

## STATEMENT

for the dissertation of Prof. Krasimira Slavcheva Aleksova, Ph.D.  
on the subject "The Dubitative in Present-Day Bulgarian"  
for obtaining the academic degree of 'Doctor of Philosophy'  
professional field 2. 1. *Philology*  
Specialty *Bulgarian Language. Modern Bulgarian Language*  
by Assoc. Prof. Marina Georgieva Dzhonova, PhD, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

By order No ПД-38-425/15.07.2022 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" I was appointed as a Member of the Scientific Jury for the defense of the dissertation work of Prof. Dr. Krasimira Aleksova. I have reviewed the materials submitted under the procedure and can confirm that they meet the minimum national requirements for the degree of Doctor of Science. No plagiarism has been detected in the dissertation, abstract and scientific papers submitted to the procedure.

This dissertation is the first comprehensive study of the dubitative in the Bulgarian language. The text submitted for review has a total length of 387 pages and consists of: an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a list of scientific contributions and a bibliography. The conclusions in the text are based on a rich empirical material from corpus data as well as from internet sources and own records, which is determined by the aims of the dissertation, which include the full presentation of the actual forms and usages of the dubitative and their study from the point of view of grammar, typology and pragmatics.

In the first chapter of the dissertation the main opinions on the semantic invariant of the evidentiality are examined and various typological classifications of the evidential systems (Hahn, Willett, Eichenwald, Plungian, etc.) are commented on the basis of relevant semantic features, looking for the place of the Bulgarian evidential system in these classifications, as well as for the dubitative as a member of the Bulgarian evidential system. In Bulgarian linguistics the existence of dubitative forms has long been mentioned. The study contributes by presenting the evidential forms in Bulgarian in the context of typological patterns, as well as the dubitative as one of the evidentials. On the basis of the review, a scheme is also presented which shows the position of evidentiality and in particular of the dubitative within epistemic modality.

Chapter two of the dissertation clarifies the semantics of the dubitative in terms of expressing unreliability and doubt. The semantics of the dubitative is characterized by the speaker's expression of evaluation. Associated with the expression of evaluation are emotiveness (*mistrust, doubt,*

*unreliability, truthfulness, etc.*) and expressiveness. The dissertation contributes to the clarification of the semantics of the dubitative and the classification of the empirical material according to the nuances in the expressed evaluation (disagreement, doubt in the credibility of the transmitted other person's utterance, reservation towards its reliability), the possibilities of expressiveness and emotional reaction. I believe that this is the first time that such a detailed analysis of the semantics of the dubitative and of the pragmatic situation has been made on the basis of rich empirical data.

An important conclusion is that "on the continuum of emotional-expressive uses of the dubitative, at one end is positioned the weak hesitation, the suspicion, the non-expressive doubt, and at the other end the indignation, the angry denunciation, the ironic or sarcastic rejection of truthfulness. The unifying feature among the uses listed is the speaker's kind of epistemic assessment of the credibility/reliability of the mediated information." Based on the analysis of the empirical data, the author points out that in Bulgarian the dubitative expresses reservation, doubt, mistrust of the information in the other's primary utterance and makes a conclusion about the place of the dubitative in typological plan as an evidential subcategory. It also presents the place of the dubitative as an evidential subcategory within the evidential system in Bulgarian.

For the author, the perception of the degrees of reliability expressed by evidential forms in the Bulgarian language is also important, and in my opinion the experiment conducted as well as the data analysis are contributory in terms of presenting the actual linguistic situation.

The author's choice to present the formal paradigm of the dubitative in chapter three of her study is clearly motivated. The description of a given form as a dubitative is not always easy in the presence, on the one hand, of matching dubitative and renarrative forms and, on the other hand, the presence of variants in the negative dubitative forms of the posterior tenses.

The author points out that she regards dubitative formal variants as a case of doubletness, with doubletness being perceived as a literary-linguistic variant. Through concrete examples, the use of the different temporal forms of the dubitative is attested, with the database showing the higher frequency of the dubitative future tense, and then of the dubitative aorist and the dubitative imperfect. The analyses also make clear the dependence of the usages on the grammatical category of person.

The calculation of the typological indices is evidence of the author's enduring interest in the statistical approach to linguistic data. The analyses are illustrated with tables and present a model for an interdisciplinary approach to linguistic phenomena. The observations on the matrix model of the Bulgarian verb, as well as the results of the 4 typological indices computed, give grounds to argue that with a high degree of compositionality of the forms of a given part of speech, a tendency to condensation of the forms or to a tendency to unification of the forms may occur. The emergence of numerous compound verb forms in the development of the Bulgarian language is evidence of an

increasing index of compositionality in the verb paradigm.

In the fourth chapter of the dissertation Kr. Aleksova also presents the pragmatic aspects of the dubitative by considering the relation actual speech : substrate speech : reproduced speech. The author comments on the relation quoted speech : directly reproduced speech with the dubitative, and also considers indirect speech with the dubitative with an emphasis on the syntactic structure of the reproduced and the actual utterance. It is pointed out that utterances with dubitative verb forms have the status of reproduced speech in which the actual speaker/writer expresses various degrees of reservation as a kind of subjective epistemic evaluation towards the trustworthiness and reliability of the information in the retransmitted utterance. Directly reproduced utterances with a dubitative (and also with a renarrative) represent a kind of reproduced speech that is situated between quoted and indirect speech in a continuum constructed according to the degree of accuracy in the transmission of another's utterance. The author's observations on the degree of "freedom" in terms of the use of the dubitative in different text types are also interesting.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance of the research on the dubitative presented by Krasimira Aleksova for Bulgarian linguistics. This is the first comprehensive academic work that includes a description of the paradigm and semantics of the dubitative, as well as the contextual uses of the forms and their pragmatic value. The author's original approach also includes a presentation of the place of the dubitative in typological terms.

### **Conclusions**

On the basis of the contributions of the dissertation, the publications presented and their significance for Bulgarian linguistics, I strongly recommend the scientific jury to award the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the professional field 2.1.Philology (Bulgarian language - Contemporary Bulgarian language) to Krasimira Slavcheva Aleksova.

14.09.2022 г.

Assoc. Prof. Marina Dzhonova