

PIE analogies that just don't work (Abstract)

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As a precise description of how morphological analogy works is still lacking, analogy is often tackled with an “anything goes” attitude. At closer inspection, many proposed analogies that are widely passed around and accepted reveal themselves to be simply impossible.

This paper will discuss two prominent examples from recent discourse of PIE morphological reconstruction and expose their proposed analogies as methodologically unsound – albeit for different reasons.

1. *Origins of the *-h₂e endings*

Ever since the decipherment of Anatolian, the formal similarity between the Hittite *ḫi*-conjugation and the reconstructed PIE perfect has been observed. One school of thought (Eichner 1975, Kloekhorst 2018) strives to explain the *ḫi*-conjugation as deriving from the perfect. The second school goes the opposite way by proposing a primary **h₂e*-conjugation, of which the PIE perfect represents a reduplicated present (Jasanoff 2003) or aorist (Jasanoff 2018).

It will be shown that both accounts in their current forms are doomed to fail, mostly since they require several steps of inflectional change where analogy is conducted on a morpheme-by-morpheme basis. A type for which (as per Hill 2020) we have no positive evidence.

2. *s-aorist subjunctives*

The long-standing standard explanation for both the Ancient Greek future and the Insular Celtic subjunctive is that they were simply subjunctives formed to *s*-aorists. (Most recently Willi 2018 for Greek, Darling 2019 for Celtic and Søbørg 2021 for a common predecessor.)

Still, none of the accounts published to date satisfyingly explain the emergence of the **-s-/*-h₂s-* allomorphy that either would have been acquired in the subjunctive or lost in the indicative. Furthermore, the Old Irish data reveals that the models on which the proposed analogies are based are in fact missing for most roots, as the two categories barely even touched.

References

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