

## **What Lexicographers Do with Word Formation<sup>1</sup>**

**Maurizio Dardano**

(Università degli studi Roma Tre)  
Via Senafè, 19  
00199 – Roma

**Gianluca Frenguelli**

(Università degli studi di Macerata)  
Via Ascrea, 32  
00135 – Roma

**Gianluca Colella**

(Università degli studi di Macerata)  
Via Col di Lana, 99  
00043 – Ciampino (Roma)

### **Abstract**

In the past 50 years a relevant increase in the inclusion of word-formation data in Italian dictionaries has taken place. This development has proved very important to Italian users: in other words it has increased their linguistic awareness. Dictionary users are convinced to investigate WF mechanisms. What looking-up strategies are necessary in order to achieve this goal?

This paper analyzes the development of the treatment of word-formation issues in Italian monolingual dictionaries published since the mid-1960s. A short profile of the dictionaries analysed will introduce the topic. The paper aims to find the different selections of affixes and components listed as headwords in the dictionaries analysed and the selections of items included in each entry (neologisms or 'traditional' words), in order to compare the different lexicographical techniques used.

### **1 Introduction**

This paper analyzes the development of word formation [= WF] in Italian lexicography, by comparing the monolingual dictionaries published in Italy from the mid-nineteen sixties to the present. After a short outline of the dictionaries analysed, our research will focus on the following aims: to find the repertoires of affixes and combining forms included as entries in the different Italian dictionaries published in the last forty years; to identify the selection of derivatives included in each entry; to identify the criteria followed in the lemmatization of

---

<sup>1</sup> The present study is the result of a close collaboration between the three authors. MD did § 1 and § 7, GF § 5 and § 6, GC § 2 § 3, § 4.

compounds and derivatives. This paper does not aim to put forward new criteria for the lemmatization of prefixes, suffixes and combining forms, but rather to highlight the theoretical aspects that lie at the basis of the decisions made by lexicographers in setting up dictionaries. To this end, this paper analyses aspects of WF – as it is treated in dictionaries – which are seldom addressed in Italian linguistic works.

A monumental dictionary as *GDLI* doesn't lemmatize affixes. This aspect shows how Italian lexicography has only recently conformed to the English one. In fact, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which was first published in 1933, lists many affixes, both of classical and Germanic origin.

These issues have been faced with only to a limited extent within Italian lexicography,<sup>2</sup> however the Anglo-Saxon, French and German tradition have provided several terms for comparison over the last twenty-five years.<sup>3</sup>

How are derivatives dealt with within European dictionaries? A recent essay (Jackson 2004), comparing English lexicography with the German and French one, provides some useful indications.

Prefixed words are obviously separated from their lexical stem because of the alphabetical order followed in dictionaries. Suffixed words are normally dealt with in two ways: 1) a suffixed word is listed as subentry within the entry it stems from, it is listed in bold type and accompanied (though not always) by a short definition; derivatives, whose meaning directly depends on the meaning of their own stem, are normally dealt with in this way. 2) the derivative is listed as a dictionary entry and is thus attributed the status of an independent word; derivatives whose meaning differs from the one of their stem are normally listed in this way.

The treatment of compounds is more complex. The problem with compounds is to decide whether a "word + word" or "root + root" combination constitutes an independent word or lexical item and, as such, deserves to be listed as a single dictionary entry. Some dictionaries follow the writing criterion and accept only *solid* or *hyphenated* compounds. Others include compounds with semantic unity (the so-called "unity of meaning", as in Cowie 1983: 104), whose sequence is either stable or institutionalized.

The problem related to whether and how to lemmatize WF elements and products in dictionaries is of strong interest for lexicographers. In their function of register of a language lexicon, dictionaries obviously pay great attention to WF. Lexicographers are generally open to welcome all the new words entering the lexicon of a language, first of all because a large number of derivatives can considerably increase the number of entries listed in the dictionary; this aspect has played a fundamental role in helping commercialize monolingual dictionaries for several years.

The treatment of compounds and derivatives within the dictionary is another major problem. Should compounds and derivatives be listed as single entries or can they be entered as

---

<sup>2</sup> The topic of word formation is very rarely dealt with in Italian lexicography. See for example Marellò (1993 e 1996: 21-23), Thornton (1998), Lindemann (1999), Schafroth (1999).

<sup>3</sup> References include: Bergenholtz/Mugdan (1982), Müller (1982), Mugdan (1984), Hudson (1988), Benson/Benson/Ilson (1986), Hausmann et al. (1989-1991), Prcic (1999).

subentries, under the entries corresponding to the words they stem from? A strictly alphabetical order would probably be the best solution from the point of view of consultation, yet the second method is followed as often as possible for economic reasons.

