Suppletion is not silence: GO verbs in Romance (and elsewhere)

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Outline

- suppletion, syncretism and the paradigm

- DM accounts of Romance GO

- Kayne on Spanish *ir*

- Kayne on *go/went* and *aller*

- suppletion and synonymy

- suppletion and the morphome

- nanosyntax and (ir)regularity

- some conclusions

Suppletion

'For the signs X and Y to be suppletive their semantic correlation should be maximally regular, while their formal correlation is maximally irregular.'

[Mel'čuk 1994:358]

'Some authors reserve the term for the collapse of two, unrelated roots in diachrony, but there is no reason in synchrony to treat this differently than the total phonological divergence of two forms of the (originally identical) root.'

[Bach & Round, in press]

fero ~ tuli ~ latum

Present stem: *fer-* < PIE *b^her- 'carry', cf Eng. *bear*

Perfect stem: *tul-* < PIE *$telh_2$- 'lift, pick up', OL *tetuli*

cf Lat. *tollo* 'lift, remove'

3rd stem: *lat-* < PIE zero grade *tl-āt-

also in future part. *laturus*

Issues arising:
- lexical convergence/incursion vs sound change
- semantic relations between converging stems

Romance GO words: stems

	Pres N-forms	Pres 1-2pl	imperf	pret	future/cond	inf	past part
Galic.	v-	i-	i-	f-	i-	i-	i-
Span.	v-	v-	i-	f-	i-	i-	i-
Catalan lex	v-	a-	a-	a-	a-/i-	a-	a-
Catalan aux	v-	v-					
French	v-	a-	a-	a-	i-	a-	a-
Italian	v-	a-	a-	a-	a-	a-	a-
Sicilian	v-	i-	i-	i-	—	i-	i-
Sard.	a-	a-	a-	a-	a-	a-	a-

Romance GO words: functions

Future: Fr.   *nous allons manger*
                    'we are going to eat'

Past: Cat. *l'equip de RM va ser inferior en la primera part*
                    'RM's team was weaker in the first half'

Progress: Ital. *la situazione si andava complicando*
                    'the situation was getting complicated

Passive: Ital. *questo libro va letto*
                    'this book must be read'

Mirative: Sic. *jisti pi futtiri e fusti futtutu*
                    'you went to swindle and you got swindled

Romance GO words: forms and functions

The general conclusion is that 'go' verbs in Romance display considerable formal and functional variety, but within any one language the same set of forms often serves all the functions.

In particular, GO verbs show paradigm split when marking past (e.g. Catalan) but not when marking future or progressive. Old Occitan had a GO + inf past with paradigm split, but modern Occ has a GO + inf future with no such split

Lexical vs auxiliary split

	Guardiol		Aragonese	
	Lexical	**Auxiliary**	**Lexical**	**Auxiliary**
1SG	vau	vau	voi	va
2SG	vas	vas	vas	vas
3SG	vai	vai	va	va
1PL	anèm	vam	imos	vam/vamos
2PL	anatz	vatz	itz	vatz
3PL	van	van	van	van

Suppletion and syncretism

Romance GO verbs exhibit two kinds of paradigm sharing:

- paradigm split or 'non-overlapping': Fr. *vais/irai/allais*; Ital *vado/andrò/andavo*

- paradigm sharing or 'overlapping': Sp/Port/Gal/Arag *fui* as past of *ir* and *ser*

Pre-theoretically, both are often called suppletive and described in terms of paradigms and cells, but are these concepts also necessary theoretical constructs?

Theories of morphology (Stump 2001: ch 1)

	Lexical	Inferential
Incremental	item-and-arrangement	[Articulated Morphology]
Realizational	Distributed Morphology (DM)	Word & Paradigm Paradigm Function (PFM)

Lexical: each affix/morpheme has its own lexical entry
Inferential: word form inferred from rules applying to a lexeme
Incremental: a word acquires its properties item by item
Realizational: a word form is the exponent of a set of features

Pomino & Remberger (2019), Oltra-Massuet (2013)

Adopt a DM approach characterised by:

- word internal syntax

- late Insertion

- post-syntactic morphological operations such as fusion and impoverishment

Pomino & Remberger (2019:494)

- In GO-suppletion more specified VIs take precedence over less specified and default VIs. Yet, if the more specified item disappears from the inventory of possible VIs, a default element shows up. With this we explain why, in Ibero-Romance, some Vocabulary Items of √SER take over the realisation of √IR (= overlapping suppletion).

