Lecture 4: **Properties of sound changes continued**

1. Assimilation

- In general, segments need not be adjacent: vowel harmony

  foot > feet

*fōt	*fōti	pre-OE
*fōt	*føti	i-mutation
fot	fẽt	OE
fuːt	fiːt	Great Vowel Shift
fut	fit	ME

  cf. *mouse > mice, goose > geese*

- Palatalisation = common assimilatory change: C, [+FRONT] vowel

- Drags point of articulation of consonant further forward.

- Term used with three meanings: [k] > [c] or [k] > [kⁱ] or any fronting

- Latin centum [kentu] > Fr. cent [s-], It. cento [tʃ]-, Sp. ciento [θ-]

- Also PIE *kᵘ > Gk. τ- (in most dialects) before a [+FRONT] vowel:

  cf. Lat. *-que, quis* vs. Gk. τε, τίς.

- Can be full or partial, e.g. *ad-similare,* ἐμβαίνω

- Greek shows examples of both

Partial assimilation:

- A nasal assimilates to the place of articulation of a following stop

- [+nasal] > [position X] / __ [+stop, position X]

- Generally noted in internal sandhi

- In inscriptions usually also noted in external sandhi

- When the words are closely associated in sense (e.g. def. art. + noun or preposition + noun), when the second word starts with a labial or when the first word is ἐν: ΕΜ ΠΟΛΕΙ , ΕΓ ΚΥΚΛΟΙ

- Occasionally found also in looser combinations:

  ΙΕΡΟΓ ΧΡΕΜΑΤΟΝ, ΣΤΕΣΑΜ ΠΡΟΣΘΕ

Full assimilation

- A nasal assimilates completely to a following continuant.

- [+nasal] > [-nasal, -stop, position X] / __ [-stop, _ position X]

  ΤΟΛ ΛΟΓΟΝ   = τὸν λόγον

  ΕΡ ΡΟΔΟΙ   = ἐν Ῥόδῳ

- Compare Mod. Gk. treatment of the -ν of the def. art.

  Before a stop: written as -ν

                       assimilates in place of articulation

                       τον πατέρα [tom ba'tera]

- Before a continuant: not written

                       not pronounced

                       [ton 'logon] > [tol 'loγo] > [to 'loγo], το λόγο

- Lack of full assimilation of nasals before β, δ, γ in classical Greek is evidence that these are stops not fricatives.

2. Weakening (lenition) and loss

- Relaxation of articulatory effort: mechanically efficient

Example 1: Latin rhotacism

- *flōs, flōris*

- a-stem gen.pl. in [-āsom] > [-āzom] > [-ārum].

Example 2: Greek [s]

- Between vowels weakened first to [h] then further to zero

- Hence [–āsōm] > [–āhō] > Attic [–ōn], –ῶν

Example 3: Latin word final [s] is lost after a short vowel

- Hence inscr. spellings:

     Cornelio(s)

     militare = militaris

- Common in Ennius

- Restored from end of C3 BC

Example 4: Simplification of Greek consonant clusters involving [n] and [s]

- Often with compensatory lengthening of a preceding short vowel

- In Attic and Ionic:

     $\breve{V}Ns > \bar{V}s \quad$ and $\quad \breve{V}sN > \bar{V}N$

     NB α > ᾱ, ε > ει, ο > ου

     Acc plural *- ăns (Doric -ανς) > -ᾱς, *-ŏns > ους

     Infinitive of 'to be': *es-nai > εἶναι

     Note that ει [ẹː] and ου [ọː] > [uː] = 'spurious diphthongs'

     Other dialects assimilate e.g. Aeolic ἐμμεν

Example 5: Latin simplification of clusters involving nasals and fricatives

- *consol* [kŏnsol] > [kõːsol] > [koːsol], later [koːsul]

- *censor* [kĕnsor] > [keːsor] > [keːsor]

- Hence inscr. spellings

    cosol (whence standard abbrev. *cos*.)

    cesor

    cosentiont

- Cf. Lat. *mensis* > It. *mese*, Lat. *sponsa* > It. *sposa*.

- *n* spellings used historically, especially in official inscriptions.

- Leads to reintroduction of pronunciation of [n]

- But not uniformly reintroduced, leading to utter confusion:

    Grammarian Caper: *'omnia adverbia numeri sine n scribenda sunt, ut milies, centies, decies; quotiens, totiens per n scribenda sunt.'*

- Also hypercorrections eg. *thensaurus, occansio, Herculens*.

- Lost nasal sometimes restored analogically

- Eg. in the perf. of *sumo*, sum-s-i [sumsi] > [sũːsi] >[sūsi]

- But *m* then restored by analogy with present, (with epenthetic *p)*

Example 6: Fricativisation of the Greek voiced stops

- In class. period, β, δ, γ = [b, d, g], i.e. voiced stops.

- In Mod. Gk. these are [v, ð, γ], i.e. voiced fricatives.

- No clear evidence when this change took place.

- C2 AD: Jewish inscriptions at Rome use β for L.<V> ([v])

  βιξιτ = vixit [vixit]

  But NB what else would they use?

- Some evidence for change in some dialects in C4 BC

  omission of γ after a front vowel

  e.g. ολιος = ὀλίγος

  cf. Mod. Gk. ἔφαγε 'he ate' = ['efaye]

  BUT the Mod. Gk. phenomenon is palatalisation before a front vowel

  ALSO grammarian Herodius: ολιος phenomenon was not standard.

- C4 AD: Wulfila adopts Greek alphabet for Gothic

- Uses β, δ, γ for Goth. [b~v, d~ð, g~γ]

- BUT stops as well as fricatives

- C9 AD: Cyrillic alphabet adapted from Greek

- Uses <В в> (=beta) for [v] and a modified sign <Б б> for [b]

- Terminus post quem

- Mod. Gk. uses digraphs μπ, ντ, γκ for [b, d, g]

- These originate in voicing assimilation of the voiceless stop to the preceding nasal (with γ = [ŋ]).

Example 7: Fricativasation of Greek aspirated stops

- In class. period, ϕ, θ, χ = [pʰ, tʰ, kʰ] i.e. aspirated stops.

- In Mod. Gk. these are [f, θ, x] i.e. voiceless fricatives.

- We assume that [ph] > [ϕ] > [f] = oral depletion

- First clear evidence comes from C1 AD spellings at Pompeii:

  DAFNE = Δάϕνη

  LASFE = λάσθη (cf. Cockney English)

- From C2 AD Latin frequently uses *<F>* to represent Gk. ϕ

- Inscr. from Jewish catacombs in Rome use *<F>* for ϕ

- But *<TH>, <KH>* for θ, χ

- May suggest ϕ had become fricative earlier than θ, χ

- Greek script confuses θ, τ and χ, κ but not ϕ, π

  ΕΘΩΝ = ἐτῶν

  ΠΑΡΤΕΝΟΣ = πάρθενος

- Possibly the change of θ takes place earlier in Doric

  σιός for θεός in Spartan ambassador's speech in Lysistrata

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