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Syncretism and metamorphemes in the diachrony of Lemosin varieties

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Abstract

By detailed comparative study of data from historical and descriptive grammars, this chapter traces the source of pervasive syncretism patterns in Occitan varieties of the Limousin region (‘Lemosin varieties’). The majority of these patterns are shown to result from regular sound change causing mergers of previously distinct forms; subsequently, speakers are able to infer a morphological generalisation that the forms realising a given pair of cells are identical, and exploit the patterns as productive templates for morphological analogy. The behaviour of these patterns, and their interaction with established ‘metamorphemes’ (abstract templates for the paradigmatic distribution of inflectional exponents), is captured by treating the rise of syncretism as an example of ordinary change to metamorphemes, in which paradigm cells are reassigned from one metamorphomic template to another: this approach facilitates principled predictions about the susceptibility of metamorphemes to change in diachrony.

Keywords

autonomous morphology
morphemes
syncretism
Occitan
verb inflection
historical linguistics
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Author

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1 Introduction

This study explores the origin and behaviour of syncretism patterns (i.e. patterns in which ‘two or more distinct morphosyntactic values are collapsed in a single inflected word form’, Baerman 2007:539) in the verb paradigm of northern Occitan varieties spoken in the Limousin region of central France (henceforth ‘Lemosin varieties’).¹² In Lemosin varieties, syncretism is overall more prevalent than in southern Occitan varieties, and can be found between person/number forms within a single TAM (tense, aspect, mood) category, as well as between forms realizing different TAM categories (§2).

On the basis of a comparative study of data from modern Lemosin varieties and historical grammars, the majority of syncretism patterns in these varieties are shown to result from regular sound change causing mergers of previously distinct inflexional forms (§3).

The syncretism patterns are also observed to share key characteristics with the structures termed ‘metamorphemes’ (Round 2015; for Romance examples and discussion see e.g. Maiden 2009a, 2016a, 2016b, 2018a).³ Metamorphemes are a phenomenon of ‘autonomous morphology’ (Aronoff 1994); they can be characterized as groupings of paradigm cells which share inflexional exponents, as bundles of implicational relationships between paradigm cells, and as recurrent patterns of paradigmatic distribution of inflexional exponents. Such patterns may align partially, entirely or not at all with phonological or syntactic/semantic natural classes (Smith 2013). Two significant properties of metamorphemes are their systematicity (the same distributional pattern is found across multiple lexemes), and their productivity as templates for morphological analogy affecting inflexional exponents. As both these properties are shared by syncretism patterns in Lemosin varieties, and the interaction of the syncretism patterns with established metamorphemes parallels interaction between established metamorphemes, this study proposes that the behaviour of the syncretism patterns is most accurately captured by treating them as metamorphemes (§4).

2 Syncretism patterns in the north Lemosin variety of Gartempe (Creuse)

Some impression of the patterns observed in Lemosin may be gained from the examples reproduced below, taken from Quint’s (1996) descriptive grammar of the variety of Gartempe (Creuse), a village situated in the northern part of the Lemosin dialect area, within what is called the ‘Croissant linguistique’, a transitional area between *oc* and *oil* varieties (Brun-Trigaud 1990).

The most pervasive and systematic type of syncretism in this variety concerns person/number values, for which three patterns are found (1SG=3SG, 1PL=3PL, and 2SG=2PL). The variety of Gartempe also

¹ The research reported here was begun during a Junior Research Fellowship funded by St John’s College, Oxford (2013-16) and continued under the auspices of two projects overseen by the French National Research Agency: ANR-17-CE27-0001-01 (Project “The Linguistic Crescent: A Multidisciplinary Approach to a Contact Area between Oc and Oil varieties”) and ANR-10-LABX-0083 (Program “Investissements d’Avenir”, Labex EFL, Strand 3, Workpackage LC4 - “Les parlers du Croissant : une aire de contact entre oc et oil”). A version of the study was presented at the 18th International Morphology Meeting (Budapest, 10-13 May 2018) and I thank the audience there for their helpful comments. I am grateful to Xavièr Bach, Pierre-Joan Bernard, and the CIRDOC in Béziers for assistance with access to a number of publications not widely available; and to Hans-Olav Enger, Martin Maiden, and Nicolas Quint for their help in untangling various of the data and issues discussed here.

² Lemosin /lemu'zi/ is the Occitan term for the area and by extension its speech varieties.

³ Note that Maiden refers to these patterns as ‘morphemes’ throughout.

presents TAM syncretism: between the present indicative and present subjunctive for all person / number combinations in the first conjugation; between the present indicative and present subjunctive for all person / number combinations except the third person singular in the second and third conjugations, including many (though not all) irregulars; and between the imperfect indicative and conditional in a subset of third-conjugation verbs.

Table 1 shows the synthetic forms of the first-conjugation verb *chantar* ‘sing’ (Quint 1996:115f.).⁴ In five of the seven synthetic paradigm categories (present indicative, present subjunctive, imperfect indicative, imperfect subjunctive, conditional), all three patterns of person syncretism apply: 1SG=3SG, 1PL=3PL, and 2SG=2PL. In the remaining two categories, the preterite and future, only one of these patterns is found (1PL=3PL), while the other four forms are each distinct. The present indicative and present subjunctive are syncretic with each other for each person / number combination.

Table 1. *chantar* [tsã'ta] ‘sing’, Gartempe (Quint 1996:115f.)

	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV	IPF.IND	PRT	IPF.SBJV	FUT	COND
1SG	'tsãtə	'tsãtə	tsã'tavə	tsã'ti	tsã'tœsə	tsãtə'raj	tsãtə'jø
2SG	tsã'ta:	tsã'ta:	tsãta'va:	tsãtə'ta:	tsãtə'sa:	tsãtə'ra:	tsãtə'ja:
3SG	'tsãtə	'tsãtə	tsã'tavə	tsã'te	tsã'tœsə	tsãtə'rø	tsãtə'jø
1PL	tsã'tã	tsã'tã	tsãta'vã	tsãtə'tã	tsãtə'sã	tsãtə'rã	tsãtə'jã
2PL	tsã'ta:	tsã'ta:	tsãta'va:	tsãtə'te	tsãtə'sa:	tsãtə're	tsãtə'ja:
3PL	tsã'tã	tsã'tã	tsãta'vã	tsãtə'tã	tsãtə'sã	tsãtə'rã	tsãtə'jã

In first-conjugation verbs which display root allomorphy, typified by *sauvar* ‘save’ (Table 2) and *gaitar* ‘look (at)’ (Table 3), such allomorphy is distributed in line with the patterns of syncretism observed for *chantar*: the alternants [aw] and [aj] occur only in the first person singular and third person singular forms of the present indicative and present subjunctive.⁵ Observation of *sauvar* and *gaitar* demonstrates that the pairings found in Lemosin are not simply cases of identity between desinences: instead, each pair of syncretic forms involves identity between entire wordforms.

Table 2. *sauvar* [so'va] ‘save’, Gartempe (Quint 1996:118)

	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV
1SG	'sawvə	'sawvə
2SG	so'va:	so'va:
3SG	'sawvə	'sawvə
1PL	so'vã	so'vã
2PL	so'va:	so'va:
3PL	so'vã	so'vã

⁴ Note that stress is not systematically indicated in the source paradigms; for the purposes of this study, stress placement is inferred based on Quint’s (1996) description of the phonological system in the variety of Gartempe.

