

# Οδηγός Μαθήματος ΓΛΩ818 | SYLLABUS GLO818 Η Φωνολογία της Ελληνικής | The Phonology of Greek

Anthi Revithiadou

**Contact details:** Old building, Office 301; Office hours: Thursday 17.00-19.00 & Friday 14.00-16.00; **Email:** [revith@lit.auth.gr](mailto:revith@lit.auth.gr); **URL:** [www.revithiadou.gr](http://www.revithiadou.gr)

**When and where do we meet?** Tuesday 17.15-18.45 & Thursday 19.00-20.15, Old building, room 309 (Σπουδαστήριο)

**Summary:** The *Phonology of Greek* aims at providing a comprehensive description of the phonology of Standard Modern Greek. More specifically, the main goals of this course are: (a) to present a wide-range of novel data from Greek, covering all aspects of the phonology of the language (i.e. sound inventory, syllable structure, word and above the word prosody, intonation and phrasing), (b) to shed light on the nature of phonological representations through synchronic and empirical investigations into the Greek sound structure, and (c) to highlight the typological significance of the Greek sound system.

## Organization of the course:

### #Unit 1. The sound inventory

#### 1.1. Vowels

1.1.1. Phonemes and allophones

1.1.2. Outstanding issues

1.1.2.1. The special status of /i/ and /j/

1.1.2.2. Unstressed vowel reduction

#### 1.2. Consonants

1.2.1. Phonemes and allophones

1.2.2. Outstanding issues

1.2.2.1. The status of voiced stops /b, d, g/

#### 1.3. The emergence of new sounds

Unit 1 presents the inventory of Greek sounds and the distinctive features that yield the attested system of contrasts. Next to the distinction between phonemes and allophones, various outstanding issues of Greek phonology, such as the phonemic (or not) status of the semivowel /j/, the allophonic variants of the high front vowel /i/, the underlying representation of the voiced stops /b,d,g/. This lecture will be rounded off with a discussion on the development of new sounds, documented in the speech of the new generation of Greeks, such as the glottalized pronunciation of voiceless velars before back vowels (e.g. [ak<sup>h</sup>oma] 'still').

---

### #Unit 2. The syllable structure

#### 2.1. Introduction

#### 2.2. The Greek syllable structure

#### 2.3. The Demotic – Katharevousa split

2.3.1. Distributional restrictions in the Demotic vocabulary

2.3.2. Distributional restrictions in the Katharevousa vocabulary

#### 2.4. Phonotactics and syllable structure in peripheral strata

2.4.1. Acronyms and blends

2.4.2. Loan words

Unit 2 addresses the structure of the SMG syllable. More specifically, we will start with a description of the basic syllable structure of Greek and we will continue with the fundamental for the Greek language distinction between the Katharevousa and the Demotic vocabulary. It will be shown that each subsystem is liable to its own distributional and phonotactic conditions. For instance, /xθ/ is a permissible consonant cluster (or sequence) f/or archaic (Katharevousa) words but not for popular (Demotic) ones, which permit only fricative-stop sequences, e.g. /xt/. Similarly, /iV/ sequences are permissible in Katharevousa (e.g. [ikojénia] 'family') but not in Demotiki (e.g. [jénja] 'beard').

Furthermore, SMG has an abundance of acronyms (*pasók* 'socialist party') and blend constructions (*sfixterman* 'strong guy'), which are worth exploring because, together with unassimilated loans (e.g. *asanser* 'elevator'), are the only instances of uninflected words and hence consonant ending (other than *n* and *s*) formations in the language. Such words naturally constitute an ideal case-study for identifying the phonotactic and syllable structure generalizations that apply in less central strata of the SMG grammar.

