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Tatjana Srebot-Rejec, *Word Accent and Vowel Duration in Standard Slovene. An Acoustic and Linguistic Investigation*. München: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1988. [= Slavistische Beiträge, Band 226]. xxi + 286 pp. DM 38.00

The well-known Munich-based monograph series *Slavistische Beiträge*, which covers all areas of Slavic literature, philology and linguistics, in its first 225 volumes included only three works on Slovene. The 226th is welcome, however, not only to help make statistical amends, but in its own right: for this book is likely to be considered a landmark publication in Slovene phonetics and phonology.

The book derives from Srebot-Rejec's doctoral dissertation research for the Universität für Bildungswissenschaften, Klagenfurt/Celovec, work which was carried out under two able linguists, Gerhard Neweklowsky and William Nemser, the former himself the author of a book on Carinthian accentology (Neweklowsky 1973). The Ljubljana-Celovec link, which features the exchange of instructors, joint colloquia and meetings, shared publications, and many other ventures, is thus seen to flourish in one more respect: for although Srebot-Rejec's project was supervised in Celovec, she used informants in Ljubljana and worked there with a sonograph and computers funded by the Pedagoška akademija, and as well was sponsored by the Filozofska fakulteta.

AIMS: Her list of aims (p. 11) takes up the whole page; and it is at once obvious that she set herself an enormous task: (1) to analyze vowel-duration, with respect to (a) its phonological relevance, (b) its relationship to stress, (c) its intrinsic and actual character, (d) the difference between stressed and unstressed vowels, and (e) the role of syllable structure; (2) to measure the intrinsic frequency of stressed vowels; (3) to analyze "accent" in a context-free environment; (4) to contrast the Academy Dictionary prescriptions with the perceptions of Ljubljana informants; (5) to analyze "accent" in context, i.e., in sentences of different kinds, with a more precise measurement of pitch-contours than hitherto, and also with attention to the role of duration; and (6) to study the perception of accents, to find answers to the questions (a) what is a "typical acute" and a "typical circumflex"? (b) which phonetic correlates are perceptually decisive? (c) how do these correlates vary from speaker to speaker, from listener to listener, and in other respects? and (d) why are some "accents" ambiguously perceived?

Each one of these tasks was an exacting one, and just about each one could have formed the basis for a separate monograph. Given that at least 124 pages (in the actual text, which runs from pp. 1 to 247) are taken up with diagrams, tables, and other figures, and that much of the remainder is a detailed exposition of the data, it is obvious that much is highly condensed, and that this is not very easy reading, even for a specialist.* This review will not attempt a detailed assessment of every step in each of these analyses, but, after some general remarks, will dwell briefly on some of the major implications of the work.

PRAISE: In the first place, as is vital for any such work, the experiments were carefully thought out and executed; this can be easily checked, since so much is provided—the whole corpus, details of experimental results, etc. etc.. All the tasks performed were either innovative, or were important replications of previously-performed experiments. For example, the measurement of context-free vocalic frequencies, using so-called “nonsense”-words, is apparently something new in Slovene linguistics; while the measurement of vocalic frequencies in sentential contexts replicates Jože Toporišič’s experiments in some respects (e.g., in the actual texts, and in the combination of acoustics and psycholinguistic testing) but not in others (in particular, Toporišič employed one speaker and five judges; Srebot-Rejec had three speakers and two judges).

Also worth singling out for praise are other features, listed here in no special order. (a) The fact that the whole corpus is provided (pp. 252-64) makes replication (which is essential, see below) that much easier. (b) The author laudably insists that “all acoustic data are irrelevant unless we know how they are perceived” (p. 11), and consequently subjected all the data to psycholinguistic tests (using, as informants, Professors Tine Logar and Urška Snedic, who both worked with the late Jakob Rigler on word accents for the Academy Dictionary). (c) She is well aware of the limitations of instrumental analysis, but rightly points out that instruments can often do what humans cannot, e.g., (p. 232) demonstrate what occurs in indeterminate kinds of utterance. (d) She ventures from phonetics into phonology whenever this is relevant (and the relevance is sometimes enormous, see below): thus, on the subject of markedness, and for interlinguistic analytical comparisons (pp. 16, 231). (e) She is very much aware of the number of variables involved in the production and perception of “accent” and provides an admirable set of controlled experiments.

