

Kåre Elstad: DET NORDNORSKE CIRKUMFELKSTONEMET
(THE NORTH NORWEGIAN CIRCUMFLEX TONEME)

I. Geographical distribution

The special North Norwegian circumflex toneme occurs in the districts of Salten, Lofoten and the southern parts of Vesterålen in the county of Nordland.

II. The contour of this toneme

is different from that of the circumflex accent in Trøndelagen and in parts of Sweden. In those areas the tonal curve is two-peaked, whereas the circumflex of the North-Norwegian dialects has a level pitch almost throughout the word with only a slight rise at the beginning and a slight fall at the end. This is fairly easily audible, and it is confirmed by mingograms. Nor is the stress curve two-peaked. Thus, North Norwegian words pronounced with circumflex cannot be classified as disyllables.

III. Origin and distribution

The North Norwegian circumflex originates in apocope of disyllables with toneme 2 (accent grave). Word contraction does not lead to circumflex. In some areas in the districts of Salten the suffixed def.art. of the neuter gender (-/e/) may also be apocopated. If the indefinite form of the noun is monosyllabic with toneme 1, the shortened def. form too obtains toneme 1 (accent acute).

IV. Analogy

Analogical loss and acquisition of circumflex seems only to occur in verb forms. The rules for this kind of tonal transition differ somewhat from one dialect to another, and may be determined by phonological, morphological, or syntactic factors.

V. Disappearance of the circumflex toneme

In the dialect of the town of Bodø in Salten the circumflex has already disappeared. The same tendency is obvious also in villages in Vesterålen and the westernmost islands of Lofoten. When the circumflex is abandoned, it is either replaced by toneme 1 (acc. acute), or the apocopated final vowel is restored.