

Koseska-Toszewa, Violetta

## Many-volume contrastive grammar of Bulgarian and Polish

*Opera Slavica*. 2009, vol. 19, iss. 2, pp. 36-43

ISSN 1211-7676

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/117046>

Access Date: 17. 02. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

\* ROZHLEDY — MATERIÁLY \*

---

**Many-volume Contrastive Grammar of Bulgarian and Polish**

Violetta Koseska-Toszeza (Warszawa)

**History.** Bulgarian-Polish Contrastive Grammar [Polsko-bułgarska gramatyka konfrontatywna] (from now, BPCG) consists of 12 volumes. Volume 6 contains four separate parts — monographs (BPCG 1988 – 2008).

**Semantic juxtaposition.** For linguists interested in general and theoretic problems, a novelty is **semantic juxtaposition** of two languages performed for the first time in the world using an **interlanguage** (*i. e., a system of notions based on logical and mathematical theories, which is a starting point for the juxtaposition of the languages under examination*).

The employed method of juxtaposing languages based on an interlanguage developed in line with the progressing research guarantees obtaining reliable, comparable results of research for arbitrary juxtaposed languages. This method of analysing semantic categories assures a consistent contrastive description. It should be stressed that BPCG is the first grammar to treat certain issues previously overlooked in academic grammars of Polish and Bulgarian. For Polish, this includes, among others, an exhaustive study of the semantic category of time and aspect, of diverse modal categories – of which next to nothing was previously known, of the definedness / undefinedness category, as well as the categories of quantity and communicating person. The case with Bulgarian, which was treated equivalently to Polish using the interlanguage, is similar. Hence an attempt to juxtapose an analytic language with a synthetic one has succeeded.

**Interlanguage.** As I have already mentioned, the *Bulgarian-Polish Contrastive Grammar* is the world's first, and up to now only, extensive attempt at semantic juxtaposition with a gradually developed interlanguage. Though development of an interlanguage different from both juxtaposed languages has been postulated, this was a theoretical requirement difficult to meet in practice due to the need of isolating the basic semantic categories comprising the structure of the interlanguage. The interlanguage should consist of empirical notions discovered in the course of simultaneous studies of at least two languages. The task of constructing the interlanguage would be impossible to perform if only formal structures of both languages were examined. The interlanguage emerges as a product of theoretical contrastive studies, and represents a system of notions taken from selected mutually consistent theories describing the juxtaposed languages.

Along with the progressing studies, the interlanguage develops gradually, and is enriched with new notions. We think that the most important rule in its development is the requirement that the interlanguage be developed based on theories not leading to a contradiction. For example, when developing basic semantic units used for describing the linguistic definedness/undefinedness category in the interlanguage, one can employ either reference theory or defined description and quantification theory. However, both theories cannot be used simultaneously, for this leads to internal contradiction in the notion system of the interlanguage. Already the second volume of BPCG (Koseska, Gargov 1990) clearly implies that a description that takes as a starting point the Bulgarian formal means of the language is quite different from a description that takes as a starting point the formal means of Polish. This is determined even by the more extended morphological plane of the means expressing the notions of definedness and undefinedness in Bulgarian as compared to Polish (see also Koseska, Mazurkiewicz 1988). The interlanguage we know from Volume 2 of BPCG, especially with respect to the notions related to quantification of time, is developed further in Volume 7. The interlanguage related to juxtaposing Polish and Bulgarian in the area of the semantic definedness/undefinedness category (Koseska, Gargov 1990) is based on the assumption on the quantificational character of that category. The basic notions, such as uniqueness (of an element or a set) could be written down using the language construction of the iota operator, existentiality — using an existential quantificational expression, universality — using a universal quantificational expression, etc. Volume 2 of BPCG (Koseska, Gargov 1990) undertakes the first attempt to implement the conception of a language juxtaposition using an interlanguage. In the subsequent volumes of the BPCG, the interlanguage is extended with notions related to modality and the semantic category of time, thanks to including the contemporary theory of processes known as Petri nets (Mazurkiewicz 1986, Koseska, Mazurkiewicz 1988).

