

DIFFERENTIAL CASE MARKING IN OLD IRISH:  
NOMINAL AND PRONOMINAL ARGUMENTS  
IN VALENCY ALTERNATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses from a typological perspective case marking of different types of arguments in Old Irish, drawing on the framework of the Leipzig Valency Classes Project (Hartmann, Haspelmath and Taylor 2013; Malchukov and Comrie 2015, ValPaL) and using datasets from *Corpus Palaeo-Hibernicum* (Stifter et al. 2021, CorPH), supplemented by the Würzburg Glosses. Old Irish is first shown to score high for inflectional behaviour of person according to Nichols' (2017b) typology of person marking, so that nominal and pronominal arguments are systematically kept apart as to their case marking. The Old Irish values for Nichols' 42 data-points are given in the Appendix. The contribution then deals with argument marking in relation to valency changes, focusing in particular on alternations with a sample of labile verbs (notably *ar-olslaici* 'open', *fercaigidir* and *londaigidir* 'get angry' and 'make angry', *fo-botha* 'get scared' and 'frighten') and with a sample of ditransitives. The data show that a distinct labile behaviour is attested only with pronominal arguments indexed on the verb, so that this alternation comes close to a coded alternation, according to the typological distinction drawn in ValPaL. On the other hand, the promotion of the recipient-like argument to direct object is allowed only with a small set of verbs (notably *guidid* 'ask for', *for-cain* and *múinid* 'teach'), it often combines with argument omission, and is again frequent with pronominal objects, but rather follows the Extended Animacy Hierarchy (Croft 2022). Since, however, the total number of occurrences of nominal arguments for each verb is not very high, a larger corpus would be necessary to conclude that these tendencies were in fact well entrenched in Old Irish grammar.

**Keywords:** case-marking alternations, pronominal arguments, Old Irish, valency, inflection, lability, ditransitives.

## 1. Introduction

This chapter addresses from a distinctive typological perspective case marking of different types of arguments in Old Irish, drawing on the framework of the Leipzig Valency Classes Project (Hartmann, Haspelmath and Taylor 2013; Malchukov and Comrie 2015) and setting the scene through Nichols' (2017b) typology of person marking. It examines the behaviour of different kinds of arguments in valency reduction and expansion strategies (mainly causativization, passivization and reflexivization, including labiality) and in object alignment alternations for a sample of verb meanings. The selection of verbs is based on the Pavia Verbs Database (PaVeDa), to be described in Section 2, and the data are drawn from the texts in CorPH (Stifter et al. 2021), supplemented by the Würzburg Glosses where appropriate (Stokes and Strachan 1901; Kavanagh and Wodtko 2001; Doyle 2018).

The chapter is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly introduces basic concepts in valency patterns and the goals of the PaVeDa project, within which this research is cast.<sup>1</sup> Section 3 outlines the typological background for the description of some phenomena of argument marking that keep nominal and pronominal arguments apart in Old Irish. It focuses on the status of Old Irish pronominals within the typology of the category of person devised by Nichols (2017b), framing well-known features of argument marking in Old Irish in a typological perspective. Sections 4 and 5 form the core of the contribution. Section 4 dwells on argument marking in relation to the most widespread valency changes, in particular passivization, reflexivization and labiality as anticausativization strategies (4.1), and on alternations with a sample of Old Irish ditransitives (4.2). Section 5 overviews and discusses the main findings and Section 6 draws the conclusions.

## 2. Argument marking and the Pavia Verbs Database

This chapter deals with nominal and pronominal morphosyntax as it relates to valency patterns, and treats case marking and syntactic behaviour of nouns and pronominal elements qua verbal arguments. Arguments should be meant broadly as referring phrases or speech-act participant indexes that accompany predicates and are directly related to their semantic and syntactic properties.

The framework adopted to study argument marking and valency patterns and alternations is the typological stance of the Leipzig Valency Classes Project, which gathered comparable valency data on a wide variety of languages

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(Hartmann, Haspelmath and Taylor 2013; Malchukov and Comrie 2015). Within this framework, the valency of a verb crucially includes the list of its arguments with their coding properties (coding frame), their behavioural properties (syntactic-function frame), and the relationship of the arguments to the roles in the verb's semantic role frame. Coding properties in particular, that are the focus of this chapter, involve the following techniques (Haspelmath 2005; Malchukov, Haspelmath and Comrie 2010b; Haspelmath and Hartmann 2015): flagging (case or adposition marking), indexing (agreement, cross-referencing), word order (in the absence of other kinds of marking).

PaVeDa is, likewise, an open-source relational database designed to expand the Valency Pattern Leipzig Database (ValPaL), adding new languages and in particular past varieties, in order to investigate verb argument structure and its diachrony across languages. The database is under construction and data collection has been completed only for some languages (Ancient and Modern Greek, Old Latin, Gothic, Old High German, Old English, Classical Armenian) but is well under way for Old Irish.<sup>2</sup> For further information about the database, refer to Zanchi, Luraghi and Combei (2022), to Luraghi et al. (forthcoming) and to Roma and Zanchi (to appear). PaVeDa in turn relies mainly on the texts in CorPH (Stifter et al. 2021), on the Würzburg Glosses (Stokes and Strachan 1901; Kavanagh and Wodtke 2001; Doyle 2018) and on eDIL (2019), in order to determine each verb meaning counterpart and classify attested valency patterns in Old Irish.

### 3. The Typology of person applied to Old Irish and the different behaviour of nominal and pronominal arguments

Nichols (2017b) identifies 42 data-points that describe the inflectional vs. lexical behaviour of person, that is, the behaviour of expressions referring to speech participants that pattern with inflectional elements (affixes and clitics), or that rather pattern with nouns, thus resembling lexical elements. Briefly stated, indexes of A- and O-arguments on verbs,<sup>3</sup> possessive indexes on nouns, attraction of person markers to negation, cumulative marking of person with TAM and hierarchical marking of person are hallmarks of inflectional behaviour. On the other hand, the same case distinctions, case morphology and number markers as nouns are hallmarks of lexical behaviour of person. The distinction between inflectional vs. lexical behaviour of pronouns is summarized in Table 1.

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<sup>2</sup> As of March 2024, data have been collected for three quarters of the 80 core meanings of ValPaL and a few verbs have been added to the list. The current beta version of the database can be accessed at the following website: <https://paveda.unipv.it>.

<sup>3</sup> A, S and O are the labels used in the typological literature for the three main argument types, i.e. first argument of transitives, unique/first argument of intransitives, second argument of transitives, respectively. P is also used for O.

