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# Object experiencer nominalizations in Italian: the anticausative hypothesis versus the light verb construction hypothesis

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**Abstract:** This research analyses Object Experiencer (OE) nominalizations, a widely discussed topic in the broader debate on the lexicalist versus the syntactic hypotheses concerning nominalizations. I tested two types of hypotheses to explain Italian OE nominalizations: the anticausative hypothesis and the light verb construction hypothesis. The former proposes that causative psych nominalizations from OE verbs undergoing causative-anticausative alternation are derived from the anticausative alternant. The light verb construction hypothesis suggests that OE nominalizations derive from light verb constructions that encode the result of the change in emotional state. I show that the anticausative hypothesis does not explain some counterexamples, whereas the light verb construction hypothesis correctly explains all OE nominal constructions, regardless of whether they derive from verbs that undergo the causative-anticausative alternation. Psych nominalizations inherit their argument and event structure from light verb constructions and show a resultative semantics.

**Keywords:** agentive/non-agentive causes; causative/anticausative alternation; light verb constructions; object experiencer verbs; psych nominalizations

## 1 Introduction

Since the 1960s (Chomsky 1970; Lakoff 1970; Lees 1960), researchers have debated nominalizations arguing between the syntactic and the lexicalist approaches. The syntactic approach claims that nominals are syntactically generated and inherit verb properties, whereas the lexicalist approach claims that nominal properties do not depend on verb properties. See Alexiadou and Borer (2020) for details on past and current research on nominalizations.

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Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a) investigate non-agentive Object Experiencer (OE) nominalizations in Greek and Romanian, illustrated in the Greek example (1). The authors argue that these derive from the anticausative variant of OE psych verbs that undergo the causative-anticausative alternation (CAA), as shown in (2a)–(2b), respectively (cf. Section 3 for details). These nominalizations inherit their arguments from verbs. Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a) further predict that this hypothesis applies to all languages in which OE psych verbs show such an alternation:

(1) *i enohlisi tis Marias me ta nea*  
 the bothering the Maria.GEN with the news  
 'Maria's getting annoyed with the game'

(2) a. *Ta nea enohlisan ti Maria*  
 the news annoyed.ACT the Maria  
 'The news annoyed Maria'  
 b. *I Maria enohlithike me/\*apo ta nea*  
 the Maria annoyed.NACT with/by the news  
 'Maria got annoyed with/\*by the news'

In this study, I investigate the patterns of Italian psych nominalizations derived from OE psych verbs. Specifically, I tested Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia's anticausative hypothesis on Italian nominalizations from OE verbs, as Italian is one of the languages in which most OE verbs undergo CAA. My analysis of Italian data shows that Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia's (2014a) hypothesis accounts for most OE nominalizations in Italian, yet leaves some irregularities unexplained. I thus propose that OE nominalizations in Italian derive from resultatives encoded by light verb constructions (LVCs). Although my study focuses solely on Italian, it aims to contribute to the broader debate on the special properties of OE nominalizations in terms of their argument and event structure.

The analysis benefits from the taxonomy of Italian psych verbs that I developed in Vietri (2024), based on a lexical resource of approximately 300 psych verbs. The data I analyse only include nominalizations ending in suffixes *-zione* '–tion' and *-mento* '–ment' (see the appendix). These are derived from OE verbs that (a) undergo CAA (196 verbs – 84 nominalizations), and (b) do not undergo CAA (20 verbs – 7 nominalizations).

Grammaticality judgments on the sentences are mine. Any doubtful cases were verified through Web searches and by consulting the Italian Web Corpus 2020, accessible through the application Sketch Engine ([www.sketchengine.eu](http://www.sketchengine.eu)).

This article is structured as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of the debate on psych verbs and OE nominalizations. Section 3 focuses on the anticausative derivational hypothesis proposed by Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a). Section 4

investigates the CAA that OE verbs undergo in Italian, and test the application of Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia's (2014a) hypothesis to account for OE nominalization in Italian. Section 5 examines the limitations of the anticausative hypothesis. Sections 6 and 7 present the LVC derivational hypothesis. Section 8 extends the LVC hypothesis to Subject Experiencer (SE) nominalizations derived from transitive verbs. Section 9 introduces some diagnostics to distinguish between stative versus result reading, and lastly Section 10 presents the conclusions.

## 2 The debate on Object Experiencer verbs and nominalizations

Psych verbs challenge the straightforward alignment between  $\theta$ -roles and syntactic positions. They have thus long been a topic of debate regarding their syntactic configuration and aspectual properties. Within Generative Grammar, Baker (1985) proposed the Uniformity Theta Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH), which itself evolved from the Universal Alignment Hypothesis (UHA) originally formulated by Perlmutter and Postal (1984) within Relational Grammar. UTAH posits a one-to-one mapping between  $\theta$ -roles and syntactic positions.

In their seminal study, Belletti and Rizzi (1988) show that Italian psych verbs share the same  $\theta$ -grid, consisting of a Theme and an Experiencer, however these roles are realized in different syntactic configurations: SE verbs, as in example (3), and OE verbs, as in examples (4)–(5). This variation appears to conflict with UTAH, which is considered a fundamental principle of Universal Grammar:

(3) *Gianni* <sub>Experiencer</sub> teme quel conflitto <sub>Theme</sub>  
 Gianni fear.PRS.3SG that conflict  
 'Gianni fears that conflict'

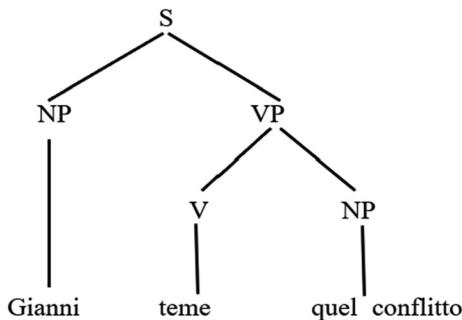
(4) Quel conflitto <sub>Theme</sub> preoccupa *Gianni* <sub>Experiencer</sub>  
 that conflict worry.PRS.3SG Gianni  
 'That conflict worries Gianni'

(5) A *Gianni* <sub>Experiencer</sub> piace quel conflitto <sub>Theme</sub>  
 to Gianni appeal.PRS.3SG that conflict  
 'That conflict appeals to Gianni'

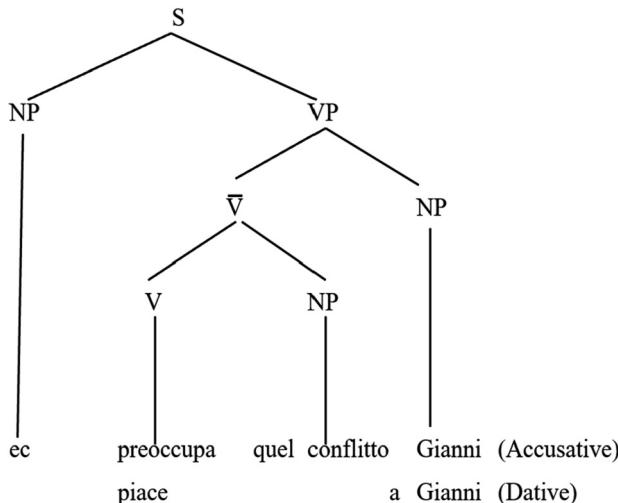
Bellotti and Rizzi (1988) argue that SE verbs in (3) are transitive, as represented in the D-structure (6), whereas OE verbs in (4)–(5) exhibit an unaccusative structure. The D-structure in (7) indicates that both types of OE verbs involve two internal

arguments, and that the surface structures shown in (4)–(5) result from NP movement to the subject position (cf. Belletti and Rizzi 1988: 293, figures [5]–[6]):

(6)



(7)



In this framework, the three verb types (*temere* = fear, *preoccupare* = worry, *piacere* = appeal) share the same D-structure and  $\theta$ -grid, differing only in their case assignment (e.g., *Gianni* as Accusative versus *a Gianni* as Dative). According to Belletti and Rizzi, this hypothesis remains consistent with the UTAH.

The debate on psych verbs has since focused on the properties of OE verbs. Several studies, including Grimshaw (1990), Zaenen (1993), Pesetsky (1995), have challenged Belletti and Rizzi's (1988) unaccusative hypothesis for OE verbs, with some rejecting it entirely. All these authors question whether the two types of OE

verbs exhibit arguments with identical semantic roles. Grimshaw (1990) calls into question Belletti and Rizzi's analysis, and emphasizes the aspectual difference between *fear*-type and *frighten*-type verbs: *frighten*-type verbs express causation, while *fear*-type verbs do not. Nonetheless, Grimshaw concurs with Belletti and Rizzi's unaccusative analysis of *frighten*-type verbs.

Building on Dowty (1991), Zaenen (1993) argues that causation is one of the proto-agent properties conveyed by the meaning of *frighten*. Pesetsky (1995: 55–57, and examples [30b], [36b]) argues that Theme is not the correct θ-role to assign to the subject of verbs such as *frighten*, since this verb-type has a causative semantics and should be analysed in the same way as transitive causative verbs, since they show a syntactic structure analogous to that of *fear*-type verbs (cf. Iwata 1995; Arad 1998).<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the subject of OE *frighten*-type verbs plays the role of *Causer of Emotion*, as in (8)–(9):

(8) *The article in the Times angered/enraged Bill* [Causer]  
 (9) *The television set worried John* [Causer]

The debate on the special properties of OE verbs is still ongoing, especially regarding their stative or eventive nature, along with all the properties related to these two types of predicates (Giusti and Iovino 2019; Landau 2010). With respect to the aspectual properties of *frighten*-type verbs, Arad (1998: 3) observes that OE verbs may have three readings: an agentive reading, as in (10); an eventive reading, as in (11); and a stative reading, as in (12). The agentive and eventive readings involve change of state, whereas the stative reading involves neither an agent nor a change of state:

(10) *Nina frightened Laura deliberately/to make her go away*  
 (11) *Nina frightened Laura unintentionally/accidentally*  
 (12) *Nuclear war frightened Nina*

Stativity and eventivity have also been discussed in relation to the acceptability of the passive: stative verbs do not accept passive, whereas eventive verbs do. Belletti and Rizzi (1988) argue that OE verbs do not permit passivization – an influential but controversial claim. Pesetsky (1995: 27, examples [66a–b]) argues that the passive, particularly the passive with the auxiliary *venire* 'come', becomes "progressively more acceptable as the predicate becomes more and more eventive".