Nonetheless, different choices correspond to different criteria for language analysis, different ways of considering dictionary users, as well as different ways of teaching the language to various categories of speakers; for example, if the lexicographer's aim is to highlight the relation between a compound like *fruit-pick-ing* and the construct it stems from ('they pick the fruit'), the compound will be entered under the verb *pick*.

Yet compounds are normally entered under the first element. This may sometimes turn out to be an arbitrary choice, as it implies the existence of a relation between the compound and its components, although the compound may have developed its own specific meaning which can no longer be referred to any of its components.

Another approach to the problem lies in the adoption of a "practical" perspective, which consists in entering a compound in the exact place where a user would expect to find it. In such a case, the compound may be listed in several places because of the different consultation strategies adopted by the users.

Why are affixes and combining forms listed as entries, although they are not full words?<sup>4</sup> To what extent and following which modalities does this take place? This is what the following paragraph intends to investigate. The aim of this section is simply to stress how, as in this case, lexicographers tend to make choices that are from time to time imposed by reasons like language practice, the needs of language users, as well as the progress made by research: the inclusion of these elements namely presupposes that they carry some meaning and their listing as entries thus enables dictionary users to decode new formations that have not yet entered our lexicon (for example, the inclusion of the *-logia* combining form allows a user who knows the meaning of *poeta* to decode the neologism *poetologo*). In this case, the information contained in dictionaries on affixes and combining forms must include not only the meaning of these elements, but also the way in which they form new words. A similar explanation can also be included in an annex, as is the case with the GRADIT, which provides for an overall presentation of affixes and combining forms.

## 2 The growing importance of affixes in dictionaries

In the last fifty years WF data in Italian lexicography have increased considerably. This has contributed to enhance the linguistic consciousness of Italian users. In learning lexicon

---

<sup>4</sup> Lexicographers generally tend to distinguish between affixes and combining forms, even if some dictionaries normally turn to the "prefix" and "suffix" labels only or, more rarely, to that of combining form only. This happens because the distinction between inflectional affix, derivational affix and combining form is all but clear. A lot of scholars believe that there exists a *continuum* ranging from more evident inflectional affixes (like the *-s* English morpheme for the plural form), through less evident inflectional affixes (like the *-ing* morpheme for the present participle), highly productive affixes (like the *-er* adjective), clear lexical elements (like *re-* meaning 'again'), and finally to *combining forms*, of the *-ology* type meaning 'study of' (Jackson 2004).

structures a modular trend is shown. Dictionary users are encouraged to investigate the WF mechanism. What instruments are used in order to get to this goal?

The first signs of the interest shown by lexicographers for affixes and combining forms are to be found in Panzini (1905) (the well-read lexicographer did not use these terms, of course!). The author is not however particularly strict in lemmatizing this kind of forms. The same definitions do not follow any precise criteria.

The following are a number of examples, which show a large extent of variability in the graphical elements of definitions (the etymology of the word is sometimes to be found at the beginning of the entry, as in 3, sometimes at the end, as in 6) and present explanations that do not follow any consistent criteria. Affixes and combining forms are from time to time referred to as *preposition* (as in 4, with a clear reference to the etymology of the entry), *element* (5), *component* (1), *prefix/suffix* (1, 2, 3, 6), *ending* or *termination* (again in 2). Examples of a component are sometimes provided (1, 2, 4), whereas in other cases they are not (3, 5, 6, 7). Etymology is reserved to elements of Greek origin (see 3, 4, 5, 6). Sometimes generic indications are provided (3, 5, 6, 7), but some considerations are surprising because of the attention paid to micro- and macrolinguistic phenomena (1) and neology (1 and 2).

- (1) **Àggio.** È notevole l'abuso che si fa di questo suffisso che ricorda il suffisso *age* dei francesi, onde molte parole come *metraggio*, *arbitraggio*, *viraggio*, *drenaggio*, *bendaggio*, ecc. [Àggio, *ismo*, *ale*, *izzazione* sono i suffissi dominanti, sì per effetto del nuovo bisogno di astrarre, sì per effetto delle lingue straniere]<sup>5</sup>
- (2) **Ale.** Notevole è l'uso di questo nuovo suffisso usato, non solo dagli imperiti della lingua, ma da scrittori i quali sembrano annettervi uno speciale senso di riposta eleganza, come in *lacuale*, *medicale*, *mattinale*, *passionale*, etc. invece di *lacustre*, *medico*, *mattiniero* o *mattutino*, *appassionato* o di *passione*. Deve questa desinenza in *ale* esserci provenuta dall'inglese *al*, piuttosto che dal francese *V. Medicale*
- (3) **Filo.** Gr. φίλος = amico, favorevole. Si trova in composizione di molte parole come prefisso o come suffisso.<sup>6</sup>
- (4) **Meta:** preposizione greca (μετά) che vale *oltre*, *di là*, *dopo*, e anche *tra*; serve a formare gran numero di parole scientifiche in cui è il concetto di *successione* o di *trasformazione*: *metafisica*, *metamorfosi*, ecc. [inserita in Panzini (19082)]
- (5) **Mono:** gr. μονος = *solo*, *unico*, *semplice*: elemento costitutivo di moltissime parole di carattere scientifico, in ogni culto linguaggio.

