

## Anticausatives and A-movement in the history of Latin

**1. Introduction** Subjects in Latin can either remain inside the VP (1a) or A-move to the TP-layer (1b). Corpus evidence shows that there is a diachronic dimension to this alternation, A-movement only becoming productive after *ca.* 200 AD (AUTHOR 2017b). This paper aims at reconstructing how A-movement was innovated, making crucial reference to a second (and partly independent) axis of variability, viz. parameterized EPP-checking, as well as to the syntax of intransitive verbs, in particular anticausatives.

- (1) a. *quamquam* [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> *mal-e* [<sub>VP</sub> *gest-a* *re-s*]] *era-t*]  
although *bad-ADV* *done-NOM.F.SG* *matter-NOM* *be-IPFV-3SG*  
'although the mission was a failure' (Liv. 1.37.5, *ca.* 10 AD)
- b. *si* [<sub>TP</sub> *re-s* [<sub>VP</sub> *prosper-e* [<sub>VP</sub> *gest-a*]] *es-se-t*]  
if *matter-NOM* *successful-ADV* *done-NOM.F.SG* *be-IPFV.SBJV-3SG*  
'if the battle were to be successful' (Liv. 32.6.5, *ca.* 10 AD)

**2. Labeling and EPP-parameters** Biberauer & Richards (2006) propose that there is a universal EPP-requirement ('T must be lexicalized by some  $\phi$ -feature bearing category'), but that languages may employ different syntactic mechanisms to meet this requirement, namely movement of a finite V, a DP, or an entire VP, or - as a last resort - expletive insertion. Here I will partly recast this system in terms of Chomsky's (2013, 2015) Labeling Algorithm, assuming that T must be *labelled* by a  $\phi$ -feature bearing element. I will refer to the projection to be lexicalized by virtue of the EPP as 'F(P)', which in Latin sits above both Neg and T (see AUTHOR 2017a).

**3. EPP-driven VP movement** Elaborating on AUTHOR (2017a), I propose that in the oldest grammar of Latin (i) Voice never labels its mother node, despite being obligatorily present, and that (ii) Voice always has  $\phi$ -features (regardless of whether it projects a specifier or not), (iii) except in the case of middle-marked anticausatives.

**3.1 Voice and Latin verb morphology** Evidence for claim (i) comes from the observation that Latin voice morphology 'sits in the wrong place', in that it seems to disobey the Mirror Principle (Calabrese 1985, 2019; Embick 2000). Minimal pairs like *lauda-ba-nt* 'praise-IPFV-3PL, they praised' and *lauda-ba-nt-ur* 'praise-IPFV-3PL-PASS, they were praised' show that the characteristic *-r* exponent of the Latin medio-passive voice sits further away from the lexical root than the Tense morpheme *-ba-*. We may follow Calabrese (2019) in analysing the *-r* morpheme as structurally similar to the *se-*clitic in present-day Romance, which also surfaces far away from the verbal root and in all likelihood does not itself lexicalize Voice. In addition, Latin voice morphology is in general quite uninformative about the semantics of a given verb, witness e.g. the existence of agentive deponents (Grestenberger to appear).

Drawing a parallel with Chomsky's (2013) analysis of English weak T, we can say that Latin has 'weak Voice': the functional category is present, but unable to provide a label.

**3.2 Impersonal passives** If with Alexiadou et al. (2015) we define unaccusativity as radical absence of Voice, claim (ii) amounts to saying that Latin did not have unaccusatives. Setting aside anticausatives for the time being, all one-place verbs should then be unergatives (with a Voice-layer and an external argument (EA), but no internal argument (IA)). This last idea is supported by the fact that in Latin there were no formal cues (like variable auxiliary selection) which could lead L1-learners to postulate the existence of two types of monovalent verbs. This analysis correctly predicts that Latin should allow for motion verbs to be (impersonally) passivized (with the possibility of non-generic readings and optional *by*-phrases, cf. (2)).

- (2) *cum ad me adit-um es-se-t ab iis qu-i [...]*  
when to me.ACC gone.to-NOM.N.SG be-IPFV.SBJV-3SG by those.ABL.M.PL who-NOM.M.PL  
'when I had been approached by those who [...]' (Cic. Fam. 3.7.3, 50 BC)

**3.3 Weak Voice and anticausatives** Middle-marked anticausatives (3a) are the only (Early) Latin verbs lacking both an EA and a possible agentive *by*-phrase. With Schäfer (2008) I assume that they still have an expletive Voice layer which is devoid of  $\phi$ -features, and thus in need of a special labeling-mechanism. I propose that an 'EPP-effect' arises similar to that proposed in Chomsky (2013) for DP-movement to T in English: the IA merges with Voice, and provides the newly created element with a  $\phi$ -label (which disqualifies the IA for undergoing further A-movement).