Drawing on corpus data, Grafmiller (2013: 215–216, 221–222) shows that the situation is far more nuanced than appears from some linguists' intuitions on the acceptability of certain OE verbs in agentive contexts. He argues that the use and acceptability of a psych verb in such contexts depend on the extent to which one can

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<sup>1</sup> I adopt the θ-role *Cause of Emotion* for causative verbs and *Object of Emotion* for stative verbs.

plausibly imagine a scenario where an agent “might purposely act to evoke the emotion in question”. Similarly, Verhoeven (2017: 7, 15) claims that the gradience in a speaker’s judgments reflects the possibility of imagining a context in which a stative verb is used agentively.

The issue of eventivity versus stativity in OE verbs also arises in OE nominals, as argued by Pesetsky (1995) and mentioned in this section. Furthermore, in Section 9, I provide diagnostics to distinguish stative from result/eventive OE nominals.

In contrast with Belletti and Rizzi (1988), other authors have proposed that OE verbs are lexical causative, such as Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014b), Bialy (2005), Vietri (2024). Similarly, Levin and Grafmiller (2013: 22) argue that the subject of *frighten*-type verbs functions as a Causer just as much as the subject of prototypical transitive causative verbs like *break* or *melt*. As with non-psych lexical causatives, OE verbs may undergo CAA in certain languages.

The CAA is a widespread phenomenon across languages (Alexiadou et al. 2006, 2015; Bentley 2024; Haspelmath 1993, 2016; Heidinger and Huyghe 2024; Levin and Hovav 1995; Nedyalkov and Silnitsky 1973; Schäfer 2008; Tubino-Blanco 2020), particularly with non-psych lexical causatives such as *rompere* ‘break’ and its English counterpart *break*. The intransitive variants (anticausatives) in (15)–(16), which can be morphologically marked in Italian, denote a change-of-state undergone by the theme – *la vetrata* ‘the window’ and *the window* – whereas the transitive variants (causatives) in (13)–(14) encode the causation of that change-of-state:

- (13) *Lei ruppe la vetrata* (causative)  
she break.PST.3SG the window
- (14) *She broke the window*
- (15) *La vetrata si ruppe* (anticausative)  
the window si break.PST.3SG
- (16) *The window broke*

The literature on psych verbs and their participation in the CAA is similarly extensive. Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014b) examine the psych causative alternation in Greek and Romanian, while Bialy (2005) and Jurth (2016) investigate the CAA in Polish and Hungarian, respectively. Verhoeven (2015) investigates alternating psych verbs in German. On the other hand, Rozwadowska and Bondaruk (2019) and Bondaruk and Rozwadowska (2024) argue against the CAA in Polish, while Vietri (2024) examines alternating psych verbs in Italian. Alexiadou (2016) analyses the diachronic reasons why this alternation is missing from English. As Pesetsky (1995: 73, examples [203]–[206]) observes, a few psych verbs such as *worry*, *grieve*, *delight* and *puzzle* exhibit such an alternation.

Psych nominals, in particular OE nominals, have played a key role in the debate on nominalizations, as their argument and event structure seem to diverge from OE verbs. According to Lakoff (1970: 126), despite the alternation of psych predicates in (17a)–(17b), the nominalizations (17c) “all realize the experiencer as the higher/external argument and the stimulus as the lower/internal one” (from Iordăchioaia [2019: 58]):

(17) a. *I was amused/surprised at what he did* (SE)  
 b. *What he did amused/surprised me* (OE)  
 c. *My amusement/surprise at what he did* (SE)

According to Grimshaw (1990: 120), English psych nominals derived from causative OE verbs restrict any arguments that are not Experiencers. Psych nominalizations in (18b) realize only the Agent of the base OE verb in (18a), whereas the nominalization in (19b) can realize both the Agent and the Event of the non-psych causative base verb in (19a):

(18) a. *The clown/movie amused/entertained the children*  
 b. *The clown's/\*movie's amusement/entertainment of the children*  
 (19) a. *The enemy/hurricane destroyed the city*  
 b. *The enemy's/hurricane's destruction of the city*

Pesetsky (1995: 9–10 and 72, 79) observes that the OE verb construction (20a) is causative and refers to the ‘process of making someone annoyed’, while SE nominalization (20b) lacks causative force, and is stative and refers to ‘the state of being annoyed’. He argues that OE verbs are derived from a SE root that is causativized by a zero-morpheme CAUS:

(20) a. *The book annoyed Bill*  
 b. *Bill's annoyance at the book*  
 c. *\*The book's annoyance of Bill*

Iordăchioaia (2019: 74) points out that “psych-derived nominals do not straightforwardly realize the Agent of their base OE verb”. For instance, *annoyance* fails to do so in (21b)–(21c), although *annoy* is a typical psych verb that allows agentive reading” in (21a). However, *annoyance* can realize both the Experiencer and the Stimulus in (21d) (cf. also Pesetsky [1995: 72, 74]):

(21) a. *John intentionally annoyed the girl*  
 b. *\*John's annoyance of the girl*  
 c. *\*Our constant annoyance of Mary got on our nerves*  
 d. *The residents' annoyance at the kids/with the noise*

In conclusion, the non-agentive causer cannot be realized in OE nominalizations as the highest argument (cf. [18b], [20c]), while the agentive causer's acceptability depends on the type of OE verbs (cf. [18b]–[21b]). However, agentive and non-agentive causers can be realized as PPs in (21d).

In Sections 3 and 4, I offer an account of OE verbs that undergo CAA in Romanian, Greek, and Italian, along with the corresponding nominalizations.

### 3 The anticausative hypothesis and OE nominalisations in Greek and Romanian

Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a: 119) assume “a dichotomy between agents (i.e., agentive causers) and non-agentive causers: the action of the former can be characterized as (non)deliberate, while that of the latter cannot. While (human) animates can function both as agents and non-agentive causers, inanimates cannot act as agents”.

Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a: 121–122) affirm that in Greek and Romanian the subject of the OE form of a psych verb can be non-agentive, as in (22a) and (24a), or agentive as in (23a) and (25a). In Greek, the SE variants (22b)–(23b) bear non-active morphology and licence non-agentive causer PPs with *me* ‘with’ in (22b) and agentive causers PPs with *apo* ‘by’ in (23b). In Romanian, the SE variants (24b)–(25b) bear a reflexive and licence non-agentive causer PPs with *de la* ‘from’ in (24b) and agentive causers PPs with *de către* ‘by’ in (25b):

- (22) a. *Ta nea enohlisan ti Maria*  
the news annoyed.ACT the Maria  
'The news annoyed Maria'
- b. *I Maria enohlithike me/\*apo ta nea*  
the Maria annoyed.NACT with/by the news  
'Maria got annoyed with/\*by the news'
- (23) a. *O Janis enohlise ti Maria epitides*  
the John annoyed.3SG the Maria intentionally  
'John annoyed Maria intentionally'
- b. *I Maria enohlithike \*me/apo Janis*  
the Maria annoyed.NACT with/by Janis  
'Maria got annoyed with/\*by Janis'
- (24) a. *Stirile au enervat-o pe Maria*  
news.the have annoyed-her ACC Maria  
'The news annoyed Maria'

b. *Maria s- a enervat de la/\*de către știri.*  
 Maria RF-has annoyed from/\*by news  
 'Maria got annoyed with the news'

(25) a. *Ion a enervat-o pe Maria dinadins*  
 John has annoyed-her ACC Maria intentionally  
 'John annoyed Mary intentionally'  
 b. *Maria s- a enervat \*de la/de către Ion*  
 Maria RF-has annoyed \*from/by Ion  
 'Maria got annoyed with/\*by Ion'

Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a: 123) claim that in Greek and Romanian agentive and non-agentive causers are allowed with nominalizations from OE verbs that have a SE counterpart such as (26)–(27). On the other hand, non-agentive causers are ruled out when nominalizations are derived from the transitive structure of those OE verbs that do not undergo CAA, such as *haropio* 'cheer up' in Greek and *a încuraja* 'to encourage' in the Romanian example (28):

(26) *i enohlisi tis Marias apo to Jani/me ta nea*  
 the bothering the Maria.GEN by the John/with the news  
 'John's annoying Maria/Maria's getting annoyed with the game'

(27) *enervarea Mariei de către Ion/de la joc*  
 annoy.INF.the Maria.GEN by Ion/from game  
 'John's annoying Maria/Maria's getting annoyed with the game'

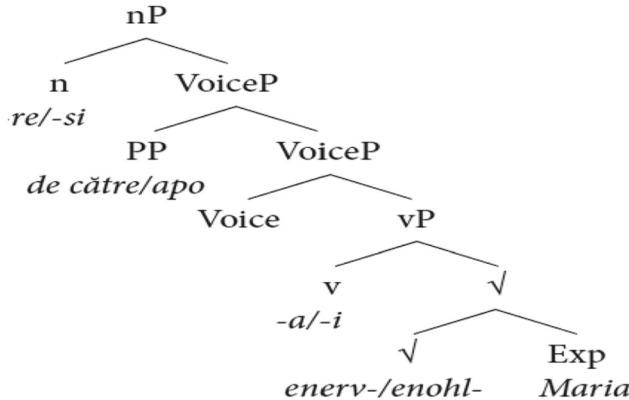
(28) *încurajarea Mariei de către Ion/\*de la știri*  
 encourage.INF.the Maria.GEN by John/from news  
 'John's encouraging Maria/\*Maria's getting encouraged with the news'

Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a: 122–123) also state that they limit their attention to "the event readings of psych verbs (and their nominalizations) with non-agentive causer [...]. The nominalizations keep the argumental PPs that the verbs use". The authors analyse causative psych nominalizations (CPNs) as derived from the anti-causative psych verb, from which they inherit the non-agentive causer PPs as arguments. These CPNs can express non-agentive causers, although these are not the highest arguments, and are truly causative constructions, since they involve a similar structural causer to that of anticausative cognates of causative verbs (Iordăchioaia 2019, fn. 2).

