

STATEMENT

by Prof. Svetla Peneva Koeva, PhD, Institute for Bulgarian Language “Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin”, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

on a doctoral dissertation for awarding of the educational and scientific degree “**Doctor**”

in: field of higher education 2. Humanities,

professional area 2.1. Philology,

Doctoral programme: Germanic languages: English

Author: Simona Anastasova Mateva

Topic: “Adverbials and Functional Heads: A Comparative Study of Bulgarian and English Clause Structure”

Academic Advisor: Prof. Iliyana Todorova Krapova, PhD

1. General presentation of the procedure and of the doctoral candidate

I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury for the defence of the doctoral dissertation entitled “Adverbials and Functional Heads: A Comparative Study of Bulgarian and English Clause Structure” by **Simona Anastasova Mateva**, submitted to Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional area 2.1. Philology (Germanic languages: English).

The set of materials submitted by Simona Mateva meets the requirements of the regulatory framework and includes: a curriculum vitae; the doctoral dissertation; a dissertation summary in Bulgarian and English; the minutes of the preliminary departmental meeting; a list of Simona Mateva's publications; and a report on compliance with the national minimum requirements.

2. Relevance of the topic

The aim of the study is to provide a systematic description of the place of adverbs within the hierarchical structure of the clause in English and Bulgarian, with a view to formulating principles of predictive value. This entails addressing questions such as: to what extent do adverbs occupy fixed positions within clause structure, and how can the position of the verb relative to adverb positions be accounted for. Treating adverbs as part of the functional structure of the clause helps formulate the regularities that determine their distribution in English and Bulgarian.

3. Familiarity with the problem

Simona Mateva's dissertation demonstrates a thorough command of the current scholarly literature on adverbs and their syntactic distribution. It offers a detailed comparative analysis of the Cartographic approach and the Scope-based approach, highlighting their respective explanatory strengths and limitations – including the difficulty the Scope-based approach faces in accounting for word-order differences in languages with free or partially free word order, such as Bulgarian. At the

same time, it makes no mention of Desislava Vilimovska's dissertation "Word Order and Information Structure of the Sentence (with Regard to Adverbial Modifiers Expressing Epistemic Modality)", Elena Georgieva's book "Word Order of the Simple Sentence in Literary Bulgarian", Elisaveta Balabanova's book "Word Order Patterns with Adjuncts in Bulgarian", Vyara Maldzhieva's publication "A Formal Description of Adverbs in the Normative Grammar of Bulgarian", and others.

4. Research methodology

The study employs analytical and comparative research methods. A deductive approach is adopted, whereby the predictive power of theoretical proposals is tested against corpus data – from the British National Corpus, the Corpus of Contemporary American English, and the Bulgarian National Corpus. A Cartographic approach to description is adopted, according to which the clause is represented by means of a universal hierarchical structure of functional projections expressing various grammatical meanings, with strictly defined positions determining the syntactic and semantic interpretation of clausal constituents.

5. Characteristics and assessment of the dissertation and its contributions

Simona Mateva argues that the distribution of adverbs in Bulgarian and English clauses is not arbitrary but governed by systematic constraints. For this reason, a substantial part of the dissertation is devoted to investigating adverb positions and clause structure. According to the author, the comparative analysis between Bulgarian and English provides evidence that adverbs occupy fixed positions within the hierarchical structure of the clause, while displaying variation at the surface level. These differences stem from language-specific operations related to the position to which the verb can move in the two languages.

The author adopts the principles of the Cartographic approach, which aims to define a universal and fixed hierarchy of functional projections associated with the realisation of grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, modality, and negation. Under the Cartographic approach, each adverb is assumed to be associated with a specific functional projection and to occupy its specifier position, so that its placement in the clause is not free but reflects its grammatical function and semantic scope.

Under the Scope-based approach, adverb placement is explained through the semantic scope of modification over part of the clause, with adverbs treated as adjoined modifiers capable of associating with different clausal positions.

The author adopts the hierarchy of functional projections proposed by Cinque for English and applies it to Bulgarian. The author extends Ledgeway and Lombardi's proposal of an intermediate syntactic projection (YP), located in the domain between adverbial negators and the

arguments of the verb, by introducing two additional projections – YPlow and YPhigh – which, together with YPmiddle, form a more fine-grained hierarchical structure.

The choice of the Cartographic approach reflects a commitment to descriptive precision. At the same time, however, the requirement to position adverbs precisely within a fixed hierarchical structure necessitates the introduction of additional syntactic positions. Insofar as the dissertation does not cover all possible configurations between verb forms and adverbs, including the various combinations among adverbs themselves, it cannot be claimed with sufficient confidence that the proposed set of positions is exhaustive. In this sense, it would be necessary to present at least a basic set of concrete lexical items for Bulgarian and English, associated with the individual components of the so-called universal inventory of adverb types, which is assumed to follow a strictly fixed order across all human languages.

In our view, the analysis of correspondences between Bulgarian and English (as well as of cases where such correspondences are absent) should either be restricted to core adverbs proper, or clearly and explicitly justify which adverbial constructions and lexical items fall within the scope of the study. At present, the analysis covers a range of adverbial expressions, such as *за щастие, откровено казано, преди това* (luckily, frankly, before that), as well as lexical items that, within the Bulgarian grammatical tradition, are assigned to other parts of speech, such as *всъщност, може би* (actually, perhaps).

This is a direct consequence of the lack of a clearly delimited scope for the adverbs under investigation, which creates the potential for gaps and inconsistencies. For instance, *maybe* is used as a parenthetical in Bulgarian, which is why sentences such as *Georgi is speaking, maybe* are fully grammatical. Elsewhere, the author herself acknowledges the need for a second position in relation to the additional positions already introduced.

Simona Mateva's observations also extend to the placement of adverbs with respect to certain complex verb forms in Bulgarian. Although the observations presented are accurate, no reference is made to studies on the ordering of the components of complex verb forms and the possibility of inserting clausal elements between them – for instance, the work of Tanya Avgustinova.

The conclusion of the dissertation is concise and does not sufficiently present the observations, proposals, parallels drawn between Bulgarian and English, and the conclusions reached by the author.

In summary, in order to claim categorically that the Cartographic approach has greater explanatory and predictive power than alternative models based on semantic scope, a sufficient number of cases would need to be examined comparatively and analysed under both approaches. The Cartographic approach represents a high degree of abstraction which, precisely because of its abstract character, provides an adequate model for describing languages that differ in structure.

6. Assessment of the publications and of the doctoral candidate's personal contribution

Four independent publications related to the topic of the dissertation have been submitted. In our opinion, the reviewed dissertation, its summary, and the submitted publications are the result of the candidate's own original work.

7. Dissertation abstract

The summary of the dissertation meets the requirements and reflects the main results achieved in the dissertation.

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

Simona Mateva has presented a comprehensive scholarly study that demonstrates her capacity for analytical thinking and for reaching scholarly conclusions and generalisations. The limited scope of a single dissertation does not allow all aspects of the phenomenon under discussion to be developed, and the author herself has outlined future directions for her work.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation **contains scholarly results that meet** the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act, and the corresponding Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. Simona Anastasova Mateva possesses thorough theoretical knowledge and demonstrates the qualities and skills required to conduct independent scholarly research.

In conclusion, we give our positive assessment of the scholarly research presented in the dissertation “Adverbials and Functional Heads: A Comparative Study of Bulgarian and English Clause Structure”. We propose that the esteemed scientific jury award the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” to Simona Anastasova Mateva in field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional area 2.1. Philology (Germanic languages: English).

23 September 2026

Prepared by:

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