

## On the Indo-European Reflexive

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This brief paper explores the origin of the reflexive stems *\*se-*, *\*s(e)we-* traditionally reconstructed for Indo-European. It is argued that a demonstrative in *\*(e/o)s-* underlies the "reflexive" elements *\*se-* and *\*s-* and that *\*-we-* can be derived from an ancient Indo-European indirect speech marker which was affixed to the demonstrative as a means of formally differentiating the true reflexive and logophoric functions. Both comparative and typological evidence is used to support this theory.

Traditional historical-comparative Indo-European linguistics ascribes to the proto-language a reflexive pronoun in *\*se-*, *\*s(e)we-* (cf. Brugmann 1904: 409), e.g., *\*se-*: Lat. acc. *sē(d)*, Go. *si-k*; *\*swe-*: Hom. acc. *ῥέ*, Skt. *sva-* 'self'; *\*sewe-*: Lith. gen. *savė*. Of course, "a besetting phonetic problem of IE" is the attested variation in reflexive stems, one with a labial semivowel and one without this segment, i.e., *\*se-/s(e)we-* (Hamp 1984: 58). The former stem is manifested in Baltic, Slavic, Germanic, and Italic, while the latter is characteristic of Indo-Iranian, Hellenic, Armenian, and Celtic.<sup>1</sup> Since a strictly phonological explanation of the alternation appears impossible, the most popular analysis of the data proposes that the original form was *\*se-* and that this stem was analogically "modeled in great part on the second person stem *tewe- twe- te-*," thereby creating the variant with the labial semivowel (Hahn 1963: 91, cf. also Erhart 1970: 49, Burrow 1973: 268, Schmidt 1978: 165). An etymological connection between the reflexive in *\*se-* and the demonstrative stem in *\*se/o-* (e.g., Skt. *sá[s]*, Gk. *hó*, Go. *sa*) "ist wahrscheinlich" (Schmidt 1978: 164, cf. also Seebold 1984: 78-79) not only because of the formal correspondence but also because of the common anaphoric value of both. A reflexive pronoun is clearly anaphoric in nature (Fillmore 1992: 282),

<sup>1</sup>In Hittite, the reflexive function is generally expressed by way of the particle *-za* of uncertain origin (but cf. Shields 1993a), although "the third person pronoun *se* ... may be reflexive" (Hahn 1963: 92-93).

and it is clear that “most Indo-European languages” used demonstratives “for anaphoric purposes” (i.e., as third person pronouns) (Hahn 1963: 93, cf. also Brugmann 1904: 408), despite their primary deictic signification. Although I accept the traditional interpretation of the etymology of the reflexive stem in *\*se-*, in this brief paper I wish to explore another explanation of the origin of the reflexive stem in *\*s(e)we-* based on some recent research of mine in Indo-European pronominal morphology, a novel proposal about the morpho-syntax of Indo-European, and certain typological considerations.

There exist many non-analogically-based hypotheses about the origin of *\*s(e)we-* as well, all of which emphasize that, as far as *\*se-* and *\*s(e)we-* are concerned, “ihrer Herkunft nach nicht einheitlich sind” (Erhart 1970: 49). For example, on the basis of evidence from attested compounds, Meillet (1937: 336-338) maintains that the etymon of *\*s(e)we-* was an adjective *\*sew-* with the meaning ‘propre à une personne,’ while Specht (1944: 46) derives *\*s(e)we-* from the root *\*swe/o-* ‘alles, was zu einer Grossfamilie gehört,’ which first became a reflexive possessive and then a fully functional reflexive pronoun (cf. also Szemerényi 1996: 221-222).<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Mezger (1948) argues that *\*s(e)we-* was a particle which “referred to a remote object and therefor one that is by itself and on its own” (100).<sup>3</sup> Lehmann (1974: 128, 207) sees in the attested dialectal variation associated with the form of reflexives and in his views of the typology of Indo-European a very late appearance in the proto-language of a reflexive adjective in *\*sewe-* with the signification ‘own’—a morpheme which gradually evolved into

<sup>2</sup>Szemerényi (1996: 220-221) thus says: “The reflexive possessive, which survives in Lat. *suus* and Gr. *he(ḗ)ós, hós* (from *\*sewos, \*swos*), had the peculiarity of referring to all persons, just as e.g. in modern Russian it is used in sentences such as ‘I go to my house,’ ‘you go to your house,’ etc., instead of ‘my,’ ‘your,’ etc. This usage has its explanation in the social system of the extended family: in regard to any external possessions (in contrast to ‘my foot,’ etc.) there was of course no personal ownership; everything belonged to the extended family. This was called *\*swe-/swo-* ‘family, kin’ (from *\*su-* ‘be born’), and the adjectival form *\*swo-s* meant ‘belonging to the family’ = ‘own’.”

