

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gueorgui Ivanov Jetchev,
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology,
Department of Romance Studies,
habilitated in the field of 2.1. Philology

for obtaining the scientific degree "Doctor"

in the field of 2.1. Philology

with candidate Desislava Angelova Davidova

The main issue dealt in the dissertation of **Desislava Davidova "Comparative study of Italian and Bulgarian concessive sentences"** is the clarification of the specifics of the concessive structures in the Italian language in comparison with the Bulgarian language. Such a comparative study is made for the first time and it contributes to the elucidation of the Bulgarian language material with methods already applied to the Italian language, as well as to outline the differences in the two modal-temporal systems as far as "concession" is concerned. The conclusions in the dissertation, made after the analysis of the corpus of translated texts in Italian and Bulgarian, can be a valuable guide for the potential difficulties in teaching Italian grammar to native speakers of Bulgarian, as well as for translators from Italian to Bulgarian and vice versa.

A review of the existing linguistic literature shows that the problem is addressed in some of the most famous Italian grammars: for example, in Tekavčić's historical grammar (1972) and in the second volume of the authoritative *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione* (2001), edited by Renzi, Salvi and Cardinaletti, dedicated to the verb phrase and the syntax of subordinate clauses. Herczeg's publications (1959, 1964, 1977) on the types of subordinate clauses in the Italian language are also taken into account.

The classification of the concessive sentences adopted by the author of the dissertation is inspired by the taxonomies in the works of mainly Herczeg and Mazzoleni. Mazzoleni is the Italian linguist who has most consistently studied this issue. He is also the author of the part devoted to the concessive sentences in Chapter XIII («Funzioni delle frasi subordinate») of the *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione*. This classification has been successfully used in the structuring of the content in the second and third chapters of the dissertation, where an analysis of the different types and subtypes of concessive sentences is offered, respectively in Italian-Bulgarian and Bulgarian-Italian translations.

The dissertation presented by Desislava Davidova aims to outline the specific features of the semantics, as well as the syntax of this particular category of subordinate sentences - the

concessive ones - by comparing their characteristics in two languages - Italian and Bulgarian, based on a corpus of texts translated from one into the other language.

In accordance with their presence in the corpus, the author offers a more in-depth analysis of some specific concessive conjunctions (*nonostante che, malgrado che, per quanto*) and constructions (*per* + adjective + the copula *essere* in the conjunctive) in the Italian language and their Bulgarian equivalents. For the corpus with translations from Bulgarian into Italian, special attention is paid to the conjunction "i da" (§3.4).

A special place is given to the use of the conjunctive mood, characteristic of most of the concessive subordinate conjunctions. The review of these examples is also combined with temporal analysis: the use of the two simple tenses in this mood (*presente, imperfetto*) as well as the two complex tenses (*passato, trapassato*) is outlined.

The model adopted by D. Davidova, based mainly on the publications of Herczeg and Mazzoleni, combines syntactic and semantic analysis. The second type of analysis is essential for clarifying the specifics of concessive constructions, which are part of the so-called "adverbial" subordinate clauses, in which the semantic criterion is leading.

The author performs a functional-semantic analysis of the concessive constructions in both languages, emphasizing the broken logic of the causal relationship. The consequence is the opposite of the cause and therefore it contains an element of frustration with an unfulfilled expected action. The analysis of the examples shows how this general semantics manifests itself with different nuances in the different subtypes of the subordinate clauses: real clauses, conditional-concessive clauses, nonconditional clauses, clauses with relative-indefinite pronouns.

D. Davidova's publications related to the topic of the dissertation are 8 in number and were made in a period of 10 years before the completion of the dissertation.

Two of them are in the magazine "Čuždoezikovo obučenje (Foreign Language Teaching)", respectively from 2010 on the explicit concessive sentences and from 2011 on the concessive conjunctions and the concessive relation (Italian - Bulgarian).

Five of the publications are from the Yearbook of the Department of Romance and German Studies or other editions of NBU. Three of them are comparative studies dedicated to specific Italian concessive conjunctions: respectively *anche se* from 2015, *benché* with its correspondences in the Bulgarian language (2016) and *quantunque* in the translation of Italian novels from the beginning of the XXth century (2019).). Another publication (from 2018) is on the Bulgarian concessive conjunction "makar če" and its Italian translation equivalents, as it also deals with the problem of temporal uses in the concessive subordinate clauses. The sequence of tenses in the conjunctive mood in the translation from Italian into Bulgarian is the subject of the 2017 publication, as well. The author's list of publications also includes a review of a two-way Italian-Bulgarian dictionary, published in the journal "Šapostavitelno ezikoznanie/Contrastive Linguistics", as well as two reviews of master's theses defended at

Sofia University (2017) and NBU (2021) on problems of translation from Italian into Bulgarian.

In the review of the literature in Italian linguistics, the absence of Luca Seriani's book *Italiano. Grammatica, sintassi, dubbi* from the encyclopedic series *Le Garzantine* edited by Garzanti (1997), where §§172-184 are devoted to concessive clauses (*proposizioni concessive*), is striking. I would recommend smoothing out some of the translations of specific terms from Italian grammars. For example, for *momento/intervallo di riferimento*, I find the translation as "referenten moment/interval" more appropriate than the "moment/interval na referentnost" used in the dissertation.

Although some remarks are included regarding the variability in the use of some of the concessive structures (mainly to explain their absence from the corpus), it is desirable to specify in more places their affiliation to certain sociolects or registers according to the more or less formal nature of the communicative situation. When reviewing the literature on Italian concessive constructions, material from the well-described Italian dialects should be included as an element of diatopic variability at the syntactic level (for example, by including material from the third volume - devoted to syntax - of *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei suoi dialetti* by Gerhard Rohlfs, namely §781 to §784).

Desislava Davidova convincingly outlines the specific features of the semantics and syntax of the subordinate clauses in the Italian and the Bulgarian language. She demonstrates a good knowledge of specialized publications in both languages, highlighting those that work for her analysis of the corpus of texts translated from one language to another. In her analyses, Davidova skillfully uses the theoretical model she has chosen. The structure of the research shows a thorough understanding of the issues and clarification of the methodological choice made. The dissertation presents correctly and clarifies its connections with previous research on the topic. It also raises questions that may be the subject of future research. The style is characterized by precision and clarity. The author systematically explains the terminology she uses, observing an academic tone. The abstract is comprehensive and at the same time concise. It clearly sets out the issues involved, the methodology and the contribution of the research. The conclusions in the dissertation are original and can be useful for teachers of Italian in their work with native speakers of Bulgarian, as well as for translators from Italian to Bulgarian or from Bulgarian to Italian.

Taking into account the above facts, I give a positive assessment of the dissertation presented by Desislava Davidova, as well as of her publications related to the topic of the dissertation. I find that they are quite sufficient for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "doctor".

28 September 2021