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Latin valency in typological perspective

Christian Lehmann

University of Erfurt

Abstract

The goal of this paper is to characterize the structural properties of valency in Latin and to bring out its role in the language system in comparison with other languages. The functional basis of valency is conceptual relationality, which may manifest itself in syntactic structure in different ways and to different degrees. Verb valency is analyzed in the context of syntactic relations in general, including nominal valency; and its role in the system is assessed with regard to the kinds of operations that exist to change it.

It turns out that valency is underdeveloped in Latin, in the sense that government exerted by verbs and other grammatically relational words is relatively loose. To this correspond a great liberality in the addition of nominal and adverbial dependents to one verb, with no emphasis on the distinction between complements and adjuncts, and a low profile of valency-changing operations in the language system. All of this can be related to a dependent-marking syntactic type.¹

1. The concept of valency

1.1. Relationality

There are two kinds of concepts, relational and absolute concepts. A relational concept incorporates a relation to a reference point, like the concept ‘uncle’ incorporates a relation to someone whose uncle he is, and the concept ‘chase’ incorporates one relation to an actor who chases and another relation to an undergoer whom he chases. An absolute concept incorporates no such relation. Thus, the concept of ‘apple’ is independent of any relation to an entity whose apple it is, and the concept of ‘rain’ is independent of any entity that rains. These junctures for conceptual relations will be called argument places. They belong to the intension of a concept. The relationality of a concept may be changed by conceptual operations, but then it becomes a different concept.

The linguistic counterpart of conceptual relationality is grammatical relationality. An expression A is grammatically relational if a certain grammatical relation to an expression B of a certain category is part of A’s grammatical equipment. This means that A imposes certain formal constraints on B (cf. Lazard 1994, section III.2.1.1). Most important among these are:

1. specific syntactic function (as opposed to general modifier function) of B,
2. obligatoriness (vs. optionality) of B,
3. a grammatical subclass of B (vs. free lexical choice of B in consonance with A’s meaning).

¹ I am grateful to the volume editors for helpful comments on this article.
Correlate 1 of grammatical relationality is most important. The syntactic function is itself constituted by a bundle of structural properties, which in the case of government include importantly

1.1 fixed syntagmatic position (vs. permutability) of B,
1.2 a single case relator (vs. semantically based choice of case relator) on B.

An argument place may or may not manifest itself in a grammatical slot. For instance, the concept ‘eat’ involves an actor who eats and an undergoer that is eaten. The Yucatec Maya verb for ‘eat’, hàan, which appears in (1)a, is basically intransitive. The addition of a direct object to (1)a renders the sentence ungrammatical. (1)b features the verb hàant ‘eat’, which is derived from hàan by an operation of transitivization (cf. (31) below) and which does take a direct object.

(1) a. k-in hàan-al
YM IMPF-SBJ.1.SG eat-INCMPL ‘I eat’
b. k-in hàan-t-ik wàah
IMPF-SBJ.1.SG eat-TRR-INCMPL bread ‘I eat bread’

Although two concepts that differ in their relationality are different concepts, they may be subsumed under a common denominator. Thus, at a cross-linguistic level, we may speak of the concept ‘eat’ and disregard its conceptual relationality. Then we may observe that verbs of eating tend to be basically transitive across languages and that Yucatec Maya is in the minority here. We may take this as evidence for the hypothesis that the concept of eating has by default an argument position for the undergoer of the situation, although it may alternatively start out without this argument position and only acquire it by an operation that renders it relational.

In this vein, we may observe that concepts of certain conceptual areas tend to be relational in a certain way. For instance, concepts of relatives and body parts mostly have an argument position for the animate being whose relative or body part it is. At the level of logic, there may even be the necessity for an argument of a certain kind. The concept of a father who is nobody’s father is self-contradictory. However, this is not so at the grammatical level. Again in Yucatec Maya, the noun tàatah ‘father’ is grammatically relational and requires a possessive attribute referring to his child. From this base, the noun tàatah-tsil may be derived, which designates a father without considering the issue of whose father he is or whether he is anybody’s father at all. The word is used in such contexts where we would say, in English, a father. Similarly, while an avalent concept of ‘rain’ may appear to be the default, languages (e.g. Greek) may construe it as the activity of somebody and, thus, represent it by a personal monovalent verb. It is important to observe that relationality is not something static, but is manipulated at the linguistic level. While relationality of a certain kind may seem constitutive of certain concepts at the logical level, languages construe relationality dynamically. They do this at two levels: First, they equip lexical stems with a certain inherent relationality. Second, they provide operations that change this basic relationality. Naturally, it is interesting to see which classes of concepts tend to have which basic grammatical relationality cross-linguistically. However, this is an empirical question, and there is little to be deduced or postulated here at the level of linguistic theory.

The concept of ‘valency’ will here be situated at the grammatical, not at the conceptual level (cf. Lehmann 1992, section 4.7). The valency of a linguistic sign is the constellation of slots for grammatical relations that is associated with its syntactic category and subcategory (e.g. ditransitive verb).
1.2. Participation

At the conceptual level (cf. Seiler 1988, Seiler & Premper (eds.) 1991), a situation is a constellation of participants related to each other in diverse ways. They are arranged around an immaterial center, called the situation core, which is, so to speak, the intersection point of the participant relations. Typically, the participants are represented by nominal expressions, and the situation core, by a verb. The participant relations may then be inherent to the verbal concept. To the extent that they are not, they are hypostatized as relations between the participants and the situation core and typically represented by case relators.

