

EXPERT OPINION

**By Associate Professor Doctor Teodora Kurteva Rabovyanova,
St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo**

On a dissertation for conferring the title of **Doctor**

In higher education field 2. *Humanities*

Professional field 2.1 *Philology*

Doctoral program: *Modern Bulgarian Language*

Dissertation author: Diana Georgieva Markova

Topic: Semantics and Pragmatics of the So-Called Present Passive Participle in Modern Bulgarian Language

Research supervisor: Associate Professor Doctor Krasimira Angelova Chakarova, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

1. General information about the procedure and the doctoral candidate

By order No. ПД-21-681 dated 25/03/2024 of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, I was appointed member of the scientific jury for the defence of the above dissertation. The presented set of materials complies with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

Diana Markova was born on 20/04/1995. In 2019, she obtained a master's degree in Current Bulgarian Studies (linguistic profile). Since 2023, she has been a full-time teacher of Bulgarian as a foreign language at the Medical University of Plovdiv. The jobs held as a proofreader and editor (2019–2020) and as a teacher of Bulgarian language and literature (2020–2021) prepared the future researcher in the field of linguistics. Her excellent foreign language skills, professional development courses attended, organizational skills acquired, and prizes received for her scientific and fiction production are impressive.

2. Relevance of the topic. The thesis presented is a complete scientific research paper. Correctly defined are the object and subject of the research as well as the goal and the tasks. The developed problem is relevant in both theoretical and practical aspects. The content of the text clearly indicates knowledge of the problem and critical assessment of the theoretical and practical material. The research methodology led to the achievement of the goal set, as well as to adequate answers to the 12 tasks.

3. Evaluation of the publications and the personal contributions. The thesis is highly assessed for its comprehensive analysis of the present passive participle. The first chapter is mostly diachronic. In the second chapter, table 1 compares the corresponding opinions of scholars – authors of 9 systematic grammar books – regarding the analysed participle. It is the unification of the views that should be “questioned, as... it is based on an older state of the Bulgarian language, without taking into account the current trends in its development” (p. 55). In modern studies on the subject, three points of view are accepted: verbal adjective, “unified” passive participle, and present passive participle (p. 63). The latter point of view is fervently defended, and illogical or unconvincing statements are boldly rejected. Even here, the skills of reasoned defence are evident. The author knows in detail the literature on the problem, and has applied criteria formulated by other scholars, including her supervisor.

The main thesis achievements are:

- A clearly stated opinion about the presence in the modern Bulgarian language of a symmetrical participle system of 4 equal participles: past (perfect) active, past passive, present active, and present passive.
- The analysed deverbatives have a participial origin and passive semantics – “a categorical indication of preserved voice (resp. verbality)” – p. 103, which in the third chapter are bound to conjugation, aspectual and status features, foreign influence, and functional specifics.
- Various “proofs” of activation: 6 times more deverbatives ending in *-m* compared to the data in dictionaries (Appendix), and their current productivity is the result of linguistic economy and frequent use in scientific writing, the language of the media, advertising, and colloquial speech; word-forming potential when forming abstract nouns ending in *-ocm*; examples from all styles: it was not at all assumed that they can be used in modern Bulgarian/translated fiction texts;
- Categorical distinction from the corresponding adjectives ending in *-(e)m* (with neutralized verbality, deficient in passivity/potentiality). At the same time, the comparison brings the analysed participle closer to qualitative adjectives (using articles with adjectives, gradation and substantivization of adjectives), but also to the present active participle (semantic replacement with addition of the reflexive particle *ce* to the active participle is possible only in the meaning of *passivity* of the passive participle; if a deverbative ending in *-m* also carries modality, “present active participles do not indicate a potential, hypothetical

action, but one that is in principle performed (and not that can (cannot) be performed)” – p. 133. The parallel use of passive participles (present and past ones from an iterative stem) is a proof of their semantic non-identity (p. 136).

Applicable in science are the formula of verbality (passivity and/or possible performing of the action indicated by the source verb through transforming the verb with identical reflexive-passive/participle passive structure into a definite relative clause), the semantic classification (present passive participle with passivity; with passivity and modality; de-semanticized with attributive meaning: verification by replacement with a single synonymous adjective), as well as the criteria for recognizing the analysed participles – except for the formula indicated above, and the unoccupied indirect object position (hence the restoration of the source verb rection with the potential performer of the action – by whom).

Another indisputable contribution of the doctoral student is the analysis of Bulgarian deverbatives and their English equivalents (-able/-ible), with many examples from translated fiction and precise comments on the translator's choice between present passive participle, adjective, descriptive translation, and verb phrase. Throughout the thesis, the ability to prove by examples (and not just in theory) is impressive. The excerption from dictionaries, fiction texts, and internet sites is quite skillful. The examples are visually summarized in the form of tables, diagrams, and a glossary of deverbatives ending in *-(e)m*. The 1,774 verb derivatives excerpted from the *Official Spelling Dictionary of the Bulgarian Language. Verbs (2016)* and diligently illustrated with examples from the Internet, the Bulgarian National Corpus, and fiction, can be implemented in practice.

Another contribution are the presented results of a survey on linguistic attitudes towards deverbatives ending in *-(e)m*, with preliminary set hypotheses for verification. The analysis of the answers to the 16 questions is invariably tied to the subject, topic, tasks, and goals of the dissertation, i.e. to show in a new light the “forgotten” present passive participle reviving mainly due to the possibility of economic expression and implicitly containing the semantics of modality and/or passivity.

4. The author’s abstract meets the requirements and clearly, precisely, and concisely reflects the main results achieved in the dissertation.

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

When reading the text, the following questions arose: 1) Do you think that brevity (for linguistic economy) prevails over aesthetic considerations when activating deverbatives ending in *-(e)m*? 2) Is it possible to predict which verbs ending in *-upa* tend to form such deverbatives, as many of the frequently used ones do not have a corresponding participle (**лакируем, *зримируем, but лакиран, зримиран*)? In my opinion, it is more logical to put the present passive participle with passive and modal meaning first in the semantic classification, as it is the most frequent (94% – p. 123). The examples from the advertising discourse, including “advertisements and commercials from Internet sites” (p. 173), could be grouped into a subsection named *Internet Speech Examples*. In subsection 3.4.2.5, the predominant examples are also from forums where colloquial means of expression are actively used.

CONCLUSION. The above impressions indicate that the doctoral student possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills and demonstrates qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research. Therefore, I confidently give my **positive** assessment of the research conducted and propose that the esteemed scientific jury confer the title of Doctor to **Diana Georgieva Markova** in Higher Education Field 2. *Humanities*, Professional Field 2.1 *Philology*, Doctoral Program *Modern Bulgarian Language*.

25/04/2024
Veliko Tarnovo

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