

14

The rise and fall of Occitan *be(n)* and *pla(n)*

A semantic-pragmatic cycle?

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14.1 Introduction

Language change is understood, from a functionalist perspective, as the result of language in use, originating in both the ways language is used by the speaker and understood by the addressee. At the semantic level, changes are brought about by ‘the pragmatic uses to which speakers or writers and addressees or readers put language, and most especially out of the preferred strategies that speakers/writers use in communicating with addressees’ (Traugott and Dasher 2002: xi).

Recent research (Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014a; Hansen 2014, 2018a, 2018b, 2020b) has put forward the idea that semantic-pragmatic changes can occur in cyclical ways, similarly to the cycles that have been suggested to be operative crosslinguistically at the morphosyntactic level (recently by van Gelderen 2011, but already noticed at the beginning of the last century, notably by Jespersen 1917, formally recognized as the ‘Jespersen Cycle’ by Dahl 1979: 88). This idea of cyclicity is rooted in the pragmatic motivation of semantic change: more specifically, ‘it may be that when the content-level source item of a context-level (i.e. pragmatic) marker is replaced, then the new item is likely eventually to become the source of context-level functions similar to those of the item it replaced’ (Hansen 2014: 164).¹ In terms of what differentiates a cycle from other instances of language change, Hansen (2018b: 129) specifies that semantic-pragmatic cycles are ‘found when the evolution from a particular type of content-level meaning or function to one or more particular types of context-level meanings or functions *takes place more than once within a given language and/or across two languages, one of which is the direct descendant of the other*’ (emphasis mine).

¹ ‘Content-level’ and ‘context-level’ are terms introduced by Hansen (2008) to further refine the more traditional distinction between ‘semantic’ and ‘pragmatic’ uses of lexical items: in semantic change, a shift between coded, semantic meaning and a context-dependent, discourse-level meaning can be often observed, especially in the diachronic development of pragmatic markers.

Within this idea of cyclicity, two trajectories can be recognized, the cycle of a particular lexical item or of etymologically closely related items (semasiological or form-based) and the cycle of a given meaning/function (onomasiological or function-based) that is renewed several times through etymologically unrelated lexical items (Hansen 2018a: 57–64).

Crosslinguistic tendencies for lexical items to reproduce given paths of development at the diachronic level have long been recognized (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 6). These are partly due to the restricted set of lexical items that, for any given grammatical phenomenon, are likely to be sources of grammaticalization, and partly to the step-by-step developments that delimit and highly restrict the changes that can occur (Traugott and Heine 1991: 8). These grammaticalization paths or clines (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 7) can be understood as representing sequential changes in form (e.g. the prototypical grammaticalization cline ‘content item > grammatical word > clitic > inflectional affix > zero’, which refers to both changes from lexical to grammatical and from free to bound element), or tendencies to develop similar meanings given the same (or similar) source meanings (e.g. one of the many examples listed in Heine and Kuteva’s (2002) ‘Source-Target Lexicon’, spatial motion > expression of future tense/aspect). As well as developing similar meaning, we see that over time lexical items with similar meanings can also develop similar pragmatic functions. Pons Bordería and Llopis Cardona (2020: 323) note that ‘[b]efore grammaticalization occurs, the items involved in a cycle show a similar source meaning (semantic resemblance). ... Sharing similar meanings is a precondition of which the outcome might be the development of similar functions’.

Given the undeniable similarity, at least superficially, between a grammaticalization cline that follows a spiralling path and an onomasiological semantic-pragmatic cycle, it is natural to ask how the two differ, if at all.

This chapter sets out to attempt answer this question through the exploration of the development of two etymologically unrelated lexical items, Occitan *be(n)* and *pla(n)*, that potentially exemplify an instance of an onomasiological semantic-pragmatic cycle, both moving through the similar path of manner adverb > degree adverb > attitudinal sentential adverb > modal-particle-like element and also, crucially, differentiating themselves in developing different usages.

After presenting the behaviour of their Latin ancestors *BĒNĒ* and *PLĀNĒ* in Section 14.2, the development of *be(n)* and *pla(n)* from their first occurrences in the 11th/12th centuries through to modern times is discussed in Sections 14.3, 14.4, and 14.5. These are followed by a discussion of the nature of the developments exhibited by the two elements in Section 14.6, and some conclusions follow in Section 14.7.

14.2 Latin

14.2.1 *BĒNĒ*

The Latin adverb *BĒNĒ*, which derived from the archaic form **DUENĒD* (> **benĒd* > *benĒ* > *BĒNĒ* through iambic reduction (cf. Aslanov 2012: 29, referring to Vaan 2008: 49)), was already polysemous in the Classical period. Lewis and Short (1879: 229–231) identify a number of meanings that it could express, all centring around two main usages, as a verb modifier and as an intensifier. As a verb modifier, *BĒNĒ* was first and foremost a manner adverb that could express both concrete (referring to physical or external goodness, usefulness, ornament, comfort, etc., (1a)) and abstract (referring to perception, ability, judgement, will, etc., (1b)) properties:

- (1) a. *PATREM FAMILIAE VILLAM RUSTICAM BENE AEDIFICATAM HABERE EXPEDIT*
(Cato, *De agri cultura*, III:2)
‘It is a good idea for the master to have a well-built barn.’
- b. *DE MEDICO ET TU BENE EXISTIMARI SCRIBIS* (Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, XVI: 4, 1)
‘You write that the doctor is well thought (spoken) of.’

Within the latter, in its basic meaning of approval, *BĒNĒ* also expressed moral evaluations such as ‘honourably, bravely, gloriously’ especially in expressions such as ‘live, die, fight, carry oneself honourably/bravely’, and so on (2a), and ‘rightly, correctly’ when co-occurring with verbs of saying such as ‘admonish, advise’, and so on (2b).

- (2) a. *BENE MORI*
‘To die honourably.’
- b. *BENE DIXIT, AC MIHI ISTUC NON IN MENTEM VENERAT*
(Terence, *Eunuchus*, 451)
‘He speaks well / he is right, and that had not occurred to me.’

At the same time, it also functioned as a degree adverb: *BĒNĒ* could modify adjectives (3a) and adverbs ((3b–c), with a meaning equivalent to *VALDE* ‘very, very much’), but also verbs (3d) when these involved a notion of gradability in their semantics (Kühner and Stegmann 1955: 1, 793; Hofmann and Szantyr 1965: 171). With verbs, *BĒNĒ* expressed the meaning of completeness,² and, similarly,

² Bolinger (1972: 29) comments on the ‘semantically complex’ nature of English *well*, which includes semantic elements of ‘approval’ as well as ‘fulfilment’ in its meaning. Closely connected to *fulfilment* are

in collocation with expressions of size and time (and, later, numbers), it conveyed the sense of fullness/intensity (3e).

- (3) a. VIDEO EUM ESSE **BENE ROBUSTUM ATQUE EXERCITATUM**
(Cicero, *In Caecilium*, XV: 48)
‘I see that he is very vigorous and practised.’
- b. **BENE MANE** HAEC SCRIPSI (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, IV: 9, 2)
‘I wrote this very early in the morning.’
- c. **BENE LIBENTER** VICTITAS (Terence, *Eunuchus*, V: 8, 44)
‘You live with much pleasure.’
- d. **BENE DISSIMULATUM** AMOREM (Terence, *The Woman of Andros*, I: 1, 132)
‘Entirely disguised love.’
- e. ET DURAVIT **BENE PER TRES EBDOMADAS** (Anonymous,
Chronicon Placentinum)
‘And it lasted for three full weeks.’