Participant roles may be situated in an abstract two-dimensional space whose first dimension is the continuum from control to affectedness and whose second dimension is the continuum of involvement of participants. This is shown in figure 1.

![Figure 1. Hierarchy of semantic roles](image)

The inherence of the roles in the concept of the situation core decreases from the center to the periphery. I.e., first the central roles are mapped onto the macro-roles of actor and undergoer, and after these are accommodated in the verb valency, more peripheral roles come into play. The horizontal axis between actor and undergoer is the schema for the transitive verb. At the structural level, there are diverse strategies of arranging the participants as nominal and adverbial constituents in the sentence, and most of these have to do with verb valency.

1.3. Case relators

A relator is a linguistic sign that embodies two grammatical slots to be occupied by two syntagms which it puts in relation. For asymmetric relators, one of the slots is a modifying, the other a governing slot. A case relator (simply speaking, a case affix or adposition) is a relator that opens a governing slot for an NP. The combination yields a cased NP or adpositional phrase. It inherits a modifying slot from the case relator, by virtue of which the construction can modify something, chiefly a verbal expression. The construction is thus a potential modifier (especially, a satellite); i.e. it does not presuppose a governing slot on its dependency controller (the verb) for a dependency relation to come about. However, there may be such a governing slot on the dependency controller. Governing slots differ, among other things, in requiring a naked or a cased NP. In the latter case, government overrides modification, i.e. the modificatory potential of the dependent lies idle. To take an example, in
tibi iacet ‘it is lying for you’ (cf. Cic. Q.Rosc. 4.4), the dative of the dependent enables the latter to serve as a modifier. The verb itself governs no such dependent, and consequently the intrinsic function of the case relator becomes operative. In tibi oboedit ‘he obeys you’ (cf. Sall. Rep. 2. 10, 6, 2), the verb does govern a dative object, so that the modifying potential of tibi is not actually needed and thus remains virtual.

2. A typology of valency

Situating the concept of valency at the grammatical instead of the conceptual level has the consequence that valency is not something cognitive/functional which could serve as tertium comparationis in comparative linguistics, but instead is something which may be present or absent from a language or may be present to some extent or in different forms. There are, in fact, great differences among languages as regards the formal constraints of relationality (in the sense of section 1.1). Also, the existence of a certain valency frame in a language presupposes the existence of certain grammatical relations, e.g. the indirect object. Given that grammatical relations are at the center of the system of grammar, cross-linguistic differences in valency may be of great typological relevance.2

Given two concepts A and B, then a syntagmatic relation between them may be brought about by an argument place in either A or B (non-dependency relations will be disregarded). If this is presupposed, then two decisions have to be made:

1. Does A or B contain the argument place?
2. Does A depend on B or vice versa?

These two decisions interdepend in the following sense: If A contains the argument place, then if this is manifested as a modifying slot, A must depend on B, whereas if the argument place is manifested as a governing slot, then B must depend on A. And vice versa, if we first decide that B depends on A, then either A must contain a governing slot or B must contain a modifying slot. The following sections present the typology of valency as a decision process.3

2.1. An argument place appears as a governing or modifying slot
2.1.1. The nominal sphere

In the first of the alternatives mentioned, we start from a concept class whose basic relationality is taken for granted independently of any particular syntagmatic combinations. If this argument place is manifested as a grammatical slot, this may be either a governing or a modifying slot. This choice may exist for a given concept class within one language, or languages may differ in their choice. For instance, the construction that combines a numeral with a nominal representing the counted set is based on an argument place in the numeral, since a numeral represents the cardinality, i.e. a property, of a set. Consequently numeral concepts are generally categorized in languages as either verbs or relational nouns s.l.4 When the numerals are in the category of nouns s.l., their argument place may appear in grammar as a modifying slot, in which case the numerals are in the category of the adjectives and combine as an attribute with their head noun; or it may appear as a governing slot, in which case they

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3 A similar idea was already pursued in Keenan 1978.
4 A noun s.l. is a nomen (anything that declines), a noun s.s. is a substantive noun.
are in the category of nouns s.s. and take the nominal representing the counted set as a genitive attribute. Both of these possibilities are illustrated by *mille* and *milia* in (2).

(2)  
Pythagoras ... cum mille mercennariis militibus et duobus milibus Argiurorum Lacedaemonem ad Nabim uenit. (Liv. 34 29 14 3)
‘Pythagoras came to Nabis in Sparta with 1000 mercenaries and 2000 Argivians’

In Latin as in many other languages, numerals are in the category of nouns s.l. Just as in other Indo-European languages (see Comrie 1981: 102-104 for Russian), the lower numerals are adjectives, the higher numerals are nouns s.s., although in Latin only *milia* takes the counted noun as a genitive attribute. Cross-linguistically, combining the numeral as an adjective attribute with the counted noun appears to be a minority strategy. Mostly, if numerals are nouns s.l., then they are nouns s.s. (see Lehmann 1992, section 5.1 for Wolof).

