



REVIEW

By Professor Sia Kolkovska, PhD, at the Institute for Bulgarian Language “Prof. L. Andreychin” of a dissertation towards obtaining a doctoral degree

Author of dissertation: Assistant Professor Zhaneta Zlateva at the Institute for Bulgarian Langauge “Prof. L. Andreychin”

Topic of dissertation: Dynamics of Doublets in the Verb System of Contemporary Bulgarian Standard Language

The dissertation of Assist. Prof. Zhaneta Zlateva focuses on the main characteristics of doublets in the verb lexis of Bulgarian literary language. The study manages to expand the existing insufficient theoretical research on this topic, and it also contributes to the scientific process of codification in more practical terms.

The paper contains an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, contributions, a bibliography, and an appendix, which presents the established word forms for each manifest of doublets. Z. Zlateva has published four articles related to the dissertation topic.

The candidate explores the characteristics of doublets in terms of the processes of language change and the theory of literary languages. In Chapter One, the candidate discusses language change in great detail as understood throughout various fields of linguistics, while in Chapter Two, she explains the main concepts related to the theory of literary languages: norm; literary norm and language norm, and others.

It is in these theoretical frameworks Z. Zlateva defines the phenomenon of doublets, which she accepts as a type of language change within the literary language. She supports her argument that doublets reflect an actual phenomenon within the language norm that needs to be reflected in the literary norm as well. Her clarification of the nature of doublets presents an important theoretical contribution. Of particular note is her precise distinction between this phenomenon and variability, which is also a type of language change. The distinction becomes necessary due to the existence of different understandings of the boundaries between the two phenomena. Z. Zlateva follows the argument that, unlike variability, doublets manifest only in forms and lexemes that are allowed in the literary norm.

Z. Zlateva examines in detail how doublets manifest in the verb lexis by distinguishing three types: phonetic, word-forming and morphological. She analyses phonetic doublets in past simple and past active aorist participle verb forms, imperfect forms of verbs with infinitive stems followed by ‘-ж’, ‘-ч’, ‘-ш’ or a vowel, verbs with variable ‘я’ and others. The candidate also explores word-forming doublets of verbs with inflectional suffixes ‘-овам’ and ‘-увам’; ‘-ирам’, ‘-ировам’ and ‘-увам’; ‘-увам’ and ‘-вам’. She recognises morphological doublets in verb forms from first and second class of conjugation, as well as in secondary imperfective verbs formed with

different suffixes. Attributing these secondary imperfective verbs to morphological doublets, however, seems not entirely well justified as they could also be attributed to word-forming doublets because they constitute separate lexemes. This is still a minor issue which in no way discounts the paper's merits.

Z. Zlateva's argument that doublets are an instrument of codification which reflects language change within the literary language is a significant contribution. This argument is applied consistently in the analysis of doublets within the verb lexis. The candidate has chosen a successful approach which allows her to explore how doublets manifest and examine current research efforts on the process of codification through various spelling dictionaries. Z. Zlateva analyses verb doublets in three types of sources: the three academic Bulgarian spelling dictionaries (*Spelling Dictionary of the Modern Bulgarian Literary Language* (1983), *Official Spelling Dictionary of the Bulgarian Language* (2012), *Official Spelling Dictionary of the Bulgarian Language. Verbs* (2016)); six grammar books published between 1938–1944; and independent spelling dictionaries published between 1945–1983. The approach of examining verb doublets from different types of sources spanning a long period of time helps Z. Zlateva to study the development across different forms, as well as the development of decision-making in the process of codification.

The candidate explores in detail concepts from different dictionaries and grammar books about the regulatory status of doublets and the decisions governing the process of codification. She also presents the motives behind each concept. For instance, Z. Zlateva discusses doublets in imperfect verb forms with stems followed by '-ж', '-ч', '-ш' or a vowel in the context of the spelling reform of 1945 and explains the arguments for the formation of these doublets. She describes the evolution of the codification decisions made in relation to them by presenting the motives behind the eventual obsolescence of doublets with 'е' and the codification of forms with 'а/я' as solely correct.

To the paper's merit, this evolutionary process of doublets codification is shown to be grounded in available research, and evaluations have been drawn on that basis. For instance, the change in understanding of verb doublets ending in '-ybam' and '-bam' has been explained as a process of gradual removal of the vowel '-y' from the suffix '-ybam' in speech practise.

Based on a deep and comprehensive review of doublets codification in various spelling dictionaries Z. Zlateva is able to make important observations and reach valuable conclusions. She determines three processes in this phenomenon's dynamics: removal (e.g., past imperfect verb forms ending with '-ж', '-ч', '-ш' or a vowel), restriction (e.g., secondary imperfective verbs) and retention. The candidate makes an interesting argument that the occurrence of doublets in verb lexis is more systematic than in other lexical categories. It could prove useful if this argument is developed further.

Detailed analysis of verb doublets codification strongly affirms the argument that doublets are an instrument of codification which ensures sustainability and helps maintain the flexible stability of the literary norm. Z. Zlateva argues well the aforementioned purpose of doublets and

her conclusions offer a theoretical and methodologically adequate basis for making well-argued codification decisions.

The abstract reflects accurately the content and the scientific contribution of the dissertation.

The valuable conclusions and observations made by the candidate on the characteristics of doublets in verb lexis and their importance as an instrument for codification determine the significant scientific merits of this dissertation. On this basis and with full confidence, I offer my recommendation to the Honourable Scientific Council at the Institute for Bulgarian Language to award assist. Z. Zlateva with a PhD degree.

14.02.2020

Reviewer:

Prof. S. Kolkovska