

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyse, from a diachronic perspective, the use of the Tobler-Mussafia law, a linguistic principle that establishes rules for the distribution of pronominal clitics in a sentence. The law applies to all Romance languages during the medieval period. The thesis focuses specifically on Old Italian. First, clitics are defined from phonological, morphological, and syntactic points of view, presenting their basic characteristics, with a particular emphasis on object clitics. Next, the Tobler-Mussafia law itself is defined, and all contexts in which it is applied are presented. The second part of the thesis is devoted to corpus analysis. Using the CODIT diachronic corpus, a sample of selected verbs is analysed to examine the application of the Tobler-Mussafia law in literary Italian. The sample covers the period from the 13th century to the beginning of the 20th century.