

Categoriality in language change: The converbalization of the gerund

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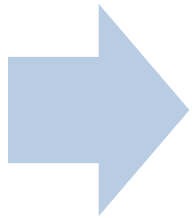


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The Latin gerund in **synchrony**

Syntax

- (1) [...] *reficiendi se et curandi potestas fuit*. (Cic. *Phil.* 9.6.6)
'he had opportunity to refresh and to look after himself'

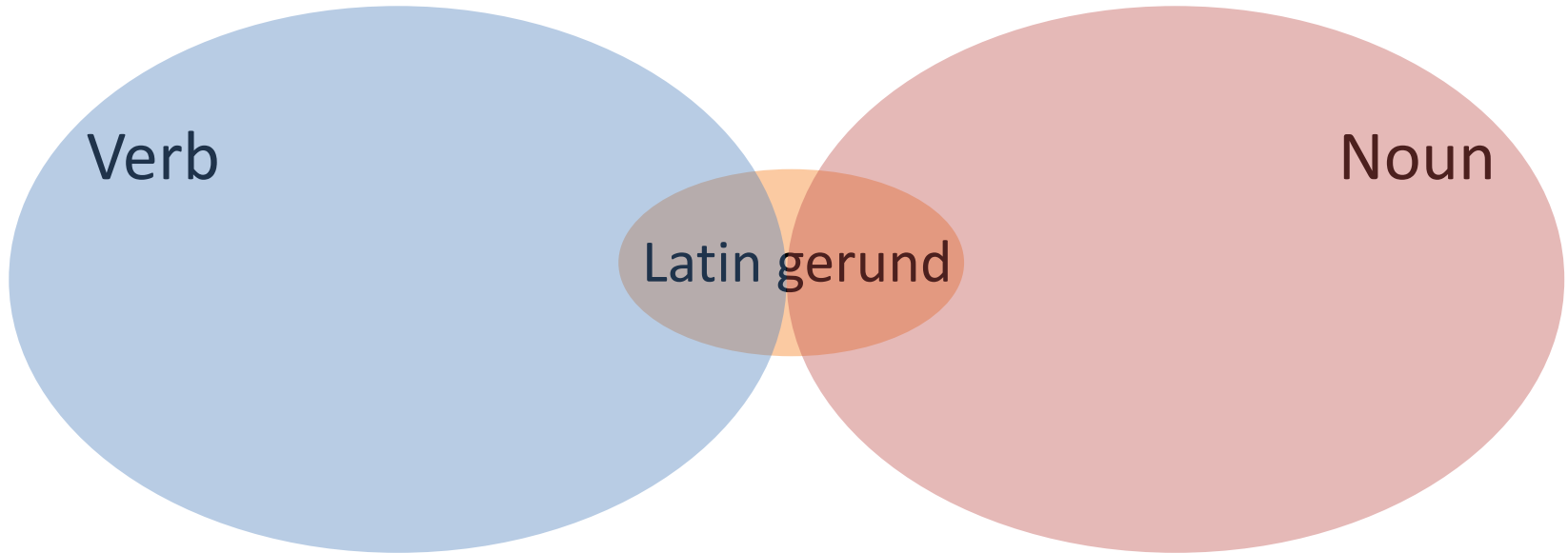


Internal syntax: verb

External syntax: noun

The Latin gerund in **synchrony**

Syntax



= Nominal gerund

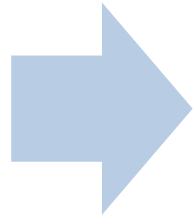
The Latin gerund in **synchrony**

Syntax

(2) *Et post dies quinque **orando** dominum emisit spiritum.*

(Passio Pimenii, 6th c.)

‘After five days, he died while he was praying to God’

