

Monophthongization before the retroflex flap in Norwegian

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January 13, 2022

Introduction

- Diphthongs in Old Norwegian: *ei*, *au*, *øy*.
- Modern Norwegian:
 - retained:
/stein/ 'stone', /laus/ 'loose', /røyk/ 'smoke'
 - monophthongized:
/ste:n/ 'stone' /lø:s/ 'loose', /rø:k/ 'smoke'
 - variably retained or monophthongized

The regular development of some strings is still unknown, one being *-øy/-*.

Previous remarks on *-øyl-*

All previous remarks are based on the word *søyla* 'mud'.

- Larsen 1907: The word *søyla* usually has a monophthong in eastern Norway, there seems to be a monophthongization of *øy* in front of the retroflex flap (p. 63).
- Kolsrud 1932: *øy* is apparently not found preceding the retroflex flap in the dialect of Romerike (p. 37).
- Hoff 1946: suggests that *øy* might be monophthongized in front of the retroflex flap in Indre Østfold (p. 161).

No survey on the regular development of *-øyl-* has been done yet.

What is the regular development of *-øyl-* in the Norwegian dialects?

The original *-øyl-* is mainly found in three words:

- *Søyla* 'mud'
- *Pøyla* 'puddle'
- *Bøyla* 'growl, glower'

Findings

Søyla, *pøyla* and *bøyla* in Norwegian dialects:

- /søyla/, /pøyla/ and /bøyla/ are found in West Norwegian dialects.
- /sø:ɾe/, /pø:ɾe/ and /bø:ɾe/ are found in East Norwegian dialects.
- /søyɾe/ and /bøyɾe/ are found in some dialects in the south along the /ɾ/-isogloss, on the border between East and West Norwegian dialects.

Findings: East Norwegian

Øy before a retroflex flap is monophthongized regardless of whether the dialects have generally monophthongized øy or not.

East Norwegian dialects with monophthongization of øy:

- /rø:k/ - /sø:ɾe/

East Norwegian dialects with retained øy:

- /røyk/ - /sø:ɾe/

Findings

There seems to be a strong correlation between the retroflex flap isogloss and the monophthongization of $\emptyset y$.



Regular development of $-\emptyset y l-$ in dialects with $/\tau/$:

Step 1:

$/\emptyset y l/ \rightarrow / \emptyset y \tau /$

This stage is still preserved in the dialects where we find the forms $/s\emptyset y \tau e/$ and $/b\emptyset y \tau e/$.

Analysis

- There is an articulatory difficulty in combining a high front vowel with a retroflex flap.
- This sequence is generally banned in Norwegian dialects, i.e. */iɾ/, */yɾ/.
- Most East Norwegian dialects have therefore had a lowering of /y/ before the retroflex flap.

Step 2:

/øyɾ/ → [øø̞ɾ] → /ø:ɾ/

Retroflex flap after $\emptyset y$

Skjekkeland 1997: /ɽ/ is usually not found after / $\emptyset y$ /

- Not because /ɽ/ did not develop following $\emptyset y$, but because $\emptyset y$ was later monophthongized.

Summary

- Dialects that lack the retroflex flap /ɽ/ have retained the original diphthong øy.
- Dialects with a retroflex flap have developed a retroflex flap following the diphthong øy.
 - Øy has then undergone a monophthongization in most dialects.