⁵ The forms of *gaitar* and *sauvar* given as PRS.SBJV here are labelled ‘imperfait / imperfach’ (i.e. IPF.IND) in the original source. I assume this to be a misprint: the desinences of the forms reproduced are characteristic of the PRS.SBJV in this variety, whereas [so'vavə], [ge'tavə], etc. would be expected in the IPF.IND (compare Table 1).

Table 3. *gaitar* [ge'ta] 'look (at)', Gartempe (Quint 1996:118)

	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV
1SG	'gajtə	'gajtə
2SG	ge'ta:	ge'ta:
3SG	'gajtə	'gajtə
1PL	ge'tã	ge'tã
2PL	ge'ta:	ge'ta:
3PL	ge'tã	ge'tã

While it is conventional for Occitan grammars to distinguish three⁶ conjugations, a practice followed by this study and its source materials, the inflexional desinences of the second and third classes are largely identical to each other in the Lemosin varieties under discussion. The second and third classes are instead differentiated by thematic elements: the second conjugation (e.g., *partir* 'leave', Table 4) is characterized by the theme vowel /i/ and the presence of a thematic element /is/ (Maiden 2003; Esher 2016),⁷ while the third conjugation (e.g. *vendre* 'sell', Table 5) lacks these formatives.

Table 4. *partir* [par'tir] 'leave', Gartempe (Quint 1996:121)

	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV	IPF.IND	PRT	IPF.SBJV	FUT	COND
1SG	par'tisə	par'tisə	par'tiʃə	parti'si	parti'sœsə	parti'raj	parti'jə
2SG	parti'se	parti'sa:	parti'ʃa:	partisə'te	partisə'sa:	parti'ra:	parti'ja:
3SG	par'ti	par'tisə	par'tiʃə	parti'se	parti'sœsə	parti'rø	parti'jə
1PL	parti'sã	parti'sã	parti'ʃã	partisə'tã	partisə'sã	parti'rã	parti'jã
2PL	parti'se	parti'se	parti'ʃa:	partisə'te	partisə'sa:	parti're	parti'ja:
3PL	parti'sã	parti'sã	parti'ʃã	partisə'tã	partisə'sã	parti'rã	parti'jã

Table 5. *vendre* ['vãdrə] 'sell', Gartempe (Quint 1996:123)

	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV	IPF.IND	PRT	IPF.SBJV	FUT	COND
1SG	'vãdə	'vãdə	'vãdjə	vã'di	vã'dœsə	vã'draj	vã'djə
2SG	vã'de	vã'da:	vã'dja:	vãdə'te	vãdə'sa:	vã'dra:	vã'dja:
3SG	vã	'vãdə	'vãdjə	vã'de	vã'dœsə	vã'drø	vã'djə
1PL	vã'dã	vã'dã	vã'djã	vãdə'tã	vãdə'sã	vã'drã	vã'djã
2PL	vã'de	vã'de	vã'dja:	vãdə'te	vãdə'sa:	vã'dre	vã'dja:
3PL	vã'dã	vã'dã	vã'djã	vãdə'tã	vãdə'sã	vã'drã	vã'djã

⁶ These are respectively the continuants of Latin conjugations I (thematic vowel A), IV (thematic vowel I) and III (short thematic vowel); modern Occitan varieties do not continue Latin conjugation II, members of which were assimilated to III. Note that several authors, including Ronjat (1937) number the continuants of IV 'third conjugation' and the continuants of III 'second conjugation', as is conventional for Catalan; this study and its source material number the continuants of IV 'second conjugation', as is conventional for French. See also Maiden (2018a:38f.).

⁷ In the variety of Gartempe, original [is] in the imperfect indicative of second-conjugation verbs has developed to [iʃ] as a result of assimilation: *partisjam > [partiʃã].

Although certain of the desinences and inflexional formatives in the second- and third-conjugation paradigms differ from those in the first conjugation, the patterns of person syncretism observed are almost identical. In all conjugations, the present subjunctive, imperfect indicative, imperfect subjunctive and conditional present the patterns 1SG=3SG, 2SG=2PL and 1PL=3PL, while the future presents a single pattern, 1PL=3PL. The only differences concern the present indicative and preterite, which both present two patterns in non-first-conjugation verbs, 1PL=3PL and 2SG=2PL.

TAM syncretism between the present indicative and present subjunctive in the second and third conjugations (as well as for the many irregular verbs which do not present a distinctive stem in the present subjunctive) applies only in the first person singular and in the plural. In regular third-conjugation verbs, such as *vendre* ‘sell’ (Table 5), an additional pattern of TAM syncretism, between the imperfect indicative and the conditional, occurs in the second person singular and all plural forms.

3 The origin of the syncretism patterns

Almost all cases of syncretism in the regular verbs shown above are the expected result of regular sound changes, in particular the loss of final consonants, and the attraction of stress to the resulting long and nasal vowels. Thus, in diachrony, these syncretisms result more frequently from cases of phonological merger than from analogical change involving replacement of one morphological form by another. Mediaeval Occitan forms in this section are taken from Skårup (1997) unless otherwise indicated.

3.1 Person syncretism: 1PL=3PL

1PL=3PL is the syncretism most widely found in Lemosin varieties. This syncretism is found systematically across all TAM categories and conjugational classes in the variety of Sanilhac, excepting the future (Marshall 1984:48); across all TAM categories and conjugational classes in the variety of Nontron (Reydy 2008:100-09; with the possible exception of the imperfect subjunctive, for which no forms are given); and among the many variant forms given by Lavalade (1987) for the Lemosin dialect area in general.

In the variety of Gartempe, 1PL=3PL is a case of ‘complete syncretism’ (Baerman et al. 2005:59), since it applies to all paradigms, occurring in all synthetic paradigm categories (present indicative, present subjunctive, imperfect indicative, imperfect subjunctive, conditional, preterite, future) for all conjugational classes.⁸ Furthermore, all first person plural and third person plural forms in this variety share the desinence [ã].

For first person plural forms, the desinence [ã] < -AMUS is etymological in the first-conjugation present indicative, in the second- and third-conjugation present subjunctive, and in the imperfect indicative and conditional of all conjugations: e.g., CANTAMUS > [tsã'tã] ‘sing.PRS.IND.1PL’, UENDAMUS > *vendam* > [vã'dã] ‘sell.PRS.SBJV.1PL’, CANTABAMUS > [tsãtã'vã] ‘sing.IPFV.IND.1PL’, UENDEBAMUS > *vendiam* > [vã'djã] ‘sell.IPFV.IND.1PL’, CANTARE HABEBAMUS > *cantariam* > [tsãtã'jã] ‘sing.COND.1PL’. In all these forms, the final unstressed syllable undergoes deletion (-AMUS > -am), and the vowel of the new final syllable is nasalized by regressive assimilation to the following nasal consonant. As in French (Ohalá 1989),

⁸ The only exception given in Quint’s grammar concerns the present indicative of *plaire* ‘please’: two stem variants are available to the first person plural cell, only one of which is found for the third person plural cell.

the sequence of nasalized vowel and nasal consonant ultimately develops to a nasal vowel, *-am* [am, an] > [ã]; indeed, the same process can be seen to have applied to the root of *chantar* (CANT- > [tsãt]).