Table 1. Inflectional vs. lexical behaviour of pronouns

inflectional	lexical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pronouns <b>are</b> referential indexes               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A, O on V, poss on N</li> <li>person is attracted to negation</li> <li>multiple marking per argument</li> </ol> </li> <li>pronouns appear in paradigms (closed sets)               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cumulative with TAM</li> <li>hierarchical marking<sup>4</sup></li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pronouns <b>bear</b> referential indexes</li> <li>pronouns appear as an open class               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have the same cases as nouns</li> <li>have the same case morphology as nouns</li> <li>have the same number markers as nouns</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Old Irish ranks very high for inflectional behaviour: the sum of all positive results for inflectional behaviour is 11, while the sum of positive results for lexical behaviour is 2 (see Appendix), which gives a percentage of inflectional behaviour of 85%, well over the mean value observed by Nichols (70%). This figure can be compared with the figures for Modern Irish, i.e. 64% according to Nichols' own counts, and e.g. those for French (57%), for Italian (47%) and for German (38%).

Nichols' data-points thus clearly capture from a distinctive typological angle the divergent morphosyntactic behaviour of nominal and pronominal arguments that descriptions of Old Irish person markers have repeatedly shown. Obligatory features for nominals are case marking of A+S and O, Agreement of verb with A+S, Agreement with passive, case marking on adnominal modifiers; on the other hand obligatory features for pronominals are bound morphemes for A+S and O, bound O morphemes for 1st and 2nd persons (speech act participants) with passive, possessive clitic morphemes (Thurneysen 1946; Roma 2000: 43–57, 116; Griffith 2011; Griffith 2015; Roma 2021: 90–96). Constructions that appear to be allowed for pronominals are (infix) objects with intransitives, subjective genitives with transitive verbal nouns (VNs), objective genitives with intransitive verbal nouns (Roma 2021), non-referential objects (3sg. neuter infixes) in verb phrase anaphora (Roma 2018). For nominals, only cognate objects appear to parallel the larger freedom of pronominal arguments (see Ó hUiginn 1983; Roma 2021: 118, fn. 42, for this construction). An overview of obligatory and preferred features for nominal and pronominal arguments is given below in Table 2. Note that gaps in relative constructions, i.e. when the antecedent is either the subject or object in the relative clause, have been merged with pronominals.

<sup>4</sup> For hierarchical marking of person in Old Irish, see Griffith (2008).

Table 2. Nominal vs. pronominal arguments in Old Irish (\* = speech act participants)

	nominals	pronominals
obligatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case marking (A+S and O)</li> <li>• Agreement with A+S</li> <li>• Agreement with passive</li> <li>• Case marking with adnominal modifiers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bound morphemes (A+S and O)</li> <li>• Bound O morphemes (1/2)* with passive</li> <li>• Possessive clitic morphemes</li> </ul>
admitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognate objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O with intransitives</li> <li>• A genitives with transitive VNs</li> <li>• O genitives with intransitive VNs</li> <li>• Non-referential objects (3SG neuter)</li> </ul>

These observations will be taken over in Section 5 when discussing the data in Section 4.

#### 4. Old Irish basic valency orientation and reduction and expansion strategies

In order to investigate the coding frames of (nominal and pronominal) arguments in reduction and expansion strategies, data gathered for basic valency orientation in Old Irish have been used as a core, convenient sample of predicates. Basic valency orientation as defined by Nichols et al. (2004) and Nichols (2017a) is a preference that the verbal lexicon of languages exhibits in lexicalizing transitive and intransitive verb meaning pairs. “Transitivizing” languages are languages where intransitive verbs (“plain” in Nichols’ terms) in verb pairs are more basic, that is, morphologically less marked and complex, than transitive ones (“induced” in Nichols’ terms), which require extra-marking; this is the kind of relationship that holds between e.g. *saidid* ‘sit down’ and *suidigidir* ‘seat, make sit’, where the latter, causative verb, is derived from the verbal noun *suide* of the former, intransitive verb.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, “detransitivizing” languages are languages where transitive verbs are more basic than intransitive ones, and intransitive counterparts are derived from transitive ones, for example they are derived anticausatives, passives or reflexives; this is the relationship that holds between *ceilid* ‘hide’ and *ceilid* reflexive ‘go into hiding, hide oneself’, or between *báidid* ‘submerge, sink (tr.)’

<sup>5</sup> The denominal derivation with *-igidir* is quite productive in Old Irish but not always associated with transitivity and causativization. However, this association is frequent in Nichols’ sample of verbs devised to investigate basic valency orientation, as noted below (see Roma & Zanchi to appear).

and *báidid* passive ‘sink, be drowned’.<sup>6</sup> So-called “augmentation” is the term used in this context for the morphological process that corresponds to the transitivity type, where morphological complexity or derivation lies with the causative counterpart, as with *suidigidir* with respect to *saidid*. The label “reduction”, on the other hand, is used for the correspondence featured by “detransitivizing” languages, where it is the intransitive counterpart that requires morphological marking. Languages can also be non-oriented, namely “neutral”, if they consistently show overt morphological marking for both plain and induced verbs, or else “indeterminate”, if they lack overt marking for both members of the pair, as is the case with suppletion and labiality or ambivalency, that is when the same lemma performs both duties (e.g. *tírmaigid* ‘get dry’ and ‘make dry’, *fercaigidir* ‘get angry’ and ‘make angry, anger’).<sup>7</sup>

Nichols originally compared 18 plain-induced verb pairs that were considered representative of the verbal lexicon in a sample of 80 languages. In the more recent version (Nichols 2017a), plain verbs are further distinguished into continuous, stative predicates and bounded, change of state telic verbs (for example BE SITTING continuous stative vs. SIT DOWN bounded, BOIL, BE BOILING continuous stative vs. COME TO A BOIL bounded, BURN continuous stative vs. CATCH FIRE bounded) and 6 additional meanings are also added to the list. The resulting 24 verb pairs are further divided into animate and inanimate, according to the animacy of the most frequent, likely or possible subjects with the plain verb, for example *fercaigidir* is an animate verb while *tírmaigid* is an inanimate verb. Old Irish data for these 24 predicates have been gathered through meaning searches in eDIL and relying on frequency data based on CorPH. The methodology, the same

<sup>6</sup> The Old Irish instances for each relationship in this Section are based on the data collected for PaVeDa and extracted from CorPH (UID = CorPH Text Unit ID; for abbreviations see fn. 8). For *ceild* reflexive ‘hide (oneself)’, see *nuda-chelat* [3PL.OBJ.REL-hide.PRES.3PL] ‘that hide themselves’ Ml. 54c9 (UID S0006-3310) and *nuda-chéiltis* [3PL.OBJ.REL-hide.IMPF.3PL] ‘who were hiding themselves’ Ml. 61a2 (UID S0006-3782), both glossing Latin *latentes* [be\_hidden.PTCP.PRES.PL] ‘hiding’. Note that the reflexive usage of *ceild* is not clearly distinguished in eDIL. For *báidid* passive ‘sink’ see *Báite Pharo lia shúag sain* [drown.PASS.PRET.SG pharaoh.NOM with.his host.ACC] ‘Pharaoh was drowned with his own host’ *Blathmac* 335 (UID S0005-84), to be compared with active *co-mbáidi benna borrh-bárc* [so\_that drown.PRES.3SG peak.ACC.PL proud-ship.GEN.PL] ‘so that it drowns the prows of proud ships’ *Blathmac* 910 (UID S0005-228).

