

Introduction

1. Purpose of the Lithuanian Root List (LRL)

Modern Lithuanian words are notoriously difficult for non-native speakers to recognize, acquire, and retain because of a combination of word-formation features of the language. Many high-frequency noun, adjective, and verb forms consist of multiple syllables and multiple morphemes: for example, *šeim-inišk-as* ‘owner, host, boss, master’, *dain-úo-ti* ‘to sing’. It is often difficult to identify the root of a word because many Lithuanian roots are not immediately recognizable from their equivalents in non-Baltic Indo-European languages, as in the two examples above. Moreover, the shape of the root may vary in related words and even in different forms of a single word, particularly in verbs: for example, infinitive *skris-ti*: present tense 3P *skreĩd-a*: past tense 3P *skrid-o* ‘fly’. Finally, some prefixes have vague or multiple meanings, and the meanings of many of the derivational suffixes, which are used to form a new word, are not clear.

The LRL addresses these problems by providing the underlying forms of the most common modern Lithuanian word roots, derivational suffixes, and prefixes, together with their basic meanings in English. The underlying forms presented here are the basic synchronic forms of these Lithuanian morphemes as they exist today and with the meanings they have today, and not earlier historical forms and meanings, which can be found in an etymological dictionary.

The LRL is intended both for linguists interested in the structure of modern Lithuanian or in the historical comparison of Lithuanian with other Indo-European languages, and for students and instructors of Lithuanian. By consulting the lists in this book of roots, prefixes, and suffixes and their basic meanings, and then applying the rules in section 2 below that can result in a change of vowel or consonant at the boundary between prefix and root, root and suffix, or suffix and suffix, readers should be able to break down unfamiliar Lithuanian words into their constituent morphemes and make an educated guess at their meanings without having to rely regularly on a dictionary. A list of linguistics terms and their definitions is found in the appendix for students of Lithuanian who are unfamiliar with them.

It is assumed that students of Lithuanian who use the LRL as a translation and vocabulary-building aid are already familiar with the Lithuanian inflectional suffixes, including the gender, number, and case endings for nouns and adjectives, and the tense and conjugation suffixes for verbs. These can be found in any Lithuanian language textbook and are not listed in this book.

2. Relevant Phonological and Morphophonemic Rules

Modern Lithuanian has an opposition between short and long vowels in both stressed and unstressed positions. The long vowels are represented in the spelling system as follows: /e:/ is represented as *ė*, /o:/ as *o* (for historical reasons spelled the same way as short /o/, but pronounced /ɔ/), /i:/ as *y* or *į*, /u:/ as *ū* or *ų*, /æ:/ as *e* or *ę*, and [ɑ:] as *a* or *ą*. The vowel letters with cedillas below them represent historical nasal vowels that lost their nasal component in the modern language and were lengthened compensatorily. The short vowels are represented by letters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*.

The old Indo-European phenomenon of vowel alternations (ablaut) within a root is still productive in Lithuanian, particularly in verb forms. The ablaut variants in verbs are *i-e-i* (inf. *vilkti* : pres. 3P *velka* : past 3P *vilko* ‘carry, drag’), *o-a-o* (*võgti* : *vãgia* : *võgẽ* ‘steal’), *a-a-o* (*kãrti* : *kãria* : *kõrẽ* ‘hang’), *i-i-i* (*skirti* : *skiria* : *skýrẽ* ‘separate’), and *u-u-u* (*pũsti* : *pũcia* : *pũtẽ* ‘blow’). Ablaut also occurs in noun derivation: e.g., adjective *gražus* ‘beautiful’: noun *grõžis* ‘beauty’.

Lithuanian has diphthongs consisting of two vowels (*ei*, *ai*, *ui*, *au*, *ie*, *uo*) or a vowel followed by a sonorant (*em*, *am*, *im*, *um*; *en*, *an*, *in*, *un*; *el*, *al*, *il*, *ul*; *er*, *ar*, *ir*, *ur*). These can occur in both stressed and unstressed syllables. In a stressed syllable containing a diphthong, including a sonorant diphthong, the stress can fall either on the first or the second element of the diphthong. A diphthong can alternate with a vowel in the same root (e. g., *gãinioti* ‘chase’ vs. *giñti* : *gẽna* : *ginẽ* ‘chase, drive’).