The root of *vendre* ‘sell’ demonstrates that the tautosyllabic sequence of front mid vowel + nasal consonant also develops to [ã]: *vendiam* > [vã'djã] (Quint 1996:13). In early Occitan the contrast between mid-high and mid-low front vowels was neutralized under nasality (Sampson 1999:141), with both [ɛn] and [en] yielding [ẽn]. Subsequently, in the variety of Gartempe, [ẽ] has lowered to [ã]; this development resembles that found in the history of French, where [ẽ] lowers and merges with [æ̃] < [ã] (Sampson 1999:68-70). The regular development of [en] to [ã] explains the presence of the desinence [ã] in the first-conjugation present subjunctive, e.g. CANTEMUS > *cantem* > [tsã'tã] ‘sing.PRS.SBJV.1PL’ and in the future of all lexemes, e.g., CANTARE HABEMUS > [tsãtə'rã] ‘sing.FUT.1PL’. For the imperfect subjunctive, while the development CANTAUISSEM > *cantessem* > [tsãtəsã] would be expected, textual evidence shows that the etymological *-e-* of the desinences was typically replaced in mediaeval Lemosin by *-a-*; thus [tsãtə'sã] is more likely to continue analogical *chantessam* than etymological *chantessem* (Chabaneau 1876:283; Ronjat 1937:196).

The preterite has undergone significant analogical remodelling, in which the third person singular form is taken as a stem for the second person singular form and the plural forms (Ronjat 1937:193; Bybee and Brewer 1980).⁹ The final vowel [ã] may continue etymological *-am* and *-em* in the first and third conjugations respectively, but in the second conjugation must be due to analogical extension of either *-am* or *-em* (compare modern [partisətã] ‘leave.PRT.1PL’ with its mediaeval equivalent *partim*).

For third person plural forms, final [t] is lost (Ronjat 1932:266) and the resulting final sequence V+[n] develops to a nasal vowel, e.g. CANTANT > *cantan* > [tsã'tã] ‘sing.PRS.IND.3PL’. Given comparative and diachronic evidence for Occitan, stress in third person plural forms of the present indicative and present subjunctive would be expected to fall on the penult, and it continues to do so in the variety of Sanilhac (Marshall 1984:48), as well as in some of the data cited by Javanaud (1981:68). A significant feature of Lemosin varieties is the presence of distinctive vowel quantity, to which stress assignment is sensitive (Javanaud 1981; Lavalade 1986). As nasal vowels count as long (or half-long, Javanaud 1981:68), they can attract stress:¹⁰ in the varieties of Nontron (Reydy 2008:117;119) and Montembœuf (Dourdet 2015:256), as in that of Gartempe, stress systematically falls on the final (always nasal) vowel of third person plural forms. Stressed [ã] in Gartempe is thus the expected reflex of stressed and unstressed [an] and [en], e.g., CANTENT > [tsã'tã] ‘sing.PRS.SBJV.3PL’, UENDANT > [vã'dã] ‘sell.PRS.SBJV.3PL’, CANTABANT > [tsãtã'vã] ‘sing.IPF.IND.3PL’, UENDEBANT > [vã'djã] ‘sell.IPF.IND.3PL’, CANTARE HABENT > [tsãtə'rã] ‘sing.FUT.3PL’, CANTARE HABEBANT > [tsãtə'jã] ‘sing.COND.3PL’.¹¹

⁹ According to Quint (1996:105), the element [ət] is the regular reflex of Latin *-IST-* in the second person singular and second person plural perfect, e.g., CANTAUISTI > *cantetas* ‘sing.PRT.2SG’. Although this reconstruction is plausible from a phonological point of view, it is not supported by the textual evidence: Chabaneau (1876:278), in a survey of fourteenth to sixteenth century texts from the Limousin area, finds only what he terms ‘classical’ preterite forms (i.e. without *-et-* or its more common equivalent *-er-*), while the earliest attestations which he notes for preterites in *-et-* are from seventeenth-century carols in the Auvergne region.

¹⁰ Note also that where the penult and final syllable are of equal length (as here), stress falls on the final syllable (Javanaud 1981:53).

¹¹ The desinences [an]/[en], etymological in these examples, were further extended by morphological analogy: the reflex of etymological *-UNT* in non-first-conjugation third person plural present indicative forms was replaced in early Romance by the reflex of *-ENT* (Maiden 2009a:48), yielding [en] > [ã]; in the preterite, [ã] results from analogical

Final stress in third person plural forms also has consequences for stem distribution, which, in the present indicative and present subjunctive, is correlated with stress placement (see Tables 2 and 3): the alternants [aw], [aj] occur only in stressed roots. In most Occitan varieties, a stressed root, and thus a distinctive alternant in relevant lexemes, would be expected in the third person plural forms of the present indicative and present subjunctive forms. By contrast, in the variety of Gartempe,¹² primary stress in these forms has shifted to the desinence due to the long, nasalized vowel in the final syllable; since a diphthong would not be licit in an unstressed syllable (Quint 1996:30;119), the shift of stress is accompanied by a change in stem vowel, replacing the alternants [aw], [aj] with their unstressed counterparts [o], [e] respectively.

In summary, the systematic syncretism of desinences, stress pattern, and (where relevant) stem alternants between first person plural and third person plural forms in regular verbs, across all tenses and all conjugations, is almost entirely attributable to regular sound change, the only exception being the preterite, where some analogical extension of desinences is found.

3.2 Person syncretism: 2SG=2PL

In the variety of Gartempe, the syncretism pattern 2SG=2PL occurs systematically in the present indicative, present subjunctive, imperfect indicative, imperfect subjunctive and conditional of first-conjugation verbs; and in the present indicative, imperfect indicative, preterite, imperfect subjunctive, and conditional of non-first-conjugation verbs. Similar distributions are found in other Lemosin varieties (e.g., Marshall 1984:48; Reydy 2008:100-09).

The syncretism of second person singular and second person plural forms in the present indicative of the first conjugation results from regular sound change. In the second person plural, the final unstressed vowel falls (e.g., CANTATIS > *cantatz* ‘sing.PRS.IND.2PL’), the resulting sequence [ts] reduces to [s], and the final [s] falls with compensatory lengthening (Ronjat 1932:275, 283-284; compare the similar development in French, Pope 1934:206f.; De Chene and Anderson 1979:520f.; Kavitskaya 2017), giving *chantâ* with a long,¹³ stressed final vowel (Chabaneau 1876:233). In the second person singular, final [s] also falls with compensatory lengthening (Ronjat 1932:275), e.g., CANTAS > *cantas* > *chantâ* with a long, originally unstressed final vowel (Chabaneau 1876:233). As long vowels attract stress in Lemosin varieties (Chabaneau 1876:9; Javanaud 1981:53), primary stress in the second person singular form shifts from the root to the final syllable, resulting in syncretism with the second person plural form.