<sup>3</sup>Mezger (1948: 100) believes that “IE *\*swe* and *\*se* must have had a difference in function, although the distinction cannot be definitely proved.” He says that, in contrast to *\*swe-*, “one may tentatively suggest that IE *\*se* could originally have been a particle or adverb designating separateness, remoteness or absence.”

a pronoun in some dialects<sup>4</sup>—whereas Seebold (1984: 73-80) basically adopts Hirt's Sanskrit-based etymology (1927: 21) of \**s(e)we-*, "der in abgeleiteten Bildungen mit der Bedeutung 'eigen, selbst' (u.ä.) gemein-indogermanisch ist" (74). Hamp (1984) identifies \**s(e)we-* as an original marker of the direct object "under coreference" in the ergative syntax of early Indo-European; "when pre-IE ergative syntax changed to IE nominative-accusative," its role was expanded to mark the direct object "under inversion" of the transitivity of the verb (58-59). Finally, Cardona (1987), utilizing a morphological segmentation first proposed by Cowgill (1965: 169-170), considers \**s(we)-* as "consist[ing] of the third person pronominal \**s-* followed by the oppositional affix \**we-*, \**wo-*" (4).<sup>5</sup> It is not my purpose to critique each of these theories; instead, I merely want to present a reasonable alternative to those etymologies heretofore proposed. I submit that my hypothesis is as valid as any of those just described, and therefore it merits serious consideration as an etymological explanation.

Before I begin to present my proposal regarding the origin of \**s(e)we-*, I want to point out that I have committed myself to the view (cf. Shields 1992: 29) that the demonstrative stem \**se/o-* should be derived from an original form in \**e/os-*, still attested in such demonstratives as nom. sg. "osk. **es-ídum** 'idem,' umbr. *es-to-* 'iste,' ir. *ē* (*hē*) ...; ahd. *er*, aisl. *er* run. *eR*; gathv. *ē* und *as-* (in *as-čit*)" (Brugmann 1911: 326-327) as well as in the Hittite nom. sg. 3rd person enclitic personal pronoun *-aš* (< \**-os*), which is an etymological demonstrative (cf. Friedrich 1974: 63). In short, \**se/o-* represents "the contamination of [the zero grade] of \*(*e/o*)*s* and the demonstrative \**e/o-* or ... the thematization of \*(*e/o*)*s*" (Shields 1992: 29).<sup>6</sup> Such

<sup>4</sup>Of course, dialectal variation in the function of the reflexive pronoun itself is also attested. As Erhart (1970: 48-49) points out: "Im syntaktischen Gebrauch der reflexiven *s*-Formen weisen die ie. Sprachzweige nicht unwesentliche Unterschiede auf: im Slawischen, Baltischen und Indo-iranischen bezieht sich das Reflexivum auf alle drei Personen, im Germanischen, Italischen und Griechischen dagegen nur auf die dritte Person. Die erste Gebrauchsweise wird in der Regel als ursprünglich angesehen, die zweite als Ergebnis einer späteren Entwicklung."

<sup>5</sup>\**we/o* is attested with oppositional value in such forms as Skt. *vā* and Lat. *ve* 'or'.

