

REVIEW STATEMENT

by **Prof. Elka Petrova Mircheva, PhD**
Institute for Bulgarian Language “Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin”,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

on the materials submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of “**doctor**”
in the Sphere of higher education 2. Humanities
Area of professional qualification 2.1. Philology
Doctoral Programme: Germanic Languages: English Language

Author: *Maria Ivanova Anastasova*

Subject: *The Analytic Constructions with the Verbs *Be* and *Have* and a Past Participle in Old English and in Old Bulgarian*

Supervisor: *Assoc. Prof. Antoaneta Stefanova Dzhelyova, PhD – Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv*

1. General overview of the submitted materials:

Following Order № ПД-21-1381 from 20.07.2022 of the Rector of the *Paisii Hilendarski* University of Plovdiv (PU) I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury participating in the defense procedure of a doctoral thesis on the subject “**The Analytic Constructions with the Verbs *Be* and *Have* and a Past Participle in Old English and in Old Bulgarian**” for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of “doctor” in the sphere of higher education 2. Humanities, area of professional qualification 2.1. *Philology*, Doctoral Programme: *Germanic Languages: English Language*. The author of the dissertation is Maria Ivanova Anastasova – an independent doctoral candidate at the Department of English Studies. The candidate’s supervisor is Assoc. Prof. Antoaneta Stefanova Dzhelyova, PhD – *Paisii Hilendarski* University of Plovdiv.

The set of documents submitted by the Department of English Studies is in accordance with art. 36 (1) of the Rulebook for Development of the Academic Staff of Plovdiv University and comprises the following documents:

- an application to the Rector of the University of Plovdiv for opening a doctoral dissertation defense procedure;
- a Europass CV;
- preliminary defense minutes from the extended English Philology Department meeting discussion of the candidate’s preparation for oral defense;
- a doctoral dissertation;
- doctoral dissertation abstracts;
- a list of scientific publications on the subject of the doctoral dissertation;

- copies of the scientific publications;
- a declaration for originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
- a reference form concerning the fulfillment of the minimal national requirements.

The doctoral candidate has attached 3 publications on the topic of the dissertation.

2. Brief autobiographical data concerning the doctoral candidate

Maria Anastasova is a graduate of the *Paisii Hilendarski* University of Plovdiv, where in 2014 she obtained her *Master's degree* in English Philology with a major in Linguistics and Translation. Since the same year she has been professionally associated with the University of Plovdiv, where she has held the positions of *assistant professor* and *lecturer* of English at the Department of English Studies, Faculty of Philology.

The dissertation was developed under the scientific supervision of Assoc. Prof. Antoaneta Dzhelyova, PhD.

3. Relevance of the topic

The chosen subject is fit for a dissertation, and the conducted research can undoubtedly be described as innovative, and not in a single respect only. The set objectives and the achieved results in the comparative study of the analytic constructions of the verbs *be* and *have* and past participles in Old English and Old Bulgarian go much further than the comparative analysis of gospel texts from the Wessex Gospels and the Codex Marianus and turn into a large-scale study of the typological features and specific characteristics of the constructions under examination and the grammatical categories they represent. In addition to the inevitable references to the Greek and Latin versions of the Gospels, the translations of which register the first written records of the Old Bulgarian and Old English texts, what is also added is abundant comparative material from a multitude of related and unrelated languages, as well as from the historical development of the Bulgarian and English languages, even arriving at the Bulgarian dialect material wonderfully implanted in Maria Anastasova's study.

4. Knowledge of the problem

Maria Anastasova not only knows the subject of her dissertation well but she has also covered in depth an impressive body of research and has critically reflected on what has been done before her. The author's ability to formulate a clear personal scientific position as well as the successful and convincing argumentation of the logically formulated theses should be acknowledged. I value the chosen approach of presenting the previous scholarly tradition in parallel with the author's own theses – an approach that differs from the classical way of developing a dissertation by a novice colleague and that presents Anastasova as an established scholar.

5. Research methods

The large-scale objective requires the combination of different research approaches. This requires in-depth theoretical knowledge and skills. The author uses a complex methodology that includes the comparative, panchronic (synchronic-diachronic) and synergetic research methods. Their combination ensures the achievement of the objectives set in the dissertation.

6. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and contributions

I will formulate and list the main and important points for me in a few paragraphs:

- Maria Anastasova's dissertation is an excellently structured study of high scientific value.

– The work is innovative. The style is clear and scientifically sound.

– As a reader of the dissertation, I had the impression that the topic originally chosen for the comparison of the analytic constructions with *be* and *have* and past participles in the Wessex Gospels and the Codex Marianus, which was based on preliminary impressions of related linguistic phenomena, grew over time and led to the setting of new and new objectives. I fully welcome this expansion of the research field, because the author has met the many challenges and reached significant scientific results.

– Maria Anastasova does not stay “on the surface” of the combinations of the verbs *be* and *have* and past participles and their historically trodden path towards grammaticalized analytic constructions for expressing perfect meaning, but quite rightly first goes into the depths of the semantics of these 2 verbs. I strongly welcome this approach, as well as the excerpting of ample material from lexicographical reference books. The performed analysis clearly shows the intersection of the semantic fields of the 2 verbs and creates the prerequisites for further development of the analysis and the characterization of participles and analytic constructions with *be* and *have* not only in Old English and Old Bulgarian, but in English and Bulgarian as well.

– With the analysis of the constructions consisting of *be* and *have* and past participles in historical and contemporary terms, the author wades into deep waters by critically reviewing a host of research, taking a reasoned stance on decades of scholarly discussion, and offering her own interpretations.

– The historical development of *have*-constructions in Bulgarian and English leads Anastasova to Bulgarian dialects. Her analysis is supported by abundant material drawn from numerous studies. With these, the dissertation enters another research field, different from its main topic, which, in my opinion, the author handles successfully.

– All in all, *The Analytic Constructions with the Verbs Be and Have and a Past Participle in Old English and in Old Bulgarian* is a research work of scientific merit.

7. Assessment of the publications and personal contributions of the doctoral candidate

In the materials for the defense of her dissertation M. Anastasova has submitted 3 scientific articles on the topic, which were published in the period 2017 – 2021. These papers mark key moments of the doctoral candidate’s work on the topic.

8. Personal contribution of the doctoral candidate

The quality of the work, the critical review of what has been done so far in different areas of linguistic science, in two fields at that – English and Bulgarian philology, the formulated motivated scientific position, presuppose independent work on the part of the doctoral candidate.

There are no traces of unauthorized borrowings from other scientific works.

9. Abstracts

The abstract adequately presents the thesis and meets the regulatory requirements.

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

My main recommendations can be summarised in the following bullet points:

– The volume and the quality of the research, in my opinion, deserve to be supported by a more voluminous Introduction and Conclusion. In its present form, the Introduction is 4 pages long and the Conclusion consists of several paragraphs collected into 1½ pages. I feel that expanding these will give the necessary completeness to the dissertation.

– I believe that the 5th point of the conclusions, which refers to the definitions of perfect, pluperfect and futurum exactum, definitions formulated in A. Dzhelyova’s monographic work “Old Bulgarian language. Morphology” and differing from those accepted in the traditional grammars, have a place in the Introduction. This fundamentally new understanding is key to the overall exposition as well as to the drawn conclusions.

– Another theoretical proposition that is extremely important for the dissertation is that of the attractor in the language system. A number of the important drawn conclusions are related to it. This postulation has also been introduced by A. Dzhelyova. It seems to me that M. Anastasova should devote some space to the problem in the Introduction of her work.

CONCLUSION

Maria Ivanova Anastasova’s doctoral dissertation *Analytic Constructions with the Verbs Be and Have and a Past Participle in Old English and in Old Bulgarian* is a mature scholarly work containing scientific contributions.

In many respects, it exceeds the requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Rulebook for the Application of LDASRB and the corresponding Rulebook of *Paisii Hilendarski* University of Plovdiv.

The doctoral candidate possesses theoretical knowledge, unquestionable skills for independent research, and shows impressive abilities to work in many research fields of linguistics.

Due to the aforesaid, I hereby confidently give my positive assessment of the evaluated dissertation, dissertation abstract, the obtained results and scientific contributions and I encourage the honourable scientific jury to award Maria Ivanova Anastasova the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in the sphere of higher education 2. Humanities, area of professional qualification 2.1. Philology, doctoral programme: *Germanic Languages: English Language*.

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Reviewer:

Prof. Elka Mircheva, PhD