Advances in Romance Linguistics

is a collection of selected articles presented at the eleventh Annual Linguistics Symposium on Romance Languages hosted by the University of Texas on March 6-9, 1986. As an open forum of the LSRL, the LSRL has assumed in the last three years, a position of undiscussed prominence. The essays contained in this volume have been selected to reflect the high quality of recent research in Romance Linguistics. The volume features contributions by Profs. Osvaldo Jaeggli, Donna Jo Napoli, and other scholars, the keynote speakers at the Austin Conference.
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Marie-Odile Junker

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.

8. Initial hypothesis

The initial hypothesis we will discuss is:

(5) a. The presence of a derivational affix on de-adjectival 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 grandir is, according to (5b), the inchoative one: (1a).

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

(6) a. 1100: il l'embellit

The first attestation of the intransitive use is not until 1671:

(6) b. 1671: il embelit

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 the XIth century and the earliest attestation of this use is 1460.

(7) b. 1460: il le grandit

C. The data

C.1. Data collection

450 deadjectival verbs were checked in all dictionaries (Grand Larousse de la Langue Française de la Langue Française: TLF, Littré, Lexia, froy, Huguet, Tabler-Lomatsch, etc.). The or actually giving dates for different uses were TLF. However, the other dictionaries were us meanings and most common uses.

In using the dictionaries we kept in mind the order in which the two uses are arbitrary and therefore cannot be used as evidence. Though TLF and GLLF are the only dictionaries to give dates for each use, they do it in some sporadic cases. The only etymological and historical description articles but only starting with letter C: most of the dictionary does not state the dates of use (transitive, intransitive) but restrict single date of the verbal form (a date which an exceptional case).

3. if a syntactic use is attested, it may not be looking for: 'intransitive' uses may simpler than transitives (la lampe éclaire...la pièce)... lights...(the room)... and anything else. The principle should not be reliable (in Old French) could be added to form the past participle affixed verb; for example, rougir — pa enrougli, i.e. there is no verb such 'enrougli'

The data are summarized in (8).
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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.

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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 em- could be added to form the past participle of 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).
### C.2. Comments

Affixes having an effect on verbal valency are:

1. the prefixes **a-**, **en-em-**, **é-** and **dé-**; **enlaidir**, **élargir**, **dégourdir**;
2. the affixes **-is-** and **-(i)fi-** preceding the affix and referred to as the suffixes **-iser** and **Ø** symbolizes the lack of such an affix; the vi inflectional ending.

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

- **-ail-**: grisaille **(to turn grey)**
- **-oy-**: rougeoyer **(to turn red)**
- **-on-**: prisonner **(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, cent, triple, to quadruple, to centuple)

In this study, 410 (out of 450) verbs considered.

**Total:** shows the number of deadjectival verbs. This total number of verbs is divided between the transitive use only (**trans only**), the **intr only** (**intr only**) and those having both uses (**both**). Evidence is given in the columns called **affix**.

There are three possibilities: the transitive use can be either than the intransitive one (**date: trans intransitive can be the earliest** (**date: intr dates are not available** (**date: not available**). Columns of subtotals show: **total of trans total**.

### C.3. Results

The data reveals that: 1) only verbs without under discussion can be uniquely intransitive (**active only**), and 2) if a verb has an affix it must have a transitive use. There is only one verb with the latter generalization; this verb **(gatifie**
C.2. Comments

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The affixes having no effect on the verbal valency and therefore excluded from this study are in the column 'other'. They are:
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- oy- : rougeoyer  (to turn red)
- on- : grisonner  (to turn grey)
- dis- : discontinuer  (to discontinue)
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- sur- : surenchérir  (to bid higher)
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and numerals: tripler, quadrupler, centupler... (to triple, to quadruple, to centuple)

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 a-verbs 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 6-verbs 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unaffixed</th>
<th>Affixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baisser</td>
<td>Abaisser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chauffier</td>
<td>Echauffier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Durcir</td>
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<td>Forcir</td>
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<td>Dégauchir</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tiéder</td>
<td>Attiéder</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In (10) affixed verbs are definitely marked with transitivity whereas unaffixed verbs are unmarked and we now reformulate our initial hypothesis.

E. Final hypothesis

(11) = (5) reformulated:

(11) a. The affix on a deadjectival verb gives a transitive syntactic primitive causative meaning;

b. Unaffixed verbs are unmarked and likely to have the intransitive meaning (adjectives are intransitive)

(11) explains the results provided by the history and the uses of affixed and unaffixed verbs. The one of the affixes mentioned above (see par. C.2) with respect to transitivity, whereas unaffixed, can be either intransitive or transit why 'only transitive' verbs could be found in logical classes: some being specifically marked affix, some being unmarked with respect to t and, more precisely, why only unaffixed verb is intransitive; we would not expect a marked uniquely intransitive.
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(11) a. The affix on a dejectival 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 à mes yeux/ dans mon estime
he is growing / he is growing in my regard/ in my 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

c. vieillir quelqu'un
to make someone look older

Embellir, 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 (= annually)

In the same manner:

(16) a. les cheveux déclaireissent au soleil
hair lightens in the sun

b. le pull élargit (intransitive: the sweater stretches

c. le temps refroidit (intransitive: the temperature becomes cooler

d. les jours allongent (intransitive: the days lengthen

G. Intransitive vs reflexive use

Next, intransitive and reflexive use of a verb is compared, because we suspected these uses could be the syntactic primitive:

(17) a. If a verb is initially intransitive, its reflexive use, based on the transitive form, be synonymous with the intransitive

b. If a verb is initially transitive, and pronominal forms will be synonym of their uses.

This follows from the above claim that the transitive uses of a verb which is initially intransitive is from the initial semantics of the adjective. A pattern can be outlined as follows:
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b. mon 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 refroidit (intransitive 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 → 2. transitive → 3. pronominal
b. 1. transitive → 2. intransitive → 2. pronominal

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

(19) Il grandit → Il se grandit
he becomes tall → 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 refraîchit
the weather becomes cooler

Most affixed verbs - those which have a transitive causative primitive - can have an inchoative reflexive use. In the case where the verb also has an intransitive use, the two uses are synonymous: 19 e-affixed verbs, 3 a-verbs and 6 enverbs 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 -in- or -ifi-affix) always use the reflexive for the intransitive, inchoative construction. Some verbs are directly derived as reflexives, as shown by Rothenberg (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 subcategory of a dejectival verb with respect to transitivity determined from its morphology. It was shown that of a dejectival verb is a reliable morphological initial syntactic use of the verb. Specifically stated in (11), the affix gives the verb a syntactic primitive along with a causative meaning. The other hand, unaffixed verbs are unmarked biologically and semantically and are therefore likely to be transitive intransitive, inchoative meaning.

Once the syntactic primitive is determined, the meaning of the intransitive and reflexive use is predictable. The intransitive and reflexive use is synonymous for transitive verbs, whereas they are different for initially intransitive verbs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work has been partially subsidized by Rees 410-83-0333 from the Social Sciences and Humanities of Canada to Paul Hirschbühler (Syntaxe des français et catégorie vides). Special thanks to Martineau who helped collecting the data.
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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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