

Bulgarian Grammar

Ruselina Nicolova

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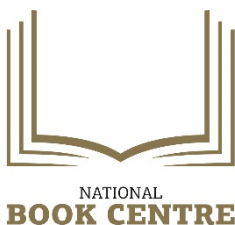
Bulgarian Grammar

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by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Christo Stamenov

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FOREWORD

From a letter to an american colleague

“Dear friend,

You asked me what do I do when I need a really tricky piece of information about Bulgarian morphology? ‘Elementary,’ as Sherlock Holmes would say. I go to Nicolova’s *Bulgarian Grammar*. For instance, you need to know how the meaning of Bulgarian articles compares to that of determiners in other European languages; you open §§ 1.6.1–89, and you find a solid analysis of logically possible cases represented in terms of relations between the referent of the noun phrase and the class of similar entities, the Speaker, and the world. Or else, if you feel lost in the intricacies of the Bulgarian renarrative mood (a.k.a. reportative, or hearsay), you can consult §§ 5.6.1–19 of the book: there you get a detailed description of all the relevant forms and of their uses, as well as a compact presentation of different specialist opinions. And you are also offered a no less detailed discussion of the conclusive and dubitative moods! Generally speaking, any Slavic linguist should have the *Bulgarian Grammar* at his disposal. The book is nicely organized and abundantly exemplified. Moreover, it is well tuned to modern theoretical linguistics – among other things, it supplies a lot of data for typological studies; in this way, it is beneficial to all researchers interested in comparison and parallel description of linguistic phenomena in different (and not only Slavic) languages. Therefore, grab the *Bulgarian Grammar* and you will never again ask questions about Bulgarian morphology.

Yours as ever, Igor Mel’čuk.”

(Université de Montréal, Observatoire de linguistique Sens-Texte)

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

This book is a revised version of *Bălgarska gramatika, Morfologija* (*Bulgarian Grammar. Morphology*), Sofia, 2008, published in two Bulgarian editions and awarded the Best Linguistic Book Prize for 2008. It is the result of many years of research and teaching Bulgarian grammar at St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia and several universities in Germany and Austria. I had two main goals in mind when writing this grammar: a) to produce, as far as this was possible at this point of time, a theoretically sound, consistent, and complete description of Bulgarian morphology, taking into consideration the achievement of Bulgarian linguistics and my own research after the publication of the *Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Grammar* (1983), and b) to offer a description that would fit theoretically and methodologically into the context of contemporary linguistics and would be suitable for typological studies, since the Bulgarian language offers rich and interesting material from that perspective. One way to achieve these goals was to try and use a unified and internationally recognizable terminology.

This is a semantically and functionally oriented type of grammar, paying special attention to the meaning and use of the morphological categories, without neglecting their formal description. New semantic interpretations, often based on logical analysis, are offered in the area of determination of nouns, the treatment of pronouns, the verb (especially, voice, temporal system, evidentiality, mood, and a detailed description of the various *da*- and *neka da*-forms), as well as the treatment of invariable words (prepositions, particles, interjections). Since it is not always easy (and wise!) to separate morphology from syntax, morphological facts are related to their syntactic context where necessary (functional-semantic types of sentences, types of discourse, information packaging). Special attention is also paid to the pragmatic aspect of Bulgarian morphological categories. For the first time the Bulgarian morphological system is given a typological characterization.

The illustrative examples are collected from various sources: classic and contemporary literature (fiction and poetry), folklore, academic texts, the media, everyday conversation, etc., representing various styles and registers of Present-

Day Bulgarian. Some of the examples come from emblematic texts, easily recognizable for the native speaker of Bulgarian, but possibly somewhat puzzling for the reader who is not familiar with Bulgarian culture. The main criterion in selecting the examples has been how well they illustrate the linguistic phenomenon under discussion. The examples are followed by a translation into English given in single quotation marks. Sometimes idiomaticity is sacrificed in these translations for the sake of keeping closer to the structure of the original example. Glosses of the relevant grammatical categories are provided when this was deemed necessary.