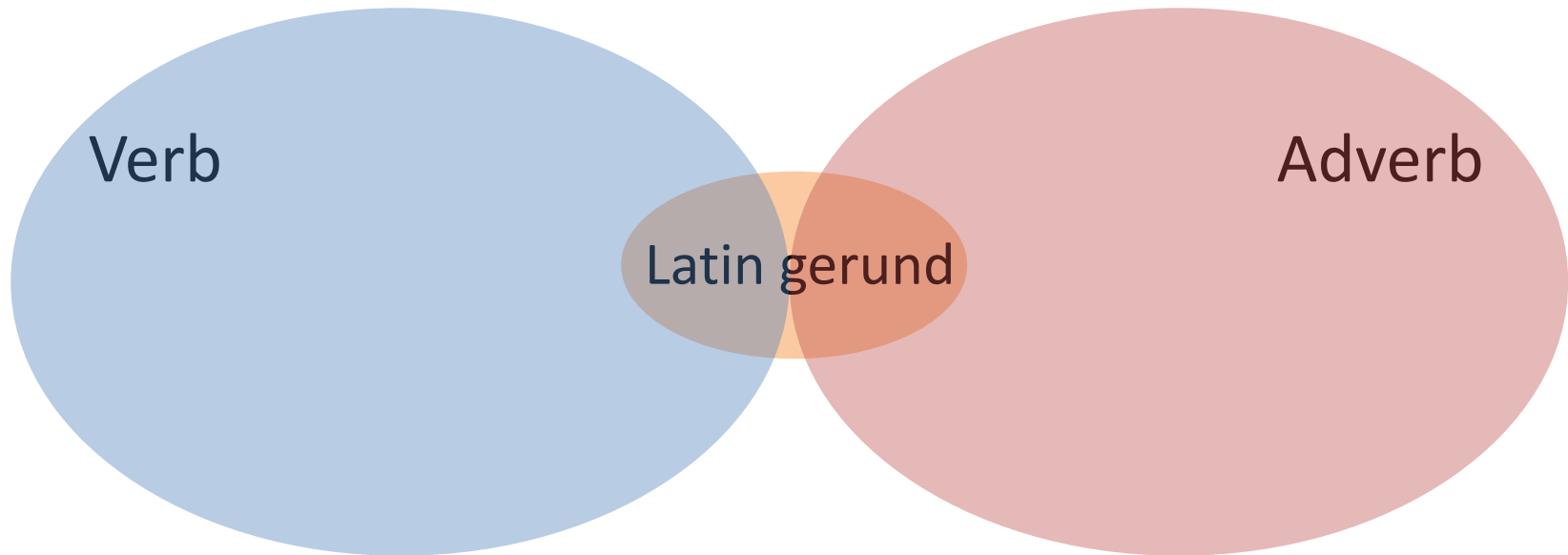


Internal syntax: verb

External syntax: adverb

The Latin gerund in **synchrony**

Syntax



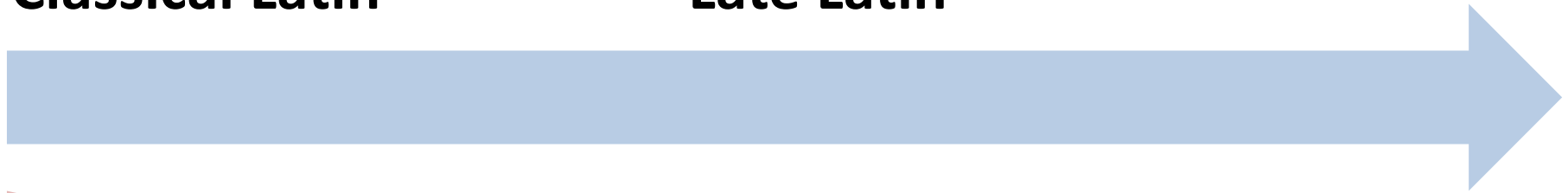
= Adverbial gerund

The gerund in **diachrony**

**Republican/
Classical Latin**

**Imperial/
Late Latin**

Romance



Nominal gerund

Adverbial gerund

(Kühner & Stegmann 1914, Elcock 1960, Palmer 1964, Väänänen 1981, Haspelmath 1995)

Research questions

1. Does the evolution of the external syntax of the gerund consist of:
 - the loss of the nominal gerund in Late Latin?
 - the expansion of the adverbial gerund in Late Latin?
2. What is the driving force behind the categorial shift from the nominal gerund to the adverbial gerund?

Corpus

75 texts between the 4th and the 10th c. AD (Appendix 1)

Database: BFM (*Base de français médiéval*)

- Corpus BL2LAT
- Corpus PALAFRALAT-V2-0

Data

Century	# of gerunds
4 th	39
5 th	9
6 th	216
7 th	340
8 th	25
9 th	47
10 th	7
Total	683

Basic assumption

Morphosyntactic categories can be defined on the basis of distributional properties (Aarts 2007)

I read a book.

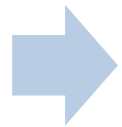
buy

give

**apple*

**gerund*

**Budapest*



The morphosyntactic categorization of the gerund can be determined on the basis of its external syntax

Nominal gerund

Patterns like a prototypical noun

Syntactic function	Example		
Modifier of a noun	<i>Tempus</i>	<i>seminandi.</i> <i>anni.</i>	
Complement of a verb	<i>Animam</i>	<i>ad scribendum</i> <i>ad philosophiam</i>	<i>appuli.</i>
Complement of an adjective	<i>Avidus</i>	<i>regnandi.</i> <i>cibi.</i>	

(Appendix 2)

