The -*sk Indo-European suffix evolution in Latin and Romance: is it a cycle of grammaticalization and degrammaticalization?

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The Indo-European suffix *-*sk* has its development registered for all Indo-European families, and in most of them, it is described as an element attached to roots to form verbs (Beekes 2011; Fortson IV 2011; Clackson 2007). In Ancient Greek, Latin, Hittite and Tocharian, studies analyze *-*sk* as an aspectual marker, associated with causative, progressive, inceptive and inchoative (Brugmann 1891; Jasanoff 2003; Malzahn 2010; Duhoux 2000; Ernout 1914).

Allen(1995) proposes that the evolution of *-*sk* in Latin, the suffix -*sc*-, is an instance of grammaticalization, and its evolution to Romance languages happens via degrammaticalization. The author states that throughout the history of the Latin language, the suffix -*sc*- went from a verbalizer found in verbs such as *po**sc***ere* 'to demand' to an inchoative such as *cale**sc***ere* 'to become hot'. For Allen,

this is an instance of grammaticalization, since -*sc*- has specialized as an inchoative suffix.

In the evolution from Latin to Romance languages like French and Italian, the suffix -*sc*- lost its inchoative meaning and became part of the verbal conjugation paradigm of some verbs. In French, it evolved to the -*ss*- ending found in verbs such as *choisi**ss***ons* 'we choose', and in Italian it is the -*sc*- of verbs like *agi**sc***o* 'I act'. Allen, in agreement with Ramat (1992), calls this stage of evolution *degrammaticalization*, where the suffix has lost its grammatical function.

I propose a formal approach to grammaticalization (Roberts and Roussou 2003, 1999; Roberts 2012) to account for the evolution of the Indo-European *-*sk* suffix in Latin and subsequently in Romance. The authors propose that grammaticalization happens due to an upward movement towards functional categories. This movement is reanalyzed over centuries, leading to the later merge of the element in the functional position. This would be the case for the evolution of the inchoative Latin -*sc*- to Italian verbal affix -*sc*- or French -*ss*-.

I propose that the Latin -*sc*- bears an [INCHOATIVE] feature and initially was merged into Asp_0, the head of a functional phrase between VP and TP, and then moved to T_0. This structure was later reanalyzed, losing its [INCHOATIVE] feature and merged directly to T_0, which led to the change we now see in French and Italian.

Contrary to what Allen (1995) and Ramat (1992) claim, I do not propose a degrammaticalization stage in the evolution of the Indo-European *-*sk* suffix to Latin and other languages where it 'gained' an aspectual value. Instead, I propose that the verbalizer value of *-*sk* is caused by its merge at v_0. In the evolution from Indo-European to Latin, Greek, Tocharian and Hittite, a reanalysis happened due to the movement of *-*sk* to Asp_0, above VP.

In this analysis, it is not necessary to argue for degrammaticalization as a movement downwards for the evolution of *-*sk*, because I propose that it moved always upwards: from v_0 to Asp_0 and, in from Latin to Romance, the movement was from Asp_0 to T_0.

I do not intend to argue whether degrammaticalization is the opposite of grammaticalization or a different mechanism in the evolution of languages, but my analysis indicates that there is only grammaticalization happening in this case and it could help analyzing other degrammaticalization phenomena, especially those involving affixes.

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