

Psych Predicates in Romance Languages

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Introduction

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1 The Challenge of Psych Predicates

Within the domain of linguistic theory, *psychological predicates* – often abbreviated as *psych predicates* – have long occupied a central position in debates on the mapping between syntax and semantics. Since the seminal work of Belletti and Rizzi (1988), verbs denoting psychological states, emotions, and perceptions have appeared in discussions regarding the limits of theories of argument and event structure, as well as thematic role assignment. These verbs – such as *to fear*, *to please*, *to worry*, *to interest* – pose a persistent challenge to any model that seeks a systematic link between meaning and morphosyntactic realization.

The difficulty lies in their argument linking. While agentive predicates tend to show a straightforward alignment between the semantic AGENT and syntactic subject, psych predicates frequently invert this relation. The EXPERIENCER, i.e. the individual who feels, perceives, or evaluates an emotional state, may appear as subject, direct object, or indirect object, depending on the predicate type and



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the language in question. This variable mapping between semantic and syntactic functions (i.e. between the EXPERIENCER and the non-experiencer argument, which might be a CAUSER or a STIMULUS) has implications for the modeling of the syntax-semantics interface.

A long-standing observation, reiterated across several decades of research, is that psych verbs (at least in Romance languages) divide into *subject-experiencer* (SE) verbs – such as the Catalan *témer* ('to fear'), where the experiencer occupies the canonical subject position –, and *object-experiencer* (OE) verbs – such as the Catalan *preocupar* ('to worry'), where the experiencer surfaces as an object. Whereas SE verbs align with the prototypical transitive schema (EXPERIENCER as subject, STIMULUS as object), OE verbs display non-canonical argument alignment: the STIMULUS is realized as the grammatical subject, while the EXPERIENCER appears as a dative or accusative object. As Belletti and Rizzi (1988) and later Grimshaw (1990) and Landau (2009) have emphasized, this inversion of roles results in a series of “psych properties”: restrictions on reflexivization and passive formation, peculiarities in clitic doubling, differential case marking, and nominalization constraints.

In addition, Romance OE verbs present a particularly rich field for variation. In Spanish and Catalan, for instance, they may appear in either accusative or dative case with some verbs, often with subtle semantic and pragmatic effects. This is the case, for instance, for *preocupar* ('to worry') or *interesar/interessar* ('to interest'). Such variation, as Kailuweit (2018c) and Royo (2017; 2020; 2021) observe, interacts with factors like agentivity, topicality, and even language contact. Indeed, the pluricentric nature of Spanish – with different norms across Europe and Latin America – and the bilingual reality of the majority of the Catalan-speaking territories make this alternation an ideal context for studying the interface of grammar, meaning, and social variation.

Despite decades of work, the theoretical description of psych predicates remains fragmented. Competing accounts – those that attribute their peculiarities to unaccusativity, those that posit causativity, and those that emphasize aspectual or information-structural parameters – have produced multiple interesting insights into this question (Temme 2018). The empirical evidence, moreover, points to a gradient rather than categorical landscape: OE verbs vary along dimensions of agentivity, causativity, and stativity, often combining features traditionally associated with distinct event classes. Recent corpus and experimental studies (e.g. Verhoeven 2010; 2017; Fritz-Huechante et al. 2020) show even within one language, psych predicates form *continua* rather than discrete categories. Complex OE predicates, for instance, light verb constructions with experiencer objects competing with synthetic OE verbs (see e.g. Pisciotta, Masini 2025; Wiskandt 2025a; 2025b), add another dimension of variation.

This volume, *Psych Predicates in Romance Languages*, arises from an international collaboration that aims to reassess these issues by integrating theoretical, empirical, and sociolinguistic approaches. The project thus addresses different fronts: the formal description of argument realization in psych predicates, and the sociolinguistics conditions under which speakers use and vary them.