In all the above instances in which it modified a phrase, be it adjectival, verbal, or adverbial, **BĒNĒ** had scope over that specific phrase.

In a further attested use (Rosén 2009), **BĒNĒ** functions as a so-called attitudinal sentential adverb expressing a positive evaluation of a proposition (hence taking scope over the entire proposition); as such, it translates as ‘luckily, fortunately, auspiciously’:

- (4) **BENE MIHI EUENIRE, QUOD MITTAR AD MORTEM** (Cicero, *Tusculanes*, I: XLI)
‘That it is fortunate for me to be sent to death’ (from Rosén 2009: 425, ex. 87)

Rosén (2009: 425) also notes that it is the preposing of **BĒNĒ** to the left periphery in the cleft construction in (4) that gives it the attitudinal sentential-adverb interpretation: should **BĒNĒ** occur in the right periphery, as an afterthought, it would have a degree-adverb reading.

It can therefore be concluded that, already in Classical Latin, **BĒNĒ** was polysemous, performing a number of functions that showed it could have narrow scope (either sentence-internally, over a given phrase) or wide scope (over the whole sentence). Polysemy is the starting point for a systematic understanding of semantic change (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 11) in which the shift from meaning A to meaning B necessarily involves a stage where both A and B are available.

also the notions of ‘perfectivity’ and ‘perfection’, referring to an action being carried towards completion (cf. its contrast with *imperfectivity* and *imperfection*), which naturally develops into the meaning ‘completely’.

The polysemy displayed by *BĒNĒ* was therefore the result of a series of semantic shifts that were underway. The manner adverb and degree adverb uses of *BĒNĒ* can be considered as contributing to the content level of the proposition (in Hansen's 2008: 16 sense), while its use as an attitudinal sentential adverb belongs to the context level.

Let us sketch a developmental path.

In its most basic function, *BĒNĒ* was an adverb of positive evaluation, expressing the speaker's subjective take on the manner a state or event unfolded. From bringing a positive evaluation on a process, a manner adverb such as *BĒNĒ* often implied the process having taken place thoroughly, exhaustively, and completely. Verbs of cognition make a particularly favourable environment for this extension to take place, affording bridging contexts; that is, opportunities for an expansion of meaning (Evans and Wilkins 2000: 550; Heine 2002). *Understanding something well*, for example, equals to understanding it *thoroughly* and *completely*: quality and degree of understanding are metonymically connected but cognitively intertwined. The new meaning is compatible with the modification of scalar adjectives and nouns, with which it appears first, with verbs that include a notion of gradability in their semantics, and then, with numbers, in which it conveys a sense of fullness. Its use with adjectives presents a further opportunity for semantic expansion, cementing the small shift from completeness to high intensity, committing it to its degree adverb use. It is when co-occurring with gradable adjectives of negative evaluation that *BĒNĒ* divests itself from any links to positive evaluation and shifts to the pure expression of high intensity. Finally, a broadening in scope allows a further extension of its positive evaluative function (as in (4)), and *BĒNĒ* becomes an attitudinal sentential adverb with scope over the whole proposition.

14.2.2 *PLĀNĒ*

In Classical Latin we also find another adverb with a very similar range of meanings, albeit occurring much less frequently,³ *PLĀNĒ*, from the adjective *PLĀNUS* 'even, flat', but also 'simple, plain, clear, obvious'.

Similarly to *BĒNĒ*, *PLĀNĒ* also had two main meanings: a manner adverb that could variously mean 'evenly, simply, clearly, plainly' (5a) and an intensifier 'wholly, entirely, utterly, completely, thoroughly, quite' (5b).

³ Logeion (www.logeion.uchicago.edu) reports *BĒNĒ* as the 324th most frequent word, and *PLĀNĒ* as 'unranked', since it appears in the corpus fewer than 50 times. Although the Logeion corpus does not include all existing Latin texts, they can be taken as representative of a general frequency trend of the two adverbs.

- (5) a. SED UT APPELLANT QUI **PLANE** ET LATINE LOQUUNTUR (Cicero, *Philippic*, 7: 17)
 ‘But I do so like those who speak plain Latin (i.e. right out, without circumlocution)’.
- b. QUOD RELIQUOS COHEREDES CONVENISTI, FECISTI **PLANE** BENE (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, XIII.6: 2)
 ‘You did quite well meeting the remaining coheirs.’

Finally, *PLĀNĒ* could be used in affirmative answers to express complete agreement, reported, in Lewis and Short (1879: 1384), as an anteclassical usage (6a). It also displayed what Rosén (2009: 342) labels a ‘modal-particle’ usage, conveying ‘the writer/speaker’s view and estimate of its validity and actuality as well as of its relevance to the current situation or immediate context’ and clarifying ‘the writer/speaker’s emotional state and intention’ (Rosén 2009: 321). Considering the wider context, *PLĀNĒ* in (6b) seems to act at the sentential level, much along the lines of *BĒNĒ* as an attitudinal sentential adverb (witness also the sentence-initial position), expressing the speaker’s strong conviction of what follows:

- (6) a. STRATOPHANES: TUM POL EGO ET DONIS PRIUATUS SUM ET PERII.
 PHRONESIUM: **PLANE** ISTUC EST.
 (Plautus, *Truculentus*, 617–618)
 ‘Stratophanes: Then I’ve been deprived of gifts and I’m utterly ruined.
 Phronesium: That’s obvious/exactly so.’
- b. **PLANE** SI FILIAM HABEREM, AURICULAS ILLI PRAECIDEREM. (Petronius 67,10; adapted from Rosén 2009: 342, ex. XIIb)
 ‘Surely if I had a daughter, I would cut her ears off’.

In Late Latin, *PLĀNĒ* is also reported as a connective particle expressing contrast (Rosén 2009: 356) and as a modal particle with a complying/conceding function (Rosén 2009: 359). Although no examples are provided (and I myself have not been able to identify any), which increases the speculative nature of what follows, it is plausible to imagine that it may have originated in an inference from its use as a strong affirmation to be interpreted with a broader function of foregrounding, hence suitable to express contrast. This is explored in Section 14.6.

It is interesting to note that both *BĒNĒ* and *PLĀNĒ* were positive evaluative adverbs that could also be used as degree adverbs. This fits in with a general tendency for expressions of quality to be reanalysed as expressions of quantity via metonymy, as described above. We can therefore assume a shared cline of diachronic development along the lines given in (7):

- (7) Manner adverb (positive evaluation) > (completeness) > degree adverb (high intensity) > attitudinal sentential adverb [> modal particle].⁴

At the same time, we also notice the reported further developments of *PLĀNĒ* as a particle expressing contrast and concession.

We return to the significance of this cline and its role in assessing the potential existence of a semantic-pragmatic cycle in Section 14.6. Let us now turn to the development of these two adverbs in Occitan.

