REVIEW
by Prof. Dr. Ruska Sabeva Stancheva
Institute for Bulgarian Language, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
of a dissertation submitted for the award of the educational and scientific
degree **Doctor (PhD)**

Field of Higher Education: 2. Humanities
Professional Field: 2.1 Philology
Doctoral Programme: Contemporary Bulgarian Language

Author: Krasilina Georgieva Koleva-Kostova
Dissertation Title: *"The Bulgarian Complex Mixed Sentence – A Study of Structurographic Models and Syntactic Sketches"*
Academic Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petya Ivanova Nestorova, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

1. General description of the submitted materials

By Order No. RD-22-2498 of 09.12.2025 issued by the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, I was appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury. At an online meeting of the Jury held on 12.12.2025, I was assigned to prepare a review to ensure the procedure for the public defense of the dissertation entitled *"The Bulgarian Complex Mixed Sentence – A Study of Structurographic Models and Syntactic Sketches"* for the award of the educational and scientific degree **Doctor (PhD)** in Field of Higher Education 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.1 Philology, Doctoral Programme "Contemporary Bulgarian Language."

The author of the dissertation is Krasilina Georgieva Koleva-Kostova, a full-time doctoral candidate at the Department of Bulgarian Language, Faculty of Philology, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, supervised by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petya Ivanova Nestorova.

The set of materials submitted by Krasilina Koleva-Kostova, both in printed and electronic form, includes the following documents:

- Full text of the dissertation
- Abstract (in Bulgarian)
- List of publications – five in total
- Updated CV
- Order No. RD-22-2498 of 09.12.2025 of the Rector approving the composition of the Scientific Jury
- Statement confirming compliance with the minimum national requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor (PhD)"

• Declaration dated 28.11.2025 regarding the originality of the results and contributions of the dissertation research

After reviewing all the above-mentioned documents, I concluded that they fully comply with the requirements and adhere to the established procedural regulations.

2. Brief biographical information about the doctoral candidate

The doctoral candidate, Krasilina Koleva-Kostova, is a graduate of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, where between 2010 and 2016 she consecutively completed:

- the Bachelor's programme in Bulgarian Philology
- the Master's programme in Contemporary Bulgarian Studies
- doctoral studies in Professional Field 2.1 Philology, Doctoral Programme "Contemporary Bulgarian Language" at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

In addition, Krasilina Koleva-Kostova has obtained a Master's degree in Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy from Trakia University in Stara Zagora.

I am particularly impressed by the fact that since 2015 the doctoral candidate has chosen to dedicate her professional career to Bulgarian secondary education, working as a teacher of Bulgarian Language and Literature at the lower secondary level – a stage at which the foundations of scientific syntactic knowledge are laid and students' skills in the field of linguistic structures are developed.

3. Relevance of the research topic and appropriateness of the stated aims and objectives

The topic of the dissertation has been very well chosen in order to address the need for expanding the body of knowledge in the field of the syntax of the complex mixed sentence in Standard Bulgarian, and more specifically, knowledge concerning the structurographic potential of the Bulgarian complex sentence. In this respect, it can be confidently stated that the dissertation contributes new findings about the complex mixed sentence from both a formal and a functional perspective, established through the use of precise statistical methods. The author formulates two main objectives of the study (p. 11):

(a) by deriving quantitative parameters (scope, depth, types of relations, etc.) from the primary syntactic sketches of complex mixed sentences and by applying statistical predictive methods, to draw conclusions about the language of the authors under investigation, Yordan Yovkov and Yordan Radichkov, on the basis of the two novels *The Farm near the Border* and *Noah's Ark*, respectively;

(b) to classify complex mixed sentences into subtypes based on the quantitative parameters of scope and depth, while clarifying the meaning and usage of the term *period*.

In order to achieve these objectives, the author outlines 23 specific research tasks (pp. 12–15).

4. Familiarity with the research problem

The text of the dissertation demonstrates that the author has an excellent command of the subject matter. Theoretical principles are presented and skillfully incorporated into the observations, analyses, and conclusions. The extensive corpus resources employed have been examined by Kr. Kostova with close regard to the research problem, clearly revealing her ability to offer original contributions to the interpretation of the data.