<sup>7</sup> What is meant here is so-called S/P labiality. It should be noted that labiality/ambivalency is not directly addressed in eDIL entries, since the labels “transitive” vs. “intransitive” used in eDIL apply to any valency alternation that has to do with the presence vs. absence of an accusative argument, while S/P labiality applies to a specific alternation whereby the semantic role mapped as object in the transitive construction (P) surfaces as the subject in the intransitive one (S) (see Malchukov & the Leipzig Valency Classes Project team 2015: 33). In a similar vein, “ambitransitive” in Le Mair (2011: 55) is applied to a verb “if the action, depending on meaning and context, can require an object (direct or indirect) or not”, a definition which encompasses different kinds of ambivalency besides S/P labiality.

adopted for PaVeDa, and the results have been presented in Roma and Zanchi (to appear): I refer to that paper for details and I will only summarize the main points here for the sake of the issues related to valency expansion and reduction strategies.

Suppletion is the prevailing correspondence between causatives and anticausatives for animate verbs, passivization for inanimate verbs. Lability is also represented in 4 out of 12 for inanimates and 3 out of 12 for animates. I shall therefore concentrate on passivization/reflexivization with labile verbs (Section 4.1) and on alternations with ditransitives (Section 4.2), including passivization with different syntactic frames. Before turning to the coding of arguments in these alternations, however, I shall spend a couple of words on derived causatives. Although the augmentation process as defined above is poorly represented in our predicate sample, there appears to be a productive causativization process in Old Irish, namely a transitivizing pattern that derives weak, frequently deponent verbs from nouns, adjectives or verbal nouns of plain counterparts. Among Nichols' (2017a) list of meanings we may find the following derived causatives:

*suide* 'sitting' (verbal noun of *saidid* 'sit down') → *suidigidir* 'place, make sit' (verb)  
*etargnae* 'knowledge' (verbal noun of *etar·gnin* 'know') → *etargnaigidir* 'make known' (verb)

*foillus* 'clear' (adjective) → *foillsigidir* 'make clear' (verb)

*ferc* 'anger' (noun) → *fercaigidir* 'make angry' (labile/ambivalent verb)

*lond* 'angry' (adjective) → *londaigidir* 'make angry' (labile/ambivalent verb)

*marb* 'dead' (adjective) → *marbaid* 'kill' (verb)

*díriuch* 'straight' (adjective) → *dírgid* 'make straight' (labile/ambivalent verb, cp. the deponent compound *con·dírgedar*, which translates compounds of Latin *rego*, e.g. *dirigo*)

*ísel* 'low' (adjective) → *ísligidir* 'bring low' (verb)

*tírim* 'dry' (adjective) → *tírmaigid* 'get dry, dry out' (labile/ambivalent verb)

Deponent verbs derived from verbal nouns of plain counterparts with the suffix *-igidir*, such as *suidigidir* and *etargnaigidir*, are causatives and not labile, while verbs derived from nouns and adjectives may or may not be (or become?) labile. The association of the *-igidir* derivation with causativity could be linked to a specific chronological layer, which belongs at earliest to Insular Celtic and is not related to inherited deponency. On the other hand, the fact that the denominal and deadjectival derivation allows for different valencies is probably due to different chronological stages. Lability could therefore be added to the criteria set out by Le Mair (2011) to classify and date secondary verbs. One may also wonder whether lability of denominals might be related to the different developments of the deponent inflection set out by Griffith (2013), who has shown that the loss of deponent inflection with denominals is swifter than with deverbal deponents. These issues deserve further scrutiny but lie beyond the scope of this contribution.

#### 4.1. Passives and reflexives with labile verbs

As noted above, lability is well represented among the verbs in Nichols' list, especially for the relationship between plain telic meanings and causatives, which can be considered the basic one. However, lability is clearly attested in CorPH,<sup>8</sup> as will be shown below, only for a handful of verbs, namely *fercaigidir* and *londaigidir* 'get angry' and 'make angry', *fo·botha* 'get scared' and 'frighten', *ar·oslaici* 'open' transitive and intransitive. Among the other verbs in Nichols' sample that appear to be labile according to eDIL, *tirmaigid* 'get dry' and 'dry out', *dirgid* 'straighten' and 'make straight', *do·fiuschi* 'wake up' and 'awake' are attested only in the induced, causative counterpart in CorPH. On the other hand, for *lasaid* 'catch fire' and 'set afire' and *reithid* 'run' and 'make run', it is the causative meaning that is not attested in CorPH.<sup>9</sup> This is not surprising given that for the latter two verbs the causative meaning appears to be a marginal or later use in eDIL.

Lability in fact is manifested in CorPH, and presumably in general in Old Irish texts, in three different ways. It may be revealed by the use of the active or deponent alongside the passive or reflexive with the same meaning (monovalent, anticausative counterpart), while the active also has causative meaning (bivalent counterpart). This holds for *ar·oslaici*: (1) is an instance of active bivalent (causative), while in (2) and (3) we find active monovalent (plain, anticausative) instances. In (4) the form is passive and in (5) it is reflexive, both resulting in a construction where the subject

<sup>8</sup> Abbreviations for the titles of quoted texts correspond to those used in eDIL, though examples are quoted from CorPH and from Doyle (2018). The glosses on examples quoted in this chapter deviate from this volume's guidelines in the following points, which are consistent with the Leipzig Glossing Rules:

1) the raised dot is not used; instead, one of the symbols used to separate morphemes in the Rules is chosen, i.e. hyphen for segmentable morphemes, angle brackets for morphemes which are inserted within a lexical unit, i.e. between a preverb which is part of the verbal lexeme and the rest of the verb form, backslash for initial mutations. In line with the one-to-one principle, this means that when a pronominal object (so-called infix) occurs after a segmentable morpheme which is not part of the verbal lexeme, e.g. a negation or *ro*, it is not treated as an infix. All glosses are as meaningful as possible, so the glosses PV, AUG are avoided, and when the object or relative morpheme is appended to the dummy preverb *no*, the two receive a single gloss.