There is a similar alternative in the construction that combines a mensurative phrase (MP) with a mass noun. In German, this NP may take two forms, which appear in (3).

(3)  
Hier ist/sind [[zwei Meter]MP Zwirn]NP.
GERM  ‘Here is/are two meters of thread.

If the NP *zwei Meter Zwirn* triggers singular agreement on the verb, then obviously the mass noun must be the head and the MP must be the modifier of the phrase. If, however, the NP triggers plural agreement, then the MP must be the head and the mass noun must be the modifier. Both of these constructions are based on an argument place in the mensurative (*Meter*), which is a modifying slot in the first construction, but a governing slot in the second construction.

Similarly in Korean, the MP (just as a numeral classifier phrase) may combine in two ways with the mass noun. The head of the NP is its last constituent. In (4)a, this is the mass noun, while the MP is a genitive attribute, whereas in (4)b, the MP is the head of the NP, and the mass noun is an (asyndetic) attribute.

(4)  
| a. han can-uy swul |
| KOR  | [[one glass-GEN]MP wine]NP ‘a glass of wine’ |
| b. swul han can |
| KOR  | [wine [one glass]NP]MP ditto |

(5)  
tunc mulieri ipso iure quinque librae auri debebuntur (Iust. Dig. 34, 2, 34, 1, 11)
‘then by law five pounds of gold will be due to the woman’

Latin uses only one mensurative construction, illustrated in (5). The construction of (5) corresponds to the construction of (4)b: the relationality of the MP comes out in its governing the mass noun as a nominal complement. The alternative construction, which employs the argument place of the mensurative as a modifying slot (as in (4)a), is not used in Latin. This is one of the rare cases where Latin does not make use of this option and opts for a governing construction (in the weak sense in which there is at all grammatical government in the genitive attribute construction).

2.1.2. The verbal sphere
In the verbal sphere, the alternative of section heading 2.1 is largely unavailable, since a finite verb cannot depend on its actants. I.e., grammatical slots on finite verbs are governing slots. A nominal predicate, however, does not govern its subject. In non-finite verbs, the subject slot may be reshaped as a modifying slot. The whole of verbal syntax in Tagalog may be understood on this basis: Orientation affixes equip a verb for service as a nominal predicate with a modifying slot for its subject (Himmelmann 1987). In Latin, a nominal predicate bears a peculiar relation to its subject which may be understood as an extension of the modificatory relation of a (predicative) adjective to its subject. This relation of the nominal predicate to the subject becomes visible in infinitival constructions, which agree with the subject in case just as modifiers do, as illustrated by (6).

(6)  
   a. Iulius putatur praecox esse.  
       ‘Julius is believed to be cheeky.’  
   b. Iulio licet praecoci esse.  
       ‘Julius may be cheeky.’  
   c. Iulium putamus praecocem esse.  
       ‘We believe Julius to be cheeky.’

Such constructions serve to show that the predicate not only governs its subject, but may also modify it (cf. Lehmann 1982, section 4.3).

2.2. An argument place appears on either the controller or the dependent

In the second of the alternatives mentioned above, we start from a syntagmatic asymmetry between A and B in the sense that conceptual dependency of B from A is taken for granted independently of the decision of which grammatical means may bring it about. If this conceptual dependency is manifested as syntactic dependency, then this requires either a governing slot on A or a modifying slot on B. Again, this choice may exist for a given type of combination within one language, or languages may differ in their choice.

The governing slot may be marked by a cross-reference index on the dependency controller, while no morphology is necessary on the nominal dependent. The modifying slot is generally marked by a case relator on the nominal dependent, while no morphology appears on the controller.

2.2.1. The nominal sphere

In the nominal sphere, possessive attribution provides an example (cf. Lehmann 1983a, section 3.3). There is a prior decision that an entity A is to be identified with reference to B, its possessor. If this conceptual relation manifests itself as a dependency relation, B must depend, as a kind of possessive attribute, on A. This may be brought about in two ways. A may be a relational noun which governs its possessive dependent, or B may be a possessive attribute which modifies its head noun. The first solution would be expected if a relational concept such as a body part or a relative figures as head, while the second solution would be expected if the head is an absolute concept. An alternative of this kind appears in some Papuan languages such as Yimas (Foley 1991: 180; see Lehmann 1983a: 360 for Hua and Nichols 1988 for this contrast in general):
(7)  a. ama-na  matn
    YIMAS  1.SG-GEN brother(I.SG) ‘my brother’

    b. ama-na-kn patn
        1.SG-GEN-V.SG betelnut(V.SG) ‘my betelnut’

In either construction, the possessor (pro)noun takes a genitive suffix, and for most nouns like the one in (7)b, it also shows the noun class of the possessed noun, thus agreeing with it. Only if the possessed noun designates a relative, thus a relational concept, as in (7)a, then the possessive attribute does not agree. Thus, the possessive dependent generally behaves as a modifier, but less so if its head noun is relational.

