Reviews

Ruselina Nicolova. *Bulgarian grammar.* Berlin: Frank and Timme GmbH, 2017. 714 pp.

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This new Bulgarian grammar is a welcome addition to the field of Slavic linguistics. Its author, Ruselina Nicolova, is a distinguished scholar who has been at the forefront of Bulgarian linguistics for many years. The book, a result of her decades long pedagogical and scholarly work, presents a thorough account of Bulgarian morphology, offering an excellent summary of the existing literature in Bulgarian and advancing new analyses of debated issues, such as definiteness and evidentiality. Phonology and syntax are not represented in the book apart from a few short sections on sound changes and morphophonemic alternations and a brief description of the linear order of clitics. Rather, the author's goal is to offer a comprehensive examination of Bulgarian morphological categories. It is thus not surprising that the book is packed with data, which is both an advantage and a challenge to the reader. Making sense of the data could sometimes be problematic because the Bulgarian example and its English translation are not graphically separated from the rest of the text. Nevertheless, the author's choice to transliterate the examples using the Scientific Transliteration System of Cyrillic (with a couple of exceptions, such as *ch* instead of *h* for the Bulgarian *x* and *â* instead of *ă* for ъ) makes it more appealing to a wider linguistic community not necessarily familiar with the Cyrillic script.

The book draws primarily on publications in Bulgarian and Russian, referencing some rare publications that are typically not available to wider audiences. This approach sets the book apart from previous grammars and provides non-Bulgarian-speaking scholars with access to the wealth of literature in that language.

In parallel to earlier Bulgarian grammars, the book is intended to serve as a reference source but, unlike them, it cannot be used as a self-study course for learning Bulgarian. The grammars by Hauge (1999), Alexander (2001), and Leafgren (2011) aimed to offer theoretical but also practical information to learners of Bulgarian who also want to get familiar with the language structure. Such goals prompted treatments of the material that differ from Nicolova's book in scope and coverage of the scholarly literature. For example, Hauge's short grammar of contemporary Bulgarian offers a good and accessible description of the language with a focus on morphology and syntax.

However, as the title of Hauge's grammar suggests, his depth of discussion and the number of phenomena treated in his book are on a smaller scale.

Alexander's *Intensive Bulgarian* (2001) has a double function: it is a textbook and a reference grammar that provides useful linguistic information and language data for students and linguists alike. The advantage of her approach is in the book's practical application and the choice of material. Alexander also offers some theoretical insights about clitic ordering rules and revisits the Bulgarian system of tense, mood, and aspect, proposing the concept of a "generalized past".

Leafgren's short but informative grammatical sketch of contemporary Bulgarian (2011) summarizes key facts about Bulgarian morphosyntax and provides a brief sociolinguistic discussion of contemporary usage.

Scatton's reference grammar (1984) is the only one that, similarly to Nicolova's book, intends to be a theoretically based resource for linguists and advanced students. It offers structural description and analysis of phonology and morphology and functional treatment of syntax. This was the first complete grammar of Bulgarian written in English in the generative tradition, and as such became a valuable resource for linguists who were interested both in the language and the formal approach to grammar.

Nicolova adopts a functional framework with a focus on the description, empirical generalization, and categorization of the morphological data. This approach is reflected in the organization of the book in sections that discuss general characteristics of the parts of speech and subsections featuring analysis of grammatical categories (gender, number, mood, and others). For example, the reader will find a discussion of grammatical gender and number in the section on nouns, while tense, aspect, and mood are included in the section on verbs. Such an organizational principle makes the book easy to follow, with a few minor exceptions. There is occasional duplication of data due to the treatment of the same phenomena in different sections. For example, gender adaptation of borrowings is discussed twice—once in the section on noun borrowings (p. 96) and once in the section on defective paradigms (p. 114).

Another minor issue with the organization of the book stems from the multi-level numbering of the section headings, with a separate section for each part of speech. There are some occasional errors, such as a discrepancy in the numbering of the subsections on vocative forms in the Table of Contents (p. 6) and the text (p. 120) and apparent lacunae in the Table of Contents (e.g., 1.6.46, 1.6.52, etc.).