Lithuanian has automatic palatalization of consonants before a front vowel, including diphthongs with [e] or [i] as their first element: e.g., *gimti* ‘to be born’. This palatalization is not marked orthographically. Consonant palatalization also occurs before a back vowel, where it is represented by the letter *i* (for example, *čia* ‘here’), but here it is not automatic. After letters representing word-initial labial consonants, this second type of palatalization is spelled and pronounced as *j* (e.g., *bjaurũs* ‘ugly’). In other word positions, the palatalization is spelled and pronounced after labials the same way as after other palatalized consonants (e.g., *labiaũ* ‘more’).

The consonant [t] mutates to [tʃ], and [d] to [dʒ], immediately before a back vowel or a diphthong that begins with a back vowel (e.g., past 3P *mãtẽ*, past 1P sing. *mačiaũ* ‘see’). A [t] or [d] immediately preceding a [t] mutates to [s] (e.g., present 3P *vẽda*, infinitive *vẽsti* ‘lead’).

The nasal consonants [m] and [n] can drop before obstruents.¹ In the fifth noun declension, the suffixes *-en-* and *-er-* are replaced by *-uo* or *-ẽ* in the nominative singular form: e.g., nom. sing. *akm-uõ*, gen. sing. *akm-eñ-s* ‘stone’; nom. sing. *dukt-ẽ*, gen. sing. *dukt-eř-s* ‘daughter’.

¹ Devoicing assimilation in consonant clusters and other automatic rules are not set forth here, since they do not affect the morphological form of roots.

A diphthong in an open root form is vocalic before a consonant suffix and consonantal before a vowel suffix: e.g., inf. *aũ-ti*, past 3P *āv-é* ‘put on (footwear)’. Open roots consisting of or ending in a vowel or diphthong receive the present tense infix *-n-* (*aũn-a*). The nasal infix forms generally are not listed in the LRL, since they are predictable. Past tense open root forms in /v/ are listed if they are productive: for example, *au-* ‘put on footwear’ vs. *av-* ‘footwear’ (*āvalynė* ‘footwear’, *āvalyninkas* ‘shoemaker’), *bū-* ‘be’ vs. *būv-* ‘exist; stay; state’; or if they contain a different vowel from that in the vocalic root variant (for example, *plau-*, *plov-* ‘wash’).

The consonant clusters /sk/, /šk/, /zg/, /žg/ preceding a vowel metathesize to /ks/, /kš/, /gz/, /gž/, respectively, immediately before another consonant: e.g., root variants *mez-*, *mezg-* ‘knit, knot’ (see Ambrazas 1997a: 48, 1997b: 75). Where root variants with the same meanings exhibit both clusters, the LRL generally treats the pre-vocalic cluster as the underlying form; hence for the English meaning of the root form *mezg-*, the reader is directed to *mezg-*. Cf., however, the separate listings for *drisk-* ‘rag; worn (out)’ and *driks-*, *dryks-* ‘tear; scratch; wear (out)’.

Word stress is free in Lithuanian, and can shift within the declensional or conjugational paradigm of a word. Stress can be morphologically distinctive in minimal pairs for purposes of distinguishing one case form or tense form from another: e.g., genitive singular *žiemōs*, nominative plural *žiemos* ‘winter’. For this reason, the roots in the LRL are not marked for stress. In contrast, certain suffixes are inherently stressed, and these are marked for the appropriate stress type in the suffix list.

There are three Lithuanian stress types: acute or rising (´), grave or falling (˘), and circumflex (˜). Stressed long syllables (i.e., stressed syllables containing a long vowel or a diphthong) are also considered by many linguists to have tone, consisting of an opposition between an acute accent on the vowel and a circumflex accent on either the vowel or the sonorants *r*, *l*, *m*, *n*: note, for example, the minimal pair *áukštas* ‘high’ vs. *aūkštas* ‘story, floor’.

