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## **Tonal neutralization in Upper East Dalarna Swedish: The end or the beginning of the road?**

This talk will discuss whether dialectal variation in tonal accent realization in a small region in Dalarna can shed light on the historical development of the Scandinavian tonal dialects.

Most varieties of mainland North Germanic are characterized by an accent contrast that is tonal in Norwegian and Swedish and glottal in Danish (stød). The tonal varieties are traditionally subdivided into two main dialect groups, or types, based on the number of tonal peaks in accent 2 (Gårding (1977), Bruce & Gårding (1978)). In type 1, accent 2 is characterized by one peak, which is differentiated from the accent 1 peak by later timing with respect to the stressed syllable. This type is mainly found at the margins of the tonal area, in West and North Norway, South Sweden and Gotland. In type 2, which is found in central varieties such as Central and Göta Swedish and East Norwegian, accent 2 is characterized by an early and a late peak, while accent one is single-peaked.

There are currently two competing theories of how the tonal accent contrast arose in the North Germanic languages. One argues that the double-peaked system found in Central Swedish is the older one, and that the second peak goes back to a tonal marking of secondary stresses following the main stress (Riad 1998). Except in compounds, the latter were eliminated due to stress clashes caused by the widespread syncopation processes that hit the North Germanic languages between 600 and 800 AD, while the tonal markings themselves survived. The other theory, see e.g. Bye (2004) and Hognestad (2012), holds that the single peak type is the older one, and that the accent difference evolved from peak delays allowed by longer domains.

In three municipalities in the Upper East Dalarna region in Central Sweden, the two types meet, and manifest a baffling degree of variation. In northernmost Älvdalen, we find the two-peaked type 2. The two others, Mora and Orsa, represent the northern margin of an isolated inland area characterized by the single-peaked type 1. In different villages here the accentual system interacts in unusual ways with the old distinction between light and heavy stressed syllables. And on the border between the two we find the village Våmhus, where the accent contrast appears to be neutralized in a generalized one-peak system.

According to the Riad hypothesis, this dialect should represent some sort of end point of the development from the original two-peaked starting point into the single-peaked systems. According to the alternative hypothesis it should be close to the original state of affairs, before peak delay created the starting point for the distinction. In my talk I shall discuss what implications may be drawn, if any, from the Dalarna variation with respect to the origin of the tonal accents and the split into two main dialect groups. The analysis will be based on systematic recordings collected during fieldwork in 1989 and 2008.

### *References*

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