

STATEMENT OF OPINION

by **Dr. Petya Ivanova Nestorova**

Associate Professor at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree **Doctor** in:

field of higher education *2. Humanities*

professional field *2.1. Philology*

PhD programme *Modern Bulgarian Language*

Author: Diana Georgieva Markova

Topic: *Semantics and Pragmatics of the so-called Present Passive Participle in the Modern Bulgarian Language*

Scientific supervisor: *Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Angelova Chakarova – Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv*

1. General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student

By order **No. RD-21-681 of 25.03.2024** of the Rector of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for providing a procedure for the defence of a dissertation on the topic of *Semantics and Pragmatics of the so-called Present Passive Participle in the Modern Bulgarian Language* for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in the field of higher education **2. Humanities**, professional field **2.1. Philology**, PhD programme **Modern Bulgarian Language**. The author of the dissertation is **Diana Georgieva Markova** – a PhD student in full-time education at the Department of *Bulgarian Language* with scientific supervisor **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Angelova Chakurova – Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv**.

The set of materials submitted by Diana Markova on electronic media is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations on the Development of the Academic Staff of PU and includes all the required documents.

Diana Markova completed her secondary education at the Ivan Vazov Language School in Plovdiv studying two foreign languages – English and Russian. Then she graduated in the programme of Bulgarian Philology at the University of Plovdiv. As a student and later as a PhD student, she participated in linguistics olympiads, scientific forums and conferences, where she won many prizes and which probably predetermined her scientific interests and development. She continued her studies in the Master's programme of Contemporary Bulgarian Studies with a linguistic profile, and even then her supervisor for the successfully defended Master's thesis was Assoc. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Chakarova. In the meantime, she worked as a proofreader and editor at the Hermes publishing house in Plovdiv, then for a year she was a lecturer in Bulgarian language and literature at the centre of Educational Technologies in Plovdiv. Then she started working as a lecturer in Bulgarian language

for foreigners at the Medical University in Plovdiv, and after a year she won a competition and was appointed a full-time lecturer at the Bulgarian Language Section of the Department of Language and Specialized Education at the Medical University.

2. Topical relevance

There is no doubt that the topic of the scientific work presented for evaluation by the jury is extremely topical, at the same time still controversial, as the opinions expressed are many and different in nature, and often polar. In this line of thought, it can be said that the task set by the PhD student is undoubtedly difficult and extremely challenging, since many of our well-known, respected linguists have written on the problem and the opinions expressed by them are well argued. At the same time, the problem of the revival, formation, use and belonging today to the participle system of present passive participles in the Bulgarian language is interesting and rewarding to study precisely because there is no consensus among linguists and because there is still no comprehensive large-scale study on this issue, such as the one carried out by Diana Markova.

3. Knowledge of the problem

The PhD student shows an excellent knowledge of all issues related to the topic she has chosen. In her work, she outlines all aspects of the phenomenon under study, presents all existing theses on the subject, comments on them correctly, presents and proves her thesis in a reasoned and comprehensive manner, providing abundant evidence and examples.

4. Research methodology

The chosen research methodology includes a very large arsenal of methods and allows achieving the set goals and objectives, as well as obtaining an adequate answer to the set questions. The methods of work are formulated correctly and in detail, and the methodology is adequate to the set objectives and tasks and fully covers all stages of scientific substantiation and practical work.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the thesis and contributions

Diana Markova focuses her dissertation on the study of the semantics and pragmatics of the so-called present passive participle in the modern Bulgarian language. Her main aim is to investigate whether this participle is “alive” in the Bulgarian language today and whether it can be assigned to the system of Bulgarian participles.

The dissertation has a classical structure. It consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, a list of excerpted sources, a list of the used abbreviations and an appendix (a dictionary of the present passive participles after excerption from the Official Orthographic Dictionary of the Institute for Bulgarian Language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences).

