A Glossary of Terms

in Grammar, Rhetoric, and Prosody for Readers of Greek and Latin

A Vade Mecum

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Ablaut

See vowel gradation.

Abstract Noun

See noun.

Accent

The term accent is used in three ways in classics. (1) In Greek, accent means the spoken pitch of a particular syllable in a word. The pitch is indicated by an accent mark: acute (´), grave (`), or circumflex (˜). We do not know how these pitches sounded, except very generally, i.e., the acute indicated a rising tone, the grave the omission of that tone, and the circumflex a rising and then falling tone. Thus, most classicists stress the accented syllable of a Greek word in speech. (However, there is a movement afoot to restore the pitch accent.) (2) In Latin and English, accent means the stress that is given in speech to a syllable in a word, e.g., *cónflict* (noun), *conflíct* (verb). Latin stress is determined by the rule of the penult, i.e., if the penult is long, it receives the stress. Otherwise, in a trisyllabic word (or longer) the stress will fall on the antepenult. (3) In Latin, but not in English, stress also means the metrical (IV.b) stress, i.e., the long or heavy syllable in a foot (IV.b) of verse (IV.b). This stress is called the ictus in prosody (IV.a).

Adjective (LL, *adiectīvum*, "added")

One of the parts of speech, an adjective modifies, i.e., describes, limits, or qualifies, a noun or a pronoun. *A **big** man* is a more qualified statement than *a man*. In Greek and Latin, an adjective must agree with the word it modifies in gender, number, and case. This is the first of the three concords (II.c).

An adjective can serve as a substantive, e.g., *O Love! they wrong thee much / That say thy **sweet** is bitter.* [Captain Tobias Hume, *The First Part of Airs.*]

There are five kinds of adjective in English. (1) Descriptive or attributive adjective. (2) Demonstrative adjective. (3) Possessive adjective. (4) Quantitative adjective. (5) Numeral adjective. Greek and Latin have these five types, too. See also adjective pronoun.

Adjective Pronoun

In English grammar, an adjective pronoun is a demonstrative adjective or a quantitative adjective put to pronominal use, e.g., *She said, Never man was true; He said, **None** was false to you.* [Nicholas Breton.]

ADVERB (L, *adverbium*; Gr, ἐπίρρημα)

One of the PARTS OF SPEECH, an adverb modifies, i.e., describes, limits, or qualifies, a VERB, an ADJECTIVE, or another adverb. *He hit the ball* ***hard*** is a more qualified statement than *He hit the ball*.

Although very many MnE adverbs are formed by the addition of the SUFFIX *-ly*, some important ones, like the one in the example above, go back to a large class of OE adverbs that ended in *-e*, and then lost the *-e* in the transition from ME to MnE. (The suffix *-ly* is from OE *-liċe*. Cf. Modern German *-lich*.)

There are four classes into which most adverbs fall. (1) Time, e.g., *now, then*. (2) Place, e.g., *here, there*. (3) Manner, e.g., *fast, slow(ly)*. (4) Degree, e.g., *rather, very*.

ADVERBIAL CONJUNCTION (or CONJUNCTIVE ADVERB)

An adverbial conjunction is an ADVERB that serves as a CONJUNCTION, e.g., *therefore, nevertheless*. Not all MnE adverbial conjunctions are considered adverbs in Greek and Latin, e.g., ἐπεί, *cum*.

ADVERSATIVE CONJUNCTION

An adversative conjunction, like any CONJUNCTION (II.B), joins WORDS (II.B), PHRASES, and CLAUSES. However, adversatives such as *but* join together only to oppose.

ALPHABET

An alphabet is a system of conventional signs, called letters, for representing speech sounds in writing. Signs or combinations of signs are assigned to sounds or combinations of sounds in a LANGUAGE (I.A). In this way an alphabet is distinguished from other forms of writing, e.g., hieroglyphics, in which signs represent SYLLABLES, WORDS, and PHRASES (II.C), as well as sounds. The alphabet (Gr, *alpha-beta*) was invented by the Phoenicians, refined by the Greeks, and modified by the Etruscans, who passed it on to the Romans. The Roman form of the alphabet is now used by most European languages, as well as by a number of non-European languages.

ANAPTYXIS (Gr, ἀνάπτυξις, "opening, gaping")

Anaptyxis is the classicist's name for what the linguist calls *svarabhakti* or the *intrusive shwa*, i.e., the intrusion of a mid-central vowel (see VOWEL (II.B)) between certain pairs of consonants, as in the old song's, "I'm Henəry the Eighth, I am." [Pyles and Algeo, *English Language*, 35.]

ANTEPENULT (L, *ante paenē ultima*, "before the next to the last")

In a WORD of three or more SYLLABLES, the antepenult is the third from the last syllable.

Apocope (Gr, ἀποκοπή, "a cutting off")

Apocope is the omission of a vowel at the end of a word. "Dīc, dūc, fac, fer," which "have an *e* that isn't there," are all shortened by apocope. [Sihler, *Comparative Grammar,* § 547.1a.] Goodwin [*Greek Grammar,* § 53] illustrates the phenomenon in Greek: "in Homer we find ἄν, κάτ, and πάρ, for ἀνά, κατά, and παρά."

Article (L, *articulus*; Gr, ἄρθρον)

In English, the definite article and indefinite article form a subclass of adjective. The former shows that the noun it modifies represents a particular member or members of a class. The latter shows that the noun that it modifies represents any member of a class. Linguists see the former as "salient in the discourse," the latter as "not salient."[10] Examples: ***the*** *man,* ***a*** *man*. Latin has no definite or indefinite article, though *ille* and *unus* came to be used as such in ML. Greek has no indefinite article, although τις, τι is often used as such.

Assimilation (L, *assimulātus* < *adsimulātus,* "having been imitated")

Assimilation is the alteration of the sound of a consonant partially or entirely in imitation of the following consonant, illustrated in the etymology (II.a) of this very entry.

Attributive Adjective

See descriptive adjective.

Augment

In Greek, indicative forms of the imperfect, aorist, and pluperfect tenses are marked by the prefix ἐ- (syllabic augment) or by a lengthening of the initial vowel (temporal augment), e.g., **ἔ**λυσα, **ἤ**λπισα. The augment indicates that the verb refers to time, as well as to aspect (II.c).

Bare Infinitive

See infinitive.

Barytone (Gr, βαρύτονος, "deep-sounding")

In Greek, a word that carries no accent on the ultima is called barytone, e.g., ἄνθρωπος, σωφία.

[10] Private communication from Dr. D. Eric Holt.