

STATEMENT

on the doctoral thesis of Lora Ognyanova Zheleva

"Semantic structure of nouns derived with the suffix *-ik* in Bulgarian"

for the award of the scientific and educational degree "Doctor"

in the professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian Language)

by Assoc. Prof. Marina Georgieva Dzhonova, PhD, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

1. **Relevance of the problem studied in the dissertation.** The dissertation of Lora Zheleva presents a contemporary problem - the semantic structure of derived nouns formed with the suffix *-ik*, which, as stated in the dissertation, are over 700 in the modern Bulgarian language. It deals with derived words with the suffix *-ik*, which can be semantically and formally derived from another existing word in the modern language. Both domestic and foreign words whose word-formation structure can be explained by the rules of the Bulgarian language (p. 103) are studied. As Lora Zheleva points out, such a comprehensive study of a given word-formation pattern has been done only in the Bulgarian-Polish Comparative Grammar, and it includes a detailed presentation of nouns formed with *-ec* and *-ak*. In this sense, the study is a contribution to the field of Bulgarian word-formation, as it applies a modern approach to the study of word-formational meanings and adds new knowledge about a particular word-formational pattern.

2. **Awareness of the problem and the scientific literature.** Evidence of the excellent knowledge of the doctoral student on the topic of the dissertation is the rich bibliography of 94 sources, which includes both basic works and articles in Bulgarian, English, Polish, Czech and Russian. The review of theoretical approaches to word formation in the first chapter of the dissertation is contributory.

3. **Methodology.** In view of the object of the study, the dissertation chooses the approach applied in Bulgarian-Polish grammar to the representation of word-formational meaning, namely the predicate-argument theory, according to which the semantic structure of the derived word is a predicate-argument structure. The chosen methodology for the analysis of the material is appropriate in view of the linguistic material.

4. **Scientific and/or applied contributions of the thesis.** The dissertation consists of 312 pages and comprises an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, a list of contributions and four appendices. The text has a clear structure and the practical application of the analyses made by the PhD student is illustrated in the appendices with a detailed classification of the derived nouns with the suffix *-ik*. In the introduction of the dissertation the object and the subject of the research, namely the semantic structure of the derived nouns in the Bulgarian language formed with the suffix *-ik*, are clearly

and precisely stated. The realization of the research objectives is connected with the fulfillment of four scientific tasks, which are consistently realized in the dissertation.

The first chapter of the dissertation contributes with a detailed theoretical review of the development of word formation as a science and of the word formation approaches applied in Bulgarian linguistics. On the basis of the review, the choice of the predicate-argument approach in the consideration of derived nouns with the suffix *-ik* is clearly motivated.

Chapter two of the dissertation presents the basic principles in the study of derived words as well as the definition of the motivating word. It is assumed that derived words, like sentences, convey different situations and can be represented as predicate-argument structures. The stem and the formant express concepts from this structure - predicates and arguments. Both the base and the formant can express a predicate or an argument.

In the third chapter, the presented model for the analysis and classification of derived nouns with the suffix *-ik* is applied to a particular material. The type of concept (predicates, arguments) expressed by the formant and the base is described. The assignment of the argumental or predicative word-formation category to which nouns of *-ik* belong is made on the basis of the concept denoted by the formant. This chapter contributes by applying the chosen model of description to concrete linguistic material and by the comprehensive motivation of the classification made, which can serve as a model for future research. Of particular interest to me here is the inclusion of words such as *kalnik* and *potnik* in the semantic structure with the formant agent, since in semantic role theory agent implies consciousness and deliberateness of action.

In the conclusion Lora Zheleva summarizes her observations. It shows that the author has successfully realized the research tasks. The original hypothesis that a large number of derived nouns involve a person is confirmed to a great extent by the large number of derivatives in the argumentative word-formation category Agent.

5. Publications on the dissertation. Lora Zheleva has 4 publications on the dissertation topic. Two of them are in "Proceedings of the International Annual Conference of the Institute for Bulgarian Language "Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin" (2020, 2021), and the volumes are indexed in Web of Science. There is one publication in a scientific journal and one in a peer-reviewed volume. The number of publications meets the requirements for the degree of Doctor.

6. Critical remarks. Here I would like to give some recommendations. The subject of the study is very large, thus, when publishing the resource, perhaps a clearer motivation should be given for classifying some words into a particular semantic type. For example, the word *bozaynik* in my opinion should refer to persons and animals. I would recommend that in motivating the selection of the

empirical material, more examples of words should be added where the motivating word is difficult to infer from a modern perspective. I would also like to recommend publishing the appendices in an electronic format that allows searching by the features by which the words are classified. Other approaches are possible with respect to the semantic role of experiencer. In the theory presented, this is the subject of an emotional or cognitive state, which is a reason to include words like *bolnik* within the semantic role object, whereas existing research in syntax would associate this word with the semantic role experiencer.

7. **Abstract.** The summary of the main contributions in the dissertation corresponds to the results achieved in fulfilling the research objective. The abstract of the dissertation accurately and faithfully reflects the main aspects of the research, the positive results of the analyses and the overall scientific contributions.

8. **Conclusion.** The dissertation presented by Lora Zheleva on "Semantic Structure of Nouns Formed with the Suffix *-ik* in the Bulgarian Language" convincingly proves the author's skills for independent analysis, shows excellent awareness of modern approaches to word formation and the ability to use them critically in order to study the semantic and word-formation structure of derived nouns. This leads me to propose that Lora Zhecheva BE GRANTED the educational and scientific degree of Doctor.

Date:

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