I should like to thank the colleagues who gave of their time helping me in the preparation of this book. I am especially grateful to Assoc. Prof. Dr. P. Barakova and Prof. Dr. K. Aleksova, who read the entire manuscript, making critical comments and suggesting some illustrative examples. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Dr. P. Osenova and Prof. Dr. K. Simov who helped with language material from the Bultreebank Project (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), and Prof. Dr. S. Koeva for material from the Computerized Grammatical Dictionary of the Department of Computational Linguistics at the Institute for Bulgarian Language, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Dzhonova and Dr. L. Laskova deserve my special thanks for various kinds of assistance in the preparation of the Bulgarian edition. I must also thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Atanasov for the program for transliteration of Cyrillic texts.

Meeting my translator, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Christo Stamenov, and working with him during the past two years proved to be a godsend. The process involved a number of stimulating discussions with this highly competent linguist who is equally at home with both the English and the Bulgarian grammatical systems. He approached the task of rendering this complicated text into English with great responsibility and precision, often assuming the role of editor as well. Without his selfless work the English edition could not have appeared. I am deeply grateful to him. I am also grateful to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexandra Bagasheva who translated a preliminary sample of the book and encouraged me to believe that in spite of the differences in the grammatical systems of the two languages, the translation of the book was a feasible task, which was proved by the excellent work of Dr. C. Stamenov.

My deep-felt gratitude goes to my husband Assoc. Professor Georgi Popivanov for his understanding over the years and the substantial financial support for this publication, and to my brother Assoc. Professor Stefan Nicolov for his technical assistance in the preparation of the manuscript.

Last but not least, my special gratitude goes to Dr. S. Comati who was instrumental in establishing and maintaining the contact with my publishers and for her dedicated work for the promotion of Bulgarian studies in Germany. I am deeply grateful to the publisher themselves and personally to Dr. Karin Timme and to Mr. Oliver Renner of Frank & Timme GmbH, Verlag für wissenschaftliche Literatur, for the meticulous editorial work and for making the appearance of this Bulgarian grammar in English possible.

I am also grateful to the National Book Centre, part of National Palace of Culture, Congress Centre Sofia for their financial support.

April, 2017

Ruselina Nicolova

THE BULGARIAN LANGUAGE

The place of Bulgarian in genealogical and areal-typological classifications.

Bulgarian is an Indo-European language of the South Slavic group. It is also a Balkan language, i.e., a member of the Balkan *Sprachbund*, together with Greek, Rumanian and Albanian, all of them belonging to various groups of the Indo-European languages that have developed a number of common features during the period of shared life within the Ottoman Empire.

Speakers. Bulgarian is spoken by about 15 million people on the territory of the Republic of Bulgarian on the Balkan peninsula and in some areas in the neighbouring countries: Macedonia, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Rumania, and also in Moldavia, Bessarabia, Ukraine, Russia. During the past two decades there has been massive immigration from Bulgaria to Spain, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, and other West European countries, and especially to the USA.

Brief historical notes. Bulgarian is the oldest Slavic literary language. It was proclaimed the official language of the Bulgarian state and the Bulgarian Church at the Council of Preslav in the year 893, A.D., thus becoming the medium of scholarship and culture in the 9th c. At that time the various Slavic languages were far less divergent. The first translations of the liturgical books into Old Bulgarian were prepared by Sts. Cyril and Methodius for their mission to preach Christianity to the Slavic population in Great Moravia and Pannonia. Due to complicated political interests and struggles the mission of the holy brothers ultimately failed there, traces of its results surviving up to the 11th c. only. However, their cause flourished in Bulgaria, a large and powerful empire in the 9th c., where it enjoyed the support of Tsar Boris I and his son Tsar Simeon the Great (893–927). The reign of Simeon marked the beginning of the Golden Age of Old Bulgarian literature (late 9th and 10th c.). During this period the immediate disciples of Sts. Cyril and Methodius added more translations from the Greek to those of their teachers and also produced a number of original works. As a result of this intensive development of Old Bulgarian literature and scholarship the Old Bulgarian language acquired the status of an international language. In the course of two or three centuries it was established as the literary language of other Slavic countries: Russia, Serbia, Croatia, and later,

from the 14th c. to the end of the 19th c., of the non-Slavic countries of Wallachia (Rumania) and Moldova. Because of its function many authors refer to Old Bulgarian as Old Church Slavonic (more in GSBKE1991).

