

Italian *-ismo* and *-ista* and Ancient Greek *-ismós* and *-istḗs* formations.

Morphological processes and diachronic relationships

In this study we examine the largely productive suffixes *-ismo* and *-ista* in Italian and the corresponding suffixes *-ismós* and *-istḗs* in Ancient Greek. Between the two languages there is an inheritance relationship (also for corresponding suffixes in many other modern languages, *via* Latin: see It. forms such as *sillogismo*, *eufemismo*, *solecismo*), but both Italian and Ancient Greek appear to show many similarities as far as morphological processes involving these suffixes are concerned. Our aim will be to describe these similarities, as well as differences with regard to these morphological processes, following a synchronic perspective but considering also diachronic aspects.

The majority of Italian formations with *-ismo* and *-ista* are systematically related to each other (Schwarze 1994: 502) and they are very productive: the suffix *-ismo* (and analogously *-ista*) combines with extremely different lexical bases, such as adjectives (e.g. *totalitarismo*), proper names (*berlusconismo*), but also whole phrases as in *menefreghismo*. According to Grossmann & Rainer (2004: 257f.), parallel derivations from the same lexical base can be found, but also derivations from *-ismo* → *-ista* and vice versa cannot be excluded. Interestingly, a linear co-occurrence of both suffixes is never found (neither *X-ismista* nor *X-istismo*). It is interesting that similar morphological relationships occur also in Ancient Greek (Chantraine 1933: 138f., Schwyzer 1953: 493). In Ancient Greek, too, the formations with *-ismós* combine with different lexical bases (adjectives, proper names or prepositional phrases, such as *psellismós* ‘stammering’ from *psellós* ‘stammering’, *philippismós* ‘philippism, to be on Philippus’ side’ from *Philippos* ‘Philippus’, *skorakismós* ‘lit. the going to the crows, the going to hell!’ from *es kórakas* ‘lit. to the crows, get lost! go to hell!’, respectively) and show a morphological relationship with *-istḗs* formations, such as *kordakismós* ‘the dancing of the Kordax’, *kordakistḗs* ‘dancer of the Kordax’.

Our corpus is constituted by the lexemes collected from the Zingarelli 2003 (ca. 1570 nouns with *-ismo* and ca. 1380 nouns with *-ista*) for Italian, and the lexemes collected from the *Greek-English Lexicon* by Liddell, Scott & Jones (ca. 860 nouns with *-ismós* and ca. 530 nouns with *-istḗs*) for Ancient Greek. Our study aims to describe the morphological processes involved in the derivation of It. *-ismo/-ista* and AGr. *-ismós/-istḗs* formations, making a contribution to synchronic and intra-linguistic morphology on the one hand and diachronic and contrastive phenomena on the other hand.

References

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