Overall, this practical aspect of the work, related to the doctoral candidate's analytical skills, is one of the strongest features of Krasilina Kostova's dissertation.

5. Research methodology

In line with contemporary trends in linguistic research, the dissertation approaches the topic through an interdisciplinary framework. In order to accomplish the aims and objectives of the study, the doctoral candidate employs a methodology that combines several methods: the method of excerpting (data extraction), the comparative-historical method, the instrumental method, the descriptive method, and the statistical method.

Their successful integration makes it possible not only to cover comprehensively the rich empirical material assembled by the author, but also to draw important conclusions regarding syntactic structures characteristic of Standard Bulgarian.

I believe that the selected methods ensure the full achievement of the stated aims and the complete fulfillment of the research tasks.

6. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation

Krasilina Kostova has structured her work into the following parts: an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and three appendices.

At the outset, I would like to emphasize that the submitted dissertation is distinguished by research maturity, depth, and consistency. These qualities present Krasilina Kostova not as a novice author making her first steps into the field of linguistics, but as a researcher with substantial experience and indisputable contributions in the area of syntax.

The first chapter of the dissertation provides an extensive clarification of the concepts *complex sentence* and *period* within the Bulgarian grammatical tradition (pp. 18–81). The careful analysis aimed at elucidating the content of these two notions leads the author to the conclusion that as early as the Bulgarian National Revival period one of the differential features of the period – bipartite structure – had already emerged. The development of Bulgarian syntactic terminology is presented attentively and in detail, including an indication of when the term *complex*

mixed sentence was introduced (by L. Andreychin), a term that has since become firmly established in grammatical terminology. Classifications of the sentence structure under discussion proposed by various scholars are also reviewed. In this chapter, the evolution of scholarly views regarding the concept denoted by the term *period* is examined in depth.

As is typical of the dissertation genre, the second chapter (pp. 82 – 155) offers a survey of the theoretical sources, analytical commentary on them, clarification of terms, and discussion of the specific features involved in defining the key concepts employed in the study. Fundamental notions of generative-transformational grammar are presented, and with the help of this theoretical apparatus the author develops 300 primary syntactic sketches of complex mixed sentences. A significant portion of the chapter is devoted to the description of configurational syntactic analysis within the framework of both the simple and the complex sentence. The author relies on the so-called *postulates of configurational syntactic analysis*, developed by the late P. Barkalova, with whom Krasilina Kostova collaborated productively over many years.

Among the conclusions reached in the second chapter, particular attention should be drawn to Kostova's observations on recursion as an inherent property of linguistic structures (pp. 165 – 174), as well as to her division of complex mixed sentences into two types — *periodic* and *non-periodic* — based on the presence or absence of three differential features ("bipartite structure, syntactic parallelism without stylistic markedness, and specific intonation" (p. 154 ff.)). Also noteworthy is the author's observation that the sentences she designates as *periodic* occur only sporadically in the excerpted material.

Here, I would venture to recommend that the author consider whether the terms *period-type / non-period-type sentences* might be more appropriate and semantically unambiguous than the labels *periodic / non-periodic sentences* used in the dissertation.

The author's observations regarding the relationship between intonation and structurographic models are also highly valuable, and her analyses confirm the conclusions reached by other scholars.

The third chapter constitutes the core of Kostova's research. Through statistical modelling, it analyzes the quantitative characteristics (33 in total) of complex mixed sentences. On the basis of precise analysis, a number of important observations and conclusions are drawn concerning the structure of such sentences through syntactic sketches, first introduced by P. Barkalova and developed within the framework of configurational syntactic analysis to visualize the structure of each sentence unit in the corpus.

Among the author's conclusions regarding the structural features of complex mixed sentences, several deserve particular emphasis:

1. In the examined material, subordinate clauses outnumber main clauses.

2. Sentences containing a small number of main predications tend to exhibit greater structural depth, whereas an increase in the number of main predications corresponds to fewer structural levels (one or two);

3. On the basis of regularity, mentioned above, the author proposes a second classification of complex mixed sentences, distinguishing three types:
(a) linear – with a clear predominance of main predications;
(b) depth-type – with more than three structural levels;
(c) combined – without a clear predominance of either main or subordinate predications (p. 174 ff.).