2 From Unaccusativity to Causativity: Theoretical Models and Debates

The theoretical fascination with psych predicates stems from their ability to reveal tensions between universal principles of argument linking and language-specific patterns of encoding. Since the late 1980s, two major hypotheses have dominated discussion: the *unaccusativity hypothesis* and the *causativity hypothesis*. Each has illuminated aspects of psych predicate behavior but neither has proven exhaustive.

2.1 The Unaccusativity Hypothesis

Belletti and Rizzi (1988) proposed that the peculiar syntactic properties of OE verbs derive from their unaccusative status. In this view, verbs like *piacere* or *gustar* (both of them meaning ‘to please’) pattern with unaccusatives such as *arrivare* or *llegar* (i.e., ‘to arrive’): their subjects originate as internal arguments, and the surface subject position is not a true external argument. The experiencer, typically encoded as a dative, is therefore an oblique argument introduced by a prepositional or applicative structure rather than by the canonical subject position. This model explains certain diagnostics, such as auxiliary selection (*essere* vs. *avere* in Italian), restrictions on passivization, and the impossibility of reflexivization. However, it struggles with the transitive-like behavior of many OE verbs, especially those taking accusative experiencers.

Moreover, the unaccusativity hypothesis implies that all OE verbs share the same underlying structure, an assumption increasingly at odds with empirical evidence. In Italian, only a subset of OE verbs behave like *piacere* in auxiliary selection and cliticization; most, such as *preoccupare* (‘to worry’), use *avere* and allow direct object clitics. In Spanish, nearly all OE verbs may alternate between dative and accusative marking, suggesting a fluid interaction between unaccusative and transitive configurations. The unaccusativity model, though foundational, thus appears too rigid to accommodate the observed variation across verbs and languages.

2.2 The Causativity Hypothesis

Grimshaw (1990) and Pesetsky (1995) proposed an alternative explanation: rather than being unaccusative, OE verbs are causative. They denote events in which the non-experiencer argument brings about a psychological change in the experiencer. Under this analysis, the Spanish *preocupar* ('to worry') and *enfadar* ('to anger') are change-of-state predicates whose subjects occupy the canonical AGENT or CAUSER role. The EXPERIENCER, though syntactically an object, is semantically a PATIENT undergoing a mental or emotional change. This account explains the availability of causative paraphrases (x worries $y \approx x$ causes y to be worried), the possibility of passivization, and the aspectual properties that distinguish them from purely stative verbs.

However, this approach also faces empirical difficulties. Many OE verbs resist truly eventive or agentive readings. As Kailuweit (2005; 2015) and Temme (2018) argue, their semantics often combine stative and inchoative properties. Moreover, the causativity hypothesis must explain why the causatively affected object of a psych verb behaves morphosyntactically differently from the patient of a canonical causative verb, such as the Spanish *romper* ('to break') or *matar* ('to kill'). The asymmetries observed in clitic doubling, case alternation, and reflexivization suggest that psychological causation is structurally distinct from physical causation.

Recent work has attempted to bridge these perspectives by recognizing the *heterogeneity* of OE verbs. Kailuweit (2015; 2018a) proposes an *activity hierarchy* that maps varying degrees of agentivity and affectedness across arguments, allowing verbs to occupy intermediate positions between causative and stative poles. Marín and McNally (2011) similarly describe psych predicates as denoting *inchoative states*, i.e. states that include a temporal onset but lack a telic endpoint. These approaches avoid the binary opposition between unaccusativity and causativity by positing a continuum of event structures.

2.3 Argument Structure, Aspect, and Voice

Beyond causativity, psych predicates also challenge the interface between aspectual class and argument realization. Vendler's (1967) and Dowty's (1979; 1991) taxonomy – states, activities, accomplishments, achievements – cannot easily accommodate verbs that exhibit both stative persistence and change-of-state features. Verbs such as Spanish *preocupar* ('to worry') or *enfadar* ('to anger') describe enduring emotional conditions initiated by an event but not necessarily culminating in a result. Their pronominal

counterparts (*preocuparse*, *enfadarse*) further complicate the picture by introducing apparent reflexivity or anticausativity.

Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014) term this the *psych causative alternation*, paralleling the causative-inchoative alternation in non-psych domains (e.g. Spanish *romper/romperse*, ‘to break’). Whether these pronominal forms are true reflexives, inchoatives, or passives remains contested. Some authors (e.g. Acedo-Matellán, Mateu 2015; Marín, McNally 2011) view them as inchoative or anticausative constructions with a proto-patient experiencer; others (Härtl 2001; Herslund 1997) analyze them as reflexive or antipassive, with a proto-agentive experiencer.

This ambiguity has motivated experimental and corpus-based studies seeking empirical correlates of agentivity and causality. Several studies across languages (e.g. Verhoeven 2017 for German) show that agentivity in the stimulus argument correlates with reduced acceptability or occurrence of pronominal or anticausative variants, paralleling findings in non-psych domains where volitionality blocks anticausativization. For Spanish, pilot corpus studies conducted by Kailuweit and Wiskandt indicate that verbs allowing frequent pronominal alternants tend to have inanimate or less agentive stimuli. Thus, the alternation between the two constructions – e.g. Spanish *preocupar* vs. *preocuparse* (‘to worry’) – appears to be probabilistically conditioned by semantic features rather than strictly categorical syntactic rules. Recently, typological studies on the alternation (e.g. Rott et al. 2020; 2024) have gained momentum, establishing the “psych alternation” as a widespread cross-linguistic phenomenon conditioned by valence orientation and other syntactic parameters.

2.4 Toward Integrative Models

The theoretical landscape of psych predicates is thus characterized by complementarity rather than exclusivity. Each framework captures a dimension of the phenomenon: unaccusativity accounts for dative marking and syntactic restrictions; causativity explains transitive alignment and aspectual change; aspectual and constructional approaches bridge the two. The current consensus inclines toward multidimensional modeling that integrates argument structure, aspectual composition, and pragmatic prominence. Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), in particular, offers a flexible apparatus for mapping semantic macroroles (ACTOR and UNDERGOER) to syntactic functions, allowing for graded activity hierarchies (Kailuweit 2018a).

By applying such models to cross-Romance data, this volume aims not to adjudicate between unaccusativity and causativity but

to explore the intermediate zones that characterize real language use. These include constructions where the experiencer alternates between accusative and dative marking, where the pronominal form alternates with the active, and where sociolinguistic factors influence grammatical choice. Theoretical adequacy, in this perspective, must be matched by empirical and sociolinguistic realism.

3 Overview of the Volume

The present volume, emerging from a workshop at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf in 2023, brings together ten contributions that collectively explore the syntactic, semantic, and sociolinguistic dimensions outlined above. The editors have organized the chapters so as to reflect both theoretical diversity and thematic coherence, and sorted them into three parts: The first part comprises the contributions that investigate the pronominal construction of OE verbs from various perspectives. The contributions in the second part study dative-experiencer verbs. The third part consists of two contributions focussing on constructions with psych nouns.

3.1 The Pronominal Construction

The first part of this volume begins with a chapter by José María García-Miguel and Victoria Vázquez Rozas. They offer a comprehensive quantitative study of diathesis alternation and case marking in Spanish psychological predicates, providing one of the volume's empirical contributions. As said, psych verbs constitute a long-recognized challenge for theories of transitivity because their argument-structure patterns vary substantially both cross-linguistically and within individual languages, and Spanish illustrates this complexity. Within the object-experiencer class, variation arises in morphological case marking. Verbs like *gustar* ('to please') consistently take a dative Experiencer, whereas others, including *asustar* ('to scare'), alternate between accusative and dative (*A ella no la/le asustaba el contagio*. 'The infection did not scare her.'). These same verbs also participate in a voice alternation to the middle or pronominal construction, which promotes the experiencer to subject position (*Ella no se asustaba de nada*. 'She was not scared of anything.'). García-Miguel and Vázquez Rozas investigate the factors conditioning both alternations, using large datasets from ADESSE and CORPES XXI. Their regression analyses show that experiencer person, stimulus person, aspect, verb and geographical zone significantly predict the choice between active object-experiencer constructions and middle subject-experiencer constructions. A

