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**Indo-European origins of Anatolian morphology and semantics:
innovations and archaisms in Hittite, Luwian and Lycian**

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CHAPTER 6

The etymology of PIE **h₁es-* ‘to be’

Abstract: In Hittite, the root formation continuing PIE **h₁es-* / **h₁s-* meant both ‘to be’ and ‘to sit’. I argue that it is likely that ‘to sit’ is the older meaning from which the copulative meaning developed by grammaticalization. Hittite *eš-^a* < **h₁e-h₁s-* (Gr. ἦσται, Skt. *áste*) further indicates that the older meaning of the reduplicated formation was ‘to sit down’. This suggests that the loss of the meaning ‘to sit’ for **h₁es-*, the semantic extension of **h₁e-h₁s-* to include ‘to sit’, and the introduction of **sed-* to express ‘to sit down’ were post-Anatolian innovations.¹

The PIE verb **h₁es-* / **h₁s-* ‘to be’ is reflected in all branches of Indo-European (Hitt. *e-eš-zi*, Skt. *ásti*, Gr. *ἐστί*, Lat. *est*, Goth. *ist*, etc. < PIE **h₁es-ti*), where it serves as the main copula, in addition to being used absolutely (‘to be the case, to exist’).² In statements of a general nature, however, truisms with permanent or inherent value, without reference to a specific time or circumstance, we rather find nominal sentences, i.e. sentences without any overt verb form (see Praust 2003).³ For example, the PIE way to state ‘X’s name is Y’ was “(of/to X) the name [*sc. is*] Y”.⁴

¹ Thanks to Martin Kümmel and Daniel Kölligan for helpful discussion.

² Cf. also the participle **h₁s-ont-* > Hitt. *ašant-* ‘existing, true’, Skt. *sant-* ‘real’, PGM. **sanpa-* ‘true; guilty’, Lat. *sōns* ‘guilty; criminal’ (i.e. “(s)he who is it”).

³ Praust shows on the basis of Indo-Iranian, Greek and Armenian evidence that PIE had no morphological injunctive of **h₁es-* ‘to be’. We only find augmented preterite forms, and in the other main context in which we normally find the injunctive, viz. general statements, we rather find zero.

⁴ Praust (2003: 137) illustrates this with examples from Hittite (*ŠUM-an=šet*^{URU} *Šudul* ‘its name (is) Sudul’), Old Persian (*Arxa nāma* ‘Arxa (is) his name’), Sanskrit (*havír asya nāma* ‘oblation (is) its name’), Old Irish *Mac Dathó a ainm* ‘Mac Dathó (is) his name’) and Greek (*Ἀλπηνοὶ οὖνομα* ‘Alpenoi (is) (its) name’). Praust is not certain about the antiquity of the Greek construction, as he believes that Homer only has this construction with an expressed copula. This is not the case, however, cf. e.g. Odysseus’ famous words to Polyphemus: *Οὐτις ἐμοί γ’ ὄνομα* ‘‘Nobody’ is my name’ (*Od.* 9.366). We may further add Latin evidence, e.g. *cantus ... cui nomen Neniae* ‘a song whose name is Nenia’ (*Cic. Leg.* 2.24.26). Beside this PIE collocation,

This means that the verb **h₁es-* was used in statements of more specific, temporal, local or situational nature.⁵

We can also reconstruct **h₁eh₁s-* ‘to sit’ for PIE, which looks like a reduplication of a root **h₁es-*, i.e. **h₁e-h₁s-*.⁶ LIV² s.v. **h₁eh₁s-* remarks: “Ungewöhnliche Wurzelstruktur, vielleicht liegt doch ursprünglich **h₁es-* (= 1. **h₁es-* ‘sein’?) vor (das im aheth. Aktiv *es-/as-* erhalten sein könnte), mit Reduplikation dann **h₁e-h₁s-*.” We find **h₁eh₁s-* in Greek, Indo-Iranian and Anatolian, in all of which it is a medium tantum: Gr. ἵσται ‘sits’, Skt. *āste* ‘sits’, Hitt. *eša* ‘sits down’ < **h₁e-h₁s-(t)o*.⁷ The meanings do not match completely, however: the Greek and Indo-Iranian verbs mean ‘to sit’, whereas the Old Hittite verb means ‘to sit down’. In Greek and Indo-Iranian, ‘to sit down’ is rather expressed with descendants of the root **sed-* (Gr. ἕζομαι, Skt. *sīdati*). The normal way to express ‘to sit’ in Old

productive instances of the zero-copula are numerous. Again some examples from Praust (2003: 131-136): Lat. *omnia praeclara rara* ‘all beautiful things are rare’ (Cic. *Amic.* 79), Gr. οὗτω δὴ καὶ ἀνθρώπου κατάστασις ‘such is also the condition of man’ (Hdt. 2.173), Skt. *ahām rāṣṭrī* ‘I am the woman in rule’ (RV 10.125.3).