Adverbial gerund

Patterns like a prototypical adverb

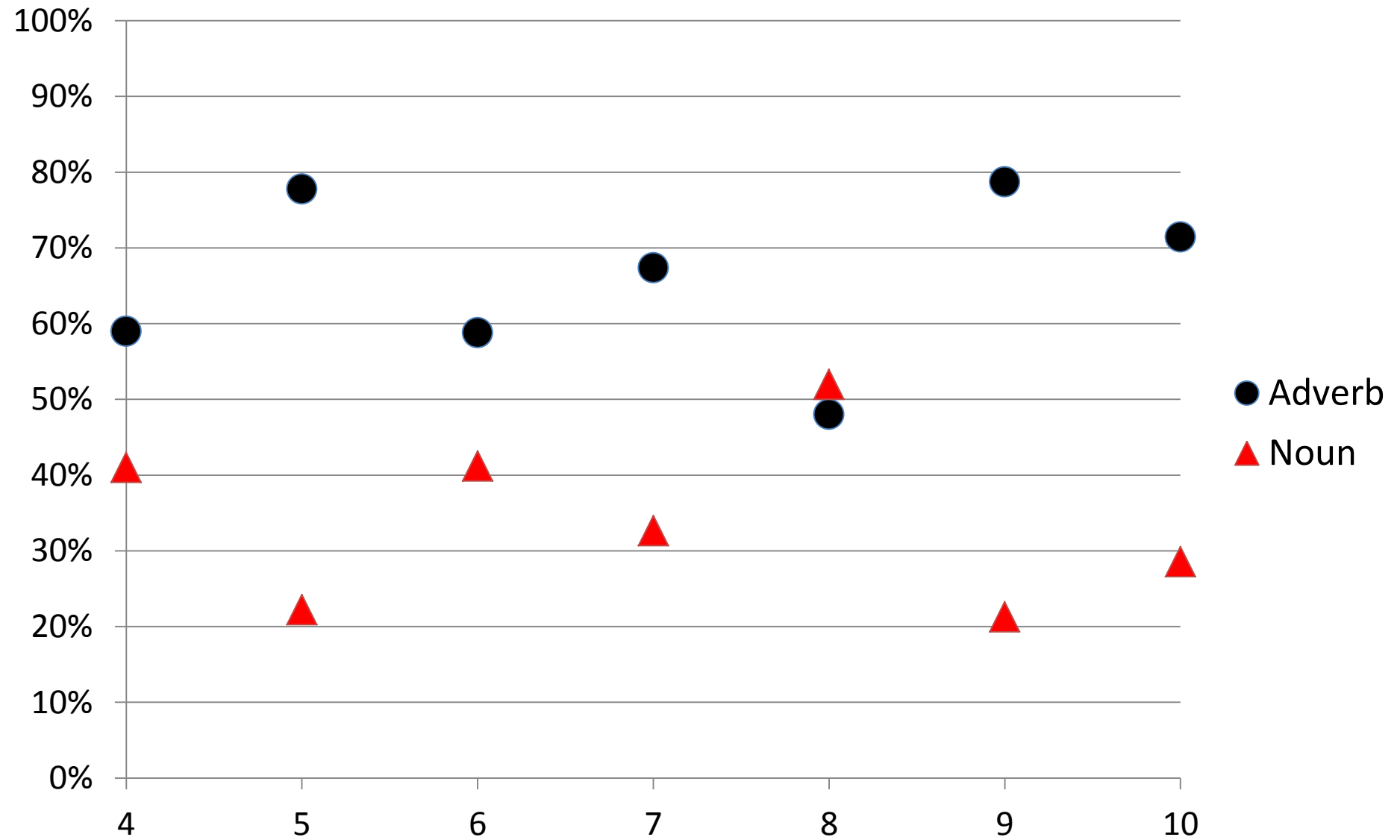
Syntactic function	Example
Adjunct	<i>Palpare mulcendo. dulciter.</i>

(Appendix 3)

Results

Century	Noun	Adverb
4 th	16	23
5 th	2	7
6 th	89	127
7 th	111	229
8 th	13	12
9 th	10	37
10 th	2	5
Total	243	440

Results




A typology of non-finite verb forms

Type of non-finite verb form	INFINITIVE	ACTION NOMINAL	PARTICIPLE	CONVERB
Category 1	Verb			
Category 2	Noun		Adjective	Adverb
Latin gerund	Nominal gerund			Adverbial gerund

Converbalization

Type of non-finite verb form	INFINITIVE	ACTION NOMINAL	PARTICIPLE	CONVERB
Category 1	Verb			
Category 2	Noun		Adjective	Adverb
Latin gerund	Nominal gerund			Adverbial gerund



(Haspelmath 1995, Nedjalkov 1995, Ylikoski 2003)

