

Root Infinitives and Gerunds and the Features of the C-T System

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This talk discusses root infinitives and gerunds Romance by looking at Middle French (MF), Acadian French (AF) and Old Romanian (OR) data. The focus is on constructions where clauses with non-finite verb forms (i.e. infinitive and gerund forms) are coordinated with declaratives that contain indicative, hence finite, verbs, as seen in (1).

(1a) [*il estoit yvre et se laisse tomber, et [chacun de rire]* **MF**
he was drunk and let fall and everyone to laugh
'he was drunk and let himself fall and everyone laughed' (Maupas 1625: 325)

(1b) *On brûlait du bois, Faire du feu pis avoir des couvertes pour s'abrier.*
we burned of wood make of fire and have covers for REFL cover
'We burned wood. We made a fire and had blankets to cover ourselves.' **AF**
(4, M365 apud Wiesmath 2007: 78)

(1c) [*Postindu-mă*] și voiŭ dezlega a mânca, și nu mă voiŭ arăta.
fasting=REFL and will.1SG stop to eat and not me=will.1=show
'I will fast and will stop eating and will not show myself.' (Coresi EV {4}) **OR**

We show that root infinitives and gerunds yield exclusive declarative (versus interrogative) readings and argue that an Assert OP (Meinunger 2004) mapped in Spec,CP/ForceP recategorizes these otherwise non-finite derivations into a finite, *realis* clause. Conversely, we argue that root indicatives achieve the assertion reading in the absence of any clause typing operator.

The talk identifies a series of shared properties in these derivations, as follows: (i) exclusive assertion semantics; (ii) projection to a phasal CP; (iii) verb movement outside of vP. In addition, we illustrate a series of distinct empirical properties in the grammar of root infinitives and root gerunds in MF, AF, and OR. These concern: (i) the level of verb movement, (ii) the presence versus absence of a lexicalized independent subject, and (iii) the presence versus absence of clitics. Specifically, if in MF and OR independent Nominative subjects and clitics are permissible in these constructions, we show that they are totally ruled out in AF. We argue that properties (ii) and (iii) can be related to the two types of Agreement features proposed in Miyagawa (2010, 2017) as properties of the C phase head: φ -features, having to do with subject predicate agreement and δ -features having to do with topic/focus and comment/presupposition agreement. While this is a universal property of the C phase, cross-linguistic variation arises with respect to feature transfer from C to T (see also Lochbihler & Mathieu 2016): both these two feature sets may be transferred to T, or only one of them, or neither one. This yields the 4-way cross-linguistic typology seen in (2), which we argue provides a straightforward explanation for the observed variation with root non-finite verb forms in the Romance varieties we investigate.

- (2) Miyagawa's 2010 typology:
- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Category I: C ϕ , T δ | Japanese |
| Category II: C δ , T ϕ | English |
| Category III: C, T ϕ/δ | Spanish |
| Category IV: C ϕ/δ , T | Dinka |

With root infinitives and gerunds, the absence of inflection in T and the obligatory presence of the Assert OP in C ensures that ϕ -features remain in C. Since clitic pronouns spell out δ agreement (Delfitto 2002), their presence indicates transfer of δ -features to T in Romance as these languages have T-oriented clitics. This means that MF and OR, which permit clitics in these constructions, are languages of Category I, with C ϕ , T δ for non-finite domains, so an activated T. Licensing of independent Nominative subjects falls out from the presence of this activated T domain, which we take to be a non-trivial finding. On the other hand, AF, which rules out subjects and clitics in these contexts, shows lack of any C-T feature transfer and an inactive T thus indicating a Category IV typology, with C ϕ/δ , T.

With respect to the level of verb movement, we exploit Rizzi's (1997 et seq) more fine-grained cartographic mapping which splits the C domain into Force and Fin heads. If in MF, and unproductively, in OR, there is just V-to-T movement, with the Assert OP checked via long distance Agree, in AF and, more productively, in OR, there is V-to-C head movement. However, the landing site in C differs in AF and OR, with AF evidencing V-to-Force, and OR evidencing V-to-Fin. This latter asymmetry follows from the fact that in OR Force has transferred both its ϕ -features and its δ -features (i.e. ϕ to Fin and δ to T), while in AF at least the δ -features remain in Force (though ϕ is arguably in Fin given the finiteness aspect of these derivations).

Lastly, the paper discusses why root infinitives and root gerunds were phased out in Romance. In sum, our analysis relates the occurrence of root infinitives and root gerunds to a derivational mechanism that recategorizes these clauses as finite assertions, and it relates cross-linguistic syntactic asymmetries in these derivations to C-T feature transfer options.

Selected References:

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