The English translation of the grammar also deserves attention. Translating specialized literature is a tremendous feat by itself and there is hardly anybody who could question the magnitude and complexity of such a task. At the same time, the reader should be aware of some inaccuracies in the otherwise idiomatic English translation, stemming either from literal rendition of the Bulgarian original or from challenges in translating the linguistic termi-

nology. For example, the sentence "there exist in Bulgarian prepositional constructions…" (p. 58) is an almost verbatim translation of *v bâlgarski sâštestvuvat predložni konstrukcii*; the sentence "the stylistically marked use of *edin* instead of the zero article…is connected with a number of limitations" (p. 170) renders *stilistično markiranata upotreba na edin vmesto nulevija člen e svârzana s množestvo ograničenija*; and so on. There are also complex sentences, which present syntactic and semantic challenges to the translator, e.g., "these examples show that when the meaning is totality of the genus, there is neutralization of the opposition between the articles, while the opposition is maintained in the uses referring to individuals" (p. 170). It might be that in some of these cases the issue stems from the use of terms, such as "genus", which pertain to specific fields of study (biology). Their use in the context of other disciplines calls for less specialized terms, such as "kind", "type", "category", "class", etc. Other similar cases include the translation of *kategorijata opredelenost* with 'determination of nouns' instead of 'definiteness', and the use of the phonetic term "formant" to designate parts of speech (participles) or clitics.

Given the wide scope of the book and the density of its content, I will go over some sections that, in my opinion, are representative of its approach and treatment of grammatical phenomena.

In its opening discussion of the typological features of Bulgarian morphology (pp. 61–73), the author offers her own perspective on what she terms "a trend towards uniformity", namely, a tendency to reduce allomorphic forms resulting in uniform paradigms. Compare the future in the past expressed by *štjach da chodja* and *šte chodech* 'I would have gone'. While Nicolova's analysis presents valuable observations and generalizations, it must be noted that this trend is not uniform across the board, as is evidenced in the stable allomorphic variation between the forms of the auxiliary in the positive and negative future (*štjach da chodja* vs. *njamaše da chodja* 'I would not have gone').

The section on gender is extensive in its coverage of formal and semantic characteristics of gender, as well as the mechanisms of gender assignment and gender agreement. A subsection on borrowings in Bulgarian and their gender assignment provides valuable observations on the formal mechanisms involved in this process. This is by far the most exhaustive treatment of gender in Bulgarian grammars written for an English-speaking audience. At the same time, the analysis of the formal vs. semantic features of gender could have been bolstered by more in-depth theoretical discussion, similarly to the examination of the phonological, morphological, and semantic properties of gender in Manova and Dressler (2001).

Furthermore, Nicolova refers to the gender of nouns as a "selective category" (p. 88), and states that "the gender of nouns determines the gender in the singular of adjectives, pronouns functioning as adjectives, ordinal numerals, and participles, when these are attributes and object complements". It is not very clear how the noun "selects" the adjective—perhaps the author's

intentions here were to indicate that gender governs syntactic agreement be-
tween the adjective and the noun. The same term "selective category" is used
to refer to grammatical number (p. 99), which is also left without additional
explanation.

In the section on the plural, the author offers a thorough review of the
singular and plural forms, including the so-called *brojna forma* of the plural
(quantified plural or count form). Unlike previous authors who provide only
an inventory of the uses of the count form, Nicolova suggests an interesting
explanation of the semantics of this form based on the criterion of "discrete-
ness" (dividedness). According to her, the ordinary plural refers to a discrete
(divided) set of objects with a lower limit of two and no definite upper limit,
for example *stolove* 'tables'. Since there is no upper limit, the quantifier *mnogo*
'many' can be used to modify the ordinary plural. The author suggests that
the fact that the set is limited in the case of the count form distinguishes this
form from the regular (ordinary) plural. While this is an appealing explana-
tion, it lacks a more formal justification, particularly as regards the limited
number of objects in the set.

