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THE SLOVENE NEO-CIRCUMFLEX REVISITED

Keith Langston disagrees with my account of the Slovene neo-circumflex. He rejects compensatory lengthening as an explanation of the neo-circumflex, primarily on theoretical grounds. His “moraic analysis” is quite unacceptable to me because it starts from an a priori segmentation of the speech flow. In a strict autosegmental approach, the segmentation of the speech flow should be part of the analysis and not be given a priori. Langston’s rejection of Van Wijk’s law, according to which the simplification of certain consonant clusters yielded lengthening of the following vowel, is based on a misguided theoretical interpretation which led him astray.

Keith Langston disagrees with my account of the Slovene neo-circumflex (Kortlandt 1976 = 2011: 51–58, Langston 2007). Instances of secondary circumflex alternating with a rising tone in related forms are the following (cf. Jaksche 1965: 19–29):

- (1) gen.pl., e.g. *lîp, brâtov, lêt*,
- (2) masc. loc.sg., e.g. *o brâtu*,
- (3) masc. dat.sg., e.g. *k brâtu*,
- (4) masc. inst.pl. and loc.pl., e.g. *z brâti, pri brâtih*,
- (5) inst.sg. *a*-stems, e.g. *lîpo*,
- (6) inst.du. and inst.pl. *a*-stems *-âma, -âmi*,
- (7) neuter plurals, e.g. *lêta, vîna*,
- (8) oblique cases of *i*-stems, e.g. *nîti*,

- (9) present tense, e.g. *mâžeš*, *mîsliš*,
- (10) passive participle, e.g. *mâzan*,
- (11) masc. *l*-participle, e.g. *sêdəl*, *trêšəl*,
- (12) fem. *l*-participle, e.g. *pisâla*, *nosîla*,
- (13) imperatives such as *nesî-me*, *ženî-se*, also *tresîmo*, *tresîte*,
- (14) imperatives such as *pâdaj*, *igrâjte*,
- (15) infinitives such as *lâjati*,
- (16) supine, e.g. *spât*,
- (17) definite adjective, e.g. *stâri*, *stâro*,
- (18) comparative, e.g. *stârši*,
- (19) relational adjectives, e.g. *bâbji*, *bâbski*, *bâbin*,
- (20) derived nouns with jers, e.g. *prâvda*, *slâmka*, *lîpnik*, *lêtnik*, *zdrâvje*,
brâtstvo,
- (21) derived masc. nouns such as *rîbič*,
- (22) trisyllabic fem. nouns such as *zabâva*,
- (23) *i*-stems such as *mîsəl*, *kâzən*,
- (24) *ja*-stems such as *krâja* (cf. Kortlandt 1976: 4 = 2011: 54),
- (25) masc. nouns such as *mêsec*, *jâstreb* (cf. Kortlandt 2011: 55, 265),
- (26) adverbs such as *lêtos*, *jûtri*, *drêvi*.

These instances fall into the following categories:

I. After the loss of the acute (broken, glottalized) tone, analogical lengthening yielded a falling tone in the gen.pl. forms (1) (cf. Kortlandt 1978: 285 = 2009: 114).

II. Lengthening before a weak jer which was lost in the following syllable (18, 19, 20, also 11 and 23, where the epenthetic vowel is more recent, with analogical extension in *trêšəl*). At this stage, word-final weak jers had already been lost after a single consonant, e.g. *stâr*.

III. Lengthening before a long vowel in the following syllable which was shortened (2 through 10, 12, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26), analogically in *k brâtu* (3), *vîna* (7), *lâjati* (15).

IV. Lengthening in the imperative before a clitic and analogical extension (13, 14).

V. The falling tone in the supine (16) is a result of Meillet's law and therefore much older (cf. Stang 1957: 154).

Langston rejects compensatory lengthening (II and especially III above) as an explanation of the neo-circumflex, primarily on theoretical grounds (2007, cf. also 2006: 280–283). His “moraic analysis” is quite unacceptable to me because it starts from an a priori segmentation of the speech flow. In a strict autosegmental approach, the segmentation of the speech flow should be part of the analysis and not be given a priori (cf. Kortlandt 1972: 137–149). Similarly, Langston’s rejection of Van Wijk’s law, according to which the simplification of certain consonant clusters yielded lengthening of the following vowel (cf. Kortlandt 2011 *passim*), is based on a misguided theoretical interpretation which led him astray. Van Wijk’s law must not be compared to Hayes’ “onset deletion” (thus Langston) but rather to his “glide formation” (1989: 280), as in Old Icelandic *ljúga* ‘to lie’ < **liugan*. As theoretical considerations can easily embody the reflection of rationalized prejudice (cf. Kortlandt 2010: 7–20), it is important to give priority to an empirical approach.

The posttonic long vowels which gave rise to the neo-circumflex have different origins:

- (i) Original non-acute long vowels and diphthongs (2, 4, 8, 9, 19, 21, 25, 26).
- (ii) Post-posttonic long vowels which lost the acute at an early stage (Kortlandt 2011: 163, 298) and became directly posttonic as a result of Dybo’s law (*ibidem* 171, 305), e.g. *ženâmi*, *zabâva* (6, 7, 12, 22). The remaining acute long vowels were shortened (*ibidem* 168, 172, 303, 306).
- (iii) Long vowels which originated from Van Wijk’s law (9, 24, cf. *ibidem* 169, 304).
- (iv) Long vowels which originated from contractions in posttonic syllables (5, 10, 17).

