

## A Verb classes model in a cross-linguistic perspective

**Keywords:** causatives, anticausatives, change of state verbs, degree achievements, argument structure, valency alternations, analysis of comparative concepts

**Introduction.** The talk compares the behavior of (anti-)causatives, in particular of change of state verbs (CoS) (*open, close*) (Fillmore 1970; Levin, 2013) and degree achievements (DAs) (*dim, dry*) (Kennedy 2001; Kennedy/Levin 2008), reflexives and middles (Abraham 2005; Schäfer 2008; inter alia) in German, English and Greek. Verbs expressing a change-of-state take agents and/or causers as external argument; they have a use that lacks an external argument syntactically and semantically (Levin/Rappaport Hovav 1998; Reinhart, 2002). In German, verbs undergoing the causative alternation, can appear: (a) as morphologically unmarked i.e., unmarked anticausatives (see 1a,b), and (b) as (reflexively) marked anticausatives, in case they appear with the reflexive pronoun 'sich' (Schäfer 2008; Alexiadou/Anagnostopoulou/Schäfer 2015; Haspelmath 2019; inter alia) (see 2a,b). DAs can be either morphologically marked (with the reflexive pronoun 'sich') or unmarked (see 3), while middles (4a) and reflexives (4b) show up with the reflexive 'sich'. (Anti-)causative CoS verbs in Greek can appear: (i) with a morphological marking (5a) (s. Alexiadou/Anagnostopoulou/Schäfer 2015; inter alia), (ii) without a morphological marking (5b), (iii) with an optional marking that correlates with a difference in interpretation (Alexiadou/Anagnostopoulou/Schäfer 2015, p. 88) (see 5c), while middles (6a) and reflexives (6b) remain always morphologically marked (Schäfer 2008; Alexiadou/Anagnostopoulou/Schäfer 2015, p. 64).

**Aim:** The aim of the talk is to propose a model that introduces an analysis of comparative concepts of the verbs under investigation (Sioupi 2019, 2021, 2022), relating morpho-syntactic and semantic information to each other.

**Methodology:** The proposed model views valency alternations (Herbst 1992, 2011; Herbst /Schüller 2008; Zanchi/Combei/ Luraghi 2022) and argument structure as a primary means identifying verb class alternations (Sioupi 2019, 2021, 2022, 2022). The analysis is built on different levels: (a) the argument structure (argument variables) level (x, (y)), (b) the valency patterns level [ $NP_{NOM}$ , ( $NP_{ACC}$ )], (c) the semantic (theta-) roles level (x: agent, (y: theme)), (d) the syntactic level assuming the distinction between structural and lexical cases (x: NOM, (y: ACC)), (e) the grammatical functions level (subject, (object)), (f) the semantic decomposition level (Dowty 1979); it provides details about verb-formation that help us explain the different patterns found in these three languages (Sioupi 2019, 2021, 2022; Sioupi/Grigoriadis under review).

**Results:** The model is expected to have both theoretical and typological implications. It contributes to the typological research (Hartmann/Haspelmath/Taylor 2013) and updates the theory of verb classes in all three languages — resulting in better models for language learning. The perspectives of morphosyntax and semantics can help L2 learners to understand the syntax-semantics interface.



the Anna-NOM washes NACT  
'Ana washes herself.'

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