The issue of stem vowel quality in the present indicative and present subjunctive, discussed above for 1PL=3PL, is equally relevant for the syncretism of second person forms. Most varieties of Occitan present a contrast between root-stressed second person singular forms and non-root-stressed second person plural forms, correlated with stem alternation. In Lemosin varieties such as that of Gartempe, the shift of

extension of *-an* and/or *-en* (Ronjat 1937:179); and in the imperfect subjunctive, [ã] continues analogical *-an*, as described above for the first person plural form.

¹² And in some other Lemosin varieties, though not all: see, e.g., Javanaud (1981:68), Marshall (1984:48).

¹³ This form, like others from the same work, is given according to Chabaneau’s original (somewhat idiosyncratic) transcription. In Chabaneau’s system (1876:6), a circumflex is used to indicate a long stressed vowel, a macron to indicate a long unstressed vowel, and an acute accent to indicate a short stressed vowel.

stress in the second person singular forms is accompanied by the replacement of the original rhizotonic stem alternants (here [aw], [aj]) with their arrhizotonic counterparts (here [o], [e] respectively).

In the imperfect indicative, conditional, and imperfect subjunctive, the syncretism 2SG=2PL can be attributed to the same processes of deletion and compensatory lengthening, albeit applying to non-etymological desinences 2SG *-ssas*, 2PL *-ssatz* in the case of the imperfect subjunctive (Chabaneau 1876:283; Ronjat 1937:196).

In the preterite, all second person singular and second person plural forms present the element *-et-* extended by analogy from the third person singular form. Non-first-conjugation second person singular and second person plural forms, and first-conjugation second person plural forms, all share the desinence [e]. This desinence continues mediaeval Occitan third-conjugation preterite desinences with theme vowel *-e-* (Ronjat 1937:177), which have been generalized across conjugations in most varieties of Occitan. Through the loss of final [t] and [s], without compensatory lengthening, 2SG *-es* and 2PL *-etz* fall together as [e], as happens in non-first-conjugation present indicative forms. In first conjugation verbs, second person singular preterite forms present the desinence [a:], which is most plausibly due to analogy from other TAM categories, as the desinence [a:] is shared by all second person singular forms in the first conjugation.

In the present subjunctive, regular sound change would ordinarily produce syncretism between second person singular and second person plural forms in all conjugations: one would expect e.g. CANTES, CANTETIS > 'kântes, kân'tes > *chantei* (Chabaneau 1876:274; Ronjat 1932:275) in the first conjugation, and forms in *-ā* or *-â* (as for the first-conjugation present indicative) in the other conjugations (Chabaneau 1876:235). However, the observed forms frequently present inflexional desinences originally characteristic either of a different conjugation or of the present indicative. For example, the variants attested by Chabaneau for the present subjunctive forms of second- and third-conjugation verbs include 2SG *-ei*, and 2PL *-ê* or *-ei* (1876:238-239, 244, 249) – the desinences expected for the first-conjugation present subjunctive – while Ronjat (1937:165) finds analogical second person singular and second person plural first-conjugation present subjunctive forms in *-ā* in the area of Périgueux. In the modern variety of Gartempe, there is syncretism between present indicative and present subjunctive forms in all six person / number combinations for first-conjugation verbs (Table 1), and in four person / number combinations for non-first-conjugation verbs (Tables 4 and 5). Thus, while the expected outcome, 2SG=2PL syncretism, is consistently found, the forms instantiating this relationship are commonly subject to analogical redistribution, which may involve TAM syncretism (§3.5) as well as person syncretism.

3.3 Person syncretism: 1SG=3SG

In the variety of Gartempe, the syncretism pattern 1SG=3SG is found, for all verbs, in the present subjunctive, imperfect indicative, imperfect subjunctive, and conditional, and, for first-conjugation verbs, in the present indicative as well.

Outside the present indicative, all such syncretism results from regular sound change in early Romance. There is no difference in stress placement or number of syllables between Latin first person singular and third person singular forms in the relevant TAM categories, nor is there a difference in vowel quality in the desinences of these forms. The only distinction is between the final consonants, which have been lost by the mediaeval period: UENDAM, UENDAT > *venda* 'sell.PRS.SBJV'; CANTABAM, CANTABAT > *cantava* 'sing.IPF.IND'; UENDEBAM, UENDEBAT > *vendia* 'sell.IPF.IND'; CANTAUISSEM, CANTAUISSET >

cantesse ‘sing.IPF.SBJV’; CANTARE HABEBAM, CANTARE HABEBAT > *cantaria* ‘sing.COND’ in mediaeval Occitan (Skårup 1997). According to Lavalade (1987), the majority of Lemosin varieties maintain etymological 1SG=3SG syncretism in the imperfect indicative, conditional, present subjunctive, and imperfect subjunctive; in the varieties of Sanilhac (Marshall 1984:48) and Nontron (Reydy 2008:100-09), such syncretism is confined to the present subjunctive, imperfect indicative, and conditional.

Presence of the syncretism pattern 1SG=3SG in the present indicative is unusual among Occitan varieties, but can be traced to a much more widespread development. It is common in Occitan varieties for the first person singular form to be differentiated from the third person singular form in one or more TAM categories, by analogical extension of a desinence *-i* or *-e* (Ronjat 1937:170, 172,196; Esher 2017b). Thus, in the first person singular present indicative form, three variants occur in mediaeval Occitan (no desinence, *-e*, and *-i*), all three of which are attested for the variety of Nontron in the nineteenth century: *chant*, *chante*, *chanti* ‘sing.PRS.IND.1SG’ (Chabaneau 1876:232). In the variety of Gartempe, first person singular forms such as [tsâtə] are the regular continuants of forms in *-e* (e.g. *chante*), as unstressed [e] develops to schwa (compare present subjunctive forms). As final unstressed [a] also develops to schwa, third person singular present indicative forms in the first conjugation (e.g., *chanta* > [tsâtə]) become identical to the corresponding first person singular forms.

3.4 TAM syncretism: imperfect indicative and conditional forms

Identity between the desinences of imperfect indicative and conditional forms of second- and third-conjugation verbs is common in Occitan for etymological reasons:¹⁴ the imperfect indicative forms of second- and third-conjugation verbs continue Latin imperfect indicative forms in -(I)ĒBAM, etc., while the synthetic conditional originates in a periphrasis collocating the infinitive of a lexical verb with the imperfect indicative of the auxiliary HABERE ‘have’, i.e. HABĒBAM, etc. (Ronjat 1937:171; Esher 2018). In general, conditional forms may nevertheless be distinguished from imperfect indicative forms by a unique stem or the presence of thematic elements (theme vowel and / or formative [r]).

In regular third-conjugation verbs, which present neither a unique stem nor a theme vowel in the conditional, the contrast crucially depends on the formative [r]: compare *vendiá* ‘sell.IPF.IND.3SG’ vs *vendriá* ‘sell.COND.3SG’ in modern standard varieties of the Languedoc and Provence (Alibèrt 1976; Martin and Moulin 2007). But the sequence [rj], historically found throughout conditional forms, is unstable and vulnerable to change. In several varieties of the Languedoc, Auvergne, and Limousin areas, [rj] is commonly reduced to [j] in intervocalic contexts (*cantariá* [kantarjə] > [kantajə] ‘sing.COND.3SG’; *dormiriá* [durmirjə] > [durmijə] ‘sleep.COND.3SG’, Esher 2015a; see also Lanly 1971); while regular third-conjugation verbs, which have consonant-final roots, show regional variation as to whether [r] or [j] is deleted from the original cluster [Crj]: [bĕn'dra] ‘sell.FUT.3SG’ contrasts with [bĕn'drə] ‘sell.COND.3SG’ in the variety of Molleville (Aude, ALLOc survey point 11.01), but with [bĕn'djo] ‘sell.COND.3SG’ in the variety of Loubens (Ariège, ALLOc survey point 09.02).

