

Ilse Lehiste, "Polytonicity in the area surrounding the Baltic Sea"

The paper re-examines the evidence for the existence of a Sprachbund around the Baltic Sea characterized by polytonicity. Jakobson (1931) included the Scandinavian languages, some North German dialects, North Kashubian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Livonian and Estonian in this Sprachbund. It appears that the north German dialects with stød-like features are outside of the territory, and that North Kashubian has lost its (presumed) tonal character. Lithuanian continues its inherited polytonicity. Latvian and Livonian have exercised considerable mutual influence on many aspects of their respective structures, including their prosodic systems. Latvian differs from Lithuanian in two basic respects: accent in Latvian is fixed on the first syllable in contrast to the free accent of Lithuanian, and Latvian has developed a third tone in addition to the two inherited tones which it shares with Lithuanian. Both developments appear to be due to contact with Livonian. On the other hand, Livonian has developed a system of tonal oppositions; one of the newly developed tones in Livonian is identical with the Latvian third tone, which arose in Latvian through contact with Livonian. Recent experimental studies of Estonian indicate that Estonian, too, may be developing a tonal component as part of its prosodic system. Evidence from production suggests a stød-like reduction in intensity in certain overlong syllable nuclei, and evidence from listening tests indicates that fundamental frequency plays a significant part in the identification of prosodic patterns realized over disyllabic sequences. No developments of this kind are discernible in Finnish, which appears to be relatively immune to influence from other languages spoken around the Baltic Sea. The conservative influence of Finnish is suggested as a factor in the preservation of an older quantity system in Finland-Swedish.