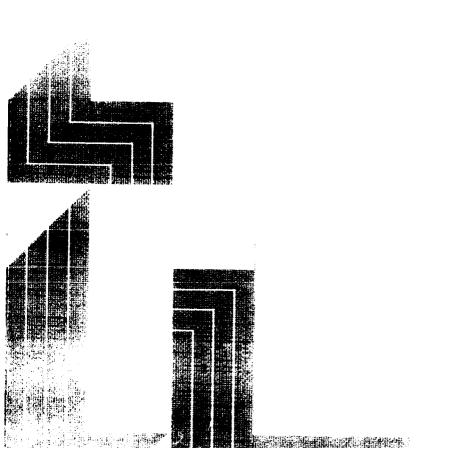
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Advances in
Romance Linguistics

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Advances in Romance Linguistics

This book is a collection of selected articles presented at the Sixteenth Annual Linguistics Symposium on Romance Languages hosted by the University of Texas at Austin on March 6-9, 1986. As an open forum of Romance linguists, the LSRL has assumed in the last few years a position of undisputed prominence.

The studies contained in this volume have been selected to reflect the high quality of recent research in the field of Romance Linguistics. The volume features articles by Profs. Osvaldo Jaeggli, Donna Jo Napoli and Donca Steriade, the keynote speakers at the Austin symposium.



Transitive, Intransitive and Reflexive Uses of Adjectival Verbs in French

This study on de-adjectival verbs will try to relate their morphological subclasses to their syntax and semantics. We will see that diachronic facts shed light on the verb's syntactic primitive (transitive or intransitive); moreover, affix distribution and semantic restrictions correlate with the syntactic primitive; finally an account is provided for intransitive vs reflexive use of the verbs.

A. Two uses and two morphological subclasses for de-adjectival verbs

Verbs derived from adjectives, like **grandir** or **embellir** very often have two uses, an inchoative intransitive one (a) and a causative transitive one (b):

- (1) a. il grandit he is growing
 - b. il le grandit
 he makes him/it taller
- (2) a. il embellit he grows prettier
 - b. il l'embellit
 he embellishes him/it

An inspection of the list of all the verbs derived from adjectives reveals the existence of two morphologically different subclasses: those derived with the addition of a derivational affix (3) and those derived without such an affix (4):

(3) embellir and not *bellir (to embellish)

(4) grossir and not *engrossir or *agrossir (to grow bigger)

We will explore the consequences of those two modes of formation on the syntax and the semantics of the resulting verbs.

B. Initial hypothesis

The initial hypothesis we will discuss is:

- (5) a. The presence of a derivational affix on deadjectival verbs indicates that the verbs were initially (historically) transitive, with a causative meaning.
- (5) b. Verbs derived from adjectives without such an affix are initially intransitive, with an inchoative meaning.

We suggest that a verb like embellir was initially derived with a causative meaning, i.e. it was transitive; historically, (2b) was the first syntactic use of the verb. The affix em- is a morphological trace of this initial syntactic use. On the other hand, the initial syntactic use of granding is, according to (5b), the inchoative one: (la).

In order to test the hypothesis in (5), one must investigate the historical evidence. For example, **embellir**, in its first use, is transitive: it is first attested in the XIIth century (the dates are 1100 and 1130 according to GLLF and TLF) with a causative meaning:

(6) a. 1100: il l'embellit

(6) b. 1671: il embellit

Grandir appears in French around 1260 with an intransitive, inchoative use: its first use is (7a):

(7) a. 1260: il grandit

The transitive use (7b), however, is said to be rare before the XIXth century and the earliest attestation we have for this use is 1460.

(7) b. 1460: il le grandit

C. The data

C.1. Data collection

450 deadjectival verbs were checked in all major dictionaries (Grand Larousse de la Langue Française: GLLF, Trésor de la Langue Française: TLF, Littré, Lexis, Robert, Godefroy, Huguet, Tobler-Lommatsch, etc.). The only dictionaries actually giving dates for different uses were the GLLF and TLF. However, the other dictionaries were useful to check meanings and most common uses.

In using the dictionaries we kept in mind the following: 1. the order in which the two uses are given may be arbitrary and therefore cannot be used as evidence.

- 2. though TLF and GLLF are the only dictionaries which give dates for each use, they do it in some sporadic ways: TLF excellent etymological and historical descriptions, but only only in its first volume (letter A/Af...). GLLF has good articles but only starting with letter C: most of the time, the dictionary does not state the dates of each syntactic use (transitive, intransitive) but restricts itself to a single date of the verbal form (a date which may even show an exceptional use).
- 3. if a syntactic use is attested, it may not be the one you are looking for: 'intransitive' uses may simply be absolute transitives (la lampe éclaire...(la pièce)... 'the lamp lights...(the room)...) and anything attested by a past principle should not be reliable (in Old French the prefix en- could be added to form the past participle of a a- or an unaffixed verb; for example, rougir —> past participle: enrougi. i.e. there is no verb such 'enrougir').