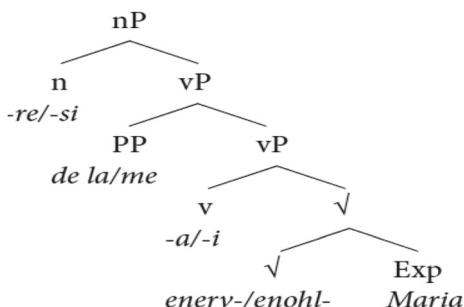
Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a) distinguish two different inputs to OE nominalizations in Greek and Romanian. The input to agentive nominalizations is the structure in (A), which "nominalizes the transitive structure with Voice, but in its

passive form, given that it realizes the external argument as a *by*-phrase". The input to non-agentive nominalizations is the structure in (B), "which realizes non-agentive causers PPs and disallows agents" (Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia [2014a: 130]):

(A)



(B)



The authors' prediction is "that every language whose OE psych verbs alternate (or which has inchoative SE verbs) should be able to derive CPNs, just like Greek and Romanian" (Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia 2014a: 134). The authors also explain that the lack of non-agentive causers in English psych nominalizations is due to the lack of anticausative forms in this language, as already noted by Pesetsky (1995).

I tested Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia's (2014a) anticausative hypothesis on Italian nominalizations derived from OE verbs undergoing the CAA.

## 4 The causative-anticausative alternation and OE nominalizations in Italian

Italian OE verbs can be either transitive, such as *preoccupare* ‘worry’ (example [4], Section 2) or non-transitive, such as *piacere* ‘appeal’ (example [5], Section 2). More precisely, *preoccupare* ‘worry’ has an Accusative Experiencer, while *piacere* ‘appeal’ has a Dative Experiencer. As regards my analysis of Italian, I refer to transitive OE verbs with an Accusative Experiencer and to nominalizations related to them.

Most Italian OE verbs (196 over 216) undergo CAA (Vietri 2024). For example, the transitive causative construction (29a) of *divertire* ‘amuse’ alternates with the anticausative pronominal construction (29b)–(29c). In causative constructions the subject has the role of Cause of Emotion while the direct object refers to the Experiencer. In anticausative constructions the subject encodes the Experiencer, while the PP – which can be dropped – encodes the Cause of Emotion:

- (29) a. *Il film/clown divertì i bambini*  
the movie/clown amuse.PST.3SG the children'  
'The movie/clown amused the children'
- b. *I bambini si divertirono (con/per il film)*  
the children si amuse.PST.3PL with/for the movie  
'The children were amused by the movie'
- c. *I bambini si divertirono (con/?\*per il clown)*  
the children si amuse.PST.3PL with/for the clown  
'The children were amused by the clown'
- d. *\*I bambini si divertirono dal film/clown*  
the children si amuse.PST.3PL by.the movie/clown  
'The children were amused by the movie/clown'

The anticausative constructions in (29b)–(29c) are morphologically marked, since they present a pronominal unaccusative verb, i.e. *divertirsi* ‘lit. amuse.si, get amused’. In (29b), the anticausative licenses non-agentive causer PPs headed by *con* ‘with’ (similarly to the use of the preposition *me* in Greek) and *per* ‘for’, the latter being the reduction of *per via/causa di* ‘lit. for way/cause of, because of’. The anticausative in (29c) licenses agentive causer PPs only with *con* ‘with’, whereas *per* ‘for’ – the reduced form of *per via/causa di* ‘lit. for way/cause of, because of’ – is deviant and only marginally accepted. Neither agentive nor non-agentive causer PPs can be headed by *da* ‘by’ in (29d); this preposition is usually employed in the passive of the causative variant.

Some OE verbs (20 occurrences) such as *sedurre* ‘seduce’ – which can have both an agentive and non-agentive causer as shown in (30a) – do not exhibit the anti-causative alternant, i.e. (30b) is ruled out, even as a reflexive:

(30) a. *Maria/Quel mare in tempesta sedusse Gianni*  
           Maria/that sea in storm seduce.PST.3SG Gianni  
           ‘Maria/That stormy sea seduced Gianni’  
   b. *\*Gianni si sedusse*  
       Gianni si seduce.PST.3SG  
       intended reading ‘Gianni seduced himself’

In Italian non-OE nominalizations, the Agent can be expressed by a PP introduced either by *di* ‘of’ or *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’. For instance, the nominal *descrizione* ‘description’ in (31b)–(32b) is derived from the verb *descrivere* ‘describe’ in the active sentence (31a) and in the passive sentence (32a), respectively. In active nominals such as (31b), the Agent is introduced by *di* ‘of’, whereas in passive nominals such as (32b), it is introduced by *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’.<sup>2</sup>

(31) a. *Gianni descrisse quell’ evento accuratamente*  
           Gianni describe.PST.3SG that event carefully  
           ‘Gianni carefully described that event’  
   b. *La descrizione di Gianni di quell’ evento è accurata*  
       the description of Gianni of that event is accurate  
       ‘Gianni’s description of that event is accurate’

(32) a. *Quell’ evento fu descritto da Gianni accuratamente*  
           that event be.PST.3SG describe.PTCP by Gianni carefully  
           ‘That event was carefully described by Gianni’  
   b. *La descrizione di quell’ evento \*da/da parte di Gianni è accurata*  
       the description of that event by/from part of Gianni is accurate  
       ‘Gianni’s description of that event is accurate’

Italian OE nominalizations exhibit certain differences compared to non-OE nominalizations. The nominal *divertimento* ‘amusement’ is derived from *divertire* ‘amuse’: the Experiencer (*i bambini* ‘the children’) is introduced by the preposition *di* ‘of’, while the non-agentive causer (*il film* ‘the movie’) is headed by the prepositions

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2 While Italian passive sentences such as (32a) mark the Agent with the preposition *da* ‘by’, passive nominals such as (32b) obligatorily require the use of *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’. For a detailed analysis of the structure of Italian nominalizations within the syntactic approach, see Giorgi and Longobardi (1991) and Giorgi (1998).

*con/per* ‘with/for’ in (33a). Unlike *descrizione* ‘description’ in (32b), the agentive causer (*il clown* ‘the clown’) cannot be headed by the preposition *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’ in (33b); it has to be headed by the preposition *con* ‘with’, as in (33c):

(33) a. *Il divertimento dei bambini con/per il film*  
           the amusement of.the children with/for the movie  
           ‘The children’s enjoyment of the movie’

      b. *\*Il divertimento dei bambini da parte del clown*  
           the amusement of.the children from part of.the clown  
           ‘\*The children’s enjoyment by the clown’

      c. *Il divertimento dei bambini con il clown*  
           the amusement of.the children with the clown  
           ‘The children’s enjoyment of the clown’

Italian OE nominalizations display certain differences compared to OE nominalizations in Greek and Romanian. As shown in Section 3, both agentive and non-agentive causers are permitted in Greek and Romanian nominalizations derived from OE verbs that also have a SE counterpart, as illustrated in (26)–(27). In contrast, non-agentive causers are ruled out when nominalizations are formed from the transitive structure of those OE verbs that do not undergo CAA, as shown in (28). Unlike in Greek and Romanian, as shown in (26)–(27) – where the agentive causer is introduced by *apo* ‘by’ and *de către* ‘by’ – Italian does not permit the agentive causer introduced by *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’, as illustrated in (33b).

In conclusion, Italian permits non-agentive causers when introduced by the prepositions *con* ‘with’ and *per* ‘for’, similarly to Greek and Romanian. However, agentive causers are not allowed with *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’, but are permitted when introduced by *con* ‘with’, as in (33c) – a pattern that diverges from both Greek and Romanian. Consequently, the input structure (A) (see Section 3) proposed by Alexiadou and Iordăchioia (2014a: 130) for Greek and Romanian agentive nominalizations (26)–(27) does not account for the pattern observed in Italian, where agentive OE nominalizations introduced by *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’ are ruled out.