14.3 Occitan *be(n)*

In Old Occitan (8th to 15th century), two reflexes of Latin *BĒNĒ* were attested, *ben* and *be*. In the texts that make up the corpus on which this study is based,⁵ the earliest attestations are of *ben*, occurring from the 11th century, while *be* first appears in the 12th century. Anglade (1921: 184–185) remarks that intervocalic ‘n’ in Latin (as in *BĒNĒ*) had become word final after the loss of the final vowel and was unstable in proto-Romance in the majority of words, particularly when the adverb preceded a word beginning in *s*, *f*, *v*, *m*. This would suggest that the alternation of *ben* and *be* was phonologically motivated. Phonology, perhaps, played a part in the earlier period: as the data show, in its first attestations in the 12th century *be* appears exclusively with an enclitic pronoun, suggesting a link between enclisis of a pronoun and *be*. However, from the onset there are indications that hint at a deeper distinction between the two forms, in terms of both their semantic properties (*be* tends not to function as a manner adverb but seems to encode information typical of attitudinal sentential adverbs) and their syntactic properties (*be* occurs predominantly at the periphery of sentences).

⁴ This term, ‘modal particle’, is chosen over similar others (e.g. discourse marker, pragmatic particle, etc.) because it includes ‘modality’, an expression of the speaker’s modal stance; that is, their subjectivity. It is not meant to be understood as a choice based on the widely accepted opposition between the German-type modal particles that generally have fixed scope and syntactic position, and discourse markers, characterized by variable scope and syntactic position.

⁵ This is a self-compiled corpus of selected texts originating from the broad Languedocian area, written between the 11th and 19th centuries, and totalling over 500,000 words. For the earlier period (11th to 15th centuries), they include a mixture of mystery plays and *chansons de geste*, and, although in verse, they have the advantage of being of a more discursive and narrative register than the troubadour’s poetry. For the later period (16th to 19th centuries), they are exclusively plays. Overall, all the texts have a high degree of dialogue, which can be taken to be as representative of the spoken language of the time as can reasonably be expected. This is a summary of the texts included in the corpus (with the acronyms used in the examples and the length in lines) used in this study: 11th century, *La Canso de Sancta Fides* (CSF), 593; 12th century, *Roman de Jaufré* (JAU), 10,974; 13th century, *Canso de la Crotzada* (CCA), 9,578; and *Flamenca* (FLA), 8,094; 14th century, *Guilhem de la Barra* (GDB), 5,344; 15th century, *Lo Jugamen General* (JDE), 2,730; *Mystère rouergat de l’Ascension* (MDA), 1,047; *Mystère rouergat de la Passion* (MDP2), 4,516; and *Istoria Petri et Pauli* (PEP), 6,104; 16th century, *Le billet de logement* (BDL), 364; 17th century, *Theatre de Beziers* (TDB), approx. 9,540; 18th century, *Lo Tresaur de Substancion* (TDS), approx. 2,310; 19th century, *Lou pan dou pecat* (PDP), approx. 2,145.

Before we look more in detail at the distribution of *ben* and *be* across the centuries, it is useful to have an overview of the trend in their frequency in the older period (i.e. 11th to 15th centuries). Presenting the overall frequencies of the two adverbs (expressed as a ratio of raw number of occurrences over length of text (in number of lines)) for each century, Figure 14.1 offers an indication of the trend in their distribution. While *ben* is significantly more frequent than *be* between the 11th and 13th centuries, in the 14th century we see a shift, and in the 15th century the use of *ben* declines and *be* takes over. This does not continue in the later period, as discussed in Section 14.3.2, in which *be* almost disappears and with it, the specific modal-particle-like usage that it expresses in the 15th century.

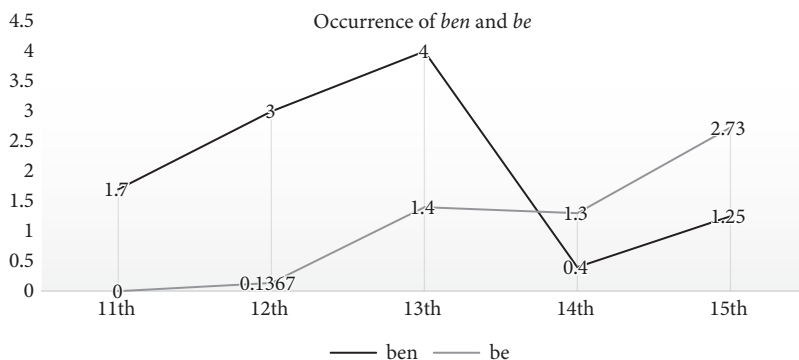


Figure 14.1 Frequency of *ben* and *be*

14.3.1 Earlier period: 11th to 15th centuries

14.3.1.1 11th to 13th centuries

In the 11th century, only *ben* is found: it functions as a manner adverb (8a) and as an intensifier with adjectives (8b):

- (8) a. *Qui ben la diz a lei Francesca* (CSF 20)
 ‘Who says it well in the French way’.
- b. *q’aqell a ben prod et agud*; (CSF 184)
 ‘Since she is very brave and prudent’.

Be makes its first appearance in the twelfth century: it is found *exclusively* with an enclitic pronoun, and functions as an attitudinal sentential adverb (cf. Vendler’s ‘illocutionary’ adverb (1984: 303) or Cinque’s ‘speech act’ adverb (1999: 12)):

- (9) a. *Be-m poira tener per aurat* (JAU 1232)
 ‘Rightly/Indeed me he could consider insane’
- b. *Ez ieu voill mais receber mort/en outra terra, be-us o dic* (JAU 8052–3)
 ‘And I would rather receive death/in another land, in truth/indeed I tell you’.

The manner adverb function is only available to *ben*. With verbs of cognition, *ben*, too, can take on an attitudinal sentential adverbial use ((10a) and (10b)):

- (10) a. *Ez es s'en ab aitant intrada/ E fes castiar sa mainada/ Que non faisons bruida ni nausa,/ E que laison dormir en pausa/ Jaufre, si com pro cavallier,/ Que ben cre que l'aia mestier.* (JAU 7375–7380)
 ‘And she went into her chamber/ and admonished her servants/ not to make chatter nor noise,/ and that they let sleep a bit/ Jaufre, although an excellent knight,/she truly believed that he needed it’
- b. *E dis a Jaufre tot süau:/ “Seiner, ben sabetz escarnir,/ E gent parlar e plazer dir”* (JAU 7868–7870)
 ‘And she replied to Jaufre most softly:/ “My Lord, you really know how to mock,/ and speak courteously and say pleasant things”’.

In the 13th century, we see that both *be* and *ben* can function as attitudinal sentential adverbs. The distribution of *be*, however, is determined by the presence (or lack of it) of an enclitic pronoun, as shown in (11a) (cf., however, (11b), in which *ben* is followed by a dative clitic). *Ben* can also be a degree adverb modifying a past participle used adjectivally (11c):

- (11) a. “*Sener, ben aug e be-us enten*” (FLA 1182)
 “‘My Lord, well I hear and well I understand you’”.
- b. “*Ben l’ò dirai e be-i sera*” (FLA 6954)
 “‘For sure I’ll tell him and for sure he’ll be here’”.
- c. *Una capa de negra saia/ Ben feita vest* (FLA 2220–2221)
 ‘He puts on a cloak of black woollen cloth, well made’.