⁵ A contrastive example from Praust (2003: 135): πίθεσθε καὶ ὑμμες, ἐπεὶ πειθεσθαι ἄμεινον ‘you had better trust (me), too, because trusting is (generally) better’ (*Il.* 1.273-274) vs. ὁ γὰρ φέρτερός ἐστιν ἐπεὶ πλεόνεσσιν ἀνάσσει ‘he (Agamemnon) is superior, because he rules over more men’ (*Il.* 1.281). The first states a general truth, the second refers to Agamemnon specifically, and in his current situation of ruling over more men.

⁶ Oettinger’s (2004) suggestion, taken over by Melchert (2014: 254), that we should rather reconstruct **h₁ēs-*, is prompted by the idea that Luwian *i*, as found in the derivations HLuw. *i-sà-nu-wa/i-* ‘to set’, *i-sà-tara/i-ta-* ‘seat’, cannot go back to **-eh₁-* (which gives *ā*), only to **-ē-*. Probably **ē* does not give Luwian *i* either, however, but *ā* as well (cf. e.g. CLuw. *zārt-sa* ‘heart’ < **kērd*). Rather, these derivations probably simply reflect the bare root, **h₁es-*, in unaccented position (see Kloekhorst 2008: s.v. *eš^{-a(ri)}*). Moreover, the derivations are irrelevant for determining the shape of the basic verb meaning ‘to sit’, because this verb is actually attested in HLuw. 3pl.pret. (SOLIUM)*á-sa-tá-* – with *a*, not *i*. In view of the ending of its 3sg.pres. form SOLIUM+*MI-sá-i*, this verb is likely to be the Luwian equivalent of Hitt. *eš^{-a}* rather than that of *eš^{-zi}* (for which cf. HLuw. *ásti*, Lyc. *esi* ‘is’ < **h₁es-ti*), meaning that ablaut is not expected (cf. Hitt. 3pl. *ešanta*). The Luwian word for ‘to sit’, then, also continues **h₁eh₁s-* or perhaps **h₁es-*, not **h₁ēs-*.

⁷ Unless one prefers to reconstruct Hitt. *eša* as unreduplicated **h₁es-o* (thus Oettinger 2004: 494). This reconstruction is less probable in view of the separation from the Greek and Indo-Iranian comparanda it requires.

Hittite is with *eš^{-zi} / aš⁻* < **h₁es-* / **h₁s-* (see HW²: s.v.).⁸ Although LIV² remains on the fence,⁹ this last fact can only mean that **h₁eh₁s-* is indeed to be analyzed as derived from **h₁es-*, i.e. as **h₁e-h₁s-*, with Hittite *eš^{-zi} / aš⁻* continuing a derivationally more primary formation, viz. the root formation on which **h₁e-h₁s-* is based.¹⁰

The identification of **h₁es-* ‘to sit’ with **h₁es-* ‘to be’ can hardly be doubted in view of the formal identity and close semantics.¹¹ Cf. Kloekhorst (2008: s.v. *eš^{-a(ri)}*): “This root **h₁es-* is identical to **h₁es-* ‘to be (present)’, indicating that ‘to sit’ is a development out of the meaning ‘to be present’.” Similarly, Willi (2018: 205 n. 179), dealing specifically with the reduplicated formation, claims that “‘sitting’ can be a temporally bounded form of ‘being’ (cf. *John sits ~ is on the floor*).” Although such a development is conceivable, the data show that ‘to be’ and ‘to sit’ must have been part of the semantics of **h₁es-* in PIE already, and the direction of change is therefore not immediately clear.

I would like to propose that the opposite development happened: that ‘to sit’ developed into ‘to be’. The development from a body posture verb (typically ‘to sit’, ‘to stand’, ‘to lie’) into a copula is a common pathway (cf. Heine & Kuteva 2002: 282). For ‘to sit’, see Heine & Kuteva (2002:

⁸ Illustrations of *eš^{-zi} / aš⁻* and *eš^{-a}* from OH (see HW² II: 101): LÚ.MEŠ ÚBARU LÚ-aš *kuiš kuiš* LUGAL-*uaš* *peran ešzi n=e šarā tienzi* ‘the strangers and whoever sits in front of the king stand up’ (KBo 17.11+ i 5-6 // KBo 17.74+ i 5-6), LUGAL-*uš* MUNUS.LUGAL-*aš ešanda* ‘the king and the queen sit down’ (KBo 20.10 + 25.59 ii 9).