**Cognitive approach.** If, for example, we want to describe the content of universal quantification in the semantic structure of a Bulgarian sentence, we should take into consideration the language phenomena visible on the morphological level: definite article, but we should also indicate universally quantifying lexems, both on the nominal phrase level and on the verbal phrase level, e.g. Bulgarian *всеки* 'each', *винаги* 'always'. A strict separation of morphological, syntactic and lexical levels would prevent a comprehensive description of semantic phenomena. Hence it is worth stressing that our studies of theoretical semantics eliminate strict divisions into grammatical and lexical levels, bringing a lot of new observations regarding the examined phenomena. Such an approach is termed cognitive here. On the one hand, we understand cognitive studies as theoretical semantic studies which allow us to take into consideration language means from various levels: grammatical and lexical ones, seen as a single whole. On the other hand, when necessary, we use broader language situations, where the phenomena we are interested in are understood by language users in an unambiguous way. Such situations always take into consideration also the states of language users and their attitude to the communicated contents.

**Semantic category of time. Examples.** The examples selected will only concern description of the semantic category of time in both languages (Koseska 2006). In Volume 7 of BPCG, the semantic category of time is described using the net model instead of the linear one. Net theory was first adapted to description of temporal and modal

phenomena in natural language by A. Mazurkiewicz (Mazurkiewicz 1986), and later by V. Koseska-Toszewa and A. Mazurkiewicz (Koseska, Mazurkiewicz 1988). Petri nets (Petri 1962) are a tool independent of the existing natural languages, and so indifferent with respect to them. Their simplicity (they are based on just three primary notions: of a state, event and their mutual succession), combined with a considerable expressive power, predestines them for the role of a theory forming the *tertium comparationis* (inter-language) in contrastive studies of natural languages. We adopt the notions of state and event as fundamental units of time description. The two notions are distinguished based on the time spread of states and the momentary character of events. States continue, while events can only happen. An abstract counterpart of the above distinction is the difference between a section of the real line (state) and a point lying on that line (event). The notion of a process is represented in nets by a configuration of states and events joined by the precedence-succession relation. By way of example, the meanings of praeterite forms in Polish and Bulgarian can be written down in the net notation as follows:

1. Event which has occurred before the speech state.

In Bulgarian, such temporal content is expressed by the aorist of perfective verbs, and in Polish — by praeteritum of perfective verbs:

*Щъркелът се върна в гнездото си. – Восан wrócił do gniazda.* [The stork has returned to the nest.]

(Net paraphrase: The event „the stork’s return to the nest” has occurred before the speech state).

2. Unique configuration of a state and an event.

In Bulgarian, this type of temporal content is expressed by the aorist of imperfective verbs, and in Polish — by the praeteritum of imperfective verbs. In both languages, those verbal forms can be only accompanied by unique quantifying expressions, see sentences of the type:

*Той точно тогава боледува от грип. – On właśnie wtedy chorował na grype.* [He was sick with flu just then.]

(Here we have to do with a unique configuration of a state and an event).

3. Multiple occurrences of the same combination of a state and an event.

These contents are expressed by Bulgarian aorist of imperfective verbs and Polish praeteritum of imperfective verbs. In this case, the language situation is associated with a quantitative rather than scope quantification, see:

*Тази седмица той ходи пеша няколко пъти до центъра на града. – W tym tygodniu on kilka razy chodził pieszo do centrum miasta.* [This week he has gone on foot to the city centre several times.]

4. Combination of states and events which have occurred before the speech state.

The Bulgarian imperfectum form of imperfective verbs emphasises states continuing in the past, while the aorist of imperfective verbs emphasises events which occurred in the past and broke the described states. These subtle differences in meaning are revealed by differences in quantification characteristic for the Bulgarian aorist, which when formed from either perfective or imperfective verbs acts as a placeholder for the unique quantifier only; while the imperfectum of imperfective verbs acts as a placeholder for all types of scope quantification. Polish separates those meanings by selecting quantifying expressions which occur together with the praeteritum form of imperfective verbs. See examples of the type:

*Той понякога намираше време за разходка. – On od czasu do czasu znajdował czas na spacer. [He found time for a walk from time to time.]*

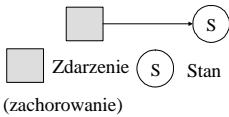
5. A state continuing before the speech state connected with an event and a state coexisting with the speech state.

In Bulgarian, such content is expressed by the perfectum form. In Polish, this meaning is expressed by the praeteritum form, which often occurs next to the praesens form. The past state expressed is not finished before the speech state, as is the case when aorist of perfective verbs is used. The result following the past state is still valid during the speech state:

*Той е боледувал от грип (и сега още кашля). – On chorował na grype (i teraz wciąż kaszle). [He has been sick with flu (and is still coughing now).]*

Below we present schemata of nets showing the difference in the meanings of Bulgarian aorist and perfectum, together with Polish counterparts.