In the variety of Gartempe, [rj] reduces to [j] in all conjugations (Tables 1, 4, and 5), giving rise in the third conjugation to conditional forms syncretic with the corresponding person / number forms of the imperfect indicative (e.g., [vã'djã] ‘sell.IPFV.IND/COND.1PL/3PL’). There is, however, no evidence in the

¹⁴ With the notable exception of varieties spoken in Gascony.

source material for productivity of this syncretism, which is not replicated by analogical change. On the contrary, the redistribution of stress disrupts the etymological identity between the desinences of the conditional and of non-first-conjugation imperfect indicative forms. For first person singular and third person singular forms of the imperfect indicative, stress shifts from the final syllable to the penult: thus, for example, [par'tiʃə] replaces expected [parti'ʃø] 'leave.IPF.IND.1SG/3SG'.¹⁵ In some verbs, such as *vendre* 'sell' (Table 5), such a change may be phonologically motivated due to the long vowel in the penult, but in many others, including *partir* 'leave' (Table 4), it can only be analogical, extending the majority pattern of stress assignment in which first person singular and third person singular forms receive stress on the penult, while all other forms bear stress on the final syllable. By contrast, the first person singular and third person singular forms of the conditional retain their final stress (as does the future) rather than undergoing stress retraction (as do the corresponding imperfect indicative forms); as a result, syncretism between conditional and imperfect indicative forms is confined to the plural and the second person singular.

3.5 TAM syncretism: present indicative and present subjunctive forms

Diverse patterns of syncretism between present indicative and present subjunctive forms occur, according to variety and conjugational class (see also Chabaneau 1867:244). Tables 6 and 7 illustrate the extent of TAM syncretism between present indicative and present subjunctive forms in the Lemosin varieties of Gartempe (Creuse), Nontron (Dordogne) and Sanilhac (Dordogne), for first-conjugation and non-first-conjugation verbs.

In all three varieties, third person singular forms of the present indicative and present subjunctive remain distinct in non-first-conjugation verbs, reflecting the regular deletion of final unstressed vowels other than [a] (e.g., UENDIT > *ven* 'sell.PRS.IND.3SG' vs UENDAT > *venda* 'sell.PRS.SBJV.3SG', Anglade 1921:294); and syncretism is found between first person singular forms of the present indicative and present subjunctive forms across the regular conjugations, due to the analogical generalization of *-e* across first person singular forms (Ronjat 1937:170, 172,196; Esher 2017b). Syncretism between present indicative and present subjunctive forms is noticeably most extensive in the variety of Gartempe, chiefly due to this variety having undergone two sound changes which did not occur in more southerly varieties such as those of Nontron and Sanilhac: the reduction of unstressed final vowels to [ə], causing syncretism between third person singular forms of the present indicative and present subjunctive in the first conjugation; and the merger of [ɛ̃] with [ã], causing syncretism between the present indicative and present subjunctive for first person plural and third person plural forms across conjugations.

¹⁵ The stress retraction in the IPF.IND is also associated with stem alternation. In some cases, e.g. [v'œnjə] 'come.IPF.IND.1SG/3SG' vs [və'nja:] 'come.IPF.IND.2' (Quint 1996:139) the alternation can be straightforwardly attributed to phonological restrictions: schwa occurs only in unstressed syllables (Quint 1996:7f.) and thus a realization *[vœnjə] 'come.IPF.IND.1SG/3SG' would not be licit. In other cases, e.g., [ku'najʃə] 'know.IPF.IND.1SG/3SG' vs [kune'ʃa:] 'know.IPF.IND.2SG' (Quint 1996:127), it appears that the etymologically regular, unstressed alternant (in this case [e]: Quint 1996:6) can occur in a stressed syllable: thus the introduction of [aj] in the stressed syllable, replicating the alternant pair tonic [aj] and unstressed [e] (Table 3), is plausibly analogical.

Table 6. PRS.IND and PRS.SBJV forms of first-conjugation verbs in the varieties of Gartempe (Quint 1996:115f.), Nontron (Reydy 2008:100) and Sanilhac (Marshall 1984:48).

	Gartempe (<i>chantar</i> ‘sing’)		Nontron (<i>parlar</i> ‘speak’)		Sanilhac (<i>chabar</i> ‘finish’)	
	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV
1SG	tsãtə	tsãtə	parlə	parlə	sabə	sabə
2SG	tsãta:	tsãta:	parla:	parlei	soba,	sobei
3SG	tsãtə	tsãtə	parlo	parlə	sabə	sabə
1PL	tsãtã	tsãtã	parlẽ ^m	parl(j)ã ^m	sabẽn	sobõn
2PL	tsãta:	tsãta:	parla:	parle:	soba	soba
3PL	tsãtã	tsãtã	parlẽ ^{n(m)}	parlã ^{n(m)}	sabẽn	sobõn

Table 7. PRS.IND and PRS.SBJV forms of third-conjugation verbs in the varieties of Gartempe (Quint 1996:123), Nontron (Reydy 2008:105) and Sanilhac (Marshall 1984:48).

	Gartempe (<i>vendre</i> ‘sell’)		Nontron (<i>metre</i> ‘put’)		Sanilhac (<i>vendre</i> ‘sell’)	
	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV
1SG	vãdə	vãdə	me:te	me:te	vẽnde	vẽnde
2SG	vãde	vãda:	metei	metei	vẽndei	vẽnda
3SG	vã	vãdə	mei	me:te	vẽn	vẽnde
1PL	vãdã	vãdã	metẽ ^m	met(j)ã ^m	vẽndẽn	vẽndõn
2PL	vãde	vãde	mete:	mete:	vẽnde	vẽnda
3PL	vãdã	vãdã	metẽ ^{n(m)}	metã ^m	vẽndẽn	vẽndõn

The major locus of variation is second-person forms. Syncretism between second person singular forms of the present indicative and present subjunctive is found in the first conjugation in Gartempe and Sanilhac, but in the third conjugation in Nontron; while syncretism between second person plural forms of the present indicative and present subjunctive occurs in all conjugations in Gartempe, in the first conjugation in Sanilhac and in the third conjugation in Nontron.

In the varieties of Nontron and Sanilhac, the present subjunctive desinences are constant across conjugations, although observation of regular sound changes predicts that they should remain distinct (as reflexes of Latin A and E do not merge in these varieties). The modern distribution of desinences is due to analogical levelling across conjugations, in opposite directions: in Nontron, first-conjugation present subjunctive desinences with theme vowel *-e-* have been generalized across conjugations, causing incidental syncretism with non-first-conjugation present indicative desinences; while in Sanilhac, non-first-conjugation present subjunctive desinences with theme vowel *-a-* have been generalized across conjugations, causing incidental syncretism with first-conjugation present indicative desinences.