3. Methodology

The LRL is limited to etymologically Lithuanian roots and to early borrowings, which were primarily from neighboring Slavic, Germanic, and Baltic languages. The list does not include neoclassical borrowings, i.e., later borrowings from Latin, Greek, French, English, modern Russian, etc. The form of each root presented in the list here is the basic, or underlying, form from which modern variants can be derived by applying the synchronic phonological and morphophonemic rules set forth in section 2 above.² These root forms are not necessarily the etymological

² An exception is made where one of two or more variants ends in a consonant that can be reconstructed to the underlying final consonant by applying morphophonemic rules, but also contains another phoneme, usually a vocalic one, that differs from the phoneme in

roots, which can be reconstructed by stripping away historical rules, but the basic forms of the roots as they appear in the modern language. Thus, for example, if a /č/ in a root is not the result of the operation of one of the productive morphophonemic rules above, it is presented as part of the modern root, even though the consonant /č/ derived historically from **tj* (e.g., *ginč-* ‘argue, quarrel, dispute’).

Roots that appear both with and without epenthetic suffixes in forms of a single word are represented in the list together with the suffix in parentheses: e.g., *akm(-en)-* ‘stone’, *ses(-er)-* ‘sister’, but *mot(-er)-* ‘woman, female’.

If an unproductive historical suffix occurs regularly in a word, it is provided here together with the root, with which it forms a so-called “neo-root,” or synchronic root shape, as opposed to the original historical root (see Smoczyński 2007: xxv). For example, the etymological combinations *bai-l-*, *bai-m-*, *bai-s-* ‘fear’, which consist of the historical root *bai-* followed by one of various old unproductive suffixes whose meanings are now lost, are all treated here together as synchronic roots *bai-*, *baim-*, *bais-*.³ Historical nasal infixes in the present-tense forms of verbs that are not easily predictable are also treated as part of the synchronic root: for example, *skre-n-d* is listed as the root variant *skrend-* together with the past-tense root form *skrid-* ‘fly’.⁴ The root variant *skris-* in the infinitive form *skristi* ‘to fly’, however, is not listed, because it can be derived from *skrid-* by applying the rule in section 2 for the mutation of /d/ to /s/ before /t/. Root variants ending in *st* are listed, however, if they are productive: for example, *klaid-*, *klyd-*, *klyst-* ‘mistake, fault; mislead, deceive’ (note the verb *klýsti*, present tense *klýsta*, past tense *klýdo* ‘be mistaken, err’, but also *klýstkelis* ‘wrong path’, *klýstžvakė* ‘will-o’-the-wisp’). Otherwise, the present tense formant *-st-* and its variant *-t-* following /s/, /š/, /ž/, or /ž/ are not included in

the other variant(s): for example, the pair *brend-*, *bręs-* ‘ripen; imminent’. Here even though the /s/ in *bręs-* is the result of the morphophonemic process that the dental consonants /d/ and /t/ undergo across a morpheme boundary before /t/, hence allowing the form *bręs-* to be identified easily as underlying *bręd-*, the allomorph *bręs-* is listed nevertheless because it is the result of the operation of two morphophonemic rules: the mutation of /d/ and /t/ to /s/ before /t/, and the less predictable monophthongization of the nasal diphthong /en/ to the historical nasal vowel /e/ (still indicated orthographically with the cedilla in modern Lithuanian, although the vowel has now lost its nasality and is pronounced identically to the historical non-nasal /e/). The root form in /s/ is also listed for differentiation purposes where the LRL contains an identical unrelated root ending in an underlying /s/ (e.g., *rus-1* ‘smolder’, *rus-2* ‘see rud-’).

³ Historically, neo-roots developed from a single Proto-Indo-European (PIE) lexeme that had ablaut root variants for different tenses. These variants of a single root, which are allomorphs from a PIE perspective, were reanalyzed in Lithuanian as separate roots, from which new lexemes were produced (Smoczyński, *ibid.*).

⁴ In contrast, the LRL does not list the present-tense *-n-* infix forms of open roots (e.g., infinitive *aũ-ti*, present tense *aũ-n-a* ‘put on (footwear)’), since these are predictable.

root forms in the LRL: e.g., *pik-*, *pyk-1* ‘angry; evil, malignant’ but not *pykst-* (cf. verb *pỹkti*, *pỹksta*, *pỹko* ‘be angry’).