⁹ Similarly Oettinger (2004: 493).

¹⁰ The idea that *eš⁻ / aš⁻* ‘to sit’ would reflect a derived formation **h₁ēs-* / **h₁es-* (Oettinger 2004: 493, Melchert 2014: 254) has no basis in the data, which rather contradict it (Melchert has to assume a replacement 3pl. **eš-anzi* >> *aš-anzi*). *eš⁻ / aš⁻* ‘to sit’ is formally completely identical to *eš⁻ / aš⁻* ‘to be’ < **h₁es-* / **h₁s-*. See also note 19.

¹¹ For the close semantics cf. HW² s.v. *eš⁻⁽²⁾* (‘to sit’): “Abgrenzung des Akt. gegen →*eš⁻/aš⁻⁽¹⁾* in der Bed. ‘(irgendwo) sein’ bleibt öfter problematisch im Aheth. und Jheth.”.

278), where examples from Spanish¹², Imonda and Sango are provided.¹³ The opposite is not true: copulas do not usually develop into verbs expressing specific body postures.¹⁴

One example of the development from a postural verb into a copula is Latin *stāre* ‘to stand’, which developed into a copula in western Romance (It. *stare*, Sp. *estar*). The older copula *esse* (It. *essere*, Sp. *ser*¹⁵) was not ousted. In Spanish, which shows the most progressed stage of grammaticalization,¹⁶ the general difference between the two is that the modern counterpart of *esse* is used for more permanent or inherent qualities (e.g. names, occupations, inherent traits of physique or character, nationalities, origins, family relationships), while the descendant of *stāre* is applied to more temporary, changeable, non-inherent conditions (e.g. locations, positions, physical and mental states, emotions, ongoing actions).¹⁷ An example of a minimal pair is Sp. *es alegre* ‘(s)he is a cheerful

¹² Namely *ser* ‘to be’ < Lat. *sedēre* ‘to sit’. This is not the best example, however, since most forms subsumed under *ser* are still unambiguously those of older *esse*, and those that resemble *sedēre* are likely to be as well, since they have close counterparts in the other Romance languages in which *sedēre* remained separate: for the inf. *ser*, subj. *sea*, fut. *será* cf. It. *essere*, *sia*, *sarà*, reflecting (V)Lat. *esse(re)*, *sit*, *esse(re) habet*. Although *sedēre* may have had some formal influence on the paradigm (cf. the Old Spanish infinitive *seer*), then, *ser* as a lexeme continues Lat. *esse* rather than *sedēre*. In addition, although *sedēre* did shift its meaning toward ‘to be’, its final merger with (or rather its being ousted by) *esse* ‘to be’, which had been adapted first to *éssere* (It. *essere*), and later further to *essére*, also had a formal component (cf. Corominas 1954-1957: s.v. *ser*: “Creo, pues, seguro que el golpe decisivo en la evolución semántica de SEDERE ‘estar sentado’ hasta ‘estar’ y ‘ser’, lo dió la confusión fonética con ESSERE”). The examples of Imonda and Sango, and that of *stāre*, elaborated upon below, are more straightforward.

¹³ We can add Dutch, in which *zitten* ‘to sit’ can also mean ‘to be located’ and ‘to be in a certain condition’, e.g. *ik zit deze week in Ljubljana* ‘I am in Ljubljana this week’, *wat zit er in je zak?* ‘what is in your pocket?’, *deze schroef zit los* ‘this screw is loose’, *ik zit je te plagen* ‘I am teasing you’, *zo zit het* ‘that is how it is’.

¹⁴ These observations also make sense from a wider perspective: meanings tend to develop from concrete to abstract rather than the other way around.

¹⁵ For *ser* as the continuation of *esse* rather than of *sedēre*, see note 12.

¹⁶ If we leave out French, where the descendants of *stāre* and *esse* conflated into the single verb *être* ‘to be’ (impf. *était* < *stābat*).