The data are summarized in (8).

date. (8) Verbs: uses and affixes date: both intr. trans. total

affix

		only	only		date: trans intr	date: intr trans	date n.a.	total: trans	total: intr
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0	104	58	12	34	1	19	14	92	0 97

40

other

Affixes having an effect on verbal valency are:

- 1. the prefixes a-, en-/em-, e- and de-; for example: enlaidir, elargir, deqourdir;
- 2. the affixes -is- and -(i)fi- preceding the inflectional affix and referred to as the suffixes -iser and (i)fier.
- $m{\emptyset}$ symbolizes the lack of such an affix; the verb just has inflectional ending.

The affixes having no effect on the verbal valency and therefore excluded from this study are in the columm 'other'. They are:

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-ail-: grisailler (to turn grey)
-oy- : rougeoyer (to turn red)
-on- : grisonner (to turn grey)
dis- : discontinuer (to discontinue)
pro- : prolonger (to prolong)
sur- : surenchérir (to bid higher)
ré-, r-, re-: réhumidifier (to rehumidify)
and numerals: tripler, quadrupler, centupler... (to
triple, to quadruple, to centuple)
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In this study, 410 (out of 450) verbs were finally considered.

Total: shows the number of deadjectival verbs per affix. This total number of verbs is divided between those having the transitive use only (trans only), the intransitive use only (intr only) and those having both uses (both). The historical evidence is given in the columns called date: there are three possibilities: the transitive use can be attested earlier than the intransitive one (date: trans intr); the intransitive can be the earliest (date: intr trans) or the dates are not available (date: not available). The final two columns of subtotals show: total of trans, total of intr.

C.3. Results

The data reveals that: 1) only verbs without the affixes under discussion can be uniquely intransitive (see: intransitive only), and 2) if a verb has an affix it must minimally have a transitive use. There is only one verb which violates the latter generalization; this verb (gâtifier, to become

senile) contains an affix but is uniquely intransitive.

The historical data - when available - fulfills 5a: all affixed verbs with both uses have their transitive use attested earlier than the intransitive one. Out of 19 averbs having both uses: 16 have their transitive use attested earlier than their intransitive one. No dates are available for the remaining 3 verbs; of the 3 everbs which have both uses, 1 is attested as predicted, 2 have non-available dates; for 6 en-verbs, 5 are attested earlier in the transitive use as well, 1 has non-available dates. There are no counter-examples.

Regarding (5b), things seem more complicated: the bulk of the historical data supports (5b) with respect to verbs having both uses; 19 of these verbs have their intransitive use attested first, there is only one counter-example (roussir).

Nevertheless 58/104 of the unaffixed verbs are uniquely transitive: we cannot maintain the claim that a verb without an affix necessarily has an intransitive syntactic primitive, as hypothesized in (5b). We must reformulate (5b) in light of the distribution of affixed and unaffixed verbs.

D. Distribution of affixed and unaffixed verbs

Some deadjectival verbs show complementary distribution with respect to affixes, for example (9):

(9) a. faiblir
to weaken
(intransitive)

b. affaiblir
to weaken
(transitive)

Faiblir has only an intransitive use, whereas affaiblir has only a transitive one. Notice that both verbs have been cited since 1100 and that the presence of the affix is related to a specific use: the causative one.

Similar examples can be seen in (10), where the affixed verb never has an intransitive use. The intransitive use is expressed by the form without affix; this unaffixed verb can also be transitive, but this use is less common:

(10)	Examples: Unaffixed	Affixed	Adjective
	Baisser	Abaisser	Bas
	Chauffer	Echauffer	Chaud
	Durcir	Endurcir	Dur
	Forcir	Fortifier	Fort
	Gauchir	D é gauchir	Gauche
	Grossir	Engrosser/Degrossir	Gros
	Hausser	Exhausser	Haut
	Maigrir	Amaigrir	Maigre
	Mincir	Amincir	Mince
	Mollir	Amollir/Mollifier	Molle
	Sècher	Assècher	Sèche
	Tiéder	Attiéder	Tiède

In (10) affixed verbs are definitely marked with respect to transitivity whereas unaffixed verbs are unmarked. We can now reformulate our initial hypothesis.

E. Final hypothesis

- (11) = (5) reformulated:
 - (11) a. The affix on a deadjectival verb gives the verb a transitive syntactic primitive along with a causative meaning;
 - b. Unaffixed verbs are unmarked and consequently likely to have the intransitive, inchoative meaning (adjectives are intransitive).
- (11) explains the results provided by the historical data and the uses of affixed and unaffixed verbs. The verb with one of the affixes mentioned above (see par. C.2.) is marked with respect to transitivity, whereas unaffixed verbs, unmarked, can be either intransitive or transitive. This is why 'only transitive' verbs could be found in both morphological classes: some being specifically marked by the affix, some being unmarked with respect to transitivity; and, more precisely, why only unaffixed verbs could be intransitive; we would not expect a marked verb to be uniquely intransitive.