CRITICISM: There are however grounds for reproach; given the many virtues of this book and the research it describes, I make these criticisms reluctantly. First and foremost, the methodology is not fully described (and since replication of some of these experiments is necessary, this is a vital matter). Implicitly we understand that the methods of Peterson & Lehiste 1960 were followed; although these methods are now nearly 30 years old, they are apparently perfectly adequate to the task, and we have no reason not to consider the results reliable. However, some details are required. Srebot-Rejec writes about “measuring the frequency”, by which she must mean “the *fundamental* frequency”; but how did she do this? The examples of narrow-band sonograms (pp. 265-86) all show mirror-images of the lowest harmonics; this suggests that the measurements were taken in the lower harmonic ranges, whereas (as I am informed) it is normal to measure the tenth harmonics and divide the measurements by 10. If details of this kind had been provided, we would not have to take so much on trust.

My other criticisms are of four kinds—in order of (probable) least importance: (a) there is not enough discussion of the results and their implications (which I treat below) with reference to previous literature. (b) At times, the (mis)use of terminology becomes quite annoying. In particular, the term *tone* is usually, and is better, restricted to being used

phonologically, whereas *pitch* (the perceptual correlate of certain frequency changes) is the usual phonetic term. Srebot-Rejec, (especially in chapter I) frequently refers to *tone* and its derivatives when she is discussing phonetic matters. The same kind of point can be made about *stress*, often used where the term *accent* would be more suitable. There is a section (pp. xviii-xx) where technical terms are defined, but *stress* is omitted; yet we read, e.g., that “Stress is the result of length and pitch” (p. 223). (c) The statistical analysis of the results seems to be incomplete. True, all the results are averaged; but these means are not enough. The differences—among speakers, between listeners, and along each of the parameters so carefully controlled—should have been assessed for statistical significance. This lack makes the book more of a description than an analysis; and the results are so interesting that some idea of their statistical significance would have helped a great deal. (d) Finally—and this is crucially important—there is no discussion of the limitation of this study to three speakers and (in the auditory parts of the research) two listeners. The three speakers were chosen for being speakers of Standard Slovene [SLS] as spoken in Ljubljana, and for the timbre of their voices; otherwise, the choice was made “completely at random” (p. 13). Are they typical? The two listeners were chosen for their expertise (p. 14). In what respect do they represent native hearers of SLS? Normally, a scientific description of human behavior requires a representative sample; and the figure of 30 informants has become common in linguistic practice. If the sample is limited to just three, it is vital that these three should be representative; and there are substantial grounds for doubt on this score. It is in this respect, above all, that the study must be considered incomplete; and it is in this respect that the extremely interesting conclusions and implications cry out for replication. I am not suggesting that the whole gamut of experiments that were undertaken by Srebot-Rejec have to be replicated; but those that bear on her most startling conclusions must be.

THE SCHOLARLY CONTEXT: The first chapter (pp. 1-9) reviews previous literature, and (apart from the terminological inconsistencies just mentioned) is succinct, readable, and very useful. (Two omissions are noteworthy, but explicable. Lehiste (1961) was presumably omitted—in spite of being a spectrographic analysis of Slovene—because it was based on *prleški* dialect speech; and there is no discussion of Neweklowsky’s published research, we may suppose, because of his supervisory role. A third omission, that of reference to Tesnière (1929), may be much more serious; see below.) Towards the end, the chapter introduces the reader to a minor disagreement between Toporišič and Rigler on the subject of Slovene accent. Apparently, Rigler (who, we read, was very circumspect in his judgments on *accent* and preferred the relative safety of the traditional terms *acute/circumflex* to the implicit commitment to a specific parameter involved in terms such as *fall/rise* or *high pitch/low pitch*) was of the opinion that Toporišič overemphasized the importance of *pitch level*. It is clear from the history of the subject that the whole business is very complex. Everyone has more or less agreed where the accents are, and (for most words) which accent belongs where; but there has been little consensus as to how the accents differ. Some authors have specified the essential difference as being one of *intensity*; others have opted for *pitch contour*; others again, *pitch level*. Many have emphasized that two or more of these factors are involved. In addition, it has been pointed out that realizations vary according to (a) speed of talking, (b) the number of syllables involved, (c) the quality of the vowels, (d) stressedness, and (e) the surrounding and intervening consonants; that the distinctions are less obvious in Slovene than in (say) Serbo-Croatian; that dialect-mixture is very much involved; and, above all, that there is frequent neutralization of accentual oppositions under the effects of sentence intonations.

