

"The Contribution of Language Documentation to Historical Phonology"
Bonny Sands, Northern Arizona University

Textbooks and courses on linguistic fieldwork typically lack sections on the role that language documentation can play in historical linguistics. Similarly, introductions to historical linguistics rarely if ever discuss how fieldwork can affect linguistic reconstructions. These gaps exist even though a large number of field linguists are also historical linguists. This paper describes how language documentation can directly inform phonological reconstruction by looking at a number of seemingly disparate sound changes involving lateral obstruents. New data is one obvious way in which documentation can increase knowledge about historical phonology. This is particularly true when the focus is on relatively rare sounds. The increased knowledge about the production and perception of sounds made through impressionistic and instrumental phonetic analyses directly aids in understanding what types of sound changes are more likely than others. Phonological reconstruction, in turn, can play a role in aiding phonetic descriptions and contributing to phonetic theory.

In this paper, I will present fieldwork and comparative work on Cushitic, Ju-#Hoan, and !Ui languages which supports the existence of a previously unknown sound change mechanism by which dorsal obstruents become lateral obstruents. Phonological reconstructions involving lateral obstruents typically involve lateral sonorants or palatals changing into lateral obstruents (Steiner 1977) and do not involve velar or uvular sounds. However, the sound change $t\ddot{s} > k$ has been hypothesized for Northeast Caucasian (Trubetskoy 1922) and Chadic (Ibriszimow 1990). Documentation of a sound change mechanism by which dorsal sounds become laterals may help account for the presence of languages which have lateral obstruents but no lateral sonorant /l/ (Maddieson 2005) and may also call into question previous reconstructions involving lateral obstruents. Perhaps more surprisingly, these reconstructions suggest that the role of larynx height in the production of click consonants has been not well-enough understood.

I argue that the lateral attachments of the hyoglossus muscle may pull down, creating a sound with velar lateral friction, during the production of sounds with a raised larynx and high tongue body (i.e. clicks and dorsal ejectives), particularly in the environment of low vowels. In Dahalo, a palatal lateral ejective affricate /c_l'/ is argued to be a reflex of Proto-Cushitic *k'. In #Hoan, a recently documented lateral velar ejective affricate /k_l'/ is argued to be a conditioned reflex of Proto-Ju-#Hoan *k_l'. Palatal clicks *# in Proto-!Ui and Proto-Ju are argued to result in click and non-click laterals in daughter languages !Xegwi and Ekoka !Xung. The contrast between anterior and dorsal lateral obstruents in Dahalo and Ekoka !Xung is not well-documented phonetically, but is supported by the phonological reconstructions.

Ibriszimow, D. (1990). Notes on Chadic lexical comparisons: selected issues. *Folia Orientalia* (Kraków), 27: 199-216.

Maddieson, I. (2005). Lateral consonants. *The World Atlas of Language Structures*. ed. M. Haspelmath, M. S. Dryer, D. Gil & B. Comrie. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 38-42.

Trubetskoy, N. (1922). Les consonnes latérales des langues caucasiennes-septentrionales. *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*, 23: 184-204.