

PIE Sounds (DRAFT)

This article explores the relationship between Proto-Indo-European (PIE), the theoretical ancestor of the Indo-European languages, and the Albanian language. Since no written records of PIE exist, its structure is reconstructed through linguistic theories, which, as all research, remain at the phase of hypothesis; even interpretation. This simple draft makes no new assertions or claims. Instead, it strives to provide a simple comparisons between the reconstructed vowels, consonants, and diphthongs of PIE with the sounds found in Literary Ghëg (LG) and Literary Tosk (LT) of the Albanian language.

Proto Indo-European Sounds

Typically, when studying sounds, they are divided into vowels and the consonants.

PIE vowels

1. According to Beeks, there were only two PIE vowel sounds of which linguists can be sure of, /e/ and /o/, both in short and long versions.

Without the phoneme /a/, the PIE vowel system would look something like the following.

	Front	Back	
Length↓			Height↓
short	*ĕ	*ŏ	Close Mid
long	*ē	*ō	

He is not arguing that PIE had only two vowels, but that only two vowels /e, o/ out of the five PIE vowels /i, e, a, o, u/ were phonemes; the others were phones. Phonemes are the sounds which change the meaning of the word, as in **day/hay**. Phones, on the other hand, are allophone sounds, which cannot change the meaning of a word.

2. Beeks' laryngeal theory explains the way the other PIE vowels came to be. PIE had three laryngeals: H₁, H₂, H₃. When these laryngeals were in between consonants or in initial position followed by a consonant, they would evolve into a schwa /ĕ/.

3. The three laryngeals were lost, but the schwas originating from them evolved into different vowels, adding three phones (not phonemes) to the PIE set of vowels. However, in the IE daughter languages, these phones evolved into phonemes, for example:

*h₁ > ĕ > /e/: PIE *dh₁-tós > Greek δε-τός de.tós 'bound'.

*h₂ > ĕ > /a/: PIE *ph₂-tér > Greek πα-τήρ pa.tér 'father'.

*h₃ > ĕ > /o/: PIE *(dh₃-tós > Greek δο-τός do.tós 'given'

4. Others believe that the two glides (y (j), w) evolved into the high vowels /i/ and /u/, and the /a/ vowel might have originated from /e/. In the end, many linguists accept that PIE had five vowels:

short: *e *o *a *i *u
long: *ē *ō *ā *ī *ū

Vowels Albanian Inherited from PIE

Some scholars believe that the Albanian language may have inherited only four vowels from PIE

ĩ ī ũ ū
ě ē
ǎ ǣ

However, it must be noted that it is argued that the Albanian language lost the long PIE vowels, then reconstructed them through her own inner processes. In addition, it added many more phoneme vowels, but as the SA stands today, three more are accepted (ë, o, y). Five of these vowels were nasalized; /ë/ and /o/ were not.

PIE Consonants

Keeping in mind that, to some degree, all ‘truths’ remain at the stage of hypothesis or even interpretation, based on Beekes CIEL, the PIE had the following consonants.

		Labial	Coronal	Dorsal			Laryngeal
				Palatovelars	Plain Velars	Labiovelar	
Nasals		*m _l	*n _l				
Stops	voiceless	*p	*t	*k̑	*k	*kʷ	
	voiced	*b	*d	*g̑	*g	*gʷ	
	aspirated	*pʰ	*dʰ	*g̑ʰ	*gʰ	*gʷʰ	
Fricatives			*s				*h₁, *h₂, *h₃
Liquids			*r̥ *l̥				
Semivowels				*j		*w	

^h- aspirated, ^w- labialized.

The table shows that PIE had only one fricative, and no affricatives. The PIE liquids /*m_l *n_l *r̥ *l̥ / and the semivowels /*j, *w/ were capable of forming syllables, while in Albanian no consonant can form syllables. The dorsals consonants were merged in various ways, but that would be beyond this text. Today’s Albanian stops comprise the voiceless /p, t, k/ and their voiced counterparts /b, d, g/. Some might add here the Tosk /q, gj/, but in other dialects these two sounds are affricatives. Albanian language does have an /h/, but the laryngeals shown in this table were lost. However, Matanovic claims that if the Albanian language has inherited an /h/, it would be the one in the word ‘herdhe’ (testicles).

