

REVIEW

by Vera Tervel Marovska,

Doctor of Philosophy, Professor at the Department of Bulgarian Language

of a dissertation for the awarding of a scientific degree **Doctor of Science**

in the area of higher education: 2. Humanitarian Sciences; professional field 2.1. Philology;

Scientific Specialty: Bulgarian Language (Modern Bulgarian Language)

Code: 05.04.17

Author: Assoc. Prof. Konstantin Ivanov Kutsarov, PhD – Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”, Faculty of Philology, Bulgarian Language Department

Dissertation topic: The Bulgarian lexeme classes and the teaching of the parts of speech

1. Subject of review

By order No P33-4369 / 23.07.2019 of the Rector of the Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” (PU), I was appointed a member of the scientific jury for conduction of the procedure for the defence of the dissertation on the topic: *The Bulgarian lexeme classes and the teaching of the parts of speech*, for the acquisition of scientific degree of Doctor of Sciences of PU in higher education 2. Humanitarian Sciences; professional field 2.1. Philology; Specialty: Bulgarian (Modern Bulgarian Language); code 05.04.17.

Author of the dissertation works is Assoc. Prof Konstantin Ivanov Kutsarov from the Department of Bulgarian Language at the Faculty of Philology of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarskii".

The material presented by Assoc. Prof Konstantin Ivanov Kutsarov in hard copies complies with Art. 45(4) of the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU, and includes the following documents:

- Application to the Rector of PU for initiation of procedure for dissertation defence
- Curriculum vitae in EU format
- Copy of the diploma for educational and scientific degree Doctor

- Minutes of the departmental committee meeting related to the opening of the procedure and the preliminary discussion of the dissertation work;
- Dissertation work;
- Author’s summary of the dissertation
- List of scientific publications on the dissertation subject;
- Copies of the scientific publications.
- Declaration of originality and authenticity of the presented documents.
- Certificate of compliance with the specific requirements of the respective faculty;
- The candidate has provided 10 publications on the dissertation subject.

2. Brief biographical information

Assoc. Prof Konstantin Ivanov Kutzarov is born on 14.08.1968 in Varna. He graduates primary school in 1986 in Plovdiv, and from 1988-1993 studies Bulgarian Philology at PU “Paisii Hilendarskii”. He starts teaching as a visiting assistant in the Department of foreign students at the Agricultural University in Plovdiv. From 1995 to 1998 he is doctoral student at the Department of Bulgarian Language at PU. In 1991 he acquires a major in philology in the same department, and in 2001 is appointed assistant. In 2003 he becomes senior assistant, and in 2005 chief assistant. In 2010 he is habilitated as associate professor.

3. Relevance of the topic and the set tasks and objectives

The dissertation deals with the parts of speech, extremely relevant for the linguistics for several reasons. First of all, learning every natural language necessarily begins with the parts of speech. Almost any scientific study of a language form or category depends on its author's criteria. The author's position on the parts of speech largely determines the line of the interpretation and the final result of the analysis.

That is precisely why the lexical-semantic classifications have an ancient history. At the same time, the problem of the parts of speech is often underestimated and superficially discussed, although there is some important contributions from the ancient authors (both in the Indian grammar and in the Greco-Roman philosophical and philological tradition). The works of the modern grammarians, although using innovative methodology, are more often formally rigid and uninteresting. Therefore, it can be summed up that the dissertation topic is appropriate for dissertation and relevant, and the results of its research could quickly gain popularity.

4. Knowledge of the problem

The dissertation provides an in-depth and detailed overview of what has been done so far and is based on a comprehensive bibliography of about 150 titles. This is a testimony to K. Kutzarov's competence in the studied problems.

5. Methodology of the study

The research approach is the result of the author's focus on heterogeneous linguistic phenomena: from the word classifications to the structure of the grammatical categories and grammemes. Therefore, the methodology of the study can be defined as combined: a critical description of linguistic opinions until now, and in the field of analysis of morphological categories and grammemes - a systemic-structural analysis. For their relevance to the subject to the thesis, the methodological practices are well-selected and effective.

6. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation work

The dissertation consists of four chapters, an introduction, general description of the parts of speech in tabular form, conclusion and bibliography, or a total of 365 standard computer pages (TNR, 12).

The contribution of the scholars from Antiquity until present is presented in the first three chapters of the work. Their titles indicate the chosen chronological model for their composition. The first chapter is "Classification of words in Antiquity and the Middle Ages" (p. 6-30); follows "The development of the doctrine of the parts of speech in the Russian linguistics until the grammar of MV Lomonosov" (p. 31-134), and the third chapter is "Concepts of the parts of speech in Bulgarian linguistics" (p. 135-238).

