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Abstract

So-called psychological verbs such as *temere* 'fear', *preoccupare* 'worry', and *piacere* 'like' denote a particular state that involves an experiencer and a second role taker that causes, initiates or is related to the psychological state. They present an extremely varied argument structure across languages, that arranges these two roles in apparently inverted hierarchies and assigns them different grammatical functions (subject, direct, indirect and prepositional objects). This paper aims to provide a descriptively adequate taxonomy of psych-verbs in Latin in a comparative perspective with Italian. We individuate seven classes of psych-verbs and show that they distribute across the transitive, unergative, unaccusative pattern with the possibility of externalizing either argument, therefore creating three "direct" and three "inverted" classes. The seventh class is impersonal, with no external argument. We show that the diachronic variation and apparent idiosyncrasies displayed by some verbs can be explained by the proposal that the seven classes are potentially available to all psych-roots. For this reason, psych-verbs present a high degree of vulnerability in language contact and change which results in intra-language optionality and diachronic variation.

Keywords	Latin; Italian; psychverbs; experiencer verbs; diachronic change; parameter change
Taxonomy	Syntax, Morphology
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Psychological Verbs as a vulnerable syntactic domain. A comparative study of Latin and Italian

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1 **Psychological Verbs as a vulnerable syntactic domain. A comparative study of Latin and** 2 **Italian**

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6 a particular state that involves an experiencer and a second role taker that causes, initiates or is
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8 languages, that arranges these two roles in apparently inverted hierarchies and assigns them
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10 to provide a descriptively adequate taxonomy of psych-verbs in Latin in a comparative perspective
11 with Italian. We individuate seven classes of psych-verbs and show that they distribute across the
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20 21 **1. Introduction**

22 Psychological verbs denote a particular state that involves an Experiencer and a second argument
23 that causes, initiates or is related to the psychological state. This has been defined either as Theme
24 (Belletti and Rizzi 1988, Grimshaw 1990), or Stimulus (Talmy 1985), or Target (Dowty 1991,
25 Pesetsky 1995), capturing different properties that characterise it. Both Experiencer and Stimulus
26 present complex semantic features. On the one hand, Experiencer is the semantic role of an entity
27 which experiences or undergoes the effect of an action (or an event) and for this reason, it is more
28 similar to a Patient than to an Agent although it is prototypically [+ human], on the other hand,
29 Stimulus elicits or accelerates a psychological state or condition so it is more similar to an Agent
30 than to a Patient although it is prototypically [-human] (a.o. Lehmann 1991, Croft 1993, Smith 1993,
31 Pustet 2015, Dik 1997. Cf. Dahl and Fedriani 2012 for an overview).

32 The particular semantic status of the two roles has consequences on their syntactic
33 configurations. As a matter of fact, Experiential predicates are less transitive than agentive
34 predicates (a.o. Hopper and Thompson 1980, Dixon and Aikhenvald 2009, Shibatani 2009).

35 Furthermore, they present an extremely varied argument structure that arranges these two roles in
36 different, in some cases apparently inverted orders and assigns them different grammatical
37 functions (subject, direct object, indirect and prepositional objects).

38 The literature of the last three decades (a.o. Perlmutter and Postal 1984, Rosen 1984, Grimshaw
39 1990, Pustejovsky 1991, Pesetsky 1995, White 2003, Levin and Rappaport Hovav 2005, Borer
40 2005, Ramchand 2008) has aimed to capture the alignment of thematic roles and syntactic structure.
41 In so doing, it has focused on the *fear/frighten*-dichotomy exemplified in (1) where the two
42 transitive verbs display apparently opposite alignments crosslinguistically: *fear* has a subject
43 Experiencer (henceforth SE) and an object Stimulus (OS); *frighten* has an ‘inverted’ structure in the
44 sense of Bossong (1998) with a subject Stimulus (SS) and an object Experiencer (OE). The symbol
45 “>” indicates the relative order of the two arguments:

46

47 (1)a. Mary fears conflicts SE > OS

48 b. Conflicts frighten Mary SS > OE

49

50 Belletti and Rizzi (1988) introduce a third class of psych-verbs in Italian, which coexists with the
51 transitive dichotomy (2) and does not appear to have an English equivalent: the *piacere* class (3),
52 with a SS and a prepositional object Experiencer (henceforth POE). They note that unlike the
53 transitive verbs in (2), the *piacere* class allows for the dative POE to appear in preverbal position,
54 which they claim to be the sentential subject position, parallel to quirky subjects in Icelandic (also
55 cf. Cardinaletti 1997, 2004):

56

57 (2)a. Maria teme i conflitti SE > OS

58 ‘Maria fears conflicts’

59 b. I conflitti preoccupano Maria SS > OE

60 ‘Conflicts worry Maria’

61 (3)a. A Maria piace la tranquillità POE > SS

62 to Maria likes the peacefulness

63 b. La tranquillità piace a Maria SS > POE

64 the peacefulness likes to Maria

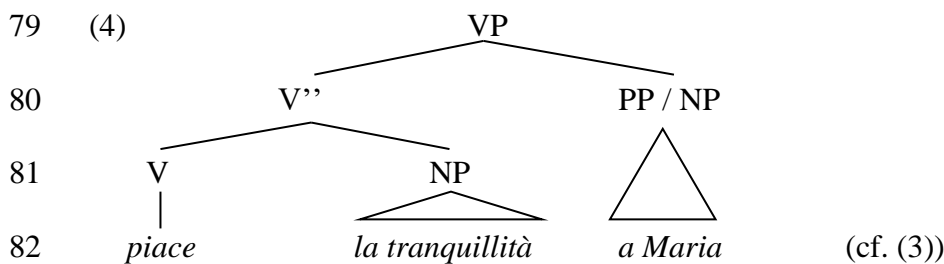
65 ‘Maria likes peacefulness’

66

67 Belletti and Rizzi (1988) show that the SS of *preoccupare* does not behave as an external argument
68 as regards extraction and binding and is more similar to the internal subject of unaccusative verbs,

69 despite the fact that *preoccupare* combines with auxiliary *avere* in compound tenses. For this reason
 70 *preoccupare* cannot be considered as truly unaccusative. They also show that the accusative OE
 71 does not behave like an internal argument and propose *preoccupare* is specified in the lexicon for
 72 inherent accusative assignment to the OE, which is structurally parallel to the POE of the *piacere*
 73 class. They therefore claim that the hierarchical alignment of Experiencer > Stimulus is universal,
 74 complying with the Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH, cf. Baker 1988:46)
 75 according to which “Identical thematic relationships between items are represented by identical
 76 structural relationships between those items at the level of D-structure”. The proposed structure for
 77 *preoccupare* and *piacere* is (4), which is set in a pre-X-bar-theoretic form:

78



83 *preoccupano* *i conflitti* *Maria* (cf. (2b))

84 The inverted constructions of (2b) and (3) are derived by independently motivated movement of the
 85 Stimulus to subject position across the Experiencer. This is achieved by different lexical
 86 specifications of the three classes. *Temere* externalises the Experiencer and has no Case
 87 specification; the two arguments therefore get structural Case (Nominative on the SE and
 88 Accusative on the OS). The other two classes assign inherent Case to the Experiencer: prepositional
 89 dative in the case of *piacere* and inherent accusative in the case of *preoccupare*. The Stimulus (or
 90 Theme in Belletti and Rizzi’s terms) is therefore the only argument to be externalised.

