

***Anticausatives in Latin and early (Italo)-Romance:
the semantics of predicates and the syntax of voice***

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This paper investigates the role played by the interplay of the *aspectual template of verbs*, the *verb's inherent meaning* (the 'root'), and the *nature of the –P subject* (e.g., animacy and control) in determining the distribution of the different strategies available in the diachrony of Latin and in early Italo-Romance to mark anticausativization (the (medio-passive) *-r* form, the reflexive pattern and the active intransitive in Latin, the active intransitive and the reflexive in old Italian).

The different forms are usually described in the literature as interchangeable (Feltenius 1977 for Latin). I will argue, instead, that the structural and lexical aspects of the verb meaning (following Levin & Rappaport Hovav 2005, int. al) as well as the inherent and relational properties of verbal arguments affect the use of the different patterns, interacting with the encoding of voice, both synchronically and diachronically.

In particular, building on Cennamo, Eythórsson & Barðdal 2015, I will show that the selection of the reflexive strategy in Latin was initially confined to inherently telic predicates (achievements and accomplishments) (e.g., *frangere* 'break', *dum calor se frangat* - till heat RFL breaks - 'Till the heat goes down', *fervefacere* 'heat up', *se patinae fervefaciunt* RFL - pans heat-up - 'The pans heat up'), whilst the active intransitive mainly occurred with verbs of variable/reduced telicity (e.g., *lenire* 'soothe', *irae leniunt* - anger soothes - 'Anger soothes'), with activities (e.g., *volutare* 'roll', *saxa volutant* - stones roll - 'Stones roll') and, marginally, with accomplishments lexicalizing a reversible state (e.g., *aperire* 'open', *foris aperit* - door opens - 'The door opens'). Gradually, in the course of time, the reflexive spreads to non-inherently telic (e.g., *minuere* 'decrease', *minuente se morbo* - decreasing RFL illness) and atelic predicates (e.g., *servare* 'keep', *mala se servant* - apples RFL keep - 'Apples keep'), and the active intransitive expands to inherently telic predicates (e.g., *rumpere* 'break'), until in late texts the three anticausative forms become truly interchangeable (*rumpunt dentes/rumpuntur dentes/dentes se rumpunt* - break teeth/break-R teeth/teeth RFL break - 'Its teeth break' (sc. *equus* 'horse')).

The equivalence between the anticausative strategies obtaining in Late Latin is also found in some early Italian vernaculars, e.g., old Florentine, where the active intransitive and the reflexive alternate with all verb classes (e.g., degree achievements, *aumentare* 'increase', *le pene ... s'aumentano* - the punishments RFL increase - 'The punishments increase' vs. *le biade aumenteranno* - the corn will-increase - 'Corn will increase', with hints of the gradual gaining ground of aspectual notions such as telicity in determining the occurrence/preference of the reflexive form to mark anticausatives, interacting with the reconstitution of the voice system in the transition to Romance (Cennamo 2012)

The Latin and Old Italian data, therefore, appear to offer an interesting contribution to the current debate on the role played by the verb's inherent meaning and its interaction and integration with the event structure template of predicates in determining argument realization, showing the relevance of these notions for the diachrony of anticausativization in Latin and the transition to Romance.

References

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