

The predicative markers *iĝ* and *ig* in the verbal valency system of Esperanto

Philippe Planchon (University of Tours)

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When Esperanto first appeared in 1887, it was not a complete language. This might be perceived as a lack of precision, but it was a necessary step to obtain a language capable of further evolution (Koutny 2017). To explain this point, we intend to explore the verbal valency system of Esperanto using a corpus-based approach (cf. Gledhill 1998). The valency of a verb is encoded in the lexicon (Kiselman 1995). However, this valency can be changed by suffixes such as *-iĝ-* (detransitivization) and *-ig-* (factive). The grammatical theory of Tesnière (1959) explains how this kind of markers can increase or decrease the number of actants of the verb. Nevertheless, this analysis cannot perfectly apply to Esperanto, not only because there are other means of detransitivization (like the reflexive form *si(n)* ; cf. Jansen 2002), but primarily because there are specific forms like *mortiĝi*, *estiĝi*, *pliigi*, *kunigi*..., and even autonomous use of the suffixes (hence the verbs *igi* and *iĝi*). This phenomenon is still in use today in Esperanto, and has been extended to new forms. We explain these forms by relying on a hypothesis about the functioning of the verb, which is called a "verbal scenario" (Paillard 2000). The verbal scenario can explain the interaction between the verb and its arguments in terms of predicative and referential relations. This predicative function is not restricted to words expressing action; it can also be applied to words expressing properties (like the adjective *blanka* "white") when they serve to construct verbs (*blanki* / *blankiĝi* / *blankigi*). By the use of the model of Culoli (2020), known as the Theory of the Predicative and Enunciative Operations, it becomes possible to identify the operations underlying the suffixes *-iĝ-* and *-ig-* : they indicate different modalities of transformation of the events, that we will analyse through genuine sentences. For this analyse, we use examples from the text corpus *Tekstaro* (<https://tekstaro.com>), from the Internet and from oral data. The suffixes *-iĝ-* and *-ig-* are showing an internal evolution of Esperanto, and such an evolution of the language is an important factor to consider regarding the development of the Esperanto community (Fiedler and Brosch 2022).

References

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