The author herself admits that "the actual usage of the quantified plural
shows so many deviations from the prescribed rules that it is impossible to
speak of a stable norm here" (p. 111). She attributes this situation to dialect
variation and specifically to the presence of quantified animate nouns in the
language of speakers from Eastern Bulgaria. Even if such a tendency is more
characteristic of those dialects, the use of quantified plural with all nouns (not
just inanimate) is an example of regularity in the paradigm.

There are some inaccuracies in the discussion of the plural of borrowings,
which Nicolova refers to as "defective paradigms" (pp. 114–15). She states that
the word *mis* 'miss, beauty queen' does not have a plural form. While this is
generally true, this word has undergone a morphological change in recent
years. The productive feminine suffix *-ka* has been attached to its stem in the
singular, yielding the novel word *miska*, which then becomes *miski* in the plu-
ral. The word *madmoazel* 'mademoiselle' is another example of plural forma-
tion with words from 'defective paradigms'—a recent Google search reveals
plural use of that word, as in *tri madmoazeli* 'three mademoiselles'. It is possible
that this is a change in progress and there will be very few countable words
left in Bulgarian without a plural form. Since Nicolova's book focuses mostly
on the synchronic state of the Bulgarian language, it is understandable that
not all diachronic phenomena could find a place in it.

The section on vocative forms discusses diminutive vocatives and clipped
vocatives of personal names. This part is very useful to both linguists and
learners of Bulgarian since it features an interplay between formal and se-
mantic features in gender assignment and details the different forms of femi-
nine and masculine vocatives. The author provides a complete list of the pho-
nological, morphological (suffixes), and prosodic (stress) patterns in vocative

formation. She also describes diminutive vocatives, which are very common not only in child-directed speech but also in colloquial language. Apart from the grammatical aspect of the vocatives, Nicolova provides an account of the sociopragmatic functions of the vocative form and the elements of "politeness" in various registers. She advocates for a new codification of the standard norm due to several changes in the perception of formal vs. informal opposition by speakers of Bulgarian.

The section on determination of nouns (pp. 122–73), together with the section on evidentiality, occupy central places in the book. The reader is presented with a wealth of data about the origin of the definite article, its Balkan characteristics, formation rules, and sound changes, as well as detailed syntactic and semantic information. Of particular importance for scholars studying L1 and L2 acquisition is the discussion of the two principles in the attachment of the definite article to the noun—the phonetic and the morphological. In line with recent theories about the role of phonological markers and transparency in L1 and L2 gender acquisition, this section provides a valuable point of departure and opportunity for comparative analysis with other Slavic languages. The subsection on articles in pronouns and quantifiers is also very well written, providing the obligatory and optional forms of the articles in these parts of speech.

The discussion of the expression of indefiniteness also merits consideration. In that subsection the author compares the use of the zero article and *edin* 'one' as in the following examples: *Ivanov e edin naivnik* 'Ivanov is one naïve person' vs. *Ivanov e naivnik* 'Ivanov is a naïve person'. According to her, here the opposition *edin*–zero is neutralized without changes in meaning. However, Nicolova provides examples with existential sentences that clearly demonstrate the non-specific meaning of the zero article vs. the specific indefinite *edna*: *V dvora ima jabâlka (ne kruša)* 'There is an apple tree in the garden' (not a pear tree) vs. *V dvora ima edna jabâlka. Jabâlkata ošte ja ima v dvora* 'There is an apple tree in the garden. The tree is still there'. Previous grammars (Hauge 1999 and Alexander 2001) mention *edin* and its semantics as an indefinite specific pronoun but do not provide a detailed account of this pronoun or its opposition/interaction with the zero article. In fact, Alexander states that there is no difference in the meaning of *četa edna interesna kniga* 'I am reading one interesting book' and *četa interesna kniga* 'I am reading an interesting book'. The problem with such an interpretation is the use of the regular transitive verb 'read' instead of an intensional transitive verb, such as 'seek'. The latter has been found to trigger relational/notional (or specific/non-specific) ambiguity compared to regular transitive verbs (Moltmann 2013). In general, analyses of the semantics of indefinite articles should consider the type of sentence (existential or presentational) and the type of predicates (intensional or extensional).

