Romance languages

Ti Alkire and Carol Rosen trace the changes that led from colloquial Latin to five major Romance languages, those which ultimately became national or transnational languages: Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian. Trends in spoken Latin altered or dismantled older categories in phonology and morphology, while the regional varieties of speech, evolving under diverse influences, formed new grammatical patterns, each creating its own internal regularities. Documentary sources for spoken Latin show the beginnings of this process, which comes to full fruition in the medieval emergence of written Romance languages. This book newly distills the facts into an appealing program of study, including exercises, and makes the difficult issues clear, taking well-motivated and sometimes innovative stands. It provides not only an essential guide for those new to the topic, but also a reliable compendium for the specialist.

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# Contents

*Acknowledgements*  
ix

**Introduction**  

1 The evolution of stressed vowels  
1.1 Syllables and word stress in Latin  
1.2 Stressed vowels: the (almost) pan-Romance seven-vowel system  
1.3 Special developments in stressed vowels  
1.4 The three Latin diphthongs  
Exercises  

2 Early changes in syllable structure and consonants  
2.1 Prosthetic vowels  
2.2 Syncope and new consonant clusters  
2.3 Merger of /b/ and /w/  
2.4 Early consonant losses  
2.5 In search of Popular Latin speech  
Exercises  

3 Consonant weakening and strengthening  
3.1 Degemination  
3.2 Lenition  
3.3 Other consonant weakenings  
3.4 Fortition  
Exercises  

4 New palatal consonants  
4.1 About palatal articulation  
4.2 Yods old and new
vi Contents

4.3 Yods and the growth of new consonants  58
4.4 Charles and Charlotte  72
Exercises  74

5 More about vowels: raising, yod effects, and nasalization  77
  5.1 Vowel raising in Italian  77
  5.2 Yod effects in Spanish  80
  5.3 Yod effects in French  86
  5.4 Nasal vowels in French  91
Exercises  92

6 Verb morphology: the present indicative  95
  6.1 Infinitives  95
  6.2 Present indicative in Popular versus standard Latin  99
  6.3 Present indicative in Italian  100
  6.4 Present indicative in Spanish  102
  6.5 Present indicative in French  103
  6.6 Stem allomorphy in the present indicative  104
  6.7 Paradigm leveling  112
  6.8 Paradigm disleveling  116
  6.9 A stem extender: -sc-  118
  6.10 Some truly irregular verbs: be, have, go  119
Exercises  123

7 Verb morphology: systemic reorganization  127
  7.1 Map of the Latin verb system  127
  7.2 How Romance reorganizes the Latin system  130
  7.3 Present indicative and present subjunctive  133
  7.4 Imperfect indicative  140
  7.5 Perfect indicative: Romance synthetic past  144
  7.6 Imperfect subjunctive  158
  7.7 Future subjunctive  162
  7.8 Future and conditional  163
  7.9 A bombshell: the birth of periphrastic perfects  169
  7.10 The passive voice  174
  7.11 Past participles old and new  176
Exercises  180

8 Noun and adjective morphology  185
  8.1 The starting-point: Latin noun and adjective morphology  185
  8.2 From five to three declension classes  186
  8.3 From six to two cases  187
  8.4 Romance noun and adjective morphology  188
Contents

8.5 The neuter diaspora: from three to two genders 192
8.6 Toward gender marking 195
8.7 Imparissyllabic nouns and adjectives 196
8.8 Romance personal pronouns 198
8.9 Birth of the definite article 203
Exercises 206

9 History and structure of Portuguese: an overview 209
9.1 Stressed vowels: the seven-vowel system 209
9.2 More on stressed vowels: secondary diphthongs 212
9.3 More on stressed vowels: nasalization 215
9.4 Raising effects 217
9.5 Early changes in consonants 217
9.6 Consonant weakening and strengthening 219
9.7 New palatal consonants 222
9.8 Noun and adjective morphology 228
9.9 Verb morphology: infinitives 234
9.10 Verb morphology: present indicative 234
9.11 Paradigm leveling and disleveling 240
9.12 A stem extender: -se- 240
9.13 Some truly irregular verbs: be, have, go 241
9.14 Verbs: old categories with inherited morphology 242
9.15 Verbs: new periphrastics 246
9.16 Verbs: other new categories 248
Exercises 250

10 History and structure of Romanian: an overview 252
10.1 Romanian vowels: diachrony and synchrony 252
10.2 Syllable structure: conservatism and innovation 260
10.3 Palatal influences on consonants 261
10.4 Other consonant changes 263
10.5 Present indicative and subjunctive 267
10.6 Verb morphology: systemic reorganization 274
10.7 Noun and adjective morphology 279
Exercises 284

11 Formation of the Romance lexicon 287
11.1 Lexical competition and replacement 287
11.2 Exploiting the derivational resources of Latin 289
11.3 Cycles of added and lost meaning 300
11.4 Reanalysis: how the mind remakes words 304
11.5 Loan words 306
Exercises 314
# Contents

## 12  Emergence of the Romance vernaculars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.1  Language in the Carolingian world</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2  The earliest Romance texts</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.3  Conclusion: from dialects to standards</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes** 339  
**Glossary of linguistic terms** 353  
**Suggestions for further reading** 360  
**Works cited** 364  
**Index** 372
Acknowledgements

Like general linguistics, Romance linguistics in the modern sense of the term traces its origins to the early decades of the nineteenth century. Given the weight of the accumulated scholarship, any work on the present topic will necessarily be derivative. In this book we do take some stands and venture some new analyses, but our debt to earlier researchers is immeasurable, beyond what our quotations and citations can convey.

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