While many languages do make a morphological distinction between alienable and inalienable nouns, most languages base the whole grammar of possession on either of two models: either they relationalize any head noun that is not relational, thus forcing government into all possessive noun phrases, or else they ignore the relationality of the head noun and convert every possessive dependent into a modifier. Yucatec Maya adheres to the first model:

(8)  a. u   tàatah Hwàan
      YM   POSS.3 father  John ‘John’s father’

      b. u   nah-il Hwàan
          POSS.3 house-REL John ‘John’s house’

The head noun in (8)a is relational and thus can directly govern a possessive dependent, witness its agreement by the prenominal personal clitic. The head noun in (8)b is not relational. It is provided with a relational suffix and now can govern its dependent.

Latin adheres to the second model. The dependent noun in (9)b is equipped with a genitive suffix which converts it into a modifier. The same happens with the dependent noun in (9)a, although here the head noun is conceptually relational. In Latin, however, conceptual relationality of nouns is only weakly grammaticalized in the form of government.5

(9)  a. pater Johannis ‘John’s father’

      b. domus Johannis ‘John’s house’

2.2.2. The verbal sphere

The alternative that we have seen in the possessive attribute construction has its close counterpart in the verbal sphere. We start by a prior decision that there is a participant in a situation. If this conceptual relation manifests itself as a dependency relation, the participant will be represented by a nominal expression which depends on a verb that represents the situation core. This may be brought about in two ways. The verb valency may provide a grammatical slot through which the verb governs the dependent NP, or the latter may receive

5 Piera Molinelli (p.c.$) observes that the diachronic process in which the prepositional phrase introduced by *de* ousts the genitive attribute starts historically in NPs with an absolute head and only later reaches NPs with a relational head. At an early point in the grammaticalization of *de*, it can be used in a modifier, but it cannot yet – like the genitive – be governed.
a case relator by which it modifies the verbal expression. The first solution would be expected for a central participant, the second for a peripheral participant.

Many languages make use of both alternatives in order to distinguish central from peripheral participants. Yucatec Maya has no case. Subject and direct object are cross-referenced by pronominal indices in the verbal complex (u and -Ø in (10). Any other nominal dependent of the verb – here the indirect object – must be introduced by a preposition. This means that the subject and direct object are governed by the verb, while other dependents modify it.

(10) t-u ts’a’-ah-Ø hun-ts’íit che’ ti’ tèen a tàatah
YM PAST-SBJ.3 give-CMPL-ABS.3 one-CL.LONG wood LOC me POSS.2 father
‘your father gave me a stick’

Some languages extend the government strategy to other verbal dependents as far as possible. Abkhaz uses personal agreement prefixes on the verb for the three central syntactic functions, ergative, absolutive and indirect object, as in (11). The clause structure of this type is called concentric (Milewski 1950) or head-marking (Nichols 1986, 1988).

(11) (sarà) a-x°əč’-k°à a-š°q°’-k°à Ø-rə̀-s-to-yt’
ABKH I the-child-PL the-book-PL ABS.3-IO.3.PL-ERG.1.SG-give-INDEP
‘I give the books to the children.’ (Hewitt 1979: 105)

Other languages extend the modification strategy to all the verbal dependents. Thus, in Japanese (12), no actant is cross-referenced on the verb, and instead all of them have a case suffix (or postposition) expressing their syntactic function. This strategy of clause-formation is called eccentric or dependent-marking. The concentric strategy generalizes the principle of government, while the eccentric strategy generalizes the principle of modification.

(12) John-ga Mary-o sono isya-ni syookaisi-ta.
JAP John-NOM Mary-ACC D2 doctor-DAT introduce-PRT
‘John introduced Mary to this doctor.’ (Kuno 1973: 260)

(13) Johannes Mariam huic medico commendauit.
‘John commended Mary to this doctor.’

In this typology, Latin sides with the dependent-marking languages. This becomes clear from a comparison of (13) with (12). At this level, the only overt difference between Latin and a pure dependent-marking language like Japanese is that Latin does have person agreement of the verb with the subject, as a concession to the principle of government.

As explained in section 1.3, case-marked dependents are, in principle, capable of serving as modifiers. That is, they need not be provided for in the valency of the verb. However, a modifying slot on a dependent may coincide with a governing slot on a dependency controller. For instance, a dependent such as huic medico in (13) may be marked by the dative and insofar be capable of serving as a modifier, and at the same time the controlling verb may be ditransitive and thus govern this same dependent. To the extent that the case relator on the dependent may be chosen on semantic grounds, its modificatory potential is made use of, constraints associated with the governing slot of the verb are not strong enough to preclude this, and it is less clear whether the dependent belongs to the verb’s valency. This is true to some extent for the indirect object in (13): the dative of medico here
signifies what the Latin dative may signify by itself, and therefore it may be replaced with a suitable preposition, for instance *apud medicum*. Again, to the extent that the verb does determine the case on the dependent, government overrides modification, i.e. the modificatory potential of the dependent lies idle. In (13), this is true of the direct object. Government is the stronger, the more of the constraints mentioned in section 1.1 the controller imposes on the dependent. In the end, government completely overrides modification, with the consequence that the case relator on the dependent forfeits its meaning and retains, at best, a discriminatory function (Comrie 1981, ch. 6.1).