In Gartempe, by contrast, present subjunctive desinences maintain limited contrast between conjugations, and syncretism of present indicative and present subjunctive forms has two distinct causes. In the first and third persons, syncretism of present indicative and present subjunctive forms is due to regular sound change ([am, an, em, en] > [ã]; §3.1). In the second person, however, such syncretism results from analogical remodelling of present subjunctive forms on the basis of present indicative forms. This process is most clearly visible in the second person plural present subjunctive form, which receives the desinence *-[e]* in regular non-first-conjugation verbs such as *partir* ‘leave’ and *vendre* ‘sell’ but retains its historically

expected form in $[-a:]$ in a number of irregular verbs. Quint’s (1996) grammar includes eight verb lexemes with a second person plural present subjunctive form in $[a:]$; second person plural forms of the present indicative and present subjunctive for these lexemes are given in Table 8.¹⁶

Table 8. PRS.IND.2PL and PRS.SBJV.2PL forms of irregular verbs retaining $[-a:]$ for PRS.SBJV.2PL in the variety of Gartempe (Quint 1996:108f.,127,133f.,141).

lexeme	PRS.IND.2PL	PRS.SBJV.2PL
<i>être</i> ‘be’	se	ʃa:
<i>avêr</i> ‘have’	a:	a’ja:
<i>corrêr</i> ‘run’	ku’re	ku’re, ku’ra:
<i>plâire</i> ‘please’	plə’ze, plə’ze	plə’za:
<i>pòdêr</i> ‘be able’	pò’dè	py’tse, py’tsa:
<i>quêure</i> ‘cook’	kə’ze	kə’za:
<i>vòlêr</i> ‘want’	vo’le	vy’tsa:

The variety of Gartempe has few lexemes for which Quint’s grammar attests a difference of stem between present indicative and present subjunctive forms,¹⁷ and it is notable that almost all such lexemes figure in Table 8, with the only exceptions being the impersonal verbs *fâler* ‘be necessary’ and *plòure* ‘rain’, which by definition do not have a second person plural form, together with *savêr* ‘know’.¹⁸ This distribution suggests that the spread of $[-e]$ to forms originally presenting $[-a:]$ has been favoured by pre-existing identity of stem between second person plural forms of the present indicative and present subjunctive. Such a development would be consistent with analogical changes observed elsewhere in Romance, where thematic and desinential material is redistributed according to established patterns of stem distribution (Maiden 2009b; O’Neill 2014).

Stem identity acts as one factor among others in the spread of $[-e]$, for which it is neither necessary nor sufficient. The second person plural present subjunctive forms of *corrêr* ‘run’, *plâire* ‘please’, and *quêure* ‘cook’ all maintain $[-a:]$ despite presenting no difference of stem, while the second person plural present subjunctive form of *pòder* ‘be able’ shows extension of $[-e]$ as a variant alongside $[-a:]$ despite a difference of stem, and in the case of *savêr* ‘know’, the second person plural present subjunctive form $[saje]$ has $[-e]$ although the corresponding second person plural present indicative form $[sa:]$ has $[-a:]$. The spread of $[-e]$ in the cases of *pòdêr* ‘be able’ and *savêr* ‘know’ may be attributable to the high lexical type frequency attained by $[-e]$ in the second person plural present subjunctive, favouring further generalisation of $[-e]$; the retention of $[-a:]$ in *corrêr* ‘run’, *plâire* ‘please’ and *quêure* ‘cook’ is more difficult to motivate. Non-first-conjugation second person singular present subjunctive forms, meanwhile, overwhelmingly retain their historically expected form in $[-a:]$, despite pressure from the corresponding second person singular present indicative forms and second person plural present subjunctive forms, both in $[-e]$.

¹⁶ Also by implication *vâler* / *vôler* ‘be worth’ for which a full paradigm is not given since all forms except the infinitive are syncretic with those of *vòlêr* (Quint 1996:138).

¹⁷ Comparison with the dialectal variants listed by Lavalade (1987) shows that this is a common situation in Lemosin varieties, contrasting with southern Occitan varieties in which non-first-conjugation present subjunctive forms tend to present a stem (often shared with the preterite and imperfect subjunctive) distinct from that found in the present indicative (Wheeler 2011; Esher 2016).

¹⁸ Present subjunctive forms for *anar/nar* ‘go’ were not available (Quint 1996:125).

3.6 Summary

The single most frequent source of syncretism is regular sound change, which causes previously distinct forms to fall together. The most systematic syncretisms concern person-number combinations: 2SG=2PL (the natural class of second-person forms), 1SG=3SG and 1PL=3PL (neither of which is a natural class, though each pair of forms shares a number value). TAM syncretism is also attested in the Lemosin data examined here (though less prominently), supporting the generalization made by Baerman et al. (2005:120,124) that the presence of TAM syncretism entails that of person syncretism.

Among person syncretisms, the syncretisms 2SG=2PL and 1SG=3SG are instances of what Baerman et al. (2005:59) term ‘partial syncretism’, as they occur in most, but not all, TAM categories and conjugational classes, whereas the syncretism 1PL=3PL is a case of ‘complete syncretism’, as it applies to all paradigms.¹⁹ The Lemosin syncretisms uphold the crosslinguistic generalization that complete syncretism occurs either solely in the non-singular (as here) or in both the singular and the non-singular; complete syncretism between first and third person is crosslinguistically rare, but not without precedent (Baerman et al. 2005:59, 62). The sources identified for the Lemosin syncretism patterns are also consistent with those proposed by Baerman et al. (2005:71f.): the majority are due to sound changes which cause two or more forms to fall together.

The Lemosin data diverge somewhat from the generalizations in Baerman et al. (2005) in the relative prominence and resilience of the syncretism patterns. Baerman et al. suggest a number of explanations for the statistical prominence of patterns arising from feature structure in their sample: such patterns ‘are available to all languages’, ‘can arise spontaneously’ and ‘are self-regenerating in case of disruptions’ (2005:170), whereas patterns arising from sound change (which often involve functionally unnatural groupings of cells) are ‘language-specific, and always in competition with morphological patterns based on feature structure’ (2005:170). In the variety of Gartempe, 2SG=2PL reflects feature structure and is manifestly available, but is relatively unusual among Occitan varieties (see also Hinzelin 2012), and is not reasserted when compromised by the analogical generalization of $[-e]$ in non-first-conjugation second person plural present subjunctive forms;²⁰ in general, as 1SG=3SG, 1PL=3PL, inherited patterns of stem distribution and most cases of TAM syncretism in Gartempe are also due to regular sound change, morphological patterns based on feature structure are of low lexical and paradigmatic type frequency, and thus unlikely to prevail in competition. These remarks do not, of course, invalidate the proposals of Baerman et al., which remain as observed statistical tendencies.

¹⁹ The only exception given in Quint’s grammar concerns the present indicative of *plaire* ‘please’: two stem variants are available to the second person singular, second person plural, and first person plural cells, while only one of these stem variants is found for the third person plural cell.

²⁰ One possible interpretation is that although *corresponding* to feature structure, this particular syncretism is *motivated* by sound change and thus displays the characteristics of patterns arising from sound change; but such an analysis is unsatisfactory, as it would require native speaker grammars to contain knowledge of the origin of the various patterns, knowledge to which speakers do not have access in acquisition.