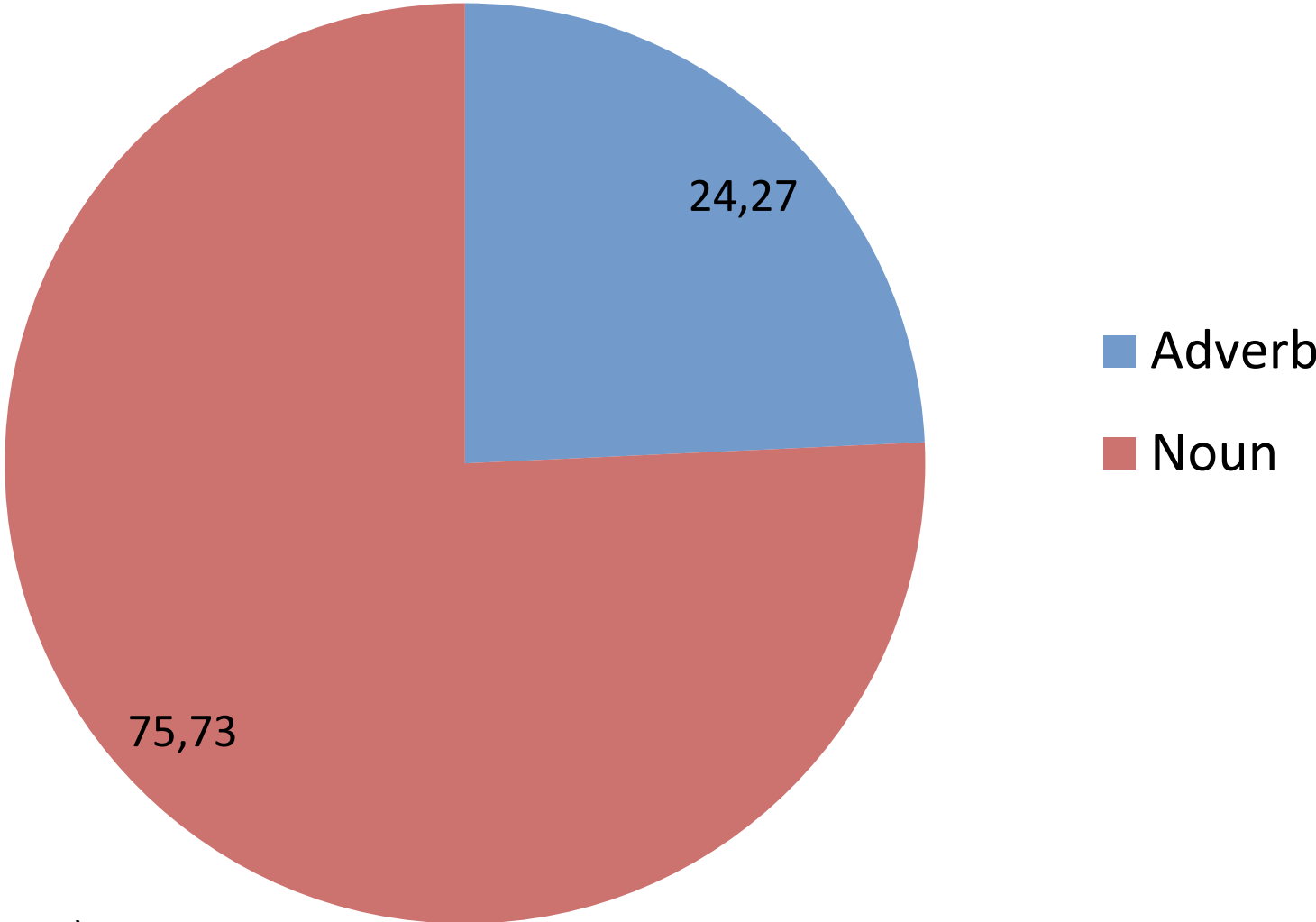
Converbalization

1. Does the evolution of the external syntax of the gerund consist of:
 - the loss of the nominal gerund in Late Latin?
 - the expansion of the adverbial gerund in Late Latin?

Yes, but in a much more nuanced way than has been traditionally assumed.

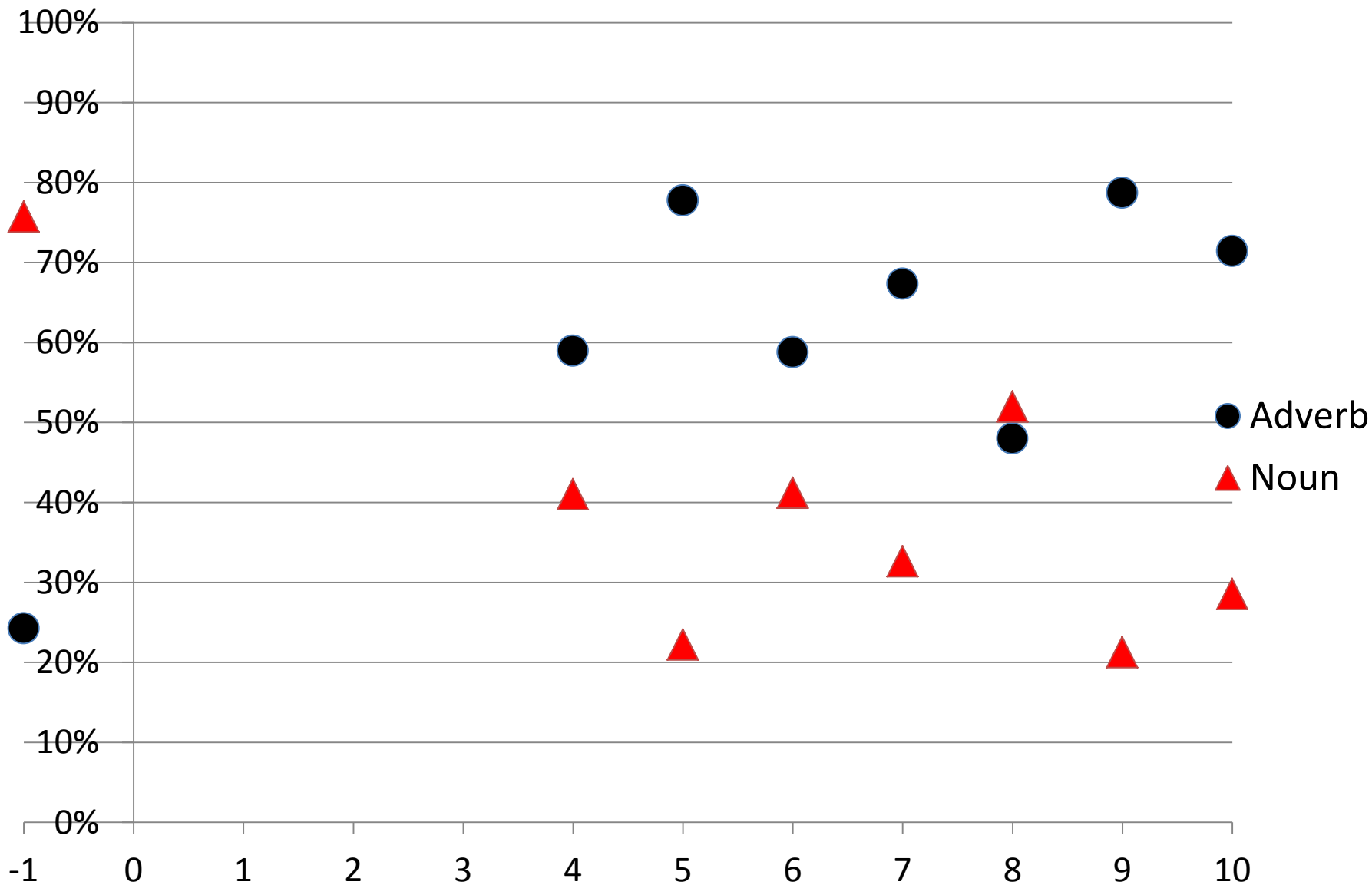
- The nominal gerund decreases in frequency, but remains relatively frequent until very Late Latin.
- The adverbial gerund is dominant as soon as 4th c., but its dominance does not increase with the expected ratio.