partially overlapping set of predictors – zone, stimulus person, aspect, and verb – also governs the alternation between accusative and dative case for experiencer-objects. Despite these parallels, the authors find no significant correlation between diathesis alternation (subject vs. object experiencer) and morphological case alternation (accusative vs. dative experiencer). They argue instead that the two patterns respond to different communicative and discourse functions, rather than forming a unified or interdependent alternation.

Following this chapter, Sarah Grätz, Armin Sawicki, and Anna Stein present an acceptability-judgment study that compares Spanish and Catalan, which offers experimental evidence on psych-verb alternations within the bilingual Catalan-Spanish community. Their study focuses on object-experiencer (OE) psych-verb constructions and investigates how speakers rate active versus pronominal voice across different animacy conditions. The authors hypothesize that, given the close geographical and sociolinguistic proximity of Spanish and Catalan, bilingual speakers' language attitudes and proficiency profiles may shape their acceptability preferences for particular voice-animacy pairings, making an experimental approach especially informative. Their pilot results shed light on how animacy modulates voice selection in the two languages and begin to show subtle differences in how Spanish and Catalan speakers process OE psych-verb constructions. At the same time, the authors emphasize the methodological dimension of the study: they argue that a full understanding of contemporary syntactic variation requires the combined use of both corpus data and experimental evidence, each contributing complementary strengths.

The volume continues with a chapter by Addison J. Blanchard-Rooney, who contributes a sketch-based elicitation study designed to probe the morphosyntactic and syntactic properties of object-experiencer (OE) psych verbs in Catalan and Spanish. The task contained four sketches depicting basic emotional scenarios, each labeled with a target verb in Catalan and Spanish (*molestar(se)* 'to annoy', *enfadar(se)* 'to anger', *entristecer(se)* 'to sadden', *alegrar(se)* 'to gladden'). Seventy-nine participants produced written descriptions incorporating these verbs, yielding 305 analyzable items annotated for six parameters: morphosyntactic voice, argument type, constituent order, morphological realization of the target, tense/aspect, and prepositional marking. Quantitative and qualitative comparisons reveal systematic cross-linguistic contrasts – most strikingly in voice choice, with Catalan speakers favoring the pronominal construction significantly more than Spanish speakers across verbs. For example, while 73% of Catalan descriptions of *alegrar-se* used pronominal voice, only 43% of Spanish descriptions did so. Additional patterns emerge regarding between-verb flexibility and the interaction of voice with structural choices such as clausal

vs. nominal stimuli. By integrating visual-elicitation methods with statistical analysis, Blanchard-Rooney's study provides new insights into how Romance speakers construct OE psych-verb phrases and illustrates how experimental methodologies complement corpus research in capturing contemporary variation.

