

## ATTITUDE OF REVIEWER

of Prof. Nadka Nikolova Nikolova, PhD, a member of the Scientific Jury  
at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen

regarding a doctoral thesis for obtaining 'Doctoral' educational and scientific degree in higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1 Philology (Bulgarian language) at 'Prof. Lyubomir Andreichin' Institute of Bulgarian Language at the Bulgarian Science Academy – Sofia

Author of the thesis: Zhaneta Todorova Zlateva

Subject of the thesis: 'Dynamics of Doublets in the Verb System of Contemporary Bulgarian Language'

The entire documentation regarding the forthcoming procedure of the thesis defence is complete and meets all the requirements of the Law on Scientific degrees and titles. The candidate, who is an assistant professor at the Department of Contemporary Bulgarian language at the Bulgarian Language Institute at the Bulgarian Science Academy, has been a post-graduate student at the Institute since January 2017. Her mentor is Dr. Ruska Sabeva Stancheva, who is an associate professor in the same Department.

The dissertation submitted to me is meaningful and interesting. The choice of the thesis subject derives from the fact that there is still no comprehensive view of the doublets in the verb system of the modern Bulgarian language; there is no comprehensive explanation of the reasons for its existence, as well as the consequences of its codification in the spelling dictionaries. Furthermore, the problem is discussed in its dynamics, covering a period of 33 years, including the publication of the first academic spelling dictionary in 1983, to the publication of 'Гуароти' ("Verbs") – 'the Official Spelling Dictionary in Bulgarian language' in 2016 - long enough so that the problem could be considered from the perspective of the bird's-eye view. The urgent need to do so is met by the dissertation developed, which determines its scientific **relevance**.

The thesis structure is compatible with the problem raised and at the same time is valid for any research of a scientific nature. The concise introductory part clearly defines the object and subject of study, the tasks for achieving the primary objective are explicitly outlined and the choice of its methods is well motivated.

There are two chapters, following the introductory part, in which doublets are considered in theoretical terms. First, the phenomenon is placed in the context of the language change problem - a very successful move that presents doublets as a consequence of language changes that give rise to variants. The second theoretical chapter is devoted to the relationship between norm and variability, on the one hand, and between variability and doublets, on the other. These two chapters give an excellent impression. It can be concluded that the post-graduate student has studied a sufficient amount of multilingual literature, which has been read chronologically. Her presentation is not just a reference: the subject is interpreted with understanding and suggests that we face a future researcher of the Bulgarian literary language. The text presents an interpretation of what has been read. It shows understanding and clearly stated position as well as meaningful conclusions. The author breaks the mould of the strictly scientific text and makes it come to life; she creates a story that is fascinating and resembles a follow-up story, and the end of one text suggests the natural continuation of the story, which I welcome.

The author has analyzed the doublets of the verbs in three aspects: phonetic, word-forming and form-forming. This **third chapter** of the study accounts for one half of the text, which is logical

True to the chronological principle, Zhaneta Zlateva has arranged the subject matter under, taking into consideration the six interwar scientific grammars and the codification in the postwar spelling dictionaries until 1983. Thus, the dynamics of the phenomena studied is convincingly presented. It is noteworthy that the analysis of the twelve phenomena (six in the phonetic, three in the word-forming and in the formative doublets) has been made with good balance of the analysis of the objective conditions, the causes and the prospects of the phenomena, the conclusions at the end (albeit slightly identical) have been formulated convincingly.

It must be noted as a positive side of the dissertation that the findings in the final part do not literally repeat the conclusions from the analysis of each of the twelve phenomena, but have been made at a higher level.

The **Annex** adds a high practical value to the work: it can be used for a variety of scientific and educational needs (e.g. in teaching and mastering spelling and speaking rules), and as a basis for comparisons over a period of time when doublets will vary from the current ones. Of course, there are **drawbacks** in every work. In this case, they are too small to spoil the wonderful impression of the work, but I would like to point them out so that they will not recur. First of all, I would like to pay attention to the format of the presentation: the use of verb forms in the first person, the plural, which is a diminishing way of demonstrating one's own achievements. In this case, I think, the neutral impersonal form should be chosen. Some expressions (for example, the Russianism "in this regard") or linguistic jargon-like "verbs which end in -Я" should not be in such a sophisticated text as the one presented by Zhaneta Zlateva. There are also some gaps in the bibliography, for example: Vladimir Matsura is quoted in the text, but it is not listed in the bibliography.

The printed **abstract** presented fully corresponds to the text of the dissertation. It has been written concisely, meeting the requirements for a similar genre of texts. At the same time, it fully reflects the content of the dissertation, and its contributions are presented objectively. As the summary of the chapters developed in the abstract allows me to draw conclusions, I would say that the dissertation work has made an excellent impression on me as a thorough, multidimensional and substantiated study. It is highly appreciated for its original, innovative and contributing character, its integrity and completeness with respect to the issues discussed, the stated goals and objectives. The author has excellent theoretical background, the analysis is competent and in-depth on voluminous empirical material, reflecting the overall state of doublets of the verbs, and the conclusions are objective. All this presents her as a well-prepared and promising young researcher. My opinion about the in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills demonstrated by Zhaneta Zlateva gives me reason to convincingly express my positive assessment of the abstract as a synthesized kind of dissertation.

**Publications** on the topic of the dissertation are sufficient both in quantity and in quality: they have been published in issues of forums in international format and in a prestigious refereed journal.

**I am strongly convinced that Assistant Professor Zhaneta Todorova Zlateva completely deserves to be awarded a Doctor's degree in Higher Education, 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, and I do request the Honorable Scientific Jury to support her efforts with a positive vote.**

26/02/2020

Reviewer  
(Prof. Nadka Nikolova Nikolova, PhD)