Another important result is the statistically established frequency of the different types of subordinate clauses, with adverbial subordinate clauses – quite expectedly, in my opinion – showing the highest proportion, as they characterize temporal, spatial, quantitative, qualitative, and other features of sentence situations.

I would also like to highlight the proposed structurographic sentence models developed on the basis of the phrase-structure approach. The syntactic trees presented clearly illustrate the conclusion that as the number of depth levels increases, so does the number of functional categories.

Overall, the dissertation by Krasilina Koleva-Kostova not only demonstrates the explanatory power of the generative model introduced into Bulgarian linguistics by Y. Penchev and subsequently applied by P. Barkalova and other scholars, but also enriches this model by enabling the Bulgarian complex mixed sentence to be viewed from a new perspective that reveals the structural richness of our language.

The dissertation is well-focused, coherent, and balanced. It opens multiple lines of inquiry, is grounded in abundant illustrative material, and at the same time maintains a clear focus on its central research problems, successfully defending the conclusions drawn from the analyses.

The extensive bibliography, comprising 147 titles, testifies to the doctoral candidate's high level of bibliographic competence and scholarly awareness.

7. Contributions and significance of the study for scholarship and practice
The unquestionable contributions of the dissertation include the following:

--establishing the relationship between scope and depth in complex mixed sentences;

--extracting quantitative sentence characteristics within the framework of the corpus compiled to date;

--presenting, for the first time, the Bulgarian complex mixed sentence as a graph with clearly visible predicative relations and --recursive structure, based on the developed structurographic models of sample sentences;

--developing two new classifications of complex mixed sentences on the basis of different criteria — a two-component classification (periodic and non-periodic

complex mixed sentences) and a three-component classification (linear, depth-type, and combined complex mixed sentences);

--conducting, for the first time, a comparative statistical analysis of 150 simple two-member sentences, through which eight quantitative characteristics are identified (scope [number of lexical words], depth, agreement, prepositional linkage, government, adjunction, syndetic and asyndetic linkage), reflecting regularities typical of the texts under study.

8. Evaluation of the publications related to the dissertation

Krasilina Koleva-Kostova presents five publications on the topic of the dissertation, produced both independently and in co-authorship, which attest to her sustained research interests and to her qualities as an established scholar in the field of syntax.

The number of publications is sufficient, and they appear in outlets that will allow the doctoral candidate's registration with the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID).

My recommendation is that links to all publications be added.

9. Personal contribution of the doctoral candidate

As noted throughout this review, the doctoral candidate demonstrates a clear commitment to comprehensive coverage of the relevant sources, possesses well-developed analytical skills, and consistently seeks to substantiate her observations through statistical tools.

Throughout the dissertation, all quotations and references are accurate and properly documented.

10. Abstract

The abstract accurately reflects the content of the dissertation. The contributions are formulated correctly and objectively.

11. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have none. The research has been carried out exemplary well.

12. Personal impressions

I am acquainted with the doctoral candidate through her participation in the annual conferences of the Institute for Bulgarian Language, and I believe that, in addition to her comprehensive research abilities, she also possesses very good presentation skills.

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

I would welcome the timely publication of the dissertation.

CONCLUSION

I am of the opinion that the dissertation entitled *"The Bulgarian Complex Mixed Sentence – A Study of Structurographic Models and Syntactic Sketches"* by Krasilina Koleva-Kostova contains scholarly and applied research results that constitute original contributions and meet all the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the Regulations for its implementation.

The dissertation demonstrates that the doctoral candidate possesses in-depth knowledge and clearly established research competences in Professional Field 2.1 Philology, Doctoral Programme "Contemporary Bulgarian Language."

In view of the above, I confidently give my positive evaluation of the conducted research, as presented in the dissertation, the abstract, and the reported results and contributions, and I propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury that the educational and scientific degree **Doctor (PhD)** be awarded to Krasilina Koleva-Kostova in Field of Higher Education 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.1 Philology, Doctoral Programme "Bulgarian Language" – "Contemporary Bulgarian Language."

Reviewer:

(prof. Ruska Stancheva, PhD)

02.02.2026