Jaume Mateu and Carles Royo examine the diachronic shift from Latin impersonal psychological verbs to their Catalan pronominal counterparts, showing that the rise of reflexive constructions follows systematic pathways of detransitivization. They focus on Latin verbs with the pattern [Experiencer_{AC}/Stimulus_{GEN}], namely MISERET, PAENITET, PIGET, PUDET, TAEDET, arguing that the accusative experiencer occupies a hierarchically prominent, subject-like position within an internal predication, while the genitive stimulus functions as a low adjunct. An empty pronominal element fills the external argument slot and moves to satisfy the EPP, thereby ensuring compatibility with Burzio's Generalization as an A(mbient)-Causer (Pesetsky 1995). As Romance developed, Catalan underwent a grammaticalization of the reflexive pronoun *se* as a marker of middle-related functions, a change that both attracted new lexemes (*avergonyir-se*, 'to be ashamed') and reshaped inherited ones (*penedir-se* < PAENITET, 'to regret'). Importantly, the transition from Latin to Catalan preserves semantic regularities: non-agentive TAEDET and PIGET correspond to anticausatives such as *fastiguejar-se* ('to grow weary') and *afligir-se* ('to grieve'), whereas the more agentive MISERET and PAENITET produce autocausatives like *compadir-se* ('to pity') and *penedir-se* ('to regret'). PUDET maps to *avergonyir-se*, which displays both anticausative and autocausative readings. Through this comparison, Mateu and Royo show that Romance pronominal psych verbs emerge through historically grounded and semantically principled patterns, and that there is certain continuity between Latin impersonals and their modern reflexive descendants.

Next, Rolf Kailuweit addresses the long-debated question of how to classify pronominal constructions of transitive object-experiencer (OE) verbs in accusative languages such as French, Spanish, and German. These constructions differ from canonical reflexives, since the undergoer of the corresponding transitive predicate remains semantically accessible and cannot be replaced by a non-coreferential pronominal argument. Within Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), previous analyses have diverged: some treat these constructions as analogous to pronominal passives or anticausatives, whereas others view them as antipassives involving privileged syntactic argument (PSA) modulation. The chapter re-evaluates these proposals by examining whether the pronominal PSA behaves as an actor or an undergoer, drawing on aktionsart properties and the logical structures of corresponding transitive constructions. The comparison with non-pronominal passives shows that pronominal OE constructions exhibit

a significantly higher degree of participant activity, which undermines a passive or anticausative interpretation. Instead, according to standard criteria for identifying antipassives, the experiencer in these constructions patterns more like an actor, providing a strong argument for analyzing Romance OE-pronominals as instances of antipassives. At the same time, following Standard RRG, the chapter argues that these antipassive-like structures arise through a lexical rule rather than through a productive syntactic operation, given that the construction is restricted to the semantic domain of episodic psych-verbs. The analysis concludes by proposing an explicit RRG model for both the transitive base construction and its pronominal counterpart, clarifying how they are related within the grammar.

Expanding the volume's typological scope, Niklas Wiskandt also addresses the problem of the classification of the pronominal construction, as discussed in the Kailuweit's chapter, but takes a different perspective. The chapter investigates psych verb detransitivization with a focus on Germanic and Romance languages. Across both subfamilies, languages display detransitivized subject-experiencer predicates derived from transitive object-experiencer verbs via markers of reflexive origin. Wiskandt proposes a novel, typologically grounded framework that classifies psych detransitivization according to patterns of voice syncretism. The study draws on a sample of languages with detransitivizing psych alternations, covering several language families beyond Romance and Germanic. It shows that all markers used to detransitivize experiencer verbs also appear in other voice constructions, though the precise range of functions varies widely across languages. Significantly, the only universal denominator across these syncretism patterns is an anticausative function, suggesting that detransitivized psych predicates are best understood as part of a broader cross-linguistic domain of anticausative marking. This finding contrasts with Kailuweit's conclusions in the previous chapter. The typological analysis in the chapter contributes both to clarifying the syntactic status of Romance and Germanic psych alternation constructions and to providing a foundation for future theoretical, typological, as well as family-specific empirical research.