Italian also shows a nominalization pattern not attested in Greek and Romanian: the complex preposition *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’, which is ruled out when introducing the agentive causer in (33b), is nevertheless accepted in (34), where it introduces the Experiencer (*i bambini* ‘the children’):

(34) *Il divertimento da parte dei bambini con il film/clown*  
           the amusement from part of.the children with the movie/clown  
           ‘The children were amused by the movie/clown’

The structure in (34) resembles pseudo-passive nominals; however the literature (Giorgi 1998; Lo Duca 1991; Samek-Lodovici 2003) accounts only for pseudo-passives derived from unergative verbs such as *telefonare* 'phone' in (35a):

(35) a. *Gianni telefonò a Maria*  
           Gianni phone.PST.3SG to Maria  
           'Gianni phoned Maria'  
   b. *La telefonata da parte di Gianni a Maria*  
           the call from part of Gianni to Maria  
           'The phone call from Gianni to Maria'

According to Giorgi (1998) and Lo Duca (1991), the *da parte di*-phrase 'by-phrase' expresses the source of an action and only unergative verbs that show such semantics accept the pseudo-passive nominal. However, the literature offers no further description or explanation of the semantics of these verbs. Nevertheless, the data in (34) suggest otherwise: *divertimento* 'amusement' is derived from the verb *divertire* 'amuse', which appears in both a transitive (causative) construction and an intransitive/unaccusative (anticausative) one. Thus, these data call into question the claim that pseudo-passives can only be derived from unergative verbs.

Following Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a), I examined the applicability of the anticausative hypothesis to non-agentive OE nominal constructions in Italian.

Under this hypothesis, the non-agentive nominalization (37) is straightforwardly derived from the anticausative (36), whose structure it keeps, especially regarding the *con/per*-phrase 'with/for' which expresses the cause of the emotional change of state. However, unlike Polish (Rozwadowska 2020), the marker *si* is not inherited:

(36) *I bambini si divertirono con/per il film*  
           the children si amuse.PST.3PL with/for the movie  
           'The children were amused by the movie/clown'

(37) *Il divertimento dei bambini con/per il film*  
           the amusement of.the children with/for the movie  
           'The children's enjoyment of the movie'

In addition, given the pattern of agentive nominalizations in Italian, where the agent cannot be introduced by *da parte di* 'lit. from part of, by' as in Greek and Romanian, but must be introduced by the preposition *con* 'with', the anticausative hypothesis can be extended to agentive nominalizations as in (39), which is straightforwardly derived from the anticausative (38), and (40) is correctly ruled out:

(38) *I bambini si divertirono con il clown*  
           the children si amuse.PST.3PL with the clown  
           'The children were amused by the clown'

(39) *Il divertimento dei bambini con il clown*  
 the amusement of.the children with the clown  
 'The children's enjoyment of the clown'

(40) \**Il divertimento dei bambini da parte del clown*  
 the amusement of.the children from part of.the clown  
 'The children's enjoyment of the clown'

Consequently, the input structure (B) discussed in Section 3 could account for both agentive and non-agentive nominalizations in Italian.

In Section 3, I referred to Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a) who affirm that non-agentive causers are ruled out when nominalizations are derived from the transitive structure of those OE verbs that do not undergo CAA, such as *haropio* 'cheer up' in Greek and *a încuraja* 'to encourage' in Romanian.

Similarly, in Italian the nominal *seduzione* 'seduction' is derived from *sedurre* 'seduce', an OE verb that does not undergo CAA. As a result, it shows a different pattern from the nominal *divertimento* 'amusement'. Only the agentive causer is permitted in the (passive) nominalization (41a) (cf. [39]):

(41) a. *La seduzione di Gianni da parte di Maria*  
 the seduction of Gianni from part of Maria  
 'Maria's seduction of Gianni'

b. \**La seduzione di Gianni con/per quella città*  
 the seduction of Gianni with/for that city  
 'The city's seduction of Gianni'

As expected, the non-agentive nominal (41b) is ruled out (cf. [37]) under the anti-causative hypothesis, since *seduzione* 'seduction' is derived from a verb that appears only in the transitive construction and lacks an anticausative alternant.

In this section, following Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia's (2014a), I hypothesize that nominals sharing their base with OE verbs that undergo CAA derive non-agentive nominalisations from the anticausative variant, by means of the input (B) that Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a) formalize for Greek and Romanian. As expected, *divertimento* 'amusement' derived from a CAA verb and *seduzione* 'seduction', derived from an OE verb that does not undergo CAA, exhibit distinct patterns.

However, given the difference in the OE agentive nominals between Italian on the one hand, and Greek and Romanian on the other, the input (A) is not adequate for Italian, and the input (B) has to be extended to OE agentive nominalizations in Italian.

In the next section, I analyse some limitations that emerge from applying the anticausative hypothesis to Italian OE nominalizations.

## 5 Limitations of the anticausative hypothesis in Italian OE nominalizations

In Section 4, I showed that the nominal pattern of *seduzione* ‘seduction’, derived from a non-alternating OE, diverges from *divertimento* ‘amusement’ – which is consistent with the anticausative hypothesis. However, further examination of OE nominalizations derived from non-alternating verbs yields problematic results. For instance, *vessazione* ‘harassment’, *frustrazione* ‘frustration’ and *attrazione* ‘attraction’ derive from *vessare* ‘harass, oppress’, *frustrare* ‘frustrate’ and *attrarre* ‘attract’, respectively, which are OE verbs that only appear in transitive constructions and do not display an anticausative alternant. These should pattern like *seduzione* ‘seduction’, and yet they do not.

*Vessazione* ‘harassment, oppression’ permits both the agentive nominal in (42b), and the non-agentive nominal in (42c). In this respect, it partially diverges from *seduzione* ‘seduction’, which does not permit the non-agentive form. Notably, *vessazione* ‘harassment, oppression’ shows the same pattern as OE nominalizations derived from alternating verbs in Greek and Romanian, where both agentive and non-agentive PPs are permitted (cf. [26]–[27]). Consequently, *vessazione* ‘harassment, oppression’ does not behave as *seduzione* ‘seduction’ and partly aligns with *divertimento* ‘amusement’ which permits non-agentive nominalizations:

(42) a. *La polizia/Quella misura repressiva vessò i manifestanti* (causative)  
           the police/that measure repressive harass.PST.3SG the protesters  
           ‘The police/That repressive measure harassed the protesters’

      b. *La vessazione dei manifestanti da parte della polizia* (agentive)  
           the harassment of.the protesters from part of.the police  
           ‘The harassment of protesters by the police’

      c. *La vessazione dei manifestanti con quella misura repressiva* (non-agentive)  
           the harassment of.the protesters with that measure repressive  
           ‘The harassment of protesters by that repressive measure’

*Frustrazione* ‘frustration’ and *attrazione* ‘attraction’ do not permit the agentive nominal in (43b)–(44b), while they permit the non-agentive nominal in (43c)–(44c). Therefore, these nominals fully diverge from *seduzione* ‘seduction’, and instead align with the pattern of *divertimento* ‘amusement’, which is derived from an alternating OE verb. The only notable difference between *attrazione* ‘attraction’ and

*divertimento* ‘amusement’ is that the preposition *con* ‘with’, introducing the Causer, is ruled out with *attrazione* ‘attraction’:

(43) a. *Gianni/Quella sconfitta frustrò Maria* (causative)  
           Gianni/that defeat frustrate.PST.3SG Maria  
           ‘Gianni/That defeat frustrated Maria’

      b. *\*La frustrazione di Maria da parte di Gianni* (agentive)  
           the frustration of Maria from part of Gianni  
           ‘Maria’s frustration caused by Gianni’

      c. *La frustrazione di Maria con/per quella sconfitta* (non-agentive)  
           the frustration of Maria with/per that defeat  
           ‘Maria’s frustration with that defeat’

(44) a. *Gianni/New York attrasse Maria* (causative)  
           Gianni/New York attract.PST.3SG Maria  
           ‘Gianni/New York attracted Maria’

      b. *\*L’ attrazione di Maria da parte di Gianni* (agentive)  
           the attraction of Maria from part of Gianni  
           ‘The attraction of Maria by Gianni’

      c. *L’ attrazione di Maria \*con/per New York* (non-agentive)  
           the attraction of Maria \*with/for New York  
           ‘Maria’s attraction to New York’

Analysis of the data reveals that OE nominals derived from non-alternating OE verbs do not constitute a homogeneous class in Italian. With the exception of *seduzione* ‘seduction’, the OE nominals *vessazione* ‘harassment, oppression’, *frustrazione* ‘frustration’ and *attrazione* ‘attraction’ are counterexamples to the anticausative hypothesis. Their patterns should neither partially nor fully align to those of *divertimento* ‘amusement’, nor should they diverge from those of *seduzione* ‘seduction’. This contrasts with Greek and Romanian, where such inconsistencies do not appear to arise.

In addition, the derivation of patterns resembling pseudo-passive nominals poses further questions in relation to the anticausative hypothesis. In Section 4, I showed that Italian displays a nominal pattern involving the preposition *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’. Although this complex preposition is ruled out when introducing the agentive causer in (40), it is nonetheless accepted in (45), where it introduces the Experiencer (*i bambini* ‘the children’):

(45) *Il divertimento da parte dei bambini con il film/clown*  
           the amusement from part of the children with the movie/clown  
           ‘The children’s enjoyment of the movie/clown’

According to the literature (Giorgi 1998; Lo Duca 1991; Samek-Lodovici 2003), pseudo-passives occur exclusively with unergative verbs. To account for the pseudo-passive in (45) as being derived from anticausatives, it is necessary to extend pseudo-passives to unaccusative verbs and revise the input structure (B).