2) the underscore symbol is only used when a single lexical morpheme in the object language happens to lack a single word equivalent in the metalanguage (English).

3) the abbreviation SG for singular is kept throughout. SBJV = subjunctive and COND = conditional. The abbreviation DEP is used for "dependent".

<sup>9</sup> The CorPH lemma IDs for each of these verbs are: *fercaigidir* 4581 (search no. 5360), *londaigidir* 5276 (search no. 5362), *fo·botha* 4639 (search no. 5361), *ar·oslaici* 3419 (search no. 5268), *tirmaigid* 5962 (search no. 5652), *dirgid* 8920 (search no. 5650), *do·fiuschi* 7322 (search no. 5654), *lasaid* 6647 (search no. 5651), *reithid* (search no. 5363). The verb *reithid* does occur in a few transitive constructions in CorPH, but not with causative meaning 'make run'. It allows for a pronominal direct object (index = infix) expressing the place run over at Blathm. 952 (UID S0005-238), and for a cognate object (*riuth*) at Ml. 129d4 (UID S0006-7826) and Karlsruhe Bede 24 (UID S0022-24 = Thes. (Stokes & Strachan 1901) ii, 12, 18b12). See fn. 14 for this construction.



argument corresponds to the opened entity, and therefore to the monovalent/plain counterpart. Nominal arguments in CorPH occur with active causative (bivalent) and passive anticausative (monovalent), i.e. alignment conforms to a non-labile behaviour with nominal arguments.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the active with anticausative meaning as in ML 39c19 (2) and the reflexive anticausative as in ML 46a12 (5) have pronominal arguments. Note that the alternation active-passive or reflexive here does not reflect a similar alternation in Latin, since in ML 39c19 the active anticausative corresponds to the Latin passive *expansum est* [expand.PASS.PTCP.N.ACC is] ‘was expanded’, while in ML 36b8 it corresponds to the Latin active *illum patēre* [ANA.M.ACC be\_open.INF] ‘him to be open’.

- (1) *arosailcim arn=ítige riam do thabairt*  
 open.PRES.1PL our=granary.ACC.PL before.3SG.M to give.VN.DAT  
*neich essib do*  
 something.GEN of.3PL to.3SG.M  
 ‘that we open our granaries before him to give him something out of them’ (ML 98a4, UID S0006-6049)

- (2) *co arosailced*  
 so\_that open.SBJV.PAST.3SG  
 ‘so that it opened’ (ML 39c19, UID S0006-2078)

- (3) *aranosailcea*  
 DEP\open.SBJV.PRES.3SG  
 ‘that it may be open’ (ML 36b8, UID S0006-1789)

- (4) *nadn-ersoilcfitis na doirsea*  
 NEG.DEF-open.PASS.COND.PL DEF.NOM.PL door.NOM.PL  
 ‘that the doors would not be opened’ (ML 46a19, UID S0006-2650)

<sup>10</sup> Besides the occurrences in (1) and (4), nominal/overt independent arguments occur at the following loci:  
 active: (i) ML 42b11, UID S0006-2285, *aranosailcea ind=argumint inn=ord inna dolo insin* [DEP\open.SBJV.PRES.3SG DEF.NOM=argument.NOM DEF.ACC=order.ACC DEF.GEN creation.GEN DIST] ‘or that the argument might open up the order of that creation’; (ii) ML 31b9, UID S0006-1292, *nicon-airsoil[c]set .i. inna=ginu* [NEG-open.PRET.3PL i.e. DEF.ACC.PL mouth.ACC.PL] ‘they did not open, i.e. the mouths’; (iii) ML 127a20, UID S0006-7664, *ersoilced .i. nanní bes les* [open.IMP.3SG i.e. INDEF.N.ACC be.SBJV.PRES.3SG.REL with.3SG.M] ‘let him open i.e. whatever he has’.  
 passive: (i) ML 14c15, UID S0006-115, *arosailther hires tri de-gním* [open.PASS.PRES.SG faith.NOM through good-doing.ACC] ‘faith is opened through doing good’; (ii) ML 14c19, UID S0006-119, *is tri=chain-gnímu rosegar 7 arosailther ind=hires foirbthe do engnu* [is through=fair-doing.ACC.PL attain.PASS.PRES.SG and open.PASS.PRES.SG DEF.NOM=faith.NOM perfect.NOM to knowledge.DAT] ‘it is through good works that perfect faith is attained and is opened up to understanding’.

(5) *ar-nda-ersoilcet*

so\_that-DEP\3PL.OBJ-open.SBJV.PRES.3PL

'that they should open themselves' (Ml. 46a12, UID S0006-2642)

On the other hand, sometimes labile behaviour is revealed only by the use of the passive or reflexive alongside the active/deponent with the same meaning, although the active causative meaning is not directly attested. This occurs with *fercaigidir*: the deponent forms in (6)<sup>11</sup> and (7) feature the same meaning and subject alignment as the reflexive forms in (8) and (9). Note that while the form in (8) is classified as deponent (2nd singular subjunctive) in CorPH, the form in (9) is classified as passive (singular indicative), although they should rather be analysed in the same way; eDIL s.v. *fergaigid(ir)* classifies such forms as passives. Whether it is passive or deponent (and therefore reflexive), the verb in (8) and (9) behaves as a causative counterpart to (6) and (7).

(6) *in fercaigid=si*

INTERR be\_angry.PRES.2PL=2PL

'are you angry?' (Ml. 20b15, UID S0006-504)

(7) *Dia fercaichther tra fria nech*

if be\_angry.SBJV.PRES.2SG then towards someone.ACC

'Now if you are angry with anyone' (Mon. Tall. 242, UID S0070-242)

(8) *ar-nach-ad-fercaighther=su etir*

so\_that-NEG,DEP-2SG.OBJ-be\_angry.SBJV.PRES.2SG=2SG at\_all

'that you should not be angry at all' (Mon. Tall. 249, UID, S0070-249)

(9) *Ma nat-fercaichther fri-t gilla dano*

if 2SG.OBJ-be\_angry.SBJV.PRES.2SG towards-your servant.ACC then

'if you are angry with your servant' (Mon. Tall. 250, UID S0070-250)

In CorPH there are no instances of the passive of *fercaigidir* with nominal arguments, which could support the analysis of (8) and (9) as passive forms. Note that active inflection instead of deponent as in *fercigim* 'I become angry' (Naples Charisius 3, UID S0073-3) does not appear to be related to causative meaning.

