



SHORT REVIEW

By prof. Maxim Ivanov Stamenov, DSc, Institute for Bulgarian Language “Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin”, BAS

of a dissertation for obtaining a PhD degree

Author of dissertation: **Georgi Kostadinov Dzhumayov**, doctoral student at the Section of Computational Linguistics, Institute for Bulgarian Language “Prof. L. Andreychin”, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Topic of dissertation: **Application of Modern Technologies in Language Learning**

Scientific adviser: prof. Svetla Koeva, PhD

1. **Relevance of the problem developed in the dissertation in theoretic and-applied terms**

The problem to which the proposed dissertation is dedicated is very relevant in the context of the latest trends in the development of information technology in view of their application in the teaching of native and foreign languages. New technological tools provide different ways of accessing and processing information needed to acquire and teach knowledge. Both students and teachers need to acquire the skills and knowledge to meet these new challenges. (p. 9). The research is focused on enriching and optimizing the methods of teaching a foreign language through the application of modern technologies in foreign language teaching. The object of research includes both the existing methods for foreign language teaching and the opportunities for integration of various modern technologies that will help for faster and more adequate learning of the foreign language (including Bulgarian as a foreign language). The subject of present research are the methods for foreign language learning and their synchronous use with modern technologies, as well as the ways in which modern technologies upgrade (foreign) language learning and contribute to faster and more effective learning. The study is specifically focused on the temporal systems of Bulgarian, English and Spanish and the interlingual correspondence in conveying the meaning of grammatical categories. Under scrutiny were put also the attitudes of the students trained in the new curriculum of the Ministry of Education and Science in the Bulgarian schools to the computer-assisted language training. The knowledge of those students who are native speakers of Bulgarian and study English or Spanish as a foreign language, was examined as far as translation from Bulgarian to Spanish and from Bulgarian to English of the tenses in expressive mood in the three languages was at stake. (pp. 12-13).

As a result of the work on the dissertation some important characteristic features of the temporal systems of the three languages are systematized. The main options for translation of the temporal forms between the three target languages – Bulgarian, English and Spanish – are indicated. An experiment was conducted, which consisted of sentences in Bulgarian, to each of which variants for translation into English or Spanish were proposed, which differed in the temporal forms used. The experimental persons were students from two language high schools, which are the first to be trained in the new foreign language curriculum in Bulgaria (2019). One group of students consist of students learning English as a foreign language and the other group of students learning Spanish as a foreign language. Based on the selected answers of the

respondents, the dissertation draws conclusions about the degree of mastery of the temporal system in indicative mood in a foreign language in view of the correct application of the taught material.

From the theoretical point of view, most interesting seems to be the fourth chapter of the dissertation, which presents the temporal systems in indicative mood in Bulgarian, English and Spanish. The aim of the author was to give short, precise and clear definitions for each of the temporal meanings and to indicate the ways of their formation in the three languages. The positive indicative and nonquestion forms in the three languages are described comparatively. In the last part of this chapter the correspondences between the three temporal systems are shown. The main motive for choosing the temporal systems as an object of modeling steps on the fact that was acknowledged by the author as not being aware of research that presents and compares the temporal systems in Bulgarian, English and Spanish targeting pedagogical and translation practice. The orientation was to make an overview of the temporal systems in the three languages with details about the formation of the present, past and future tenses in them, to delineate their temporal systems in indicative mood, to highlight the common features in their uses and to present the forms in order to support their teaching and mastery. Based on the presentation, correspondences between the temporal categories in the three languages are derived as a basis for effective foreign language learning.

Of considerable interest from the point of view of teaching a foreign language and the practice of translation is the next fifth chapter “Basic, transpositional and modal use of temporal categories in Bulgarian, English and Spanish”. Basic use is associated with the basic meaning of the temporal category, which manifests itself in different, contextually determined, cases. The transpositional uses of temporal categories can be taken as a grammatical metaphor: “one form is used instead of another by some analogy between the two” (Marovska, 1998, 155). The term modal use of the temporal category means the expression of the possibility and / or necessity of performing the specific action expressed by the verb form of the temporal category (p. 176). This is the chapter in the dissertation (pp. 173-240) with the most obvious descriptive value for teaching a foreign language, as well as for teaching translation.

The sixth, also practically oriented chapter of the dissertation demonstrates the application of modern methods for analysis of acquired knowledge for interlingual transfer at grammatical and semantic level of the temporal systems of indicative mood in all three languages. This is done through carrying out a pilot test for comparative verification of the degree of mastery of temporal categories in English and Spanish. It consists of contrasting examples in communicative positive sentences that illustrate their use. The analysis of the results of the acquired knowledge for transfer from a native to a foreign language is oriented to serve as a basis for refining the work of the teacher in the field of grammar.