Furthermore, if pseudo-passives also derive from anticausatives, then OE nominals derived from non-alternating OE verbs should not permit pseudo-passives. However, the data once again exhibit inconsistencies. *Seduzione* ‘seduction’ and *vessazione* ‘harassment, oppression’ do not permit pseudo-passives in (46)–(47). In contrast, *frustrazione* ‘frustration’ and *attrazione* ‘attraction’ unexpectedly permit pseudo-passives in (48)–(49):

(46) \**La seduzione da parte di Maria per New York*  
 the seduction from part of Maria for New York  
 ‘Maria was seduced by New York’

(47) \**La vessazione da parte dei manifestanti con quella misura repressiva*  
 the harassment from part of the protesters with that measure repressive  
 ‘The harassment suffered by the protesters because of that repressive measure’

(48) *La frustrazione da parte di Maria ?con/per quella sconfitta*  
 the frustration from part of Maria with/for that defeat  
 ‘Maria’s frustration over the defeat’

(49) *L’ attrazione da parte di Maria per quella città/Gianni*  
 the attraction from part of Maria for that city/Gianni  
 ‘Mary’s attraction for that city/Gianni’

In conclusion, I have shown that there are two main problems regarding the anticausative hypothesis. Firstly, OE nominal patterns that should exclusively characterize nominals derived from anticausative alternants are also found in some OE nominals derived from verbs that only appear in transitive constructions. These cases constitute counterexamples to Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia’s (2014a) hypothesis. In addition, my data show that OE nominals derived from non-alternating OE verbs are not homogeneous in Italian, unlike what appears to be the case in Greek and Romanian.

Secondly, pseudo-passive nominals – which are argued to involve unergative verbs – cannot be accounted for under the anticausative hypothesis, which involves unaccusative verbs. Although pseudo-passives are extended to unaccusative verbs, the input structure (B) proposed by Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia’s (2014a) cannot, in

its current form, account for such patterns. More importantly, the data show that pseudo-passives are not exclusively licensed by OE nominals derived from the anticausative variant; rather, they are also idiosyncratically accepted in some nominals derived from non-alternating verbs.

My evidence thus suggests that the anticausative hypothesis may not fully account for certain Italian data. Figure 1 illustrates the heterogeneous behaviour of OE nominalizations derived from non-CAA verbs, showing that some exhibit the same patterns as those derived from CAA verbs. From left to right, the first column lists the OE nominals analysed so far. The second and third columns indicate whether each nominalization is derived from a CAA or a non-CAA verb. The following three columns present distinct patterns observed in the data:

- <OE nom 1>: the Experiencer is expressed by a *di*-phrase ‘of’; both agentive and non-agentive Causers are expressed by a *con/per*-phrase ‘with/for’.
- <OE nom 2>: the Experiencer is expressed by a *di*-phrase ‘of’; agentive Causers are expressed by a *da parte* *di*-phrase ‘by’, while non-agentive Causers are not permitted.
- <OE nom 3>: the Experiencer appears in a *di*-phrase ‘of’; agentive Causers are expressed by a *da parte* *di*-phrase ‘by’, while non-agentive Causers are expressed by a *con/per*-phrase ‘with/for’.

The final column indicates whether **Pseudo-passive** is accepted. A ‘+’ marks each pattern for the corresponding nominalization.

In the next section, I analyse Italian OE nominalizations under the light verb constructions hypothesis.

## 6 OE nominalizations in Italian and the LVC hypothesis

OE verbs that undergo CAA are known to show a semantic and syntactic relationship among causative (50a), anticausative (50b)–(50c) and resultative constructions (50d). The latter express the result of the change-of-emotional-state and can be encoded as support/light verb constructions in (50d) (cf. Alexiadou et al. 2015). The terms *support verb* and *light verb* refer to the same sentence type. *Support verb* has been coined by Gross (1976, 1981, 1998) within the framework of Lexicon-Grammar, while *light verb* was adopted for the first time by Jespersen (1965). I will use the term *light verb*, except in the case where I refer to Gross’s studies.

<i>divertimento</i> ‘amusement’			+	CAA			
<i>seduzione</i> ‘seduction’		+		non-CAA			
<i>frustrazione</i> ‘frustration’	+			OE nom 1	Experiencer = <i>di</i> ‘of’ N		
<i>attrazione</i> ‘attraction’	+				Agentive Causer = <i>da parte di</i> ‘by’ N		
<i>vessazione</i> ‘harrassment’	+				*Non-agentive Causer		
				OE nom 2			
					Experiencer = <i>di</i> ‘of’ N		
					Agentive Causer = <i>da parte di</i> ‘by’ N		
					*Non-agentive Causer		
				OE nom 3			
					Experiencer = <i>di</i> ‘of’ N		
					Agentive Causer = <i>da parte di</i> ‘by’ N		
					*Non-agentive Causer = <i>con/per</i> ‘with/for’ N		
						+	Pseudo-passive

**Figure 1:** OE nominalizations derived from non-CAA verbs.

(50) a. *Il film/clown divertì i bambini*  
     The movie/clown amuse.PST.3SG the children'  
     'The movie/clown amused the kids'

b. *I bambini si divertirono con/per il film*  
     the children si amuse.PST.3PL with/for the movie  
     'The children were amused by the movie'

c. *I bambini si divertirono con/?per il clown*  
     the children si amuse.PST.3PL with/for the clown  
     'The children were amused by the clown'

d. *I bambini provarono divertimento (con/per il film,*  
     the children feel.PST.3PL amusement (with/for the movie,  
      $con/?per il clown)$   
     with/for the clown)  
     'The children where amused by the movie/clown'

In accordance with Gross (1976, 1981, 1998), support verb constructions in Italian are constituted by the basic support verbs such as *essere Prep N* 'be Prep N' (*essere in ansia* 'lit. be in anxiety, be anxious') *avere* 'have' (*avere successo* 'lit. have success' 'be

successful'), *fare* 'make' (*fare una passeggiata* 'lit. make a walk, have a walk') and an object. *Provare* 'feel' is the light verb that combines with OE nominalizations ending in suffixes *-mento* 'ment' (*divertimento* 'amusement') in (50d), and *-zione* 'tion' (*eccitazione* 'excitement').<sup>3</sup>

According to Gross, the object is the predicate and determining the argument structure, whereas support verbs only have a morpho-grammatical function. This conception has been adopted in numerous studies, such as Cattell (1984), Grimshaw and Mester (1988) and Alba-Salas (2002), while Wittenberg et al. (2014) propose a co-event hypothesis. In contrast, Kearns (1988), Wierzbicka (1982) and Butt (2010) argue that light verbs contribute with the non-verbal element to construe the predication. Butt and Lahiri (2013), Ramchand (2014) and Acedo-Matellán and Pineda (2019) propose that the argument and the event structure of light verbs are identical to non-light verb counterparts.

Inspired by Harris (1968), Gross (1979, fn. 6) suggests that nominals, such as *the solution of the equation by our teacher*, should be derived from an 'auxiliary' verb which he refers to as the *support verb* in later studies (Gross 1979; Gross and Vivès 1986; Vivès 1993):<sup>4</sup>

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3 The anaphoric relation between the subject of a light verb and the predicative noun is one of the properties that distinguishes LVCs from full verb constructions (FVCs). Consider the LVC (i) and the FVC (iii). Only in (i) the "subject" of the LV is also the "subject" of the predicate noun, whereas FVCs do not show this constraint. Thus, in (i) there is an obligatory anaphoric relation between *Gianni* and *divertimento* 'amusement'. This explains why sentence (ii) is ungrammatical. In contrast, in (iii), where *descrivere* 'describe' is a full verb, no obligatory anaphoric relation is required (cf. Giry-Schneider 1978).

- (i) *Gianni provò un gran divertimento con quel videogioco*  
Gianni feel.PST.3SG a great amusement with that videogame  
'Gianni was very amused by that videogame'
- (ii) *\*Gianni provò il gran divertimento di Luca con quel videogioco*  
Gianni feel.PST.3SG the great amusement of Luca with that videogame  
'Gianni had a lot of Luca's fun with that videogame'
- (iii) *Gianni descrisse il tuo gran divertimento con quel videogioco*  
Gianni describe.PST.3SG the your great amusement with that videogame  
'Gianni described how much fun you had with that videogame'

As regards the distinction between basic light verbs and light verb extensions, see Laporte et al. (2025), Vietri (2025).

4 Samek-Lodovici (2003) puts forward a similar proposal but from a different perspective.

[...] the solution of Harris 1968 [...] directly relates the two sentences:

(a) *Our teacher solved the equation.*

*Our teacher effected the solution of the equation.*

The relation is based on an auxiliary verb, here **to effect**. This verb has a passive:

(b) *The solution of the equation was effected by our teacher.*

This passive form enters by relativization in the NP:

(c) *the solution of the equation that was effected by our teacher.*

Now, by deletion of **that was effected**, we obtain the NP under analysis [...]

Gross examines passive (non-OE) agentive nominalization. The derivational framework he proposes thus requires refinement and analysis to adequately account for OE nominals, which constitute the topic of this study. For the reasons outlined in Section 4, I extend the derivational analysis to both agentive and non-agentive OE nominals. According to the LVC hypothesis I propose, the OE nominal construction (51) is derived from LVC (52), and keeping the same type of PPs found in the LVC:<sup>5</sup>

(51) *Il divertimento dei bambini con il film/clown*  
the amusement of.the children with the movie/clown  
'The children's enjoyment of the movie/clown'

(52) *I bambini provarono divertimento con il film/clown*  
the children feel.PST.3PL amusement with the movie/clown  
'The children where amused by the movie/clown'

I will now analyse the OE nominal derivation in (51) in detail. In (53), the active LVC (52) is embedded within NP through relativization. More precisely, the object *divertimento* 'amusement' in (52) undergoes relativization, resulting in a noun phrase with an embedded relative clause:

[relative clause embedding of active LVC]:

(53) *Il divertimento che provarono i bambini con il film/clown*  
the amusement that feel.PST.3PL the children with the movie/clown  
'The enjoyment children had watching the movie/clown'

In (54), the deletion of *che provarono* 'lit. that (they) felt' and the substitution of the Experiencer NP= *i bambini* 'the children' with the Experiencer PP= *dei bambini* 'lit. of.the children' produce the OE nominal in (51):

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5 To avoid an overabundance of examples, whenever possible, I will indicate only the preposition shared by PPs that express both agentive and non-agentive causers.