Additional subhypotheses were studied in order to confirm (11), especially where historical data were unavailable.

F. Semantic restrictions as clues to initial syntactic use

Semantic restrictions can be considered to be clues to the initial syntactic use:

- (12) a. The more polysemic use of the verb corresponds to its initial syntactic use.
 - b. The more selectionally restricted use of the verb corresponds to its secondary derived use.

For example, grandir, which is clearly initially intransitive (13a), has a figurative meaning associated to the transitive use (13b).

(13) a. il grandit / il grandit a mes yeux/ dans mon he is growing / he is growing in my regard/ in my

estime esteem

b. grandir quelqu'un to make someone look taller (than he really is)

In the same manner, the examples is (14a-c).

- (14) a. grossir quelqu'un
 to make someone look fatter
 - b. pâlir quelqu'un to make someone look paler
 - vieillir quelqu'un to make someone look older

Embillir, initially transitive, is restricted, in its intransitive derived use, to animate subjects (15b-c), a restriction that does not exist for the object of the transitive use (15a):

- (15) a. Jean embellit son jardin / la vérité John embellishes his garden / the truth
 - b. ?son jardin / *la vérité embellit ?his garden / *the truth embellishes
 - c. Marie embellit de jour en jour
 Mary grows prettier every day (= animate)

In the same manner:

- (16) a. les cheveux éclaircissent au soleil (just a few intransitive uses) hair lightens in the sun
 - b. le pull élargit (intransitive: colloquial) the sweater stretches
 - c. le temps rafraîchit (intrensitive restricted to temperature or weather) the temperature becomes cooler
 - d. les jours allongent (intransitive restricted to time)
 the days lengthen

G. Intransitive vs reflexive use

Next, intransitive and reflexive use of the verbs were compared, because we suspected these uses could be predicted by the syntactic primitive:

- (17) a. If a verb is initially intransitive, the reflexive use, based on the transitive form, will not be synonymous with the intransitive one.
 - b. If a verb is initially transitive, intransitive and pronominal forms will be synonymous in most of their uses.

This follows from the above claim that the transitive form of a verb which is initially intransitive is more distant from the initial semantics of the adjective. The derivation pattern can be outlined as follows:

- (18) a. 1. intransitive \rightarrow 2. transitive \rightarrow 3. pronominal

An example for (17a) and (18a) is (19) where the intransitive use is very different from the reflexive one:

(19 Il grandit \sim il se grandit he becomes tall \sim he makes himself look taller

The pronominal is clearly different from the intransitive for 26 verbs (out of 34 having intransitive, transitive and pronominal use).

There are 8 to 10 exceptions left like the verbs **jaunir** or **aigrir:** these are listed by Lagane (1967) as symmetrical verbs; i.e. they may have changed classes. They therefore behave like affixed verbs.

- (20) is an example for (17b) and (18b); the intransitive use is synonymous with the reflexive one:
 - (20) le temps refraîchit = le temps se refraichit the weather becomes cooler

Most affixed verbs - those which have a transitive causative primitive - can have a inchoative reflexive use. In the case where the verb also has an intransitive use, the two uses are synonymous: 19 a-affixed verbs, 3 e-verbs and 6 en-verbs have a reflexive use synonymous with the intransitive one.

The fact that there are synonymous reflexive and intransitive uses in French may indicate an intermediate stage in the development of the language. Recently derived verbs (containing the productive -is- or -ifi- affix) always use the reflexive for the intransitive, inchoative construction. Some verbs are directly derived as reflexives, as shown by Rothemberg (1974) in her thesis; for example se miter (to undergo the process of getting mites [for wool]). She proposes that inchoatives are realized by intransitives only when the subject undergoes a natural (internal) process, whereas they are realized as reflexives when external factors are also required for the process. This could explain the behavior of our exceptions: jaunir (to yellow), aigrir (to turn sour), etc.

H. Conclusion

In conclusion, the primitive syntactic subcategorization of a deadjectival verb with respect to transitivity can be determined from its morphology. It was shown that the affix of a deadjectival verb is a reliable morphological trace of the initial syntactic use of the verb. Specifically, as I stated in (11), the affix gives the verb a transitive syntactic primitive along with a causative meaning. On the other hand, unaffixed verbs are unmarked both morphologically and semantically and are therefore likely to have the intransitive inchoative meaning.

Once the syntactic primitive is determined by (11), the meaning of the intransitive and reflexive use is, generally, predictable. The intransitive and reflexive uses will be synonymous for transitive verbs, whereas they will be different for initially intransitive verbs.

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