ABSTRACT

The inventory of the methods of reconstruction must be extended so that it should comprise the methods of comparative, internal, graphic and external reconstruction. The scope of each method needs further specifications as well.

INTRODUCTION

The reconstruction of earlier states and chronology in the history of a language ranks among the central problems of diachronic linguistics and diachronic phonics. In a narrower sense, reconstruction is synonymous with diachronic linguistics. The most important data concerning the distribution of the sound elements. IR helps reconstruct earlier sound alternations, such as Old English gen - dana (< /ge/ - /á/), fyllan - full (< /f/ - /á/). Modern English was - were (< /w/ - /ó/), frost - froze, house - houses (< /h/ - /áz/), break - brake (< /k/ - /á/), long - longer (< /l/ - /ál/), without regard to morphological classes. In this case the effectiveness of IR depends upon the paradigmatic similarity of alternating phonemes and the possibility to recover the conditional phonological factors of alternation. The method may be complicated and restricted in its application (cf. such cases as bring - brought) and finally made altogether inapplicable by successive changes of sounds and morphemes, and, naturally, complete mergers of allomorphs. One has to admit that sometimes alternations exist as morphological interchanges from the very beginning without any sound change involved (cf. ablaut of the type sing - sang). IR may also be based upon the principle of pattern congruity. Such reconstructions considerably widen the scope and possibilities of IR and they may be no less cogent than those based on alternations (cf. hand, it may equally need a support by evidence provided by other methods of reconstruction.

GRAPHIC RECONSTRUCTION

In the case of alphabetic writing, IR is the most reliable method among all the possible methods of reconstruction. IR is especially effective when based on what is called phonemic alphabets (as opposed to nonphonemic alphabets), in such languages as Old Greek or Old English. The essence of IR is in establishing the graphs and the graphemes, the relationship between the graphs and the sounds, between the graphemes and the phonemes, which are the language of the texts under analysis (cf. the use of spelling evidence when establishing the sounds and phonemes of Old, Middle and Early Modern English, as in /á/). Thus alphabetic writing provides the most valuable evidence for the inventory and distribution of sounds and phonemes in a language at a certain stage of its development. Moreover, graphic evidence helps reconstruct sound changes of their chronological order, however such

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the different treatment of the "second fronting" in West Mercian and Kentish proceeding from the different patterns of the short vowels of the two dialects, /4, §§ 147-150//. We still remain within the limits of IR when we base our assumptions on relationships between subsystems of the sound structure, *e.g.*, between prosody and segmentics, paradigmatics and syntagmatics, or on interlevel relationships between the sound structure and morphological, syntactic and even semantic patterns, as well as on typological maxims. Typological maxims impose two constraints on reconstruction: the sound changes must be typologically acceptable as processes and the proto-forms and the proto-language must be typologically acceptable in a static sense /5/. This broad treatment of IR is much in accord with Kuryłowicz's approach to it /6/.

Ideally speaking, IR should precede CR: in the first place pre-forms and pre-languages are established by means of IR and then the CR of proto-forms and proto-languages is carried out (cf. /7, p.156/)

**COMPARATIVE RECONSTRUCTION**

The traditional method of CR hardly needs any further elaboration (see, among other works, /8/). It is based upon the comparison of genetically related elements from cognate languages and dialects of the same language. Otherwise it may be said that CR deals with the facts of different dialects of the same language or different languages within the same language family. Moreover, it must be added that a contrastive treatment of evidence from earlier and later stages of the same language should be considered as belonging to the method of CR as well, for such evidence is drawn actually from different linguistic systems. The comparative method has proved to be of special importance in prehistoric reconstructions.

**EXTERNAL RECONSTRUCTION**

ER may be based on linguistic and non-linguistic data. Linguistic data may be provided by language contacts, in the form of borrowings, loanwords, foreign words and names. The interpretation of the descriptions by orthoepists in terms of modern linguistics may also be considered as a procedure of ER based on linguistic data. Non-linguistic data may be provided by archaeology, history, onomastics (*e.g.*, records of animal cries), etc.

**CONCLUSION**

From the methodological point of view, it is important and possible to distinguish and define more exactly four methods of reconstruction: GR, ER, CR and ER. Practically, however, it is possible to achieve reliable reconstructions only as a result of a combined use of several methods of reconstruction. In a sense it is true that there is no "method of internal reconstruction as distinct from a method of comparative reconstruction" /9, p.116/, or from any other method of reconstruction.

**REFERENCES**