- If a more specified item loses one of its features (influenced by the semantic process of synonymisation), it enters into a "new" competition with other less specified VIs. This is what happened with the VI /vad-/, for instance.

- Having highly specified VIs for the realisation of one terminal node also implies that this node resists (morphological) fusion. This explains why French has highly fused forms in the present tense for 1/2/3sg and the 3pl, but not for 1pl/2pl. As the fused structures combine features that in other cases may appear separately, the VI for the realisation of the whole set is rather unique (see [vɛ], [va] and [võ]). The less fused form for 1pl/2pl are, in contrast, segmentable and have a VI that realises the √ROOT-node alone, i.e. [al-] (= non-categorial (contextual) suppletion).

12

Pomino & Remberger (2019: 494)

- The absence of a VI for certain terminal nodes (e.g. for T° with the feature [present]) causes fusion, e.g. of T° and φ in the present tense. This fusion has the effect that person and number features encoded under φ are more local to the √ROOT and can thus impinge on its realisation (= non-categorial suppletion).

- Analogical levelling is captured by the fact that highly specified feature combinations (or complex feature geometries) are 'neutralised' as possible context features for suppletion, depending on (un-)markedness or the battle between iconicity and economy.

Oltra-Massuet (2013) on Catalan

Two structures:

2SG pres indic *vas* [[v$_{MOTION}$ **Th**]] [T/Agr]]

                               b   ***á***   *z*

2SG analytic past v*as* [[v$_{AUX}$ **Th**]] [Agr]]

                               b   ***á***   *z*

'Lack of syncretism in 1/2PL is due to default insertion and paradigm leveling in the context of a *v*$_{AUX}$.'

[Oltra-Massuet 2013: 16]

Assessment of DM approaches

- deals with the data

- involves late insertion hence realizational

- P & R's account based on two 'core assumptions':

  - Separation Hypothesis – derived from Beard (1976); not unique to DM but characteristic of any realizational approach in Stump's typology

  - Subset Principle (aka Elsewhere) – also not unique to DM, and allows one item to 'block' another

- neither specific to DM

Spanish *ir/ser*

"... we will treat overlapping suppletion of the Ibero-Romance type ... as a case of syncretism"

[Pomino & Remberger 2019: 493]

"We can call it suppletion, as long as we recognize that doing so leaves questions open that we need to try to answer ... Nor, it seems to me, would there be much insight to be gained by stating that Spanish *go* and *be* are syncretic in the preterite and in the imperfect subjunctive."

[Kayne 2020a: 3]

Silence

Danish

vi skal i teatret 'We are going to the theatre'

jeg vil hjem 'I want to go home'

- van Riemsdijk (2002) inserts a silent GO as head of the VP in structures such as these

- Kayne (2020:4) adduces as a general principle:

'A directional PP is always the complement of the verb "go", which may be covert in certain cases.'

<div align="right">[Collins 2007]</div>

Kayne on Spanish *ir*

Adopts van Riemsdijk's idea and Collins' generalization and analyses *fuimos a casa* 'we went home' as:

[fuimos [GO a casa]]

GO is claimed to be silent and hence to co-occur with *f*-forms only in the past, and a comparison is drawn with English *we have been to Paris:*

[we have been [GO to Paris]

Contrast Pomino & Remberger who insert 'default' BE.

Some problems for Kayne's account

- English has a contrast *he has been to Paris* vs *he has gone to Paris* which Spanish does not have

- What therefore determines silence of GO in Spanish?

- Is silent GO in Spanish different from silent GO in Danish?

- If so, what is gained by postulating a set of different GO verbs?