3.2 Dative-Experiencer Verbs

In the second part, Lisa Figura contributes a historical perspective to the volume with her study of Old French psych verbs and the behavior of dative experiencers, focusing in particular on the role of the preposition *à*. Figura examines Old French PV belonging to their third class in Belletti and Rizzi's classification (1988), where the experiencer surfaces as a dative object and the nominative subject

encodes the stimulus. A hallmark of this class is the possibility for the dative experiencer to appear in preverbal position – an option retained today in some Romance languages such as Spanish (e.g. *A Ana le gusta el chocolate* ‘Ana likes the chocolate.’) but lost in Modern French, where preverbal placement is restricted to marked topicalization or dislocation. Old French, however, freely allowed preverbal experiencer datives, as seen in examples such as *A l’abé e a monies plut mult sa conpaignie* (‘The abbot and the monks liked his company a lot.’). A closer examination of these structures reveals further complexities: when the experiencer appears preverbally, the preposition *à* may be omitted altogether, suggesting that its distribution was neither stable nor exclusively tied to marking dative case. Indeed, in line with recent work questioning the sharp Old French distinction between direct and indirect objects, Figura argues that the distribution of *à* reflects a more fluid system in which dative marking had not yet fully crystallized. Her findings thus show that early Romance displayed greater variation in argument realization than modern standard languages, reinforcing the idea that present-day alternations are remnants of a once broader typological space.

Simonetta Vietri then investigates the syntactic behavior of Dative Experiencer (DE) verbs in Italian, traditionally exemplified by *piacere* (‘to please’) and characterized as unaccusative predicates with an inverted argument structure. While previous literature has focused on the quirky-subject properties of preverbal Experiencers or on their interpretation as topicalized elements, the present study undertakes a corpus-based analysis to determine the conditions regulating the preverbal vs. postverbal distribution of DEs. The author examines Dative Experiencer verbs in Italian, focusing on the syntactic patterns that configure the apparent stability of the Italian system. Her analysis of prepositional and clitic constructions with *a* shows that even within a seemingly fixed paradigm, subtle alternations depend on information structure and lexical semantics. The study further demonstrates that the class of DE verbs is more heterogeneous than generally assumed, comprising four distinct syntactic types. Alongside *piacere*, which alternates between dative and reflexive patterns, verbs such as *dispiacere* (‘to regret’) behave like change-of-state predicates, alternating between dative and non-reflexive subject constructions. *Interessare* (‘to interest’) displays both dative and accusative Experiencer alignments, as well as a pronominal variant with a subject Experiencer and prepositional Stimulus. Finally, unergative DE verbs – selecting *avere* (‘to have’) in compound tenses – such as *compiacere* (‘to please’) and *ripugnare* (‘to disgust’) exhibit their own alternation patterns, further demonstrating that the Italian DE system, far from uniform, encodes a rich set of argument-structure configurations shaped by lexical properties and discourse-driven constraints.

3.3 Constructions with Psych Nouns

Elga Cremades' chapter shifts the focus to the nominal domain for the third part, examining psych nominalizations in Catalan and showing how their internal structure relates to the well-known syntactic and morphological behavior of psych verbs. Building on Belletti and Rizzi's (1988) tripartite classification, the paper shows that when one turns from verbs to psych nominals – mostly deverbal nouns denoting psychological states or emotions – this tripartite distinction becomes partially neutralized. Nominals derived from Type I verbs pattern as subject-experiencer predicates, preserving an internal argument corresponding to the target of emotion. By contrast, nominals related to Type II and Type III verbs typically license only a single argument: the experiencer, which surfaces as an external argument. In other words, psych nominals are uniformly subject-experiencer predicates, regardless of the alignment found in their verbal bases. The chapter argues that this restructuring follows from broader properties of nominalization. Crucially, nominals lack the ability to introduce cause arguments – an absence that particularly affects nominals derived from Type II verbs. This restriction can be traced to the inherent characteristics of external arguments, as well as to the aspectual profile of nominalizations. By tracing how experiencers are encoded in psych nominals, the author shows how nominal structures can either preserve or neutralize argument-structure distinctions otherwise visible in the verbal domain.

