

## REVIEW

of the PhD thesis of **Vladimir Phillipov Valov**  
entitled “Some Aspects of Intonational Phonology”

Vladimir Phillipov has already had a long career of teaching English Phonetics and Phonology and Translation at the Department of English and American Studies, the University of Sofia where he has a central role in those academic disciplines. He has also taught at various times at leading universities in Britain and the USA. He obtained his MA degree at the University of Malta and has specialized later on in Hungary and elsewhere. V. Phillipov has a rich experience as a practicing translator. He is one of the most widely-read members of the English Department not only in his field of specialization but in all areas of linguistics and in humanitarian studies at large. This shows in the PhD dissertation he has submitted, which is not the typical thesis of a young scholar making his first steps. It is more of the summing-up of an academic career. The author’s personality is evident in the style and the generic characteristics of the text, in places verging on esseyism and heavily loaded with imagery, allusions and direct expression of feelings and impressions, which makes for an interesting reading. As V. Phillipov himself might have put it, *Le style c'est l'homme même* (Style is the man himself).

The topic of the thesis is theoretical. It mainly relies on data from the existing literature but a number of concrete examples coming from various sources are also discussed. The data come from English, Bulgarian, some of the major European languages, including Slavic languages, as well as from some exotic languages, mostly African. This provides opportunities for a general linguistic approach to intonation. Even material from dead languages and reconstructed forms is sometimes adduced. The examples are analyzed in the context of their use, which, if not available, is recreated as a likely potential use for the particular utterance. Translated materials (parallel texts) are also involved which allows contrastive and typological observations, as well as critical evaluation of the translation adequacy. The use of written material is justified by the belief that the written text inevitably implies some non-arbitrary prosodic characteristics and by the insistence on studying intonation in relation to the other levels/meaningful units of language, especially syntax. A wide approach to the theoretical and descriptive studies referred to is also adopted. The references include not only the recent theoretical developments in the study of intonation, but also important moments in the history of the relevant ideas, as far back as classical Greek and Latin texts on rhetoric. The author is well

acquainted with the trends outside the English-speaking world and the achievements of European and Russian linguistics. The contributions of Bulgarian scholars like M. Mincoff, J. Molhova, E. Dimova, St. Dimitrova, M. Pencheva, Sn. Dimitrova, to name but a few, are not neglected either. This V. Phillipov adopts Molhova's idea of fluctuation and M. Pencheva's views on the special position of some of the linguistic levels as regards the overall structure of language and her contributions to typology.

The text of the dissertation (199 pages) is organized in five chapters and a conclusion. Chapter One: *Preliminary Considerations* (pp. 4-36) offers an introduction to the study of intonation, from the first steps to the present day, as well as a glimpse of the intellectual climate in which the ideas have been developing. Some terminological problems are clarified concerning intonation, suprasegmental phenomena and prosody. Arguments in favour of the use of diachronic data and the results of philological analysis of texts are given. The sign character of intonation is insisted on and the scope and the goals of the dissertation are also outlined. The original idea of looking upon intonation as a case marker is first launched in this chapter. An interesting, although not immediately obvious, parallel can be pointed out with the theoretical work of Ivan Kasabov who regards the case principle as fundamental in the organization of the language system (*Граматика на семантиката* [The grammar of Semantics], Sofia, 2006).

Chapter two (pp. 37-62) tackles the difficult question of *The Status of Intonation in a Level Approach in the Organization of Language*. Various solutions are presented and commented on and some modifications are offered by the author. Very successful is the marriage of the generativist approach and the Praguean theory of Functional Sentence Perspective, most fully developed by J. Firbas. Another Bulgarian linguist who does that, starting however from the perspective of syntax, is M. Grancharov in his book *Синтактични средства на функционалната изреченска перспектива...* [Syntactic Means of Functional Sentence Perspective...], Plovdiv, 2010, where a useful combination of the synchronic and the diachronic approach can also be seen.

Chapter three (pp. 63-95) offers an *Introduction to Typology and Intonational Analysis*. Pride of place is given here to Autosegmental-Metrical Phonology, which is currently the dominant approach to the study of intonation as well. Chapter four (pp. 96-125) is entitled *The Case for Case... of Intonation. Delicacy Increased. Content Typology*. The idea of intonation as a marker of a simplified two-member case system is developed here. Data from a number of

typologically different languages are adduced here, as well as arguments from onto- and phylogenesis. In typological V. Phillipov favours is content typology as developed by scholars as G. A. Klimov, and in Bulgaria, by M. Pencheva.

Chapter five: *Intonational Phonology and Content Typology Applied to (Translated) Literary Texts* (pp. 125-168) makes use of the findings so far on intonation as a meaningful and grammatically relevant aspects of language in the analysis of literary texts, prose and poetry, in the original and in translation. The excerpts chosen come from a short story by Bulgarian author Chudomir, whose prose is very close to oral language, and two translations in Russian and one in English; an excerpt from *The Iliad* and its English translation; the opening of Hamlet's monologue "To be, or not to be..." and two of its Bulgarian translated versions. The analysis reveals the contrasts and the difficulties in translation due to typological differences of the languages involved. The last chapter ends with a discussion of the Stoics' concept of "Lekton" and its relevance to the analysis of the relation between intonation and presupposition. Finally, the Conclusion sums up the main results reached in the thesis. The impressive Bibliography lists about 390 titles quoted in the text.

The *Avtoreferat* (an extensive 38-page summary in Bulgarian of the thesis) is an accurate and detailed presentation of the dissertation. Unfortunately a large number of typographic errors have remained in this text. The *Avtoreferat* lacks the necessary bibliography, although there are many references with the name of the author, year of publication and relevant pages.

Vladimir Phillipov's dissertation successfully works out a difficult theoretical topic, offering original solutions and methodological approaches. The depth of the analysis and the originality of the findings well surpass the average requirements for a PhD thesis. I therefore appeal to the members of the Examiners' Committee to give their positive vote and to recommend that Vladimir Phillipov Valov be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philology (English Phonetics and Phonology).

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