Thirdly, lability may be manifested by the use of the active/deponent with both meanings and valency patterns (bivalent and monovalent), while the passive may not be attested. This is the case for *fo-botha*, see examples (10) and (11), and for

<sup>11</sup> Active and deponent 2nd plural forms are not distinct, so the form in (6) could in principle also be active, but this is irrelevant here. The only non-second plural form in Ml. is deponent (*ní fercaigedar* 'he is not angry' Ml. 24b18 UID S0006-758).

*londaigidir*, examples (12) and (13). For these two verbs only pronominal arguments are attested in CorPH, but occurrences are very scanty (4 each, and 3 out of 4 instances of *fo·botha* are the same as (11) and belong to the various Priscian manuscripts).<sup>12</sup>

- (10) *co fo<ta>bothad*  
 so\_that <3PL.OBJ>scare.SBJV.PAST.3SG  
 ‘in order that he may scare them’ (Ml. 33b16, UID S0006-1489, glossing Latin *ut terreret* [so\_that terrify.SBJV.IMPF.3SG] ‘in order to terrify’)

- (11) *fobothaim*  
 scare.PRES.1SG  
 ‘I am frightened’ (Sg. 146b13, UID S0007-2461, glossing Latin *consternor* [dismay.PASS.PRES.1SG] ‘I am dismayed’)

- (12) *ro-londaigestar*  
 PRF-anger.PRET.3SG  
 ‘it has angered’ (Ml. 29a2, UID S0006-1107, corresponding to Latin *quod... Deum iusta indignatione commouit* [what God.ACC just.ABL annoyance.ABL move.PRF.3SG] ‘what upset God in just anger’ and *impius Deum ad iracundiam prouocauit* [impious.NOM God.ACC to anger.ACC provoke.PRF.3SG] ‘the impious provoked God to anger’)

- (13) *indi londaigedar*  
 DEM.GEN.SG.M anger.PRES.3SG.REL  
 ‘of him who is angry’ (Ml. 64b5, UID S0006-4059, glossing Latin *indignantis* [get\_annoyed.PTCP.PRES.GEN] ‘of someone who is annoyed’)

Again, active inflection for deponent, as in (11) and in *londaigim* ‘I am angry’ (Karlsruhe Priscian 65b3, UID S0009-102) is not related to causativity.

#### 4.2. Argument marking alternations with Old Irish ditransitives

Ditransitive constructions consist of a ditransitive verb, an agent argument (A), a recipient-like argument (R), and a theme-like argument (T). Three alignment types are distinguished in the typological literature (Haspelmath 2005; Malchukov, Haspelmath and Comrie 2010a; Croft 2022: para. 7.5.2), which may include what are usually termed dative and locative alternations:

<sup>12</sup> Occurrences of *fo·botha*: Ml. 33b16 UID S0006-1489, Sg. 146b13 UID S0007-2461, Karlsruhe Priscian 65b4 UID S0009-103 and 60b4 UID S0009-76. Occurrences of *londaigidir*: Ml. 29a2 UID S0006-1107, 64b5 S0006-4059, 102b11 UID S0006-6289, Karlsruhe Priscian 65b3 UID S0009-102.

a) Indirective alignment, whereby the theme-like argument is the object, and the recipient-like argument receives separate coding, as in (14) below.

- (14) *Foidis iarum a muindtir dochum nadamnain*  
 send.PRET.3SG then his people.ACC towards Adamnán.GEN  
 ‘He sent then his monks to Adamnán’ (Mon. Tall. 596, UID S0070-596)

b) Secundative alignment, whereby the recipient-like argument is the object, and the theme-like receives separate coding, as in (15) below.

- (15) *amal ro-t-gát=sa im anad in ephis*  
 as PRF-2SG.OBJ-ask.PRET.1SG=1SG about stay.VN.ACC in Ephesus.DAT  
 ‘as I have asked you to stay in Ephesus’ (Wb. 27d19)<sup>13</sup>

c) Neutral alignment, whereby both the recipient-like and the theme-like argument receive the same coding, as in the Double Accusative Construction, e.g. (16) below.

- (16) *To<sn>inchoisecht ind óen ré dénom*  
 <3PL.OBJ>teach.PRET.3SG DEF.DAT one.DAT time.DAT make.VN.ACC  
*nathrach n-umaide*  
 snake.GEN.PL GEN.PL-brazen\GEN.PL  
 ‘He taught them at the same time the making of brazen serpents’ (Blathm. 345, UID S0005-87)

Note that the alignment exemplified in (16) is rare in Old Irish and is subject to restrictions.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Thes. translates literally *im anad* with ‘about staying’, but the Latin text *Sicut rogauí té ut remaneres Ephesi* makes clear that this is the sense. See also (17) below.

<sup>14</sup> It also occurs in the construction where the theme-like object is a cognate verbal noun and the head of a relative clause while the animate, recipient-like, object is pronominal (infix pronoun), as in (i) and (ii):

- (i) *ní dochumacht dúib a forcital for<ndob>canar*  
 NEG feeble.NOM.N to.2PL DEF.NOM.N teach.VN.NOM(N) <REL\2PL.OBJ>teach.PRES.PASS.SG  
 ‘not feeble to you is the teaching that is taught to you’ (Wb. 3b23)
- (ii) *is cúrsagad ro-nd-cúrsagu[s]=sa di=chomitecht*  
 is reprimand.VN.NOM PRF-REL\3SG.M.OBJ.REL-reprimand.PRET.1SG=1SG of=indulgence.DAT  
 ‘it is a reprimand that I have reprimanded him for indulgence’ (Wb. 19a6, see Roma (2021: 118, fn. 42)).

