

Further Evidence for Morphemes: The H-Pattern in Central Ibero-Romance

Katie Slemp and Tatiana Fernandez

The University of Western Ontario

Verb stem allomorphy (Ast. *perder*, *pierdo* ‘lose.1SG.PRS.IND’) is one of the most significant morphophonological changes from Vulgar Latin into Modern Romance. Following the historical loss of vowel length distinction, Castilian diphthongized the Vulgar Latin mid-low vowels [ɛ] to /je/, and [ɔ] to /we/ in stressed syllables (Lloyd 1987). These alternations give rise to the N-pattern (shown below in Table 1). Another morphomic pattern is the L-pattern proposed by Maiden (2009). The L-pattern consists of velarization and palatalization resulting from the ‘yod effect’ and the palatalization and affrication of velars (Maiden 2009, 2018). In the L-pattern, the velar or palatal is found in the root of the first-person singular of the present indicative, and throughout the entirety of the present subjunctive. The N- and L-patterns are taken as evidence of distinct morphemes. These morphomic patterns have no phonological or functional content, but they are recurrent for typologically similar verbs in the grammar of each language and systematic in their occurrence (Aronoff 1994; Maiden 2009, 2018). Both patterns are found in Asturian and Spanish, the two languages examined in this study.

After close examination of the corpuses from the Real Academia Española and the Academia de la Llingua Asturiana, we propose a third pattern, derived from the N-pattern, which we call the H-pattern, and which provides further evidence for morphomic patterns in Romance language. Maiden (2009, 2018) categorizes our H-pattern verbs as N+L-pattern verbs, but we argue that the H-pattern is a better classification for these fourth-conjugation class verbs. Although Maiden (2018) argues that the appearance of high vowel alternation in the L-pattern cells is a result of the yod effect and palatalization historically, there is no synchronic velarization or palatalization present in these paradigms. Therefore, the H-pattern should stand alone in synchrony. The proposed H-pattern also includes the preterite, as it is essential to show the role of metaphony in these verbal paradigms that does not appear in regular N-pattern verbs. Including the preterite in the N-pattern paradigms does not change the distribution, as there is no metaphony in the preterite of N-pattern verbs. The H-pattern is demonstrated below in Table 3.

The patterns have their roots in historical phonology but their persistence in modern language is due to purely morphomic reasons. The systematic occurrence of these patterns across central Ibero-Romance thus provides us further evidence for morphemes.

Table 1) N-Pattern <i>contar</i> 'to count'	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Present indicative	cuento	cuentas	cuenta	contamos	contáis	cuentan
Present subjunctive	cuenta	cuentes	cuenta	contemos	contéis	cuenten

Table 2) L-Pattern <i>hacer</i> 'to make'	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Present indicative	hago	haces	hace	hacemos	hacéis	hacen
Present subjunctive	haga	hagas	haga	hagamos	hagáis	hagan

Table 3)H-Pattern <i>repetir</i> 'to repeat'	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
Present indicative	repito	repites	repite	repetimos	repetís	repiten
Present subjunctive	repita	repitas	repita	repitamos	repitáis	repitan
Preterite	repetí	repetiste	repetió	repetimos	repetisteis	repetieron

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