---

### #Unit 3. Word-level phonology

- 3.1. Preliminaries
  - 3.1.1. The morphological structure of words
  - 3.1.2. The phonological Word in SMG
- 3.2. Lexical processes
  - 3.2.1. Processes involving consonants
  - 3.2.2. Processes involving vowels
- 3.3. Post-lexical processes
  - 3.3.1. Processes involving consonants
  - 3.3.2. Processes involving vowels

Unit 3 will address vowel- and consonant-targeting phonological rules that apply both at the lexical and at the post-lexical level. We will begin with some preliminary information on the structure of the SMG word with special attention to the distinction between inflection and derivation. Since both the lexical and post-lexical phonological processes apply within the domain of the *Phonological Word* (PW), an introduction to the relevant notion and, in general, the *Prosodic Hierarchy*, is required. After this short introductory section, processes that apply at the lexical level will be discussed in detail. Once again, the distinction between the Demotic and Katharevousa subsystem will be vital for the description and analysis of the data, since lexical items from the archaic stratum will be shown to be subject to different phonological processes than those from the non-archaic/Demotic one. The last part of the lecture will be dedicated to phonological processes that apply post-lexically.

---

### #Unit 4. Word stress

- 4.1. Stress at the Interface
  - 4.1.1. Greek stress: Fixed vs. free?
  - 4.1.2. A representational approach to SMG stress
  - 4.1.3. Accentual differences between nominal and verbal constructions
- 4.2. Stress in nouns and adjectives
  - 4.2.1. Stress in inflected constructions
  - 4.2.2. Stress in derived constructions
- 4.3. Stress in verbs
  - 4.3.1. Stress in the verbal group

- 4.3.2. A controversial issue: The accentuation of the PAST forms
- 4.4. 'Elsewhere' stress patterns
  - 6.4.1. Stress in words with no inherent accents
  - 6.4.2. Stress in loanwords, acronyms and blends

The main topic of Unit 4 is word stress. We will start with investigating whether SMG is a *fixed* or a *free* stress system. In the former category, stress is reckoned mainly on the basis of purely phonological principles (e.g., weight, syllable position in relation to the edge of the word, etc.), whereas in the latter category, stress hinges on the morphological structure of the word and on the inherent accentual properties of morphemes (e.g., roots, inflectional endings, derivational suffixes, etc.). It will be argued that Greek belongs to the latter category. The genuine interface character of SMG stress, therefore, dictates a distinction between the accentuation of nouns and adjectives and the accentuation of verbal formations. This split is further supported by the fact that verbal stress presents certain peculiarities which are not attested in the other classes (e.g., the lack of inherently accented roots, the relation between antepenultimate stress in the PAST forms and the augment *e-*, and so on).

The last part of this cycle of lectures will be devoted to the 'elsewhere' stress patterns, as these are revealed in words with no inherent accents, unassimilated loans and, in general, uninflected constructions.

---

### #Unit 5. Above the word level phonology

- 5.1. The prosodic structure of compounds and other composite constructions
  - 5.1.1. Lexical compounds and prefixed formations
  - 5.1.2. Phrasal compounds
  - 5.1.3. Other composite expressions
- 5.2. The prosodic structure of clitic constructions
  - 5.2.1. Enclisis
  - 5.2.2. Proclisis

The focus of Unit 5 will be on the prosodic and phonological properties of various types of compounds and complex expressions as well as clitic constructions. We will first focus on the phonological and prosodic properties of compound and prefixed formations, which seem to differ depending on the prosodic structure the relevant constructions are mapped onto, i.e. PW or a higher prosodic constituent. Evidence from stress, rules of allomorphy and various segmental processes will be put forward to support the attested prosodic patterns. We will then continue with the prosodization of clitic+host and host+clitic constructions. Emphasis here will be on the various prosodic patterns different types of clitic constructions opt to be parsed into. Once again, the proposed prosodic shapes will be substantiated with evidence from stress, syllabification and segmental rules. The lectures will conclude with a summary of the various types of prosodic asymmetries that characterize the prosodic structure of SMG (e.g. asymmetry between proclitics and enclitics, etc.).

**Readings:** A list with the relevant readings will be distributed each week in class.

**Exams:** Term paper. Students will be required to submit a paper on a topic of their choice. Joined papers (in groups of 1-2 students) will also be accepted.