

Some questions on reflexes of *-eu-* in Slavic languages

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Abstract

The Slavic languages are traditionally believed to have *(-)ju-* as the result of the change of the proto-IE diphthong *(-)eu-* in the first syllable and, as a consequence, the elision of *-j-* with the palatalization of the consonants before: *Ceu > Cju > C'u*. Some scholars try to show examples of this palatalization, and some even try to reconstruct this prosthetic *-j-* as a Balto-Slavic isogloss. This reconstruction seems to be currently accepted. But when we start checking the list of all stems proposed to us to illustrate this sound change, we face some serious contradictions and difficulties that could make us call this description into question.

Keywords: phonology; etymology; Slavic; Balto-Slavic; reconstructions

1. Introduction

In this paper I would like to show some dubious moments of the traditional explanations of the change of *-eu-* in Slavic languages and to try to improve them by proposing alternative ones.

Slavic languages have a series of stems with the possible results of the change of *-eu-* in the first syllable. In all the other positions we have no possibility to distinguish *-eu-* and *-ou-*. For example, in Russian *dožd'evik* "raincoat" or *nočevat'* "to stay overnight" look like the analogical forms (in *dožd'evik* *-ev-* may also be the trace of the *u-* stem if the Slavic **dūždžī* "rain" is from the proto-IE **dus-dju-*).

And thus, the topic of the current paper is the change of the cluster *-eu-* in the first syllable in Slavic languages.

2. Checking

cluster	change	examples	comments
open syllable (-euV-)			
-eu-	-ev-	<i>kl'ev'eta</i> "slander" <i>d'ev'at'</i> < <i>devęti</i> "nine" <i>r'ev'et'</i> "to roar" "to cry"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>sever</i> "north" < Proto-Slav. <i>*sęverŭ</i> < IE <i>*-ęu-</i>
	-ov-	<i>novyj</i> "new" <i>slovo</i> "word", <i>slovesnyj</i> "verbal" <i>zovu</i> "I call"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>slava</i> "glory" < IE <i>*-ęu-</i>
		OldChSl <i>rovę</i> "I roar", <i>rovętŭ</i> "they roar", <i>rovj</i> "roaring"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>revemŭ</i> "we roar"; -ov- only in the back row
	-ŷv-	Proto-Slav. <i>*plŷvati</i> "to spit", <i>*žŷvati</i> "to chew"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in Slavic languages <i>ŷ</i> drops or becomes <i>e, u</i>
closed syllable (-euC-)			