91 Belletti and Rizzi’s system predicts the non-existence of a genuine transitive with a SS. This is
 92 supported by the non-canonical behaviors of the SS and of the OE of the *preoccupare* class. The SE
 93 of a transitive psych-verb can bind a reflexive, as in (5a), while SS of an inverted transitive cannot,
 94 as in (5b). The OS of a direct transitive can be the subject of a passive clause, as in (6a), while the
 95 OE of an inverted transitive cannot. The passive auxiliary *venire* (lit. ‘come’) in (6b) ensures that
 96 the past participle is not reinterpreted as an adjective (6c):

97

- 98 (5) a. Gianni teme se stesso
 99 ‘Gianni fears himself’
 100 b. *?Gianni preoccupa se stesso
 101 ‘Gianni worries himself’

- 102 (6) a. Maria veniva temuta dai suoi allievi
 103 'Maria was feared by her pupils'
 104 b. *?Maria veniva preoccupata dai suoi allievi
 105 'Maria was worried by her pupils'
 106 c. Maria era preoccupata (per i suoi allievi)
 107 'Maria was worried for her pupils'

108

109 We refer the interested reader to Belletti and Rizzi (1988) for the innumerable diagnostics to
 110 attribute transitivity, unergativity, and unaccusativity in Italian and the abundant literature that
 111 questions them, cf. Arad (1998) for subject Experiencers, Landau (2002) for object Experiencers,
 112 Pesetsky (1995) and Bouchard (1995) for both. We simply note that at least for Italian, there seems
 113 to be great variation among individual speakers, as regards such contrasts as those in (5)-(6),
 114 suggesting that that we are not dealing with clear-cut classes, but with a continuum, as argued for
 115 by Cennamo (1999) and Bentley (2006).¹ This is captured by our proposal substantiated in section 3
 116 that the same psych-root may have more than one argument structure at one and the same stage of a
 117 language.

118 Belletti and Rizzi (1998) predict the existence of unergative verbs that externalize the
 119 Experiencer and assign inherent case to the Stimulus, as is the case of *gioire* in (7a) and impersonal
 120 verbs that do not externalize any role because they assign inherent case to both arguments, as is the
 121 case of *importa* in (7b):

122

- 123 (7)a. Gianni gioisce solo di questo
 124 'Gianni rejoices only of this'
 125 b. A me importa solo di questo
 126 'To me matters only of this'

127

128 Belletti and Rizzi (1998) also argue that the reflexive clitic *si* which appears with many verbs of the
 129 *preoccupare* class, as in (8a) is an unaccusative marker and not a genuine reflexive, as shown by the
 130 ungrammaticality of a strong reflexive in (5b). This is confirmed by the fact the Stimulus is realized

¹ We find the contrasts in (5)-(6) quite solid, while we do not find many counterexamples reported by Pesetsky (1995, 1990) and Bouchard (1995, quoting Pesetsky 1990) as grammatical. In (i) we report a single example, where the star in parentheses indicates our divergent judgment:

(i) (*)Gianni venne spaventato/terrificato da questa prospettiva alle cinque.
 Gianni came scared/terrified by this perspective at five

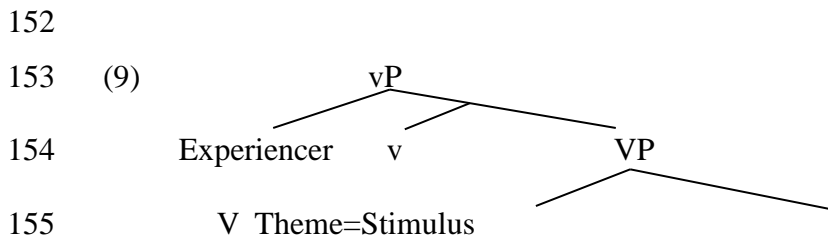
131 by a PP introduced by *di*, which cannot be projected in the case of the inverse transitive
 132 *preoccupare*, only compatible with instrumental *con*:

- 133
- 134 (8)a. Gianni si preoccupa di questo
 135 Gianni CL.REFL worries of this
 136 ‘Gianni worries about this’
- 137 b. Gianni preoccupa Maria (*di questo / con il suo comportamento).
 138 Gianni worries Maria of this / with his behavior

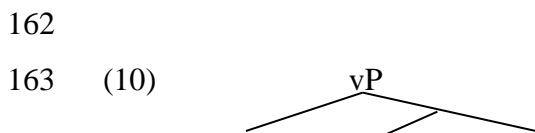
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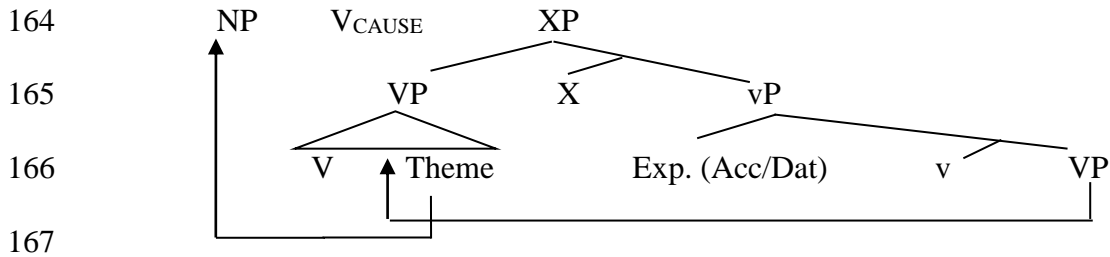
140 Folli (2002) argues that the *preoccupare* / *preoccuparsi* alternation cannot be fully derived in
 141 syntax, as there are inverted transitives, e.g. *affascinare* ‘fascinate’ that do not have a reflexive
 142 counterpart, e.g. **affascinarsi*, and vice versa, there are unaccusative reflexives like *fidarsi* ‘trust’ or
 143 *pentirsi* ‘regret’ that do not have a transitive counterpart **fidare*, **pentire*. We therefore take
 144 *preoccuparsi* as a sixth class that is characterised as being formed by direct unaccusative psych-
 145 verbs.

146 In a recent paper, Belletti and Rizzi (2012) revisit their proposal in the spirit of Antisymmetry
 147 (Kayne 1994) which only allows for left-branching specifiers. In this perspective the higher position
 148 of the Experiencer implies that the first-merge configuration of the arguments of the six classes
 149 must be as in (9). The *temere* class maintains this configuration with the Experiencer naturally
 150 taking the function of clausal subject, where it receives nominative Case, and the Stimulus, which
 151 Belletti and Rizzi label as Theme, receiving structural accusative Case:



157 In the case of the *preoccupare* and *piacere* class, the Stimulus crosses over the Experiencer through
 158 smuggling, in the sense of Collins (2005), namely with movement of the whole VP to the specifier,
 159 of a higher projection, call it SpecXP. From that position, the Theme/Stimulus moves to the
 160 Specifier of a higher vP, which contributes a causative feature to the verb (also cf. Arad (1998),
 161 Bentley (2006), Folli and Harley (2007)):





168 To summarize so far, Belletti and Rizzi (1988) point out six classes of psych-verbs in Italian, two of
 169 which with “inverted” Stimulus > Experiencer order. The six classes distribute across the transitive
 170 / unergative / unaccusative spectrum, according to many tests. In (11), we provide the test of
 171 auxiliary selection for each verb class: transitives (11a), inverted transitives (11b) and unergatives
 172 (11c) select *avere*; unaccusatives (11c), inverted (anti-causative) unaccusatives (11d), and
 173 impersonal *importa* (11f) select *essere*:

174

175

176 (11) a. Mario ha sempre temuto la professoressa di matematica

177 ‘Mario has always feared his Math teacher’

178 b. Gli esami di matematica hanno sempre preoccupato Mario

179 ‘Math tests have always worried Mario’

180 c. Maria ha gioito della buona notizia

181 ‘Maria has rejoiced of the good news’

182 ‘Maria was happy about the good news’

183 d. Maria si è sempre preoccupata della qualità della vita

184 Maria CL.REFL is always worried of the quality of life

185 ‘Maria has always cared about the quality of her lifestyle’

186 e. A Maria sono sempre piaciute le mele

187 to Maria are always liked the apples

188 ‘Maria has always liked apples’

189 f. A Maria non è mai importato dei soldi

190 to Maria not is never cared of the money

191 ‘Maria never cared about money’


192

193 Table (12) provides a taxonomy of argument structures with the case specification for the internal

194 argument:


(12)	verb class	externalised argument	internal argument
a.	transitive <i>temere</i> ‘fear’	Experiencer	Stimulus (structural accusative)
b.	inverted transitive <i>preoccupare</i> ‘worry’	Stimulus	Experiencer (inherent accusative)
c.	unaccusative <i>preoccuparsi</i> ‘worry’	Experiencer	Stimulus PP (<i>di/per</i>)
d.	inverted unaccusative <i>piacere</i> ‘like’	Stimulus	Experiencer PP (<i>a</i>)
e.	unergative <i>gioire</i> ‘be glad’	Experiencer	Stimulus PP (<i>di</i>)
f.	unaccusative impersonal <i>importa</i> ‘matters’	0	Experiencer PP(<i>a</i>) Stimulus PP (<i>di</i>)

195

196 Our classification confirms and complies with Dahl and Fedriani’s (2012) study of the variation in
 197 the argument structure of experiential constructions in early Indo-European languages (early Vedic,
 198 Homeric Greek and early Latin). Starting from Verhoeven’s (2007) study of experiential structures
 199 in Yucatec Maya, in which the author identifies five classes of experiencer verbs (bodily sensation,
 200 emotion, cognition, volition and perception verbs), Dahl and Fedriani (2012) individuate five
 201 possible syntactic configurations. First, they distinguish between a direct construction with an
 202 Experiential subject and an inverted construction with a Stimulus subject, following Bossong
 203 (1998); then they individuate three syntactic arrangements for the former (one-place experiential
 204 predicates; nominative Experiencer combined with an accusative Stimulus; nominative Experiencer
 205 combined with an oblique (genitive or dative) Stimulus); and two for the latter (subject Stimulus
 206 combined with an accusative Experiencer; subject Stimulus combined with a dative Experiencer).
 207 They find these constructions with a large variety of verb types in the three languages they
 208 investigate confirming the extremely syntactic varieties of psych-verbs 

209 Dahl and Fedriani do not address genuine transitive and impersonal constructions; the latter are not
 210 represented in early Indo-European languages except for Latin (also cf. Cuzzolin and Napoli 2008).
 211 This fact suggests that their presence in Latin is not a conservative feature and its loss in Italian, as
 212 we will show in section 3, cannot be related to an on-going change towards personification and / or
 213 transitivization (*pace* Cavallo 2014 and other literature reported in Fedriani 2012).

214 Belletti and Rizzi (1988, 2012) do not really deal with the three classes in (12c-d). These classes are
 215 also disregarded by more recent neo-constructionist approaches, which concentrate on the

216 *fear/worry* dichotomy (cf. such as Ramchand (2008), Lohndal (2014), Acéto-Matellàn (2016)). In
217 this paper, we want to fill this gap, treating all possible classes in a comparative approach and
218 aiming to provide a sound taxonomy that can be useful to future work, independent of the different
219 theoretical persuasions inside and outside the generative approach. 

220 The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 sets out the selectional properties of the six classes in
221 Latin and argues for a seventh logically possible class, namely inverted unergative verbs. It also
222 shows that none of the diagnostics presented for Italian can apply successfully, due to independent
223 properties of Latin, and suggests four diagnostics for Latin. Section 3 briefly presents the diachronic
224 changes between Latin and Italian directly or indirectly impacting on the syntax of psych-verbs and
225 on diagnosing transitivity / unaccusativity / unergativity. It also presents intra-language variation,
226 discussing psych-verbs that belong to more than one class at the same stage of the same language
227 and argues that variation is due to the instability of the argument structure of psych-verbs, which is
228 present at all stages of any language.

229

230 **2. Seven classes of psych-verbs in Latin**

231 In this section, we apply to Latin the taxonomy exemplified in (12) for Italian, to discover that Latin
232 displays a further class of impersonal psych-verbs, which we claim to be inverted unergative. In so
233 doing, we present some diagnostics applicable to Latin, which substantiate our classification;
234 namely, the possibility of passives with *ab/a*+ablative diagnoses transitive verbs, the lack of a past
235 participle in the paradigm diagnoses unergative verbs, the deponent or semi-deponent Voice and the
236 past participial adjective with active meaning diagnoses unaccusative verbs. These diagnostics work
237 only in one direction; namely, the presence of the diagnostics is evidence for the given
238 classification. Lack of the diagnostics is however not direct evidence for exclusion in the given
239 class.

240 Due to lack of native informants, we can only search for the application of the diagnostics in the
241 corpus, with obviously uncertain results. The other difficulty to diagnose psych-verbs in a corpus is
242 the fact, to be substantiated in section 3 below, that the argument structure of psych-verbs is
243 typically unstable at every stage of a language due to the semantic characteristics of both
244 Experiencers and Stimuli, as we argued in section 1. For this reason, apparent inconsistencies in the
245 diagnostics may be related to the independent possibility for the same verb to have more than one
246 argument structure.

247

248 2.1 Transitive and inverted transitive psych-verbs

249 Let us start with the *temere / preoccupare* dichotomy. In (13), transitive *timeo* has an active and a
250 passive form, parallel to Italian *temere* in (2a) and (6a). Note that the circumstantial Experiencer is
251 realised as *a/ab*+ablative parallel to the circumstantial Agent in passive constructions:

252

253 (13) a. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentis*
254 fear.1P.SG.PRES Danaos.PL.ACC and present.PL.ACC bringing.PL.ACC
255 ‘I fear the Greeks even if they bring presents’ (Verg. *Aen.* 2,49)

256 b. *Sic ira [...] timetur a pluribus*
257 thus anger.F.SG.NOM fear.3P.SG.PRES.PASS by most.PL.ABL
258 *sicut deformis persona ab infantibus*
259 like deformed mask.F.SG.NOM by children.M/F.PL.ABL (Sen. *Dial.* 2,11,2)
260 ‘Thus anger is feared by most people just as a deformed mask is by children’

261

262 In (14) the inverted transitive *perturbo* apparently presents a passive form, opposite to what is
263 expected for inverted transitives in Belletti and Rizzi (1988). But the Stimulus in (14b) is as
264 *de*+ablative, parallel to what we find with the unaccusative / deponent *quaeror* ‘lament’ in (14c):

265

266 (14) a. *sed perturbat nos opinionum varietas*
267 but worry.3P.SG.IND.PRES 1P.PL.ACC opinion. PL.GEN variety.F.SG.NOM
268 ‘But the variety of opinions worries us’ (Cic. *Leg.* 1,47)

269 b. *cum T. Annius ipse magis de rei publicae salute*
270 whereas T. A.NOM self.NOM more about republic.GEN welfare.F.SG.ABL
271 *quam de sua perturbetur*
272 than of his-own.F.SG.ABL worry.3SG.SUBJ.PRES (Cic. *Mil.* 1)

273 ‘Whereas Titus Annius is more concerned for the safety of the State than for his own’

274 c. *cives [...] de me querebantur*
275 citizen.PL.NOM about 1P.SG.ABL complain.3P.SG.IND.IMPF

276 ‘The citizens complained about me’ (Cic. *Verr.* II 3,132)

277

278 It is therefore plausible to suggest that (14a,b) is evidence for the presence in Latin of the indirect
279 transitive / unaccusative alternation parallel to Italian *preoccupare / preoccuparsi*, as we show in
280 the following section.

