

# THE EXAPTATION OF THE LATIN AFFIX -SC-: EVIDENCE FROM OLD CATALAN VERBAL INFLECTION

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**SUBJECT:** In the **-ir Catalan conjugation** there are two inflectional patterns: the non-inchoative, in which the forms do not present any augment between the root and the desinence (e.g., *dorm* 'sleep.3SG.PRS.IND'), and the inchoative one, in which some forms present a root-augment (e.g., *serveix* 'serve.3SG.PRS.IND'). Currently, most *-ir* verbs (around 900) are inchoatives.

**GOAL:** To analyze the **evolution** of the **Catalan inchoative pattern** to check if the exaptation process of the Latin affix -SC- is consolidated from the 13<sup>th</sup> century or if, on the contrary, it is an evolution that is not yet completed in old Catalan.

## 1. METHODOLOGY

- **Corpus:** Catalan works ranging from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. For each century, our corpus contains 180,000 words: 90,000 of which correspond to Western Catalan works, and the other half to Eastern Catalan Works.
- To check whether the distribution of the verb forms in relation to the centuries is random or not, we have carried out a **chi-square test** with SPSS Statistics (IBM Corp. 2019).
- This test is based on the **comparison** of the **bivariate frequencies** obtained from the data (empirical frequencies) with the frequencies that would result if there were no association between the variables (theoretical frequencies).

## 2. THE N-PATTERN DISTRIBUTION OF THE INCHOATIVE AUGMENT

- The current distribution of the **inchoative augment** in **Catalan** correspond to the **N-pattern morpheme**, which reflects the effects of stress variation in the vowels of lexical roots (Maiden 2018: 167).
- In Old Catalan, the distribution of forms with the inchoative augment didn't always follow this morphomic pattern: sometimes the 1PL and 2PL of the present subjunctive and the 1PL of the imperative (taken from 1PL.PRS.SBJV) presented this augment (e.g., *procehescam* 'proceed.1PL.PRS.SBJV', *accedeixcau* 'access.2PL.PRS.SBJV').
- However, these forms ended up losing the inchoative affix and became equal to those of the present indicative, which proves the **attractive force** of the **N-pattern**.

	Present indicative	Present subjunctive	Imperative
1SG	<i>seguisc/seguixo</i>	<i>seguisca/segueixi</i>	
2SG	<i>seguixes/seguixes</i>	<i>seguisques/segueixis</i>	<i>seguix</i>
3SG	<i>seguix/seguix</i>	<i>seguisca/segueixi</i>	<i>seguisca/segueixi</i>
1PL	<i>seguim</i>	<i>seguim</i>	<i>seguim</i>
2PL	<i>segiu</i>	<i>segiu</i>	<i>segiu</i>
3PL	<i>seguixen/seguixen</i>	<i>seguisquen/segueixin</i>	<i>seguisquen/segueixin</i>

## 3. THE REANALYSIS OF THE -SC- AUGMENT: AN EXAPTATION CASE?

- The **exaptation** notion, first used in linguistics by Lass (1990), could be useful to explain the changes yielded by the **reuse** of **morphological markers** (Booij 2010: 211).
- Despite some authors reluctance (e.g., Vermandere & Meul 2016), the exaptation process could be applied to the **recycling of the Latin affix -SC-** as a **root-augment**.
- In Catalan, as in other Romance varieties, the inchoative affix lost its initial meaning of 'becoming' (Blaylock 1975) and was relegated to the *-ir* conjugation verbs as an **inflectional marker**.

## 4. CORPUS RESULTS

- There are **no significant differences** in the distribution of the cases in the studied period ( $\chi^2_{(3)} = 1.259$ ,  $p = 0.739$ , Cramér's  $V = 0.087$ ).
- The percentage distribution between non-inchoative (e.g., *consume* 'consume.3PL.PRS.IND') and inchoative forms (e.g., *posseix* 'possess.3SG.PRS.IND') could be considered equivalent throughout the studied centuries.
- The **inchoative** forms are always **dominant**.

		Inchoative	Non-inchoative	
Period	13 <sup>th</sup>	Count	37	10
		% within century	78.7%	21.3%
	14 <sup>th</sup>	Count	47	7
		% within century	87%	13%
	15 <sup>th</sup>	Count	19	4
		% within century	82.6%	17.4%
	16 <sup>th</sup>	Count	36	7
		% within century	83.7%	16.3%

## 5. A MORE DETAILED ACCOUNT

- Only in two centuries, the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup>, there are inchoative forms that come from the non-inchoative pattern (as *elèger* 'to choose' or *oferre* 'to offer').
- **Most verbs** were already **inchoative** from the beginning or were created directly following the inchoative pattern.

Period	Non-inchoative		Inchoative	
	Total amount of forms	Detached forms	Detached forms	Total amount of forms
13 <sup>th</sup>	10	10 <sub>ni13</sub>	37 <sub>i13</sub>	37
14 <sup>th</sup>	7	5 <sub>ni13</sub> +2 <sub>ni14</sub>	15 <sub>i13</sub> +2 <sub>ni13</sub> +29 <sub>i14</sub> +1 <sub>ni14</sub>	47
15 <sup>th</sup>	4	1 <sub>ni13</sub> +3 <sub>ni15</sub>	7 <sub>i13</sub> +8 <sub>i14</sub> +4 <sub>i15</sub>	19
16 <sup>th</sup>	7	2 <sub>ni15</sub> +5 <sub>ni16</sub>	7 <sub>i13</sub> +9 <sub>i14</sub> +2 <sub>ni15</sub> +18 <sub>i16</sub>	36

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- There is a **migration of verbs** from the non-inchoative pattern to the inchoative one, but in a **low amount** to be statistically significant.
- **Unidirectional change:** all the verbs that switch the paradigm do so in all cases from the non-inchoative pattern to the inchoative one.
- The **inchoative** class is always the **dominant pattern** and gradually attracts the non-inchoative verbs, following Mayerthaler's proposal (1987: 37), according to which the stable inflectional class normally dominates.

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