With verbs of cognition, both *ben* and *be* are found, although it is mainly *be*; they can either have a manner reading or an attitudinal sentential adverb reading:

- (12) a. *be sabon que la mortz lor es aparelhea* (CCA 17 029)
 ‘For they knew well /They truly knew that death awaited them’.

- b. *Avan que de Nemur[s] issis/ Mi cuh eu **be** que la sentis;* (FLA 1077–1078)
‘Before he left Namur,/ it seemed to me for sure that he had tasted her.’
- c. *Na Girauda fo preza que crida e plora e brai,/ en un potz la giteron a
travers, **ben** o sai;* (CCA 71 011–2)
‘Lady Girauda was taken, and she shrieked and cried and shouted,/
they threw her across into a well, I truly know this/ I know this
well.’

14.3.1.2 A noticeable change: 14th and 15th centuries

In the 14th century, *be* overtakes *ben* in frequency (69 and 22 occurrences respectively). *Be* is still used with enclitics ((13a) and (13b)), both are used as manner adverbs ((13c); *be* also co-occurs with intensifiers, (13d)), and both can modify a participle used adjectivally (13e):

- (13) a. *Pueyss enapres, que **be-m** sove* (GDB 4016)
‘Then after, I remembered well/indeed.’
- b. *si fos qui **be-l** saubes menar* (GDB 4031)
‘If it were him who you know well how to chase away.’
- c. *Comjat van pendre **ben** e gent* (GDB 108)
‘(With) permission they go and take (them) carefully and gently.’
- d. *amdos s’endevengron trop **be*** (GDB 2371)
‘Both made a very good agreement.’
- e. ***ben** adobat e **be** prendent* (GDB 2477)
‘Well adorned and a real expert.’

With verbs of cognition, however, only *be* is found, and both manner adverb and attitudinal sentential adverb readings are available:

- (14) a. *gardatz vos **be** que no parletz* (GDB 3664)
‘Be very careful (lit. watch yourself well) not to talk (about this).’
- b. *mas **be** say ques anc no-y fon us* (GDB 3860)
‘But I know well/truly that there were none.’ (i.e. guests who did not
leave rich)

It is in the 15th century that *be* truly takes over and becomes significantly more frequent than *ben*, although *ben* is still the adverb of choice for the expression of the manner adverb function (except for a single occurrence in JDE, cf. (15c)):

- (15) a. *quar el ho fara mot ben.* (MDP2 1016)
 ‘Since he will do it very well.’
- b. *Notari, ieu fariey ben mon mestier* (MDP2 4479)
 ‘Notary, I would do my job well.’
- c. *he te porvesiriey mot be* (JDE 2074)
 ‘And I will provide for you very well.’ (i.e. amply, with plenty of food)

In terms of the intensifier function, this is mainly expressed by *ben* and only very marginally by *be*:

- (16) a. *Aquest amava ben fort* (MDP2 2208)
 ‘He loved this one intensely.’
- b. *Areguardatz lo be fermamen* (MDP2 4887)
 ‘Look at him very carefully.’

With verbs of cognition, there is a mixed picture, and we find some variation depending on the text. In JDE we essentially only find *be* (there is one instance of *ben*, cf. (17b)), in MDA we only find *ben* (17c), and in MDP2 we find both ((17d) and (17e)):

- (17) a. *He, mayre, vos sabetz be* (JDE 1210)
 ‘Mother, you know well/indeed.’
- b. *He sabetz ben, senhor/, Que Misericordia es tot jorn perpetuala;*
 (JDE 1029–30)
 ‘You know well/ You truly know, Lord,/ that Mercy is eternal and forever.’
- c. *que aquesta gen ago tant ben saubut* (MDA 808)
 ‘That these people had indeed known.’
- d. *Tot aiso me hemagena ben ieu* (MDP2 4044)
 ‘All (things) like this I indeed imagine myself.’
- e. *Nos sertas be conoysem* (MDP2 5722)
 ‘We certainly know well.’

Across the three texts, *be* very frequently co-occurs with attitudinal sentential adverbs such as *veramen* ‘truly’ and *sertas, de sertas, sertanamen* ‘for sure, surely’. The verbs are all verbs of saying and verbs of cognition.

The overall tendencies for this earlier period can be summarized as follows:

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|---|--|
| <p>(18) <i>Ben:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manner and degree adverb throughout • extends into attitudinal sentential adverb with verbs of cognition | <p><i>Be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initially co-occurs with enclitics • attitudinal sentential adverb • occurs readily with verbs of cognition • not available for the manner adverb reading |
|---|--|

In the 15th century, a new use emerges, and it is exclusively restricted to *be*: occurring in negative polar questions, *be* displays a modal-particle-like behaviour. In the example in (19), *be* cannot possibly be interpreted as either manner adverb, intensifier, or attitudinal sentential adverb. The context makes it clear that it is used to express a strong affirmation by the speaker, and it opposes a strong counterexpectation on the part of the hearer:

- (19) *Per que davant lo jutge tu me acusas?/ He las! no sabes **be** tu que ton mal conselh,/ Ton fastich he ton erguelh/ De Paradis te an fach tonbar?* (JDE 194–197)

‘Why do you accuse me in front of the Judge?/ Alas! Don’t you BE know that it was your perverse inspiration,/ your presumption and your pride/ that made you fall from Heaven?’

(19), extracted from a scene of *Lo Jutgamen General* ‘Judgement Day’, is uttered by Saint Michael as a response to Lucifer (JDE 106–147) who proclaims his innocence of all the sins that have been attributed to him. The response, ‘*He las! no sabes **be** tu que ton mal conselh,/ Ton fastich he ton erguelh/ De Paradis te an fach tonbar?*’, is a strong assertion that puts forward a view of what happened that starkly contrasts with Lucifer’s declaration, also witness the preposing to a focalized position of the phrases expressing the real reasons (i.e. *ton mal conselh, ton fastich he ton erguelh*). It could be translated as ‘Alas! You know *full well* ...’

This question very closely resembles instances of modern French *bien* occurring in polar questions, which have been analysed by Hansen (1998b) and Waltereit and Detges (2007) as a modal-particle use of *bien*:

- (20) *Vous avez **bien** reçu mon message?*

‘You *did* receive my message, didn’t you?’ (Waltereit and Detges 2007: 63, ex. 4)

As a modal particle used in polar questions, French *bien* has a positive bias: it strongly affirms the speaker's belief in the truth of the proposition over which it takes scope, in this case that the hearer received the speaker's message, and at the same time it signals that the speaker is aware of the opposite belief being held by their hearer (cf. Hansen 1998b: 114). As a modal particle, French *bien* is polyphonous and it acts at the speech-act level (expressing a strong affirmation in contexts with a strong counterexpectation).

Similarly to its French counterpart, *be* also expresses strong affirmation where a strong counterexpectation exists. In (19), the speaker is denying the hearer's denial that they are responsible for their own fall. Put schematically,

- (20) Hearer (X)'s belief: $\neg A$
 Speaker (Y)'s utterance: $\neg(\neg A)$

where A stands for the proposition 'X is responsible'.

Although no strong generalizations can be drawn from so few examples, it is worth mentioning that in all these instances, *be* co-occurs with verbs of cognition, which were discussed above (Section 14.2) as offering an opportunity for semantic expansion. Furthermore, all the instances of *be* as an affirmative particle occur in dialogic exchanges, contexts in which more than one point of view is present and entertained by the participants. This facilitates the development of polyphonous elements, that is, linguistic items that are able to encode an 'awareness' of multiple voices/points of view (cf. Ducrot 1984). The properties displayed by *be* strongly point to its modal-particle nature along the properties laid out by Waltereit and Detges (2007: 63).

