THREE TYPES OF PROSODIC CORRELATIONS IN SOUTH GERMAN DIALECTS

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ABSTRACTS

The paper deals with three types of prosodic correlationes in South German dialects: correlation of gemination in High Alemannic, opposition of syllables with different place of quantitative syllable peak in North and Central Bavarian, correlation of syllable cut in Low Alemannic and High Franconian. This prosodic systems are considered as different stages of the evolution of Germanic quantity.

There are three major types of prosodic systems in South German dialects. High (South) Alemannic dialects - a group which most of Swiss German dialects belong to - are known to preserve a rather archaic quantitative order and syllabic structure. In the consonant system of these dialects two phoneme types are opposed to each other: the weak consonants - lenes - and the strong - fortes -, this opposition concerning all the consonants: stops, fricatives, resonants. Geminates, double consonants typical of Swiss German dialects, occuring in the intervocalic position or sometimes between resonant and vowel, are phonologically identified with fortes. This can be demonstrated by means of the rule formulated by L.Zinder [9]: sounds standing in complimentary distribution and alternating in the same morpheme constitute the same phoneme; e.g. in our case šit 'Holzscheit'- -šit-tə ' Holz spalten'. The occurence of long vowels before fortes (long) consonants or consonant clusters ([šāff] 'Schaf', [lȳt] 'Leute', [dōrff] 'Dorf') seems to testify "free quantity". This syllable shape (overlong syllable) is especially frequent in some South Swiss German dialects with "Auslautverhärtung", i.e. the neutralization of fortes-lenes opposition in favour of fortes at the word end. As for another "unusal" (in terms of modern West Germanic languages) syllable type in monosyllabics - short vowel before lenis, - they are frequent, when stressed, in few dialects (Gadmental, Haslital, Obwalden in the South and some dialects in the North-East of German speaking Switzerland)[2].In most Swiss German dialects, however, they are possible only in some word kinds - imperative verb forms, expressive words: [šlag] 'schlage!', [red] 'rede!' [kxog] swear-word [5] This syllable shape is quite seldom in case of a resonant in the word end. Whereas in monosyllabics lenis is in most cases preceded by a long vowel - because of the so-called High Alemannic lengthening (or Leichtschlussdehnung), i.e. lengthening of short vowel before lenis, short vowels in the open syllable of di- and polysyllabic words are quite usual, [šabə] (ša-bə) 'schaben', [redə] (re-də) 'reden'. While the syllabic division and shape are independent on the vowel length, the type of consonant plays here a decisive role. In the intervocalic position the syllabic boundary always occurs within fortis which is phonetically geminated whereas the lenis starts the next syllable: sit-tə 'Seite' -si-də 'Seide'. Thus a specific prosodic order in these dialects is present which could be called correlation of gemination.

A similar prosodic system is observed in South Bavarian dialects, whereas in Central and North Bavarian the syllable structure obeys the rule: long vowel+lenis (short) consonant-short vowel+fortis (long) consonant (Pfalz's law), these two syllable types often alternating in morphological paradigms, e.g.the opposition of singular and plural forms of substantives: [grīf]-[griff] 'Griff',[fīš]-[fišš]'Fisch', [šdōg]-[šdek]'Stock'. This correlation has some peculiarities differing it from similar prosodic quantitative opposition in other Germanic languages. The alternation of fortes and lenes depending on the length of preceding vowels takes place in consonant clusters as well: [gōsd]-[gesst] 'Gast'- -'Gäste'; long as opposed to short can be diphthongs and affricates too:[hāud]-[hait] 'Haut' - 'Häute', [khōbf]- -[khepf] 'Kopf'-'Köpfe'; resonants do not take part in this correlation being always weak: [hūnd] - [hunt] 'Hund' - 'Hunde'. We consider this correlation as a prosodic one, as an opposition of syllable types differing in the place of syllabic quantitative peak, although the character of this opposition remains disputable [3].

In Low Alemannic and High Franconian a third prosodic order is represented - the syllable cut correlation or the opposition of close and loose contact between a stressed vowel and the following consonant, typical of many West Germanic languages and dialects, e.g. modern standard English, German and Dutch. The prosodic character of this correlation becomes apparent in syllabication depending on the vowel length which in turn is the phonetic sign of contact: [līdə] (lī-də), -[lidə] 'leiden' - 'lauten' (Low Alemannic - Alsatian dialect).

Modern dialects reflect different stages of prosodics development. They show general trends of syllable structure evolution common to all Germanic languages, but also some specific High German features

An important consequence of the Second Sound Shift was the elimination of the opposition voiceless-voiced in the consonant system of South German dialects. The reduction of the opposition of three consonant raws : lenes-fortes-geminates to that of only two: lenes-fortes with geminates as positional variants took place - as many scholars believe -

already in the Old High German [6]. Thus the consonant system here was based on the opposition of lenes derived from Germanic voiced and fortes derived from Germanic voiceless stops which were shifted according to the Second Sound Shift, Germanic geminates and long consonants resulted from the West Germanic consonant lengthening. The shifted fricatives were long, strong and in the intervocalic position geminated. Germanic p>ff merged with Germanic ff, k>xx merged with Germanic xx, t>zz. Thus the group of fortes was enlarged, the opposition of fortes-lenes became universal for the whole system. Only in the dental raw the triple opposition d-t-tt and also s-ss-zz was preserved for a longer time. After the coincidence of z, zz (<t) with s, ss and t (<d) with tt (<dd, þþ) the consonant system was simplified, the opposition of fortes-lenes intimately connected with syllabication and syllable shape became strengthened This consonant system is preserved to-day in Swiss German dialects.

Further evolution of syllabic structure was directed toward the interrelation of vowel and consonant quantity inside the word. According to the assumption of E.Kranzmayer a trend to the equal quantity of all the words got developed [4]. As the Swiss German dialects indicate, the first step of this development could be the vowel lengthening in monosyllabics before lenes - first of all of open vowels before resonants. This statement conradicts the widespread concept according to which the lengthening in monosyllabics occured by analogy with that in open syllable, Many new monosyllabic words ending in fortes resulted from the apocope which took place in Central and North Bavarian dialects: [šiff]<[šiffə]. They contrast with old monosyllabics built according to the pattern: long vowel+lenis. As a result of all these processes a quantitative- prosodic order referred to above as the correlation of the syllable peak place was formed. There are reasons to suppose that a prosodic correlation like this (sometimes called isochrony) always preceded the syllable cut correlation in the history of West Germanic languages [8].

The next step was the elimination of geminates which became phonologically redundant. In Central German dialect area including also some South German dialects - High Franconian, Low Alemannic - these processes were connected with the merge of fortes and lenes - consonant weakening[7].Because of very few oppositions in the consonant system of these dialects the syllable cut (contact) correlation became an important means of differentiation: liuten > lit-ten (with delabialization iu [y] > i and vowel shortening)> modern Alsatian [lidə] with close contact 'lăuten' - līdan> modern Alsatian [līdə] with loose contact 'leiden' [1].

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