

Grimm's and Verner's laws as a single process

Roland Noske (Lille 3 University)

Scheer (2004) raises the question of unattested intermediate stages in language change. An example is the traditional view on Verner's Law (VL): the transition of PIE voiceless stops to Proto-Germanic voiced stops after unstressed vowels, via the detour of fricatives. By virtue of the spirantization part of Grimm's Law (GL), there is a change $T > \beta$ (where the upper case characters generalize over the place of articulation), then the voiceless fricatives get voiced by VL ($\beta > \eth$) in a position after an unstressed vowel, and finally an occlusivization process takes place ($\eth > D$).

There is no record at all, however, of the alleged intermediate stage of voiced fricatives. As pointed out by Verner (1877:101) himself, a direct derivation $T > D$ would be impossible, because this would go "counter to the main direction of the sound shift" i.e., the third act of GL, $D > T$. Scheer does not reject the possibility of unattested changes, but argues that it is sometimes necessary to assume them and mentions in this connection the Germanic sound changes. However, several objections can be raised against the traditional view of GL and VL. The most important ones are:

- (i) The alleged occlusivization applies across the board while otherwise maintaining the integrity of the series. This is typologically very unusual.
- (ii) The fact that *s*, the only PIE fricative, does not undergo occlusivization.
- (iii) The relative chronology of both laws: VL refers to the PIE free accent, while GL, which precedes VL, is generally analyzed as initiated by the transition from PIE free stress to Proto-Germanic root-initial stress. This is a paradox.

In this paper, I will depart from Vennemann's (1984) remark that, if one adopts the Glottalic Theory (Hopper 1973, Gamkrelidze & Ivanov 1973, 1905) where T, D, D^h have been replaced by T, T', D as the PIE stops, it can be assumed that VL has preceded GL and that there was a direct change $T > D$. I will go one step further and show that there was actually no ordering between VL and GL's spirantization, but, that they were a unitary process, triggered by the deglottalization of T' and the need to maintain the contrast that existed between T and T' . Alternative models to the classic view on the PIE obstruent inventory, other than the glottalic model, offer, *mutatis mutandis*, the same possibility.

I will also argue that Mańczak's (1990) analysis that (in accordance with Verner himself) VL did not apply word-finally, as assumed by certain authors, but was a straightforward intervocalic voicing.

The unity of the process becomes clear in an OT analysis: at the time when PIE's original T became outlawed by deglottalization of original T' and the need to maintain contrast, there are two possibilities for T to change: either spirantization ($> \beta$) or voicing ($> D$). The choice between them is determined by the relative order of the well-established constraints of Intervocalic Voicing and IdentLar (which demands that the laryngeal specification, voiceless or voiced, be maintained). The constraint of Intervocalic Voicing is not valid for a segment in post-stress position, due to ambisyllabicity or gemination of the consonant in question. This is the reason behind VL's failure to apply in that position.

- Gamkrelidze, Thomas V. & Vjačeslav V. Ivanov. 1973. 'Sprachtypologie und die Rekonstruktion der gemeinindogermanischen Verschlüsse.' *Phonetica* 27, 150-156.
- Gamkrelidze, Thomas V. & Vjačeslav V. Ivanov. 1995. *Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans: a reconstruction and historical analysis of a proto-language and a proto-culture*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Hopper Paul J. 1973. 'Glottalized and Murmured Occlusives in Indo-European'. *Glossa* 7, 141-166.
- Mańczak, Witold. 1990. 'La restriction de la règle de Verner à la position médiane et le sort final du *s* final en germanique'. *Historische Sprachforschung* 103, 92-101.
- Scheer, Tobias. 2004. 'How minimal is phonological change?' *Folia Linguistica Historica* 25, 69-114.
- Vennemann, Theo. 1984. 'Hochgermanisch und Niedergermanisch'. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* (Tübingen) 106, 1-45.
- Verner, Karl. 1877. 'Eine ausnahme der ersten lautverschiebung'. *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der indogermanischen Sprachen* 23, 97-130.