**4. The ban on A-movement for subjects** In the system sketched above, movement of the entire ( $\phi$ -labelled) lower phase is the only way to satisfy the EPP-requirement.  $\Phi$ -driven movement of an argument XP contained in this complex constituent can be ruled out by Rizzi's (2016) Maximality principle ("only maximal objects with a given label can be moved"). Moreover, assuming syntactic acquisition to require unambiguous triggers (Fodor 1998) and to be subject to the Subset Principle (Manzini & Wexler 1987), EPP-checking through verb movement is unacquirable, given that it is both unnecessary (cf. the availability of VP-movement, itself unambiguously triggered (AUTHOR 2017a)), and not associated with a word order string which could serve as an unambiguous cue for its acquisition (on the structural ambiguity of verb positions in (partial) head-final languages, see Han *et al.* 2007).

**5. Unmarked anticausatives** An alternative to the old EPP-grammar arises through an independent innovation, viz. the rise of unmarked anticausatives (Feltenius 1977; Gianollo 2014): the 'active' structures in (3b) gradually oust the pre-existing middle-marked ('non-active') forms (3a) (well before *se*-anticausatives (Cennamo 1993) become productive). With Schäfer (2008) I assume that unmarked anticausatives lack a Voice head. Instead, the highest head of the thematic domain is the root-categorizing  $v$ , whose very *raison d'être* it is to label its mother with a V-feature.

- (3) a. quibusdam rump-itur sponte  
 some.DAT.PL break-NONACT.PRS.3SG spontaneously  
 'with some <trees> it (the bark) bursts of its own accord' (Plin. Nat. 16.126, ca. 78 AD)
- b. si forte tardius rump-ere sens-eri-s apostema  
 if by.chance late-COMP.ADV burst-ACT.PRS.INF feel-ACT.PLPFV-2SG abscess.ACC  
 'if by chance you notice that the abscess bursts too late' (Cass. Fel. 21.7, 447 AD)

**6. A new EPP-grammar** Clauses like (3b) cannot be derived through EPP-driven  $vP$  movement, as there is no way the  $vP$ -node can end up with a  $\phi$ -label: the only available parse involves V-to-F movement, which effectively satisfies the EPP. Movement of an EA or a  $\phi$ -labelled 'VoiceP' are (trivially) ruled out, because no EA/Voice head is present. Moreover, it is  $V_{fin}$  rather than the IA that ends up moving to F, because the former always counts as a closer Goal for F than the latter: either there standardly is V-to-T movement (cf. rich agreement), or in the absence of that the  $v/\sqrt{\quad}$ -complex still asymmetrically c-commands the IA (i.e. the complement of the root).

**7. Innovating A-movement** The new EPP-grammar opens up the possibility for A'-moved subjects to be reanalysed as A-moved, plausibly because children generally acquire A-movement before A'-movement (Friedman & Ladvi 2006), at least in languages where both operations are available. Crucially, unlike V-to-F this operation is optional (as it is in many present-day Romance varieties), and by this token unrelated to the EPP. Rather, only 'subjects of predication' are moved to an A-position (*pace* Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1998), which does not have to be structurally contiguous to the finite V (Cardinaletti 2004). Note that although the account does not predict that A-movement *has to* be innovated along with the new EPP-grammar, A' to A-reanalysis of (preverbal) subjects constitutes a perfectly normal step in the Subject Agreement Cycle (van Gelderen 2011). On the other hand, the fact that A-subjects become possible has the interesting side effect of reinforcing the V-to-F EPP-grammar, even in clauses with a verb other than an unmarked anticausative: given that A-movement is impossible in the old EPP-grammar, any clause with an unambiguously A-moved (i.e. non-left/right-peripheral, non-VP-internal) subject can serve as a cue for a learner to acquire the V-to-F EPP-grammar.

**Selected references** Biberauer & Richards 2006. True optionality. In *Minimalist Essays* | Calabrese 1985. The Mirror Principle and the Latin passive. Ms. MIT | Calabrese 2019. Morphophonological investigations. Ms. UConn | Chomsky 2013. Problems of projection, *Lingua* 130 | Feltenius 1977. *Intransitivizations in Latin*. Almqvist & Wiksell | Friedmann & Ladvi 2006. On the order of acquisition of A-movement, WH-movement and V-C movement, In *Language acquisition and development* | Gianollo 2014. Labile verbs in Late Latin, *Linguistics* 52 | Han, Lidz & Musolino 2007. V-raising and grammar competition in Korean, *LI* 38 | Rizzi 2016. Labeling, maximality and the head - phrase distinction, *TLR* 33 | Schäfer 2008. *The Syntax of (Anti-)causatives*. Benjamins | van Gelderen 2011. *The Linguistic Cycle*. OUP.