Let us now summarize the development, so far, of Occitan *ben* and *be*. Following Hansen's (1998b: 128) proposal for French *bien*, I assume that the basic use of (proto-)Occitan *ben* was the manner adverb, from which, via metonymy, the use as a degree adverb was derived.⁶ Just like the development of *BĒNĒ* discussed in Section 14.2.1, this new extension of the meaning was compatible with the modification of scalar adjectives. In its extension of usage to modify verbs, verbs of cognition offered an opening for a shift towards expressing a strong affirmation. This allowed a further extension to an attitudinal sentential adverb with scope over the whole sentence. The final step of this development, into an affirmative modal particle, only applied to *be*. Affirming a state of affairs which is either explicitly or implicitly denied, requires something stronger than a simple declarative clause. The speaker needs to affirm that A does not only hold, but 'it holds WELL' (Waltereit and Detges 2007: 75), or 'INDEED it holds'. It was in dialogic exchanges, I claim, that the conventionalization of this affirmative use of *be* came about

⁶ It is entirely plausible that, in fact, the degree adverb reading was simply inherited from its Latin usage. Either way, the metonymic nature of the expansion of meaning does not change.

(cf. Waltereit and Detges 2007 for French *bien*).⁷ Such a trajectory is well attested: Traugott and Dasher (2002: 40) comment on the same directionality typically involved in the shift from ‘meanings that function at the propositional level (e.g., manner adverbials in event structures), to meanings with scope over the proposition (e.g., sentential adverbials), to meanings with scope over the discourse unit (e.g., adverbials in discourse marker function)’.

Figure 14.2 summarizes the developmental path followed by *ben/be*.

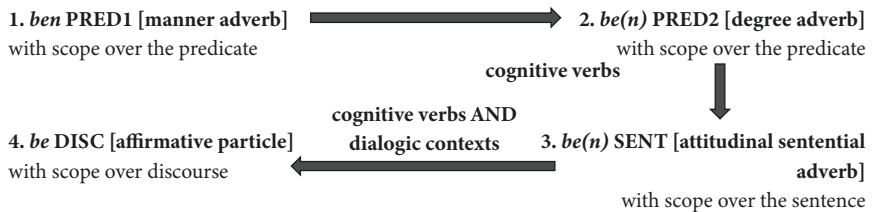


Figure 14.2 Development of Occitan *ben/be*, 11th to 15th centuries

14.3.2 Later period: 16th to 19th centuries

The relative linearity of the path followed by *ben* and *be* in the earlier period is not reflected in what we see in the later period. This is possibly due to the choice of texts, which for the later period originate from a broader area (unlike those from the earlier period, which are mainly from what Alibert classifies as the Southern and Northern dialects (Alibert 1935/1976)).

In the 16th century there are no instances of *be*. *Ben* is used as a degree adverb, alongside *tant* (21a), as an attitudinal sentential adverb (21b), and, only marginally, as a manner adverb (21c):

- (21) a. *Que petto coumo un roussin/ Et veissino coum'un poullin / Qu'à sa perssouno tant rougnouso/ Emay, certos, ben mourvellouzo* (BDL 125–128)

‘Who breaks wind like an old horse/ and suckles like a colt,/ who has a very mangy face/ even, for sure, very snotty.’

- b. *Aquo, certos, faray ben you,/ Car vous vezes que syou bon home* (BDL 153–154)

‘This, for sure, I will do well/ indeed,/ because you can see that I am an honest man.’

⁷ Cf. Paoli (2020) for an account of how dialogic contexts have favoured the establishment of *pas* as the unrivalled postverbal sentential negator in Occitan.

- c. *Tantost parlavyan de la guerro, / N'ya que dizien qu'ero per terro, / May la tournon **ben** revelha* (BDL 145–148)

'Just now we were talking about the war, / there were some who said she was completely dejected, / but they revive her nicely.'

In the 17th century we find both *ben* and *be/bé*: both can be used as attitudinal sentential adverbs and as degree adverbs and *be* occurs in contexts where it may be interpreted as an affirmative modal particle (22a). Neither is found as a manner adverb: this is significant, since, as shown in the next section, this is when *pla(n)* begins to appear with this meaning.

- (22) a. *LE PAYSANT. Yeu saui **be** legi, mays ma viste es debile* (TDB)

'I DO know how to read, but my sight is weak' (possibly a modal particle, 'I can in fact read, in spite of what you think')

- b. *Tout so que vol es **ben** voulgut* (TDB)

'All you wish for is very appreciated.'

In the 18th and 19th centuries, once again only *ben* is found, mainly in collocation with verbs of cognition, functioning as an attitudinal sentential adverb and as a degree adverb, and in collocation with *oc* 'yes' to reinforce a positive answer to a question (23):

- (23) *Pascau: Setz-ti **ben** segur de vòstre fect?*

*Nicou: Oc-**ben** sai que!* (TDS)

'Pascau: Are you quite sure about your facts?

Nicou: Absolutely yes I know (i.e. I know without a doubt).'

No unambiguous uses of *ben* as a manner adverb are found, although with cognitive verbs there would naturally be a possibility for it to be read as such alongside its degree-adverb reading.

Let us now turn to the development of *pla(n)*.

14.4 Occitan *pla(n)*

Similarly to the situation in Latin, *pla(n)* is less frequent than *be(n)* in the Occitan texts that make up the corpus, and consequently there are considerably fewer examples across the centuries. This is compounded by the added complexity of the degree of overlap between the epicentre of the area in which *pla(n)* seems to be used historically (mainly seen in Gascon) and the diatopic distribution of the texts in the corpus. From the early 17th century, the use of Gascon in writing is

restricted mainly to the Béarn region (Bec 1986: 93), an area that is not covered by the texts. For this reason, the discussion of *pla(n)* in the later period relies mainly on secondary sources.

14.4.1 Earlier period: 11th to 15th centuries

In the earlier period, we see a rather fluid situation, in which there are a number of forms (i.e. *plan*, *de plan*, *pla*, *plannamens*, and *planamentz*) with a number of meanings, ranging from a manner adverb meaning ‘calmly, slowly, gently’ ((24a), 12th century; (24b), 14th century; (24c), 15th century), to a manner adverb meaning ‘plainly, simply’ ((24d), 13th century), to an attitudinal sentential adverb ((24e), 13th century), to a modifier of expressions of time and place ((24f) and (24g), 13th century). The most frequent usage is as a manner adverb meaning ‘calmly, gently, slowly’ and ‘simply, plainly’:

- (24) a. *Pueis a-l ditz tot suau e plan* (JAU 9178)
 ‘Then he said to him, very softly and calmly.’
- b. *Ayssi cavalguan bel e pla* (GDB 5152)
 ‘They rode this way, nice and gently.’
- c. *Parthemius: Menen-lo plan, lo bon guarson, / Ou aultroment el ploraré* (PEP 4434–5)
 ‘Parthemius: “Take him there gently/slowly, the good boy, / otherwise he will cry”.’
- d. *E lo coms de Montfort fe que cortes e bar/ a la gent de la terra lo fe el pla mostrar* (CCA 40 019–20)
 ‘The count of Montfort behaved like a man of honour/ and to the people of the land, he showed his body plainly.’
- e. *Que ben vos dic en ver de plan*, (JAU 3699)
 ‘I tell you truly and certainly.’
- f. *al mati, pla a l'alba* (CCA 106 004)
 ‘In the morning at first light.’
- g. *pla desobre las rengas* (CCA 211 134)
 ‘Right above the straps.’

