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**French « voilà »:  
an uninflectable form arising from an inflecting verb**

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The French particle *voilà* clearly does not inflect. However, with regard to its syntactic behavior, this is quite surprising: The various configurations in which it occurs suggest that *voilà* actually behaves like a verb (cf. amongst others Bergen/Plauché 2005; Morin 1985; Moignet 1974), and should therefore belong to the group of inflecting expressions par excellence. In particular, *voilà* takes complements, assigns accusative case (which becomes visible when looking at the type of clitics adjoined to it), and can even be embedded as the only element of a relative clause.

From a diachronic point of view, the origins of the particle lie in the combination of the imperative form of the verb *voir* ('to see') with the locative adverb *là* ('there'). It was hence originally a multiword construction that shows certain similarities to a phenomenon dubbed "constructional uninflectedness" by Spencer (2020, 148). But in the case of Modern French *voilà*, can the first, verbal part (*voi-*) still be considered as an inflecting form representing an imperative? The working hypothesis for this paper will be that even this last trace of inflection got lost over time, given the fact that during the medieval period, the expressions *veez la*, containing the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural imperative and *vei la*, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular imperative, both exist (cf. Oppermann-Marsaux 2007). First results of a corpus research suggest that after a period of parallel use, the singular imperative form is the one usually used to create the merged particle around the 16<sup>th</sup> century, yet without being restricted in number and thus taking over the function of both formerly inflected forms.

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