Consonants Albanian Inherited from PIE

The chart below shows the consonants Albanian language inherited from IE, which, again, might also have been lost and later recreated. There might also might be disagreements among scholars as to the exact number of inherited consonants.

		Labial	Coronal	Labiodental
Nasals		m _l	n _l	
Stops	voiceless	p	t	
	voiced	b	d	
Fricatives			s > sh	
Liquids			r̥ l̥	
Semivowels				w > v

It is important to note that ‘s > sh’ indicates the state of this sound at the time when Albanian language was interacting with the Latin language; around the beginning of our area. At that time, Albanian did not have an /s/ sound because it had evolved into a /sh/ sound. All the other sounds shown in the following table, and more of them, which can be found in the Atlas of the Albanian Dialects (Gjinari, Shkurtaj), were recreated

within the Albanian language.

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Inter-dental	Alveo-dental	Alveolar	Alveo-Palatal	Palatal	Velar	Laryngeal
Nasals	m /m/				n /n/		ɲj /ɲj/	ŋ (ŋ)	
Stops									
voiceless	p /p/			t /t/			ç /ç/	k /k/	
voiced	b /b/			d /d/			g /g/	g /g/	/ʔ/
Affricates									
voiceless					c /t͡s/	ç /t͡ʃ/	q /t͡ɕ/		
voiced					x /d͡ʒ/	xh /d͡ʒ/	gj /d͡ʒ/		
Fricatives									
<i>Sibilants</i>									
voiceless					s /s/	sh /ʃ/			
voiced					z /z/	zh /ʒ/			
<i>Nonsibilants</i>									
voiceless		f /f/	th /θ/						h /h/
voiced		v /v/	dh /ð/				j /j/		
Approximants									
<i>Laterals</i>				ll /l/	l /l/				
<i>Trills</i>					rr /r/				
<i>Taps/Flaps</i>					r /ɾ/				

This table includes the sounds used by LG and LT.

PIE Diphthongs

As reconstructed, the PIE diphthongs were a combination of three vowels, /*e, *o, *a/ and one of the glides /*i(j), *u(w)/:

*eᵢ *oᵢ *aᵢ; *eu *ou *au

The diphthongs of daughter languages were built in various ways, depending on each-language's phonetic inventory and phonological system.

Sounds Albanian Inherited From PIE Diphthongs

Albanian language inherited single vowels from the PIE diphthongs.

Word	Meaning	IE Diphthong.	Albanian Vowel
PIE *gʰeṛmon (Topalli, Matasović)	<i>dimën</i> 'winter'	eᵢ	/i/ dimën (Tosk. dimër)
IE *stoṛḡh-o-	<i>shteg</i> 'path'	oi > ai	/ë/ shteg
IE *bʰoṛdeh₂	<i>bë</i> 'oath'		/ē/ bē
Lat. <i>caecus</i> 'blind', Got. <i>haihs</i> , OIr. <i>cáech</i> ; Grc. <i>κακός kakós</i> 'bad' (B. Demiraj)	<i>i keq</i> 'bad'	ai < (*h₂ey)	/ë/ i keq
PIE *ew > Alb. <i>e</i> , cf. <i>hedh</i> 'throw' < *skeud;	<i>hjedhë (hedhë)</i> 'throw, toss'.	eu > e	/ë/ Tosk: <i>hedh</i>

(Matasoić); PIE *sked- ‘to throw (B. Demira)); Both: OE sceotan ‘to shoot, sling’			Ghég: <i>hjedbë</i> Léck: <i>híedb</i>
PIE *h ₂ ews-	<i>vesb</i> ‘ear’	*[h ₂]eu̯	/ě/ vësh
L ovum, OCS j-aję (PIE *h ₂ owyom, *h ₂ owis ‘bird’ (Matasović)	<i>ve</i> ‘egg’	*[h ₂]ou̯	/ē/ Leck: <i>vē</i> Tosk: <i>vezë</i> NW Ghég: <i>vø</i>