

Lecture 7a: Tense and Aspect in Greek and Latin

1. Recap

- Tense and aspect separable categories
- But they often overlap: difference of aspect most usually found in past
- Greek grammaticalises aspect with the aorist and imperfect ‘tense’
- Apart from in the indicative there is no connection between aorist aspect and tense
- Aspect = grammatical category expressed on verb
- Does it affect all verbs in the same way?

2. Morphological contrast

- 2 opposing ways of forming present and aorist stems:

1. Root/thematic present: affixed aorist

γράφω vs. ἔγραψα

Aorist is formed from the present stem with suffix -s

2. Root/thematic aorist: affixed present:

ἔγνων vs. γιγνώσκω

ἔβαλον vs. βάλλω

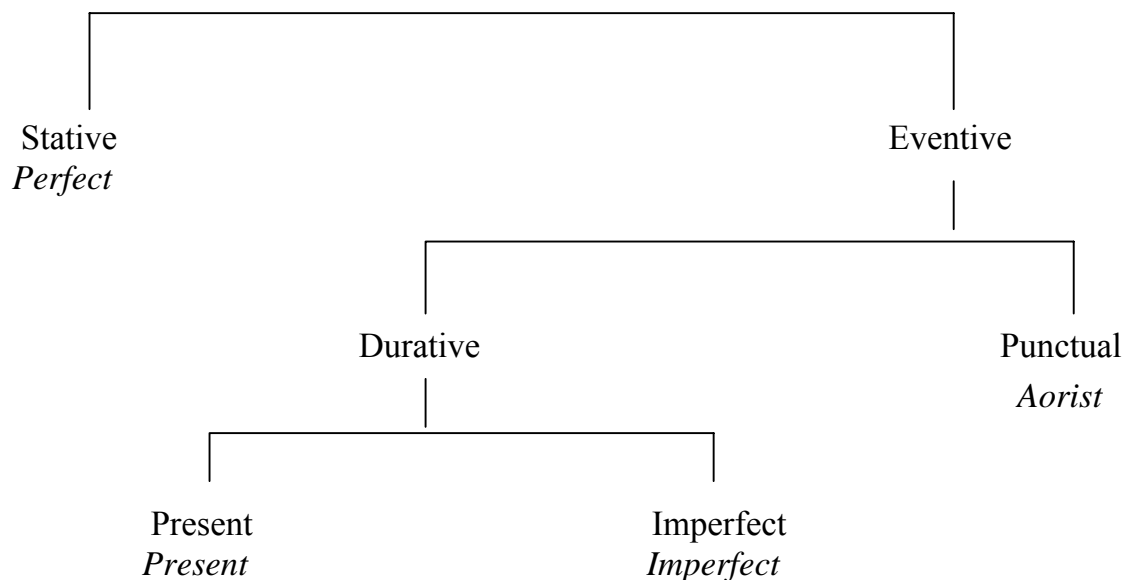
ἔλαθον vs. λα-ν-θ-αν-ω

Present is formed from the aorist stem in various ways

- One type = aorist stem ‘made’ present, the other present stem ‘made’ aorist
- Some verbs naturally perfective or imperfective?
e.g. ‘to be’ is naturally imperfective: εἶμι does not have an aorist
‘to give’ is goal-oriented and perfective: δίδωμι = root aorist
- Roots with inherent perfective semantics (give, take, kill etc) are called telic, those with imperfective semantics (be, carry) atelic
- Difference between telic and atelic verbs grammaticalised in Greek?
- Other ways of forming aorist and present stems:
 3. Both can be affixed: ζευγ-νυ-μι vs. ἐζευξ-α
 4. Ablaut alone: λείπω vs ἔλιπ-ον
 5. Suppletion, where the lexical semantics of the root do not permit changing the ‘natural’ aspect: φέρω vs. ἤνεγκον

3. Latin and Greek perfect tenses

- Some people call Greek perfect (e.g. τέθνηκα) another aspect
- But it indicates the *present* state as the result of a completed action in the past
- Thus defined as a tense
- Latin perfect also has this meaning
novi, odi, memini
urbs nostra deleta est; fuimus Troes: ‘Our city is destroyed; We Trojans are gone.’
- But it also denotes the perfective aspect in the past
cucurrit ad me Marcus
- Latin perfect = syncretism of original perfect and aorist
- Original perfect neither tense or aspect = a different way of differentiating verb
- Perfect morphology found on ‘stative’ verbs
- Other tenses found on ‘eventive’ verb
- Three different ‘axes’ – stative vs eventive, aspect, tense
- Possible schematisation:



