

EVALUATION OF THE LECTURE FOR THE EXPERT AUDIENCE

Masaryk university	
Faculty	Arts
Area of study	General and diachronic linguistics
Candidate	doc. PhDr. Bc. Ondřej Šefčík, Ph.D.
Date of lecture	26.02.2025
Lecture topic	Spirantization and lenition in Old Western Indo-European languages: common inherited development or common parallel drift?
Audience present (number)	Present in person: 12 (see attendance list in appendix) Online: 12 (see attached attendance list)
Credentialed evaluators (committee members)	prof. RNDr. Václav Blažek, CSc. (Masarykova univerzita) prof. Dr. Jadranka Gvozdanović (Universität Heidelberg) prof. Dr. Michael Janda (Universität Münster) prof. Dr. Martin Kümmel (Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena) prof. Dr. Birgit Olsen. (University of Copenhagen)

The lecture for the expert audience in the procedure for appointment to a professorship took place on 26 February 2025 in the conference room of the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Philosophy of Masaryk University, A. Novák 1, starting at 12:00. The lecture was streamed online and the majority of the committee was also present online.

After a short introduction of the candidate by Prof. Václav Blažek, the actual lecture began, which was held in English with the help of a presentation that was accessible both to those present on site and online in the Teams environment.

In the introductory part of his presentation, the candidate outlined the structure of the thesis, which consisted of a theoretical introduction and two case studies on which he intended to demonstrate the theoretical propositions.

In the theoretical part, the candidate first described the methodological apparatus and outlined the basic concepts he would use, namely *common development* and *drift*. He first discussed the fact that diachronic changes of (phonological) systems are understood as a sequence of transformations from one system to another and described the basic operations that occur during these transformations (elision, transition, merge, splitting and element preservation). He also defined the concept of trajectory as a series of transitions from one state to another, with possible intermediate states, and applied it to material from Indo-European languages. Here he pointed out how differently the final state (documented languages being raw data), the initial state (reconstructed Indo-European) and intermediate states are identified, which can often move along different trajectories between which a choice has to be made (here he used the term "black box"). He illustrated hypothetical trajectories describing a single

process with two examples. He then defined his own notions of inherited development and drift, emphasising that drift is a separate development, driven by its own dynamics, and that the two phenomena must be distinguished in language development. Again, he gave two examples of when it is necessary to distinguish common development from parallel drift. He also showed that drift between closely related languages is not simple parallelism, but parallelism based on previous common development. He then spoke generally of lenition and fortition as two oppositely directed mutations and described the basic principles of these phenomena. The last part of his theoretical exposition was devoted to the Old Western Indo-European languages (OWIE), showing their common and different features and determining their position in relation to other ideological languages.

The practical part was a demonstration of two case studies: the first evolution of the IE clusters **Tt* and **Ts* into the OWIE cluster *ss* and showed that it was at least a three-stage evolution: the first two stages (**Tt* > **ʒt/*Ts* > **ʒs* and later **ʒt/ʒs* > **ʒʒ*) are common evolutionary stages first of IE, later OWIE languages, the third (**ʒʒ* > *ss*) is already a drift, as shown by the data. The second case study then described the later evolution of the **Pt*, **Kt*, **Kʷt/*Ps*, **Ks*, **Kʷs* clusters from Indo-European to OWIE languages, and showed that the analogous results in some branches are the result of drift, not coevolution.

The final section was a summary of the previous presentations, with suggestions and challenges for further study and discussion.

In his presentation, the candidate convincingly demonstrated an excellent grasp of the topic and the literature, upon which he based his own original conclusions, which made a great and positive impression on both the committee and the members of the academic community present. The candidate also responded competently to questions in the ensuing discussion, demonstrating the strength of his theoretical approach and concepts.

Conclusion

The presentation of Assoc. Prof. PhDr. Bc. Ondřej Šefčík, Ph.D., "Spirantization and lenition in Old Western Indo-European languages: common inherited development or common parallel drift?", presented in the framework of the procedure for appointment to the post of professor, **demonstrated** sufficient scientific qualification and pedagogical competence of the candidate, which is required in the framework of the procedure for appointment to the post of professor in the field of general and diachronic linguistics.

The lecture for the professional public in the procedure for appointment as professor took place on 26 February 2025 in Brno.

prof. RNDr. Václav Blažek, CSc.
předseda komise

prof. RNDr. Václav Blažek, CSc. (Masaryk University)
prof. Dr. Jadranka Gvozdanović (Universität Heidelberg)
prof. Dr. Michael Janda (Universität Münster)
prof. Dr. Martin Kümmel (Friedrich Schiller University Jena)
prof. Dr. Birgit Olsen. (University of Copenhagen)