Another interesting and not very well studied phenomenon is definiteness and proper names, a phenomenon discussed in the book with a focus on the formal rules of attaching the definite article. However, there are certain gaps in the treatment of the data as the author fails to acknowledge the existence of other factors in assigning definite articles to personal names, for example, male names ending in -*o* (*Borko*, *Goško*) never take a definite article but the same names ending in -*e* do (*Bore*, *Goše*). Similarly, female names ending in -*e* always take a definite article (*Lenče*). It is also worth noting the type of agreement (always neuter) even with names referring to females, e.g., *edno Lenče*. This is a fruitful area for investigation given the recent interest in semantic gender in other Slavic languages. The book could be a useful source for discussion of these topics.

In the section on pronouns (pp. 208–317) the author focuses her attention on all types of pronouns, including the use of the full vs. short forms of personal pronouns (clitics). She only briefly mentions the syntactic characteristics of clitics and then moves on to a more detailed account of their meaning from the point of view of the Information Structure of the sentence. A similar descriptive approach is adopted in the discussion of object doubling, with a list of all the possible constructions with doubled objects. Since this topic enjoys much attention among Slavic and general linguists, I would like to refer the reader to a recent publication by B. Harizanov on the topic, in which he summarizes the main accounts on clitics and proposes his own analysis, in which object doubling is situated at the interface of syntax and morphophonology. He argues that such an analysis is able to capture "different types of clitic doubling in terms of the same syntactic and morphophonological mechanisms simply applying in different domains" (Harizanov 2014).

In separate sections on the order of the components of the perfect tense forms, the author provides the clitic template with all the possible word order patterns for statements and questions. This list is broader than the lists provided in previous Bulgarian grammars and as such deserves more attention. My only concern is that these sections are buried inside the descriptions of the perfect tense (on p. 415), the pluperfect (p. 427), the future (p. 435), the past future tense (p. 443), and the future perfect tense (p. 448) and thus could be easily missed by the reader.

As a preamble to the section on grammatical voice, the author refers to the concept of "diathesis" to illustrate the syntactic-semantic mapping in the forms of the verb. It would have been desirable to have a more detailed account of this concept since it is just one of the several analyses of voice. As Kulikov (2013) points out, there are other possible (and commonly used) terms and approaches, such as "syntactic pattern", "valency pattern", and "construction type".

In the discussion of the meaning of voice, the author brings up ideas and hypotheses characteristic of mid-20th century Bulgarian philological thought.

In doing so, she is mostly concerned with the problem of categorization, paying less attention to the syntactic and semantic features of the category of voice. In line with such an approach, constructions such as *spi mi se* ('I feel like sleeping') are analyzed as both optative passive and optative impersonal voice. The author states that these are similar (but not identical) but does not provide an explanation of the differences. A recent study by Smirnova (2015) looks at the semantics of these constructions and divides them into three types: dispositional reflexives, quality reflexives, and ability reflexives. Her cross-linguistic investigation shows that only the first type exists in Bulgarian (and in South Slavic languages in general), while the other types are present in East and/or West Slavic languages. Such an analysis based on fine-grained semantics (rather than syntax or mere categorization) is suitable for cross-linguistic generalizations and more nuanced understanding of the different types of reflexive constructions.