Given that the modificatory potential of a cased NP is always either actual or virtual, tests that serve to decide whether a certain verbal dependent is part of the verb’s valency or not often yield no clear-cut results. Dative constituents are notorious here. Consider (14) and (15).

(14) *prouinciae priuatis decernuntur* (Caes. *Civ. 1 6 5 2*)
    ‘provinces are adjudged to private persons’

(15) *qui mihi nunc uno digitulo fores aperis fortunatus* (Ter. *Eu. 284*)
    ‘you now luckily open me the door with one little finger’

Are either or both of the NPs in the dative indirect objects, or are they benefactive datives? If the former, then these verbs have an optional indirect object and thus, depending on one’s valency theory, several alternate valency frames. If the latter, then the exact meaning of *decernere* ‘adjudge’ in (14) must be construed in a compositional way from its basic meaning and the basic meaning of the dative. The issue need not be resolved here; it suffices to see that such constructions may, in principle, be analyzed either way.

### 2.3. Quantitative valency

Up to now, we have taken for granted that the situation core is a unitary concept and therefore appears as a verb at the linguistic level. Then if all of the participants of the situation are to be accommodated in one clause, they have to be dependents of this verb. Whatever is then not provided for in the verb’s valency must be added as an adverbial. This is essentially the Latin strategy, which we will come back to below.

There is, however, a principled alternative to this: Do not crystallize the union set of all the participant relations in one unitary situation core, but distribute them among the components of a composite situation core (cf. Lehmann et al. 2000). Each component may then be represented by a verb, and the whole set of participants of the complex situation will be distributed over these verbs. In order to see what is meant by this, consider a Latin sentence such as (16).

(16) *is suo filio fidicinam emit* (Pl. *Epid. 90*)
    ‘he bought a zither-player for his son’

The situation contains an actor and an undergoer both of whom are provided for in the verb valency, plus a beneficiary who is accommodated in an NP in the dative. An alternative to this strategy isolates the beneficiary and the relation extending to him and puts them into a clause of its own. This is what Yucatec Maya does in (17).
There are much more extreme cases than this. In Kobon (East New Guinea Highlands), the verb inventory is relatively small, the verbs designate basic situation cores with few participants. To express a complex situation such as the one designated in the Latin
text, the language serializes verbs, as in (19).

(18) anus puerum transtulit
‘the old woman carried the boy over’

(19) Nibi lapön ñi i ugal dam gidan yu-bil.
‘The old woman carried the boy over (to them).’ (Davies 1981: 204)

The closely related language Kalam has about 100 verbs. To express a three-participant situation such as the one of (20), for which Latin uses one verb with three dependents, Kalam employs three verbs among which it distributes the participants, as may be seen in (21).

(20) homo ligna asciā diffissit
‘the man split the wood with an axe’ (Pawley 1987: 101)

This shows that the existence of multivalent verbs and the existence of adverbial dependents in a language go together. It is also significant that the languages whose verbs have narrow valency have no case system.

2.4. Constraints on complements

Once the decision has been made that certain argument places of a verbal concept are manifested as governing grammatical slots, the next question is: Which kinds of constraints are imposed on the complements? In a certain sense, a grammatical function is the sum of the constraints associated with it (Matthews 1981, ch. 1).

First a word on syntagmatic and paradigmatic variability of the complements. As for the former, no Latin verb determines the sequential order of its complements. As for obligatoriness, there are differences. The first thing to be observed is that, contrary to many other languages, no Latin verb requires the presence of any of its complements in the clause. However, for many verbs a complement which is not present in the clause is latent (Matthews

In Bororo (Macro-Jê, Brasil; Crowell 1979), there are practically only monovalent lexical verbs. The few transitive verbs that exist are auxiliary or function verbs that may combine with the lexical verbs and augment their valency. The language has no case system. There is, thus, essentially one nominal dependent per verb.
1981: 38ff) in the sense that its referent will be sought in the linguistic or extralinguistic context. Thus, in (22), there must be an undergoer of reduci.

(22) Huic adsentiuntur reliqui consulares praeter Serullium, qui omnino reduci negat oportere ... (Cic. Fam. 1,1,3)
‘With him agree the remaining consulars except Servilius, who denies that he, [the king] should be brought back at all’

The last explicit reference to the king is three sentences back and thus not controlled by syntax. Consequently, the latency of the undergoer of reducere is more of a semantic than a syntactic constraint on this grammatical slot. In cases such as (36)b below, the direct object is not even latent. Thus, in terms of constraints on syntagmatic and paradigmatic variability on complements, Latin valency is weak.

As for syntactic functions of complements, Latin follows the accusative model of alignment of fundamental relations. As shown in Pinkster 1988: 65, the construction of Latin valency frames can be described by the following principles:
- the first complement is a subject,
- the second complement is a direct object in 9 out of 10 cases,
- the third complement is an indirect object in 7 out of 10 cases.

The 10% in which the second complement has a different syntactic function, and the 30% in which the third complement has a different syntactic function, are for the most part not erratic exceptions, but are due to the interaction of independent principles. Also, Latin possesses a couple of traits of ergative and active/inactive structure (Lehmann 1985a) which, however, it shares with many other accusative languages and which do not render it unusual within this type of fundamental relations.