---

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the second part of this definition was eliminated in Panzini (1942), presumably for puristic reasons.

<sup>6</sup> Definition given by Panzini (1935): «prefisso che si trova in composizione di molte parole». Panzini (1905) has both *filo* and *filia* as entries: «voci greche usate in molte composizioni di voci, specialmente scientifiche (*φίλος* = amico, propenso, amante)».

- (6) **Neo**: prefisso formativo di gran numero di parole, specialmente scientifiche: gr. νέος = nuovo recente.
- (7) **Psico-**. V. PSICHE. Primo componente di molte parole scientifiche e filosofiche per indicare ciò che in varia misura ha relazione con la *psiche*.

In *Zingarelli* (1923) only a few affixes are included in entries; in the subsequent editions the practice of lemmatizing affixes gradually increases.

In Migliorini (1965) it seems that only prefixes and no suffixes are featured as entries. In the dictionary by *Garzanti*, on the other hand, only prefixes appear as entries; the affixes and combining forms they reveal mainly come from classical languages (*allo-*, *-ite*, etc.). The dictionary by *Zingarelli* (1970) is the first to introduce a large amount of classical, romance and foreign affixes. In this respect, it is worth noticing that dictionaries such as De Felice/Duro (1974) and Palazzi (1974), although published later than the above-mentioned *Zingarelli* (1970), feature a smaller number of affixes and the amount of suffixes is extremely small.

However, from the Eighties onwards all dictionaries have started to regularly list affixes (Dardano 1982, *Gr Garzanti*, etc.), while the overall attention devoted to WF has increased. As a matter of fact, in *Gr Garzanti* cross-references about prefixes, suffixes and combining forms (edited by Luca Serianni and Pietro Trifone) appear for the first time.<sup>7</sup> This reflects the growing importance of the contribution from linguistics to the creation and editing of dictionaries. However, the relevance of processes of WF in *Gr Garzanti* makes this dictionary stand out as a unique publication among common usage dictionaries. Since its 11th edition published in 1994<sup>8</sup> *Zingarelli*, the most widespread Italian dictionary, has been regularly adding entries for affixes and highlighting them by means of a grey background for the black-printed characters. The explanation provided for each definition has been subject to thorough changes, increasingly relying on icons and a rather schematic content.

The following tables aim to emphasize that affixes and combining forms of classical origin are normally the first to be accepted and included in modern dictionaries. In point of fact, it was only with the dictionary by *Zingarelli* (1970) that romance affixes have made their appearance:

|                | Migliorini<br>(1965) | Garzanti | Zingarelli<br>(1970) | De Felice/Duro<br>(1974) | Palazzi<br>(1974) | Dardano<br>(1982) | Gr Garzanti |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| <i>Allo-</i>   | -                    | +        | +                    | -                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| <i>Apoc-</i>   | -                    | +        | +                    | +                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| <i>Adin-</i>   | -                    | -        | +                    | +                        | -                 | +                 | +           |
| <i>Idro-</i>   | +                    | +        | +                    | +                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| <i>Iso-</i>    | +                    | +        | +                    | +                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| <i>Antico-</i> | -                    | -        | +                    | -                        | -                 | +                 | +           |
| <i>Orni-</i>   | -                    | +        | +                    | +                        | +                 | +                 | +           |

Table 1. classical prefixes and combining forms

<sup>7</sup> Subsequent editions of this dictionary list affixes in the A-Z text and in the appendix.

<sup>8</sup> This edition was in fact printed in 1993.

|                      | Migliorini<br>(1965) | Garzanti | Zingarelli<br>(1970) | De Felice/Duro<br>(1974) | Palazzi<br>(1974) | Dardano<br>(1982) | Gr Garzanti |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| -fobia               | -                    | -        | +                    | +                        | -                 | +                 | +           |
| -idrico <sup>9</sup> | -                    | -        | +                    | -                        | -                 | +                 | +           |
| -ite                 | -                    | +        | +                    | +                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| -lita                | -                    | +        | +                    | +                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| -mante               | -                    | +        | +                    | +                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| -oide                | -                    | +        | +                    | +                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| -osi                 | -                    | +        | +                    | +                        | +                 | +                 | +           |

Table 2. classical suffixes and combining forms

|        | Migliorini<br>(1965) | Garzanti | Zingarelli<br>(1970) | De Felice/Duro<br>(1974) | Palazzi<br>(1974) | Dardano<br>(1982) | Gr Garzanti |
|--------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Afazi  | -                    | -        | +                    | +                        | -                 | +                 | +           |
| Afazi- | -                    | -        | +                    | +                        | -                 | +                 | +           |