### Aoryst od dokonanych



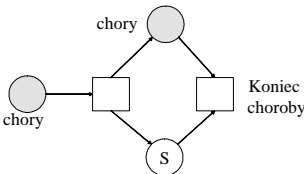
Toj se razbolja ot grip

On zachorował na grype

### Legend:

Aoryst od dokonanych – Aorist of perfective verbs  
 Zdarzenie – Event  
 zachorowanie – falling sick  
 Stan wypowiedzi – Speech state  
 On zachorował na grype – He has fallen sick with flu.

### Perfectum od niedokonanych



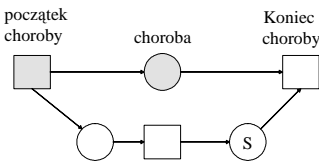
Toj e boledoval ot grip

On chorował (i wciąż jeszcze choruje) na grype

### Legend:

Perfectum od niedokonanych – Perfectum of imperfective verbs  
 chory – sick  
 koniec choroby – end of sickness  
 Koniec choroby – End of sickness  
 On chorował (i wciąż jeszcze choruje) na grype – He has been (and still is) sick with flu.

### Perfectum od dokonanych



Toj se e razboljal ot grip

On zachorował na grype (i nadal choruje)

### Legend:

Perfectum od dokonanych – Perfectum of perfective verbs  
 Początek choroby - start of sickness  
 Koniec choroby- end of sickness  
 choroba – sickness  
 On zachorował na grype (i nadal choruje)– He has fallen sick with flu (and is still sick).

A net description facilitates understanding of temporal and modal phenomena in both Bulgarian and Polish unknown in the subject literature until now. Thanks to this, the myth of a relatively simple system of temporal meanings (tenses) in Polish has been rejected. Up to now, nobody has described quantificational meanings of time in Polish. However, as the Bulgarian material shows, without that description, we would be unable to distinguish between the uses of aorist of imperfective verbs and imperfectum of imperfective verbs. Despite the identical information on the aspects of the aorist and imperfectum forms of imperfective verbs, the two forms provide different temporal information. In both cases, we have a combination of states and events which have occurred before the speech state. However, using the imperfectum form, we emphasise states continuing in the past, while in case of the aorist of imperfective verbs we emphasise events which occurred in the past and broke the described states. These subtle differences in meanings are emphasised by the quantificational differences characteristic for the aorist. As we have already mentioned, the aorist, independently of the verb aspect, i.e. both of imperfective and perfective verbs, is a placeholder for the unique quantifier only, while the imperfectum of imperfective verbs is a placeholder for all kinds of scope quantification. The above fact explains the different distribution of both the forms in Bulgarian (see Koseska, Mazurkiewicz 1988, Koseska, Gargov 1990). As the aorist of both aspects of a verb can only express uniqueness, it is a self-contained, independent carrier of that quantificational meaning. In turn, the imperfectum of imperfective verbs is not a form independently expressing quantification. The imperfectum can be a placeholder for both universal and existential quantification. Though this is rare, we can also encounter it in contexts with uniquely quantified temporal information. The imperfectum always expresses quantification of states, and never of events, see: *Тя седеше пред прозореца.*, where the imperfectum may, depending on the completion of quantification, express universal quantification: *Тя винаги седеше пред прозореца.* – *Ona zawsze siedziała przy oknie.* [She always sat at the window.] It can also express existential quantification, like in the sentence: *Тя понякога седеше пред прозореца.* – *Ona czasem siedziała przy oknie.* [She sometimes sat at the window.] As I have mentioned above, the imperfectum of imperfective verbs is exceptionally encountered also in a meaning analogous to praesens forms in contexts of the type: *В точно този момент, той я обичаше.* – *W tej właśnie chwili on ją kochał.* [At just that moment, he loved her.] In that case, unique quantification refers to a past state continuing during the situation chosen as the only one (just at that moment...).

From the comparison of the uses of the Bulgarian aorist and imperfectum, we can see that the aorist of both perfective and imperfective verbs expresses only quantificational uniqueness of events and states, while the imperfectum of imperfective and perfective verbs can express both existentiality and universality of events and states, but also (though very rarely) uniqueness of states, like the praesens form. It is worth stressing that Polish more often than Bulgarian copes with expressing temporal meanings using lexical means which are quantifying expressions (and hence not only using verbal forms). When we want to express the temporal meaning of resultative perfectum, we need two Polish verbal forms rather than one, like in Bulgarian. Though all elements of temporality can be expressed in both languages, it is worth noting that some temporal meanings would not have been noticed in Polish without its juxtaposition with Bulgarian. We should emphasise the immense importance of the definedness / undefinedness opposition for understanding the semantic category of time expressed by quantification of time, and the fact that in

Polish it can concern aspect and time, while in Bulgarian first of all time (see Koseska, Korytkowska, Roszko 2007).