In the introduction, Diana Markova presents the object and subject of her research quite accurately and correctly: the participle system of the Bulgarian language (BL) and the present passive participle in particular. The main aim of the study is the answer to the question “to what extent is the thesis of the modern reproducibility of the *-m/-em* deverbatives justified and whether in the modern stage of the development of the Bulgarian language there are already sufficient grounds for the *-m/-em* deverbatives to be assigned back to the participle system and to enjoy the equal status of participles”. In order to achieve her goal, the PhD student formulated a list of 12 tasks, which outline the stages of the development of the scientific work and are both theoretically and practically oriented. The methods of work are correctly presented and correspond to the activities carried out in the dissertation: 1) the method of theoretical generalization; 2) the method of description and explanation; 3) the comparative-historical method; 4) the contrastive method; 5) the method of excerption and 6) the statistical method.

The first two chapters constitute the theoretical overview of the topic, which is a complete bibliographic presentation of grammars, scientific monographs, articles and papers of scholars who have worked on the topic. In this part, the PhD student demonstrates excellent bibliographical awareness and the ability to cite the important scientific facts for her and for her research, which she handles not only statistically but also analytically, thoroughly researching the issues, presenting the points of view in the scientific literature, and then formulating her views in a scientifically argued manner. Tracing what has been written on the problem in the scientific texts, Diana Markova systematically and consistently directs the commentaries towards her thesis, which in the contributory third and fourth parts she also systematically and consistently manages to prove through successfully selected arguments, abundant examples and plenty of evidence.

In the first chapter, the PhD student places her research in the broadest possible framework, presenting the participle system in Old Bulgarian, examining the etymological present passive participle together with all the other participles available at this stage. The diachronic study starts from the Old Bulgarian period, through the Middle Bulgarian period, in which the most significant changes are found with the present passive participle under study, to the Revival period. The author devotes special attention to the formation, use and meaning of the present participle in Old Bulgarian, illustrating all her observations and conclusions with many examples.

Chapter Two traces the scholarly thought on the subject from the first Revival grammars to the most recent modern research on the subject. Quite logically, she divides the theoretical literature into grammars, monographs and articles and papers, as she finds scholarly claims to support her theses in K. Kutsarov’s monograph and in some of the articles presented.

In the third chapter Diana Markova examines the formal-semantic and functional features of the *-m/em* deverbatives in the modern Bulgarian language. This chapter contains many of the contributions of the dissertation and has a very strong proof part in which the PhD student presents almost all possible evidence in support of her thesis. First of all, the volume of verbs studied, excerpted from

three official BL dictionaries: the *Reverse Dictionary of the Bulgarian Language* (BAS, 2011); the *Official Orthographic Dictionary of the Bulgarian Language* (BAS, 2012) and the *Official Orthographic Dictionary of the Bulgarian Language, Verbs* (BAS, 2016), is respectable, "a total of 1,774 deverbal derivatives ending in -m/-em, whose usage is verified and supported by examples from the internet space (articles, forums, advertisements), the Bulgarian National Corpus (BAS) and fiction". On all of the excerpted present passive participles, she defines the base, type and conjugation of the source verb, something that cannot be found elsewhere. She presents the word-formation regularities of verbs of the three conjugations in forming the participle, and then proposes a classification of present passive participles according to the formants involved in their formation: the suffix *-m* in verbs of conjugation II, the suffix *-im* in verbs of conjugation I, the suffix *-em* in verbs of conjugation III, and exceptions with the suffix *-om*.

The PhD student presents in the text various evidentiary statistics, justified by the research and richly supported with examples: in aspectual terms, she proves that most of the participles are formed from an iterative base; most participles are positive, a smaller number are negative; there are about 100 Russianisms among today's passive participles, which entered our language in the Revival; nouns of *-ost* are formed from the base of the present participle in scientific and fiction literature.

Diana Murkova convincingly proves that the present passive participle expresses, besides its inherent passivity, also the modal meaning of *possibility*. In support of her thesis that it possesses not only nominal but also verbal characteristics, the PhD student proposes her own, workable formula to verify the preserved verbality in it. The formula recovers the source verb "by a reflexive-passive construction in a subordinate defining clause, cf. *unforgettable memory = memory that cannot (Poss) be (Pass) forgotten (V)*".