[deletion → *che provarono* 'lit. that (they) felt']

[substitution: NP= *i bambini* 'the children' → PP= *dei bambini* 'lit. of.the children']

(54) *Il divertimento che provarono* [<sub>NP</sub> *i bambini*] → [<sub>PP</sub> *dei bambini*] *con il film/clown*  
 the amusement that feel.PST.3PL [<sub>NP</sub> the children] → [<sub>PP</sub> of.the children] with the movie/clown  
 'The fun children had with the movie/clown'

This type of derivation accounts for the *con*-phrase 'with/for', introducing the Causer – i.e. the same one as in (51) – and of the *di*-phrase 'of' introducing the Experiencer.

In Section 4, I discussed OE nominalizations such as (45), repeated here as (55), which exhibit a pattern resembling the pseudo-passive construction. However, I found that this pattern is difficult to account for under the anticausative hypothesis. In contrast, adopting the LVC hypothesis allows for a straightforward derivation of (55). Specifically the LVC (56) has the passive form (57):

(55) *Il divertimento da parte dei bambini con il film/clown*  
 the amusement from part of.the children with the movie/clown  
 'The children's enjoyment of the movie/clown'

(56) *I bambini provarono divertimento con il film/clown*  
 the children feel.PST.3PL amusement with the movie/clown  
 'The children enjoyed the movie/clown'

(57) *Il divertimento fu provato dai bambini con il film/clown*  
 the amusement be.PST.3SG feel.PTCP by.the children with the movie/clown  
 'The fun children had watching the movie/clown'

In (58), the passive LVC (57) is embedded within NP through relativization:

[relative clause embedding of passive LVC]:

(58) *Il divertimento che fu provato dai bambini con il film/clown*  
 the amusement that be.PST.3SG feel.PTCP by.the children with the movie/clown  
 'The fun that the children had watching the movie/clown'

In (59), the deletion of *che fu provato* 'that was felt' and the obligatory substitution of the preposition *da* 'by' with *da parte di* 'lit. from part of, by' produce (55):

[deletion → *che fu provato* 'that was felt']

[substitution: Prep *da* 'by' → Prep *da parte di* 'lit. from part of, by']

(59) *Il divertimento che fu provato* [<sub>PREP</sub> *da*] → [<sub>PREP</sub> *da parte di*]  
 the amusement that best3se feel.PTCP [<sub>PREP</sub> *by*] → [<sub>PREP</sub> from part of]  
*i bambini con il film/clown*  
 the children with the movie/clown  
 'The fun children had watching the movie/clown'

This type of derivation enables us to avoid labeling these constructions as pseudo-passive (cf. Section 4), since (55) is instead analysed as a regular passive nominal construction. Furthermore, this derivation also accounts for the Experiencer as the highest argument as well as the unacceptability of the *da parte di*-phrase 'lit. from part of, by' introducing the agentive causer in (60), that is, the unacceptability of those nominals where the causer is the highest argument:

(60) \**Il divertimento dei bambini da parte del clown*  
 the amusement of.the children from part of.the clown  
 'The children's amusement sparked by the clown'

## 7 Deriving counterexamples to the anticausative hypothesis

In Section 4, I focused on Italian OE nominals derived from OE verbs that do not undergo CAA. I argued that, under the anticausative hypothesis, these nominals should not show the same patterns as those derived from verbs that alternate, as observed in Greek and Romanian. In fact, I showed that *seduzione* 'seduction' – derived from the verb *sedurre* 'seduce' that lacks an anticausative alternant – reveals a different pattern from *divertimento* 'amusement', as expected.

However, in Section 5, I highlighted that OE nominals such as *frustrazione* 'frustration', *attrazione* 'attraction' and *vessazione* 'harassment' – all derived from OE verbs that also lack an anticausative alternant – are counterexamples to the anticausative hypothesis. Although they are derived from OE verbs that do not undergo CAA, they exhibit an irregular behaviour, as they do not have the same pattern as *seduzione* 'seduction'. They nevertheless display similar patterns to those of *divertimento* 'amusement', which is derived from a CAA verb, as illustrated in (42c), (43c) and (44c). This suggests that the Italian data are significantly more irregular than the patterns observed in Greek and Romanian. I demonstrate that the LVC hypothesis can also account for these OE nominals.

Given that the derivational processes for the OE nominals *frustrazione* 'frustration' and *attrazione* 'attraction' are identical, I will present only the derivation of *frustrazione* 'frustration' to avoid redundancy.

*Frustrazione* ‘frustration’ is derived from the OE verb *frustrare* ‘frustrate’, which only appears in the causative construction (61); the intransitive construction in (62) is ruled out, even when reflexive. The OE nominal in (63) is structurally similar to that of *divertimento* ‘amusement’ in (37) and (39), derived from the anticausative alternant of the verb *divertire* ‘amuse’, despite the fact that *frustrare* ‘frustrate’ lacks the anticausative alternant:

(61) *Gianni/Quella sconfitta frustrò Maria*  
 Gianni/that defeat frustrate.PST.3SG Maria  
 ‘Gianni/that defeat frustrated Maria’

(62) *\*Maria si frustrò*  
 Maria si frustrate.PST.3SG  
 ‘\*Maria frustrated herself’

(63) *La frustrazione di Maria con/per Gianni/quella sconfitta*  
 the frustration of Maria with/for Gianni/that defeat  
 ‘Maria’s frustration for Gianni/that defeat’

However, if we adopt the LVC hypothesis, (63) is derived from the LVC (64), following the derivation I propose:

(64) *Maria provò frustrazione con/per Gianni/quella sconfitta*  
 Maria feel.PST.3SG frustration with/for Gianni/that defeat  
 ‘Maria felt frustration for Gianni/that defeat’

In (65), the active LVC (64) is embedded within NP through relativization:

[relative clause embedding of active LVC]:

(65) *La frustrazione che provò Maria per Gianni/quella sconfitta*  
 the frustration that feel.PST.3SG Maria for Gianni/that defeat  
 ‘The frustration Maria felt because of Gianni/that defeat’

In (66), the deletion of *che provò* ‘that (she) felt’ and the substitution of the NP= *Maria* with the PP= *di Maria* ‘of Maria’ produce the OE nominal (63).

[deletion → *che provò* ‘that (she) felt’]

[substitution: NP= *Maria* → PP= *di Maria* ‘of Maria’]

(66) *La frustrazione che provò [NP Maria] → [PP di Maria] con/per Gianni/quella sconfitta*  
 the frustration that feel.PST.3SG [NP Maria] → [PP of Maria] with/for Gianni/that defeat  
 ‘The frustration Maria felt because of Gianni/that defeat’

On the other hand, the pattern in (67) – where the *da parte di*-phrase ‘lit. from part of, by’ refers to the Experiencer (the so-called pseudo-passive) – is straightforwardly derived as follows. The LVC (64) has the passive form (68):

(67) *La frustrazione da parte di Maria con/per Gianni/quella sconfitta*  
the attraction from part of Maria with/for Gianni/that defeat  
'Maria's frustration for Gianni/that defeat'

(68) *La frustrazione fu provata da Maria con/per*  
the frustration be.PST.3SG feel.PTCP by Maria with/for  
*Gianni/quella sconfitta*  
Gianni/that defeat  
'The frustration was felt by Maria because of Gianni/that defeat'

In (69), the passive LVC (68) is embedded within NP through relativization:  
[relative clause embedding of passive LVC]:

(69) *La frustrazione che fu provata da Maria con/per*  
the frustration that be.PST.3SG feel.PTCP by Maria with/for  
*Gianni/quella sconfitta*  
Gianni/that defeat  
'The frustration that was felt by Maria because of Gianni/that defeat'

In (70), the deletion of *che fu provata* ‘that was felt’ and the obligatory substitution of the preposition *da* ‘by’ with *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’ produce the OE nominal (67):

[deletion → *che fu provata* ‘that was felt’]  
[substitution: Prep *da* ‘by’ → Prep *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’]

(70) *La frustrazione che fu provata [<sub>PREP</sub> da] →*  
the frustration that be.PST.3SG feel.PTCP [<sub>PREP</sub> by] →  
*[<sub>PREP</sub> da parte di] Maria con/per Gianni/quella sconfitta*  
[<sub>PREP</sub> from part of] Maria with/for Gianni/that defeat  
'The frustration that was felt by Maria because of Gianni/that defeat'

This derivation also accounts for the unacceptability of the *da parte di*-phrase ‘lit. from part of, by’ introducing the agentive causer in (71):

(71) \**La frustrazione di Maria da parte di Gianni*  
the frustration of Maria from part of Gianni  
'Maria's frustration because of Gianni'

Unlike *frustrazione* ‘frustration’ and *attrazione* ‘attraction’, *vessazione* ‘harassment, oppression’ appears as an OE nominal that allows both agentive and non-agentive causers in (72)–(73), respectively:

(72) *La vessazione dei manifestanti da parte della polizia*  
 the harassment of.the protesters from part of.the police  
 'The harassment of the protesters by the police'

(73) *La vessazione dei manifestanti con quella misura repressiva*  
 the harassment of.the protesters with that measure repressive  
 'The harassment of the protesters by that repressive measure'

