

## REVIEWER'S OPINION

by Prof. Velka Aleksandrova Popova, PhD, from the Department of Bulgarian Language, Faculty of Humanities, Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, concerning the habilitation thesis "Dubitative modality in the modern Bulgarian language" by Prof. Krasimira Slavcheva Aleksova, PhD, from the Department of Bulgarian language, Faculty of Slavic Philology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", submitted for obtaining the academic degree "Doctor Habilitatus" in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian language. Modern Bulgarian language)

### **Overall assessment of the submitted documents**

According to order No. RD 38–425 of 15.07.2022 by the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", I was appointed as a member of an academic jury for the defence of the habilitation thesis submitted for awarding the academic degree "Doctor Habilitatus" to Krasimira Slavcheva Aleksova from the Department of Bulgarian Language. The submitted documents for the defense procedure are in accordance with the ZRASRB, PPZRASRB and the Regulations for the terms and conditions for awarding scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

### **Brief biographical data**

Krasimira Aleksova graduated with a degree in Bulgarian philology from the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1988. From 1991 to 1994, she was a doctoral student at the Department of Bulgarian Language. In 1994 she defends her dissertation in sociolinguistics titled "Language processes in the family (based on material from the capital)."

From 1989 to 1997, Krasimira Aleksova worked as a senior lecturer in Bulgarian language, Bulgarian culture studies and Bulgarian business correspondence at the University of National and World Economy, Sofia. At the same time, starting from 1993, she started working at Sofia University as a part-time teacher at the Faculty of Slavonic studies, where she taught Bulgarian as a foreign language (1993–1995), had seminars for students of Bulgarian philology, and seminars in Bulgarian morphology and Syntax for students of Slavonic studies (1994–1997). In the period 1997–2000, Krasimira Aleksova was a part-time lecturer at the University of National and World Economy. She has taught Bulgarian language to foreign students of all levels.

Since 1997, Krasimira Aleksova has been appointed successively a chief assistant, an associate professor (2005), and a professor (2017) in the Department of Bulgarian Language at Sofia University. She has taught a variety of lecture courses in the Master's and Bachelor's programs in the Faculty of Slavonic studies and the Faculty of primary and pre-school pedagogy at Sofia University. She has also been a guest lecturer at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, where she teaches a course in sociolinguistics in the Master's program "Modern Bulgarian Studies". In addition, she was a lecturer in Bulgarian language and culture from 2005 to 2007 at the University of Provence "Aix-Marseille 1", Aix-en-Provence, France, where she taught Bulgarian language and Bulgarian civilization.

Prof. Krasimira Aleksova is recognizable in the linguistic community with her solid publication output, mainly in the field of morphology of the modern Bulgarian language and sociolinguistics, as well as with her participation in national and international research projects and scientific forums. She is one of the key figures in the Bulgarian sociolinguistics, and a member of the Executive Committee of the International Sociolinguistic Society - INSOLISO, Sofia. She is also a member of the Bulgarian Society for Evaluation of Education.

### **Description and evaluation of the habilitation thesis**

The habilitation thesis “Dubitative modality in the modern Bulgarian language” discusses a number of important topics. The interest in the language forms for expressing doubt in the modern Bulgarian language dates back to more than a decade ago in connection with the studies of subjective evidentiality. It should be mentioned that very little attention has been paid to the dubitative modality in Bulgarian research literature. In this context, the present research is a contribution which fills a gap in Bulgarian linguistics. It is a comprehensive study of dubitative modality in which its semantics, its forms and uses in various contexts are discussed in depth.

My overall impression of the text is definitely positive. The good composition, precise academic style, clear logic of the exposition, the logical interpretation of the language data, the depth of the conclusions, the appropriate combination of several research methods all show that the author of the text is an experienced and talented linguist.

The thesis, which amounts to 389 pages, consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. There are 389 examples, 10 tables, 18 graphs and 18 diagrams. The cited 235 sources in Bulgarian, Russian, English, and French demonstrate the solid knowledge of the author on the topic of the thesis.

In the Introduction of the thesis the author clearly defines the object, the subject, the goals, the tasks, the methods of the research, and the structure of the paper. Information is also given about the solid empirical base of the research, which is extracted from the Bulgarian National Corpus, the Bulgarian National Reference Corpus BulTreeBank, the Corpus of Bulgarian Political and Journalistic Speech, the Parliamentary Corpus ParlaMint-BG 2.1, transcripts of meetings of the National Assembly, the databases of the site for the Bulgarian oral speech BG Speech, and the author’s own records and Internet sources (newspapers, forums, blogs, social networks, etc.).

In the first chapter, evidentiality, modality and the place of the dubitative modality among them are discussed in the context of different typological classifications. The semantic mapping is also commented on, and a semantic map of evidentiality and epistemic modality in the Bulgarian language is presented, in which the place of the dubitative modality in the field of mediated information of natural epistemicity is clearly defined.