281

282 2.2 Unaccusative psych-verbs

283 A certain number of Latin psych-verbs display deponent or semi-deponent morphology (e.g. *vereor*
 284 ‘fear’, or *gaudeo* ‘rejoice’ and *(con/dif)ffido* ‘trust, mistrust’, respectively). As Dahl and Fedriani
 285 (2012) note, the (semi)deponent morphology is a crosslinguistic valid “strategy for distinguishing
 286 experiential predicates from agentive ones” (p. 346-347), the latter mostly presenting active forms
 287 (or both active and middle forms).

288 We suggest that (semi)deponent psych-verbs are the counterpart of Italian unaccusative psych-
 289 verbs,² which all display the pronominal clitic *si* unassociated to a thematic role (cf. the pair
 290 *quaeror* / *lamentarsi* ‘lament’ *gaudeo* / *rallegrarsi* ‘rejoice’). This hypothesis is in line with much
 291 research that associates deponent and semi-deponent morphology to non-agentive subjects (cf. a.o.
 292 Ježek 2003, Gianollo 2010, Cennamo 2012). It is also corroborated by Cennamo’s (1999, 2012)
 293 work showing that insertion of an expletive reflexive as a marker of anti-causativity was already
 294 available in early Latin and came to gradually replace the eroded deponent *R*-inflection, as further
 295 discussed in section 3.³

296 Other (semi)deponent unaccusative psych-verbs realize the Stimulus mostly with bare ablative
 297 (15a) and (16b), but also with genitive (15b), dative (16a), and even (inherent) accusative (15c):

298

299 (15) a. *Ipsa liberatione et vacuitate omnis molestiae*
 300 this freedom.F.SG.ABL and absence.F.SG.ABL all.F.SG.GEN distress.F.SG.GEN
 301 *gaudemus*
 302 enjoy.1P.PL.IND.PRES (Cic. *fin.* 1,11,37)
 303 ‘We enjoy this freedom and absence of all distress’

304 b. *Voti gaudeo*

² This is not to say that there is a one-to-one correspondence between individual Italian unaccusative verbs (with *si*) and Latin (semi)deponent verbs. In fact, *queror* does not survive in the Italian lexicon as a root, while *gaudeo* has turned into intransitive *godere* ‘enjoy’. What is meant here is that direct unaccusativity in psych-verbs (which regards the presyntactic interface with the lexicon) has undergone a change in how it is expressed by inflectional morphology (which regards the postsyntactic interface with morphology).

³ It is generally true the accusative object of deponent and semideponent verbs cannot be turned into a nominative subject and that generally deponent and semideponent verbs do not provide the base for a *-tor/-trix* agentive nominalization, as predicted if the accusative is inherent, parallel to the accusative assigned by inverted transitives, according to Belletti and Rizzi (1988). Despite this fact, Embick (2000) argues against the inherent accusative hypothesis on the basis of sporadic passive forms with an overt prepositional agent: e.g. *ab amicis hortaretur* ‘[He] is exhorted by [his] friends’ (Varro in Pisc GL II 8,387,2) and on some agentive nominalizations of deponent verbs: e.g. *sequor* ‘follow’ > *secutor* ‘follower’, *aggredior* ‘assail’ > *aggressor* ‘assailer’, *consector* ‘follow’ > *consectatrix* ‘follower’. Gianollo p.c. notes that these participles are not directly formed from the deponent verb but from a frequentative root formed on its past participle. Frequentative roots are not deponent, and the very existence of these participles may not be relevant to the point at all.

305 request.N.SG.GEN rejoice.1P.SG.IND.PRES
 306 ‘I am glad of the request’ (Apul. *Met.* 1,24)
 307 c. Nunc furit tam gavisos homines
 308 now infuriate.3P.SG.IND.PRES so rejoiced.PAST-PART.M.PL.ACC man.M.PL.ACC
 309 suum dolorem
 310 his.M.SG.ACC pain.M.SG.ACC

311 ‘Now he is so furious over the general rejoicing for his discomforture (Cic. *fam.* 8,14,1)

312 (16) a. arcae nostrae confidito
 313 money.F.SG.DAT our.F.SG.DAT trust.IMPERAT.FUT.2.SG
 314 ‘Trust in our money’ (Cic. *Att.* 1,9,2)

315 b. alio duce plus confidere
 316 another.M.SG.ABL leader.M.SG.ABL more trust.INF.PRES
 317 ‘to trust more in another leader’ (Liv. 21,4,3)

318 As far as we can tell, the inherent case seems to be rather idiosyncratic with respect to possible
 319 nuances of interpretation. Note that it is not related to animacy, as ablative (realizing inanimate
 320 causes in genuine passives) appears on both inanimate (15a) and animate (16b) referents, and dative
 321 (usually taken to express a (human) Benefactive) appears on an inanimate referent in (16a). The
 322 accusative found with *gaudeo* in (15c) cannot be structural, if we take deponent morphology to be a
 323 marker of unaccusativity, but must be inherent as in the case of the object Experiencer of *perturbo*.
 324 Note that circumstantial accusative is present in Latin in common periphrases such as *magnam*
 325 *partem* (great.F.SG.ACC part.F.SG.ACC, ‘in great part’) or *id temporis* (that.NT.SG.ACC
 326 time.NT.SG.ACC, ‘at that time’), as noted by Traina and Bertotti (1985: 57), who also notes that
 327 the many neuter pronouns used adverbially are to be considered as being accusative, as is the case
 328 of *quid*, which means ‘what’ but also ‘why’, or of many neuter adjectives functioning as adverbs,
 329 such as *multum* ‘very / very much’, *ceterum* ‘moreover’. In these cases, accusative is certainly not
 330 structural. The assumption of inherent accusative in Latin is therefore independently motivated.

331 Latin *placeo* has the same inverted unaccusative structure as *piacere*, namely a subject Stimulus and
 332 an indirect object Experiencer expressed with dative case, as in (17). Parallel to what has been
 333 observed for *piacere* in (3) above, the order of the arguments is rather free. In (17a) we find a clause
 334 with Verb-first, preceding the dative Experiencer, which in turn precedes the subject Stimulus. In
 335 (17b) the dative Experiencer is preverbal and the subject Stimulus is postverbal. In (17c) the subject
 336 Stimulus is preverbal and the dative Experiencer is postverbal:

337
 338 (17) a. Placent vobis hominum mores?

339 like.3P.PL.IND.PRES 2P.PL.DAT man.M.PL.GEN behaviour.M.PL.NOM

340 ‘Do you like these mens’ behaviour?’ (Cic. *Verr.* II 3,208)

341 b. Quam multis placet illa [...] auctoritas!