Comparison with Classical Latin



(Vangaever 2018)

Taking into account Classical Latin



Motivation?

2. What is the driving force behind the categorial shift from the nominal gerund to the adverbial gerund?

Functional competition?

No. The nominal and the adverbial gerund have a different functional and morphosyntactic profile, so the nominal gerund cannot be ousted by the adverbial gerund on the basis of a functional competition.

Hypothesis

The converbalization of the gerund results from the gradual loss of the nominal gerund due to the expansion of the infinitive:

Lat. *avidus regnandi* > Fr. *avide de régner*

Lat. *ars legendi* > Fr. *l'art de lire*
It. *l'arte di leggere*
Esp. *el arte de leer*

Implication

The converbialization of the gerund is mainly a passive process:

- The nominal gerund is gradually replaced by the infinitive.
- In order for the gerund to converbialize, it was sufficient for the adverbial gerund to remain stable on the diachronic axis while the infinitive gradually replaced the nominal gerund.



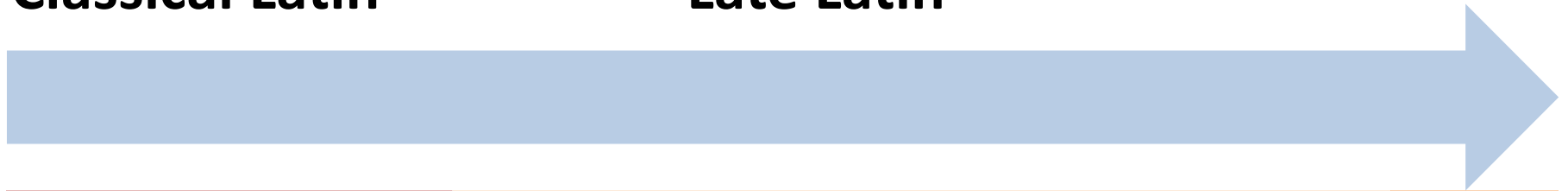
The battle has been fought by the infinitive, not by the adverbial gerund.

Hypothesis

**Republican/
Classical Latin**

**Imperial/
Late Latin**

Romance



Nominal gerund

Infinitive

Adverbial gerund

Adverbial gerund

Conclusion

In the transition from Latin to Romance, the gerund gradually specializes as a converb.

This process is triggered by the loss of the nominal gerund rather than by the expansion of the adverbial gerund.

Conclusion

The loss of the nominal gerund takes place in Romance and is mainly caused by the expansion of the infinitive, in particular the emergence of the prepositional infinitive, which takes part in at least three linguistic shifts:

1. The shift from predominantly synthetic structures in Latin (*ars legendi*) to predominantly analytic ones (*l'art de lire*) in Romance (Schulte 2007, Carlier & Combettes 2015).
2. The shift from suffixal inflection to **pre**posed morphemes to mark syntactic dependencies (Carlier & Combettes 2015).

Conclusion

3. Morphosyntactic specialization (Carlier & Combettes) or the tendency of language to optimize isomorphism through competition (Fonteyn 2016).

	Republican/ Classical Latin	Imperial/ Late Latin	Romance
Nominal functions	Gerund		Infinitive
	Infinitive		
Adverbial functions	Gerund		

Implication: typological alignment

Type of non-finite verb form	INFINITIVE		CONVERB
Category 1	Verb		
Category 2	Noun		Adverb
Latin	Nominal gerund	Infinitive	Adverbial gerund
Romance	Infinitive		Gerund

From Latin to Romance, the infinitive behaves more and more like its corresponding cross-linguistic category, while the gerund develops into a new category which is in a one-to-one correspondance with the cross-linguistic category of the CONVERB.

References

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Thank you for your attention!