<sup>6</sup>A demonstrative stem in \**e/o-* is reconstructed by Brugmann (1904: 401): e.g., "\**ei* \**oi* (Lok. Sg.) in ai. *ē-šā* 'dieser' osk. **ei-sūd** 'eo,' ai. *ē-na* 'er' (*ēna-*m

contamination of demonstratives is a common phenomenon which is motivated by the fact "that by use a demonstrative tends to become weaker and weaker in its deictic force, and is therefore continually reinforced by being compounded with itself or with other demonstratives or with adverbs" (Lane 1961: 469). As far as the reflexive stem in *\*s(e)we-* is concerned, I would suggest that it is attested dialectally with both the zero grade of the original stem in *\*e/os* (i.e., *\*s-*) and the contaminated (or thematicized) stem in *\*se/o-* (i.e., *\*se-*). Insight into the identity of the morphological element *\*-we/o-* is provided by a syntactic pattern attested in Latin (and also in Greek) which, I believe, can be ascribed to the proto-language.

In Latin, reflexive pronouns assume functions beyond those of typical reflexives. While, strictly speaking, reflexive pronouns "must have antecedents in the same sentence" (Fillmore 1992: 282) and "are primarily characterized by coreferentiality between subject and object," even though in many languages "the occurrence of reflexives" is extended to indirect objects, objects of adpositions, and "possessors" (Wiesemann 1986: 439), Latin reflexives are used for logophoric reference. Wiesemann (1986: 443) explains: "Coreferential marking is not restricted to relationships within simple sentences. 'Indirect reflexivization', i.e. the use of reflexive pronouns to indicate that the subject of a subordinated clause is the same as that of the main clause, is a well known feature of Latin; classical Greek has a similar feature as a special use of the nominative and accusative cases. The antecedent of the reflexive pronoun in Latin refers to an

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u.a.) lat. *oīno-s*. ai. *ē-vá* 'so' gr. *oī-(ϕ)o-s* 'allein,' ai. *ē-k-a-s* 'I.'" In Shields (forthcoming), I argue that the zero grade of *\*e/os* also underlies the first element of the Greek pronouns in *sph-*, while the element *-ph-* derives from another (contaminated) demonstrative in *\*bh-* (cf. Markey 1979: 65-66). It is interesting to note that Markey (1982) posits the contamination of the deictic/demonstrative form *\*bh-* with "the original IE reflexive, effectively a genderless and numberless dummy, ... built on the stem *\*s(w)e/o-* (*\*se/ow-*)" (349), for Germanic *\*se-l-bh-* (e.g., Go. *silba-*, OE *se(o)lf*, OI *sjálf*), where *\*-l-* constitutes still another affixed deictic/demonstrative element. In essence, these developments created, in his view, "an emphatic [reflexive] form beside the true reflexive ([Go.] *sik*)" (< PGmc. *\*se-k*) (355). "Outside Germanic, a formation directly analogous to *selb-* is found only in Venetic *sselboisselboi* 'sibi ipsi' ..., where reduplication is merely another facet of intensification" (356, cf. also Polomé 1957: 91). Although this proposal merits consideration, the contamination of deictics (or their reduplication) in no way implies special emphasis since this developmental process is so common (cf. Lane 1961: 469).

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individual whose speech, thoughts or feelings are being reported. It is not restricted to being the subject of the main clause; he can be in an agent/experiencer role in other than subject function. Example:

<i>vir</i>	<i>renuntiat</i>	<i>se in urbe</i>	<i>habitare</i>
man	says	REFL in city	live
'the man <sub>i</sub> says that he <sub>i</sub> lives in the city'			
<i>se</i> indicates coreference with speaker			
<i>vir</i>	<i>renuntiat</i>	<i>eum in urbe</i>	<i>habitare</i>
man	says	him in city	live
'the man says that he lives in the city'			
<i>eum</i> indicates non-coreference with speaker."			

According to Wiesmann (1986: 443), "a similar distinction is being reported" for many languages, "not, however, as a special use of the reflexive pronoun. A different set of markers, a special pronoun or set of pronouns, or a verbal affix, indicate such coreferentiality, first termed 'logophoric' by Hagège (1974)." A very common means of indicating logophoric reference is "the grammaticalization of the indirect speech introducers" (Wiesmann 1986: 450). For example, in Lele, a Niger-Congo language of northwest central Africa, logophoric reference is marked by the affixation of the indirect speech morpheme *nā* to pronominal forms (Wiesmann 1986: 445-446).