342 how many.M.PL.DAT like.3P.SG.IND.PRES that.F.SG.NOM authority.F.SG.NOM

343 ‘How many like that kind of prestige?’ (Ps. Quint. *decl.* 17,8)

344 c. atque Afrae volucres placent palato

345 and African.F.PL.NOM fowls.F.PL.NOM like.3P.PL.IND.PRES palate.N.SG.DAT

346 ‘Fowls from Africa are sweet to taste (lit. the palate likes fowls from Africa)’ (Petron. 93)

347

348 Unfortunately, Latin is well known to have a generalized free order. The free order of arguments
349 cannot be a diagnostics in Latin, unlike Italian. In Latin, an inverted order of arguments is found
350 with all verb classes including direct (18) and inverted (19) transitive psych-verbs. The examples in
351 (18)-(19) show the wide variation in the position of the arguments with respect to the verb: in (18a)
352 and (19a), the verb is clause-final, in (18b) it is between the two arguments, and in (19b), it is
353 clause-initial:

354

355 (18) a. Deos nemo sanus timet

356 god.M.PL.ACC no one.M.SG.NOM honest.M.SG.NOM fear.3P.SG.IND.PRES

357 ‘No honest man fears the gods’ (Sen. *benef.* 4,19,1)

358 b. Eandem meretricem amaverunt duo iuvenes

359 same prostitute.F.SG.ACC love.3P.PL.IND.PERF two young men.M.PL.NOM

360 ‘The two young men were both in love with the same prostitute’ (Quint. *decl.min.* 344,12)

361 (19) a. Sin te auctoritas commovebat

362 If 2P.SG.ACC authority.F.SG.NOM sway.3P.SG.IND.IMPF

363 ‘If then the authority swayed you’ (Cic. *fin.* 4,22,61)

364 b. Commoverunt Vulcanum Veneris verba

365 touch.3P.PL.IND.PERF Vulcanus.ACC Venus.GEN word.NT.PL.NOM

366 ‘Venus’ words touched Vulcanus’ (Claud. *Don.* 2,8)

367

368 Given that Latin does not display left dislocation with pronominal clitics, it is a rather difficult to
369 decide whether an inverted order is triggered by discourse features or whether it targets a clausal
370 subject position as proposed by Belletti and Rizzi (1988) and Cardinaletti (1997, 2004) for the
371 prepositional Experiencer of the *piacere* class. More accurate quantitative and qualitative corpus
372 search is needed to confirm whether this is also the case of Latin.

373

374 2.3 Unergative psych-verbs

375 Unergative psych-verbs with an external Experiencer and an oblique Stimulus are verbs such as
376 *ardeo* ('love passionately') and *ferveo* ('rage') in (20), which display a subject Experiencer and
377 another argument in Ablative case. Note that in (20a) the ablative is assigned to the Stimulus, while
378 in (20b) no Stimulus is present and ablative appears on the result of the rage ('an uncommon
379 slaughter'):

380

381 (20) a. *donec non alia magis arsi*
382 *whilst not another.F.SG.ABL more burn.2P.SG.IND.PRAET*
383 'Whilst (Horace) loved no mistress more' (Hor. *Carm.* 3,9,5-6)

384 b. *perfertur nuntius hostem fervere*
385 *bring.3P.SG.IND.PRES.PASS news.M.SG.NOM enemy.M.SG.ACC rage.INF.PRES*
386 *caede noua*
387 *slaughter.ABL.F.SG new.ABL.F.SG* (Verg. *Aen.* 9, 692-3)

388 'Intelligence is brought that the enemy raged with uncommon slaughter'

389

390 The well known diagnostics to distinguish unergatives from unaccusatives in Italian are not
391 applicable in Latin. For example, *ne*-extraction and auxiliary selection do not apply, given the fact
392 that Latin does not have clitics and does not have auxiliaries in the active voice. Furthermore, any
393 argument or circumstantial can be non-overt in Latin, which can be characterized as a generalised
394 *pro*-drop language (cf. Luraghi (1997: 239), Spevak (2010: 66), Author et al. (2016) a.o.). For this
395 reason, lack of the Stimulus with *fervo* in (20b) cannot diagnose unergativity or unaccusativity.

396 A suggestive, even if not completely dependable diagnostics is the behaviour of participial
397 adnominal adjectives. We expect to find only present, no past participles with unergatives. We also
398 expect past participles to take the internal argument of unaccusatives and of direct transitives. This
399 is in fact the case. In dictionaries, *ardeo* and *ferveo* are reported to miss the past participle *tout*
400 *court*. The present participle of *ardeo* used as an adnominal predicate in (21a) contrasts with the
401 past participle of *placeo* in (21b), of *amo* in (21b), and of *vereor* in (21d):

402

403 (21) a. *animus audax, subdulus, [...]*
404 *character.M.SG.NOM audacious.M.SG.NOM underhanded.M.SG.NOM*
405 *ardens in cupiditatibus*
406 *burn.PRES-PART.M.SG.NOM in desires.F.PL.ABL*

407 'an audacious, underhanded character, burning in desires' (Sall. *Catil.* 5)

408 b. locus ambobus placitus
409 place.M.SG.NOM both.DAT.PL liked.PAST-PART.M.SG.NOM

410 'a place loved by both of them' (Sall. *Iug.* 81,1)

411 c. Lesbis amata
412 Lesbian.F.SG.NOM loved.PAST-PART.F.SG.NOM

413 'Beloved woman of Lesbos' (Ov. *Am.* 2,18,27)

414 d. minus veritus navibus
415 less worried.PAST-PART.M.SG.NOM ships.F.PL.ABL

416 'less worried about the ships' (Caes. *Gall.* 5,9,1)

417

418 From the discussion so far, it seems that unergative psych-verbs do not have an inverted
419 counterpart. We will fill this gap in the next subsection showing that the traditional label of
420 'impersonal verbs' include heterogeneous verbal classes among which inverted unergatives.

421

422 2.4 Revisiting so-called impersonals

423 Latin displays two classes of impersonal psych-verbs: a well-studied group of five verbs (*paenitet*
424 'regret/repent', *miseret* 'pity', *piget* 'bother', *puget* 'be ashamed', *taedet* 'be weary of') selecting an
425 accusative Experiencer and a genitive Stimulus (Traina and Bertotti 1985:58-60, Fedriani 2014,
426 Cavallo 2014), exemplified in (22), and a second class which is treated separately in traditional
427 grammars (cf. Traina and Bertotti 1985:92-94) and includes *interest* (a compound with *esse* 'be')
428 and *refert* (a compound with *fero* 'bring'), both meaning 'care / interest'. The argument structure of
429 this latter class presents an inverted pattern with respect to the previous one, selecting a genitive
430 Experiencer, while the Stimulus is a clause and does not display case (23), but is mostly realised as
431 a sentence (or it is not realised at all):

432

433 (22) a. pudet me non tui ... sed Chrysippi
434 shame.3P.SG.IND.PRES 1P.SG.ACC not 2P.SG.GEN ... but Chrysippus.GEN
435 'I am ashamed not of you but of Chrysippus' (Cic. *Div.* 2,35)

436 b. quodsi talium civium vos iudices taedet
437 if such citizen.M.PL.GEN 2P.PL.ACC judges.M.PL.ACC disgust.3P.SG.IND.PRES
438 'if such citizens disgust you judges' (Cic. *Flacc.* 105)

