

**Ruselina Nicolova**, *Bulgarian Grammar* (Translated from Bulgarian by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Christo Stamenov) (Berlin: Frank & Timme GmbH, Verlag für wissenschaftliche Literatur, 2017), 714 pp.

In 2008, a new book on Bulgarian grammar was published in Bulgaria: *Bălgarska gramatika, morfologija* [*Bulgarian Grammar: Morphology*] (Sofia: University Press "St. Kliment Ohridski," 2008), written by Ruselina Nicolova. It is the first Bulgarian grammar book published in the 21st century. It includes not only insights into Bulgarian morphology accumulated over a long period of time, but also newly achieved research results in the last decades, especially after the publication of *Gramatika na săvremennija bălgarski knižoven ezik* [*Grammar of contemporary Bulgarian standard language*] (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Press, 1982–1983).

The book under review, published by Frank & Timme GmbH, Verlag für wissenschaftliche Literatur in Berlin, is the revised edition of the above-mentioned descriptive *Bulgarian Grammar*. The original Bulgarian edition was translated into English by Christo Stamenov. It is obvious that *Bulgarian Grammar* under review is not a mere translation of the Bulgarian edition. One can find revisions and improvements everywhere in the book. For example, a brief outline of Bulgarian language is given after the preface (pp. 25–27); new references, including those in English, are added. A large number of examples are substituted in order to make it more understandable for those who are not familiar with Bulgarian; an illustration of this would be the use of examples written in modern languages instead of ones from classical literature, like Hristo Botev's poem *Hajduti* 'Hajduks' (cf. English ed. p. 222, Bulgarian ed. p. 152). All of these revisions in *Bulgarian Grammar* are made especially for the benefit of non-Bulgarian speakers. Apart from these, new sections providing additional explanations are included, for example, p. 357 (5.3.19.) and p. 567 (5.10.1.1.). Furthermore, the layout is improved by titling those sections that were left untitled in the Bulgarian edition. This makes it easier to grasp the overall content of each section. All of these titled sections are also listed in the index for easier reference.

The author, Ruselina Nicolova, has taught at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for many years, as well as at universities in Germany and Austria. The long years of research and teaching Bulgarian grammar culminated in this book, as mentioned in the preface to the English edition. The author has made remarkable contributions in the field of Bulgarian morphology. *Bălgarskite mestoimenija* [*The Bulgarian Pronouns*] (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1986) is doubtlessly one of the most important contributions to Bulgarian and Slavic studies. The outcome of that research is well reflected in the reviewed *Bulgarian Grammar* as well.

*Bulgarian Grammar* consists of two parts: an introduction to Bulgarian morphology (pp. 25–72) and a description of each part of speech (pp. 73–682). In the beginning of the book, the author discusses morphology in general and provides readers with a detailed description of the general and typological characteristics of Bulgarian morphology. Parts of speech, which constitute the main part of this book, are listed as follows: nouns, adjectives, numerals, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, particles, and interjections. The description of verbs occupies almost half of the entire book, from p. 319 to p. 616, which is not surprising if one takes into consideration that Bulgarian has many grammatical categories, and accordingly an enormous amount of verb forms.

*Bulgarian Grammar* is a grammar reference book, which one can consult in order to develop a better understanding of Bulgarian morphology. In the book, the author introduces literature for further reference, which makes it easier for readers to access appropriate research on specific subjects. Although references to previous studies are provided where necessary, and in the bibliography as well, it would have been helpful if a brief outline of the research history of Bulgarian morphology could have been included. One of the two main goals mentioned in the preface, “to offer a description that would fit theoretically and methodologically into the context of contemporary linguistics and would be suitable for typological studies,” (p. 21) is achieved through descriptions in the framework of contemporary linguistic theories, supported by numerous illustrative examples. This makes the complex Bulgarian grammar more understandable for typologists as well as for specialists of non-Slavic languages. Since the book is written with such high consideration, it is useful not only for researchers in the field of Bulgarian or Slavic philology, but also for university students, learners of the Bulgarian language, and non-specialists.

As the author mentions in the preface, *Bulgarian Grammar* is a semantically and functionally oriented type of grammar book. Throughout the book, the author strives to show both the meaning and the use of each morphological category without adhering to traditional frameworks and approaches. For example, the author successfully reveals the full system of Bulgarian pronouns by adopting various modern linguistic theories, such as information structure, and semantic roles. The use and function of full and short forms of personal pronouns, for example, are explained in a precise way by applying the theory of information structure. One of the specific functions of short forms—that is, the doubling of objects—is also studied in detail (e.g., *Tazi istorija sa mi ja razkazovali...* ‘They have told me this story before.’). The author illustrates types of objects that can be doubled, as well as the sentence types in which object doubling occurs, to provide readers with an overall picture of this phenomenon. There have been many attempts in previous studies to explain such specific functions of the short forms, but the overview of the phenomenon in *Bulgarian Grammar* is the most successful explanation. Besides, it is worth noting that the author also makes observations on language use in colloquial speech, such as *az mi se struva* ‘it seems to me.’ In this example the short form *mi* ‘to me’ doubles the nominative pronoun *az* ‘I’ instead of the coreferential dative one (p. 224). Such a ‘non-standard’ phenomenon, but at the same time frequently observed in colloquial speech, has not been described in standard language grammar books before. In *Bulgarian Grammar*, however, the author does not neglect such non-standard forms that are in actual use. A similar example is the use of the 1PL inflection *-me* in 1st and 2nd conjugation verbs such as *četeme* instead of *četem* ‘we read.’ The author points out that such forms are observed very often, although they are still considered to be deviating from the norm (p. 383).

Apart from pronouns, the most unique part of this book can be found in the description of Bulgarian verbs. It is well known that there have been controversial views on Bulgarian verbal moods. According to the author, evidentiality should be considered as a separate verbal category. Furthermore, it constitutes a “hypercategory of character of the information imparted by the speaker” together with modality and admirativity (p. 454). As for the admirative, it is described for the first time in such detail, while paying attention to various existing opinions of this grammatical category. The author addresses not only the forms, meaning, and use of the admirative, but also the category’s position in the Bulgarian verb system and its origin.

## BOOK REVIEWS

It is indeed delightful that Nicolova's revised *Bulgarian Grammar* is now accessible to non-Bulgarian speakers as well. This book is now in the real sense of use to everyone who is interested in Bulgarian grammar.

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