4. The relationship between patterns of syncretism and metamorphemes

Both syncretism (of the systematic type discussed here) and metamorphemes (recurrent patterns of paradigmatic distribution) are phenomena in which a given set of distinct paradigm cells consistently share inflexional exponents: in the case of metamorphemes, any type of inflexional exponent may be shared (including but not limited to roots, thematic elements, inflexional desinences, entire wordforms), while, in the case of syncretism, entire inflected wordforms are shared.

In the history of Romance languages, there is substantial evidence for the psychological reality of metamorphemes as groupings of mutually predictive cells, since speakers repeatedly exploit established metamorphemes as productive templates for the distribution of novel alternation patterns (Maiden 2018a). For example, the ‘N-pattern’ (Maiden 2009a; 2018a),²¹ which comprises the cells {PRS.IND.1SG, PRS.IND.2SG, PRS.IND.3SG, PRS.IND.3PL, PRS.SBJV.1PL, PRS.SBJV.2SG, PRS.SBJV.3SG, PRS.SBJV.3PL, IMP.2SG}, originates via the shift from phonologically predictable stress to lexically specified stress, coupled with segmental allomorphy arising from the differential development of stressed and unstressed vowels in early Romance; on the basis of the observed patterns of alternation, speakers infer a morphological generalization about the distribution of inflected forms. The reality and abstract nature of this generalization are demonstrated by the range of morphological analogies which crucially depend on it: speakers do not merely extend the existing vowel alternation patterns to additional lexemes, but also assign an N-pattern distribution to suppletive roots and thematic elements unrelated to the original phonological alternation (Maiden 2018a:175-209).

Table 9. *morir* [mu'ri] ‘die’, Graulhet (Lieutard 2004:230), showing etymological N-pattern alternation.

	PRS.IND	PRS.SBJV	IPF.IND	PRT	IPF.SBJV	FUT	COND
1SG	'məri	'mərə	muri'sjə	muri'eri	muri'ɣesi	muri'rej	muri'rjə
2SG	'məres	'məres	muri'sjəs	muri'eres	muri'ɣesəs	muri'ras	muri'rjəs
3SG	'mər	'mərə	muri'sjə	muri'et	muri'ɣesə	muri'ra	muri'rjə
1PL	mu'ren	mu'ren	muri'sjan	muri'eren	muri'ɣesen	muri'ren	muri'rjan
2PL	mu'res	mu'res	muri'sjas	muri'eres	muri'ɣeses	muri'res	muri'rjas
3PL	'mərɔ	'mərən	muri'sjəw	muri'eru	muri'ɣesu	muri'rəw	muri'rjəw

In southern varieties of Occitan, such as the variety of Graulhet exemplified in Table 9, the N-pattern retains its traditional Romance shape, while in French it has been reduced to {PRS.IND.1SG, PRS.IND.2SG, PRS.IND.3SG, IMP.2SG}. The change of shape undergone by the N-pattern in French is, like its original emergence in Romance, due to the morphologization of alternations resulting from regular sound change; moreover, the sound changes involved in the French development cause systematic syncretism between the remaining N-pattern cells (Esher 2017a). In the Lemosin varieties discussed here, the N-pattern is likewise compromised by the results of regular sound change, since the stress pattern and stem allomorphy of the present indicative second person singular and present indicative third person plural cells

²¹ It is desirable to give morphemes abstract labels, in order to refer to them independently of any phonological or functional content which may be associated with them.

systematically differentiate these cells from the remaining N-pattern cells, aligning them instead with cells outside the N-pattern.

For northern Gallo-Romance (including Lemosin) varieties, Hinzelin (2011a,b) considers syncretism ‘a major paradigm-structuring principle’ (2011b:297) on a par with, or even capable of overriding, metamorphomic patterns such as the N-pattern. Hinzelin makes a number of theoretical conjectures about the origin and status of the syncretism patterns, three of which are examined below as relevant to their relationship with metamorphomic phenomena: namely, that patterns of syncretism can act as templates for the distribution of allomorphy; that the patterns may be due to sound change; and that metamorphemes which align with TAM category distinctions are more resilient in cases of person syncretism than metamorphemes which do not.

4.1 Syncretism patterns as templates

A robust source of evidence for the productivity of local syncretism patterns is offered by the redistribution of existing suppletive roots (reflexes of *AMBULARE*, *UADERE*, and *IRE*) in the verb ‘go’, a process which cannot be attributed to phonological motivations.

In Occitan varieties, the *v*-stem continuing *UADERE* typically has an N-pattern distribution, occurring in the singular and third person plural forms of the present indicative and in the second person singular imperative, while other present indicative and imperative forms continue *AMBULARE*.²² However, in the variety of Gartempe, the *v*-stem has spread to *vam* [vã] ‘go.PRS.IND.1PL’, *vatz* [va:] ‘go.PRS.IND.2PL’ (Quint 1996:125; Hinzelin 2011a:725), replicating the first-conjugation syncretism patterns 2SG=2PL and 1PL=3PL. The same development is attested in the Lemosin data given by Ruben (1866), and is analysed by Hinzelin (2011b:298) as ‘take-over’ (in the sense of Carstairs[-McCarthy] 1987) of the second person singular and third person plural forms by the second person plural and first person plural respectively; the direction can be identified since the spread of suppletive forms extends reflexes of *UADERE* rather than reflexes of *AMBULARE*.

The direction of change in these cases of suppletion is the exact opposite of that observed for the origin of the syncretism patterns. The patterns arise due to second person singular and third person plural forms adopting stem alternants and stress patterns previously characteristic of first person plural and second person plural forms; whereas, in the cited cases of suppletion, the first person plural and second person plural forms are remodelled on the second person singular and third person plural forms. This contrast indicates that, once the syncretism is established, its original directionality becomes opaque to speakers (as the forms are now, by definition, identical, neither is synchronically identifiable as the source of the other): in the Lemosin case, the data are compatible with analysis as a non-directional syncretism, or with reversal of the historical directionality.

In the varieties discussed by Hinzelin, the analogical extension of the *v*-stem through the present indicative compromises the pre-existing syncretism patterns PRS.IND.1PL=IMP.1PL and PRS.IND.2PL=IMP.2PL found elsewhere in the verb system: for example, in the data provided by Ruben (1866), *nan* ‘go.IMP.1PL’, *nâ* ‘go.IMP.2PL’ retain reflexes of *AMBULARE* (Hinzelin 2011a:725), a distribution also attested by Chabaneau (1876:236) and Reydy (2008). In the variety of Gartempe, this clash of

²² For absence of the *v*-stem from the present subjunctive, see Maiden (2018a:199f.).

innovative and inherited patterns is definitively resolved in favour of the novel pattern: a further suppletive form *marchetz* ‘go.IMP.2PL’ is co-opted from *marchar* ‘walk’ (Quint 1996:125). By contrast, in other varieties, the original syncretism patterns PRS.IND.1PL=IMP.1PL and PRS.IND.2PL=IMP.2PL survive or are reasserted: for the first person plural imperative and second person plural imperative, Lavalade (1987:53) includes *vam*, *vatz* among regional variants, and Benoît (1932:96) for the Périgord region gives only *vam*, *vàs*.