The nominal *vessazione* 'harassment, oppression' appears in converse constructions (Gross 1989) and combines with light verbs *infliggere* 'inflict' in (74) and *subire* 'suffer' in (75), which are variants of light verbs *fare* 'make, commit' and *ricevere* 'receive', respectively (cf. Vivès 1993). The peculiarity of converse constructions is the inversion of the subject and the object, which recalls the passive. The Causer is expressed by the subject in (74) and by the PP in (75), while the Experiencer is expressed by the PP in (74) and by the Subject in (75):

(74) *La polizia/Quella misura repressiva inflisse una vessazione*  
 the police/that measure repressive inflict.PST.3SG a harassment  
*ai manifestanti*  
 to.the protesters  
 'Police/That repressive measure inflicted harassment on Maria'

(75) *I manifestanti subirono una vessazione dalla polizia/*  
 the protesters suffer.PST.3PL a harassment from.the police/  
*con quella misura repressiva*  
 with that measure repressive  
 'Protesters were harassed by the police/through that repressive measure'

The derivation of the non-agentive nominal pattern in (73) is explained below. In (76), the active LVC (75) is embedded within NP through relativization:

**[relative clause embedding]**

(76) *La vessazione che subirono i manifestanti dalla polizia/con*  
 the harassment that suffer.PST.3PL the protesters from.the police/with  
*quella misura repressiva*  
 that measure repressive  
 'The harassment that the protesters suffered from the police/through that  
 repressive measure'

In (77), the deletion of *che subirono* 'that (they) suffered' and the substitution of the NP= *i manifestanti* 'the protesters' with the PP= *dei manifestanti* 'lit. of.the protesters, of the protesters' produce the non-agentive nominal in (78):

**[deletion → *che subirono* 'that (they) suffered']**

[**substitution**: NP= *i manifestanti* ‘the protesters’ → PP= *dei manifestanti* ‘of the protesters’]

(77) *La vessazione ehe subirono* [<sub>NP</sub> *i manifestanti*] →  
 the harassment that suffer.PST.3SG [<sub>NP</sub> the protesters] →  
 [<sub>PP</sub> *dei manifestanti*]  
 [<sub>PP</sub> of.the protesters]  
*con quella misura repressiva*  
 with that measure repressive  
 ‘The harassment that protesters suffered through that repressive measure’

(78) *La vessazione dei manifestanti con quella misura repressiva*  
 the harassment of.the protesters with that measure repressive  
 ‘The harassment suffered by the protesters through that repressive measure’

The derivation of the agentive nominal pattern in (79) is explained below. In (80), the active LVC (75) is embedded within NP through relativization:

(79) *La vessazione dei manifestanti da parte della polizia*  
 the harassment of.the protesters from.part of.the police  
 ‘The harassment of the protesters by the police’

#### [relative clause embedding]

(80) *La vessazione che subirono i manifestanti dalla polizia*  
 the harassment that suffer.PST.3PL the protesters from.the police  
 ‘The harassment that the protesters suffered from the police’

In (81), the deletion of *che subirono* ‘that (they) suffered’, the substitution of the NP= *i manifestanti* with the PP= *dei manifestanti* ‘of protesters’ and the substitution of the preposition *da* ‘by’ with the preposition *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’ produce the OE nominal (79):

[**deletion** → *che subirono* ‘that (they) suffered’]  
 [**substitution**: NP= *i manifestanti* ‘the protesters’ → PP= *dei manifestanti* ‘lit. of.the protesters, of the protesters’]  
 [**substitution**: Prep *da* ‘by’ → Prep *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’]

(81) *La vessazione ehe subirono* [<sub>NP</sub> *i manifestanti*] → [<sub>PP</sub> *dei manifestanti*]  
 the harassment that suffer.PST.3PL [<sub>NP</sub> the protesters] → [<sub>PP</sub> of.the protesters]  
 [<sub>PREP</sub> *da*] → [<sub>PREP</sub> *da parte di*] la polizia.  
 [<sub>PREP</sub> from] → [<sub>PREP</sub> from part of] the police

In Section 4, I showed that the OE nominal pattern of *seduzione* ‘seduction’ in (83) is correctly predicted by the anticausative hypothesis. It does not show the same OE

nominal pattern as *divertimento* ‘amusement’ because it derives from *sedurre* ‘seduce’ in (82), an OE verb that lacks the anticausative:

(82) *Maria/Quella visione filosofica sedusse Gianni*  
 Maria/that vision philosophical seduce.PST.3SG Gianni  
 ‘Maria/That philosophical vision seduced Gianni’

(83) *La seduzione di Gianni da parte di Maria*  
 the seduction of Gianni from part of Maria  
 ‘Maria’s seduction of Gianni’

(84) *\*La seduzione di Gianni con/per quella visione filosofica*  
 the seduction of Gianni with/for that vision philosophical  
 ‘The seduction of Gianni by that philosophical vision’

If we adopt the LVC hypothesis the nominal (83) is accounted for and (84) is correctly ruled out. The OE nominal *seduzione* ‘seduction’ appears in converse constructions (Gross 1989) and combines with light verbs *esercitare* ‘exert’ in (85) and *subire* ‘suffer’ in (86), which are variants of light verbs *fare* ‘make, commit’ and *ricevere* ‘receive’, respectively (cf. Vivès 1993):

(85) *Maria/Quella visione filosofica esercitò seduzione su Gianni*  
 Maria/that vision philosophical exert.PST.3SG seduction on Gianni  
 ‘Maria/That philosophical vision seduced Gianni’

(86) *Gianni subì la seduzione di quella visione filosofica/*  
 Gianni suffer.PST.3SG the seduction of that vision philosophical/  
*da parte di Maria*  
 from part of Maria  
 ‘Gianni was seduced by that philosophical vision/Maria’

The applications of relative clause embedding, deletion and substitutions account for the OE nominals (83); therefore, I will not repeat the entire derivation again. It is also worth noting that the LVC in (85) permits the derivation of an additional OE pattern for *seduzione* ‘seduction’, namely, the OE nominal pattern in which the Experiencer is introduced by the preposition *su* ‘over’. Such OE nominals could never be derived from the transitive construction of the verb *sedurre* ‘seduce’. I show the derivation of the non-agentive nominal (87) as follows:

(87) *La seduzione di quella visione filosofica su Gianni*  
 the seduction of that vision philosophical over Gianni  
 ‘Gianni was seduced by that philosophical vision’

In (88), the LVC (85) is embedded within NP through relativization. In (89), the deletion of *che esercitò* ‘that (it) exerted’ and the substitution of the NP= *la visione filosofica* ‘the philosophical vision’ with the PP= *di quella visione filosofica* ‘of that philosophical vision’ produce the non-agentive nominal in (87).

[relative clause embedding]

(88) *La seduzione che esercitò quella visione filosofica su Gianni*  
 the seduction that exert.PST.3SG that vision philosophical over Gianni  
 ‘The seduction that philosophical vision had over Gianni’

[deletion → *che esercitò* ‘that (it) exerted’]

[substitution: NP= *quella visione filosofica* ‘that philosophic vision’ → PP= *di quella visione filosofica* ‘of that philosophic vision’]

(89) *La seduzione che esercitò [NP quella visione filosofica] → [PP di quella visione filosofica] su Gianni*  
 the seduction that exert.PST.3SG [NP that vision philosophical] → [PP of that vision philosophical] over Gianni  
 ‘The seduction that philosophical vision had over Gianni’

If the LVC derivational hypothesis is correct, then OE nominalizations – regardless of whether they derive from OE verbs undergoing or not undergoing CAA – only share the base with them, but inherit the argument and the event structure from the LVCs that encode the result state. This hypothesis also explains the lack of a morphological marker in nominalizations from OE verbs that alternate.

## 8 Extending the LVC hypothesis to SE nominalization derived from SE verbs

The LVC hypothesis can also be extended to SE nominalizations such as *ammirazione* ‘admiration’ which shares its base with the SE transitive verb *ammirare* ‘admire’ in (90a). The OE nominalization in (90b) is straightforwardly derived from the LVC (90c):

(90) a. *Gianni ammira Maria/quella iniziativa*  
 Gianni admire.PRS.3SG Maria/that initiative  
 ‘Gianni admires Maria/that initiative’

b. *L’ ammirazione di Gianni per Maria/quella iniziativa*  
 the admiration of Gianni for Maria/that initiative  
 ‘Gianni’s admiration of Maria/that initiative’

c. *Gianni prova ammirazione per Maria/quella iniziativa*  
 Gianni feel.PRS.3SG admiration for Maria/that initiative  
 'Gianni feels admiration for Maria/that initiative'

I will now analyse the derivation in detail. In (91), the active LVC (90c) is embedded within NP through relativization:

**[relative clause embedding]**

(91) *L'ammirazione che prova Gianni per Maria/quella iniziativa*  
 the admiration that feel.PRS.3SG Gianni for Maria/that initiative  
 'The admiration that Gianni feels for Maria/that initiative'

In (92), the deletion of *che prova* 'that (he) feels' and the substitution of the Experiencer NP= *Gianni* with the Experiencer PP= *di Gianni* 'of Gianni' produce the OE nominal in (90b):

**[deletion** → *che prova* 'that (he) feels']

**[substitution:** NP= *Gianni* → PP= *di Gianni* 'of Gianni']

(92) *L'ammirazione che prova [<sub>NP</sub> Gianni] → [<sub>PP</sub> di Gianni] per Maria/quella iniziativa*  
 the admiration that feel.PRS.3SG [<sub>NP</sub> Gianni] → [<sub>PP</sub> di Gianni] for Maria/that initiative  
 'The admiration that Gianni feels for Maria/that initiative'