¹⁷ Examples, of *ser*: *yo soy Ricardo* ‘I am Ricardo’, *yo no soy marinero* ‘I am not a sailor’, *ella es una mujer especial* ‘she is a special woman’, *¿quieres ser madre?* ‘do you want to be a mother?’, of *estar*: *está sentado en el sofá* ‘he is sitting on the couch’, *Tula está encendida* ‘Tula is on fire’, *mi camisa está empapada en sudor* ‘my shirt is

person’ (personality trait) vs. *está alegre* ‘(s)he is in a cheerful mood’ (current state). The distribution between Sp. *ser* and *estar* is reminiscent of the PIE distribution between zero-copula and **h₁es-*, with zero being used for more permanent or inherent states of affairs, and **h₁es-* for more specific, temporal, local or situational cases of being.

It is likely, then, that **h₁es-* originally meant ‘to sit’, and that it was later grammaticalized into a copula similar to *stāre* in western Romance.

This implies the following stages.

Stage	‘to be’	‘to sit’	‘to sit down’
Pre-PIE	–	<i>*h₁es-</i>	<i>*h₁e-h₁s-</i>
PIE I	<i>*h₁es-</i>	<i>*h₁es-</i>	<i>*h₁e-h₁s-</i>
PIE II	<i>*h₁es-</i>	<i>*h₁e-h₁s-</i>	<i>*sed-</i>

Before its grammaticalization, **h₁es-* only meant ‘to sit’, and **h₁e-h₁s-* meant ‘to sit down’.¹⁸ The grammaticalization of **h₁es-* into a copula led to the second stage. In the following stage, the original meaning of **h₁es-* ‘to sit’ was completely ousted by the new copular meaning. This can be seen as a next logical step in the grammaticalization process, further motivated by homonymophobia.¹⁹ The semantic range of the reduplicated formation, originally only meaning ‘to sit down’, was extended to include ‘to sit’, just like in later Hittite.²⁰ The meaning ‘to sit down’, in turn, came to be expressed suppletively, with the verb **sed-*.²¹ No trace of the root

drenched in sweat’, *me estás volviendo loco* ‘you are driving me crazy’. For a more detailed description and analysis of the difference see NGLÉ (2811-2826).

¹⁸ For the middle voice of **h₁e-h₁s-o* ‘to sit down’ cf. Gr. ἕζομαι ‘to sit down’.

¹⁹ Cf. Oettinger (2004: 493). But note that his assumption of homonymophobia runs counter to his idea that ‘to sit’ was morphologically different from ‘to be’. His reference to a potential identical subjunctive does not further his cause much. It makes for a much more straightforward scenario to assume that these lexemes were completely formally identical, as we indeed observe in Hittite.

²⁰ *eš-* / *aš-* ‘to sit’ was in later Hittite replaced by *eš-a^(ri)*, which came to mean ‘to sit’ and ‘to sit down’, ultimately in accordance with the absence or presence, respectively, of the particle =*za*. Such a development seems also to have happened in Luwian, or in any case by late Luwian; cf. HLuw. SOLIUM+*MI-sá-i* ‘he sits’ ~ Hitt. *eša* (see note 6).

²¹ For **sed-* we find several deviant meanings in the daughter languages that may be remnants of an older meaning, which may then have been in the realm of ‘going’. Cf.

**sed-* has so far been found in Anatolian. All references to ‘sitting’ are made using **h₁es-*, e.g. the causatives (‘to seat, to set’) Hitt. *ašāšⁱ / aše/iš-* < **h₁s(e)-h₁os-* / **h₁s(e)-h₁s-* and HLuw. *i-sà-nu-wa/i-* < **h₁es-neu-*, and HLuw. (SOLIUM)*ása-* c. ‘seat’ < **h₁e(h₁)s-eh₂-* (cf. Skt. *āsa-* n. ‘seat’ < **h₁eh₁s-o-*). The fact that **h₁es-* ‘to sit’ survives only in relics in non-Anatolian, where anything related to ‘sitting’ is most productively expressed with **sed-*, again suggests a replacement of the former by the latter.

If it is accepted that **h₁es-* originally meant ‘to sit’, it provides more evidence for the Indo-Anatolian hypothesis. Anatolian descends from the second stage, PIE I, preserving the original meaning ‘to sit’ for **h₁es-*, whereas PIE II is the ancestor of the other Indo-European languages. The defining shared innovations for PIE II, i.e. non-Anatolian IE, are the continuation of the grammaticalization process of **h₁es-* by ousting the lexical meaning ‘to sit’, the concomitant expression of ‘to sit’ with the reduplicated formation **h₁e-h₁s-*, and the introduction of *sed-* into the complex to express ‘to sit down’.

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