The following periods can be distinguished in the history of the Bulgarian language:

Pre-literary period – from the settlement of the Slavs on the Balkan Peninsula (5th–6th c. A.D.) to the second half of the 9th c.

Old Bulgarian period – 9th–11th c. The classical period.

Middle Bulgarian – 12th–14th c. A period of phonetic change, transition from synthetic to analytic nominal system and a number of other changes.

Modern Bulgarian – from the 14th c. until today. (see Mirčev 1978 on this periodization).

Dialect division of the Bulgarian language. The main division into Eastern and Western dialects is based on the reflex of the Old Bulgarian *jat* vowel, an open variety of [ɛ]. In the Western dialects it is pronounced as [e] in all environments, e.g. *bèl*:M:SG – *bèli*:PL ‘white’, while in the Eastern dialects – as [ja] and [e], e.g. *bjàl* – *bèli* ‘white’. There are also other differences like the reduction of the unstressed open vowels /a/, /o/, /e/ and the palatalization of consonants before /e/ and /i/, characteristic of the Eastern dialects and lacking in the Western ones, different stress position in some morphological classes, some inflectional differences, lexical differences, etc.

The problem of the dialects in the geographical area of Macedonia (nowadays the Republic of Macedonia and parts of Greece) is controversial. Historically they belong to the Bulgarian dialects, sharing important linguistic features with them, even the *jat* boundary, separating Eastern and Western Bulgarian dialects, and other important isoglosses cut across their territory. However, after the codification of a Macedonian literary language in the middle of the 20th c. some authors refer to these dialects as Macedonian, linking them with this new literary language.

Bulgarian dialects also exist on the territory of other countries where there is Bulgarian population: in the former Soviet Union, in Rumania (Banat Bulgarian dialects, Wallachian Bulgarian dialects, Sedmograd Bulgarian dialects in Transylvania, the latter already extinct), Albania, Kosovo, and in Asia Minor (Turkey).

THE BULGARIAN ALPHABET WITH TRANSLITERATION

Bulgarians have been writing in the Cyrillic alphabet since 9th c. It is the third official script of the European Union, following the Latin and Greek scripts, and is used nowadays by around 252 million people worldwide.

А а	Б б	В в	Г г	Д д	Е е	Ж ж	З з	И и	Й й
A a	B b	V v	G g	D d	E e	Ž ž	Z z	I i	J j

К к	Л л	М м	Н н	О о	П п	Р р	С с	Т т	У у
K k	L l	M m	N n	O o	P p	R r	S s	T t	U u

Ф ф	Х х	Ц ц	Ч ч	Ш ш	Щ щ	Ъ ъ	Ь ь	Ю ю	Я я
F f	Ch ch	C c	Č č	Š š	Št št	Â â	‘	Ju ju	Ja ja

ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTATION CONVENTIONS

ACC	– accusative
ACT	– active voice
ADJ	– adjective
ADV	– adverb
AOR	– aorist
ART	– article
AUGM	– augmentative
AUX	– auxiliary verb
BACK	– background
CLT	– clitic
CNJ	– conjunction
COM	– comment
COMP	– comparative
CONCL	– conclusive
COND	– conditional
DAT	– dative
DEF	– definite
DEM	– demonstrative
DIM	– diminutive
DUB	– dubitative
F	– feminine
FOC	– focus
FUT	– future tense
FUT.EX	– future perfect (futurum exactum)
FUT.EX.PAST	– future perfect in the past (futurum exactum praeteriti)
GER	– gerund
IMP	– imperative
IMPF	– imperfect tense
IMPV	– imperfective aspect
IND	– indicative