Table 3. foreign combining forms (from non-classical languages)

|         | Migliorini<br>(1965) | Garzanti | Zingarelli<br>(1970) | De Felice/Duro<br>(1974) | Palazzi<br>(1974) | Dardano<br>(1982) | Gr Garzanti |
|---------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| -aggio  | -                    | -        | +                    | -                        | -                 | +                 | +           |
| -ate    | -                    | +        | +                    | -                        | -                 | +                 | +           |
| -ellare | -                    | -        | +                    | -                        | -                 | +                 | +           |
| -etano  | -                    | -        | +                    | -                        | -                 | +                 | +           |
| -ismo   | -                    | +        | +                    | +                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| -izzare | -                    | -        | +                    | -                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| -mente  | -                    | +        | +                    | -                        | +                 | +                 | +           |
| -nesso  | -                    | -        | +                    | -                        | -                 | +                 | +           |

Table 4. italian suffixes

As is illustrated by the tables above, classical combining forms are by far the most commonly featured in Italian dictionaries from these years, and this is due to several practical reasons but also to the prestige which was still ascribed to classical studies in the Sixties. Moreover, at this stage explanations for entries still generally focused on etymological rather than semantic issues.

On the whole, we can say that lexicographers enjoyed a large degree of freedom and there was a frequent lack of suitable planning for dictionaries.

As data show, there are no uniform criteria for the selection and the listing of classical and Romance elements in the dictionaries published between the sixties and seventies. Folena (1992: 6) notes: «Sono mutati soprattutto i modelli formativi, con l'espandersi della composizione modulare, per mezzo di "prefissoidi" e "suffissoidi", qui più opportunamente definiti "primi elementi" o "elementi terminali" di composizione, che danno luogo a neoformazioni continue: sicché un vocabolario non può più contenere tutte le parole della lingua composte con questi elementi, ma offrirne come qui si fa una registrazione il più possibile chiara ed esaustiva» As can be observed, the same terminology used by the scholar is quite uncertain.

<sup>9</sup> Suffix composed by *idr(ogeno)* plus *-ico*.

### 3 How affixes generate new meanings

Adding a determinate suffix to derived words does not lead to a univocal meaning, but rather to several meanings: this is the case with *-iere*, meaning a professional activity *carrozziere* 'mechanic who repairs car bodies', *doganiere* 'officer in charge of customs checks'; the ownership of an economic activity in *banchiere* 'owner, major shareholder or administrator of a bank', *cementiere* 'industrialist in the cement sector', *petroliere* 'oil industrialist'; an object in *candeliere* 'element used to hold candels', *braciere* 'container for embers'.

Some affixes and combining forms, especially those which are employed with reference to technology, can also generate new meanings over time. This is the case, of course, for Italian as well many other languages. To provide an example, let us observe the case of *tele-*:

Zingarelli (1970)

**Téle-** [dal gr. *téle* 'lontano a distanza] primo elemento che, in parole composte per lo più della terminologia scientifica e tecnica, significa 'da lontano' o fa riferimento a operazioni, trasmissione a distanza: *telecinesi, telefono, telegrafo, telemetro, televisione* | In alcuni casi è accorciamento di *televisione* e vale 'della, relativo alla televisione': *teleabbonato, telecamera, telefilm*. **Teleabbonato** [comp. di *tele(visione)* e *abbonato*]

Zingarelli (1994)

**Téle-** (1) o **tèle-** [dal gr. *téle* 'lontano a distanza] primo elemento • In parole composte per lo più della terminologia scientifica e tecnica, significa 'da lontano' o fa riferimento a operazioni, trasmissione a distanza: *telecinesi, telefono, telegrafo, telemetro, televisione*  
**téle-** (2) o **tèle-** primo elemento • In alcuni casi è accorciamento di *televisione* e vale 'della, relativo alla televisione': *teleabbonato, telecamera, telefilm*.  
**teleabbonato** [comp. di *tele-* (2) e *abbonato*]

The two entries above reveal, among other things, that derivatives are often handled differently by subsequent versions of the same dictionary: while the 1970 edition of the Zingarelli dictionary lists derivatives as subentries, the one issued in 1994 features it as a separate entry.

However, this can be taken as no general rule. The dictionary published by Devoto/Oli in (1990), for instance, consider *tele-* (in the second meaning listed in Zingarelli 1994) as a free form: «**téle** s.f. Abbr.di *televisione* nel linguaggio fam. (*cosa danno oggi di bello alla t.?*) e primo elemento di parole composte in quotidiano aumento [...]». Moreover, in this dictionary the term *teleabbonato* is considered a compound, made of the two elements *tele* and *abbonato*.

