

## REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Krasimira Slavcheva Aleksova, Department of Bulgarian Language, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Doctor of Science in the field of 2. Humanities, discipline 2.1. Philology, member of the academic panel by order of the Rector of New Bulgarian University № 3-RK-195/28.04.2023.

of the dissertation of Prof. Dr. Diana Dimitrova Yankova on "Cultural diversity and cultural identity: sociolinguistic and sociocultural practices of first-generation Bulgarian Immigrants to Canada" for the degree of Doctor of Science in the doctoral programme General and Comparative Linguistics, field of 2. Humanities, discipline 2.1. Philology

### 1. Significance of the researched topic in academic and applied terms

In my opinion, Diana Yankova's thesis on "Cultural diversity and cultural identity: sociolinguistic and sociocultural practices of first-generation Bulgarian Immigrants to Canada" is significant in academic terms, as this topic has not been the subject of an independent study. Therefore, it is quite justified to say that this is the first monographic work on the topic of the speech of Bulgarian immigrants to Canada. And the language of the Bulgarians outside Bulgaria is of considerable research interest for Bulgarian linguistics, as evidenced by numerous studies beyond those of D. Yankova, e.g., by Ana Kocheva on the mixed language of the Viennese Bulgarians and by Katja Issa on the Bulgarian language of people of Bulgarian origin living in Sydney, Australia, etc. In addition, D. Yankova's work has the depth and multidirectionality required of thesis research for the degree of Doctor of Science - both cultural and (socio)linguistic phenomena are addressed.

### 2. Justification of the aims and objectives of the dissertation

The aims and objectives set by the author are fully justified and appropriate to the chosen topic. The main goal is to present a multifaceted view of the Bulgarian language of our immigrant community in Canada, the community itself, the reasons for emigration, cultural identity, social integration, sociocultural experience and the role of language, which requires the accomplishment of multiple significant tasks.

3. Correspondence between the research methodology and the set aims and objectives of the dissertation

The research methodology allows for full realization of the aim of the dissertation and fulfillment of the set tasks. Analytical approaches are combined with sociolinguistic and linguistic research. Language and immigration policy, cultural identity, bilingualism, multiculturalism and other linguistic processes related to the switching of language code in a multicultural society are analyzed.

4. Scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation (description and evaluation), including the presence of original contributions to science

Quite rightly, the author begins her multifaceted study with an examination of multicultural politics, which is also a distinctive feature of Canada. Significant for the realization of the aims and objectives of the dissertation are the studies devoted to the current image of Canada in Bulgaria. They reveal motives for emigration contained in the idealized image of Canada that dominates public opinion in Bulgaria. The claim for the existence of such an image is proven by a survey among young Bulgarians. Although it is not statistically representative, it provides grounds for inferring such a trend in public opinion. Also significant are the author's research and analyses of translated literary works by Canadian authors, which shape public opinion in Bulgaria about Canada, as well as her observations and conclusions about the difference in translation policy towards Canadian fiction before and after the changes in the 1990s.

For the first time in a dissertation in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian community in Canada is examined in detail from a sociolinguistic and sociocultural perspective. The author not only discusses the periods of emigration, the reasons for emigrating and the adjustment of Bulgarian emigrants, but also comments on the opinions of the editorial board of the newspaper "Bulgarian Horizons" on Canadian Bulgarians. It turns out that the newspaper does not have a determining influence on the entire Bulgarian community in Canada, and also the community is not compact. Connections are regularly maintained only between individual groups through kinship or friendship. The analyses of Bulgarians' perception of their own identity in Canada are also significant.

The chapter devoted to the language of the first generation of Bulgarian immigrants in Canada is a contribution from a sociolinguistic point of view. D. Yankova draws on recorded interviews in Bulgarian with Bulgarians in Canada. This makes the research credible and relevant to reality. The author is interested in the structural and sociolinguistic factors of the

mixing of linguistic codes, the linguistic levels at which this occurs, the parts of speech that most often lend themselves to code-switching. The influence of the topic, the context, the length of stay in Canada, the environment, etc., are examined. The corpus of empirical data suggests that code-switching is thematically determined - holidays, immigration, work, school, toponyms, etc. Conclusions are drawn on the basis of the collected database that calques mark a higher percentage in comparison with the direct use of English or French words and expressions in the speech of Bulgarian-Canadians. The author draws the conclusion that phrases rather than individual words predominate among the calques, which is seen as a case of implicit (hidden) language code-switching. And this switching D. Yankova finds at all linguistic levels. One of the important conclusions is that the so-called "language attrition", which is an essential element in the preservation of Bulgarian identity, is not observed among the respondents.

D. Yankova's dissertation does not only have academic contributions but is also significant in an applied aspect - many of the results can be a good basis for teaching Bulgarian as a native language in Canada, taking into account the most important characteristics of the speech of Bulgarian-Canadians.

5. Assessment of the publications on the dissertation topic: number of publications, type of journals in which they have been published

Fourteen articles have been published on the topic of the dissertation. They have enabled the scientific community to become familiar with the main contributions of the dissertation. All publications are in English, which has determined the fact that D. Yankova's research results have become known not only to Bulgarian but also to researchers from other countries interested in similar research. These 14 publications are in prestigious journals, which attests to the recognition of the high academic value of the published research.

6. Citations by other authors, reviews in the academic press, etc.

The table on the fulfilment of the national minimum requirements for the degree of Doctor of Science contains information on D. Yankova's articles cited by other authors. I find quite a few citations by foreign academics in indexed journals, as well as in non-indexed but peer-reviewed academic journals. This speaks for the contribution of D. Yankova's articles, which are perceived by Bulgarian and the foreign linguists as significant for the study of linguistics.

7. Recommendations and further remarks

I believe that D. Yankova's dissertation and her publications on the same topic, as well as the publications included in the table for fulfilling the minimum national requirements for the degree of Doctor of Science, have a significant academic contribution. I recommend that she publish articles in Bulgarian linguistic journals in order to promote the author's research even more among Bulgarian linguists.

8. Conclusion with a clearly formulated positive or negative evaluation of the dissertation

As a result of the analysis of the dissertation and the publications submitted, I believe with conviction that Diana Yankova can be awarded the degree of Doctor of Science in professional field 2.1. Philology, 2. Humanities, and I vote in favour of this decision.

12.05.2023

Signed

Sofia

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