Appendix 1. Corpus

Century	Text	Domain	N° of gerunds
4	<i>Itinerarium Egeriae</i>	Religious	20
	<i>Vita sancti Martini episcopi et confessoris</i>	Religious	19
5	<i>Epistula domni Remedii episcopi ad domum Chlodoveum regem</i>	Historical	3
	<i>Passio Agathae</i>	Religious	2
	<i>Passio Saturnini</i>	Religious	4
6	<i>Ad patriarcham Constantinopolitanum</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Dialogues (Isid.)</i>	Religious	57
	<i>Epistula</i>	Historical	4
	<i>Epistula Caesarii ad Richildem et Radegundem</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula domni Aureliani episcopi ad domnum Theodebertum regem</i>	Historical	2
	<i>Epistula domni Mapini episcopi ad domnum Nicetium episcopum</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula domni Nicetii episcopi ad Hlodosuindam reginam</i>	Historical	1

Appendix 1. Corpus

Century	Text	Domain	N° of gerunds
6	<i>Epistula domni Nicetii episcopi ad Iustinianum imperatorem</i>	Historical	2
	<i>Epistula Germani episcopi ad domnam Brunehildam reginam</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula Gogonis ad Petrum papam</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula Hildiberti regis Theodorom magistro</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula Pelagii I. ad Sapaudum Arelatensis episcopum</i>	Historical	2
	<i>Epistula Pelagii I. ad Valerianum patricium</i>	Historical	3
	<i>Epistula Pelagii II. ad Aunarium episcopum Autissiodorensis</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula Romani ad Hildibertum regem</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Formulae Andecavenses</i>	Juridical	29
	<i>Historiarum liber sextus (Greg. Tur.)</i>	Historical	15
	<i>Item ad imperatorem epistula</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Item epistula imperatoris ad Hildibertum regem</i>	Historical	7

Appendix 1. Corpus

Century	Text	Domain	N° of gerunds
6	<i>Pactus legis Salicae</i>	Juridical	2
	<i>Passio Caeciliae</i>	Religious	19
	<i>Passio Marcelli et Apulei</i>	Religious	3
	<i>Passio Pimenii</i>	Religious	8
	<i>Passio Processi et Martiniani</i>	Religious	1
	<i>Passio Symphorosae</i>	Religious	5
	<i>Passio Vincentii</i>	Religious	1
	<i>Vita Benedicti</i>	Religious	33
	<i>Vita Genovefae virginis Parisiensis</i>	Religious	13
7	<i>Charte mérovingienne 121</i>	Juridical	1
	<i>Charte mérovingienne 122</i>	Juridical	1
	<i>Charte mérovingienne 123</i>	Juridical	2
	<i>Charte mérovingienne 136</i>	Juridical	2
	<i>Charte mérovingienne 142</i>	Juridical	3

Appendix 1. Corpus

Century	Text	Domain	N° of gerunds
7	<i>Charte mérovingienne 144</i>	Juridical	7
	<i>Charte mérovingienne 147</i>	Juridical	4
	<i>Charte mérovingienne 149</i>	Juridical	2
	<i>Charte mérovingienne 32</i>	Juridical	1
	<i>Charte mérovingienne 95</i>	Juridical	1
	<i>Chronica (Fred.)</i>	Historical	93
	<i>Epistula Chrodeberti</i>	Historical	3
	<i>Epistula Constantii episcopi ad Desiderium episcopum Carducensem</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula Desiderii episcopi Cadurcensis ad Abbonem episcopum</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula Desiderii episcopi Cadurcensis ad Felicem episcopum</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula Desiderii episcopi Cadurcensis ad Salustinum episcopum</i>	Historical	1

Appendix 1. Corpus

Century	Text	Domain	N° of gerunds
7	<i>Epistula Desiderii episcopi Cadurcensis ad Sulpicium episcopum</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula Elegii episcopi ad Desiderium episcopum Carducensem</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Epistula episcopi</i>	Historical	4
	<i>Epistula Galli episcopi ad Desiderium episcopum Carducensem</i>	Historical	2
	<i>Epistula Leodegarii ad Sigradem matrem suam</i>	Historical	4
	<i>Formulae Marculfi</i>	Juridical	121
	<i>Passio Viti 1</i>	Religious	4
	<i>Passio Viti 2</i>	Religious	1
	<i>Passio Viti 3</i>	Religious	8
	<i>Epistula Bonifatii IV. episcopi ad Florianum Arelatensem episcopum</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Vita Eligii episcopi Noviomagensis</i>	Religious	56
	<i>Vita Galli Vetustissima</i>	Religious	1

Appendix 1. Corpus

Century	Text	Domain	N° of gerunds
7	<i>Vita Sulpicii episcopi Biturigi (A)</i>	Religious	1
	<i>Vita Sulpicii episcopi Biturigi (B)</i>	Religious	2
	<i>Vita virtutesque Fursei abbatis Latiniacensis et de Fulano additamentum Nivialense</i>	Religious	9
8	<i>Adelphii Abbatum Habendensis</i>	Religious	2
	<i>Charte des Arnulfiens 22</i>	Juridical	2
	<i>Charte mérovingienne 166</i>	Juridical	5
	<i>Epistula Zachariae papae ad omnes Francorum episcopos et presbyteros</i>	Historical	1
	<i>Passio Columbae</i>	Religious	15
9	<i>Passio Benedictae</i>	Religious	9
	<i>Vita Galli auctore Wettino cum prologo metrico ad Gozbertum</i>	Religious	28
	<i>Vita Waldedrudis</i>	Religious	10

Appendix 1. Corpus

Century	Text	Domain	N° of gerunds
10	<i>Passio sancti Eustachii</i>	Religious	1
	<i>Vita Madelbertae</i>	Religious	4
	<i>Vita Walberti</i>	Religious	2

Appendix 2a. Modifier of a noun

Accusative

(1) *Qualis tibi fuit **ad peccandum** intentio, talis **ad penitendum** sit devotio.* (Isid. *Dial.*, 6th c.)