Hinzelin’s interpretation of the suppletive patterns is that syncretism constrains suppletion (2011b:305) and that ‘the new syncretic stem distribution is again morphomic in nature and thus a symptom of autonomous morphology’ (2011b:310).²³ These conclusions are entirely consistent with the findings of the present study.

4.2 *The source of syncretism patterns*

Not only do the syncretism patterns serve as templates for the (re)distribution of alternation patterns, just as metamorphemes are documented to do, but the syncretism patterns arise in the same way as metamorphemes elsewhere in Romance. Hinzelin suggests that ‘sound change may contribute to or perhaps even trigger the creation of syncretism patterns’ (2011b:309), a conjecture supported by this study’s demonstration that the majority of syncretism patterns present in Lemosin varieties result from sound changes causing extensive homonymy between inflexional forms. As in the case of the patterns described by Maiden (e.g. 2009a, 2016a, 2018a) and Esher (2015a; 2017a), sound change produces a novel distribution which is consistent and recurrent across the lexicon, and forms the basis for a novel generalization about the paradigmatic distribution of morphological formatives.

The interest of the Lemosin data is that they illustrate both split and merger in distributions of cells: within the domain of the N-pattern, the second person singular and third person plural cells are differentiated from the others, just as the N-pattern cells were differentiated from the other *infectum* cells; but these same cells merge with another existing distribution outside the N-pattern. As in modern French, the change promotes identity between entire wordforms rather than solely inflexional formatives, but the fundamental mechanism is the same: individual paradigm cells are reassigned from one existing metamorphomic pattern to another, resulting in a change of shape for each existing pattern (a process termed ‘transfiguration’ by Esher 2017a).

²³ The claim that syncretism is ‘a symptom of an autonomous morphological component’ is restated by Hinzelin (2012:70), who also describes syncretism patterns as ‘an expression of an autonomous morphological component in the mental grammar’ (2012:77). In the absence of an explicit statement on the conceptual relation between syncretism patterns and the metamorphomic patterns identified by Maiden, the impression given is that Hinzelin views syncretism and metamorphemes as two distinct phenomena.

4.3 *Interaction between syncretism patterns and metamorphemes*

On the basis of the Gallo-Romance data in his study, Hinzelin (2011b) makes a more general theoretical claim about the resilience of metamorphemes in diachrony:

There is another tendency to dispense with suppletion inside partial paradigms but to maintain different stems across them, e.g. for FUT, PRT, INF, PTCP. [...] The evidence suggests that patterns following category lines like conditional and future, imperfect and (plural) imperative are more likely to survive abundant syncretism than more idiosyncratic distributions. (2011b:310).

This claim is surprising in the wider Romance context, since metamorphomic patterns which follow TAM category lines, labelled ‘TAM morphemes’ by Smith (2013), are generally no more resilient than metamorphomic patterns which do not, labelled ‘person-number morphemes’ by Smith (2013). In Italo-Romance, for example, the etymological *perfectum* stem, originally present throughout the preterite and imperfect subjunctive, is retained only in the first person singular, third person singular and third person plural preterite forms (Maiden 2000, 2018b; also first person plural preterite in some varieties), while in some Occitan varieties, the formal identity between future and conditional forms, which do share some semantic values, breaks down (Esher 2012, 2015a): in all these varieties, the N-pattern remains systematically and robustly intact. On closer examination, the disparity between Hinzelin’s findings in relation to syncretism and the general behaviour of Romance metamorphemes turns out to be an artefact of Hinzelin’s data set, in which all cases of syncretism considered involve person syncretism within a given TAM category. By definition, person syncretism within a ‘TAM morpheme’ cannot compromise the integrity of that metamorpheme, since the distributional pattern is defined independently of person features: the syncretisms COND.1SG=COND.3SG, COND.2SG=COND.2PL and COND.1PL=COND.3PL have no bearing on stem distribution within the set of future and conditional forms overall.

The case of the N-pattern is particularly instructive. As a metamorpheme crucially defined with reference to person features, the N-pattern is potentially compromised by some person syncretisms – but not all. In the present indicative and present subjunctive, the syncretism 1SG=3SG has precisely no effect on the coherence of the N-pattern: as Tables 2 and 3 show, the distinctive alternant historically characteristic of the N-pattern is retained in first person singular and third person singular forms. It is the syncretisms 2SG=2PL and 1PL=3PL which compromise the N-pattern: in both these cases, the domain of the syncretism overlaps with the domain of the N-pattern, and the two templates directly conflict. These data indicate a different conclusion: whether an inherited metamorpheme is at risk from novel syncretism depends not on the type of metamorpheme *per se*, but on whether or not the potential domains of the existing and novel metamorphomic patterns clash.²⁴ This conclusion, which increases the generality and accuracy of predictions about the susceptibility of metamorphemes to change, is entirely consistent with developments observed elsewhere in Romance, such as the case of Italo-Romance preterite forms, where the novel metamorphomic template corresponds to the intersection of two existing paradigmatic distributions (Maiden 2000, 2018b; Esher 2015b).

²⁴ The term ‘clash’ referring to partial overlap of morphomic patterns is introduced by Maiden (2009a:64); see also Maiden (2018a:288f.) for discussion.

5 Conclusions

This study provides an overview of the patterns of syncretism encountered in Lemosin varieties of Occitan, with a focus on the variety of Gartempe described by Quint (1996), which exhibits a particularly high incidence of syncretism. Person syncretism is shown to be a systematic feature of Lemosin conjugation, and TAM syncretism is also found, with the patterns attested supporting the crosslinguistic generalizations of Baerman et al. (2005).

The study demonstrates that almost all cases of syncretism in the variety of Gartempe can be traced to regular sound change: a number of such changes in this variety create homophony between inflexional forms, from which speakers can deduce a morphological generalisation that the forms realising a given pair of cells are identical. This mechanism is almost identical to that by which several prominent metamorphic patterns have arisen in Romance, and it is proposed here that the behaviour of the syncretism patterns is best captured by considering them to be metamorphic. Further evidence supporting this view is offered by the fact that, like established Romance metamorphemes (for which see Maiden 2018a), the Lemosin patterns can be exploited as templates for analogical redistribution of forms, as highlighted by Hinzelin (2011a,b, 2012).

As the rise of the syncretism patterns observed in Lemosin affects stem alternation patterns and stress alternation patterns as well as desinences, it can involve change to the classic Romance metamorphemes identified by Maiden (2009a, 2016a, 2018a). Such change is a further example of ordinary change to metamorphemes, in which paradigm cells are reassigned from one metamorphic template to another; it does not represent a conflict between qualitatively different phenomena. Change to metamorphic templates is predicted to occur where there is overlap or clash between templates (e.g., a given cell patterns with one metamorpheme in some lexemes or with respect to a given exponent, but with another metamorpheme in other lexemes or with respect to a different exponent). The distinction between metamorphemes defined solely in terms of TAM categories, and metamorphemes the definition of which additionally requires reference to person and number features, is not found to be a predictor of diachronic resilience or of susceptibility to change.

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ALLOc = *Atlas Linguistique et Ethnographique du Languedoc Occidental*. Morphological data are drawn from unpublished fieldwork transcriptions.

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