

## REVIEW

for dissertation work for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**"  
in professional field 2.1. Philology, scientific specialty „Bulgarian language“

**Author of the dissertation:** Malina Georgieva Stoycheva, doctoral student at the Section of Modern Bulgarian Language at the the “Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin” Institute of Bulgarian Language, BAS

**Topic of the dissertation:** Techniques for Expanding Simple Groups with a Noun in their composition.

**Reviewer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Marina Georgieva Dzhonova, Department of Bulgarian Language, Faculty of Slavic Studies, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski,” member of the scientific jury – RD-09-17/March 31, 2026

**Information about the doctoral candidate.** The doctoral candidate has met the necessary minimum national requirements for scientific field 2. Humanities, professional area 2.1. Philology, as well as the requirements of the ZRASRB, the Regulations for the Application of the ZRASRB, and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for Acquiring Academic Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at the “Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin” Institute of the Bulgarian Language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Malina Stoycheva graduated with a degree in “Bulgarian Philology” from Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in 2018. In 2020, she completed the master’s program “Linguistics – Language System and Speech Practices” at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski.” Since 2021, she has been a full-time doctoral student in the Section of Modern Bulgarian Language at the Institute of Bulgarian Language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, under the supervision of Prof. Ruska Stancheva.

From 2019 to 2023, she also was an assistant in the Section of Modern Bulgarian Language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. She is also a member of the team working on three of the Section’s projects related to language reference services and the development of language resources for the Bulgarian language.

**Relevance of the problem addressed in the dissertation from a scientific and applied scientific perspective.** Malyna Stoycheva’s dissertation is a study of the techniques for expanding simple syntactic groups containing a noun within the framework of dependency grammar theory. The text submitted for review has a total length of 170

pages and consists of: an introduction, a conclusion, and 3 chapters, a summary of the dissertation's scientific contributions, and a bibliography. The text has a clear structure. Evidence of the doctoral candidate's thorough awareness of the opinions and approaches regarding the presentation of noun phrases and their differentiation from compound lexical units is provided by the 76 sources included in the bibliography—primarily monographs and articles in Bulgarian and English.

The object of study in this dissertation is simple groups comprising a noun, with noun head in 5 of the selected groups. The focus of the study is on techniques for expanding simple groups containing a noun, with an emphasis on the types of modifiers and their position relative to the head. The empirical data is extracted from the Bulgarian National Corpus. Working with original texts and a rich empirical corpus provides a solid foundation for conducting this research.

The goals set by the doctoral candidate are as follows: an in-depth description of expanded noun phrases in Bulgarian; an analysis of simple noun phrase structures with a noun and a postposed or preposed modifier; the development of criteria for distinguishing simple two-noun phrases from compound lexical units with a two-noun structure.

Achieving the research objectives involves carrying out the following scientific tasks: a theoretical review of research on the NP category in Bulgarian and foreign linguistics; clarification of the terminological framework; defining the NP category; classifying the types of noun phrases with a view to outlining the main guidelines for their structural interpretation; clarification of the criteria for determining the head in the structural types  $N \rightarrow N$  and  $Num \rightarrow N$ ; analysis of the techniques for expanding the nine simple noun phrases based on data from the Bulgarian National Corpus.

Regarding the chosen terminology, I would recommend using “опора” instead of “главен член” when translating “head,” as this term has gained acceptance in contemporary syntactic studies of the Bulgarian language. The doctoral candidate also notes that in studies of dependency grammar as it pertains to the Bulgarian language, the terms “опора” and “зависима част” are used (p. 49). One might also consider contrasting “simple” and “extended” groups, rather than “simple” and “simply extended.” It is important to clarify that not only personal pronouns, but a great part of the pronouns in Bulgarian in general can be syntactic nouns—demonstrative, interrogative, indefinite, etc. Regarding the term “finite clause”—it corresponds in Bulgarian to a sentence with a finite (personal) verb form.

The first chapter provides an overview of research related to the structure of the noun phrase. It presents the differences in theoretical approaches and in the choice of terminology. Studies in Bulgarian and foreign linguistics regarding the nature and structure of the noun phrase are presented in detail, and the choice of NP rather than DP as the object of study is justified. Here I would recommend the term “verb-derived nouns” instead of “process nouns,” since verb-derived nouns are formed from all semantic classes of imperfective verbs, not just from verbs denoting processes. When presenting the possible expansions of noun phrases with verbal nouns, it would be beneficial to include R. Nitsolova’s article “On the Formal Denotation of Semantic Roles in Bulgarian Constructions with Verbal Nouns” (2005).