**Synthesis of Bulgarian-Polish Contrastive Grammar, or Polish-Bulgarian Contrastive Grammar.** The synthesis of the Grammar is to make the results of the many year's work of a numerous international team of its authors, comprising linguists and logicians dealing with natural language problems, to the people interested in this subject (Koseska, Korytkowska, Roszko 2007). The swap of the languages in the title of the synthesis is not accidental – it emphasizes the equal status of the language material in both the languages described using the interlanguage.

We should stress that this is a presentation of a new approach to many important theoretical issues, as well as a presentation of many problems which up to now have not been studied at all, or have been studied to an insufficient extent only, due to the absence of a contrastive perspective of description for Polish. Such an approach is valuable in teaching the language, as well as in translations to Polish and from Polish. The specialists in Polish studies should be interested in a new, yet unknown description of Polish as seen from the perspective of another language. The Slavists will complement their knowledge of the semantics and the specifics of the systems of the two languages which belong to different Slavic groups (south Slavic and west Slavic). For linguists interested in general and theoretical problems, a novelty will be a semantic confrontation of two languages carried out for the first time using an interlanguage. The synthesis is not a collection of selected issues. We have selected here universal semantic language categories important for description of the language that have not been elaborated until now, namely basic language categories, such as time, modality, definedness/undefinedness and semantic case, which have not been described exhaustively until now in academic grammars of Polish and Bulgarian. *The order of description in this synthesis has not been determined based on the order of the existing BPCG volumes, but based on the generally accepted order of elements in the semantic structure of a sentence.* The outermost element in the semantic structures of a sentence is its modal characteristics. The subsequent elements are time, quantifiers and their order in the semantic structure of the sentence, and predicate-argument positions. Hence the Synthesis is not a brief summary of the issues analysed in the volumes of BPCG. Its is a description of selected semantic categories, ordered according to the semantic order in the semantic structure of Polish and Bulgarian sentences. The synthetic chapter on the interlanguage placed at the end of the volume is very important for understanding the theoretical conception of the grammar. The interlanguage is the language of notions used as basis for parallel description of the phenomena in both languages.

### **Bibliography:**

- BARWISE Jon, PERRY John (1983): *Situations and Attitudes*. – Bradford Books, MIT.  
 COOPER Robin (1996): *The Role of Situations and Generalized Quantifiers*. – [in:]  
 Shalom Lappin (ed.): *The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory*. – Oxford.  
 GOTTLÖB Frege (1892): *Über Sinn und Bedeutung*. – Zeitschrift. für Phil. und phil.  
 Kritik, 100, 25–50.

BPCG (1988–2008)

BPCG-1 1988: I. Sawicka, T. Bojadzhiev, *Bylgarsko-polska syppostavitelna gramatika, tom 1. Fonetika i fonologija*, Sofija.

BPCG-2 1990: V. Koseska-Toszewa, G. Gargov, *Bylgarsko-polska syppostavitelna gramatika, tom 2. Semantichnata kategorija opredelenost/neopredelenost*, Sofija.

BPCG-3 1994: L. Krumova-Cvetkova, R. Roshko; A. Petrova, M. Choroleeva, *Bylgarsko-polska syppostavitelna gramatika, tom 3. Semantichnite kategorii kolichestvo i stepen*, Sofia: 15--38.

BPCG-4 1993: I. Gugulanova, M. Shimanski, P. Barakova, *Bylgarsko-polska syppostavitelna gramatika, tom 4. Semantichnata kategorija komunikant*, Sofija.

BPCG-5-1 1992: M. Korytkowska, *Gramatyka konfrontatywna bułgarsko-polska, t. 5. cz. 1. Typy pozycji predykatowo-argumentowych*, Warszawa.

BPCG-6-1 1995: V. Koseska-Toszewa, V. Maldzieva, J. Penchev, *Gramatyka konfrontatywna bułgarsko-polska, t. 6. cz. 1. Modalność. Teoretyczne problemy description*, Warszawa 1996.