It is not surprising, indeed it is a healthy sign, that there should have been disagreements; and it is not surprising to read, either, that in effect, “most of these conclusions were correct . . . but incomplete,” (p. 8). What seems to have happened in the history of Slovene investigation into accent is that what amounts to a “team” of researchers, over 125 years, in their separate ways but all contributing, have gradually amassed a great deal of knowledge, each one unravelling part of this very complex subject. I suggest that Srebot-Rejec has taken the investigation an important step further; and, equally important, she is able to show how much previous investigators have understood, and why their analyses have seemed to contradict each other.

RESULTS: The results of this series of investigations are many, and all require more discussion than there is space for here. The most important are, I believe, the following:

The acute and circumflex accents are shown to differ in a complex way, and it is this complexity that explains inconsistencies among the results of previous research. In oversimplified terms, Srebot-Rejec concludes as follows: (a) all accented syllables (or, if they are non-final, all accented syllables plus the posttonic syllable) bear a rise in pitch followed by a fall; (b) the peak—the transition from rise to fall—is earlier in circumflexes than in acutes; hence, (c) acutes tend to have longer rises, and circumflexes tend to have longer falls, and (d) acutes may begin with brief drops in pitch before the rise begins; (e) when there is a posttonic syllable, this will always bear a falling pitch following a circumflex (since the peak was early), but it will probably bear the peak itself following an acute (since the peak is late); (f) the rise or fall in pitch “jumps” from one syllable to another if there is a non-sonorant consonant in between. This explains why some linguists have perceived differences in pitch-contour, others differences in pitch-level; and why the old terms “rising” and “falling” are, in a sense, valid.

Srebot-Rejec distinguishes four allotonic variants of the circumflex and nine of the acute, and depicts them all graphically (p. xxi). These diagrams clearly show how the “jumps” just described complicate the whole business, so much so that there is potential ambiguity even in the clearest circumstances. Given the many opportunities for lack of clarity, plus the general neutralization under sentence intonation, it is no wonder that the distinction is so difficult to hear and learn. Hence, if an accent is not absolutely typical, it may be interpreted in different ways by different listeners, depending on a whole series of factors which the author describes very clearly (if rather too succinctly), pp. 232-35.

Among other things, one finding is that the acute is perceptually more salient than the circumflex. This has implications for markedness, cf. below.

It also follows that attention to a subset of the total clues by previous researchers resulted in specific conclusions about saliency which were in no way inaccurate, even if they were incomplete. In other words, Srebot-Rejec’s conclusions demonstrate the accuracy of previous research—most recently, that by Neweklowsky and Toporišič. Although it may appear that she is correcting their conclusions, she is—by going further than her predecessors—actually complementing their work. Moreover, the results from her listening tests show that, in general, Rigler’s descriptions of SLS accentual position and type, and his marking of “indeterminate” vowels with a macron to show where there is no agreement, were accurate too.

Most interesting of all of Srebot-Rejec’s results, to my mind, is found not in her Chapter 8 (“Word Accent—Summary”) but in her Chapter 7 (“Vowel Duration Continued”); namely, the conclusion that in the SLS spoken in Ljubljana, the “expected length distinction does not exist any longer as none of the three speakers adheres to it,” (p. 211). Included here is the conclusion that /ə/ is no different in this respect than any of the other vowels:

for it, too, length depends on stress. This overall finding has important implications, cf. below.

IMPLICATIONS: I doubt that all the implications of these results were immediately apparent to this reviewer. Those that were, seem in some instances very important:

If the differences between acute and circumflex may so often be so slight, it is a relief to those without tone systems in their native languages that they are not required to learn the distinction in order to speak SLS. It is also a warning to fieldworkers who make forays into territories where Slovene dialects have these distinctions.