### 4 Selection criteria. A few notes on the issue of *porta-*

As shown above, Palazzi (1974) lists very few romance suffixes but it also, quite strikingly, reveals an interesting and innovative choice: it is the first dictionary to consider the very common element *porta-*<sup>10</sup> as a prefix and not as a verbal component – or rather as a “first ele-

<sup>10</sup> This entry cannot be found in other dictionaries of the Seventies and Eighties. Dardano (1982), Zingarelli (1984) and Gr Garzanti consider words like *portasci, portapacchi*, etc. to be composed by *porta(re)* and *sci, pacchi*, etc.

ment”, as this combining form is most commonly defined. As to the entry definition, we can clearly see below that it appears to be extremely detailed and, in the end, slightly prolix:

«*prefissoide* con cui si formano numerosissime parole composte, per indicare astuccio, vassoio e in genere qualunque aggeggio o arnese che sostenga o sia destinato a conservare o custodire qualche cosa; qui sotto registriamo i principali, ma ve ne sono altri che non registriamo per essere il loro significato intuitivo; come per es. *portaspugne*, *portaspazzole*, ecc.; senza contare che allo stesso modo si possono formare molti altri nomi simili, per ora imprevedibili, di altri oggetti || giova qui notare che quasi tutti questi nomi così composti sono *sm.* e di numero singolare (ancorché abbiano la desinenza del femminile o del plurale) e al plurale sono indeclinabili»

As to the dictionary by Devoto/Oli (1990), which more than any other pays special attention to neologisms, we can see that entries for *guarda-* and *mangia-*<sup>11</sup> are included alongside *porta-*. These three entries have also been regularly listed in *Zingarelli* since the 1994 edition (XII edition). If we compare definitions from these two dictionaries, we can observe that the *Zingarelli* 1994 entry is more accurate and offers details about the origin of the affix (the imperative form of the verb):

Devoto/Oli (1990)

**porta-**: Primo elemento di composti formati modernamente, nei quali indica funzione di trasporto (*portaordini*), di sostegno (*porta lampada*), di custodia (*portasigari*). [tratto dal tema di *portare*]

Zingarelli (1994)

**porta-** [dall'imperat. del v. *portare*] primo elemento • In parole composte, indica trasporto (*portacontainers*), contenimento (*portaceneri*), custodia (*portagioie*), sostegno (*portasciugamo*) o anche apporto (*portafortuna*) di ciò che è indicato dalla seconda parte del termine

On the whole, common usage dictionaries do not feature single entries for items such as: *appendi-*, *apri-*, *asciuga-*, *cambia-*, *chiudi-*, *conta-*, *copri-*, *lava-*. The reason for such a choice is, incidentally, quite straightforward: the types *guarda-*, *mangia-*, *porta-* are listed because their own meaning is partially different from the very meaning of the verb they have been derived from. To give an example, the word *portaceneri*, which is made of elements meaning 'to carry' and 'ash', does not in fact mean 'somebody carrying ash from one place to another', but has solely to be intended as 'a container for ashes'. Therefore, if the referent is ignored in these cases, it is impossible to elicit the meaning of compounds from the simple conjunction of two or more elements, as illustrated by Dardano (1978: 151-2). On the other hand, whenever we come across a word starting with *lava-* we understand that there is someone or something – i.e. some kind of machine – which performs the action of washing. As can be expected, the type *lava-* is not listed in these common usage dictionaries.

---

Surprisingly, a subsequent edition of Palazzi (1974), which was edited by Palazzi/Folena in (1992), does not list *porta-* as a separate entry.

<sup>11</sup> Volit (1986-1994) only lists *guarda-*, *lava-*, *porta-*.



### 5 The Confixes in GRADIT

However, an exception has to be made for the *GRADIT* dictionary. This important lexicographic work records a huge list of formatives (2600 “confixes”,<sup>12</sup> to use the terminology set forth by De Mauro), which are regularly employed in processes of WF.

For the first time in a dictionary, 124 verb confixes are listed, and among them are words from a substandard lexicon like *accatta-*, *chiappa-*, *imbratta-*, *pappa-*, *pizzica-*, *scanna-*. Such a choice has to be related to a number of factors, first and foremost to the main idea underlying the very essence of a dictionary.<sup>13</sup> As stated by De Mauro (1999: XXIII-XXIV), with its 360.000 entries, *GRADIT* wishes to represent the entire lexicon of the Italian language used in the 20th century «tra gli italofoeni, cioè tra quanti e quante hanno impiegato e impiegano l'italiano leggendo e scrivendo, parlando e ascoltando».

Furthermore, the criteria imposed for the selection of confixes to be listed as entries in *GRADIT* are important and precise. *GRADIT* lists as headwords confixes which: 1. have generated at least three Italian words; 2. have a partially different meaning from the one which is normally ascribed to the word they derive from; 3. have a corresponding word being almost exclusively used in forming compound terms within a specialized language; 4. have generated a number of compounds which have a higher frequency than the corresponding word; 5. have a form which is quite different from the corresponding word.