BPCG-6-2 1997: M. Korytkowska, R. Roszko, *Gramatyka konfrontatywna bułgarsko-polska, t. 6. cz. 2. Modalność imperceptywna*, Warszawa.

BPCG-6-3 2003: V. Maldzieva, *Gramatyka konfrontatywna bułgarsko-polska, t. 6. cz. 3. Modalność: hipotetyczność, irrealność, optatywność i-imperatywność, warunkowość*, Warszawa.

BPCG-6-4 2004: M. Korytkowska, *Modalność interogatywna – pytania o rozstrzygnięcie*, Warszawa.

BPCG-7 tom 2006: V. Koseska-Toszewa, *Gramatyka konfrontatywna bułgarsko-polska, t. 7. Semantyczna kategoria czasu*, SOW, Warszawa.

BPCG-8 tom 2008: S. Karolak, *Gramatyka konfrontatywna bułgarsko-polska, t. 8. Semantyczna kategoria aspektu*, SOW 2008

BPCG-9 tom (w przygotowywaniu do druku) : Ju. Bałtova, W. Małdziewa, *Gramatyka konfrontatywna bułgarsko-polska, t. 9. Słowotwórstwo*.

KOSESKA-TOSZEWA Violetta (2006): *Semantyczna kategoria czasu, Gramatyka konfrontatywna bułgarsko-polska (BPCG)*, t. 7 – Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy SOW.

KOSESKA-TOSZEWA Violetta, KORYTKOWSKA Małgorzata, ROSZKO Roman (2007): *Polsko-bułgarska gramatyka konfrontatywna*. – Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog.

KOSESKA-TOSZEWA Violetta, MAZURKIEWICZ Antoni (1988): Net Representation of Sentences in Natural Languages. – [in:] *Lecture Notes in Computer Science 340. Advances in Petri Nets 1988*, Springer-Verlag, 249–266.

LOCK (1948): *Collected Works*. Vol. 1, 2, London.

MAZURKIEWICZ Antoni (1970) *Problemy języków formalnych w automatycznym przetwarzaniu informacji [w:] Problemy przetwarzania informacji*, Warszawa 1970, s. 15– 62.

MAZURKIEWICZ Antoni (1986): *Zdarzenia i stany: elementy temporalności*. – [in:] *Studia gramatyczne bułgarsko-polskie*, t. I, *Temporalność*, Wrocław, 7–21.

MAZURKIEWICZ Antoni (in print): *A formal description of temporality (Petri net approach)*.



- MONTAGUE R. (1974): *Formal Philosophy. Selected Papers of R. Montague*. New Haven, 1974.
- PETRII Carl. A. (1962): *Fundamentals of the Theory of Asynchronous Information Flow*. – [in:] Proc. of IFIP'62 Congress, Amsterdam: North Holland Publ. Comp.
- Projekt (1984): *Projekt gramatyki konfrontatywnej bułgarsko-polskiej i serbskochorwacko-polskiej, Wstęp*. – [w:] *Studia polsko-południowosłowiańskie*, Wrocław, red. Kazimierz Polański.
- RASIOWA Helena (1975): *Wstęp do matematyki współczesnej*. – Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- RYLLE G. (1967): *Teoria znaczenia [w:] Logika i język*, red. J. Pelc, Warszawa, 1967, 485-535.
- RUSSELL Bertrand (1959): *Mój rozwój filozoficzny*, Warszawa, 1959, s. 128, 129, 145.
- RUSSELL Bertrand (1967): *Denotowanie, Deskrypcje*. [w:] *Logika i język*, Warszawa.
- Studia (1984): *Studia konfrontatywne polsko-południowosłowiańskie*, pod red. Kazimierza Polańskiego, Wrocław.
- Studia (1986–2003): *Studia gramatyczne bułgarsko-polskie*, t. I (1986) – t. III (1989) Wrocław; t. IV (1991) – t. VII (2003), pod red. Violetty Koseskiej-Toszewej i in. – Warszawa.
- КОСЕЦКА-ТОШЕВА Виолета, ГАРГОВ Георги (1990): *Семантичната категория опре-деленост/неопределеност, Българско-полска съпоставителна граматика (= ВРСГ)*, т. 2, София.
- КОСЕЦКА-ТОШЕВА Виолета, БАЛТОВА Юлия, ред. (2004): *Българско-полски граматични студии, Справочник по академичната Българско-полска съпоставителна граматика*. – София: Академично издателство Марин Дринов.
- ЗАИМОВ Йордан (1982): *Супрасълски или Ретков сборник. Увод и коментар на старобългарския текст*. – София.