The (passive) nominalization (93) is derived as in the following. The LVC (90c) has the passive form (94):

(93) *L' ammirazione da parte di Gianni per Maria*  
 the admiration from part of Gianni for Maria  
 'Gianni's admiration of Maria'

(94) *L' ammirazione è provata da Gianni per Maria*  
 the admiration be.PRS.3SG feel.PTCP by Gianni for Maria  
 'The admiration that Gianni feels for Maria'

In (95), the passive LVC (94) is embedded within NP through relativization:

**[relative clause embedding]**

(95) *L' ammirazione che è provata da Gianni per Maria*  
 the admiration that be.PRS.3SG feel.PTCP by Gianni for Maria  
 'The admiration that is felt by Gianni for Maria'

In (96), the deletion of *che è provata* ‘that is felt’ and the obligatory substitution of the preposition *da* ‘by’ with *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’ produce the OE nominal (93):

[deletion → *che è provata* ‘that is felt’]

[substitution: Prep *da* ‘by’ → Prep *da parte di* ‘lit. from part of, by’]

(96) *L’ammirazione che è provata* [<sub>PREP</sub> *da*] → [<sub>PREP</sub> *da parte di*]  
 the admiration that be.PST.3SG feel.PTCP [<sub>PREP</sub> *by*] → [<sub>PREP</sub> from part of]  
*Gianni per Maria*  
 Gianni for Maria  
 ‘Gianni’s admiration of Maria’

Both types of nominals in (90b) and (93) inherit the PP that expresses the object of emotion from the LVC. In this case, full verb constructions, light verb constructions and nominalizations are all stative predicates.

## 9 Cause of Emotion versus Object of Emotion

Analysis of LVCs with nominals such as *ammirazione* ‘admiration’ compared to LVCs with nominals such as *divertimento* ‘amusement’ highlights that the preposition *per* ‘for’ is ambiguous. The diagnostics enable us to distinguish between the *per*-phrase ‘for’ expressing a Cause of Emotion, as in (97), and the *per*-phrase ‘for’ expressing an Object of Emotion in (98). When the *per*-phrase ‘for’ refers to the Cause of Emotion the preposition *per* ‘for’ can be replaced by *a causa di* ‘lit. at cause of, because of’, as in (99). In contrast, when the *per*-phrase ‘for’ refers to the Object of Emotion – i.e. the noun denotes an entity towards which the Experiencer has a feeling – the preposition *per* ‘for’ can only be replaced by *verso* ‘towards’, as in (100). Consequently, (99) can be interpreted as a result/an eventive construction, whereas (100) represents a stative one (cf. Melloni 2017):

(97) *Lei provò divertimento per il film/ \*per il clown*  
 she feel.PST.3SG amusement for the movie/ for the clown  
 ‘She enjoyed watching the movie/the clown’

(98) *Gianni provò ammirazione per Maria/per quello spettacolo*  
 Gianni feel.PST.3SG admiration for Maria/for that show  
 ‘Gianni admired Maria/that show’

(99) *Lei provò divertimento a causa del/\*verso il film/clown*  
 she feel.PST.3SG amusement at cause of.the/towards the movie/clown  
 ‘She enjoyed watching the movie/the clown’

(100) *Gianni provò ammirazione \*a causa di/verso*  
 Gianni feel.PST.3SG admiration at cause of/toward  
*Maria/quello spettacolo*  
 Maria/that show  
 'Gianni admired Maria/that show'

Similarly, the question and answer in (111) are accepted only when introduced by *a causa di* 'because of', whereas in (112) they are accepted only when introduced by *verso* 'towards':

(111) - *A causa di/\*Verso cosa/chi lei provò divertimento?*  
 at cause of/towards what/who she feel.PST.3SG amusement?  
 'Why did she feel enjoyment?'  
*A causa del/\*Verso il film/clown*  
 at cause of.the/towards the movie/clown  
 'Because of the movie/clown'

(112) - *\*A causa di/Verso chi/cosa lei provò ammirazione?*  
 at cause of/towards who/what she feel.PST.3SG admiration?  
 'Towards whom/what did she feel admiration?'  
 - *\*A causa di/Verso Gianni/quaella città*  
 at cause of/towards Gianni/that city  
 '\*Because of/Towards Gianni/that city'

Consequently, (111) has a result reading while (112) has a stative reading. However, irregularities may arise, reflecting the ongoing debate on the stative versus eventive interpretation of OE predicates. For instance, *attrazione* 'attraction' is derived from a non-CAA verb, which nonetheless can be considered a causative/eventive predicate in (113):

(113) *Maria/Quel quadro attrasse Luca immediatamente*  
 Maria/that painting attract.PST.3SG Luca immediately  
 'Maria/that painting attracted Luca immediately'

However, the LVC (114) receives a stative reading, as indicated by the diagnostics. The preposition *per* 'for' can be replaced only by *verso* 'towards' in (114), and the question and answer in (115) are accepted only when introduced by *verso* 'towards':

(114) *Luca provò attrazione per/\*a causa di/verso Maria/quel quadro*  
 Luca feel.PST.3SG attraction for/at cause of/towards Maria/that painting  
 'Luca felt attracted by Maria/that painting'

(115) - *Per/ \*A causa di/Verso chi/cosa Luca*  
 for/ at cause of/towards who/what Luca  
*provò attrazione?*  
 feel.PST.3SG attraction?  
 'Towards whom/what did Luca feel attraction?'  
 - *Per/\*A causa di/Verso Maria/quel quadro*  
 for/at cause of/towards Maria/that painting  
 '\*Because of/Towards Maria/that painting'

The diagnostics thus reveal that some OE predicates exhibit conflicting behaviour and resist a coherent description.

## 10 Conclusions

Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a) propose deriving non-agentive CPNs from the SE form of psych verbs that undergo the causative alternation. The authors examine Greek and Romanian and predict that this hypothesis is applicable to every language in which OE psych verbs show the alternation. Since a large set of Italian OE verbs undergo CAA, I tested Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia's anticausative hypothesis on Italian. However, I had to extend the analysis also to agentive OE nominalizations in Italian. This was because – unlike in Greek and Romanian – these are not permitted in Italian when introduced by a *da parte* *di*-phrase 'lit. from prat of, by'.

In particular, OE nominalizations derived from verbs that undergo CAA display patterns that are distinct from those derived from verbs that appear only in the transitive construction, as shown by Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia's (2014a) for Greek and Romanian. In contrast, while their hypothesis accounts for a wide range of constructions in Italian, it also has counterexamples.

I thus proposed the LVC derivational hypothesis and showed that it correctly explains all nominal constructions, regardless of whether the nominalizations derive from OE verbs undergoing or not undergoing CAA. My hypothesis also provides a consistent explanation for those OE nominals that, under the anticausative hypothesis, had to be analysed as pseudo-passives, whereas adopting the LVC hypothesis allows for their straightforward derivation from passive LVCs. I also showed that it explains agentive and non-agentive OE nominalizations under the same type of derivation. On the other hand, the anticausative hypothesis only explains the non-agentive nominalizations, but derives agentive nominals from the causative constructions. I also extended the LVC derivation to nominalizations derived from SE transitive verbs.

As regards the semantics of OE nominalizations, the debate has focused on whether they are causative or stative predicates. Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia (2014a) argue that CPNs have a causative semantics. I have shown that the LVC derivational hypothesis adequately explains why OE nominals are resultative predicates, as they are derived from constructions that express the result of the change-of-emotional-state.

The present study is a further step towards investigation of OE nominalizations in Romance, however additional research is necessary to extend the LVC hypothesis to Italian zero-derived nominals (cf. Iordăchioaia 2019) and to verify whether differences exist compared to the suffixed nominals I have analysed.

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## Appendix

### Nominalizations from OE verbs that do not undergo CAA (7):

*attrazione* ‘attraction’, *delusione* ‘disappointment’, *fascinazione* ‘fascination’, *frustrazione* ‘frustration’, *gratificazione* ‘gratification’, *seduzione* ‘seduction’, *vessazione* ‘vexation’

### Nominalizations from AE verbs that undergo CAA (84):

*accoramento* ‘sadness’, *afflizione* ‘affliction’, *agitazione* ‘turmoil’, *annichilimento* ‘annihilation’, *appagamento* ‘contentment’, *avvilimento* ‘despondency’, *colpevolizzazione* ‘guilt’, *commozione* ‘emotion’, *compiacimento* ‘satisfaction’, *consolazione* ‘consolation’, *costernazione* ‘dismay’, *demoralizzazione* ‘demoralization’, *demotivazione* ‘demotivation’, *distrazione* ‘distraction’, *divertimento* ‘amusement’, *eccitazione* ‘excitement’, *esagitazione* ‘excitement’, *esasperazione* ‘exasperation’, *illusione* ‘illusion’, *incoraggiamento* ‘encouragement’, *indignazione* ‘indignation’, *infatuazione* ‘infatuation’, *inibizione* ‘inhibition’, *innamoramento* ‘falling in love’, *invaghimento* ‘infatuation’, *irritazione* ‘irritation’, *mortificazione* ‘mortification’, *preoccupazione* ‘worry’, *rassicurazione* ‘reassurance’, *sbalordimento* ‘bewilderment’, *sbalordimento* ‘astonishment’, *sbigottimento* ‘astonishment’, *scombussolamento* ‘bewilderment’, *sconvolgimento* ‘confusion’, *scoraggiamento* ‘discouragement’, *smarrimento*

‘disorientation’, *soddisfazione* ‘satisfaction’, *sovreccitazione* ‘overexcitement’, *stupefazione* ‘astonishment’, *turbamento* ‘perturbation’, *umiliazione* ‘humiliation’

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