The second chapter is devoted to the semantics of the dubitative modality. In it, it is first examined in relation to the expression of incredulity and doubt, and then its relations with evaluation and emotionality are commented on. On the basis of these reflections on the relations between dubitative modality, inauthenticity, evaluation, and emotionality, a wide range of contextual nuances in the uses of dubitative forms emerges. The proposed classification of examples represents a broad continuum whose ends are inexpressive doubt and angry indignation accompanied by sarcasm in rejecting the credibility of the interlocutor’s preceding utterance. Within this continuum there are graded uses with expressed disagreement with another person’s assessment and distancing from it, rejection of unfair accusations, resentment or indignation at a

threat, or ironic dubious statements. The endless variety of dubitative forms uses in written and spoken texts makes it impossible to present the types of semantic nuances in their absolute comprehensiveness, but it can definitely be said that the author of the thesis has managed to give an optimal idea of their extraordinary variety. In this chapter, the dubitative modality is also presented typologically. In addition, the data from an empirical study of the perception of the degrees of credibility expressed by the four evidentiality types are also commented on.

The formal paradigm of the dubitative modality turns is in the focus of the Third Chapter of the dissertation. Form formation and variation, which characterizes the paradigm of distrustful forms in the modern Bulgarian language, are examined. Specific coincidences of dubitative forms defined as biparticiples and bideterminates are highlighted. The presence of empty cells in the dubitative paradigm is commented on and their presence is justified. The question of the efficiency in the paradigm of the Bulgarian dubitative is raised, and the dubitative deviations found in the database are presented and classified. In addition, the dubitative forms are considered from the point of view of C. Lehmann's syntagmatic parameters of grammaticalization. In this chapter, a special place is devoted to the calculation and commentary of four typological indices of the available four competing micro-paradigms of the Bulgarian dubitative forms, namely: the index for syntheticism, the index for analyticity, the index for compositionality and the index for the degree of markedness of a member of the micro-paradigm. At the end of the third chapter, the relationships of the dubitative modality with other grammatical categories are examined - mostly relationships of the type of mutual connection and interaction.

The fourth chapter presents some pragmatic aspects in the use of the Bulgarian dubitative - its presence in reported speech, the main types of relationships between the author of the actual statement with the dubitative and the author of the substrate speech, as well as the limitations in the uses of the dubitative in different types of simple sentences depending on the communicative purpose of the speaker/writer. The author raises the question of the traditional division of reported speech into three types: directly cited, indirect and semi-direct. Based on the analysis of the empirical material, the author identifies another type of reported speech in the modern Bulgarian language, conditioned by the presence of re-narrative and dubitative forms, namely - directly reproduced speech. The relations between topical utterance, substrate utterance and reproduced utterance, as well as the relations between cited speech and directly reproduced speech with dubitative, are examined in detail, and indirect speech with dubitative is also commented on, taking into account the syntactic formation of the reproduced and topical utterance. The following parts of this chapter examine and present types of relationships between the author of the topical utterance with dubitative and the author of the substrate utterance; specific data on the implementation of partner strategies between the dubitative forms and the context; the uses of the dubitative forms in different types of sentences, including the limitations that exist in some of them.

The thesis ends with a well-formulated conclusion, which summarizes all the essential conclusions from the main chapters, as well as the theoretical constructs, models and classifications presented in them.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that the aims and objectives set by Prof. Dr. Krasimira Aleksova in her thesis have been completely fulfilled. The author has focused on the interesting and significant issues, which she interprets in a multifaceted, innovative and extremely precise manner, expressing and defending her own positions, defending her theses with arguments based on her sound theoretical preparation and the analysis of the extracted empirical data.

The habilitation thesis “Dubitative modality in the modern Bulgarian language” is objectively and comprehensively presented in the thesis summary prepared by the author. The results of the research have been reported in 18 publications on the subject in authoritative editions.

### **The thesis contributions to research**

Krasimira Aleksova’s habilitation thesis is the first monographic study in our linguistic tradition, in which the dubitative modality in the modern Bulgarian language is the subject of an independent study in grammatical, typological and pragmatic aspects. For the first time, the types of relationships between the dubitative modality and other verb categories are considered, presenting a complete classification of the types of relationships between the verb categories in the Bulgarian language.

In the complete matrix model of the Bulgarian verb proposed by the author, all verbal forms are included, and divided into marked or unmarked according to the features that make up the meanings of the gramemes.

The thesis contains a quantitative and comparative presentation of the typological indices for compositionality, syntheticity, analyticity and semantic markedness of the members of all evidential micro-paradigms, emphasizing the place of dubitative micro-paradigms in the hierarchies based on these four typological indices.

Numerous contextual variants of the dubitative modality are examined and the difference in the frequency of the dubitative forms in the different tenses in active and passive is presented.

The presence of indeterminacy in the forms of the negative post-position dubitative tenses, which stems from the presence of variants in the inferential and re-narrative microparadigms, is proven.

The traditional classification of reported speech is supplemented with a fourth type, directly reproduced speech, which can appear only in languages with grammaticalized evidentiality such as Bulgarian.

For the first time, an examination of the relations between the author of the substrate utterance and the author of the actual speech with dubitative forms is proposed, extracting variants and sub-variants.

Pragmatically significant is the proposed classification of partner strategy types between the dubitative and epistemic plausibility modifiers and emotionality markers in dubitative utterances.

### **Conclusion**

The qualities of the reviewed habilitation thesis “Dubitative modality in the modern Bulgarian language” by Prof. Krasimira Aleksova are indisputable. The theoretical and applied results of the original research could be qualified as a significant contribution to the studies of the Bulgarian language. Therefore, without any hesitation I give my positive assessment of the thesis and suggest that the respected scientific jury awarded Prof. Dr. Krasimira Slavcheva Aleksova the academic degree “Doctor Habilitatus” in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology.

22.08.2022

Reviewer:

/Prof. Velka Popova/