### 6 Compounds and Polylexical Units in the Dictionaries

As for problems regarding the treatment of compounds, see §1. When should a compound be lemmatized independently? When should it be included as subentry within the entry corresponding to one of its components? The answer to these questions depends first of all on the status of the compound as independent lexical element; the following preliminary problem must be solved: defining a lexical unit, which is neither a simple word, nor an evident syntagm. As a consequence, this poses another question: when can a combination of two or more elements be considered a compound?

Different answers have been given to this question, which is a rather complex issue in the studies of derivative morphology. Various criteria have been indicated over time for the identification of a compound. They range from the criteria put forward by Guilbert (1971 and 1975): 1) stability of the relation between signifier and signified, 2) sequence stability, 3) frequency of use; to criteria established in more recent contributions:<sup>14</sup> 1) presence of a possible semantic relation between the constituents; 2) oneness of the concept denoted by the compound, 3) syntactic atomicity.<sup>15</sup> All of these criteria do not offer certain results.

---

<sup>12</sup> The term *confix* (first adopted by Martinet 1985) is made to stand for a semantic element which, in a specific form and meaning, does not exist as an independent word. Examples of confixes are *ammino-* in *amminoacido* and *api-* in *apicoltura* (De Mauro 1999: XXIII, Sgroi 2003).

<sup>13</sup> This feature present in *GRADIT* was not new at European level: an important precedent was *GLLF*.

<sup>14</sup> In this regard, see the contributions by Bisetto, Iacobini and Voghera, included in Grossmann/Rainer (2004).

<sup>15</sup> The concept of “syntactic atom”, developed by Di Sciullo/Williams (1987), approximately indicates a group of elements, within which it is not possible to introduce any kind of modifiers.

As a matter of fact, lexical creativity often produces forms that would have many linguists' syntactic tests fail, but which cannot be excluded as they have been used.

In the last few years, important new developments have emerged in this sector. Reference is made here to the identification, presentation and analysis of the so-called "higher lexical units", which have been referred to as "polyrematic". In older dictionaries, these higher lexical units were listed as separate entries. For example, in Manuzzi (1859-19672), the following situation can be noted: *bocca di leone* is an entry by itself, whereas *bocca d'artiglieria* and *bocca di fuoco* are listed under the entry *bocca*. Under the latter entry, the expressions *metter bocca* and *a bocca a bocca* can also be found; for this last expression, however, the user is referred to *bocca*, which represents another separate entry. Several expressions with *mettere* as their first element are listed as separate entries. They range from *mettere a basso* to *mettere voce*; there are totally 306 expressions with this verb, which have been listed as separate entries. The list goes on with the cliticized form of the same verb: *mettersi*. This criterion is derived from the *Vocabolario della Crusca* (1612) and was drawn on by dictionaries published in the 18th and 19th cent. The lexicographer did not use a well defined criterion in these cases: the procedure followed appears to be quite uncertain.<sup>16</sup>

The same uncertainty can be found also within word formation, where the criteria for the listing as an entry are far from being defined.

In Zingarelli (1970) the typographic positioning in two columns provides for long entries, under which it is possible to accommodate all words belonging to the same family, which are listed under the first word in alphabetical order. For example, the entry *onorabile* includes, among other words, also *onorabilità, onoranza, onorare, onorario, onore, onorificienza*.<sup>17</sup>

A similar scheme refers also to compounds, which are in almost all of the cases listed as subentries of the first compound in alphabetical order. Compounds with verb stem, which have a combining form as their first element, for example *porta-*, are lemmatized as a single entry, starting with the first compound in alphabetical order; in the previously given example: *portaacqua*. However, non one-verb compounds are listed as phrases, as if they were

---

<sup>16</sup> The same uncertainty between sentences, higher lexical units and compounds can be found also in linguistic studies dealing with this issue. This is the case not only with Italian scholars (see Voghera 2004), but also with foreign ones. For example, Marchand (1969: 122 ff) uses the following terminology: *syntactic groups* (for example, *man in the street, bread and butter*), *sentence phrases* (for example, *love-lies-(a)-bleeding* 'amaranthus caudatus'), *copulative combinations* (for example, *contractor-builder*).

