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Preaspiration and tonal accents as Northern Gaelic features

Or: Reconsidering contact origins

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Preview of argument

• Preaspiration and tonal accents in Scotland and Ulster show the classic pattern of innovating centre vs archaic periphery

• This presupposes that the 'archaic' pattern was once spread throughout the entire area

An early form of both phenomena must have been present in the entire Northern Gaelic area

– No special status for areas of heavy Norse settlement

– Reasonable internal reconstruction

• No need for recourse to contact

1 Reconstruction

1.1 Preaspiration

Preaspiration in the Gaelic languages


ο. No preaspiration: most of Ireland, eastern and southern periphery in Scotland

1. /hp bt bk/: Lewis, NW Scottish mainland, (West) Ulster (Ní Chasaide & Ó Dochartaigh 1984, Ní Chasaide 1986)

2. /hp ht xk/: Western Isles south of Lewis, Skye, Inner Hebrides, parts of Ross-shire

3. /xp xt xk/: Lorn, Lochaber, central mainland as far east as Banffshire on place-name evidence (Grant 2002)
Reconstruction

- Weak preaspiration (the 'Lewis' type) is the most archaic
  - Interaction between preaspiration and *xt → xk: lack of boc—bochd merger in Lewis implies lack of xk → hk sound change (provided the chronological assumptions hold)
- /hk/ becomes /xk/ for functional reasons: preaspiration is longest before [k] (Ni Chasaide 1986, Clayton 2010)
- Generalization of *h → x before a stop

The Scottish perspective

- Focusing just on Scotland, the spatial pattern is not immediately clear:
  - /hp ht hk/ is ‘peripheral’ on the islands, but intrudes far into the mainland
  - Both /hp ht xk/ and /hp ht hk/ are ‘central’ in some sense
- Several conceivable interpretations
- In particular, it is possible to see preaspiration spreading from the Western Isles to the east and south
The Northern Gaelic perspective

- In a pan-Gaelic perspective, /ʰpʰ tʰ kʰ/ is clearly a *peripheral* pattern
- Preaspiration in Irish
  - Securely attested in Gaoth Dobhair (Ní Chasaide & Ó Dochartaigh 1984, Ní Chasaide 1986)
  - Possibly hiding behind some of the descriptions of ‘fortis’/‘lenis’ contrast, e.g. Teileann (Wagner 1959)?
- Perhaps less obligatory than in Scotland
- Crucially: Lewis and Irish preaspiration are of the same type and *unlike* that in /hp ht xk/ dialects (Ní Chasaide 1986)
- /ʰpʰ tʰ hʰ kʰ/ vs /hp ht xk/

Ulster Irish
Lewis Gaelic

Preaspiration and tone accents as Northern Gaelic features
North Uist Gaelic

Mapping the interpretation

- Two possible interpretations:
  - Lewis and West Ulster show the same archaic feature
  - The developments in Lewis and West Ulster are independent but not far advanced
    - Corollary: this kind of preaspiration is relatively easy to get
    - Exactly this kind of preaspiration is attested in Welsh
- In either case: more advanced preaspiration systems should have gone through this stage!

Discussion

- This map ignores potential loss of preaspiration in peripheral areas (cf. /p t xk/ system in SE Argyll)
- Even so: some form of preaspiration must have been current in most of the Northern Gaelic area
  - For discussion of Northern Gaelic, see Ó Maolalaigh (1997), Ó Buachalla (2002), Ó Muircheartaigh (2014)
- The initial spread of preaspiration does not show a strong affinity with areas of extensive Norse settlement
1.2 Tone accents

Tonal accents in Gaelic

- Lewis ‘accent 1’: early rise + fall
- Lewis ‘accent 2’: late rise, no fall
- Accent 1: historical disyllables
  - Hiatus words: adha
  - Plain disyllables: balach
- Accent 2: historical monosyllables
  - Plain monosyllables: âth
  - Svarabhakti words: balg
- Alternations: Lewis leabhar [ʎɔːr] vs leabhraichean [ʎɔːrɪçən]

Diversity of realization

- Lewis: tonal accent as described (Oftedal 1956)
- Applecross (Ternes 2006): additional falling onglide in accent 2, otherwise like Lewis (in isolation)
- SGDS transcriptions of hiatus (Ó Dochartaigh 1994–1997, vol. 1, §7.6.5)
  - /ʔ/: glottal stop (see also Holmer 1938)
  - /|/: ‘salient hiatus’
  - /-/: ‘hiatus with no glottal catch’ (pitch? intensity?)
  - Two symbols that mostly represent falling tone

Sample map: SGDS 474 giuthas
Pitch and glottalization

- Glottalization can be reasonably connected with falling tone


- Falling tone across a syllable boundary presupposes a high tone towards the end of the first syllable

- But the high tone in Lewis is on the post-tonic syllable: why?

Pitch in Ulster Irish

- Dalton & Ní Chasaide (2005)
  - Gaorth Dobhair nuclear accent is L*+H, H aligned at the right edge of phrase
  - Cois Fharraige: nuclear accent is H*+L, left alignment of H

- The Ulster nuclear accent is (again) similar to the Lewis L*+H, except for the alignment of the trailing tone

- Ulster and Scotland show later peaks compared to Connacht and Munster

- Rising nuclear accents: typologically highly unusual (Köhnlein 2013)
Peak delay

- Rightward drift of H tone: *peak delay* (Ladd 2008)
- Connacht/Munster H*+L is the original system
- Northern Gaelic shows various stages of peak delay
  1. Lewis: trailing H on next syllable
  2. West Ulster: trailing H on right boundary
  3. Falls/creaks: right-drifting H runs into L