14.4.2 Later period: 16th to 19th centuries

It is not until the late 17th to early 18th century that examples of *pla(n)* meaning ‘well’ start to appear: this is in concomitance with *be(n)*’s manner adverb function

decreasing sharply in the eighteenth century. As well as a manner adverb (25a), *pla(n)* also functions as a degree adverb (25b), and also continues to mean ‘slowly’ (25c):

- (25) a. *Se voly que tout ane pla* (TDB)
 ‘If I want that everything goes well.’
 b. *que ne souy pla iouyous* (TDB)
 ‘That I’m very happy about it.’
 c. *Anén plan* (TDB)
 ‘Let’s go slowly.’

The 19th-century texts are plays originating mainly from the Provençal area, the Eastern area in which reflexes of Latin *PLĀNĒ* are only maintained as adverbs meaning ‘slowly’ in the current varieties (26), especially in the reduplicated form *plan plan* (cf. Fettuciari et al. 2003). We return to the significance of this in Section 14.6.

- (26) *Entre que ié siéu plus, rèn se fai, tout vai plan* (PDP)
 ‘If I’m not here, nothing gets done, everything goes slowly.’

14.5 *Be(n)* and *pla(n)*: 20th to 21st centuries

In modern Occitan, *be(n)* and *pla(n)* continue to coexist. An overview of their distribution at the beginning of the 20th century is afforded by the *Atlas Linguistique de la France* (ALF, map 131), in which the two can be seen sharing the semantic and pragmatic space between the manner adverb ‘well’, the manner adverb ‘thoroughly’, the attitudinal sentential adverb ‘indeed, truly’, and a possible modal-particle-like usage. Also from the beginning of the 20th century, a record of *be(n)* and *pla(n)* in collocation with *o(c)* ‘yes’ to reinforce a positive answer to a question, ‘absolutely’ (Ronjat 1913: 229), a usage that still exists today (cf. Fossat 2006: 161: *òc ben, òc plan* ‘absolutely, of course yes’). Following from this affirmative particle usage, *be* is, not surprisingly, never found in negative clauses (Suïls Subirà and Ribes 2015: 559).

Research from the 21st century has classified a reduced form of *ben*, *b(é)*, among the so-called enunciative particles in Gascon,⁸ a set of adverb-derived particles that, pragmatically, act on the illocutionary level (and express the speaker’s subjective attitude towards the propositional content put forward in

⁸ The term *énonciatif* was first introduced by Ronjat (1913: 79) and applied to *que*, *e*, *ja*, and *o* to indicate their function to ‘renforcer une énonciation’ (Ronjat 1913: 82); that is, to reinforce a statement by modifying the illocutionary force of a sentence.

their sentence;⁹ cf. Fossat 2006), and, syntactically, tend to occur at the clausal peripheries. In line with its strengthening of a positive response, in declarative, root clauses, *b(e)* reinforces the affirmation, highlighting ‘the assertive strength of the proposition put forward’ (Pusch 2002: 111) and denoting an ‘explicit commitment by the speaker’ (Suils Subirà and Ribes 2015: 560):

- (27) *b’ei aquò* (from Pusch 2002, 111)
 ‘Indeed/Exactly, that’s it’

Be is also used in exclamative clauses, in which it both marks the sentence as an exclamation (witness the ungrammaticality of (28b’), from Morin 2008: 140) and can strengthen the assertion ((28a), from Fossat 2006: 162):

- (28) a. *B’a nevat tota la nuèit!*
 ‘It has really snowed all night / Indeed it has snowed all night!’
 b. *Maria be canta plan!*
 b’. **Maria canta plan!*
 ‘How well Mary sings!’

Furthermore, it can also be used in yes/no interrogatives that are not seeking information but confirmation (28c):

- (28) c. *Be soparàs dab nosauts?* (Romieu and Bianchi 2005: 133)
 ‘You are dining with us, right?’

In (28c) the speaker is checking on previously made plans that perhaps had not been overtly acknowledged by both parties, but the sentence does not seem to be a reaction to an implicit denial of that state of affairs. It is, however, possible to obtain a modal-particle-like reading along the lines of what was found in the 15th century (cf. Section 14.3.1). In the following example, from Camelat (1914/2000: 77), reported in Suils Subirà and Ribes (2015: 568), while the first *be* is an attitudinal sentential adverb, strongly asserting the truth of having just seen the lady, the second is polyphonic, and results from the contrast between the actual situation (i.e.

⁹ This is not, however, a universally accepted idea (cf. already Rohlfs 1935/1977: 205; more recently, Pusch 2000, 2002): Pusch (2002: 112) rejects the notion that *be* (and *ja*) may be enunciative particles because of their relative syntactic mobility, and their ‘adverbial nature’. He concedes, however, that they are particles expressing the speaker’s attitude and the assertive strength of their proposition, which makes them incompatible with other enunciative particles. This is not the place to engage in a discussion on the specific classification of *be*: what is relevant here is its ability to express the speaker’s subjective attitude towards a given state of affairs.

the lady is hiding and seems not to want to see Gaston Febus) and what previous events (i.e. the lady's words that she would be seeing Gaston Febus the following day) have led the character to believe:

- (29) *Ò blanga Dauna, dauna aimada, ont t'escones?*
Be t'èi vista, com de la frinèsta espiavi,
per adès! Ont ès donc partida (...)?
bé'm digós: a doman! E dongas, non truca aqueth doman tà nos?
 'Oh White Lady, beloved lady, where are you hiding?
 I have surely seen you, as I looked from the window,
 A moment ago! Where have you gone, then?
 And yet you *did* say to me "till tomorrow!" And so, isn't that tomorrow
 knocking (at the door) for us?'

This ability of *be* to express a contrast between different types of evidence available to a speaker (often represented by the opposition of facts and intentions) as in (29) leads Suïls Subirà and Ribes (2015: 573) to conclude that *be* may be a marker of evidentiality.

In line with this, *be* is reported in what appears to be a modal-particle-like function, making a strong affirmation that seems to go against the addressee's implicit or explicit objections (Toulzer 2023: 229, vol. 1), much along the lines of what is claimed by Suïls Subirà and Ribes (2015):

- (30) *Perqué reboutrègos? Be t'à croumpat la maisou.*
 'Why are you complaining? He *did* buy you the house.'

As for *plan*, it functions as the manner adverb 'well' (31a) and the degree adverb (31b) in the Western Occitan varieties (Ronjat 1913: 229):

- (31) a. *La mea mair que cosina plan.* (Gascon)
 'My mother cooks well.'
 b. *N'ès pas plan content deu son tribalh* (Gascon, Romieu and Bianchi 2005: 377)
 'He is not very happy with his job.'

