

SIXTH FORUM ON BULGARIAN GRAMMAR

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In 2019, the Institute for Bulgarian Language Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences hosted the sixth edition of the Forum on Bulgarian Grammar. Traditionally, the Forum is organised jointly with one of the leading universities in Bulgaria where linguistic studies are conducted. In 2019, the co-organiser of the Forum was the South-West University Neofit Rilski.

The Forum was held on 17 October 2019 (Thursday) at the Academician Aleksandar Teodorov-Balan Hall of the Institute for Bulgarian Language (at 52 Shipchenski Prohod Blvd.). The topic – *Grammatical Systems in Synchrony and Diachrony* – was proposed by the organisers from the South-West University Neofit Rilski. The event was greeted with great interest by the linguistic community and brought together more than 100 linguists from all over the country.

A wide range of topics in the field of Bulgarian grammar were covered and discussed, thus providing an opportunity for addressing both global issues concerned with phenomena and patterns found across grammatical systems, linguistic typology, relationships and comparison between different systems, and in particular, topics related to processes and phenomena within the systems. Research based on different theoretical methods and approaches was presented, exploring linguistic systems both in synchronic and in diachronic perspective. The discussion focused on the following main areas:

- What dependencies are observed between grammatical systems?
- What are the appropriate ways to model grammatical systems?

As usual, the Forum was divided in two parts: a plenary morning session and an afternoon session devoted to various aspects of the main topic. Each session was followed by a discussion, which is one of the most interesting parts of the Forum.

At the beginning of the plenary session, the Chair, Assoc. Prof. Borislav Popov, PhD, from the South-West University Neofit Rilski gave the floor to Prof.

Stoyan Burov, DSc, from the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. In the first part of his talk titled *Dependencies and Hierarchy between Grammatical Systems* the speaker presented a detailed overview of the typological observations of A. Aikhenvald and R.M.W. Dixon on the dependencies between eight grammatical systems (polarity, tense, aspect, evidentiality, person, referential classification, number, case) across various languages. In the second part, using the formula proposed by Aikhenvald and Dixon for the relation of dependency between X and Y, i. e. $X > Y$, the speaker analysed dependencies and proposed a hierarchy among three nominal grammatical systems (definiteness, number and gender) and three verbal grammatical systems (evidentiality, tense and aspect) in the Bulgarian language.

The plenary talk given by Prof. Stefana Dimitrova, DSc, from the Institute for Bulgarian Language Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin was dedicated to *Understanding Categories as an Important Factor for the Development of Linguistic Paradigms*. The point of departure of the talk was the notion of linguistic categories. The author offered an analysis of the study of the origin and development of linguistic categories in the context of human mind. According to Prof. Dimitrova, a phenomenon still in development cannot be studied definitively and may be found to have diverging effects in a diachronic perspective. It is therefore necessary to reconsider the traditional views that all conceptual categories must correspond to real categories in the outside world.

The third plenary talk titled *A Three-element Structural Model in Some Indo-European Morphological Systems as a Projection of Mythological Perceptions and Human Knowledge of the World (with reference to Old Bulgarian Language)* was delivered by Assoc. Prof. Borislav Popov. He presented certain aspects of his theory on three-element structures, demonstrating the correspondences between some basic three-element Indo-European morphological systems (tense, person, mood, gender and number) and triads in mythological systems and systems capturing universals of human knowledge about the world. These correspondences are viewed as a result of a deep interaction and interconnectedness between language, mythology and human knowledge in mutually generating structures and find their explanation by means of an underlying common three-element archetypal model.

In his plenary talk *Character and Some Outcomes of the Interaction of Lexical and Grammatical Systems of the Languages of Balkan Sprachbund with Ottoman Turkish* Prof. Maxim Stamenov, DSc, from the Institute for Bulgarian Language Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin discussed the possibility that the invariable Ottoman Turkish lexis borrowed in the Balkan languages may have effected certain changes in their grammatical structure over the six centuries of their coexistence. The functioning of invariable Turkish loanwords in these languages was analysed in light of two hypotheses – Benz's lexical diversity hypothesis and Clahsen and Felser's shallow syntactic processing hypothesis. As the author noted, the possibilities for regular inclusion of these borrowings in the

sentence structure has facilitated the unfolding of certain trends towards analyticism in the Balkan languages.

The fifth plenary speaker Prof. Lilia Ilieva, PhD, from the South-West University Neofit Rilski gave a talk on *Bulgarian Grammar through the Filter of Standard Language and the European Linguistic Union (SAE)*. She explored the adequacy and heuristic possibilities of studying Bulgarian grammar in the perspective of three linguistic assumptions, the hypotheses of the Balkan Sprachbund, the Eurasian Sprachbund and the European Sprachbund. As concluded by Prof. Ilieva, the theories of language unions have arisen from certain cultural attitudes and political views, rather than from purely linguistic considerations. Therefore, the membership in a language union cannot be considered a main characteristic of a language as for example, genetic affiliation is.

The plenary session was followed by a lively discussion with the participation of Prof. Ruselina Nitsolova, DSc; Corresponding Member Prof. Stoyan Burrov, DSc; Prof. Petya Assenova, DSc; Assoc. Prof. Christo Stamenov, PhD; Assoc. Prof. Petya Barkalova, PhD; Assoc. Prof. Borislav Popov, PhD; among others.