Roots that occur in the modern language only together with a particular productive suffix, such as *brand-uol-* ‘kernel, core, nucleus’, are also treated as neo-roots, but are hyphenated.

For sets of ablaut root variants and root variants with different final consonants but the same or similar meanings, the LRL provides cross-references and lists the English meanings together with the first form of the root that occurs alphabetically in the list. In the case of root variants ending in different consonants that are not the result of the operation of morphophonemic rules (e.g., *bail-*, *baim-*, *bais-*), a variant is listed as an independent root only if it appears in (a) more than one word or (b) all conjugation forms of a verb. Historical and etymological relationships between separate modern roots, such as the pair *av-* ‘sheep’ and *aviet-* ‘raspberry’, are generally not notated in the LRL.

Since Lithuanian roots do not occur as free morphemes, as they can in many other languages, Lithuanian morphological studies tend to list the noun or verb in which a root occurs without prefixes or derivational suffixes, rather than providing the root alone: e.g., *vākar-as* ‘evening’. In contrast, the LRL does not include full words, for two reasons. First, the purpose of the list is to provide the basic meanings of the roots themselves, which can differ somewhat from the meaning of a non-prefixed, non-suffixed word formed from the root. Second, when a root is followed by a suffix, its inflectional desinence, and even its part of speech, may change. The list does, however, provide the nominative singular inflectional desinences for noun and adjective suffixes, since individual suffixes generally co-occur with a specific inflectional desinence. The morpheme boundaries following prefixes and preceding suffixes are indicated by hyphens; nominal and adjectival inflectional desinences are preceded by the symbol ‘+’.

Lithuanian root variants, and particularly ablaut variants, are often identified as adjective, noun, or verb roots, and within verb roots as transitive vs. intransitive roots (for example, *lauž-* ‘break’ (trans.) vs. *lūž-* (intrans.)). This practice is not followed in the LRL, because many roots and root variants that are historically associated with one lexical or voice category are also found in derived words of a different lexical category: for example, *raš-* ‘write’ is historically a verbal root (*rašýti* ‘to write’), but also occurs in nouns, including *rāšymas* ‘essay’, *rāštinė* ‘office’, and *raštvėdyba* ‘clerical/office work’, and in adjectives, including *raštingas* ‘literate’ and *raštuotas* ‘patterned, inwrought’. Hence, to return to an example used above, the verb root *bij-* (*bij-ó-ti* ‘to fear’) and its noun and adjective ablaut variants that contain unproductive suffixes (*bai-m-*, noun *bái-m-é* ‘fear’; *bai-l-*, adj. *bai-l-ùs* ‘afraid’, noun *bai-l-ỹs* ‘coward’; *bai-s-*, adj. *bai-s-ùs* ‘terrible’), are listed in the LRL together as root variants rather than as separate roots.

The morphemes in the root, prefix, and suffix lists are presented in Lithuanian alphabetical order. As in Lithuanian dictionaries, the letter *y* (designating long /i:/) is treated alphabetically as a variant of *i*, and in cases where otherwise identical roots differ only in initial letter *i* vs. *y*, the root with initial *i* is listed first (e.g., *ir-1*, *yr-1* ‘come apart’). The numeral 1 or 2 following a root form indicates that it is one of two or more historically separate roots that have identical forms: for example, *gal-1* ‘end’, *gal-2* ‘able, can; power, valid; possible; may’. The assignment to a root of the numeral ‘1’ vs. ‘2’ is arbitrary.

For root forms, I have consulted Rimkutė et al. (2011), Centre of Computational Linguistics (2013), and Karosienė (2004). For the meanings of prefixes and suffixes and examples of words containing them, I have relied heavily on Ambrazas (1997a, 1997b) and Mathiassen (1996), and to some extent on Paulauskienė (1994) and Ulvydas et al. (1965). For determining the most common roots, prefixes, and suffixes, I have relied on Ambrazas (1997a). I am grateful beyond measure to Dr. Jurgis Pakerys of the Department of Baltic Linguistics at Vilnius University for looking over and commenting on several drafts of this book. Of course, I am fully and exclusively responsible for any and all errors.