2. Orientation of the applicant in the state of the problem and the scientific literature dedicated to it

The author shows a good knowledge of the literature on the topic of the work. The bibliography for the dissertation contains a total of 133 publications of Bulgarian and foreign scientists, with which the author has worked in the implementation of activities related to the research and writing of his work.

3. Nature of the chosen methodology

The applicant has skillfully used a variety of methods to achieve the objectives and goals. In presenting new technologies and their integration with language teaching methods, he primarily used the descriptive method. In the analysis of the grammatical-semantic transfer of the verb tenses a comparative-analytical method was applied, and in the study of the attitudes

of the students and the degree of mastery of the tenses) – statistical method (when processing the results of tests to check knowledge to master the times). Synchronous comparative analysis answers two questions: (1) what are the correspondences in the temporal systems in indicative mood in Bulgarian, English and Spanish and (2) what are the modern methods for their more effective assimilation with the means of computer technologies in terms of language learning? On this basis, the characteristic features of the temporal systems in the three languages are systematized, indicating the main variants of a given temporal form in Bulgarian when translating into the other two languages. The conclusions are based on the presented theoretical basis, which is supported and substantiated with language data and examples in view of the practical orientation of the dissertation.

4. Brief analytical description of the scientific and / or applied contributions of the dissertation

We confirm the availability of the following contributions in the work. They are in two directions - theoretical and applied. From a theoretical and methodological point of view, it is of interest to describe and analyze some possibilities of modern technologies to be used for effective language learning and in particular for computer-aided language learning, including through the use of Internet technologies and mobile devices. Contribution in this respect is the study and presentation of the functions of modern technologies with a view to their application for enrichment and improvement of methods for teaching a foreign language. On this basis finds its grounding the upgrading of some teaching methods, which have had a lasting impact on (foreign) language learning at the beginning of the XXI century, including ideas for the active integration of modern technologies in the process of (foreign) language teaching.

For the purposes of the present research, clear and consistent rules for interlingual transfer at the grammatical and semantic level of the temporal categories in modern Bulgarian, English and Spanish were required and formulated (general meaning of the categories, conformity of the forms, uses within the general meaning, transpositional and modal uses of the categories). This in itself is an achievement that required solid theoretical training and proper justification. Rules were formulated in a non-trivial way that becomes evident in that they were applied to cases of use of the temporal categories in indicative mood in modern Bulgarian, English and Spanish, which are not described in the grammatical literature.

Significant are also the applied contributions. In the first place, this refers to the planning and implementation of an experiment that explores the motivation of students learning a foreign language to use modern technologies in the learning process. The analysis of its results shows that modern technologies, virtual environment and digital devices are desired by students elements in the process of language learning (both of native and foreign language). Secondly, the applicant presents the results of a test for comparative verification of the degree of mastery of temporal categories and their interlingual transfer at grammatical and semantic level from Bulgarian to English and from Bulgarian to Spanish. The analysis of the empirical data obtained from this test offers opportunities for developing a comparative protocol of language competence related to and necessary for the use of temporal forms in Bulgarian, English and Spanish.

5. Evaluation of the articles of the applicant on the dissertation subject: number, nature of the publications in which they are printed, citations

The applicant has published a total of four articles on the topic of the dissertation. They are all under his authorship. Three of his publications are in collections of papers from international scientific conferences, organized in Bulgaria by Bulgarian hosts. The fourth is in

a periodical, which is referenced and indexed in the *Web of Science*. Two of them are in English, one in Spanish and one in Bulgarian. There is no evidence provided that the articles related to the dissertation have been cited by other authors. The described publications exceed the minimum requirements for obtaining the scientific degree “Doctor of Philology”.

6. Critical remarks

The fourth chapter includes a detailed description of the formation of verbs expressing simultaneity and diversity in Bulgarian, English and Spanish (pp. 150-167). The information presented here, however, does not seem to serve neither before nor after any function within the dissertation.

In the sixth chapter there is no information made available how many were the subjects in the two experimental groups that performed the test reported in it.

7. Does the abstract correctly reflect dissertation’s content

The abstract is detailed and correctly reflects the main points and scientific contributions of the dissertation. It corresponds to the content of the work under evaluation.

8. Conclusion

Having in mind the above presented review, I propose to the Scientific Jury to award the applicant **Georgi Kostadinov Dzhumayov** the scientific and educational degree “Doctor” in professional field 2.1 Philology, scientific specialty General and Comparative Linguistics (Computational Linguistics) for his dissertation “**Application of modern technologies in language learning**”.

20.11.2020 г.

Signed:

(Signature)