#eu-, #jeu-	#ju, #u	<i>jug</i> “south” <i>užin</i> “supper”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the interchange of #j- and #Ø- is spread: <i>urod</i> “ugly creature” – <i>jurodivyj</i> “wacky”; <i>ježevika</i> – <i>dial. oževika</i> “blackberry”, <i>uzy</i> “chains”, “fettters” – <i>sojuz</i> “union”, “coalition”; <i>jazъ</i> – <i>azъ</i> in ChSl “I”, <i>jutro</i> – <i>utro</i> “morning”
beu-	bl’u-, bu-	<i>nabuxnut’</i> “to bulk up” <i>sobl’udat’</i> “to keep”, “to obey” <i>nabl’udat’</i> “to look on” <i>bl’usti</i> “to observe”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *bleu-: <i>bl’uju</i> “I vomit”; <i>bl’uš’</i> ‘ivy’; <i>Bulg. dial. bjuvam</i> “I vomit” German borrowing <i>bl’udo</i> “dish” may reflect #bj- in the origin
peu-	pu-	<i>pux</i> “floss” <i>puxnut’</i> “to swell”, “bloat”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>pl’u-</i> < *pjeu- or *pleu-: <i>pl’uju</i> “I spit”, <i>pl’uš’</i> “ivy” < *pjeu-; <i>pl’uš’it’</i> “to batter”, “to roll” < *pleu- <i>Bulg. dial. pjoska</i> “flat-shaped ceramic vessel for alcohol”, <i>pjuskam</i> “I eat a lot”, <i>pjuvam</i> “I spit”
meu-	my	only <i>mykat’s’a</i> “to ramble”, <i>smykat’</i> “to link”, <i>zamykat’</i> “to tail”, “to round out” (<i>myčat’</i> “to moo”, is onomatopoeitic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> delabialization
veu-			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no *wVw- in IE
deu-	d’u, du	<i>dupa, župa, žopa</i> “ass”; also, <i>Cz. dupa</i> , <i>dial. d’upa</i> <i>duplo</i> “hole in a tree”; also <i>Pol. duplo, dupla, dziuplo, dziupla</i> <i>d’ubat’</i> “to bite”, “to take” (about fishes); also <i>Pol. dzióbać</i> <i>d’užij</i> “strong”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> alternation of <i>d’</i> and <i>d</i>
teu-	ťu, tu	<i>t’ur’a</i> (?) “cold soup” <i>t’un’a, čun’a</i> (?) <i>dial. “galosh”</i> <i>t’ukat’</i> “to haze”, “to bonk” <i>čop, čopik</i> “rowl plug”, <i>Pol. ciupaga</i> “walking stick”, “chip ax”, <i>Ciupiki</i> <i>Pol. Ciurki</i> <i>čužoj</i> “strange”, “foreign”, <i>čud’</i> “Estonian tribe”; also, <i>Novg. čuže</i> , <i>OChSl. štuždī, stuždī, tuždī</i> , <i>Bulg. čužd</i> , <i>Maced., Serbo-Croat. tuž</i> , <i>Slovene tuj</i> , <i>Cz. cizi</i> , <i>dial. cuzi</i> ,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>očutit’s’a</i> ‘to find oneself somewhere’ < <i>ot-jut-</i> (the same root as in <i>jutit’s’a</i> ‘to huddle together’, <i>ujut</i> ‘coziness, home, comfort’) alternation of <i>t’</i> and <i>t</i> spelling <i>štuždī, stuždī</i> may express the fricative pronunciation in dialects like <i>s’už(d)ī, š’už(d)ī</i>

		Pol. <i>cudzy</i> , Slovak <i>cudzi</i> , Sorb. <i>cuzy</i>	
neu-	ńu	<i>ńuxat'</i> "to sniff"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unique
geu-	žu	<i>župa</i> "district", <i>župan</i> (but also <i>gžupan</i> < * <i>gžp-</i>) "boss" <i>žurit'</i> "to rebuke" (Slovene <i>gurati</i> "to harass", Serbo-Croat <i>gurati</i> "to push" < * <i>gour-</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>gjeu-</i> (?): <i>žuju</i> "I chew"
keu-	ču	<i>čudo</i> "wonder" (also, * <i>kudo</i> < * <i>kou-</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>-kjeu-</i> (?): <i>čujaty</i> "to feel", <i>čub</i> and <i>čuprina</i> "wisp", <i>čurka</i> "log", <i>čur</i> "fen", "keep away", <i>čeresčur</i> "too much"
skeu-	šču	<i>ščupat'</i> "to touch" <i>ščuka</i> "pike" <i>ščur</i> "grosbeak", "worm", "rat" <i>ščur'it's'a</i> "to squint"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • or <i>skjeu-</i>?
xeu-	šu	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see <i>seu-</i>
zeu-	z'u, zu, žu	<i>žurčat'</i> "to murmur", "to bicker" (onomatopoetic) <i>z'uz'a</i> "swine" (expressive) <i>župel</i> , <i>z'upel</i> (Psalterium Sinaiticum; the German borrowing?) "bugaboo" <i>zuk dial.</i> "sound"	
unclear		<i>žuk</i> "beetle", <i>žužžaty</i> "buzz", <i>žuželica</i> "desert beetle", <i>žučka</i> "house-dog", <i>žut'</i> < <i>žud'</i> "horror", "fear", <i>žukovina dial.</i> "a finger ring", "jewel of finger ring", <i>žučina</i> "pothole", <i>žur</i> "a kind of soup"	<i>zeu-</i> , <i>geu-</i> , <i>gjeu-</i> ?
seu-	šu, šu, su	<i>suju</i> "I poke" <i>šuga</i> "slush ice", <i>šugat'</i> "to frighten away", <i>šukat'</i> "to look for", "to whisper", <i>šum</i> "noise", <i>šurin</i> "brother-in-law", <i>šustryj</i> "nimble", <i>šut</i> "clown"; <i>obs. šuj-</i> "left", <i>šulo</i> "the pole" <i>s'ukat'</i> "to piss" <i>s'us'ukat'</i> "to use baby talk"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stems with initial <i>šu-</i> have no clear etymology and are not related to stems with initial <i>s-</i>, some of them may reflect *<i>sjeu-</i> (<i>šurin</i> can be of the same origin as <i>šit'</i> < *<i>sjū-</i>)
leu-	l'u	<i>l'ubit'</i> "to love", <i>l'ud'i</i> "people", <i>kl'uč</i> "key", "well", "fountain"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulg. dial. -ju:</i> <i>kjuč</i>
sleu-	sl'u	<i>sl'uda</i> "mica", <i>sl'una</i> "spittle", <i>sl'uz</i> "icing", "overflow"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not <i>šl'u-</i>!
reu-	ru, ru	<i>r'ujen'</i> , <i>rujen' dial.</i> , <i>obs.</i> "September"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not <i>štr'u-</i> in the last example!