Thus, the actor-undergoer axis of figure 1 is manifested by the syntagmatic contrast between subject and direct object, where the sole complement of the intransitive verb is included in the subject function. This contrast is strengthened by the passive operation, which also includes the subject of semantically active intransitive verbs (Lehmann 1985a). The indirect object may also be identified as one of the syntactic functions governed by the verb, but it is clearly less well integrated in the valency (conversion processes such as the one discussed in section 3.3 do integrate it to some extent).

We can now combine our observations on quantitative valency and on constraints on dependents. There is a type of language to which Yucatec, Kobon and Kalam belong, which have no case system and whose verbs have few valency slots, but these impose clear constraints on dependents. Participants which are not accommodated in the valency are not easily accommodated in the clause at all. There is another type of language to which Latin, other ancient Indo-European languages (cf. Meillet 1934: 357-359) and Japanese belong, which have a case system and whose verbs are liberal as to quantitative valency, but which impose no clear constraints on their actants. Several participants are easily accommodated within one clause, since the issue of whether or not they are provided for in verb valency is largely irrelevant.

3. Valency operations

Valency operations are grammatical or lexical operations relevant to valency. They may or may not change valency. For instance, voice is relevant to valency. But as it is included in the
valency of the lexeme, it is not a valency-changing operation (cf. Lehmann 1992, section 4.10). Similarly, operations on NPs in the clause such as anaphora do not change the valency, but are relevant to it.

3.1. Actor operations
3.1.1. Agentivization

Many languages have a productive causative derivation which increases the valency by an additional higher actor. Observe the Yucatec causative suffix of (23).

\[(23)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{YM} & \quad \text{IMPF-SBJ.3} \quad \text{remember-INCMPL} \quad \text{me} \\
& \quad \text{‘I remember him’ (lit. ‘he occurs to me’)} \\
\text{a.} & \quad k-u \quad k'a'h-al \quad tèen \\
\text{b.} & \quad k-a \quad k'a'h-s-ik-en \quad \text{IMPF-SUBJ.2} \quad \text{remember-CAUS-INCMPL-ABS.1.SG} \\
& \quad \text{‘you remind me of him’}
\end{align*}
\]

Apart from compounds such as *calefacere* ‘heat’, Latin has no productive causativization (cf. Christol 1997, section 3.4). A verb that is semantically causative of another verb is often morphologically unrelated to it, as in (24).\(^7\)

\[(24)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{a. eius memini ‘I remember him’} \\
& \text{b. me de eo mones ‘you remind me of him’}
\end{align*}
\]

3.1.2. Deagentivization

Deagentivization (sometimes called anticausative) is the opposite of causativization: A verb which takes an actor and an undergoer gets its actor position blocked, and the designated situation is conceived as happening to the undergoer without the intervention of an actor. Many languages apply reflexivization to the verb to achieve this effect, as does Spanish in (25). Yucatec Maya applies a separate derivation, as in (26).

\[(25)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{a. olvid-é eso} \\
& \quad \text{SPAN forget-PST.1.SG that} \\
& \quad \text{‘I forgot that’} \\
& \text{b. eso se me olvid-ó} \\
& \quad \text{that REFL me forget-PST.3.SG} \\
& \quad \text{‘that slipped from my memory’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[(26)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{YM PROG SBJ.3 shut-INCMPL DEF door DEF person-D2} \\
& \quad \text{‘the person is closing the door’} \\
& \text{a. táan u k’al-ik le hòol le máak-o’} \\
& \quad \text{PROG SBJ.3 shut-DEAG-INCMPL DEF door-D2} \\
& \quad \text{‘the door is closing’} \\
& \text{b. táan u k’álal le hòol-o’}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^7\) Interestingly, etymology reveals *moneo* to be, prehistorically, a causative of *memini*. 
The examples show that Indo-European and Non-Indo-European languages alike make use of a deagentive derivation. In Latin, some transitive verbs allow deagentivization without morphological mark, i.e. by valency conversion, as in (27) – (29). They are sometimes called ambivalent active verbs (Rothemberg 1974: 103-191, Flobert 1975: 408f, Boons et al. 1976: 68-120, Sznajder 1998: 792):

(27)  a. ecquis hoc aperit ostium? (Pl. Capt. 830)  
     ‘is anybody opening this door?’
  b. foris aperit (Pl. Persa 300)  
     ‘the door is opening’

(28)  a. adeo mutauerunt animum (Liv. 2,52,8)  
     ‘to this extent they changed their mind’
  b. adeo ... animi mutauerunt (Liv. 9,12,3)  
     ‘to this extent their mind changed’

(29)  a. fortuna se inclinauerat (Caes. BC 1,52,3)  
     ‘fortune had inclined’
  b. si fortuna belli inclinet ... (Liv. 3,61,4)  
     ‘should the fortune of war incline’

From the point of view of Latin grammar, there is neither agentivization nor deagentivization, because there is no regular derivational relationship in either direction. Instead, for the two valency frames one of which has an additional actor as opposed to the other, there is either one verb which varies between the two frames or else they belong to two verbs which are in an equipollent opposition. Among the 15 pairs of verbs discussed in García-Hernández 1989 which bear such a valency relationship, only six share the verb root, and these six pairs have derivationally nothing in common.