The afternoon sessions were chaired by Prof. Svetla Koeva, PhD; Prof. Krasimira Aleksova, PhD, from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski presented her talk titled *A Typology of the Relations between Grammatical Categories in the Bulgarian Language*. The author proposed a classification of the types of relationships between grammatical categories in the Bulgarian language. The theoretical basis of the study is the view that inter-categorial relations represent relationships between semantic features which construct the meanings of grammemes. The classification following the types of inter-categorial relationships is based on the following criteria: lack/presence of a non-trivial combination of the features of grammemes expressing different grammatical categories, and lack/presence of a formal change in any of the categories. On the basis of these criteria the author distinguishes the opposition *non-interdependence* : *interdependence*.

In his talk on *Some Ways of Expressing the Absolute Superlative in Bulgarian Internet Forums*, Assoc. Prof. Radoslav Tsonev, PhD, from the South-West University Neofit Rilski discussed one of the features of internet communication – the use of the absolute superlative degree and the ways in which it is expressed in internet communication. Some additional issues related to the study were also addressed, such as the relative frequency of use of some of the patterns as compared with others and the origin of words expressing the absolute superlative.

Encho Tilev, PhD, from Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski delivered his talk of *Categorial and Non-categorial Meanings as Language System Constituents* in which he addressed the nature of categorial and non-categorial meanings in grammar and the manifestations of non-categorial meanings across the inflected parts of speech in Russian and Bulgarian.

In her presentation on *The [N[N]] Type of Noun Phrases and the Competition with Other Syntactic Constructions in the Contemporary Bulgarian Speech Practice*, Assist. Prof. Bilyana Todorova, PhD, from the South-West University Neofit Rilski explored some of the reasons for the wide spread of nominal constructions formed by two nouns in which the first one modifies the second, as well as their controversial interpretation in linguistics.

Assoc. Prof. Christo Stamenov, PhD, from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski delivered his talk titled *Emphasis on the Definite Article* in which he drew attention to a phenomenon observed mostly in the public speech of educated native speakers of Bulgarian: the placing of the word stress on the definite article in cases where it should not fall there according to the rules of language. As pointed out by Assoc. Prof. Stamenov, the semantic content emphasised in such a way is a reinforced version of the grammatical meaning of the definite article and can be paraphrased as *It is he/she/it/they who/that, It is to him/her/it/them that*.

Assoc. Prof. Petya Barkalova, PhD, from Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski presented her talk titled *From the Nearest Genus to the Characteristics of the Species. Observations on the Sentence Nature and Definitions*. The author presented some observations about sentence definitions proposed in the linguistic literature, spanning the period from 1835 to 2000, through the prism of the classical division between genus and species.

The talk *From Machine Translation to Formal Grammar in Bulgaria* by Assoc. Prof. Tzvetomira Venkova, PhD, from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski was devoted to the relationship between the disciplines of formal grammar and machine translation in the period 1960–1965. The author clarified the ways in which the cutting-edge ideas in machine translation were motivated. The author paid attention to the first versions of generative grammar in the context of intercultural transmission and spotlighted the concept of a “comprehensive mathematics front” officially set in Bulgaria in 1960, which integrated machine translation and formal grammar into its paradigm.

A very interesting discussion followed with contributions by Prof. Stefana Dimitrova, DSc; Prof. Ruselina Nitsolova, DSc; Corresponding Member Prof. Stoyan Burov; Prof. Svetla Koeva, PhD; Assoc. Prof. Petya Barkalova, PhD; Assoc. Prof. Katya Charalozova, PhD, among others.

The programme continued with a special session dedicated to Acad. A. Teodorov-Balan, which marked the 160th anniversary of his birth and the 60th anniversary of his death.

In her talk *On Balan, Language Culture and the Spirit of Language*, Prof. Yovka Tisheva, PhD, from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski discussed some aspects of Aleksandar Teodorov-Balan’s work that do not fit into the popular notion of his philological activity and due to various reasons are still little known to the local philological community. She presented Balan’s ideas on the

relationship between language and thought and between language and society, the role of linguistic competence and culture in a person's development and the responsibility of teachers in nurturing a keen linguistic sense for language and a taste for the beauty of the mother tongue.

Assoc. Prof. Katya Charalozova, PhD, from the Institute for Bulgarian Language Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin spoke about *The Category of Definiteness / Indefiniteness in "Nova balgarska gramatika" of A. Teodorov-Balan*, delving into the major theoretical contributions to the description of the category of definiteness/indefiniteness made by A. Teodorov-Balan in his "*Nova balgarska gramatika*" (*New Bulgarian Grammar*, 1940). The most important one, as noted by Assoc. Prof. Charalozova, is the representation of the category as constituted by two grammemes with the values of definiteness and indefiniteness, respectively, where the indefinite forms may have definite meaning under certain conditions.

In the 2020 Appendix of *Balgarski ezik* readers will have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with all the papers presented at the Forum as well as with the accepted talks that were not delivered due to objective reasons, which include: *The Grammatical Metamorphosis of the Bulgarian Child Language at the Dawn of Human Life* by Prof. Velka Popova, PhD, from the Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen and *Noun Determination – Morphological Tradition and Contemporary Interpretations* by Assoc. Prof. Vanya Zidarova, DSc, from Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski.

The Forum was closed by Prof. Svetla Koeva, PhD, from the Institute for Bulgarian Language Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin, Assoc. Prof. Borislav Popov, PhD, from the South-West University Neofit Rilski and Prof. Stoyan Burov, DSc, from the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. The speakers announced that the Seventh Forum on Bulgarian Grammar, to be held in October 2020, will be organised by the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo and the Institute for Bulgarian Language Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin under the heading *Innovative Processes in Contemporary Bulgarian Grammar*.

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