The volume closes with Jordi Ginebra's exploration of light verb constructions with psychological predicates in Catalan, set against their Spanish – and, to a lesser extent, English – counterparts. This chapter offers the first comprehensive descriptive overview of Catalan psych constructions with light verbs, a domain of considerable structural complexity and high relevance for learners of Catalan as a second language. The study identifies twelve Catalan construction patterns combining a psychological noun with a light verb, grouped into two macro-types according to the syntactic function of the experiencer – subject-experiencer constructions and dative-experiencer constructions. For each construction, Ginebra examines a set of diagnostic parameters: the syntactic position of the experiencer, aspectual value, mass/count properties of the psychological noun, the realization of the non-experiencer argument, the existence of synthetic or attributive correlates (V + Adj/Part), cross-linguistic correspondences in Spanish and English, and historical attestation. The chapter presents the full inventory of these twelve structures, followed by a detailed analysis of the first construction type and a set of further remarks on patterns that emerge across the system. Beyond its descriptive and contrastive contributions, the chapter engages with a long-standing debate

concerning the status of light verb constructions within phraseology: whether they should be analyzed as grammatical combinations predictable from general principles, or as idiomatic collocations requiring lexical listing. Ginebra argues that the answer depends on how far the distribution of Catalan light verbs can be captured through grammatical or semantic generalizations – supporting a systematic account – or whether individual noun–verb pairings resist prediction, in which case they fall within the remit of phraseological study.

4 Toward a unified research agenda

Together, the chapters of this volume represent a comprehensive synthesis of current research on psych predicates in Romance languages. They demonstrate how empirical, theoretical, and sociolinguistic approaches can converge on a single phenomenon, each illuminating a distinct facet of its complexity.

Despite their diversity, the contributions share several unifying themes. First, they all treat argument realization as dynamic and context-sensitive rather than lexically fixed. Whether through diachronic change, register variation, or bilingual contact, the mapping of semantic roles to syntactic functions emerges as a site of flexibility within constraints. Second, the chapters collectively emphasize gradience and continuum. Rather than discrete classes, the data show tendencies along semantic dimensions such as agentivity, stativity, and affectedness. This supports the theoretical move toward scalar representations, such as Kailuweit’s activity hierarchy or Marín & McNally’s left-bounded states. Third, several contributions highlight voice categories – active, passive, reflexive, anticausative – as spaces to re-evaluate the “psych alternation” across languages, yielding a more nuanced typology of its function. Fourth, cross-linguistic comparison is used as a crucial tool for the analysis of grammatical phenomena – both within the Romance subfamily and at a larger typological scale. And fifth, the volume integrates sociolinguistic variation. The Spanish–Catalan case studies illustrate how grammatical choice can index speaker identity and stance toward linguistic norms. This approach exemplifies a broader movement toward embedding formal linguistics within real-world communicative ecologies.

In total, the findings and perspectives collected in this volume point toward a unified yet pluralistic research agenda for the study of psych predicates. Different directions appear particularly promising for future research.

On the one hand, empirical and cross-linguistic expansion and data harmonization: Future work should enlarge the comparative

database, integrating corpora from other Romance languages (e.g. Portuguese, Romanian) and systematically capturing agentivity, topicality, and polarity. Shared metadata standards would allow quantitative testing of hypotheses about the case alternation of the experiencer and the “psych alternation” across languages.

On the other hand, integration of sociolinguistic and glottopolitical considerations: Building on the pilot studies conducted in Mallorca and reported in this volume, future research should extend to other Catalan-speaking regions and to Latin America, investigating how institutional norms and language attitudes shape grammatical micro-variation. The concept of *glottopolitical reflexes* – grammatical manifestations of language ideology – may become a key analytical tool for the morphosyntactic variation of Romance psych predicates in such environments.

Under this point of view, the study of psych predicates remains an intriguing space for testing assumptions about linguistic variation and representation. The contributions assembled here reaffirm that resolving the “psych puzzle” requires not a single theory but a network of perspectives – syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic – which, albeit sometimes in conflict, eventually help each other on the path toward a deeper understanding of the psych domain.

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