- If not, what exactly is GO? – presumably not simply a semantic predicate

Kayne on English *go/went*

- Kayne (2019) also uses silent GO so that English *she went home* is analysed as:

    [she went [GO [TO home]]]

- The logic here is that *went* does not take the place of a putative **goed,* and hence we have to find an independent reason for the absence of the past of English *go*

Light verbs and theme vowels

- Some English verbs have theme vowels (TV)

- English -*ed* is bimorphemic

- -*e*- is TV and -*d* is 'past tense/participle morpheme'

- '*go* belongs to the class of English verbs that is incompatible with the theme vowel -*e*-' (2019:443)

- a special case of the general principle that all English light verbs are incompatible with the TV

- other candidates for light verb status are *be, have, do, go, come, take, bring, put, get, give, make, let, say* and modals

- implication is one-way; some non-light verbs do not have the TV: *spend, lend, mean, sleep*

The status of *went*

- in origin a full verb with a 'manner interpretation'
- hence is has a TV and the associated past *wended*
- loss of the manner component in the meaning turns it into a light verb
- hence the TV is impossible and the past is now *went*
- the light form *went* is now available to the job of the missing because morphologically impossible *goed*

TVs in English – *ignotum per aeque ignotum*?

SALVIATI: Ma il mezo termine non conviene egli che sia noto?

SIMPLICIO: È necessario , perché altramente sarebbe un voler provare *ignotum per aeque ignotum.*

[Galileo (1632) *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo,* Giornata seconda 166]

'That French allows pieces of its counterpart of *go* to be silent is reinforced by the future and conditional, which in French are normally built on the infinitive … But the future tense of 'go', with infinitive *aller*, is not **vous allerez*, but rather *vous irez*, in which form it is likely that there is no pronounced root at all. The *-r-* of *irez* is the usual infinitival *-r-*, and the *-i-* is almost certainly either the expletive/locative clitic *y*, or else (as Chris Collins has suggested to me) the theme vowel *-i-*, so that *irez* should be thought of as:

  V ALL ir ez

with both *v-* and *all-* silent.[21]' [Kayne 2020b: 11]

Note 21:

'It may be worth entertaining the possibility that French *v+all* corresponds, minus the *–k*, to English *walk*, with a possible link in that case to *tell/talk*, as suggested by Erich Groat (p.c.).'

What is a GO verb?

- What do we mean we talk about GO or COME verbs?

- For some discussion see Ricca (1993) and contributions to Devos & van der Wal (2014)

- In the latter volume, Philippe Bourdin states (p.155):

'I have suggested, borrowing from von Fintel (1995), that putative DD (= directional deixis) verbs are hybrid in nature: they are (mostly) lexical in their morphosyntax and (mostly) grammatical in their semantics.'

- The same categorial blurring applies to light verbs more generally (Butt 2010) and diachronic considerations are crucial to our general understanding in this domain.

Synonymy and suppletion

Three views to be found in the literature

- does not exist and is irrelevant (Kayne)
- pre-condition of suppletion (Maiden)
- consequence of suppletion (Börjars & Vincent)

Semantic relatedness: Juge (2019)

- Greater semantic distance between roots involved in overlapping suppletion than in non-overlapping suppletion

- With non-overlapping suppletion, 'in some cases, the roots in question closely approach true synonymy even before becoming parts of a single paradigm' [Juge 2019:404]

- Semantic distance should be viewed as a continuum in multidimensional space

The Sense That Suppletion Makes: Towards a Semantic Typology on Diachronic Principles
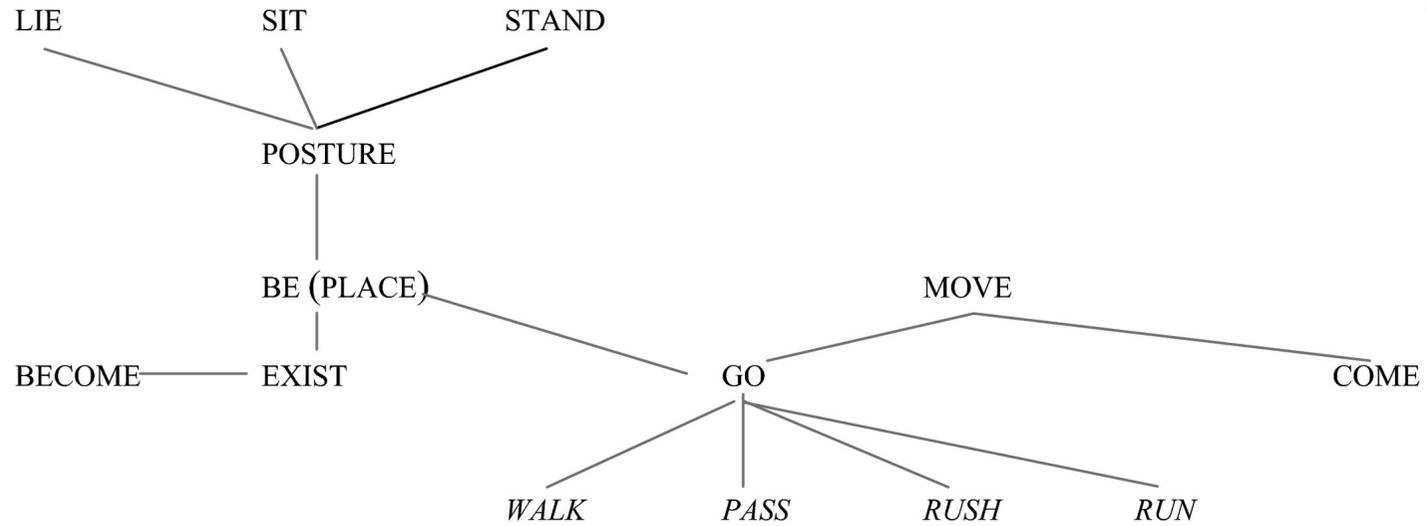
Convergence not competition

