Conference Report: “Choosing Your Words: Lexicalisation and Grammaticalisation in Greek and Latin”

The international conference “Choosing Your Words: Lexicalisation and Grammaticalisation in Greek and Latin” took place at the UCL Institute of Advance Study on 1st and 2nd April 2022. It was organised by Mathilde Bru, Baihui Cheng, Stephen Colvin and Tomaž Potočnik. The conference took place in a hybrid format, and was very well attended both in person (27 participants and speakers, from the UK and Europe) and online (between 5 and 20 participants, depending on the paper session, from the US, China and Europe). We were fortunate enough to receive funding from the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, the Classical Association, and the Institute of Classical Studies,

The aim of the conference was to examine change in the lexicon and constructions of Greek and Latin. The lexicon and construction of languages, though they have traditionally been viewed as two separate fields of linguistic study, can be understood as continuous entities. The continuum between constructions and the lexicon is an area where traditional boundaries between lexicon, morphology, syntax and semantics may be unhelpful in understanding how and why changes occur. This is symptomatic of a more systematic issue with terminology: compounds, for example, are the result of a lexicalisation process by which all these factors interact with each other. One of the main topics of discussion during the two days of the conference concerned how to resolve this question of terminology, and how to develop better frameworks for the explanation and analysis of linguistic innovation. We were fortunate enough to have speakers who covered a wide range of historical periods and authors (from Homer to Josephus), and topics (covering grammaticalisation, lexicalisation, and everything in between). The breadth of research made for fascinating discussion on how to solve this problem of terminology and frameworks, both in the questions directly following the talks and in the coffee breaks and lunches, and at the conference dinner, which took place after the first day of the conference.

The topic of this conference spanned both the field of Linguistics and the field of Classics, and brought together PGR students and established scholars from both Classics and Linguistics Departments worldwide, with the speakers travelling from universities across the UK, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy and Spain. A photo of all the speakers and conference organisers can be found at the bottom of this report, and the conference programme, and the speakers’ abstracts, can be found on the [conference website](about:blank).

The organisers are very grateful to the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies for their grant of £400, which allowed us to cover the travel and accommodation expenses of our post-graduate speakers who would not have been able to present at the conference otherwise.

*Speakers*

Prof. Silvia Luraghi (Pavia)

Dr Guglielmo Inglese (Turin)

Baihui Cheng (PhD student UCL)

Prof. Martin Haspelmath (Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology Leipzig)

Tomaž Potočnik (PhD student UCL)

Ezra La Roi (PhD student Ghent)

Sólveig Hilmarsdóttir (PhD student Cambridge)

Prof. James Clackson (Cambridge)

Mathilde Bru (PhD student UCL)

Elena Squeri (PhD student Genova/Paris)

Shoni Lavie-Driver (PhD student Cambridge)

Dr Evert Van Emde Boas (Aarhus)

Prof. Luis Unceta Gómez (Madrid)

Mathilde Bru, PhD Student, UCL.

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A group of people posing for a photo

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