		<i>rutit' dial.</i> "to drop", "to pour", <i>r'utit' dial.</i> "to push", "to throw" <i>r'uxa dial.</i> "blind-alley" <i>br'uzga</i> "growler" <i>br'uxo</i> "belly" <i>r'ut' obs.</i> "to roar", "to cry" <i>str'uk dial.</i> "well", "fountain"	
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3. Additional comments

3.1. Open syllables

In an open syllable, usually -ev- is before a front vowel, -ov- is before a back vowel ($\bar{e}u > \bar{e}v-$, -av-).

Forms like *revu* or *novejšij* "the newest", *slovesnyj* are formed by analogy with other forms having -ev-, -ov-, but see the word *kl'ev'eta* "slander" (it has the same stem as *slovo* "word", but without satemization), and *d'ev'at'* "nine" < *devětī* (of the same origin as *novyj* "new" with an abnormal change $n > d$).

The change -ev- > -iv- can be explained by the previous palatalized consonants.

3.2. Closed syllables

The clusters #eu-, #ou-, #au-, #jeu-, #jou-, #jau- can have the reflexes with or without #j-.

The clusters *leu-, *reu- are changed into l'u, r'u / ru without any traces of -j-.

The change neu- > n'u- is unique.

In case of *keu-, *geu-, *xeu-, *skeu- we can see quite a normal change into ču, žu, šu, sču without -j-. However, really only a few stems can be reconstructed as *keu- and *geu- and have cognates with the back row. All the other stems can be analyzed as *kjeu-, *gjeu-, *zeu-, *seu-. If this is true, we can see that typical reflexes of *zeu- and *seu- are žu- and šu-, but for some cases:

- expressive and onomatopoeic stems (*z'uz'a*, *s'ukat'*, *s'us'ukat'*);
- stems with possible alternation u / ou / eu (*suju*, *zúk*);
- *župel*, *z'upel* (*z'upel* is possibly dialectal or archaic).

Thus, the change *seu- > šu, *zeu- > žu is regular in cases of lack of the related stems with initial s-, z-. If stems with initial s-, z- exist, then the change $s > š$ is forbidden. This conclusion helps us to explain the palatalized s' instead of š < sj in the series of pronouns descendant from *s'ī* "this": *s'e* and *s'o* "this", "it", *s'ego* (Gen. sing. masculine and neutral), *s'uda* ("to here"), all are from *sj- < protoIE *ki-. At the same time, in some Slavic idioms there is the following change: $s > š$, $z > ž$ or lack of phonetic distinction between them, for example, *šizyj* < *sizyj* "dove-colored" (Old Pskov idiom). In Polish exists a change of palatalized s, z, t, and d into hissing sounds. These changes can be linked.

The reflexes of *teu- > t'u, *deu- > d'u have three ways of being changed: depalatalization *t'u* > *tu-*, *d'u* > *du-*; change into sibilant or hissing (*župa*, *žopa*, *čužoj*, *čop* < *čup*, *cuždy*); preservation of *t'u-*, *d'u-* (*t'ukat'*, *d'upa*) and, as a variant, new palatalization (*dziuplo*, *ciupaga*).

Also, here we see irregular cases of *-o-* (high \bar{o} like \bar{e} ?) instead of *-u-* in palatalized stems (possibly, archaic forms).