If the two accents differ in the place of the peak, this has (I am informed) important psychophysical implications, and can probably be tested using simulated, non-linguistic cues. Such testing is definitely required now, to corroborate these findings.

The fact that the acute accent is the more salient of the two suggests that it is the marked member of the pair. This conclusion is supported by five other arguments (p. 236), all of which I accept; for example, the circumflex is more common and is used more in borrowings. It is interesting to note, as does Srebot-Rejec, that where there is a posttonic syllable, the pitch peak and the stress coincide on the same syllable for a circumflex, but do not do so for an acute; this renders Slovene circumflexes more, and acutes less, like accented syllables in languages that do not have phonological tone; this typological parallel supports its marked quality.

Finally, a great deal of discussion (more than I have space for here) is required of the finding that none of the three speakers showed distinctive length. Thirty years ago Stankiewicz noted that in the speech of the younger generation in Ljubljana, “a new system is gaining ground which corresponds to the one suggested by Tesnière. In this system, which may be called *the colloquial form of the literary language*, stress alone acquires a distinctive function, whereas length is concomitant with non-final stress,” (1959: 75). If—and this is an enormous if!—the three speakers used in Srebot-Rejec’s experiments are prototypical Ljubljana speakers of SLS, *and* if the standard language is not to be something artificial in this respect, then we must be prepared to come to grips with the concept of a SLS in which length is totally predictable; for, although the three speakers used in this experiment spoke the older norm, the findings about vowel-duration are presumably valid for the newer norm too. If this assumption holds—another large if!—it follows that *length is predictable for both of the normative varieties of SLS*. On the one hand, therefore, what Stankiewicz (1959) called the “newer literary norm” and what Lencek (1982: 158) calls “the more innovative norm” of Slovene (which is described as having distinctive length and stress) will now have to be treated as prosodically equivalent to Stankiewicz’s “colloquial SLS,” with one important difference from what he described: it is enough to say that *length is concomitant with stress in all syllables*, and the word “non-final” must be omitted from his formulation; this is demonstrated more than sufficiently in Srebot-Rejec’s Chapter 7. On the other hand, what Stankiewicz and Lencek term, respectively, the “older literary norm” and the “conservative norm”—the variety which Srebot-Rejec’s three speakers spoke, and the variety described by Tesnière in 1929—must no longer be considered as having distinctive pitch and length; but rather, as it survives today at least, as having distinctive pitch, but neither distinctive stress nor distinctive length.

Here** I interject a necessary word of caution about Srebot-Rejec’s three speaker informants, according to the data provided (p. 13). Two are apparently speakers of Gorenjsko-based Ljubljana Slovene, with bases in and/or influences from Vevče and Kamnik; the third is a bilingual speaker of Slovene and Serbo-Croatian, whose “Slovene is perfect. . . , free of any trace of any Slovene dialect or of Serbo-Croatian.” While we

may accept the author's statement that all three "were chosen because they all speak [SLS] as spoken in Ljubljana" (p. 13), we are justified in questioning their prototypicality; for Ljubljana SLS is (by no means!) spoken only by Slovenes who are "dialect-free" or who have a base in the Gorenjsko dialect (with its relatively fast tempo and consequent smaller differences in quantity). There are, of course, great numbers of speakers of SLS "as it is spoken in Ljubljana" with parents (let alone, grandparents!) from other dialect bases. Particularly noticeable in this study is the lack of informants who represent both (a) the Dolenjsko base, with its more salient quantity oppositions, and (b) the native Ljubljana base, i.e., informants having all four grandparents born in Ljubljana. In this respect, the conclusions of the study must be considered as either limited (to a subset of SLS speakers) or tentative (until replicated satisfactorily). However, the findings must not be considered valueless; for, at the very least, they represent an important part of the sociolinguistic mishmash which *is* SLS.

FINAL REMARKS: The book concludes with two summaries, a brief one in German (pp. 239-40) and a longer one in Slovene (pp. 241-47); a bibliography (pp. 249-51), which omits some of the books mentioned in the text (thus the very important Fry 1958); the corpus; and a selection of exemplary sonograms (pp. 265-86). The text has (except for the terminological matters mentioned above) been expressed in excellent English, and the printing (except in the case of a few sonograms) is first-class. The binding, at least of my copy, is alas ineffective.

