

COMMON-GENDER PERSONAL NAMES IN BULGARIAN: GRAMMATICAL AND PRAGMATIC ASPECTS

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This paper examines common-gender personal names in contemporary Bulgarian, with a particular focus on the formation of their plural, definite and vocative forms. These anthroponyms can belong to masculine or feminine (but not neuter) gender, as in *Alex* and *Kris*; to masculine, feminine or neuter gender, e.g. *Toni*, *Niki* and *Nase(to)*; to masculine or neuter gender: *Zhore(to)*, *Mite(to)*; or to feminine or neuter gender, as in *Mimi(to)* and *Gerganche(to)*. The formation of the grammatical forms of such nouns has not been the subject of detailed study in Bulgarian linguistics. These personal names fall into the category of gender-defective nouns in contemporary Bulgarian, i.e. lexemes whose gender cannot be determined unambiguously. The study provides a critical review of key perspectives on the topic in Bulgarian linguistics, including the works of Ruselina Nitsolova, Stoyan Burov, Stefan Gardev and Krasimira Chakarova, among others. We adopt Krasimira Chakarova's classification, which divides these anthroponyms into two broad groups: (1) nouns with a semantically motivated common gender (subdivided into further categories) and (2) nouns with a structurally motivated common gender (also divided into subgroups). The paper also explores why some anthroponyms take a definite article, while others do not, arguing that this variation is influenced by stylistic and pragmatic factors.

Keywords: anthroponyms; common-gender nouns; definite forms; expressiveness

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