<sup>17</sup> This criterion is illustrated in the introduction to the dictionary: «si è cercato di combinare il più possibile due criteri fondamentali: l'ordine rigorosamente alfabetico, che risponde alle esigenze di chiarezza e comodità di consultazione, e il raggruppamento delle voci, che risponde all'esigenza di mostrare i rapporti esistenti all'interno di una famiglia di parole. [...] La condizione per cui una serie di parole viene presentata come una famiglia, e quindi viene raggruppata sotto la parola che alfabeticamente compare per prima sono due: l'appartenenza alla medesima sfera di significato e l'appartenenza al medesimo ambito etimologico. Le voci quindi compaiono raggruppate, sia quando sono presenti entrambe le condizioni (per es., *gabella ... gabellare ... gabelliere ... gabellino ... gabellotto*), sia quando è presente soltanto la condizione semantica (per es., *guerra ... guerriglia ... guerrigliero*) o soltanto la condizione etimologica (per es., *gagliarda ... gagliardetto ... gagliardezza ... gagliardia ... gagliardo*)» (Zingarelli 1970: XII).

shades of meaning of the word. The same treatment is applied also to higher lexical units: see *auto civetta*, listed as subentry of *autol*, and *autobotte*, which is grouped together with other compounds of *auto-2* subentry *autoblinda*, or *ferro battuto*, listed together with *ferro da stiro* under the corresponding entry *ferro*.

Palazzi (1974) presents the following situation: *autocivetta* is lemmatized as a separate entry, *ferro da stiro* is listed among the phrases, *ferro battuto* is entered among the shades of meaning of the word.

GRADIT seems to be the one, in which a part of the entry is explicitly devoted to compounds (always preceded by the abbreviation COMP.) and polyrematic units (introduced by the symbol ~).

By way of conclusion, the following criterion seems to prevail in Italian dictionaries: in the case of one-verb compounds, compounds are listed as independent separate entries; however, in the case of compounds whose components are separately written (analytic compound), the compound is listed under the entry, which corresponds to its first constituent, predominantly among variants of meaning or phrases. This appears to be the place for the listing of higher lexical units.

## 7 Conclusion: the importance of WF in modern Lexicography

For a long time lexicographers have not acknowledged the importance of explaining the mechanism of WF and educating users to create their own neologisms and apply them to everyday life. Thus, lexicographers in the past have tended to give prominence to the exceptional character of such formative elements.

Moreover, Italian lexicographers still largely connect the notion of "cultismo" (superior knowledge and education) to Latin or Greek words, without considering the fact that classical words are often adopted in Italian through other languages such as English, French or German. This attitude, which may be defined as a sort of lexicographic nationalism, has been going on for a number of years and it is still widely supported within official lexicography.

### References

#### A. Dictionaries

- Dardano, M. (1982), *Nuovissimo dizionario della lingua italiana*. Roma, Curcio.
- De Felice, E., Duro, A. (1974), *Dizionario della lingua e della civiltà italiana contemporanea*, Palermo, Palumbo.
- De Mauro, T. (ed.) (1999), *Grande dizionario italiano dell'uso*, Torino, UTET. (GRADIT)
- Devoto, G., Oli, G. C. (1990), *Il dizionario della lingua italiana*, Firenze, Le Monnier.
- Dizionario della lingua italiana Garzanti* (1965). Milano, Garzanti. (Garzanti)
- Dogliotti M. (ed.) (1994), *Lo Zingarelli* (Twelfth edition.) [Since 1993, *Lo Zingarelli* has impressions "carrying the year"]. (Zingarelli 1994)
- Dogliotti, M., Rosiello, L. (eds.) (1970), *Il nuovo Zingarelli. Vocabolario della lingua italiana*. (Tenth edition.), Bologna, Zanichelli (Zingarelli 1970).
- Duro, A. (ed.) (1986-1994), *Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana. (Volit)
- Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, started and directed by S. Battaglia, then by G. Bàrberi Squarotti, 21 vols. + "Supplemento" e "Bibliografia", Torino, UTET. (GDLI)
- Guilbert, L. et Al. (eds.) (1971-1978), *Grand Larousse de la langue française*, 6 vols. Paris, Larousse (GLLF).

- Manuzzi, G. (1859-1967) *Vocabolario della lingua italiana già compilato dagli accademici della Crusca ed ora novamente corretto...*, 4 vols. (Second edition.) Firenze, Stamperia del Vocabolario.
- Migliorini, B. (1965), *Vocabolario della lingua italiana*. (Renewed edition of *Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, eds.: G. Cappuccini and B. M.) Torino, Paravia.
- Palazzi, F. (1974), *Novissimo Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*, G. Folena (ed.). Milano, Fabbri editori.
- Palazzi, F., Folena, G. (eds.) (1992), *Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*, Torino, Loescher.
- Panzini, A. (1942), *Dizionario moderno Con un'appendice di cinquemila voci e gli elenchi dei forestierismi banditi dalla R. Accademia d'Italia*, Schiaffini, A., Migliorini, B. (eds.). (Eighth edition) Milano, Hoepli.
- Panzini, A. (1905), *Dizionario moderno* (Second edition 1908, seventh edition 1935), Milano, Hoepli.
- Rosiello, L. (1984), *Lo Zingarelli. Vocabolario della lingua italiana* (Eleventh edition), Bologna Zanichelli (Zingarelli 1984).
- Grande Dizionario Garzanti* (1987), Milano, Garzanti. (*Gr Garzanti*)
- Vocabolario degli accademici della Crusca, etc.*, (1612), Venezia, Giovanni Alberti. (Anastatic reprint, Licoso, 1974).
- Zingarelli, N. (ed.) (1923), *Vocabolario della lingua italiana*. (Third edition.) Greco Milanese, Bietti & Reggiani.