3.2. Undergoer operations
3.2.1. Extraversion

Extraversion is the operation which extends an action to an undergoer. Many languages have a derivation called applicative which adds a direct object slot to the verb valency. (30) is an example from Yucatec Maya, which transitivizes the verb by an applicative suffix.

(30)  a. táan u yóok’-ol Hwàan  
     YM PROG SBJ.3 cry-INCMPL John  
     ‘John is crying’
  b. táan u yóok’-t-ik u yatan Hwàan  
     YM PROG SBJ.3 cry-TRR-INCMPL POSS.3 wife John  
     ‘John is crying for his wife’

In Latin, the same verb stem is employed in this case, and a direct object is simply added to its valency, as in (31).

(31)  Johannes plorat (uxorem).  
     ‘John is crying (for his wife).’
The same variation between two construction schemata may be seen in *fugio* ‘flee (from)’ and several other verbs. Apart from this possibility, preverbation is a morphological strategy to increase the valency of a verb.

(32)  
\begin{align*}
a. \quad \text{consul pugnat cum rege} \\
& \text{‘the consul fights with the king’} \\
b. \quad \text{consul oppugnat regem} \\
& \text{‘the consul attacks the king’}
\end{align*}

In such cases, the oblique argument of the preverb materializes as an oblique complement (the direct object in (32)b) of the compound verb (cf. Lehmann 1983b). However, such cases are relatively rare, and indeed extraversion is not the primary function of preverbation: the same preverb *ob* may be used, in a pair such as *premo – opprimo*, to change the meaning of the stem without changing its valency.

3.2.2. Introversion

Introversion is the opposite of extraversion: A verb which takes an actor and an undergoer gets its undergoer position blocked, and the situation is conceived as an undirected activity of the actor. Again, reflexivization is a process often applied for this purpose, as in (33). Yucatec Maya applies a special derivational process, as in (34).

(33)  
\begin{align*}
a. \quad \text{Ivan ruga-et Boris.} \\
& \text{‘Ivan is scolding Boris’} \\
b. \quad \text{Ivan ruga-et-sja.} \\
& \text{‘Ivan is scolding (grumbling)’}
\end{align*}

(34)  
\begin{align*}
a. \quad \text{táan u chak-ik bak’ Hùulyah} \\
& \text{‘Julia is cooking meat’} \\
b. \quad \text{táan u chàak Hùulyah} \\
& \text{‘Julia is cooking’}
\end{align*}

Paralleling these examples in Latin with (35) and (36), we again find that one and the same verb stem is used transitively and without a direct object.

(35)  
\begin{align*}
a. \quad \text{Phalereus Demetrius, qui Periclem, principem Graeciae uituperat, (Cic. Off. 2, 60, 10)} \\
& \text{‘Phalereus Demetrius, who blames Pericles, the ruler of Greece’} \\
b. \quad \text{qui maledicit et uituperat ... fidem non capit. (Gell. 19, 3, 2, 1)} \\
& \text{‘he who scolds and blames ... does not encounter belief’}
\end{align*}

(36)  
\begin{align*}
a. \quad \text{perficit et coquit et ex fornace calcem eximit calcarius (Cat. Agr. 16, 1, 2)} \\
& \text{‘the lime-burner prepares and burns the lime and takes it out of the oven’} \\
b. \quad \text{verrit, sternit, coquit ... (Ap. Met. 7, 11, 9)} \\
& \text{‘he sweeps, puts tables covers, cooks ...’}
\end{align*}
Thus, there is again no reason to speak of extraversion and introversion in Latin, as an argument place for an undergoer may rather freely be added or blocked without any morphological operation on the stem.\textsuperscript{8}

\subsection*{3.3. Valency conversion}

The set of participants of a situation may be arranged, in the linguistic expression, in various ways, depending on such factors as their referential properties and functional sentence perspective. This requires promotion and demotion of verbal dependents. Most languages use the derivational processes already reviewed above for this purpose. In the Inuit (37), the a-version has the knife in a peripheral position, while the applicative derivation appearing in the b-version promotes it to absolutive function, at the same time demoting the former absolutive (the recipient) to a peripheral position.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{a. piniaqtu-p iqni-ni} pitaatta-mi tuni-va-a-Ø
  \textit{the hunter gave his son a knife’} \\
  \textit{b. piniaqtu-p iqni-mii} pitaata-q tuni-ip-pa-a-Ø
  \textit{the hunter gave a knife to his son’} (Lazard 1994: 160f)
\end{enumerate}

Conversely in the Indonesian (38), the recipient is in a peripheral position in the basic a-version, while it is promoted to direct object by the applicative derivation of the b-version, with simultaneous demotion of the erstwhile direct object (the transferred object) to secondary object. The same effect is afforded by the \textit{be-} applicative appearing in the German translation (39).

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{a. Ali ber-bicara tentang kesulitan}
  \textit{Ali spoke about the problem’} \\
  \textit{b. Ali mem-bicara-kan kesulitan}
  \textit{Ali discussed the problem’}
\end{enumerate}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{a. Ali sprach über das Problem.}
  \textit{b. Ali besprach das Problem.}
\end{enumerate}

Latin again achieves the rearrangement of participants without any derivational means. The same verb stem may be used in alternate valency frames according to the pattern of (40).