Ó hUiginn (1983) suggested that the antecedents of the relative clauses in (i) and (ii) should be interpreted as adverbial modifiers within the relative clause, which would amount to a version of secundative alignment for (i) but hardly for (ii). I cannot pursue this issue here but at least the

For the present purposes, although the core of ditransitive predicates in a cross-linguistic perspective are physical and mental transfer predicates (Malchukov, Haspelmath and Comrie 2010b: 1), all three-argument verbs which have a patient-like or theme-like argument and a recipient-like or goal-like argument have been considered. The ditransitive verbs reckoned for Old Irish to date for PaVeDa are 15 verbs that correspond to 16 verb meanings: *do-beir* ‘give’, *beirid* ‘bring’ and ‘carry’, *in-tuigethar* ‘cover’, *foidid* ‘send’, *do-adbat* ‘show’, *for-cain* ‘teach’, *as-indet* ‘tell’, *as-beir* ‘say’, *guidid* ‘ask for’, *do-cuirethar* ‘put’, *fo-ceird* ‘throw’, *línaid* ‘fill’, *ainmmnigidir* ‘(give a) name’, *do-luigi* ‘forgive’ and *do-fich* ‘punish’. All of these consistently appear in the indirective alignment exemplified above in (14) for *foidid*, except *guidid*, *for-cain*, *línaid*, *ainmnigidir* and *in-tuigethar*. The former two verbs, *guidid* and *for-cain*, also admit secundative alignment besides the indirective one. On the other hand, *línaid*, *ainmnigidir* and *in-tuigethar* are only attested in CorPH with the secundative alignment (recipient-like argument as direct object). Besides these, *múinid*, a synonym of *for-cain*, has been taken into account, although it is not attested at all in CorPH and data only come from the Würzburg Glosses, since it marginally attests what comes close to neutral alignment.

In this Section I shall focus on nominal and pronominal arguments in alternations with verbs that admit or require secundative alignment and in alternations with *múinid*. It will be shown that deviations from the indirective alignment, for verbs that admit it, mostly occur with argument omission, that is to say that the recipient-like argument is promoted to direct object where the theme-like or patient-like argument is omitted, and that the coding of the recipient-like argument as direct object mostly occurs when it is a pronominal argument. It will also be shown that the behaviour of arguments with verbs that are only attested with secundative alignment follow a cross-linguistic pattern.

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construction in (ii) seems to me to be rather a predicate focalization strategy. It can be contrasted with instances such as (iii) below, which Ó hUiginn labelled “bipartite”, where the alignment is indirective and there is no evident predicate focalization.

- (iii) *indatae in=dánai inna=nguide ro-ngad=sa*  
 than.PL DEF.NOM.PL=gift.NOM.PL DEF.GEN.PL=prayer.GEN.PL PRF-REL\ask.PRET.1SG=1SG  
*dait=síu*  
 to.2SG=2SG  
 ‘than the gifts of the prayers which I had asked to you’ (Ml. 43d18, UID S0006-2426, my translation: the head of the relative clause is the complex Noun Phrase)

Table 3. Argument marking with *guidid* (colored cells = secundative alignment)

<i>guidid</i> ‘ask for’	askee (recipient-like argument)		requested thing (theme-like argument)	
	active	passive	active	passive
pronominal (index, rel)	2		13	1
nominal accusative/nominative	8 ( <i>dia</i> )		9	1
preposition + pronominal ( <i>do</i> )	4			
preposition + nominal ( <i>do</i> )	2			

Table 3 shows the distribution of arguments with *guidid* ‘ask for, pray’ (CorPH lemma ID 4954, search no. 5222).<sup>15</sup> Out of 40 occurrences in CorPH with at least one non-agent argument, only in 6 instances are both arguments overt, and in those cases the direct object is always the requested thing, be it nominal or pronominal (indirective alignment). When, on the other hand, the askee is the direct object (secundative alignment, 8x *dia* ‘God’, 2x index = infixed pronoun), the requested thing is omitted. The construction with *dia* as object could be calqued on Latin *precor deum* [pray.PRES.1SG God.ACC]<sup>16</sup> ‘pray God’, but it should be noted that it occurs also in contexts where *precor* is not in the Latin text (e.g. Ml 53b26 UID 053b19, where the Latin verb it parallels is rather *peto* ‘ask’), that it also occurs outside the Glosses (Mon. Tall. in CorPH, UID S0070-522 and 524), and that when the requested thing is overt *dia* ‘God’ is flagged with the preposition *do* ‘to’ (Ml. 55d4 UID S0006-3423) or *ó* ‘from’ (Ml. 55d4 UID S0006-3423). However, in the Würzburg Glosses there are 2 instances of secundative alignment with both arguments, where the (nominal) requested thing is flagged with the preposition *imm* ‘around, about’ + accusative: see (15) above and (17) below.

- (17) *an non-geiss cách imm a chomalnad*  
 when DEP-ask.SBJV.PRES. 2SG everyone.ACC about its fulfil.VN.ACC  
 ‘when you ask everyone for its fulfilment’ (Wb. 30b4)

Wb. also features the only instance of indirective alignment without requested thing, namely 26b8 *guidmi=ni dúib* [ask.PRES.1PL=1PL to.2PL] ‘we beseech of you’. Passive forms are attested in 2 instances in CorPH (Ml. 51a17 UID S0006-3055 and 130b8 UID S0006-7867) and 2 in Wb. (17d27 and 30d5), and in none of them is the direct argument the askee.

<sup>15</sup> The labels for argument microroles in this and the following Tables are those used in ValPaL and PaVeDa.

<sup>16</sup> The 1st sg. present indicative verbal form is the citation form/lemma entry for Latin verbs.

Table 4. Argument marking with *for·cain* (colored cells = secundative alignment)

<i>for·cain</i> ‘teach’	teachee (recipient-like argument)		taught content (theme-like argument)	
	active	passive	active	passive
pronominal (index, rel)	5	1	5	2
nominal accusative/nominative		1	3	1
preposition + pronominal ( <i>do</i> )	1			
preposition + nominal ( <i>do</i> )			1?	

The distribution of arguments with *for·cain* is reported in Table 4 (CorPH lemma ID 4747, search no. 5256). In only 2 instances are both arguments overt, and in one of these the alignment is indirective (18), in the other one it appears to be secundative (19.a).