In the section on tense Nicolova capitalizes on the Reichenbachian model, which positions the event along three points on a temporal axis: point of speech, point of reference, and point of the event. The author suggests some modifications in this model by distinguishing between *moments* and *intervals*. Furthermore, she presents a detailed analysis of the Bulgarian temporal system in terms of the traditional division of Bulgarian tenses into actional (present, imperfect, future, past future, and aorist) and resultative (present perfect, past perfect, future perfect, and past future perfect). She also draws attention to the perfect forms with *habere*, the so-called possessive perfect, which is fully grammaticalized in Macedonian but not in Bulgarian since in the latter it is found only with non-stative transitive verbs (Spencer and Popova 2015). Nicolova suggests that this type of perfect could be linked to a trend to intellectualization, namely, the influence of other literary languages on Bulgarian, but does not provide any further evidence for such a claim (p. 380).

Overall, the section on the formal and semantic characteristics of Bulgarian tenses is very detailed, with an abundance of examples and references to current research. This section will be of interest to scholars working on temporal semantics, since it provides a very thorough account of the Bulgarian tenses both in written language and colloquial speech. Nicolova provides useful empirical generalizations along with analysis of some ongoing changes in the semantics and use of tenses, for example the relatively recent development of future reference of the present tense in colloquial speech in examples, such as *Kakvo pravim sega*? *Otivame na koncert* 'What are we doing now? We are going to a concert'. Furthermore, this is the first Bulgarian grammar in English that discusses embedded tenses from a semantic point of view. While there is a consensus that the tense in subordinate clauses is relative (Krapova 2001), a recent formal semantic analysis proposed by Smirnova (2010) better captures the referential and relational properties of these tenses and makes more accurate predictions about their use.

Mood is discussed extensively, with the evidential and the admirative occupying a large part of the discussion. The latter is analyzed as "transposition of the renarrated forms", a descriptive view supported by other Bulgarian linguists. Several recent proposals aim to go a step further by formalizing the meaning of the admirative. Lau and Rooryck (2017) propose to capture the meaning of both the evidential and the admirative through an underlying semantic template "involving stages that can be interpreted either in terms of event stages (in the evidential) or information stages (in the admirative)". Guentcheva (2017) adopts a theory of enunciation arguing that the admirative is a "situationally-bound phenomenon which is actualized by the enunciator and is always anchored in the situation of enunciation". Sonnenhauser (2015) also assumes context-dependency but with the element of different degrees of distance, such as hearsay, non-confirmation, doubt, or irony. Her unified analysis based on the concept of "distance" allows her to treat the perfect, renarrative, conclusive, and admirative as polysemous categories that have one and the same underlying form. Nicolova's description shows some similarities with Sonnenhauser's analysis in the argument that there is a unified basis for the expression of the three evidential subcategories: conclusive, renarrative, and dubitative. However, unlike Sonnenhauser, she assumes that this underlying form is the perfect.

Regarding the meaning of the evidential, Nicolova views it as a category that "grammaticalizes cognitive states of the speaker related to the reception and categorization of the information coming from a given source". She interprets the relation between modality and evidentiality in terms of interconnection—the modality denoted by the verb is intertwined with evidentiality, a category indicating the information source. Nicolova concludes her analysis lamenting the fact that there is a general deficiency in theoretical studies of evidentiality, which in turn leads to the lack of a more unified theory about this category. While this is generally true, several recent studies have offered analyses that capture all the facts about the form and the meaning of the evidential, thus consolidating the essential features of the existing proposals on this topic. Smirnova (2013) advances the view that the marking of information source is only one of the functions of the evidential, which could also express modal and temporal information. Koev (2017) offers a formal pragmatic account deriving the evidential from "the spatiotemporal distance between the event described by the sentence and the event of the speaker acquiring the relevant evidence for her claim". All these analyses (including the one proposed by Nicolova) take us a step further towards a better understanding of the evidential in terms of its semantics and pragmatics.

Undoubtedly, Nicolova's book offers a plenitude of data and thought-provoking discussions of grammatical phenomena. Apart from some shortcomings in the content, translation, and structure of the book, it presents by far the most complete and rigorous treatment of Bulgarian grammar written

for an English-speaking audience. Its approach is akin to that of previous grammars but differs from them in its breadth and depth of description, thus making it the best available reference source on the market.

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