

Hypotheses and scenarios in North Germanic Tonogenesis

The presence of a lexical tonal distinction in North Germanic (*accent 1* vs. *accent 2*) occasions the following two things to explain (the explananda):

- A) The origin of a lexical representation
- B) The origin of a lexical distinction

A lexical *representation* is here a lexical tone or a lexical foot (inducing a tonal effect). A lexical *distinction* is here a contrast that is expressed in the tonal structure, and which isn't predictable from non-lexical information. An example would be the tonal contrast between the monomorphemes 'ketchup' 'id.' (accent 1) and 'senap' 'mustard' (accent 2) in Swedish. One of the members in this pair contains some lexical property that causes the tonal melodic difference. That lexical property is part of the representation.

Lexical distinctions are tied to lexical representations and that gives us a logical order for the explananda. We should have an account for explanandum A in order to properly address explanandum B, while the reverse does not hold.

Nevertheless, research tradition seems to have given primacy to the explanation of B, the origin of a lexical distinction, over and above A, the origin of a lexical representation. This is apparent in the importance given to two historical changes that are taken to be crucial for the development of the contrast in simplex forms (ca 1000–1200 AD): cliticization of the definite article (*and hinn* > *and-en* 'the mallard'), and epenthesis before sonorants (*segl* > *segel* 'sail'), both resulting in disyllabic forms with accent 1, which come to contrast with accent 2, taken to previously dominate in polysyllables.

I discuss the consequences of both orderings among the explananda, i.e., B>A and A>B. I contend that the B>A stance at best provides a *scenario* for explanandum A, but not a proper hypothesis. A *hypothesis* for explanandum A should propose to explain 1) how the marked tonal contour comes into being, and 2) how it gets phonologized in the relevant forms. The B>A stance fails on the phonologization issue.

The A>B stance shifts attention away from minimal pairs in simplex forms to postlexical tonal patterns that exist and persist in all dialects. I argue that tonal patterns and changes that are apparent today admit a hypothesis for tonogenesis in North Germanic that comes out favourably by Ockham's razor.

Selected references

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