Editors' preface

Research into *Language Typology* poses two intriguing and related challenges to the linguist. One the one hand there is the challenge of isolating empirical data that either at long last seem to fill an inexplicable gap in what is commonly thought natural languages should be like, or that conversely call into question hitherto household assumptions about natural language behaviour. This is where elation often results as easily from a chance discovery, from a brief but gratefully received flash of lucidity, or from painstaking and laborious efforts. On the other hand, there is the task of demonstrating how the new findings fit into a pattern or take up a position that does not weaken our grip on the notion of language itself: any new proposal should both enlarge our insight into the focus area of investigation, but keep in check the range of possibilities that languages will be allowed to exploit. This is where typological work often seems hardest, where the enterprise immediately touches at the central issues of modern linguistics (taken first and foremost as deriving from the attempt at an explanation of the critical properties of the process of first language acquisition), and where one's closest colleagues' prods can be simultaneously welcome and inconvenient. In the course of the past two decades or so, typological research has benefited enormously from two consecutive theoretical advancements, to wit: the introduction of the theory of Principles and Parameters in the early 1980s, in Phonology grantedly a little more slowly than in Syntax, and the introduction of Optimality Theory in the early 1990s, the latter becoming especially popular in Phonology and Morphology, enabling a radically novel approach to issues and data both old and new. Not only did these developments push typological research to the forefront of the contemporary linguistic scene (by P & P's notion of parameterized principles, and OT's successor notion of the factorial typology of constraints), but the newly gained results set a very high standard not only for new theory-internal proposals but also for alternative approaches.

Considerations such as these motivated us to take *Typology in Phonology* as the central topic of the Fourth Binannual Phonology Workshop at the Re-

search Institute for Language and Speech (UiL-OTS) of Utrecht University, 22–23 June 2000. This choice turned out to be a felicitous one, and the workshop a successful two-day event, sufficiently successful at any rate to warrant the idea of a follow-up in the form of a published collection of papers on the same theme. Not all of the papers published in this special issue of *The Linguistic Review* were read at the workshop, and not all that were, made it to this collection, or made it to this collection in their original form, for a variety of reasons. In that sense, these combined papers stand on their own and are presented as a piece of the state of the art in phonological typological research at the beginning of the new millennium. We have high hopes that each of them can be perceived and may function as an interesting and stimulating contribution to this field. We are grateful to *TLR*'s editor-in-chief, Harry van der Hulst, for his almost matter-of-fact willingness to act as a host for this collection, to the Utrecht Research Institute for funding the original Workshop and helping us out with organizational matters, and to Klaus Abels, Diamandis Gafos, Janet Grijzenhout, and Marc van Oostendorp for assistance at several stages leading up to this volume. Finally, we thank the contributors for their cooperation and enthusiasm.

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