- DM accounts based on competition between forms or so-called 'blocking'; the presence of *went/vado* blocks **goed/ando*

- diachronically, however forms converge but do not need to be thought of as competing

- synchronically in a non-derivational, PFM-style approach the forms simply co-exist within the paradigm

"In all cases of suppletion one needs to ask why the unavailable expected form is not well-formed, and one needs to look for an answer that is independent of the existence of the unexpected form.

In a number of cases, or perhaps in all cases, suppletion can be seen to involve, not direct competition between two forms, but instead two structures that differ in that (at least) one contains a silent element lacking in the other."

[Kayne 2020]

Morphology as syntax (MS)

"Morphological generalizations are accounted for in terms of syntactic operations and principles. There is no morphological component in UG. There are no post-syntactic morphological operations."   [Collins & Kayne 2020: 1]

	MS	DM	NS
late insertion	no	yes	yes
post-syntactic operations	no	yes	no (bar late insertion)
morpheme based	yes	yes	no (phrase based)
competing forms	not needed	subset	superset

(Trans)derivationality and the morphome

- Despite their internal differences, all three of MS, DM and NS share one key property: they are derivational.

- Derivational models have a problem with transderivational effects.

- Such effects are most evident in the kinds of morphomic patterns for Romance described by Maiden and colleagues with labels like N-pattern, L-pattern, PYTA.

- Suppletion seems to follow the morphomic pattern and therefore argues for a paradigm-based account.

- In non-derivational models issues such as superset vs subset or late vs early insertion simply do not arise. They are artefacts of a derivational approach.

"It is not just that lexical suppletion *may* assume morphomic patterns of distribution in Romance: apparently it *must*. … lexical suppletion will replicate whatever patterns of allomorphy are to hand, regardless of whether their paradigmatic distribution 'makes sense' in terms of any possible extramorphological motivation. There is practically no non-morphomic lexical suppletion in most Romance languages because of the rarity of non-morphomic patterns of root allomorphy."

[Maiden 2018: Ch 11]

(Ir)regularity

- Both DM and PFM preserve the traditional sense that some forms are regular/productive/not in need of lexical specification as opposed to irregular/unproductive/lexically specified patterns, of which suppletion is a subtype.

- By contrast in nanosyntax (and also MS?) there is no irregularity – see the Universal Morphology (UM) research programme led by Michal Starke (Starke 2020).

Morphology-free syntax and syntax-free morphology

Two 'truths':

"Languages have some type of distinction between words and phrases and generally the properties and structures of the former are different from the latter.

Words, and their structure and formation display a number of properties which are wholly unrelated to concepts of syntax."

[O'Neill 2016:264]

"Sure, morphology and syntax share many things, say the foxes, but they are not exactly the same thing. Maybe there is a single engine driving aspects of both syntax and morphology, but there are morphological phenomena that have nothing to do with syntax just as there are syntactic phenomena that have nothing to do with morphology."

[Aronoff 2016, quoted by O'Neill 2016:265]

Conclusions

- morphology is not syntax

- non-derivational models are better able to handle suppletion

- morphomic patterns are a crucial part of the argument

- silent verbs do not help

- diachronic evidence is a crucial part of the theoretical endeavour

Thank you

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