Glottalization and stress-to-weight

- South Argyll: glottalization in all main-stressed light syllables: *teth, radan*
- But not *tapaidh* [ˈtʰahpi], *beò* [ˈpjoː]
  - Islay (Holmer 1938)
  - (South) Jura (G. Jones 2000, 2006, 2010)
  - Colonsay (Scouller 2015)
- Stress-to-weight (Smith 1999) generalized to all stressed syllables
- No glottalization when second mora present from another source
  - Consonant cluster
  - Preaspiration
  - Long vowel or diphthong

Stress-to-weight elsewhere

- Ó Maolalaigh (2014) rounds up the evidence
  - ‘*Gestoßene Silbe*’ in Ulster Irish monosyllables, especially Tyrone (Stockman & Wagner 1965, Hughes 1994)
  - [h]-epenthesis in light monosyllables all across Ulster
- Glottalization and/or aspiration of sonorants: *fear* [fax], *darna* [daʔRnə] (G. Jones 2010) vs [darhnə] (Holmer 1938)
  
  This is more similar to the stød of Danish
  
  Although Danish also has varieties with stød on short vowels (Ringgaard 1960, Ejskjær 1967)
- Consonants are commonly described as ‘fortis’ after short vowels in Ulster: might this be glottalization?
- Connection between glottalization and sonorant pre-stopping in Manx? Both after short vowels
- In Northern Sámi, some dialects have sonorant pre-stopping (Sammallahti 1998) corresponding to preglottalization in others (Bals Baal, Odden & Rice 2012)
Gaith Dobhair \textit{ba}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Epenthetic [h] is more difficult to connect to tone typologically
  \item Possible solution: S. Watson (1996), though see Ó Maolalaigh (2010)
  \item However, /h/-epenthesis in light syllables is unmotivated unless the stress-to-weight has already been established
  \item Stress-to-weight arises from tonal developments?
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Summary on glottalization}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Tones and glottalization all go back to peak delay
  \item Peak delay is a Northern Gaelic feature
  \item South Argyll, (East?) Ulster and Man: potentially most innovative area
  \item Lewis tone is \textit{archaic}
  \item Peak delay is typologically \textit{not} unusual
  \item\footnote{Recurrent process in North Germanic (Bye 2004, Hognestad 2012)}
\end{itemize}

\section{Discussion}

\subsection{Preaspiration: why Norse?}

Norse and Gaelic preaspiration
Preaspiration and tone accents as Northern Gaelic features

- Is the Gaelic stop system particularly similar to Norse anyway?
- Yes: Marstrander (1932), Oftedal (1947), Borgstrøm (1974)
- Special feature of the Gaelic stop system: contrast between (pre/post)aspirated and fully voiceless unaspirated (Ó Murchú 1985)
- This system in North Germanic: Icelandic, potentially SW Norway
- Preaspiration in North Germanic found in other systems (Pétur Helgason 2002, Pétur Helgason & Ringen 2008, Ringen & van Dommelen 2013)
- Icelandic preaspiration is unusual in a North Germanic context (Pétur Helgason 2002)
- Icelandic preaspiration is similar to some, but not all types of Gaelic preaspiration (Ní Chasaide 1986)

The internal scenario

- Preaspiration is commonly found at least as an option in systems with postaspiration in stressed onsets
- Northern Gaelic innovation: ‘non-normative’ preaspiration across the entire area (now West Ulster, Lewis) ⇒ ‘normative’ preaspiration (now Uist, North Argyll...)
- Parallel development in North Germanic: preaspiration is ‘normative’ in Iceland and bits of Norway (?) but mostly not

Summary on preaspiration

- Old point 1: preaspiration can be an internal innovation (Ó Baoill 1980, Ní Chasaide 1986, Ó Murchú 1985, Ó Maolalaigh 2010)
- New point 1: preaspiration must have been Northern Gaelic in extent (adumbrated by Ó Maolalaigh 2010)
- No specific relationship to areas of Norse settlement
- Old point 2: Gaelic preaspiration isn’t a unified phenomenon, and only partially similar to Norse (Ní Chasaide 1986)
- New point 2: little evidence that Norse preaspiration can have been a source for Gaelic, let alone that it must have

2.2 Tone accents: why Norse?

Why Norse?

- Typologically unusual: happy to talk about this (Iosad 2015)
- Borgstrøm (1974): Gaelic rising pitch is similar to Western Norwegian accents
- No wonder! Western Norwegian accent 2 has a later peak than accent 1 by peak delay (Hognestad 2012)
- Typologically almost trivial
Peak delay: a Northern Gaelic feature

- By the same reasoning: various kinds of delayed peaks are common across the Northern Gaelic area

- Much more instrumental work needed to understand the hiatus realization (Brown 2009)

- However, peak delay must have covered areas like Ulster and all of Argyll, not generally associated with strong Norse influence

- The case is slightly less secure for lack of reliable data, but similar reasoning to above

2.3 The case for contact?

- Contact is impossible to deny in view of placename and lexical evidence

- Multiple causation of language change is not unusual (Thomason 2000, 2010)

- The early stages of the Gaelic innovations may have arisen at about the same time as the early stages of the relevant innovations in Norse

- This is contentious at least for tone (Riad 1998, 2003, 2005)

- No good understanding of the diachrony for preaspiration yet

- Some sort of (mutually?) reinforcing development is difficult to rule out at this stage — and probably undesirable?

Summary

- Both preaspiration and tonal accents are pan-Northern Gaelic innovations

- Their distribution shows little cohesion with areas of strong Norse influence

- Similarities between relevant phenomena in North Germanic and Gaelic are explainable by typologically common processes

- Contact influence is difficult to exclude, but neither are the arguments for it particularly compelling

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