The studies raise questions that may be answered in different way - for example, about the contemporary European philological schools and their grammatical traditions. The development of linguistics until 17-18 century is briefly described in chapter 1 of the work¹, but it would be interesting to trace it back to the modern times. The author has examined in more detail the problems in the Russian and the Soviet and in Bulgarian linguistics. However, Western, and especially Central European linguists of the 19th and early 20th centuries, had no lesser influence on the grammatical knowledge of the Bulgarian Revival writers (most of them were their students, although some of them studied in Russia, of course). In this respect, a thematic composition of the reviews would be greatly useful, since the chosen chronological organization brings some uniformity in the analyses focused to the creativity of the various scholars. There could have been a clearer distinction between the more significant and the

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original theories and the not so impressive ones². In some places, the presentation can be interpreted as declaratively opposing, since the different views of K. Kutsarov on certain issues are not clear to the reader yet, much less their argumentation³.

The author's decision not to include the description of the Bulgarian linguistic contributions of significant works, such as the grammar of Ivan Kutsarov for example (his grammar makes one of the rare attempts to adapt innovative ideas of Czech, and other modern scholars about the parts of speech, to the Bulgarian classification), and some others, in my opinion, must be reconsidered.

Another point of view on the taxonomic features is found in the interpretations of the philosophers and the semioticians, and it would be interesting the author to express an opinion on them (e.g. on the classifications of nouns by the specificity of denotations; the lexical-semantic differences between proper and common noun, etc.). Such a discussion would suggest ideas for changes in the traditional classification because of the differing perspectives of the logical-philosophical and pragmatic-semiotic descriptions of the linguistic signs.

In the dissertation, the syntactic severability criterion is prioritized, relying on its traditionally descriptive variant rather than the generative modifications, which in this case are perhaps more reliable.

It seems to me that the author has relied too much on the theories which differentiate a separate part of speech, since the words referring to it are mainly used as parenthetical; or combined with the verb *to be* in predicative. This is a functional evaluation, which is not present in the traditional combination of differential features, but is only reflected in the syntactic feature. Thus the logical-semantic criterion remains in the background, and the three criteria (logical-semantic, morphological and syntactic) should intersect and suggest one another: e.g. semantics determines the number and type of morphological categories, as well as the syntactic functions and word-forming features of the different parts of speech. A small semantic modification can result in differentiation of the lexical-grammatical category in the group of the same part of speech; a bigger modification may cause appearance of a new morphological category, or dropping of existing ones, etc. A very important indicator of the existence of a separate part of speech - at least in the case of independent words - is the

² E.g. the definitions of noun and adjective of Dr. Manchov sound quite contemporary (p. 166); also those of Al. Teodorov-Balan and other grammar authors.

³ This is the case, for example on the opinion of LV Shcherba and his conviction that the participle is adjective because it loses its verbal quality, or that the meaning of the adverbs coincides with that of the adjective, where the Russian scientist obviously means the word-forming ones and then he is right - p. 99-100.

presence of primary words (even from modern perspective) in each individual group, even though in limited number.⁴

On the other hand, the semantics of the parts of speech in the existing grammars are insufficiently discussed and should not mislead with trustworthiness. In the latest grammars, the definition of adjectives for instance, is based on the syntactic, in its nature, explanation: they describe a feature “of a noun, or another nominalized adjective; of a phenomenon expressed by the same adjective or other nominalized part of speech, etc.”⁵ In fact, the essence of the semantics of adjectives is that they simultaneously denote both the attribute and its bearer, holder, as opposed to the nouns, which denote a single phenomenon in the sphere of human knowledge, i.e. either only the attribute, the quality, or only the holder of the attribute. In this sense, the candidate has very insightfully noted that the Bulgarian adjective has only one real morphological category – degree of comparison, and the other three – gender, number and position - are concordant”(p. 254). In fact, the degree of comparison is really the only category that characterizes the attribute itself (and quantitatively). The others are grammatical features of the “carrier” – it is masculine, feminine or neuter, one or many (i.e. singular or plural), presented as definitive or indefinite through articulation. The point here is in the hierarchy of the lexical semes (compare for example, *хубавец* and *хубав*, which although related in terms of word-forming, they have similar semes, but in a different hierarchical order - *хубав* + *ец* = *хубавец* - one that bears the mark of “*хубост*”, respectively - and different grammatical categories)⁶

The problems discussed in the dissertation of Assoc. Prof K. Kutzarov's are extremely extensive, they include issues that are outside the scientific interests of the author, so he is not obliged to express an opinion on them, however this creates many occasions for discussion. For example, in the semantic-functional definition of pronouns, the problem is whether they can be classified as "lexically dependent" (thesis p. 287). Given that their genetic conditioning is to be relatives (i.e. expressing relationships and interrelationships) and thus ensuring linguistic functionality, isn't the term "lexical semantics" irrelevant for them?

It is also not certain whether modal datives such as „*лежа си*“, „*почивам си*“, „*чета си*“ (p. 297-298) are correctly defined as stylistically unsatisfactory, since we should evaluate

⁴ Despite the claim of some authors that e.g. there are no primary adverbs, in fact the old case forms from the modern point of view are rather primary, than derivative words.

