The Words of Greek and Latin 1: Theories of word-formation

1. Introduction

- Moving from smallest to larger units: Sounds > Forms > Words > Syntax > Conversations
- Words the most easily accessible branch of linguistics?
  eg. discussions on word-aversion and whether vocabulary shapes thought
- Words are certainly long-lasting:

Mycenaean Greek: PY Ta 722 (Horrocks, 2010, p. 2)

Ta-ra-nu	**a-ja-me-no**	**e-re-pa-te-jo**	**a-to-ro-qo**	**i-qo-qe**	
$t^hrâ:nus$	aia:ménos	elephanteío:i	$ant^hró:k^wo:i$	híkk^{w}o:i-	k^we
stool (nom)	inlaid (nom)	of-ivory (dat)	man (dat)	horse (dat)-	and

po-ru-po-de-qe		**po-ni-ke-qe**		**FOOTSTOOL 1**
polupódei-	k^we	$p^hoiní:kei$	k^we	
manyfoot, *octopus* (dat)-	and	griffin (dat)	and	

'One footstool inlaid with a man and a horse and an octopus and a griffin in ivory'

Modern Greek: θρανίο – desk, ελεφάντινος - made of ivory, άνθρωπος - man, person human being, ίππος – horse, πολύποδας – polypod, φοίνικας – phoenix

- Definition of a word is surprisingly difficult

2. Overview of course

Lecture 1: Theories of word-formation

Lecture 2: Greek and Latin Vocabulary

3. Defining a word

a. *They are trying hard*

Some grey lines between morphology, words and syntax

b. *labitur et labetur in omne volubilis aeuum* (Horace: it flows and will flow into each spinning age)

Distinguish **word forms** from **grammatical words** from **lexemes:**

- labetur is the form of the 3rd person singular future indicative of LABOR
- aeuum is the form of the accusative singular of AEUUM
- plant/plants, match/match, big/bigger

Lexemes belong to a dictionary (cf. lexicon, lexicographer) but not clear which words go in dictionary and which in grammar.

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4. Inflectional vs Derivational morphology

- Greek and Latin words can be analysed into segments on the basis of recurrence in other word forms and/or contrasts with other word forms:

reg-i-t-ur	cing-i-t-ur
reg-e-t-ur	cing-e-t-ur
reg-a-t-ur	cing-a-t-ur
reg-u-nt-ur	cing-u-nt-ur
reg-i-t	cing-i-t
reg-u-nt	cing-u-nt

- These segments = **morphs**. Each morph represents 1 or more **morphemes**

Morpheme	**Morph**
3rd person singular	-t-
present indicative	-i- (or –u- when combined with –nt)
passive	-ur
REGO	reg-

- These morphemes represent a choice from a **grammatical category**

Person	1, 2, 3
Number	singular, plural
Tense	present, past, future…
Mood	indicative, subjunctive, imperative…
Voice	active, middle, passive

- The morph representing the lexeme = **lexical root,** others = **affixes** (prefix, infix, suffix)
- Affixes can be **inflectional** (grammar) or **derivational** (dictionary)
- Word minus inflectional endings = **stem**
- Inflectional affixes produce the full set of word forms for a lexeme (= the **paradigm**)
- Derivational affixes create new lexemes from roots/stems
- Consider:

  inueniunt

  irreparabilis

  εἰσβαίνω

  εὐεργέτης

5. Distinguishing inflectional from derivational morphology

- Not always easy to tell the difference
  a. *trying*
- Different part of speech?
  Not set in stone – ancient grammarians grouped participles together with adjectives and separately from verbs
  b. *nuovo/nuova* vs *cugino/cugina*
  Forms of *nuovo* grammatically required
  Forms of *cugino* semantically required
  BUT some convention here – eg number of nouns, comparatives of adjectives
- Mainly to do with **regularity**: inflectional is regular, derivational is not
  c.   dilute   dilution
          salute   *salution

          delegate   delegation (a collection of people who have been delegated)
          select   selection (a collection of things which have been selected)
          elect   election (NOT a collection of people/things who have been elected)

- NB formatives may develop from inflectional to derivational and vice versa eg *-sc-*
  d.   Latin *maturescit*: stem formed with -sc- from root maturus (derivational)
          Italian *finisco*: 1st singular present indicative of verb finire (inflectional)
          IE *-sk-: 'iterative' marker (inflectional) cf Greek:
          οἵ ῥα καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἐρίζεσκον περὶ τόξων.
          They competed even with the immortals in archery (verb ἐρίζω)

INFLECTIONAL AFFIXES
- Do not change the part of speech
- Have regular meanings
- Can be added to every appropriate root or stem (are fully productive)
- Are connected to syntax (eg are used to mark agreement)

DERIVATIONAL AFFIXES
- Create new lexemes and so may well change the part of speech
- May have less than regular of even opaque meanings (*-mon-* in *patrimonium, sermonem*)
- May not be add-able to every apparently appropriate root or stem
- Have no direct role in syntax

6. Derivation: further discussion

   a. *luceo*   b. *lucidus*

   Root = luc-, stem: lucid-

- Not always clear: baker > bake, banker > bank, butcher > *butch
- -ion derives Nouns from Verbs (generation, diversion from generate divert).
- NB they have meaning, even if not regular: in- = negative (eg. indecent, incredible)
- these share features with other versions eg un/non/dis/a
- NB not always predictable eg insubordinate NOT = negative of subordinate
- some regularity though - can be guessed/coined though with some difficulties
  gaol > gaoler, prison > prisoner
- Different suffixes differ in their **productivity**
  Compare –able, -th, -ness is supplanting it (trueness: the trueness of his aim)

7. Composition

-   New words formed from two independent words: many different types

a. blackbird   c. boathouse   e. windmill
b. book-keeper   d. houseboat   f. flourmill
-   Endocentric: blackbird, flourmill, vs. Exocentric: greybeard
-   Object compounds: book-keeper, pickpocket
-   Compound status can change:
i. lord < hlāfweard = 'loaf keeper'   j. lady < hlæfdīge = 'loaf kneader'
-   Not easy to distinguish compounds from collocations
k. tribunus militaris   l. republic
-   Stress used as indicator – but not always clear
m. mental hospital   n. topless bar

8. Further reading

Guy Deutscher, 2011 *Through the Language Glass: How Words Colour Your World*

Geoffrey Pullum, 1991 *The great Eskimo vocabulary hoax: and other irreverent essays on the study of language*

A couple of relevant posts from Language Log (an interesting blog written by US academics covering word-aversion and the vocabulary=thought question among other topics):

http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/languagelog/archives/004835.html, http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=4419

Horrocks, 2010 *Greek: A history of the language and its speakers* (2nd ed.)

P.H. Matthews, 1991 *Morphology* (2nd ed., esp. chs. 1-5)

A. Spencer, 1991 *Morphological Theory* (esp. ch. 1)