Lecture 7b: Mood and Modality – some definitions

1. Introduction

- Moods in Latin and Greek express grammatical category of modality
- In other languages the same category is expressed by modal verbs (e.g. English)
- Most descriptions of Latin and Greek moods = function-to-form approach
- My approach = form-to-function

2. Modality

- Domain of modality very hard to characterise
 - Not grammaticalised to same extent in different languages
 - Meaning of modal elements often appears to be ‘bleached’
 - Overlap of modality and other categories
- Lyons first defined it as ‘non-factual’
 - eg “He may have gone to Paris”; “Perhaps he went to Paris”; “It is possible that he went to Paris”
- Most important factor is ‘subjectivity’
 - I think he may be at home*
- ‘Subjectivity’ depends on various factors in speaker-addressee relationship
- Many definitions oppose assertive indicative to non-assertive subjunctive
- Problems
 1. ‘Assertive’ indicative found in some non-assertive situations
 2. Only non-assertive is ‘modal’. So where does indicative fit in? Binarily opposed to indicative?

- Problem 1:

The past-time temporal clause is non-assertive but the indicative is used. For example:

6.173	ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ Λυκίην ἴξε Ξάνθον τε ῥέοντα, προφρονέως μιν τίεν ἄναξ Λυκίης εὐρείης;	And when he was come to Lycia and the stream of Xanthus, then with a ready heart did the king of wide Lycia do him honour
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Therefore we need another term without syntactic connotations – e.g. ‘irrealis’

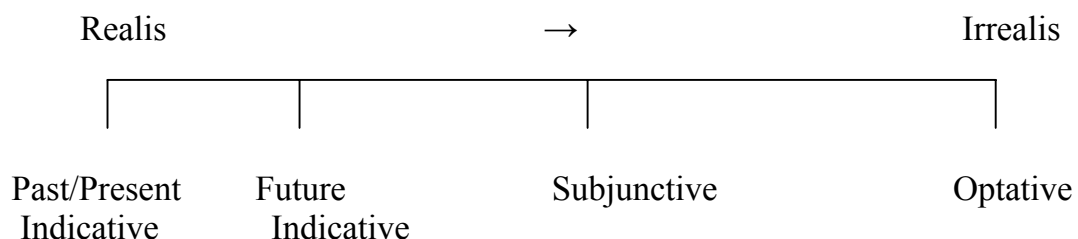
This term still suggests that ‘irrealis’ moods are opposed to ‘realis’

- Problem 2:

The status of the future indicative

The subjectivity of any other indicative

Solution: Realis-irrealis continuum



3. Semantic map

- Modality generally divided into two types
- e.g. Monro ‘quasi-imperative’ and ‘quasi-future’
- Jespersen: those with an element of will and those without
- Palmer: deontic and epistemic
- Most studies of Greek moods have looked at which meaning came first
- “Deontic modality ... is concerned with the necessity or probability of acts performed by morally responsible agents” Lyons
- “Epistemic modality is concerned with matters of knowledge, belief” Lyons
- Two domains share features – possibility and necessity
- Often expressed by same form

eg	He may come tomorrow	=	Perhaps he will/He is permitted
	The book should be on the shelf	=	It probably is/Its proper place is
	He must be in his office	=	I am certain that he is/He is obliged to be

- cf jussive subjunctive and future subjunctive in Greek
- But they are distinguished

	Epistemic	Deontic
Necessary	John must be in his office	Mary must come tomorrow
Necessary not	John can't be in his office	Mary mustn't come tomorrow
Not necessary	John may not be in his office	Mary needn't come tomorrow

- Another type of modality = dynamic modality = ability of the agent
- Expressed by modal verb in English (*can*)
- More similar to deontic modality than epistemic modality
- Alethic modality = modality connected with truth
- This discussed in logic, but not subjective
- Evidential modality: Some languages have complicated system of marking verbs according to the source of information

cf German

<i>Er</i>	<i>soll</i>	<i>steinreich</i>	<i>sein</i>
He	SOLLEN+3SG+PRES+IND	very.rich	BE+INF
‘He is said to be very rich’			

- But not subjective, not ‘possible/necessary’

Fig. 2: Deontic, dynamic and epistemic modality

Non-epistemic		Epistemic
Dynamic	Deontic	

Reading

Lyons *Semantics*

Jespersen ??

Monro, *Homeric Grammar*

Palmer *Mood and Modality*