\textsuperscript{8} This was already noted by Priscianus: \textit{Transitiua licet absolute proferre cum maxime aliquam sui passionem ipso actu significant ... Virgilius huiusce modi res ostendit animorum esse passiones ut in VI [733] “Hinc metuunt cupiuntque, dolent gaudentque”} (Prisc. \textit{Gram.} 3,270,23)
(40) a. murum urbi circumdedit
b. urbem muro circumdedit
‘he surrounded the town with a wall’

Other verbs with this valency conversion include *donare* ‘present’, *aspergere* ‘sprinkle’. The alternation serves the same purposes of rearrangement of dependents as the derivational processes employed in other languages (cf. Bolkestein 1985).

A recent study by Nichols et al. (2001) shows that languages differ in their preference for intransitive bases plus valency increase or for transitive bases plus valency decrease. We have seen that this alternative is largely irrelevant to Latin. Latin (like other ancient Indo-European languages) belongs to a minority of languages which have very little valency-changing derivational morphology (cf. also García-Hernández 1989: 300 on “diathèse lexicale”).

4. Typological correlates

From this summary comparative survey, Latin emerges as a language with the following traits:
- In the alternative of assigning the argument place either to the dependency controller or to the dependent, Latin prefers the latter alternative in diverse areas of syntax, especially in the verbal domain. In other words, Latin is heavily dependent-marking.
- Consequently, (verbal) government is weakly developed in the language.
- There is a case system with obligatory case assignment to every nominal expression in a sentence. Although the system is, in this respect, strongly grammaticalized, the paradigm is yet large enough for cases to retain some of their specific meaning. Thus, every nominal expression is a virtual modifier.\(^9\)
- The alignment of fundamental relations follows the accusative model. The central status of subject and object and the relation between them is strengthened by the passive operation.
- Apart from subject and direct object, there are other complements, most importantly the indirect object. These, however, are semantically and structurally similar to adjuncts in the same cases.
- Verb valency may comprise up to four complements, and trivalent verbs are frequent. In terms of quantitative valency, Latin thus ranges near the upper pole of the typological continuum.
- By their structural and semantic properties, complements shade over into adjuncts. In terms of strength of constraints imposed on complements, Latin thus ranges near the lower pole of the continuum.
- There are, in Latin, practically no morphological operations of increase, decrease and rearrangement of valency. Instead, the functions of such operations are achieved by combining alternate valency frames with one stem or with two stems which are in a suppletive relation to each other.

The typological connection between the Latin case system and its valency system has been pointed out. In addition, presence vs. lack of valency changing derivation correlates with

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\(^9\) This includes even expressions in the nominative, which may exert various non-subject functions.
another property not yet mentioned: Most operations of valency change require an operator whose own relationality is exploited for the desired end (Lehmann 1985b). A clear case may be seen in causative constructions of Romance languages which employ what was Latin *facere* as a function verb. Here, the subject of *facere* becomes the subject of the causative construction, and the direct object slot of *facere* takes the dependent clause in. As a result, the causative construction has one more grammatical slot than the base construction. Similar examples could be adduced for the other operations.

The operators employed in such operations are often auxiliary or function verbs. Structurally, they govern the base verb and form a complex verb with it. With ongoing grammaticalization or lexicalization, the complex coalesces, and the result is a valency-changing verb derivation. Now, apart from *esse* and *habere*, which are used in the inflection system, Latin does not have such function and auxiliary verbs. This is even truer of Pre-Latin, when *habere* was not an auxiliary. And even if Pre-Latin had had such verbs, it is doubtful whether they would have developed into derivational operators, because government was even less strong in Proto-Indo-European than it became in Latin. Last not least, coalescence of a function verb with its governed non-finite full verb is greatly facilitated (and maybe even rendered possible in the first place) if the word order is ‘rectum ante regens’, so that the function verb may become a derivational suffix of the base verb, as may indeed be seen in verbs such as *calefacere*. Again, this condition is not fulfilled in Pre-Latin insofar as Proto-Indo-European had free word order. The net result is that on the one hand, the case and valency system of Latin does not need valency-changing derivation, and on the other hand the typological conditions do not foster its development.

**Bibliographic references**


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10 Japanese is one of the many languages which show what is meant here.

(41) a. Hanako-wa Taroo-ni hon-o kat-te hosii

   Hanako-TOP Taro-DAT book-ACC buy-CONV2 desired

   ‘Hanako wants Taro to buy the book.’

b. Hanako-wa hon-ga ka-i-tai

   Hanako-TOP book-NOM buy-CONV1-desired

   ‘Hanako wants to buy the book.’

Desiderative constructions in Japanese are impersonal. They are formed with an adjective meaning ‘desired’ as the predicate. This takes a converbial construction as its complement, as may be seen in (41)a. At an earlier stage in the language history, a different adjective and a different kind of converb were used in much the same syntactic combination for desiderative constructions where the wisher is identical to the fulfiller. In present-day Japanese, this latter construction is grammaticalized, the former adjective having become a desiderative verb suffix, as in (41)b.
Christian Lehmann, Latin valency in typological perspective


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