Toulzer (2023: 152–153, vol. 3) records the following usages for *pla* in the district of Ariège:

1. Manner adverb 'well' (32a);
2. Degree adverb 'very' (32b), as well as 'much, a lot' (32c);
3. Attitudinal sentential adverb 'certainly' (32d):

- (32) a. *Qu'à pla parlat.*
 'He has spoken well.'
- b. *La filho qu'èro pla contento.*
 'The girl was very happy.'
- c. *Que minjo pla.*
 'He eats a lot.'
- d. *On pot pla cercá l'sèou enterèt, mes sense poutá prejudici as aoutis.*
 'One can certainly seek their interest, but without harming others.'

In addition, *pla* is also reported as a sentence-initial particle expressing the speaker's regret at the state of affairs asserted by their proposition:

- (32) e. *Pla nou màc diguères.*
 'Pity you did not tell me about it.'

Finally, in Gascon *pla(n)* can also be used as a negative response to a yes/no interrogative:

- (32) f. A: *Es gouarit?*
 B: *Oh! Plan* (Foix 2003: 524)
 'A: Is he better? (lit. Is he cured?)
 B: Well, no.'

Map 131 of the ALF offers an overview of the diatopic distribution of *be(n)* and *pla(n)* at the beginning of the 20th century, which can be interpreted as the synchronic reflection of the diachronic gradual change that the two elements have been undergoing.

The relevant stimulus sentences are *bien* as a manner adverb meaning 'well' (i.e. *Il faut savoir bien nager pour passer outre quand elle est gonflée* 'You need to know how to swim well to get past it when it is swollen'), as a manner adverb in collocation with a verb of cognition meaning 'well, thoroughly' (i.e. *Nous connaissons bien le chemin* 'We know the way well/thoroughly'), as an attitudinal sentential adverb meaning 'certainly, for sure' (i.e. *Si c'était bien cuit, j'en mangerais bien* 'If it is well cooked, I will certainly have some'), and as a possible affirmative modal particle (i.e. *Nous savions bien que vous venez* 'We DO know that you came [in spite of the fact that you are claiming you did not]').

14.6 Discussion

Observing the unfolding of the developments from Latin *BĒNĒ* and *PLĀNĒ* through to Old and Modern Occitan *be(n)* and *pla(n)*, a similar trajectory is recognizable:

from manner adverb to sentential adverbs to modal particle. As mentioned at the end of Section 14.3.1.2, Traugott and Dasher (2002: 40) comment on the same directionality typically involved in the shift from ‘meanings that function at the propositional level (e.g., manner adverbials in event structures), to meanings with scope over the proposition (e.g., sentential adverbials), to meanings with scope over the discourse unit (e.g., adverbials in discourse marker function)’. These sequential shifts are part of a cline; that is, a recognized tendency for items with the same (or similar) source meanings to develop similar meanings and pragmatic functions, hence following a recognizable developmental path.

The Occitan data show that both *be(n)* and *pla(n)* are on the same path, with *be(n)* preceding, in diachronic terms, *pla(n)*: of particular relevance is the timing of concomitance of *be(n)* losing its ability to function as the manner adverb ‘well’ and *pla(n)* acquiring it, which happens around the 17th and 18th centuries.

The consequence of that shift is reflected, synchronically, in the diatopic distribution of *be(n)* and *pla(n)* in the Southern regions of France where the two coexist. If the stimulus sentences that create map 131 in the ALF are arranged along a line of increasing levels of grammaticalization/pragmaticalization, that is, each element is less grammaticalized/pragmaticalized than the one to its right, as shown in (33), a revealing picture appears.

- (33) 1. manner adverb ‘well’ > 2. degree adverb ‘thoroughly’ > 3. attitudinal
sentential adverb ‘certainly, for sure’ > 4. modal-particle-like usage.

As we move from the South-West, where all of these are realized by *pla(n)/plo*, towards the South-East, we see a gradual shift from *pla(n)* to *be(n)*. The shift follows the cline in (33) from left to right, with the following results:

- | | | |
|---------|---|------|
| (34) a. | 1. <i>pla(n)</i> > 2. <i>pla(n)</i> > 3. <i>pla(n)</i> > 4. <i>pla(n)</i> | West |
| b. | 1. <i>pla(n)</i> > 2. <i>pla(n)</i> > 3. <i>pla(n)</i> > 4. <i>be(n)</i> | ↓ |
| c. | 1. <i>pla(n)</i> > 2. <i>pla(n)</i> > 3. <i>be(n)</i> > 4. <i>be(n)</i> | ↓ |
| d. | 1. <i>pla(n)</i> > 2. <i>be(n)</i> > 3. <i>be(n)</i> > 4. <i>be(n)</i> | ↓ |
| e. | 1. <i>be(n)</i> > 2. <i>be(n)</i> > 3. <i>be(n)</i> > 4. <i>be(n)</i> | East |

The area in which this cline is witnessed loosely corresponds to the administrative region of Occitania, including the Departments, from West to East, of Lot-et-Garonne, Gers, Hautes-Pyrénées, Hautes-Garonne, Tarn-et-Garonne, Lot, Cantal, Aveyron, Tarn, Ariège, Aude, Pyrénées-Orientales, Hérault, Lozère, Gard and Bouches-du-Rhône. Plotting these five stages on a map provides the picture in Figure 14.3.

The locations that represent the different stages of the cline are coded as follows in Figure 14.3:

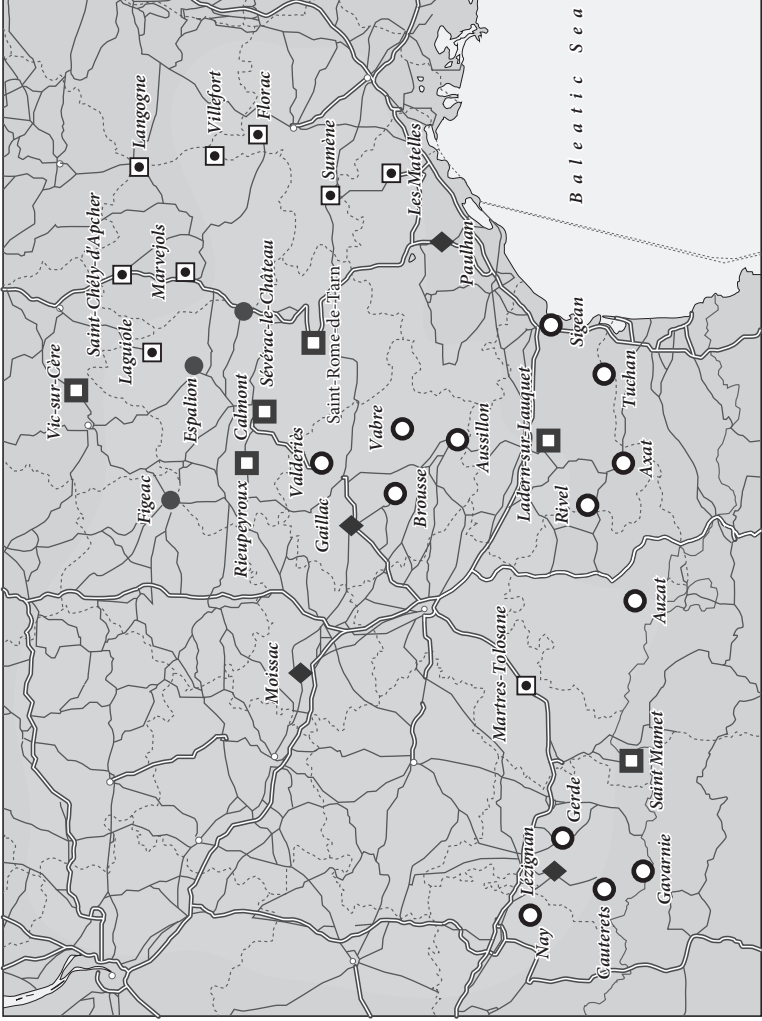


Figure 14.3 Distribution of the $pla(n)-be(n)$ cline

- Stage a: 1. *pla(n)* > 2. *pla(n)* > 3. *pla(n)* > 4. *pla(n)*—○
- Stage b: 1. *pla(n)* > 2. *pla(n)* > 3. *pla(n)* > 4. *be(n)*—◆
- Stage c: 1. *pla(n)* > 2. *pla(n)* > 3. *be(n)* > 4. *be(n)*—◻
- Stage d: 1. *pla(n)* > 2. *be(n)* > 3. *be(n)* > 4. *be(n)*—●
- Stage e: 1. *be(n)* > 2. *be(n)* > 3. *be(n)* > 4. *be(n)*—◻

In some Western Gascon varieties, a reflex of Latin *BĒNĒ* is replacing *pla(n)* as a manner and a degree adverb. Palay (1936: 149, vol. 1) reports the use of *bién*, perceived as a ‘gallicism’, nevertheless commonly used instead of *pla(n)*:

(35) a. *Qu’arribarà bién.*

‘He will arrive well (i.e. he will get there alright)’

b. *Qu’èy bién aparentat.*

‘He/it is very similar’

In these varieties, represented, for example, by point 722 on map 131 in the ALF (Promilhanes, in the Lot Department), we see three forms at different stages on the cline, with *be* leading the procession, *plo* following, and *bién* newly coming on the scene:

(36) 1. *bién* > 2. *plo* > 3. *plo* > 4. *be*

There is little doubt that what is being observed here is a cline of semantic-pragmatic change embarked upon by lexical items with a similar source meaning: it is this source meaning, or ‘source determination’, as Bybee et al. (1994: 9) call it, that contributes to a shared path. As noted by Pons Bordería and Llopis Cardona (2020: 323), sharing the same (or similar) source meanings is a ‘precondition of which the outcome might be the development of similar functions.’ There is, however, also a strong indication that this is an instance of a semantic-pragmatic cycle. At the onomasiological level, we see that the lexical items under investigation are etymologically unrelated, they have developed in the same direction, from content-level manner adverb to context-level modal particle, and as a group they embody a cyclical pattern, starting on the path at different times and renewing the meanings/functions along the path. At the semasiological level, both Latin *BĒNĒ* and Occitan *be(n)*, and Latin *PLĀNĒ* and Occitan *pla(n)*, undergo parallel semantic shifts, and in both languages, we see the manner adverbs that at the beginning have a content-level function develop context-level functions and become pragmatized. Differently from what is typically associated with a simple grammaticalization cline, at various points in the renewal, we see these lexical

items developing unique functions that are not showed by the others, despite the fact that they all share the same trajectory: *plānē* as a marker of contrast and a modal particle with a complying-conceding function in Late Latin; *be* as a marker of exclamatory illocution, an interrogative particle seeking confirmation, and a possible marker of evidentiality; and *pla(n)* as a sentence-initial particle communicating the speaker's regret at the state of affairs expressed in their proposition, and a negative response to a yes/no interrogative.

These individual differences are plausibly due to distinct inferences that are triggered in the context in which each lexical item is used. They point to the fact that the word 'cycle', as discussed by Hansen (e.g. 2018b: 143), is not to be interpreted in a literal sense as comprising an identical point of departure and arrival, but more as a symbolic representation of a cyclical renewal. This is also a consequence of the fact that, in spite of all the lexical items sharing a similar meaning at the beginning of the cycle, which naturally favours similar contextual inferences, each lexical element is individual in its usage and necessarily triggers unique inferences.

A semantic-pragmatic cycle could be characterized, then, as comprising two ingredients, so to speak: a core common denominator representing the shared path, followed by an individualized functional outcome, responsible for the distinctive functions that are exclusive to each element undergoing the cycle. An established path of grammaticalization (i.e. a cline), determined by semantic features of the source meaning, is shared by a sequence of etymologically unrelated but semantically similar lexical items that renew their predecessor's path, only to be renewed themselves by their follower. Crucially, though, these semantic-pragmatic cycles do not produce identical outcomes, the differences being the result of unique inferences triggered by each of them.

From this perspective, then, what differentiates a semantic-pragmatic cycle from a traditional grammaticalization cline is precisely the development of those unique functions that result from different lexical items evoking distinct inferences. As a simplification, a semantic-pragmatic onomasiological cycle could be understood in terms of the two ingredients discussed above as having a traditional grammaticalization cline as the common denominator, renewed cyclically by etymologically unrelated lexical items, and dynamized by the individual contextual inferences that each lexical item on that cline triggers.

The particular semantic-pragmatic cycle that has been investigated here is determined by the source meaning that all lexical items share as they embark on it: the path that sees a manner adverb turning into a sentential adverb and a modal-particle-like element is crosslinguistically well established (cf. Traugott and Dasher 2002). Much along the lines of Hansen's (2018b, 2020b) proposal for a cycle specific to temporal-aspectual adverbs, I'd like to propose a cycle for manner adverbs, more specifically for adverbs that express a subjective evaluation of the manner in which a state of affairs takes place (just as 'well' does). This would also suggest that the notion of 'manner adverb' may belong to the restricted set of semantic

notions that are likely to be sources of grammaticalization. If we interpret language change to be pragmatically motivated, then it makes sense that those elements that express a high degree of subjectivity should undergo change more readily. An apropos observation: in those Eastern areas of Provence in which *pla(n)* still only means ‘slowly’, the adverb has not developed any corresponding sentence- or discourse-level functions.

14.7 Conclusions

This contribution has explored the development of two lexical items in Occitan and their Latin predecessors, with a view to addressing the question of how semantic-pragmatic cycles differ from traditional grammaticalization clines. The evidence afforded by the data has been interpreted as a cycle that was renewed a number of times in Latin, Old Occitan, and modern Occitan varieties. Reflecting on the relation between a grammaticalization cline and a semantic-pragmatic cycle, it was proposed to view a cycle as comprising of two core elements: a crosslinguistically strong series of sequential steps of change (i.e. a cline), the expression of semantic properties of the source meaning of the lexical items, and a varying functional outcome, the result of the unique inferences triggered by the individual lexical items. The established crosslinguistic validity of the path leading from manner adverb to sentential adverb to modal particle also supported the proposal of the existence of a ‘manner adverb’ cycle, along the lines of the temporal-aspectual cycle suggested by Hansen (2018b, 2020b). The element of subjective evaluation expressed by adverbs such as ‘well’ is crucial for the development of context-level functions that reflect an increased degree of subjectivity as the element progresses along the cycle.

Further crosslinguistic studies are, needless to say, necessary to test the existence of such a semantic-pragmatic cycle; the particular cases investigated in this contribution, however, make such a hypothesis highly plausible.