Taking into account the Bulgarian form *čužd* of it, we should deny transcriptions like *ščužd* or *št'užd*, spelling *štuždī*, *stuždī* may express the fricative pronunciation in dialects like *s'už(d)ī*, *š'už(d)ī*, by the way, three cases of such spelling may indicate the peculiarities of northern Russian dialects. *Ciupiki* and *ciupaga* in Polish may be the cognates to *čop*, *čopik* < *čup*, *čupik* in Russian.

Reflexes of **veu-* are absent because of the lack of **w-w-* stems in the proto-IE.

Reflexes of **meu-* are also absent in Slavic, or, as a variant, the cluster **meu-* can be a case of the delabialization: (-)mykat' < proto-IE **mǔ-*, **mū-*, **meu-*, **mou-*; this stem is unique.

Reflexes of **peu-* have not been found or this cluster has changed, like **pou-* and **pau-*, into **pu-*: *pux*, *puxnut'*. All cases of *pl'u-* are the results of **pj(a/o/e)u-* (*pl'uju*) or **pleu-* (*pl'uš'it'*, *pl'uxat'*). The same is true for the reflexes of **beu-* > *bu-* (*nabuxnut'*) and **pj(a/o/e)u-* > *bl'u-*.

The change *beu-* > *bl'u-* is demonstrated by the word *bl'udo* "dish" and the stem *bl'us-*, *bl'ud-* in *bl'usti*, *sobl'udat'*, *nabl'udat'* "to respect", "to observe". The word *bl'udo* is a borrowing from one of the German languages and may reflect the secondary *j-* in that languages (something like **bjuda-*, **bjoda-*, see *bjerk*, *björk* "birch" etc. in the Scandinavian branch).

The etymology of the stem *bl'us-*, *bl'ud-* also is quite complicated. This stem appears only in Old Church Slavonic, and from here in Russian and Belorussian. In all the other Slavonic this stem doesn't exist. This stem is bookish and does not belong to the basic word stock. The most widespread forms are *sobl'udat'*, *nabl'udat'*, then *sobl'ust'i*; perfective forms of *nabl'ust'i* and *bl'ust'i* are almost not used. It shows us the possibility that the forms *sobl'udat'*, *nabl'udat'* are primary, all the rest are the examples of back-formation made by analogy: *sobl'udat'*, *nabl'udat'* => *sobl'ust'i*, *nabl'ust'i* => *bl'ust'i*. In the middle position *-b'* – might be mixed up with *-bj-* and, in a result, changed into *-bl'-*, like, for example, *verbl'ud* "a camel" < *vel'bl'ud* < *vel'b'udǔ* < **velībqđǔ*.

(It is interesting to note that in Western dialects of Bulgarian we can see *-j-* instead of *-l'-* in all positions: *bjuvam*, *bjuvam*, *bjuvoč*, *pjuskam*, *pjoska*, *pjuvam* and also *jijak* < *l'il'ak* 'a lilac'. In the cases of **pj(e/o/a)u*, **bj(e/o/a)u* it looks like a preservation of *-j-*. Whether this *-j-* can be omitted in the real pronunciation?).

Thus, even the stem *beud-* should be rejected as an illustration of the change **beu-* > **bj-* > **bl'u* and **-eu* > **ju-* > **-u*.

4. Conclusion

In the open syllable *-eu-* is preserved like *-ev-* or *-ov-*, *-ēu-* like *-ēv-* or *-av-*, originally depending on row; *-iv-* appears after the palatalized consonants.

The brief study of various examples proposed to us to illustrate the change *eu* > *ju* > *'u* in the closed syllables really doesn't prove this assertion, and, in most cases, shows us just the opposite.

We have no real traces of this hypothetical prosthetic sound *-j-*. The real change is *eu* > *ū* (possibly *eu* > *ö* > *ū*) and this interesting vowel influences the previous consonants in different ways. Some consonants in the position before *ū* are changed by the standard rules, but the rules of changes of the other consonants depend on the various factors. These factors can really prohibit, cancel or modify these mutations. Also, we can see a connection between this distribution and some other phenomena in the Slavic languages. The further study of all these

phenomena is an upcoming trend, that could help us to understand grammatical and phonetic peculiarities better.