

## Analogy all over: Latin, Romance, and the unrecognized frequency of analogical change

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Analogical change is commonly viewed as a counter to regular (Neogrammarian) sound change (cf. Fertig 2013). This paper examines previously understudied analogical changes in Latin and Romance verbs and argues that the role of analogy has been both underestimated and mischaracterized.

Most of the forms of the Latin verb *possum*, *posse*, *potuī* ‘be able’ have the structure of *pot-* + forms of *sum*, *esse*, *fuī*, *futūrus* ‘be’, where the first element recalls the adjective *potis*, *pote* ‘able’, ‘capable’, as in *poteram* ‘I was able’ (cf. *eram* ‘I was’). The forms that might be expected to have *-ts-* show *-ss-*, as in *possum* ‘I can’ (cf. *sum* ‘I am’), not *\*potsum*. In Romance, the corresponding forms mix analogically created form with reflexes resulting from regular sound change. For example, *potes* (2S PRES IND) yields Spanish *puedes* via regular /t/ > /d/ intervocalically and diphthongization of the stressed short /o/. This form, however, is the only Spanish form that developed by regular sound change. Excluding the later grammaticalization of the future and conditional (*cantāre habeo* ‘I have to sing’ > *cantaré* ‘I will sing’) still leaves dozens of analogically created forms in the Spanish paradigm. Such analogical changes are often couched in terms of homophony avoidance, usually (explicitly or implicitly) specifically as a matter of syncretism. Such an explanation does not, however, account for the Spanish creation of *puedo* ‘I can’ as a replacement of *possum* in light of the retention of reflexes reflecting regular sound changes in both Portuguese and Italian, namely *posso*. One might argue that the Spanish form reflects a tendency toward levelling, but the Portuguese and Italian paradigms are equally good candidates for such levelling. While it is widely accepted that the somewhat sporadic nature of analogy means that it is not necessary to account for unrealized analogical opportunities, it is nevertheless worthwhile to examine the tendencies and the fact that cases of non-analogy shape those tendencies. As a contrast, consider the universal extension of final *-e* to all Spanish verb forms that, etymologically, should lack it, e.g., *sale* ‘leave-3S.PRES.IND’ < Latin *salit*.

The copula also presents a challenge for claims about analogy, especially regarding homophony avoidance. The Romanian counterpart of *sum* ‘I am’ not only fails to reflect regular sound changes, it is a copy of the 3p form, *sunt*. Though probably not best viewed as an analogical change, this replacement does show that the principle of homophony avoidance is not as strong a catalyst for analogical change as is commonly believed. Indeed, going back to the forms meaning ‘can’ in Spanish reveals a paradigm that would have had a degree of syncretism comparable to that found in the attested forms:

pres. ind.	expected	pueso	puedes	puedes	puesmos	podestes	pueson
	attested	puedo	puedes	puede	podemos	podéis	pueden
impf. ind	expected	puedran	puedras	puedra	podramos	podráis	puedran
	attested	podia	podias	podia	podiamos	podiais	podian

If more of the forms derived through sound change had survived, there could have been mild analogical changes that would have resulted in a more typical paradigm. For example, IMPF.IND.1S *puedran* might have been replaced with *puedra*. This would not have reduced the amount of syncretism, however, since that form would then be identical to the 3S form (as is common in many Spanish verb paradigms).

The extensive analogical remodeling of the verbs meaning ‘can’ and ‘be’ seems to challenge the common view that highly frequent verbs resist change. This claim clearly cannot stand in its strongest form, but it may apply in a weakened form. These cases suggest that, though speakers inherit both words and patterns, they treat them in local rather than systematic terms (cf. Joseph 1992). The previously underestimated degree of analogy in Latin and Romance verbs suggests that the balance must be a matter of ongoing research.

## References

- Fertig, David. 2013. *Analogy and morphological change* (Edinburgh Historical Linguistics). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Joseph, Brian D. 1992. Diachronic explanation: Putting speakers back into the picture. *Explanation in historical linguistics* ed. by Garry W. Davis & Gregory K. Iverson, 123-144. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

**Keywords**

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