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Ilijana Krăpova and Cvetana Dimitrova, *Bălgarskijat ezik v evropejskija ezikov areal* [The Bulgarian Language within the European Linguistic Area] (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv. Kliment Ohridski," 2024), 383 pp.

The book under review is meant to define the place of Bulgarian within the European Linguistic Area. The task at hand appears to be worthwhile, as its successful completion should also provide an idea of how the Balkan Linguistic Area relates to the European Linguistic Area. The authors themselves, though, put forward a more immediate and fundamental need in writing their book, viz. the underrepresentation of Bulgarian in extant typological research on the European Linguistic Area (although Bulgarian is actually included in most of the feature maps in Haspelmath 2001).

The discussion of theoretical preliminaries in the first chapter reflects the current state of research. Among others the cultural and/or political impact on the formation of linguistic areas or unions is denied following Haspelmath (ch. 1.2.2.). It is true that the authors offer a less categorical outlook than Haspelmath by referring to the possible impact of written channels of cultural transmission in the case of Byzantine-Slavic culture. They seem to have an inkling that as yet the possible link between culture/politics and the formation of linguistic areas or unions has been only insufficiently explored. With respect to the Balkan Linguistic Union, the fact that the Balkans are marked off from the rest of Europe by an almost unbroken imperial tradition looms large (one forgets too easily that the Roman Empire persisted in Southeastern Europe until 1453, and that the Ottoman rise to power was actually meant as a continuation of this imperial tradition). As for Western Europe, the coinage 'Charlemagne Linguistic Area' is obviously indicative of Johan van der Auweras intuition that his linguistic findings might have something to do with politics. The same holds for George Thomas' 'Habsburg Linguistic Union'.

Chapter 1.3.1. is dedicated to the crucial issue of telling linguistic areas from unions. It offers an exhaustive presentation of what has been said about it, but apart from declaring it to be a matter of relative time depth there is little in terms of an elucidating answer to take away. Time depth at least would be a problematic criterion if one were to follow Haspelpmath's hypothesis that the European linguistic area is of a fairly recent date, probably not predating the 4th century AD. It would then be coeval to the Balkan linguistic area, which is more often than not qualified as a linguistic union (*Sprachbund*).

Finally, a decision had to be reached which list of Europeanisms should serve as a frame of reference for the present study. The authors follow earlier work by Heine & Kuteva (2006) in adopting the feature list of Haspelmath (2001), to which additional features are added, yielding a total of 22 Europeanisms. The heuristic value of some features, especially those that are defined in negative terms, like the lack of the inclusive-exclusive opposition on first person non-singular forms, remains doubtful. I would also call into question the principled division of Europeanisms vs. Balkanisms. Following Asenova (2018) the authors maintain that Balkanisms reflect true functional convergence whereas the Europeanisms as identified by Haspelmath remain on the surface of formal similarity (p. 42). Unfortunately, the authors do not make it entirely clear what this means. Applying the opposition of formal vs. functional features, it is difficult to see how the European instrumental-comitative syncretism would qualify as a mere formal property in contrast to the Balkan dative-genitive syncretism, which is indeed functional.

The second chapter is basically an inventory-taking that is meant to assess the Europeanness of Bulgarian on the basis of the 22 Europeanisms identified and selected in the first chapter. Each feature is treated in parallel subsections that detail issues of typology, functionality, the state of grammaticalization and the historical evolution, taking into account data from nonstandard varieties alongside standard language data. The presentation of the European features and their realization in Bulgarian offers basically a review of the extant literature, showing only few efforts to take a step beyond what has been already said.

The main body of the monograph consists of four chapters that single out four of the 22 features presented in chapter 2 for an indepth discussion. The four features in question are the *have*-perfect (ch. 3), external possessors (ch. 4), predicative possession (ch. 5) and case syncretism, viz. the genitive-dative syncretism and the instrumental-comitative syncretism (ch. 6). The choice of these prominent features should be obvious enough, but still a few words on why these four features have been selected would have been desirable. The internal structure of each chapter follows an identical pattern, highlighting (i) the functional properties and pathways of grammaticalization of the feature under scrutiny, followed by a discussion of the feature's presence in (ii) (Western) European languages, (iii) the Slavic languages, (iv) the Balkan languages, and (v) in Bulgarian. The last part is further subdivided into specific subsections detailing issues of the feature's functionality in Bulgarian, its evolutionary pathway and its dialectal variation. The examples in these main chapters are given in an idiosyncratic manner that does not always allow to easily track the features under consideration. One wonders why the authors did not apply interlinear glossing according to the Leipzig glossing rules.

Given the aim of the book to place Bulgarian on the map of the European linguistic area, those sections that specifically explore the selected features in Bulgarian count as the centerpieces of the monograph. And indeed it is here that the authors take the liberty to rely on their own insights and it is here that the exposition of the material is the most lucid, while the parts that basically summarize the extant literature, are often written in an abbreviated manner that does not always allow to get to the gist of what is meant. So we learn on pp. 170–171 about the difference between the *have*-construction and the older *be*-perfect, that both are resultative, but the latter is not strictly defined by its resultativeness, whatever that means. Alas, the concise summaries of what various scholars have said about it, are not very elucidating on where the dividing line between both form categories may actually run. In the end, it turns out to be a matter of the degree of grammaticalization. In Bulgarian the *have*-construction appears to have been stuck in its very initial phase. This being so, one should not expect a clear functional dividing line between the older and the new construction, anyway. It also struck me as counterintuitive that the authors reject this feature as a European characteristic of Bulgarian on the ground of its being found only in dialects that are heavily impacted by language contact. Isn't this what areal features are all about, viz. that they spread across linguistic borders through contact?

The genuine strength of the book lies in pointing out specific conditions and instantiations of European features that allow to properly assess the Europeanness of Bulgarian. By and large, this is a solid and exhaustive overview of extant research

on the European features of Bulgarian and at the same time a thorough indepth exploration of the specific details that help us to properly understand what the actual place of Bulgarian on the map of the languages of Europe is.

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