To suggest that the "older norm" is, or at least henceforward should be, characterized by distinctive pitch (with both stress and length predictable), and that the "newer norm" is or should be characterized by distinctive stress (with length predictable), is, for linguists, revolutionary. As already stated, however, it depends on two conditions. First, we must know if the three speakers used are indeed typical; so, careful replication is essential, with a "proper" sample of SLS speakers. If the replicated experiments should arrive at the same results, then those who prescribe the form of the literary language (for educational and communicative purposes) will have to reconsider their prescriptions: a daunting and, we should perhaps hope, an unnecessary task.

Tatjana Srebot-Rejec set herself extremely ambitious goals; if she faltered occasionally along the way, this does not detract from the enormous amount of work that obviously was put into this research, nor from the fact that by and large she attained her goals; nor, in particular, from the significance of what she achieved. She has presented us with some extremely interesting, and, as shown above, potentially extremely important results. Replication of her most implicative experiments, with a broad and indubitably representative sample of subjects, is urgent.

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NOTES

* I am not a specialist in experimental phonetics and hereby thank John Hogan, Department of Linguistics, University of Alberta, for his invaluable assistance; if I have made any acoustic misstatements, the fault is not his.

** For assistance with some of the facts and conclusions expressed in this paragraph, and essential help elsewhere in this review, I hereby thank Rado L. Lencek, Columbia University. I have abbreviated his comments, and the views expressed here are not necessarily his.

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Marjan Golobič. *A Glossary of Slovene-English False Friends. Glosar slovensko-angleških nepravnih prijateljev*. [= *Mostovi*, posebna številka]. Ljubljana: Društvo znanstvenih in tehniških prevajalcev Slovenije, 1988. iv + 26 pp.

The 'false friends' of the translator, according to the author's admirable (but perhaps not yet perfect?) definition on his first page, are words which may sound or look alike in the two languages concerned, but whose two semantic fields coincide partly or not at all.

One such, which has in my own experience caused at least fleeting headaches to colleagues in Slovenia, is the pair Slovene *frakcija* and English *fraction*. On the one hand, the Sln. word, in its most common political meaning: "organizirana skupina v stranki, ki ima o posameznih vprašanjih drugačno mnenje kot večina" (SSKJ = Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika), corresponds to the Eng. word *splinter-group*; on the other hand, an Eng. mathematical *fraction* is a Sln. *ulomek*; while, at the same time, in the strictly chemical context, Sln. *frakcija* is indeed identical to Eng. *fraction*; and, in addition, we have the Eng. word *faction* (without the 'r') which **does** mean an organized group within a political party, but may only be used "with opprobrious sense, conveying the imputation of selfish or mischievous ends or turbulent or unscrupulous methods" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1971). The only wonder is that the headaches caused to language-learners and translators by this 'false friendship' are only fleeting.

'False friends' are the source of so many language-learners' errors, many of which have become enshrined as classic 'howlers' or 'bloopers,' e.g., the notorious translation of Latin *bonae legiones Caesaris* as *the bony legs of Caesar*; Marjan Golobič's useful (but much too short) handbook sets out to explain what kinds of 'false friends' there are (in the theoretical first four pages) and then presents a list of about 400 Slovene-English examples.

In his theoretical section, Golobič makes some distinctions among various kinds of 'false friends' which I find extremely useful; in one instance, his classification appears faulty (see below), but this is—if true—of no great importance. However, these classifications are **not** explicitly used in the glossary, cf. below.

In the first place, he separates 'absolute' false friends (which serve as permanent traps for translators) from 'contextual' ones (which are sometimes translatable by their cognates, and sometimes not, i.e., where the relevant semantic fields overlap). An example of the former is the non-corresponding pair Sln. *ondulacija* (= Eng. *wave (in hair)*) and Eng. *undulation* (= Sln. *valovanje*). Examples of the latter are very numerous; apart from *frakcija/fraction* above, let us cite *kultura*, which is translated by *culture* in some contexts