## B. Other Publications

- Benson, M., Benson, E., Ilson, R. (1983), *Lexicographic Description of English*. Amsterdam-Philadelphia, Benjamins.
- Bergenholtz, H., Mugdan, J. (1982), 'Grammatik in Wörterbuch. Probleme und Aufgaben', in Wiegand (ed.) (1981-1984): II, pp. 17-36.
- Cowie, A. P. (1983), 'On Specifying Grammatical Form and Function', in Hartmann, R. R. K. (ed.) *Lexicography: Principles and Practice*. London, Academic Press, pp. 99-107
- Dardano, M. (1978), *La formazione delle parole nell'italiano di oggi*, Roma, Bulzoni.
- De Mauro, T. (1999), 'Introduzione', in *GRADIT*: I, I-XLII.
- De Mauro, T. (2005), *La fabbrica delle parole. Il lessico e problemi di lessicologia*, Torino, UTET.
- Di Sciullo, A. M., Williams, E. (1987), *On the definition of word*, Cambridge Mass., MIT Press.
- Folena, G. (1992), 'Un vocabolario dell'uso vivo', introduction to Palazzi/Folena, pp. 5-6.
- Grossmann, M., Rainer, F. (2004), *La formazione delle parole in italiano*, Tübingen, Niemeyer.
- Guilbert, L. (1971), 'De la formation des unités lexicales', introduction to *GLLF*: I, IX-LXXXI;
- Guilbert, L. (1975), *La créativité lexicale*, Paris, Larousse.
- Hausmann, F. J., Reichmann, O., Wiegand, H. E., Zgusta, L. (eds.) (1989-1991), *Wörterbücher, Dictionnaires, Dictionnaires* [Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft, 5] Berlin-New York, de Gruyter,
- Hudson, R. (1988), 'The Linguistic Foundation for Lexical Research and Dictionary Design', *International Journal of Lexicography* 1, 4, pp. 287-312.
- Jackson, H. (2004), 'Lexicography', in Booij, G., Lehmann, Ch., Mugdan, J. (eds.) *Morphologie: ein internationales Handbuch zur Flexion und Wortbildung* [Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft], Vol. 2, Berlin-New York, de Gruyter, pp. 1882-1892.
- Lindemann, M. (1999), 'Mediostrukturen in moderne italienischen Wörterbüchern', *Lexicographica* 15, pp. 38-65.
- Marello, C. (1993), 'Reviewing Italian Dictionaries', *Lexicographica* 9, pp. 108-132.
- Marello, C. (1996), *Le parole dell'italiano. Lessico e dizionari*, Bologna, Zanichelli.
- Marchand, H. (1969), *The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word-Formation. A Synchronic-Diachronic Approach*. (Second edition.) München, Beck.
- Martinet, A., (1985), *Syntaxe générale*, Paris, Colin.
- Mugdan, J. (1984), 'Grammatik im Wörterbuch: Wortbildung', in Wiegand (ed.) (1981-1984): IV, pp. 297-308.
- Müller, W. (1982), 'Wortbildung und Lexicographie', in Wiegand (ed.): II, pp. 153-188.

- Prcic, T. (1999), 'The Treatment of Affixes in the 'Big Four' EFL Dictionaries', *International Journal of Lexicography* 12, 4, pp. 263-279.
- Schafroth, E. (1999), 'Dizionario italiano Sabatini Coletti (DISC) Florenz, Giunti, 1997', *Lexicographica* 15, pp. 281-296
- Sgroi, S. C. (2003), 'Per una ridefinizione di 'confisso': composti confissati, derivati confissati, parasintetici confissati vs etimi ibridi e incongrui', *Quaderni di semantica* 24, pp. 81-153.
- Thornton, A. M. (1998), 'Quali suffissi nel «vocabolario di base»?', in Albano Leoni, F., Gambarara, D., Gensini, S., Lo Piparo, F., Simone, R. (eds.), *Ai limiti del linguaggio. Vaghezza, significato e storia*. Roma-Bari, Laterza, pp. 385-397.
- Voghera, M. (2004), 'Unità lessicali superiori', in Grossmann, Rainer (eds.), pp. 164-205.
- Wiegand, H. E. (ed.) (1981-1984), *Studien zur neuhochdeutschen Lexikographie*. Hildesheim, Olms.