The second chapter of the dissertation presents the theoretical approach used—dependent grammar—and examines its similarities and differences with the constituent model. The terminological framework used in the study, based on Melchuk’s model, is described in detail. The choice of this approach is justified because it emphasizes the types of dependencies between the individual parts of the sentence. The structural models of the noun phrase that are the subject of the study are also defined:  $N \rightarrow A$ ,  $N \rightarrow N$ ,  $N \rightarrow Adv$ ,  $N \rightarrow Num$ , and  $N \rightarrow Pr$ .

Regarding the word order of adjectives relative to the head, I believe a distinction should be made between adjective inversion, when it is stylistic but not mandatory, and the position of the adjective relative to an object pronoun head—*nothing*, *something*, *everything*, *what*. With pronouns, this is usually the only possible word order. It seems to me that short possessive pronouns can hardly be defined as syntactic adjectives, insofar as they do not meet the specified criteria for agreement. How is this issue resolved in dependency grammar? They are non-agreed modifiers of the noun, and the relationship is one of application, similar to the NN and NAdv groups.

When examining the NN groups, it is important to take into account the individual subgroups—cases involving constructions such as *uncle Ivan*, *prof. Petrov*, in which the personal name is considered the head in Bulgarian, and cases with a modifier following the model “a group of students” and “a bouquet of flowers,” which are usually presented separately from phrases such as “an Impressionist painter.” The proposed tests do not apply to the first group. It is also important to bear in mind K. Popov’s detailed study regarding the models of subject-predicate agreement when the subject is a noun phrase of the formal type under consideration.

I would recommend a slightly more detailed presentation of structures of the type N Num. The idea that the numeral serves as the head in the phrase “two meters” is not generally accepted in our grammar. It is not specified whether the numeral or the entire phrase with the numeral modifies the noun, insofar as there are no examples of \*width two. It is likely that two or three semantic groups of nouns can be distinguished, each having a numeral as a subordinate element, and the patterns within each group differ. Again, regarding numerals, how do you define the relationship in examples such as “two rows” and “two women”? Here, a clearer theoretical justification is needed, not only regarding research on Bulgarian but also on other languages.

The N-Pr patterns could also be presented in greater detail. There are a number of studies on verbal nouns and their modifiers in Bulgarian (R. Nitsolova, I. Gugulanova, F. Sirakova). With verbal nouns, there are certain restrictions regarding subordinate relative clauses.

The *third chapter* of the work presents in detail the structural models of NPs found in the Bulgarian National Corpus. First, phrases with a head noun are examined. Here it is important to take into account the phonetic features of clitics in the Bulgarian language, which are linked to the first stressed word in the phrase. This applies to both the definite article and clitic pronouns.

Examples such as *the cheerful children today* are interesting, in which the syntactic adjective is not a participle (unlike *the children who arrived today*). I would like to ask you whether you have observed any semantic restrictions regarding the noun head in these phrases. It seems to me that in some examples, a broader context is needed to determine whether a particular phrase is an attributive or a predicative modifier.

A valuable contribution of this chapter is the detailed presentation of the possibilities for expanding noun phrases—where there are limited possibilities and where there are no restrictions regarding the expansion of the first or second member of the group. I would recommend including tables with the observed patterns in the summaries. Here I have a question—have you examined cases with an ellipsis of the head (*package, bottle*), such as “I bought two butters” instead of “two packages of butter”?

The examples such as “a few minutes’ walk from the house” and “about a kilometer away from the place” are also very interesting. Do you think these can be considered as word order variants at a *distance of about a kilometer from the place*?

The observations regarding nouns with numeral modifiers, such as “this six-by-six-meter room,” are also noteworthy. Could there be another ellipsis of the prepositional phrase here, with the meaning of “in size”? The observations on phrases in which the noun is a dependent element, such as “those who attempted to escape,” are also valuable.

The dissertation also presents cases in which the noun is an extension of a phrase with an interjectional predicate. Have you compared these with verbs of the same meaning—do the same valency and word order occur with respect to the dependent members?

In *the conclusion*, Malina Stoycheva summarizes the observations made in the dissertation. The conclusions show that the author has successfully accomplished the research tasks she set for herself.

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 lines of inquiry addressed in the study, the positive results obtained from the analyses, and the summary of the scientific contributions.

Malina Stoychena has presented her observations in 3 *articles* in the journal Bulgarian Language. The number of publications meets the requirements of this procedure.

**Conclusion:** The submitted dissertation on the topic “Techniques for Expanding Simple Noun Phrases” convincingly demonstrates the doctoral candidate’s ability to select a theoretical approach and to independently analyze and summarize linguistic data.

This gives me grounds to propose to the Honorable Jury that it award the academic and educational degree of “Doctor” to Malina Stoycheva.

29.05.2026 г.

Reviewer:

Prof. Dr. Marina Dzhonova