‘such as was your intention to sin, may so be your devotion to do penance’

Genitive

(2) [...] *ego primus occasionem **peccandi** amplexus sum [...].*
(Isid., *Dial.*, 6th c.)

‘I was the first to seize the opportunity to sin’

Appendix 2a. Modifier of a noun

Ablative

(3) [...] *ut nec in veniendo sit tarditas.* (*Ep. austr.* 48, 6th c.)

‘so that there is no delay in coming’

Appendix 2b. Complement of an adjective

Accusative

(4) [...] *nec iam tremula **ad scribendum** manus est apta [...].*
(*Formulae Marculfi*, 7th c.)

‘nor is my shaking hand suitable to write’

Genitive

(5) [...] *Drogonem [...] **regnandi** avidum [...] in clericum*
attendent [...]. (Adson, *Vita Walberti*, 10th c.)

‘they shaved Drogo, who was eager to rule, a priest’

Appendix 2c. Complement of a verb

Accusative

(6) *Ego enim cum primum animum **ad scribendum** appuli [...].*
(Sulp. Sev., *Vita Martini*, 4th c.)

‘When I first applied my mind to write (the following)’

Ablative

(7) *Itaque non destitit episcopus **commonendo** et optimates*
[...]. (*Vita Eligii*, 7th c.)

‘He did not stop reminding the bishop and the optimates’

Appendix 3. Adjunct

Accusative

(8) [...] *altarium [...] quem posuit ipse sanctus Helias **ad offerendum** Deo [...].* (*Itin.*, 4th c.)

‘the altar which saint Elias built in order to sacrifice to God’

Genitive

(9) [...] *congregavit concilium sacerdotum causa **conpescendi**, immo **delendi** huius doctatis pravitatem.* (*Vita Eligii*, 7th c.)

‘he gathered a council of priests to restrain - or even to destroy - this depraved doctrine’