According to Langston (2007: 90), »it is puzzling why we find reflexes of the neocircumflex in the L sg. of masculine nouns (e.g., Slovene *brâtu*) but not in the N sg. of most feminine nouns (e.g., Slovene *krâva*)« and »both the *a*-stem N sg. ending and the *u*-stem L sg. ending would have originally had a long vowel and they were both accented in mobile stems«. The point is that the loc. sg. ending of the *u*-stems **-û* < **-êu* was non-acute and therefore was not shortened whereas the nom.sg. ending of the *a*-stems **-aH* was shortened under the stress and in the first posttonic syllable, e.g. in *krâva*, but not in the second posttonic syllable which became the first posttonic syllable as a result of Dybo’s law, e.g. in *ženâmi*, *zabâva*, *osnôva*, *nosîla*, *pisâla*, also nom.pl. *telêta*, but not in *gostîla*, *kovâla*, *sedêla*, *želêla*, *mîslîla*, *vidêla*, where the neo-circumflex was only introduced analogically in a limited area (cf. Rigler 1970). It is difficult to see how this distribution arose if it was not conditioned by the following long

vowel. In the neuter plural form unstressed **-ā* was generalized at a stage when stressed **-āH* had not yet lost the acute tone, as is clear from *lêta* versus *drvà*. At a later stage the neuter plural long ending spread in Čakavian, Posavian and Slovak (cf. Kortlandt 2011: 326).

I shall not go into a discussion of the thematic vowel in the present tense because this topic has been dealt with in detail by Willem Vermeer (1984: 361–386). After stems in a consonant (where Van Wijk's law operated), the expected quantity of the thematic vowel in the three accent paradigms is as follows (cf. Kortlandt 2011: 37–39 for the *a*-flexion and the adjective):

(a) short *-e-* in the *e*-flexion, long *-ē-* yielding neo-circumflex in the *je*-flexion, long *-ī-* yielding neo-circumflex in the *i*-flexion,

(b) short *-e-* in the *e*-flexion, short *-e-* after retraction of the stress from long *-ē-* in the *je*-flexion, short *-i-* after retraction of the stress from long *-ī-* in the *i*-flexion,

(c) long *-ē-* if the stress was retracted from a final jer and short *-e-* elsewhere in the *e*-flexion, long *-ē-* in the *je*-flexion, long *-ī-* in the *i*-flexion.

It is easy to see how either the short or the long vowel could be generalized in different flexion classes. Langston writes (2007: 86): »there is no obvious explanation for why long vowels would have been shortened only in the present tense endings in *-e* and not in other environments in the Čakavian dialects that have preserved posttonic length (e.g., Novi 3 sg. *plāće* vs. *oprāvī*)«. It appears that the neo-circumflex was automatically shortened when the long *-ī-* was restored here, probably because there was a constraint on consecutive long vowels at that time (cf. Steinhauer 1973: 151–154). The neo-circumflex in Novi *čûje*, *ubîje*, *šîjēn* (Langston l.c., fn. 13) is due to generalization in the *je*-flexion (cf. Steinhauer 1973: 261). In the definite adjective, the only Novi example of a neo-circumflex is *stârī*, *-ā*, *-ō* (cf. Steinhauer 1973: 249) while all other instances of accent paradigm (a) have a short stem vowel before the long ending. The isolated example is evidently a relic form with restored length in the endings.

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Ponovno o slavenskom neocirkumfleksu

Sažetak

Keith Langston ne slaže se s mojim mišljenjem o slavenske neocirkumfleksu. Odbija kompenzacijsko duljenje kao objašnjenje nastanka neocirkumfleksa, ponajprije iz teorijskih razloga. Njegova “analiza morâ” za mene je potpuno neprihvatljiva jer počinje od apriorne segmentacije govornoga tijeka. U strogome autosegmentnom pristupu segmentacija govornoga tijeka trebala bi biti dio analize i ne bi trebala biti dana apriorno. Langstonovo odbijanje Van Wijkova zakona, prema kojemu pojednostavljene određene konsonantske skupine doprinosi produljenju sljedećega vokala, temelji se na pogrešnoj teorijskoj interpretaciji koja ga je odvela u zabludu. Zanaglasni dugi vokali koji su iznjedrili neocirkumfleks imaju drugačije podrijetlo: 1. Izvorni neakutirani dugi vokali i diftonzi; 2. Za-zanaglasni dugi vokali koji su izgubili akut u ranijemu razdoblju i postali direktno zanaglasni kao rezultat Dyboova zakona; 3. Dugi vokali koji potječu iz Van Wijkova zakona; 4. Dugi vokali koji potječu od kontrakcija u zanaglasnim slogovima.

Ključne riječi: akcentuacija, slavenski neocirkumfleks, akut, kompenzacijsko duljenje, Van Wijkov zakon, Dyboov zakon

Key words: accentuation, Slovene neo-circumflex, acute, compensatory lengthening, Van Wijk’s law, Dybo’s law