

REVIEW

by Prof. Daniela Nikolaeva Koch- Kozuharova, PhD,
University of National and World Economy – Sofia,

2.1. Philology,

for obtaining the scientific degree „DOCTOR OF SCIENCE“ in professional field *2.1.*

Philology

with applicant Diana Dimitrova Yankova, PhD, Professor in New Bulgarian University –
Sofia

1. Scientific and applied significance of the research

The DSc thesis entitled “Cultural diversity and cultural identity: sociolinguistic and sociocultural practices of first-generation Bulgarian immigrants to Canada”, written in impeccable English language, was submitted to me in advance in electronic and hard copy. It has a total volume of 312 standard typewritten pages, which include 6 chapters, appendices and a list of cited literature /pp. 294-312/, which covers 174 titles, mostly in English, as well as some in Bulgarian, containing both publications by established authors and contemporary studies in the research field. The content of the DSc thesis is illustrated with 7 graphs, 2 tables, 2 maps and 134 interviews with representatives of the Bulgarian immigrants to Canada, on the one hand, and with Bulgarian and foreign NBU students, on the other. Appendices /pp. 282-292/, covering the questionnaires, have been added to the DSc thesis.

The reviewed DSc thesis deals with an up-to-date and practically significant topic, especially in recent times, related to increased worldwide migration. The dissertation research complements the information in the scientific literature on migration as an economic, social, cultural, linguistic, etc. phenomenon through the prism of sociocultural and sociolinguistic analysis for a specific target group - first generation Bulgarian immigrants to Canada.

2. Display of clearly stated research aims and objectives

The introductory part of the DSc thesis presents the goals and tasks of the research /p. 4-9/ and the methodological tools used to achieve them /pp.9-16/. Yankova aims at contributing to the generally scarce research on the subject in its specifics, setting herself the task of presenting a multifaceted view of the Bulgarian diaspora in Canada, touching on the reasons for the emigration of our compatriots during the three periods in which it took place: /the economic emigration of mainly low-skilled workers after the end of the Ottoman rule

and the restoration of Bulgarian statehood, the second wave after the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the socialist regime in Bulgaria and the third, after its end in 1989/, to the importance of the Canadian state immigration policy, the cultural identity of our compatriots, the degree of their social integration, etc. Yankova pays particular attention to Canadian multiculturalism /pp. 11-50/, introducing readers to interesting documents such as the Multiculturalism Act, adopted way back in 1971, the policy of the former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, father of Justin Trudeau, etc.

3. Assessment of the extent to which the applicant is familiar with the research problem and the relevant existing literature

Perhaps this is the place to emphasize that Prof. Yankova has been particularly prepared to research the topic even before starting her specific research work on the topic, in her capacity of an English scholar who graduated in English Philology from Sofia University in 1983 with a second major Bulgarian language and literature, researcher at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences /1987-1999/, founder and first chairman of the Bulgarian Society for Canadian Studies /2004-2006/, vice-president of the Central European Association for Canadian Studies (CEACS) /2006-2012/ and since 2018 president of the association /2012-2018/. Among the many posts and positions occupied by Prof. Yankova, due to the limited format of the opinion I will single out only one more, namely that she is also a founding member of the Bulgarian Society for the Study of English /BSSE/, as well as the Bulgarian Association of American Studies.

4. Research methodology and research methods

The methodology used by the author of the DSc thesis is explicitly presented /pp. 9-11/. Yankova investigates the problem primarily through the prism of sociolinguistics, applying quantitative and qualitative methods and a mixed approach in order to present, in her opinion, a more complete and accurate understanding of this complex social phenomenon /see p. 9/. Yankova first conducts desk research on the literature in the research area, at another stage applies discourse analysis, collects empirical data, prepares and conducts surveys and interviews of 44 respondents Bulgarian immigrants to Canada, prepares and provides questionnaires to 28 Bulgarian and 22 foreign NBU students on their perceptions and knowledge of Canada, among others.

I believe that the methodological tools used correspond to the research goals and tasks.

5. Contributions

In the abstract, totaling 58 standard typewritten pages, written in Bulgarian and faithfully reflecting the content of the dissertation, Yankova lays down 8 contributions /p. 51-55/, namely: the first multi-aspect analysis of various aspects of the immigrant identity of the first generation of Bulgarian immigrants; the first complex analysis of the relationship between factors such as Canadian immigration policy and the image of Canada in Bulgaria; the first “comprehensive sociolinguistic and sociocultural analysis of representatives” of the above-mentioned first generation /see p. 52/ - /here I would recommend a stylistic revision - instead of an analysis of representatives - of their language, integration, language code-switching of those in practice multilingual respondents/; comprehensive study of language code-switching between English or French and Bulgarian; in-depth analysis of the cultural identity of the Bulgarian diaspora in Canada and their social integration; in-depth analysis of the multicultural model in Canada. I accept the 6 contributions listed so far, emphasizing on two others, in which Prof. Yankova not only researches and analyzes, but also goes against the trend, in her capacity as a scientist with authority and experience, namely - she questions Safran’s model and refutes traditional definitions of migrants. Yankova introduces the term “hybrid identity” and adds psychological dimensions, researching Bulgarians in Canada.

6. Evaluation of the publications on the DSc thesis

Yankova presents 14 publications on the subject of the DSc thesis, 6 of which are co-authored with NBU English scholars, published by renowned Bulgarian and foreign publishers and also in scientific journals. In the dissertation itself, Yankova specifies /p. 4/ that it has already been partially published in the form of articles.

7. References and citations by other authors

Prof. Dr. Diana Yankova has recorded citations in Web of Science and SCOPUS, in non-refereed scientific reviewed publications, etc. A total of 9 of her publications have been cited in 12 sources.

8. Opinions, recommendations and notes

I congratulate Prof. Dr. Diyana Yankova on having written the present dissertation, the fruit of more than 20 years of work, as she notes in its introduction /p. 9/. In addition to being an English scholar, recognizable not only in our country, but also abroad, Prof.

Yankova is also a distinguished cosmopolitan and traveler. The Bulgarian academic community is honored by her dedicated research, teaching, administrative, and pioneering activities in many areas, building bridges between languages, peoples and cultures. It is an honor for NBU to have her as the head of the “Foreign Languages and Cultures” department, as well as member of the Academic Council.

9. Conclusion

On the basis of the above, I highly evaluate the DSc thesis entitled “Cultural diversity and cultural identity: sociolinguistic and sociocultural practices of first-generation Bulgarian immigrants to Canada”, as well as the applicant’s achievements of scientific and scientific-applied significance in their entirety. It is my honor and pleasure to propose to the honorable scientific jury **to award Diana Dimitrova Yankova the scientific degree “Doctor of Science” in professional field: 2.1. Philology** at the “Foreign Languages and Cultures” Department of NBU.

Sofia, 02. 06. 2023 Signature:

(Prof. Daniela Koch-Kozhuharova, PhD)