- (18) (pro bonis) *forcha[na]inn=se doib=som*  
REL\teach.IMPF.1SG=1SG to.3PL=3PL  
‘(for the good deeds) which I used to teach them’ (Ml. 54c31, UID S0006-3332)

- (19) a. *dond=erchoiliud .i. for<tan>roichan=ni ho*  
to.DEF.DAT=determination.DAT i.e. <1PL.OBJ>teach.PRF.3SG=1PL from  
*fortacht dund=erchoiliud asrochoilsem*  
help.DAT to.DEF.DAT=determination.DAT REL\determine.PRF.1PL  
‘to the determination, i.e. he has instructed us by help to the determination that we have made’ (Ml. 22c3 UID S0006-592)

- (19) b. *ualde nos decretui auxilio commonisti*  
verily us decision.DAT help.ABL instruct.PRF.2SG  
*ut et honorabiles apud té simus*  
so\_that also honourable.NOM.PL at 2SG.ACC be.SBJV.PRES.1PL  
‘possible interpretation of the glossator: ‘verily you instructed us through your help to the determination so that we be honourable in your eyes’

In Ml. 22c3 the prepositional phrase *dund erchoiliud* directly translates Latin *decretui* in (19.b), which is what the gloss explains, interpreted by the glossator as a dative form instead of a more likely genitive.<sup>17</sup> The original meaning of the commentary however is ‘verily you fortified us with the help of your will so that we be honourable for you’, as is clear from the text of the Psalm (*ut scuto bonae uoluntatis tuae coronasti nos* ‘you crowned us as with the shield of your goodwill’)

<sup>17</sup> I assume that *decretui* is a miscopying for *decreti tui* [decree.GEN your.GEN] ‘of your decision’ (a counterpart to *uoluntatis tuae* ‘of your will’ in the Psalm).

and of the previous part of the commentary (*dicendo ut scuto admouit similitudinem per quam augmentum diuinae protectionis exprimeret* ‘by saying “as with a shield” he put forward a simile by which he could express a supplement of divine protection’). However, the fact that *munio* ‘fortify’ was misunderstood as *moneo* ‘teach, instruct’, that *decretui* was taken as a dative, as already noted in Thes., and that *auxilio* (on which the grammatical gloss *ablatiuus* ‘ablative case’ was added) was also literally translated with *ho fortacht*, points to an attempt to retrace the misunderstood Latin text word by word. The phrase *dund erchoiliud* in the gloss in (19.a) could anyway be interpreted as depending on *fortacht* rather than on the verb (cp. ML. 92a4 *oc mo=fortacht dum=thabairt im=thir* [at my=help.VN.DAT to.my=bring.VN.DAT into.my=land.ACC] ‘helping me to bring me into my land’). In conclusion, the sentence in (19.a) can hardly be considered a genuine instance of secundative alignment with both non-agent arguments.

In all the other instances where the teachee behaves as a direct object, no taught content surfaces, and the argument is pronominal (3x index = infixed pronoun, 1x relative),<sup>18</sup> see e.g. (20).

- (20) *ind*                      *forcitlada*                      *for<da>cain*  
 DEF.GEN.SG.M    teacher.GEN                      <3PL.OBJ.REL>teach.PRES.3SG  
 ‘of the teacher who teaches them’ (ML. 30d12, UID S0006-1241)

This situation is paralleled by the Würzburg Glosses, where again if the teachee is the direct object, the taught content is omitted; in such cases (3 instances), the teachee is either an index (infix, 2x)<sup>19</sup> or the reciprocal pronoun *alaile*, see (21) below.

- (21) *forcanad*                      *cách*                      *alaile*  
 teach.IMP.3SG    each.NOM                      other.ACC  
 ‘let each teach the other’ (‘let everyone teach each other’, cp. Wb. 6d1) (Wb. 22c8)

The passive of *for·cain* is attested with both alignments, but again the direct argument is either the teachee (2x)<sup>20</sup> or the taught content (3x)<sup>21</sup> and the other argument is omitted.

<sup>18</sup> Loci besides (20): ML. 53c14 UID S0006-3213, ML. 63b1 UID S0006-3989, ML. 114b11 UID S0006-6944.

<sup>19</sup> Wb. 9a16, 31c16.

<sup>20</sup> ML. 34b12 UID S0006-1583, Tur. 37 (Thes.i.487.49) UID S0050-37.

<sup>21</sup> ML. 50d12 UID S0006-3032, ML. 82c8 UID S0006-5124, ML. 82c9 UID S0006-5125.



Table 5. Argument marking with *múinid* (colored cells = neutral alignment)

<i>múinid</i> ‘teach’	teachee (recipient-like argument)		taught content (theme-like argument)	
	active	passive	active	passive
pronominal (index, rel)	2		1	
nominal accusative/nominative			2	
preposition + pronominal ( <i>do</i> )	3			
preposition + nominal				

The occurrences of *múinid* in Wb., charted in Table 5, are in fact only 3, but in all the instances both arguments are overt and one of them is also doubled. I report the occurrences in (22), (23) and (24) below.

- (22) *r-a-múinset*                      *doib*      *buid*                      *and*  
 PRF-3SG.N.OBJ-teach.PRET.3PL      to.3PL      be.VN.ACC                      there  
 ‘They have taught it to themselves to be there’ (Wb. 5b44)

- (23) *ro-m-munus*                      *dammin*                      *dom*  
 PRF-1SG.OBJ-teach.PRET.1SG      loss.ACC                      to.1SG  
 ‘I have learned loss’ (Wb. 24b17)

- (24) *ro-m-múnus*                      *imbed*                      *dom*  
 PRF-1SG.OBJ-teach.PRET.1SG      abundance.ACC                      to.1SG  
 ‘I have learned abundance’ (Wb. 24b18)

The neuter object index (infix) in (22) anticipates the non-finite clause headed by the verbal noun *buid*. This is a frequent pattern with clausal object arguments, as shown in Roma (2018: 8–9), so, since it is not directly relevant to the alignment alternations of the verb *múinid*, it may not concern us here. On the other hand, the 1st singular reflexive indexes *m* in (23) and (24) cooccur with the nominal objects in the accusative *dammin* and *imbed* (taught content) but are co-referential with the prepositional pronouns *dom*; in fact they appear to be strengthened or clarified by the latter. The old dative pronominal index (infix pronoun), which is clearly inherited but on the wane in classical Old Irish, seems to be preserved in this reflexive construction, but in need of, or readily accepting, doubling/resumption by the synchronically transparent prepositional pronoun with *do*<sup>22</sup> (note that *doib* in (22) is also reflexive).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See Napoli (2020: 104, fn. 8) about a similar construction in Old Italian.

<sup>23</sup> According to the typology overviewed in Section 4, (22), (23) and (24) exemplify a reduction strategy (reflexivization) for the pair TEACH-LEARN (see Roma & Zanchi to appear).