Now Hittite attests a so-called "quotative particle" in *-wa(r)-*, which is, in fact, "a sign of indirect discourse" (Held, Schmalstieg & Gertz 1987: 75, cf. also Hoffner 1973: 521). In Shields (1993b), I present an etymology of this particle, deriving it from an original locative deictic in *\*we/o* with the meaning 'in' in contamination with another locative particle in *\*r* whose occurrence ultimately became phonologically conditioned (cf. Joseph 1981:95-97).<sup>7</sup> In my view, this deictic gave rise to a variety of morphemes, including the oppositional *\*we/o*. Such multiple functions for a single deictic form are common. Thus, in regard to Greek particles, Denniston (1966: lvi) observes: "... few Greek particles possess one meaning and

<sup>7</sup>As I point out in Shields (1993b: 88), the existence of the particle *\*r* is implied, for example, by the fact "that *u*-deictics/demonstratives ... are attested 'mit einem *r*-Formans' (cf. e.g., lit. *aurè* 'dort, künftighin,' ... umbr. *ura-ku* 'cum illa') (Brugmann 1904: 98)." See Hamp (1988: 174-176) in regard to the reconstruction of this particle.

one alone. New uses develop out of old, and the old, though they sometimes wither and die, more frequently prolong their existence, often in altered forms, by the side of the new." Although I still endorse my 1993 proposal and refer the interested reader to it for specific details, I would like to suggest one revision here. In 1993, I was of the opinion that the indirect speech marker *wa(r)* was a Hittite innovation, despite the fact that Vedic *iva* (< deictic *\*i-* + *\*we/o*) in its meaning 'as it were' "is functionally quite close to ... Hittite *wa(r)*.... Both particles, therefore, inject into the discourse elements of what the speaker had in mind" (Joseph 1981: 95). However, in light of the Sanskrit data and the widespread recognition of the archaic character of Hittite (cf. Adrados 1982, 1992), I feel comfortable in entertaining the idea that the Hittite quotative particle itself constitutes an archaism, reflecting a morpheme fully developed in the proto-language. If this assumption is made, then an interesting explanation of the origin of the reflexive stem in *\*s(e)we-* becomes possible.

What I would propose is that just prior to the dissolution of the Indo-European speech community, the proto-language marked both the reflexive and logophoric functions (like those attested in Latin) by means of the originally demonstrative stem *\*(e/o)s-* and its contaminated variant in *\*se/o-*, both of which had fully assumed the role as markers of coreferentiality. Since the language had available in its morphological inventory an indirect speech marker in *\*-we/o-* (which was subject to contamination with *\*r*), it merely followed a common typological path to differentiate the true reflexive and logophoric functions by affixing the indirect speech morpheme to *\*s(e/o)-*, i.e. *\*s(e)we-*, when logophoric reference was to be expressed.<sup>8</sup> Despite the emerging formal contrast between the reflexive and logophoric functions, this explicit opposition apparently did not become highly productive and was subsequently lost in the dialects, with the two markers emerging as functionally equivalent elements. In the non-Anatolian

<sup>8</sup>Thus, in my opinion, the formal similarities between *\*se-/s(e)we-* and the second person singular personal pronoun in *\*te-/\*twe-* (cf. OCS dat. *te-bě*/Hitt. abl. *twe-daz*) are fortuitous. As evidence for this assertion, I would cite the clear existence of a second person stem in *\*tu-* (cf. nom. Skt. *tv-ām*, Latv. *tu*; acc. Dor. *tú*, Go. *þu-k*) and the lack of one in *\*su-*, which implies that *\*twe-*, for example, is to be segmented morphologically as *\*tu-e-*, not *\*t-we-* (cf. Szemerényi 1996: 219n.4). In Shields (1986:17-19), I discuss in detail the origin of the stem-variants of the second person singular personal pronoun.

dialects of Indo-European Proper, the quotative particle was likewise subsequently lost.

Although this proposal cannot be proven absolutely correct, no other etymology of the Indo-European reflexive pronouns can meet this standard either. Indeed, as I point out in Shields (1982: 2), "there are very few unique solutions to the problems posed by historical and comparative linguistics." So, unless one is willing to abandon the question of what Fowler (1957: 54) calls "original meaning," all that one can expect of this and the alternative proposals described here is that they are compatible with the known data and with recognized principles of linguistic structure and change. I submit that my proposal embodies such compatibility.

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