439 (23) a. quantum interesset P. Clodii se
440 how-much interest.3P.SG.SUBJ.PLUPERF P.Clodius.GEN REFL.ACC.SG

441 perire [...] cogitabat
 442 die.INF.PRES thought.3P.SG.IND.IMP
 443 ‘[Milo] always thought how much it was Clodius’ interest to get rid of him’ (Cic. *Mil.* 55)
 444 b. parvi refert ab te ipso
 445 little matter.3P.SG.IND.PRES by 2P.SG.ABL self.M.SG.ABL
 446 ius dici aequabiliter et diligenter
 447 law.NT.SG.ACC say.INF.PRES.PASS equitably and diligently.⁴ (Cic. *ad.Q.fr.* 1,1,20)
 448 ‘It matters little whether you judge yourself impartially’

449 As regards the former class in (22), Devine and Stephens (2013:123) claim that these verbs enter a
 450 sort of existential construction, the subject being a covert locative parallel to *there* in English. This
 451 makes these verbs similar to the Italian impersonal class represented by *importa*, (12f), which
 452 displays auxiliary *be*. This observation is corroborated by Woodcock’s (1959: 167) observation that
 453 Cicero prefers a (semi-)deponent form for these verbs evidenced in the simple past: *puditum est* vs
 454 *puduit*, *miseritum est* vs *museruit* and *pertaesum est* vs *taedit*.

455 As regards the second class of alleged impersonal verbs (23), Traina and Bertotti (1985:59) note
 456 that the clausal argument may pronominaliz⁴ as a neuter pronoun (24), which in this case is analysed
 457 as being assigned nominative case. In this case, it is not plausible to analyze it as an overt expletive
 458 (say, parallel to English *it*). First of all, Latin is a generalised null argument language and is not
 459 expected to display overt expletives. Second, the subject Stimulus can be a pronominal
 460 demonstrative, such as *hoc* in (24b):

461
 462 (24) a. Quid id refert tua?
 463 what it matter.3P.SG.IND.PRES your.F.SG.ABL
 464 ‘What matters that to you?’ (Plaut. *Cas.* 330)
 465 b. vestra [...] hoc maxime interest
 466 your.F.PL.ABL this.NT.SG.ACC mostly interest.3P.SG.IND.PRES
 467 ‘you care most about that’ (Cic. *Sull.* 79)

468
 469 The nominative case on the pronoun resuming the clausal Stimulus fills a gap in our taxonomy
 470 which has direct and indirect argument structure for both transitives and unergatives. We propose
 471 that *refert* and *interest* are not impersonal but inverted unergatives, with the Experiencer assigned
 472 inherent case (oblique in this case) and the Stimulus remaining in the VP internal position, if it is

⁴ Note that in (23b) the Experiencer is null and is interpreted as human generic.

473 realised by a clause (and this explains the classification as impersonal), or moving to the clausal
 474 subject position if it needs to be realized as an overt pronoun, which expectedly receives nominative
 475 case. This is shown in the following example, where the content of the clausal argument is
 476 anticipated in the main clause and the pronoun referring to it is focused:⁵

477
 478 (25) nulla enim fere potest res in dicendi disceptationem aut
 479 no in-fact almost can matter.F.SG.NOM in say.GEN.GERUND discussion or
 480 controversiam vocari, quae non habeat utrumque,
 481 dispute bring.INF.PRES.PASS which not have.3P.SG.SUBJ.PRES both.PL.GEN
 482 sed quantum habeat, id refert
 483 but how-much have.3P.SG.SUBJ.PRES it.NT.SG.NOM matters.3P.SG.IND.PRES.
 484 ‘It is almost impossible for any matter to be brought under discussion or dispute which does
 485 not contain both (*scil.* good and bad points); the thing that matters is how much of them it
 486 contains’ (Cic. *Orat.* 2,291)

487
 488 When the Experiencer is a person pronoun, as in (24), the genitive is replaced by a possessive
 489 adjective inflected for ablative singular. This suggests that even in the other cases, we have an
 490 ablative elliptic feminine nominal expression with a genitive Experiencer possessor, something like
 491 “from the Experiencer’s part”.

492
 493 2.4 *Interim* conclusions
 494 To summarize the discussion so far, Latin displays the six classes found in Italian and one more,
 495 also predicted by (our implementation of) Belletti and Rizzi’s (1988) system; namely, an inverted
 496 unergative structure. Compare table (26) with table (12) above:

497

(26)	verb class	externalised argument	second argument
a.	transitive <i>timeo</i> ‘fear’	Experiencer	Stimulus (structural accusative)
b.	inverted transitive <i>perturbo</i> ‘worry’	Stimulus	Experiencer (inherent)

⁵ An alternative solution, is that the pronoun is an inherent accusative, as neuter has exactly the same form for nominative and accusative. In this case, we would have an inverted impersonal, with the pronoun resuming the clausal argument being entrapped in the VP and never reaching vP. There is no reason to prefer this classification over the proposed one and to contradict the traditional literature that takes the neuter pronoun as nominative.

			accusative)
c.	unaccusative <i>vereor</i> ‘repent’, <i>gaudeo</i> ‘rejoice’ <i>confido</i> ‘trust’, <i>diffido</i> ‘mistrust’	Experiencer	Stimulus (ablative, dative, inherent accusative)
d.	inverted unaccusative <i>placeo</i> ‘like’	Stimulus	Experiencer (dative)
e.	unergative <i>ardeo</i> , ‘love passionately’, <i>ferveo</i> ‘rage’	Experiencer	optional Stimulus (ablative)
f.	inverted unergative <i>interest</i> ‘interest’, <i>refert</i> ‘matter’	Stimulus (clausal/pronominal)	Experiencer (genitive/ablative)
g.	impersonal <i>paenitet</i> , ‘repent’ <i>miseret</i> ‘pity’, <i>piget</i> ‘bother’, <i>pudet</i> ‘be ashamed’, <i>taedet</i> ‘be weary of’	0	Experiencer (accusative) Stimulus (genitive or clausal)

498

499 Section 3. Variation

500 Table (26) presents a taxonomy for Latin that is very similar to the one presented by table (12) for
501 Italian. The comparative overview has shown a substantial correspondence among the verbal
502 system of the considered languages except for the class of inverted unergatives which is found in
503 Latin but not in Italian where verbs like *importare* ‘matter’ are classified as impersonal. Such a
504 degree of variation is expected if we consider the diachronic instability of impersonal verbs note
505 crosslinguistically by Rosén (1992), Bickel (2004) and Malchukov (2008) and Fedriani (2014). In
506 other words, in time, few verbs have remained in the same class, some have shifted from one class
507 to another, others have gone lost, others have emerged. This section provides a brief overview of
508 the diachronic variation from Latin into Italian, which can shed some light on the nature of the
509 parameters affecting the syntax of psych-verbs. We also note that variation is found inside the same
510 stage of a language, often setting the premises for diachronic change.

511 Previous literature explains the change in verb classes with an alleged general tendency of modern
512 European languages to re-align biargumental verbs as transitives due to change from a mixed
513 ergative/transitive system to a fully transitive system (cf. Lightfoot 1979, Lehmann 1991, Allen
514 1995, Haspelmath 2001, Trousdale 2008, Haig 2008, 2010, Fedriani 2014). Such observation
515 correlates with Harris and Campbell’s (1995) ‘Complementarity Principle’ which, with the words of
516 Haig (2010: 266), claim that “changes in a language with an alignment split will generally occur in
517 the direction of leveling out the split in the direction of the unmarked construction”.