⁵ E.g. "The adjective is a part of speech that is used to denote (but not name) static features, marks, qualities or properties of **phenomena named with nouns**" (Kutzarov 2007, p. 65)

⁶ However, if we assume that the definition of a morphological category as “substantive in terms of content” (for the part of the speech that has it - note VM), then it should be specified for any meaningful part of speech, which is not impossible, of course.

the linguistic functionality within different types of speech, not just its literary and business version.

One can also argue over the qualification of the so-called verbal nouns, because they are not at all the same. The term “verb nouns” should be reserved only for the *no* forms – *не*, formed by imperfective verbs. These nouns do indeed denote the action, but unlike the verb - without reference to the terms *verb, doer, speaker, narrative* (i.e. without reference to the 3 of the four elements of the popular scheme Jakobson - Kutzarov). The other word-forming varieties (with suffixes *еж* (*градеж, строеж*); *-тба* (*сеутба, вършитба*); *-ние* (*престъпление, събрание, etc.*), differ from the *не* forms in a number of peculiarities: they are formed by both verb types, their lexical semantics is very different from that of the source verb, etc. The differences between the *не* (*no*)-nouns and the others, formed by verb bases with different suffixes, are indicative and determine the grounds for their different qualification. The verbal nouns with *не* are actual verb forms, since they have the same semantics, formation and functions.

Similar reasoning can be made about the participles and the validity of the arguments for qualifying them as a part of speech separate from the verb.

For me, the main merits of the dissertation are related to the definition of certain verb categories and their grammeme. With respect to them, K. Kutzarov has presented convincing arguments and rethinking of their categorial structures. For example, about the taxeme, whose grammemes he binds to the preterite semantics and formulates the signs *perfective* and *imperfective*; on the moods - original and different from the traditional interpretation, which can be disputed and discussed, but an explanation of the specificity of the modal category is permissible; about the type of speech - the category of which is interpreted as having 3 grammemes: neutral, indicative and renarrative, etc.

7. Contributions and importance of the work to science and practice

The dissertation draws innovative conclusions about the parts of speech, accepting two more, which are not typical for the traditional classification - discursive and determinative. Although they may be further commented upon and considered, they are necessary for the research and evidence of its scientific significance.

The adopting of the results proposed in the work and putting them into practice would change the linguistic description of natural language, contributing to its adequacy. They will ensure the functionality of all textbooks and didactic materials and the promotion of different principles of foreign language learning.

8. Assessment of the publications related to the dissertation

The proposed 10 publications related to the subject of the dissertation are innovative and interesting; they reflect different aspects of the extremely broad topic of the study. They have been presented as reports at scientific forums or published in prestigious editions, and are evidence of the interest provoked by them in the linguistic circles to the controversial issues surrounding the parts of speech.

9. Personal participation of the candidate

The dissertation is a result of K. Kutsarov's work only. There are no collective contributions in it or in the publications presented.

10. Author's summary

The author's summary reflects adequately the content of the dissertation, its theoretical and applied potential and its contributions.

11. Critical remarks and recommendations

For a scientific genre such as a dissertation, it would be more appropriate to separate the biographical notes and index them at the end of the main text.

The author should consider a thematic rather than a chronological compositional framework of the review of the Russian and the Bulgarian linguistics.

12. Personal impressions

I know K. Kutsarov since he was a student. He has always shown a serious interest in the problems of Bulgarian grammar and general linguistics. Therefore, his orientation to this scientific field is also expected. Over the years, he has established himself as a promising specialist and a good teacher, and his career growth, which we are witnessing today, is expected and natural.

13. Recommendations for future use of the dissertation contributions and results

I would recommend the publication of the scientific work, so as to allow the reflection and the discussions of the analyses offered in it by the philological circles, and to create a new algorithm for the linguistic classification of the word categories in the natural languages.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation *contains scientific and scientific-applied results, which present contribution to the science* and meet the requirements of the Act for the Development of the

Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), the Regulations for the implementation of the ADASRB and the corresponding Regulations of the PU “Paisii Hilendarski”. The submitted materials and dissertation results fully comply with the specific requirements of the Faculty of Philology, adopted in connection with the Regulations of Plovdiv University for the implementation of ADASRB.

The dissertation work shows that Assoc. Prof Konstantin Ivanov Kutsarov, PhD, possesses deep theoretical knowledge and professional skills and demonstrates indisputable qualities for conducting research with original and significant scientific contributions.

Given the above, I give with conviction my *positive assessment* of the research presented by the reviewed dissertation, summary, results achieved and contributions, **and I propose to the Honourable Scientific Jury** to award Konstantin Kutsarov the **scientific degree Doctor of Science** in area of higher education: 2. Humanitarian sciences; professional field 2.1. Philology; scientific specialty Bulgarian Language.

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Plovdiv

Reviewer:
(Prof V. Marovska, DPhS)