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Beiträge werden an Prof. Dr. Claus Haebler, Kerstenbrockstr. 16, 4400 Münster, oder an Prof. Dr. Günter Neumann, Thüringer Str. 20, 8700 Würzburg, erbeten. Professor Neumann redigierte Band 96–97. Besprechungen können nur solchen Werken zugestellt werden, welche ein Herausgeber erbeten hat.

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More on (i)-wo(r)

In Joseph (1981), it is argued that the Hittite quotative particle -wor (with a preconsonantal allomorph -wo) is not to be connected with the Hittite verb uriga- 'say, speak', as the communis opinio holds, but instead to be related within Hittite to the adverbial isar 'like' and outside of Hittite to Sanskrit ima 'like'. Part of the motivation for this etymology was purely formal—the pair i-wor/i-wo exhibits the same alternation as -wor/-wo does—but typological parallels were given as well to show that a connection between a word meaning 'like' and a quotative particle is not an isolated phenomenon within Hittite. The purpose of this note is to provide some further typological data supporting the etymological connection made between quotative -wo/-wor and i-wo/i-wor 'like'.

First, further research has uncovered several more languages in which a word meaning 'like' can also be introduced into direct or even indirect discourse. For example, the morpheme oleem (presumably from the English all [the] same) in the creolizing language of New Guinea, Tok Pisin, means 'like' as in (examples from Woolford 1979):

1. em i kamap yangpeloi oleem James
   he VBL.PRT growing young boy like
   'He grew up (to be) a young boy like James'

   but also functions as a complementizer, and as such introduces subordinate clauses after verba dicendi/sentendi, as in:

2. na yapela i no save oleem em i matmat
   and you VBL.PRT not know like it cemetery
   'And you did not know that it was a cemetery'!

Similarly, Woolford (op. cit.: 118) reports in another language of New Guinea, Buang, that there is a particle (wo)be which is used adverbially to mean 'thus' or 'like that' but which also serves as a complementizer and as a marker introducing direct speech. Finally, the particle qhe in the Tibeto-Burman language Lahu (Matisoff 1973: 134ff., 467) likewise has both an adverbial use in which it means 'like', 'as', or 'thus', as in:

(3) yâ-é qhe te ve
   small-child like do INDIRECT
   'He acts like a child'

and a quotative use following direct discourse, as in:

(4) "te mân phâ" qhe qó? pî ve yo
do not able like say BENEFAC INDIRECT DECLAR
   'He said, "He couldn't do it"'.

Thus the facts from these additional languages support the claim made in Joseph (1981) concerning the etymology of Hittite quotative -wor.

Second, experimental work on the conversational structure of English (Schourup 1982) has turned up the following interesting parallel from English as spoken in Ohio. In laboratory recordings of casual conversation between young adults, it has been found that like in construction with a pronoun and copula often immediately precedes direct discourse, as in:

(5) She's like, "Well, why waste all that gas?"
(6) I was just like, "Oh, my God!"
(7) It's like, "Oh, God! There's all these people walking by!"

Speakers who use this construction claim that it marks what follows as an 'internal' quotation—an approximate representation in the form of reported speech of what someone had in mind but did not express. Still in its use by these speakers, like serves to set off a unit of direct discourse, much as -wor(r) does in Hittite. Thus in at least this dialect of English, another instance of the pattern of usage for 'like' crucial to the etymology of -wor(r) is to be found.

By way of conclusion, it is worth noting two methodological points raised by this additional data. The first concerns the use of typological information in historical linguistics to support the functional and/or semantic side of an etymology; while it is common to point to a typological parallel for a particular semantic connection or change entailed by a proposed etymology, the question of how much typological evidence is needed is in fact rarely asked. Obviously all that is necessary to establish a putative semantic change as a possible change is but a single instance of the proposed development, but still it is equally clear that the more parallels one can
bring to bear on an etymology the stronger the case one can build for that etymology. The additional evidence presented here is offered in that spirit.

Second, the source of the evidence concerning the Ohio English use of like is noteworthy for historical linguistic research, for it was collected under laboratory conditions as part of an experimental study quite unrelated to the question of Hittite -wa(r) and iwar or Sanskrit iva; thus this evidence shows how results from experimental linguistics, not usually thought to be of relevance to historical pursuits (though John Ohala’s work, e.g. Ohala (1974), is a notable exception), can, under the right conditions, provide valuable information for historical research, and moreover it demonstrates again that Historical Linguistics must not be isolated within Linguistics and instead must be receptive to input from virtually all branches of the discipline 1).

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Joseph, Brian. 1981. “Hittite iwar, wa(r), and Sanskrit iva”, Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung 95. 93–98.

1) A similar point has been made by Lehmann (see, for example, Lehmann 1972) with regard to the desirability of integrating advances in syntactic description concerning word-order typologies with the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European syntax and morphology.