

STUDIES OF DIPHTHONGS IN FAROESE.

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A synchronic and diachronic description of the vowels and diphthongs in Faroese is in preparation. Some general considerations will be presented in this brief report. Previously, a survey of the sounds in Faroese has been published in Danish (1), and an article on the long and short vowels (presenting some spectrographic material) appeared more recently (2). It has been shown in these articles that there is in Faroese no simple phonetic one-to-one correspondence between long and short vowel units: most of the long units are either clearly diphthongal or intermediate between the short ones in their phonetic quality. The structural analysis poses serious problems, which I hope to discuss in a future paper.

The true diphthongs in Faroese seem to constitute three groups, viz. I. diphthongs ending in a narrow palatal glide: [ɛi, ai, ui, ɔi], II. diphthongs ending in a narrow velar glide: [au, ɔu/œu/ɛu] (with dialectal variation), III. diphthongs ending in a very open vowel: [ɛa, ɔa]. Diphthongs of group I occur both long and short; these are (except [ui] old diphthongs. Most of the other diphthongs originate from long vowels, and some of these present developments that are at first sight quite puzzling. However, a pattern of development emerges.

We can postulate two tendencies in the development of diphthongs in Faroese: a. a tendency for open vowels to become opening diphthongs (diphthongs of group III originating from Old Norse é, æ, a and from á, respectively), b. a tendency for close vowels and closing diphthongs to move from front to back or from back to front, old front vowels becoming back-front (Old Norse í, ý became [ui]), and old back vowels becoming front-back (Old Norse ú became Modern Faroese [au] or rather [y]). This occurred also with diphthongs with a more open first vowel (ey or øy became [ɔi]), although with ei and ó it took place only in some dialects (ei to [ɔi], ó to [œu, ɛu]). - Somewhat apart from the rest, old au has become [ɛi].

It is the primary purpose of the continued study to determine more exactly the phonetic quality of the diphthongs in the major dialects of Modern Faroese and thus to test the phonetic validity

of the classification of the diphthongs suggested above. This is further to support the generalizations made about the developments. Scholars writing on the sound history of Faroese have generally taken each vowel or diphthong per se and have strived in vain to "explain" the peculiar developments of the individual vowels or diphthongs (especially $i > [ui]$). It seems to this author that no explanation can be hoped for unless we test the possibility of writing the developments on a common formula. This, however, demands a close examination of dialects. The "standard language", which has been the basis of most writings on the subject, presents a rather mixed picture, and only by studying the vowel patterns of some of the more peripheral dialects can one hope to disclose the systemic features in Faroese diphthongization and thus get a valid starting-point for explanations. A hypothesis that must obviously be tested says that the diphthongization of long vowels was forced upon them by the quantity shift, since the short vowels, when lengthened, might otherwise coalesce with the old long vowels. It can be shown that the conditions were essentially different from those of Icelandic, for example.

References:

- (1) Jørgen Rischel, "Om retskrivningen og udtalen i moderne færøsk" in Jacobsen & Matras, *Føroysk-donsk orðabók* (Faroese Danish Dictionary), 2nd ed. (1960), see pp. XVIII-XXV.
- (2) Jørgen Rischel, "Toward the Phonetic Description of Faroese Vowels", *Fróðskaparrit* 13 (Torshavn, 1964), pp. 99-113.

MURMURED (BREATHY) VOWELS IN GUJRATI.

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An investigation of Gujrati breathy vowels is in progress. A preliminary result is that these vowels have a stronger airflow and that their acoustic spectrum shows an increased intensity of F_0 compared to F_1 . A more detailed account of the results will be given in the report for 1967.