The PhD student found that 94% of the present passive participles can express the meanings of passivity and possibility, and very few of them have only passive meaning or belong to desemantic etymological present passive participles. Diana Markova offers very precise criteria for recognizing whether the -m/em deverbatives are adjectives or participles. She presents the syntactic characteristics of participles: they can be used with grammatical articles, they can be graded and they can be substantivized.

In the comparison between today's participles in Bulgarian, Diana Markova provides further evidence that the place of the present participle is precisely in the remaining unfilled position of the participle paradigm in BL.

The functional-semantic parallels between the derivatives of -m/-em and the English adjectives of -able/-ible (comparison of translated correspondences) prove the revival of the present participle in our morphological system. Further evidence is provided by the many examples of attributive, predicative, adverbial and substantive usage. Examples of the use of the present passive participle in different functional styles follow, which is necessary for the author to prove that the participle occurs

in all styles, not only in the scientific and formal-business ones, which is the general opinion on the matter.

The conclusion is that, in view of the current law of economy in language, participles are the preferred means of shortening a phrase and transforming a complex sentence into a simple one.

Diana Markova devotes the fourth chapter to the pragmatic features of the present passive participle. She builds on the theoretical foundation that St. Dimitrova outlines in pragmatics, and conducts a sociolinguistic study in the form of a survey, examining linguistic attitudes towards the present participle among 705 individuals. The aim of this study was to examine the attitudes of native speakers of Bulgarian towards the use of the -m/-em deverbatives. The results of this survey confirm the hypothesis that “the vast majority of native speakers prefer to use the present passive participle instead of identical variants carrying the same information, but which require more linguistic resources to express”. The survey provides further evidence for the revival and return of the present passive participle in the Bulgarian participle system.

Throughout the dissertation, the PhD student demonstrates a wonderful scientific expression, confidence in the systematization of her scientific searches, skills of a researcher who can not only describe the scientific facts, but also comment on them, analyze them, as well as express her own opinion, different from that in the commented scientific work. She convincingly proves herself as an accomplished linguistic researcher.

6. Assessment of publications and personal contribution of the PhD student

Diana Markova participated in the competition with five solo publications. The scientific issues in the articles represent the work on the topic of the dissertation and subsequently the texts become part of the dissertation. Both the articles and the dissertation show an excellent command of scientific style, which demonstrates linguistic and scientific maturity, clarity and precision, for which I congratulate the PhD student.

I have no doubt that all the texts, contributions and conclusions presented are her own work.

7. Abstract

The abstract summarizes the content of the dissertation and reflects its parts quite accurately. In it, the PhD student shows the ability to summarize her scientific work and to sift out the most important and significant issues she has touched upon in order to give a clear and accurate picture of the subject and topic of the dissertation, the stages of the research, the main theses, the inferences and the conclusions she has reached.

The abstract is developed according to the requirements and accurately summarizes the individual chapters of the dissertation, correctly presents the main observations and results reached by the PhD student, the contributions are formulated correctly and accurately.

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

I have no objections as the thesis is a model dissertation in terms of research methodology, mastery of scientific style and the ability to build arguments, present and defend them successfully. The thesis is also a model of excellent language literacy and command of the norm.

I recommend that the PhD student should publish her dissertation so that the research can gain popularity among scholarly thought.

I have known Diana Markova since her student years and then as a candidate for a full-time assistant professor of Bulgarian language for foreigners at the Medical University and I can say that my excellent impressions of an intelligent, educated, persevering and hard-working student from previous years are now confirmed after reading her dissertation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I declare with conviction that the dissertation submitted for consideration *contains scientific and scientific-applied results, which represent an original contribution to science* and *meet all* the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ADASRB and the respective Regulations of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

The text proves that the PhD student Diana Markova **possesses** in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills, **demonstrating** qualities and skills for independent scientific research.

Due to the stated statement of opinion, I confidently give my *positive assessment* of the conducted research presented by the dissertation, the abstract, the achieved results and contributions, and *I suggest that the esteemed scientific jury award the educational and scientific degree of Doctor* to Diana Markova in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field **2.1. Philology**, PhD program **Modern Bulgarian Language**.

17.05.2024

Statement of opinion prepared by:

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