Abstract

This paper discusses the controversial question of the Romance outcomes of Latin laxāre 'to let'. The problem raised by these outcomes can be formulated as follows: where does the initial consonant of d-forms (<laxāre>) come from? Is the change of [l] into [d] phonetically regular? If so, how to explain that in some Romance varieties it is limited to the outcomes of laxāre? On the basis of dialectological evidence, it is suggested that the initial d-stop is the result of a fortition process, and this process is taken to have first originated in imperative contexts, probably due to the high frequency of these contexts.