

Contamination and intrusion in morphology: some evidence from the Ladin verb
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Romance derived and neologistic verbs are virtually always assigned to the first conjugation (those with, for example, infinitives historically in *-'are). The fourth conjugation (historically with *-'ire in the infinitive) is also occasionally productive, and may even have been the dominant inflexion class in old Romanian. In contrast, the other two major Romance conjugation classes, namely the second (originally with infinitives in stressed *-'ere) and the inflexionally very similar third (with infinitives originally in unstressed *-ere), comprise a small, unproductive, coterie of inherited, semantically fairly basic verbs, often of very high token-frequency, and seemingly implacably hostile to 'intruders'. Yet there are very occasional exceptions, whose nature and significance for morphological theory will be examined here. The most striking examples come from what might be broadly described as 'Alpine Romance', notably Francoprovençal, Romansh, and Ladin. My focus will be mainly on Ladin, although Francoprovençal and Romansh data may be considered as well. Particular use will be made of the detailed comparative material furnished by linguistic atlases (notably the *ALD*).

I shall begin with a brief survey of occasional infiltrations into the second/third conjugations in the Italo-Romance domain generally. These typically involve a subclass of high token-frequency fourth conjugation verbs most of whose inflexional endings in the present indicative happen to be identical to those of the (larger) class of second/third conjugation verbs, a fact which sometimes triggers reassignment of the relevant fourth conjugation verbs to the second/third conjugations. Verbal expressions comprising singular nouns in -e (cf. Rohlfs 1968:363f.) are sometimes reanalysed as inflected verb-forms and also assigned to the second/third conjugation because final -e is interpreted as a second/third conjugation ending.

In Ladin, however, there are two other recurrent types of infiltration into the second/third conjugations. One (which also appears in Francoprovençal and some Alpine Piedmontese varieties) involves the verb 'snow'. As in many Romance languages, this is derived from the proto-Romance noun *'neve (< NIUEM), and in most languages the derivation predictably involves first conjugation morphology. Yet in Ladin this derived verb displays distinctively second/third conjugation inflexional morphology *throughout its paradigm*. Moreover, in the infinitive (the only cell in most western Romance languages where second and third conjugations are still inflexionally distinct), some Ladin dialects show second conjugation morphology, while others show third. Now, membership of one or the other class can be shown to be a strict function of the inflexional behaviour of the verb 'rain': where 'rain' is second conjugation, so is 'snow', and where 'rain' is third conjugation, so is 'snow'. The latter is always a faithful inflexional 'copy' of the former.

The other locus of unexpected inflexion-class assignment, this time specific to the second conjugation, involves a class of verbs all of broadly modal meaning (mainly 'must'). Among verbs affected are continuants of Latin CONUENIRE (originally 'be fitting, must', the reflexes of which behave in a suggestively different way from those of its base form UENIRE 'come'), verbs derived from the syntagm EST OPUS 'it is necessary' (see also Jud 1947), borrowed reflexes of Middle High German *muëzen* 'must', and reflexes of proto-Romance *'ausi'kare (originally 'dare', but meaning 'be able, be allowed to'). These verbs enter the second conjugation because they have much semantically and functionally in common with inherited Romance basic modal verbs (see, e.g., Kramer 1976:64n223), such as the reflexes of DEBĒRE 'must' and *'po'tere 'be able' (among others), which constitute a significant portion of verbs belonging to the second conjugation. Again, the *entire inflexional paradigm* is affected: for example, at Pieve di Marebbe (*ALDII* pt 81) we have infinitive me'seĭ 'must' (with distinctively second conjugation ending -'ei), past participle me'sy (with distinctively

second/third conjugation ending -'y), third person singular present indicative mes (with distinctively second/third conjugation bare root), and so forth.

In both cases, the explanation is superficially obvious. We are dealing with a kind of 'contamination' in the sense of Paul (1890=1970:161), involving partial phonological modification of some lexeme under the influence of another, semantically related, one (e.g., Latin CRASSUS 'fat' under the influence of the semantically similar *'grossu 'large, gross' > Romanian *gras*, Italian *grasso*, French *gras* 'fat'). In our case, semantic closeness between lexemes seems able to determine modifications in the marking of inflexion class. I will not address here the admittedly major question of the sufficient conditions for this to happen (cf. Maiden 2020a on 'rain' and 'snow'), but rather focus on two other issues. First, the 'contaminations' we see in these verbs are significantly unlike anything hitherto attested in the general literature on contamination (see Maiden 2020b): typical contamination involves introduction of fragments of the lexical root of one lexeme into the lexical root of another, but in our examples the lexical root is unaffected and the contaminatory effect is observed *outside* the lexical root, in the inflexional endings. Second I claim that the observed facts presuppose a 'word-and-paradigm' approach to morphology (cf. Blevins 2016), in the sense that the primary object of morphological analysis must be complete word-forms (in their paradigmatic relationship to other complete word-forms). More specifically, I shall argue that the facts show that the true exponent of lexical meaning is certainly not a lexical (root) morpheme, nor even a particular complete word-form (such as an infinitive), but the *complete paradigmatic array* of word-forms representing the relevant lexical meaning. None of this is to deny speakers' ability to identify, segment, and manipulate recurrent sames of form and meaning within word-forms, but I shall argue that the perspective I propose is necessary to account for the observed mismatch between lexical roots and the locus of contamination (in the inflexional endings), or for the fact that the 'contaminatory' effect is observable not just in one or two word-forms but throughout the inflexional paradigm, and with respect to sometimes quite different inflexional markers.

References

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