518 According to this line of reasoning, what becomes the subject of the transitive verb is the more
519 “agentive / active” participant, and this may vary in psych-verbs, as either Experiencer or the
520 Stimulus can be interpreted as the initiator/cause of the psychological state. The argument risks to
521 be circular in that it does not tell whether the change in argument structure is the trigger of the
522 semantic shift or is itself triggered by it. Furthermore, if the unmarked alignment is the transitive
523 structure, we would expect that any change in argument structure produce a direct or inverted
524 transitive; that a transitive could never change into an unaccusative; that unaccusatives should in
525 gradually disappear, as they do not comply with the transitive alignment. In this section, we show
526 that none of these predictions is borne out.

527 As our approach wants to be descriptive but informed by current theoretical advances, in analyzing
528 diachronic variation we assume a four-level parameter hierarchy recently proposed by Roberts
529 (2012), Biberauer and Roberts (2012). According to these scholars, macro-parameters regard all
530 heads of the relevant type, meso-parameters regard all functional heads of a given category, micro-
531 parameters regard a small subclass of functional heads, and nano-parameters regard one or more
532 idiosyncratic lexical items. The lower is the parameter in the hierarchy, the more complex is its
533 description, the later is its acquisition, the easier does it display variation and change. In this
534 perspective, the diachronic variation of psych-verbs in the development of Latin into Italian can be
535 distributed in the parametric hierarchy as follows.

536 Changes in verbal and nominal inflection, notably, loss of deponent morphology and development
537 of an auxiliary system on verbs, loss of case morphology on nouns, the development of articles and
538 clitic pronouns, are to be identified as changes in the value of two meso-parameters with the
539 relevant functional heads of the C-T phase (the portion of structure that regards the verbal
540 inflection, propositional content and its relation to the discourse) and of the D-N phase (the portion
541 of structure that regards nominal expressions and referential indexes), respectively.

542 These changes have had a major impact on the diagnostics. The innovations developed in Italian,
543 allow for a number of diagnostics for transitivity / unaccusativity / unergativity that Latin does not
544 provide; namely, free unmarked word order for the *piacere* class, auxiliary alternation and *ne*
545 extraction from the subject of direct and indirect unaccusatives, passive voice form with auxiliary
546 *venire* which discriminates between direct and inverted transitives). We have already pointed this
547 out in section 2.

548

549 3.1 Interlinguistic variation

550 Deponent and semi-deponent psych-verbs have been affected by micro-parametric change regarding
551 the realization of a single functional head, namely Voice. In Latin, passive and middle voice are

552 realized inflectionally. In Italian, passive voice is realized with an independent auxiliary (*essere*)
 553 even in the simple tenses, while middle Voice is realized as an independent anti-causative
 554 morpheme homophonous to the reflexive pronoun *si*. Cennamo (2012) shows that psych-verbs may
 555 not be central to this change, but provides many examples, as in (27) with deponent *laetor*
 556 corresponding to Italian *allietarsi / rallegrarsi*:

- 557
 558 (27) a. Laetatur ille adulterio
 559 rejoices that.M.SG.NOM adultery.N.SG.ABL (Sen. *epist.* 97, 11)
 560 b. Egli si allietata / rallegra del misfatto
 561 he CL.REFL rejoices of the misdeed
 562 ‘He is happy about his misdeed’

563 Latin deponent and semi-deponent verbs, which we have taken to be direct unaccusatives, may but
 564 do not necessarily shift to unaccusatives with *si* in Italian. The case of *fido / diffido* ‘trust / mistrust’
 565 is rather telling; in Latin they are both semi-deponent, as shown by the past participial form of the
 566 absolute construction in (28):

- 567
 568 (28) a. Mithridates [...] in regnum remeavit
 569 Mithridates.NOM to kingdom.N.SG.ACC come-back.3P.SG.IND.PRAET
 570 **fisus** Pharasmanis opibus
 571 confide.PAST-PART.M.SG.NOM Pharasmanes.GEN deeds.F.PL.ABL
 572 ‘Mithridates [...] made his way back to his kingdom in reliance on the help of
 573 Pharasmanes’ (Tac. *Ann.* 11,8,1)
 574 b. **Diffisus** municipii voluntati
 575 untrusting.PAST-PART.M.SG.NOM town.M.SG.GEN intension.F.SG.DAT
 576 Thermus cohortes ex urbe reducit (Caes. *civ.* 1,12,2)
 577 Thermus.NOM cohorts.F.PL.ACC from city retire.3P.SG.IND.PRES
 578 ‘Thermus, who could not confide in the townsmen, retired his cohorts from the town.’
 579

580 Parallel to Latin *fido*, Italian *fidarsi* is unaccusative; but unlike Latin *diffido*, Italian *diffidare* is
 581 unergative, as shown by the different auxiliary selection:⁶

- 582
 583 (29) a. Mitridate si è fidato degli aiuti di Farasmane

⁶ Italian *diffidare* can be transitive, but in this case it is a verb of saying (‘warn’), with a very different thematic structure.

584 Mithridates CL.REFL AUX trust.PAST-PART of the help of Pharasmanes

585 ‘Mithridates trusted the help of Pharasmanes’

586 b. Termo ha diffidato delle loro promesse

587 Thermus has mistrusted of-the their promises.

588 ‘Thermus mistrusted their promises.’

589

590 Latin deponent *commisereor* ‘to pity’ is impersonal, as in (30a), where the participle in the perfect
591 infinitive is in the neuter singular and does not agree with the accusative plural subject, as would be
592 the case in a personal construction. In (30b), *commiseror* is unaccusative with an externalised
593 Experiencer and an (inherent) accusative Stimulus:

594

595 (30) a. Navitas precum eius commiseritum esse
596 sailor.M.PL.ACC prayer.F.PL.GEN 3P.SG.GEN pity.PAST-PART.NT.SG be.AUX.INF

597 ‘The sailors were moved by his prayers’ (Gell. 16,19,11)

598 b. ut commiseratus sit fortunam

599 that pity.PAST-PART.M.SG.NOM be.AUX.3P.SG.SUBJ.PERF fortune.F.SG.ACC

600 Graeciae

601 Greece.F.SG.GEN

602 ‘He pitied the fortune of Greece’ (Nep. Ages. 5,2)

603

604 Note that *commiseror* turns into the Italian direct transitive *commiserare* (we thank XX for the
605 observation). The transitive nature of *commiserare* is shown by the possibility of a strong reflexive
606 Stimulus in object position in (31a) and of the true passive with auxiliary *venire* and the overt *da*-PP
607 expressing the circumstantial Experiencer in (31b):

608

609 (31) a. Maria commiserata se stessa

610 ‘Mary pities herself’

611 b. Maria viene commiserata da tutti

612 ‘Maria is pitied by everybody’

613

614 Out of the changes we have observed so far, only *fido* > *fidarsi* can be directly captured by the
615 meso-parametric change affecting the functional head Voice. The other changes *laetor* > *allietarsi*,
616 *diffido* > *diffidare*, *commiseror* > *commiserare* cannot be directly captured by the loss of (semi-
617)deponent morphology, which would generate **lietarsi*, **diffidarsi*, #*commiserarsi* (which is

618 grammatical but with true reflexive interpretation). Shift in verb form (as for prefixed *allietare*) and
619 verb class (as in the other two cases) must regard some specification of a property of the individual
620 lexical root. This kind of variation regards parameters of the lower kind, namely nano-parameters in
621 Roberts' (2012) terminology.

