

Two reanalyses in Franconian tonogenesis

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This talk presents a formal account of two reanalyses that learners carried through in the history of the Franconian tone languages. These two reanalyses set the stage for the later development of the tone contrast.

The first reanalysis occurred when learners reinterpreted phonetically lengthened but phonologically short (monomoraic) vowels in open syllables as phonologically long (bimoraic) vowels. The proposal is that before this reanalysis the tonal movement associated with the focus intonation (i.e. H*L or L*H) was aligned with the right edge of the first mora of the word (i.e. with the right edge of the first syllable for monomoraic open syllables, and with the centre of the first syllable for bimoraic long vowels), and that in the reanalysis of lengthened vowels the tonal movement stayed aligned with the right edge of the vowel. I give an OT account in terms of structural and cue constraints, whose rankings for learners are supported by independent properties of the language. The end result of the first reanalysis is that the language has become a lexical mora-accent language, i.e., the tonal movement occurs after the first mora for words with originally long vowels ("acute accent"), and after the second mora for words with lengthened vowels ("circumflex accent").

The second reanalysis occurred when learners reinterpreted phonetically silent but structurally present final schwas as phonologically absent. The proposal is that for circumflex words the tonal movement associated with the focus intonation (which was still aligned after the parental second mora, i.e. before the "final" consonant) was audible inside the word if the final consonant was voiced, but not if it was voiceless, and that therefore the circumflex was reinterpreted as an acute for the voiced cases but not for the voiceless cases. I again give an OT account in terms of structural and cue constraints, whose rankings for learners are supported by independent properties of the language, such as the prior presence of the acute-circumflex contrast. The end result of the second reanalysis is that the number of contrastive situations was greatly raised, a fact that may have contributed to the survival of the contrast to the present day.

A conspicuous property of these accounts is that in contradistinction with an earlier analysis (Boersma 2002), no correlation between voicing and low tone has to be assumed. This is important because any account of these facts will have to work both for the H*L case (declarative focus) and for the L*H case (interrogative focus).