

THE ORIGINE OF THE PERSONAL PRONOUN *U-NË*

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Abstract

Many historical evolutionary problems in the grammatical system of Albanian still remain unresolved and controversial. One of them is the question of the origin of the personal pronoun *u-në*. The cases forms of this pronoun are seen as one of the best preserved on grammatical elements from the period of early Indo-European, although Albanian language subsystems has undergone a continuous evolution. Many scholars (Jokl, La Piana, Çabej, Demiraj etc.) have thought that the pronoun from *u* cannot be the reflex of i.e. form *eg-*. *U* owes its origin to the reflexive *suom, sue*, should have been used to reinforce the personal pronoun and then has supplanted it. This argument is eligible in the phonetic view, but unsustainable grammatically (why the reflexive *sue* has displaced only the first person?). K.Topalli has another variant on the evolution of this pronoun, from early stages till now, *u* is the reflex of i.e. form *eg^hom*. The vowel *o*, which in general became *a* in Albanian, in some lexical items, evolved into *u*. The i.e. palatal *g^h* became voiced dental occlusives *d* in Albanian. The consonant *d* would have been deleted in its intervocalic position. Further, the elision of the word-initial unstressed vowel in the form *eg^hom* is acceptable in Albanian. Thus, the evolution way of this pronoun could be *eg^hom > eg^hon > edon > edun > edu > eu > u > u-në*. This thesis of linguist K.Topalli is more acceptable and justified by phonetics and grammatical arguments. But on the other side, the origin of this form may have derived from another i.e. nominative singular root in */u/* (*ug, hethite; ñuk, tocharic*). In attested Albanian the nasal vowels have appeared in most parts of the northern dialect, when they were followed by nasal consonants. The vowel *u* has been particularly in final position before */-n /*, when the nasal consonant has disappeared later. This fact explains the nasalization form *ũ*, that is used again in peripheral parts of the northern dialect.

Keywords: personal pronoun unë, diachronic linguistics, historical phonetics.