622 In what follows, we show that in some cases, the change in verb class is grounded on coexisting
623 structures at the same stage of the language, supporting the hypothesis that psych-verb are
624 particularly vulnerable in this respect.

625

626 3.2 Intralinguistic variation

627 Psychverbs may vary inside one and the same language. As noted above, Latin inverted unergatives
628 have not survived in Italian. Latin *refert* (23) has gone lost and has been substituted with *importare*
629 which can be inverse unaccusative (33a) or unaccusative impersonal (33b), also cf. (7b) above:

630

- 631 (32) a. Ai giovani non importano queste cose.
632 to-the young not matter.3P.PL these things
633 b. Ai giovani non importa di queste cose
634 to-the young not matter3P.SG of these things
635 'Young people don't care about these issues'

636

637 The other Latin inverted unergative *interest* (24) has turned into Italian *interessare* 'interest', which
638 presents four coexisting structures: the inverted transitive / (anti-causative) unaccusative alternation
639 (33a-b); the inverted unaccusative, as witnessed by auxiliary *essere* and the inverted word order in
640 (33c); and the (unaccusative) impersonal, with dative Experiencer and genitive Stimulus (33d), also
641 (11f):

642

- 643 (33) a. La linguistica interessa Maria e Gianni
644 'Linguistics interests Maria and Gianni'
645 b. Maria e Gianni si interessano di linguistica/alla linguistica
646 Maria and Gianni CL.REFL interest of Linguistics /to-the Linguistics
647 c. A Maria non sei mai interessato tu
648 To Mary not are.2P.SG.IND.PRES never interested you.2P.SG.NOM
649 'Mary has never been interested in you'
650 d. A te non è mai interessato di noi due.
651 To you not is.3P.SG.IND.PRES never interested of us two

652 'You never cared about the two of us'

653

654 The case of (33d) shows the productivity of the inverted unaccusative that would be expected to be
655 recessive in the view that Italian is typologically more transitive / less ergative than Latin. As a
656 matter of fact, this class of verbs is living a new life, as already noted by Berretta (1989), who
657 shows that for many psych-verbs it is quite common to realize a fronted pronominal object as a
658 prepositional accusative with *a*, not resumed by an accusative clitic in the clause. Note that the
659 order in (34a) with preverbal prepositional Experiencer and postverbal subject Stimulus is less
660 marked than the SVO order in (34b), parallel to what is found with the inverted unaccusative
661 *piacere* class:

662

663 (34) a. A me preoccupa / affascina / attrae / stupisce / colpisce il suo comportamento

664 To me worries / fascinates / attracts / astonishes / strikes her behavior

665 b. Il suo comportamento preoccupa / affascina / attrae / stupisce / colpisce (*a) me

666 Her behavior worries / fascinates / attracts / astonishes / strikes (*to) me

667 'It worries / fascinates / attracts / astonishes / strikes me that ...'

668

669 This only occurs with inverted transitives and not with direct transitives, as shown by the contrast
670 between (34a) and (35a). In (35a) the direct transitives *temere* / *amare* require that the accusative
671 pronoun is resumed by an accusative clitic:

672

673 (35) a. A me non *(mi) temono / amano.

674 To me [they] not CL.1P.SG fear / love

675 b. Non temono (*a) me.

676 [they] not fear / love (*to) me

677 'They don't fear / love me'

678

679 The contrast between (34a) and (35a) supports the claim that the accusative assigned by inverted
680 transitives is inherent, therefore more easily shifting to a prepositional accusative and ultimately an
681 oblique prepositional case.

682 Interestingly, it is more advanced with *preoccupare* which marginally allows for *ne*-extraction
683 from a postverbal subject (36a) and less advanced with the other verbs. Note that neither auxiliary is
684 possible in the present perfect (36b):

685

- 686 (36) a. ?Me ne preoccupano molti /*? Me ne affasciano molti.
 687 CL.1P.SG.DAT. NE worry.3P.PL many/ CL.1P.SG.DAT. NE fascinate.3P.PL many
 688 ‘Many worry/fascinate me’
 689 b. *A me sono preoccupati molti. / *A me hanno preoccupato molti.
 690 To me are worried many / to me have worried many.
 691 ‘Many worried me’
 692

693 This inconsistent behavior with respect to the diagnostics supports the proposal that the class shift
 694 from inverted transitive to inverted unaccusative is on-going and by no means complete.
 695 Intralinguistic variation is also well documented in Latin. Impersonal *pudet*, (22a) coexists in Latin
 696 with inverted transitive *pudeo*, as in (37a), which is probably the structure of (37b), with a neuter
 697 interrogative pronoun as subject Stimulus. In (37c) we observe a clausal stimulus, which reminds us
 698 of inverted unergative *refert*:
 699

- 700 (37) a. Non te haec pudet
 701 not 2P.SG.ACC these.NT.PL.NOM ashamed.3P.PL.IND.PRES
 702 ‘These things do not make you feel ashamed’ (Ter. *Adelph.* 754)
 703 b. Me autem quid pudeat [...] ?
 704 1P.SG.ACC but what.NT.SG ashamed.3P.SG.SUBJ.PRES
 705 ‘But what should make me ashamed?’ (Cic. *Arch.* 12)
 706 c. Non pudebat magistratus populi
 707 not ashamed.3P.SG.IND.IMPF magistrate.M.PL.ACC people.M.SG.GEN
 708 Romani in hunc ipsum locum escendere
 709 Roman.M.SG.GEN in this same place.M.SG.ACC mount.INF.PRES (Cic. *Manil.* 55)
 710 ‘The magistrates of the Roman people were not ashamed to mount this tribunal’
 711

712 Neither verb survived in Italian, where the unaccusative *vergognarsi* ‘be ashamed’ does not
 713 alternate with inverted transitive **vergognare*, thereby supporting Folli’s (2012) hypothesis that
 714 unaccusatives with *si* have a life of their own and are not derived in syntax. Note that (37b) may
 715 have an alternative analysis, as impersonal structure with a covert genitive Stimulus and a
 716 interrogative circumstantial *quid* ‘why’, being interpreted as ‘Why should I be ashamed?’. If our
 717 hypothesis of coexisting argument structures is on the right track, (37b) is to be analyzed as
 718 structurally ambiguous.

753 structures can be instantiated either externalizing the Experiencer or externalizing the Stimulus. We
754 have called the later cases “inverted” following Bossong’s (1988) terminology, which well
755 represents the idea that there is an underlying hierarchy in which the Experiencer is higher than the
756 Stimulus. We also found, for both Latin and Italian, the possibility that neither argument is
757 externalised, giving rise to an impersonal construction. The only impersonal construction we found
758 in Italian is unaccusative. It may well be the case that the extension of our taxonomy to other
759 languages will include an eighth class of unergative impersonals.

760 In section 3 we have shown that the verb classes are not clear-cut but must be treated as a
761 continuum (parallel to what has been put forth by functional linguists for the unaccusative /
762 unergative distinction). We have also shown that in one and the same stage of a language the same
763 root can belong to more than one class. This may be the ground of language change (with one class
764 prevailing on the other at some point).

765 Our overview of possible class shifts does not at the moment display any privileged tendency. In
766 particular, our analysis of Italian has disproved the hypothesis that bi-argumental verbs in European
767 languages tend to realign into a transitive structure.

768

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