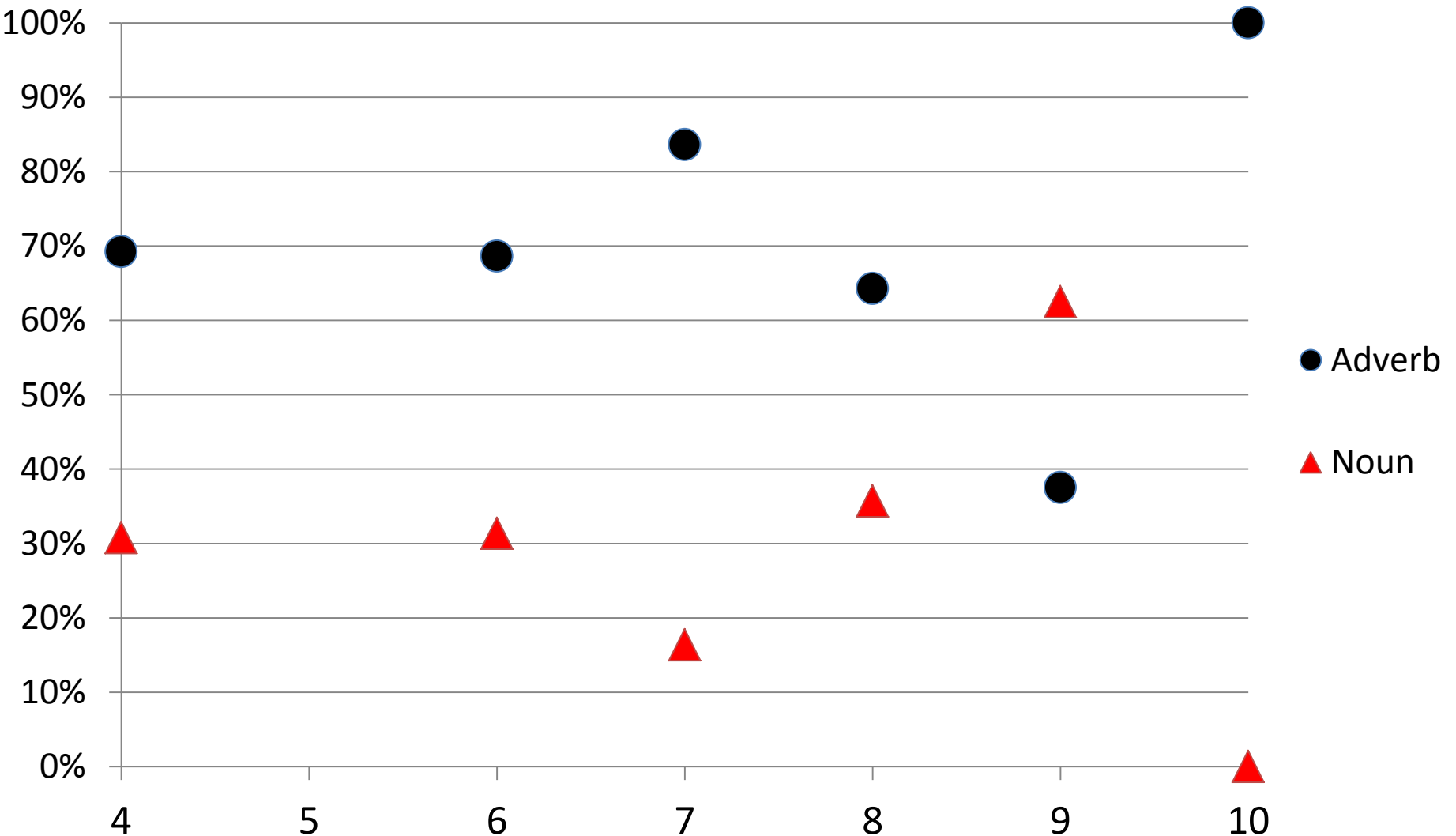
Appendix 3. Adjunct

Ablative

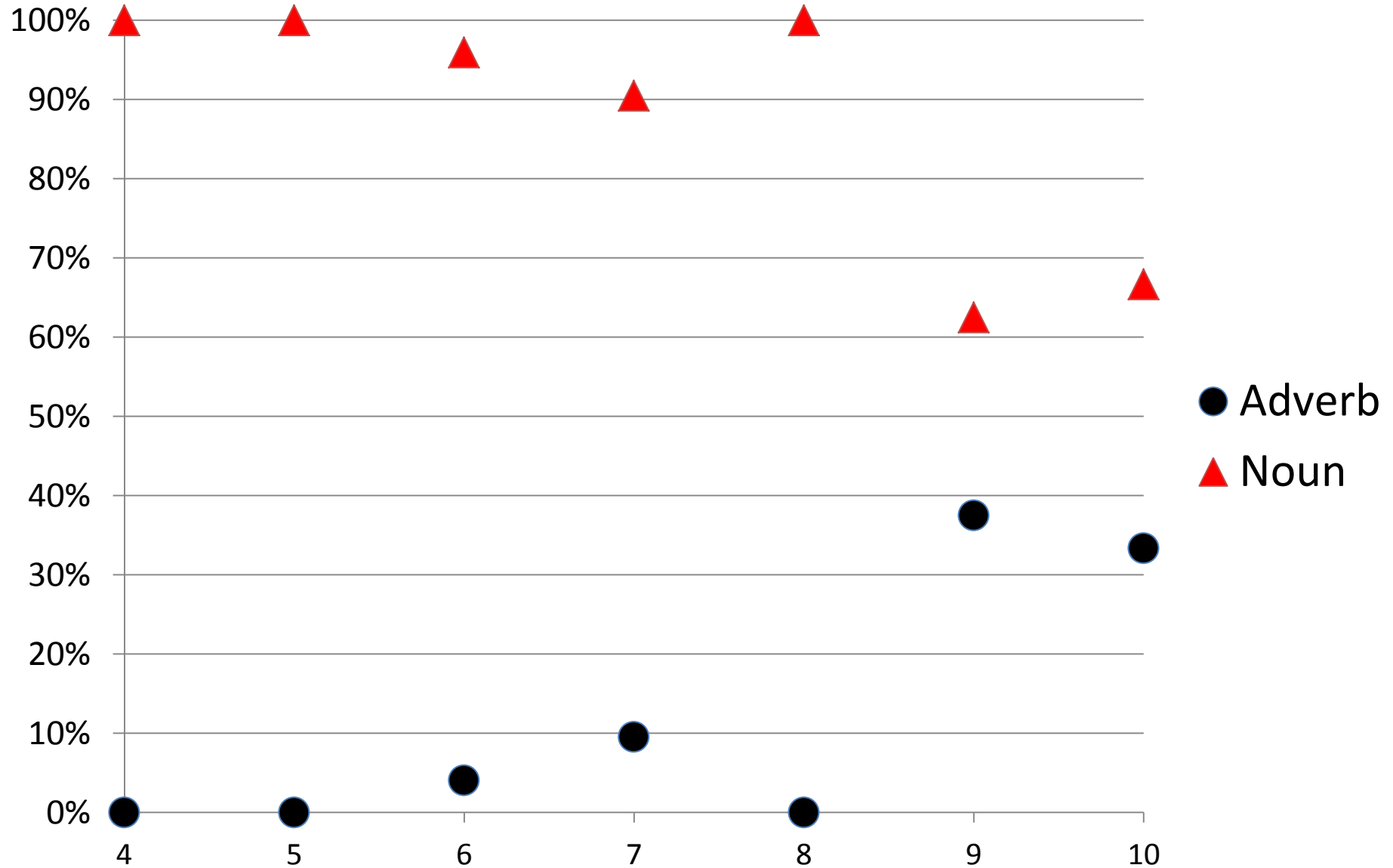
(10) *Mitte manum tuam et **tangendo** disce saxum hoc esse si **videndo** non nosti.* (*Passio Caeciliae*, 6th c.)

‘Extend your hand and learn that this is a rock by touching it if you don’t know it is a rock by looking at it’

Appendix 4a. Accusative (n=259)



Appendix 4b. Genitive (n=191)



Appendix 4c. Ablative (n=243)

