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The Noun Articles in the Bulgarian Dialects

Abstract: Many studies published in recent years deal with the morphological category of indefiniteness/definiteness with respect to its status in Standard Bulgarian or in the historical development of the language. Being one of the typological features of Bulgarian, this category is of great importance in the study of its dialects. The formal expression of the definite article is one of the main features relevant to the classification and typological characterisation of the dialects. The specialised literature features individual works on the articles in particular dialects, but a comprehensive and thorough study of this issue has not been undertaken so far. This particular task is the goal of the work *The Noun Articles in the Bulgarian Dialects*.

The first part of the study proposes the first full description of some fundamental issues, such as the origin, meaning and nature of the definite article, and the development, content and organisation of the category indefiniteness/definiteness from the perspective of the theory of grammatical oppositions. The adopted approach has enabled the author to look at these subjects from a different angle and to clarify a number of controversial issues that have not been answered unequivocally so far, such as the question of the semantics and functioning of both single definite article systems and three-way definite article systems in signifying determinateness on a formal level, or the issue of the dropping of word endings before the article, among others. Thus, this theoretical chapter is an integral part of the work.

The second part of the study discusses in detail the content and nature of the morphological category indefiniteness/definiteness based on material from the whole language territory, focusing in particular on the types of article formants and their distribution throughout the Bulgarian language continuum. The work analyses the different article systems and the archaic forms with a declined article, which are preserved in some dialects to the present day. These issues are regarded in a historical perspective and the stages of the different periods in the development of Bulgarian for which evidence is preserved are presented.

The work analyses also the types of definiteness and the disputable notions related to the existence or lack of an indefinite article in the Bulgarian dialects. The research uses results obtained in the linguo-geographical study of the Bulgarian dialects included in the *Bulgarian Dialect Atlas* and material from published sources.

As a result, the work presents a complete study of the morphological category indefiniteness/definiteness in the Bulgarian dialects, which gives a comprehensive picture of the distribution of the different article morphemes and article systems throughout the Bulgarian language territory. The study proposes a classification and a typology of the dialects according to this morphological feature.

An abridged version of the study is published as a book, which focuses on the theoretical issues related to the morphological category indefiniteness/definiteness in Bulgarian. For more information contact the author at garina@abv.bg.