

CONCEPTUAL OUTLINE

Digest

My research interests are mainly in the fields of phonetics and historical linguistics. As for phonetics, the research I have conducted concerns prosody, more specifically the intonational phenomenon of focus projection from a comparative/contrastive point of view (in English and Bulgarian). The experiments that I have conducted are based on experiments done for English (Gussenhoven, 1983). I have adopted the experiments taking into account some phonetic properties of Bulgarian as well as the perspective of a comparative approach. The phonetic and statistical analysis of the utterances is done with the help of the **Autosegmental-Metrical** (AM) theory and **Analysis of Variance** (ANOVA), respectively. Insofar as historical linguistics is concerned, I have touched upon comparisons among the Germanic languages regarding their historical phonological development and how it helps us understand the differences among them regarding which are the odd ones out in terms of syllable length and the overall impression it gives. I also teach English for Specific Purposes to students of International Relations and Economics.

Key words:

intonation / Hallidayan model of intonation / the Birmingham school of intonation / intonational focus projection (in English and Bulgarian) / historical linguistics / historical phonology of the Germanic languages / English for Specific Purposes

Description

Most of my research is within the framework of the Autosegmental-Metrical Phonology which is used as a means for transcribing utterances whereby pitch accents are transcribed as combinations of phonologically important targets along the intonational contour. This is used in turn to give evidence regarding the presence/absence of focus projection. I have also drawn comparison among some Germanic languages from the point of view of historical phonology.

[1] INTONATION

Intonation is a complex phenomenon which is often neglected in teaching. The effects of language contact in the form of interference can be observed at any linguistic level including intonation. Although there are practical models of intonation that have been developed in such a way as to be teacher- and learner-friendly, intonation remains largely ignored in the classroom, the tertiary level of education included.

Key findings:

- the role of intonation as a means of creating and contributing to meaning is underestimated
- apart from phonology and grammar, language contact concerns intonation as well

Issue further elaborated in:

Dimitrov, G., 2023, **Foreign language teaching from the point of view of language contact.** *Yearbook of UNWE*, 2023, (2), pp. 137-143. <https://doi.org/10.37075/YB.2023.2.09>

[2] FOCUS PROJECTION

Focus projection is an intonational phenomenon whereby an accent on one word marks not only the word but also the whole phrase or clause as new information. Focus projection in the sense specified above can theoretically be found in languages which make use of pitch accent to mark focus.

Key findings:

- focus projection is dependent on clause/sentence structure
- focus projection may be dependent on the number of intervening syllables between the potential accents as is the case with Bulgarian and English spoken by Bulgarians (language contact)

Issue further elaborated in:

Dimitrov, G., 2019, **Focus projection in Bulgarian English from an empirical perspective: comparison with British English.** (in:) *Verba iuvenium*. Yearbook of a National Scientific Conference for Students and PhD Students held in Plovdiv, Vol. 1, Chakarova, K. (Ed.). Plovdiv: 'Paisii Hilendarski' University Press, pp. 234-240. <https://lib.uni-plovdiv.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/772/G.%20Dimitrov.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1>

[3] HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

The major sound changes in the histories of the Germanic languages are well studied. There is, however, always room for nuanced studies focusing on certain details and adopting new perspectives. One study in this regard is an attempt to look into the view that English and Danish are the odd ones out among the West and the North Germanic languages regarding their phonological histories and certain present-day suprasegmental patterns.

Key findings:

- English and Danish stand out among the Germanic languages in the sense that their large-scale historical sound changes have contributed to a marked lack of sound-letter correspondence.
- Again due to their linguistic histories, English and Danish show a tendency towards shorter syllables in unstressed positions in comparison to other Germanic languages

Issue further elaborated in:

Dimitrov, G., 2023, **The two odd ones out among the North and the West Germanic Languages.** (in:) *Proceedings of the 13th Nordic Prosody Conference: Applied and Multimodal Prosody Research*, Sønderborg, Denmark, Niebuhr, O., Svensson, M. (Eds.), pp. 155-159.
<https://sciendo.com/chapter/9788366675728/10.2478/9788366675728-013>

[4] ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

English for Specific Purposes is a term used to refer to the teaching of English to learners specialising in a certain field such as international relations, economics, law, etc. Such courses focus on specific vocabulary, style, and register typical of the field of the learner. Although such courses aim primarily to help learners deal with the needs of the field using specialised language, some aspects of the domain of General English could also be included based on the level of the learners.

Key findings:

- there is room for intonation and/or focus projection to be included in such courses
- ESP textbooks are amenable to the inclusion of suprasegmental phenomena such as intonation and /or focus projection which can in turn be used as a means of improving learners' confidence and fluency

- additional practical tasks can be devised to facilitate the acquisition of suprasegmental/prosodic phenomena particularly when they align with the course syllabus and the needs of the learners

Issue further elaborated in:

Dimitrov, G., 2023, **Linguistic effect of focus projection in the ESP classroom: some pedagogical implications.** *Educational Role of Language Journal*, 2023, 10(2), pp. 87-93. <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2023.02.07>

Dimitrov, G., 2024, **Focus projection as a means of improving fluency: practical tasks reflecting a teacher's theoretical beliefs about an intonational phenomenon.** *Educational Role of Language Journal*, 2023, 12(2), pp. 33-39. <https://doi.org/10.36534/erlj.2024.02.03>