Table 6. Argument marking with *línaid* (only secundative)

<i>línaid</i> ‘fill’	filled container (recipient-like argument)		filling material (theme-like argument)	
	active	passive	active	passive
pronominal (index, rel)	1	6		
nominal accusative/nominative	1	1		
preposition + pronominal				
preposition + nominal ( <i>ó</i> )				1

Table 7. Argument marking with *in-tuigethar* (only secundative)

<i>in-tuigethar</i> ‘cover’	covered person/thing (recipient-like argument)		cover (theme-like argument)	
	active	passive	active	passive
pronominal (index, rel)		2		
nominal accusative/nominative				
preposition + pronominal				
preposition + nominal				

The behaviour of the arguments of *línaid* and *in-tuigethar*, summarized in Table 6 and Table 7 respectively, is quite similar to each other (CorPH lemma IDs 5245 and 5095, searches nos. 5231 and 5667 respectively). Both verbs are non-prototypical instances of ditransitives, since the recipient or goal-like argument (filled container and covered person/thing) could be conceived as a theme/patient, while the theme-like argument (filling material and cover) could also be seen as an instrument.<sup>24</sup> Both verbs, as stated above, only allow secundative alignment. What is interesting for our purposes is that passive forms and pronominal arguments outnumber active and nominal arguments, and that only in one instance, reported in (25), is the prepositional theme-like argument overt (flagged with *ó*+dative).

<sup>24</sup> See the definition of prototypical ditransitives in Malchukov et al. (2010b: 1) and the list of ditransitives in Comrie et al. (2010: 71).

- (25) *linfider do gin<sup>25</sup> ho rath in*  
 fill.PASS.FUT.DEP.SG your mouth.NOM from grace.DAT DEF.GEN.SG  
*spiur[ta] noib*  
 spirit.GEN holy.GEN  
 ‘that your mouth will be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit’ (Ml. 103a10, UID S0006-6333)

*Línaid* occurs in CorPH also with a reflexive 3sg. pronoun, *a-nund-lina* [when-3SG.N.OBJ.REL-fill.PRES.3SG] ‘when it fills it(self)’ Ml. 19b5 UID S0006-410, a single phonological word gloss mirroring Latin *implente sé* [fill.PTCP.PRES.ABL.SG 3SG.REFL.ACC].

In Wb., however, in the 2 instances out of 3 where the the filling material is overt and appears in the secundative alignment, it is flagged with the preposition *di* (Wb. 11b13 and 20d11, commented in Roma and Zanchi (to appear), examples (13 and (14)). In the third occurrence, the frame is different, the filling material being the subject and the filled container the object, see (26) below.

- (26) *ro-lín in bith n-uile et caelum*  
 PRF-fill.PRET.3SG DEF.ACC world.ACC ACC-whole.ACC and sky.ACC  
*bolad inna idbairte=sin*  
 odour.NOM DEF.GEN.SG.F offering.GEN=DIST  
 ‘the odour of this offering has filled the whole world and the sky’ (Wb. 22b13)

This is a frequent alternative cross-linguistic coding frame for the meaning FILL, as shown by the ValPaL database (Hartmann, Haspelmath and Taylor 2013), and it is interesting to note that (26) has VOS word order, that is, the filling material is topical and occupies a right-edge position, although it is in the nominative (see Lash 2020 for these constituents).

Table 8. Argument marking with *ainmnigidir* (only secundative)

<i>ainmnigidir</i> ‘name’	namee (recipient-like argument)		name (theme-like argument)	
	active	passive	active	passive
pronominal (index, rel)	3	6		
nominal accusative				
preposition + pronominal ( <i>ó</i> )				4
preposition + nominal ( <i>ó, de</i> )				2

<sup>25</sup> The ms. text *gnim* ‘action’ has been corrected in Thes. (Stokes & Strachan 1901) and in Griffith & Stifter (2013) into *gin* ‘mouth’, the compelling reason for this emendation being the Latin text of the commentary *ós tuum inpleam* [mouth.ACC your.ACC fill.SBJV.PRES.1SG] ‘that I fill your mouth’.

The verb *ainmnigidir* in CorPH always features the namee as object, or subject with passive forms, which outnumber active forms (see Table 8, CorPH lemma ID 3242, search no. 5241).<sup>26</sup> The name or source of the name can be expressed and is flagged with *ó*+dative, as in (27) (similarly at Sg. 50a2 UID S0007-1260, 106b16 UID S0007-2195, 29b10 UID S0007-690, 30a1 UID S0007-701); once, it is flagged with *de* ('name after the name x', Sg. 31a5 UID S0007-741).

- (27) *i=sind=i*                      *ro-ndn-ainmnigestar*                      *dia*  
in=DEF=DEICT    PRF-REL\3SG.M.OBJ-name.PRET,3SG    god.NOM  
*hond=anmim*                      *asberr*                      *iesus*  
from.DEF,DAT=name.DAT    REL\say.PRES,PASS    iesus  
'in that God named him by the name which is called Iesus' (Ml. 17b9, UID S0006-288)

It should be noted, however, that the meaning 'name, give a name' has a frequent alternative counterpart with predominant indirective alignment, with the verb *as-beir* and the namee flagged with *do*+dative,<sup>27</sup> as in (28) below.<sup>28</sup> This construction frequently occurs in the passive.<sup>29</sup>

- (28) *con-na*                      *epreid*                      *ainm*                      *dia*                      *n-doib*  
so\_that-NEG,DEP    say.SBJV,PAST,3SG    name.ACC    god.GEN,PL    GEN,PL-to,3PL  
'so that he might not give them the name of gods' (Ml. 70a6, UID S0006-4438)

An alternative coding frame with *as-beir* 'name' is neutral alignment, whereby both name and namee have direct object properties. This alignment, however, only occurs when either the namee (7 occurrences) or, more rarely, the name (2 occurrences) is the head of a relative clause<sup>30</sup> with the verb *as-beir* in the passive,

<sup>26</sup> In Wb. there is a single occurrence, that translates Latin *nomino* 'to name', namely 21a14 *os cech anmimm ainmnigther* 'above every name that is named' = *super omne nomen quod nominatur*.

<sup>27</sup> The addressee of *as-beir* 'say' is flagged with *fri* 'towards' + accusative.

<sup>28</sup> This is why two verbs and two basic coding frames for the same meaning NAME are listed in PaVeDa.

<sup>29</sup> Given the high number of occurrences of *as-beir*, it is not simple to count occurrences of this construction. However, in CorPH there appear to be 3 instances of the active and 11 of the passive (active: Ml. 37b28 UID S0006-1906, 55c17 UID S0006-3414, 70a06 UID S0006-4438; passive: AU 772.04 UID S0001-1126, 799.08 UID S0001-1348, Ml. 2b17 UID S0006-32, 14d13 UID S0006-134, 21c03 UID S0006-554, 017b09 UID S0006-288, 123c8 UID S0006-7437, 114a2-3 UID S0006-6917, 114a7 UID S0006-6921, 133a10 UID S0006-8024, Sg. 71a17 UID S0007-1907, 57b3 UID S0007-1466, 73b8 UID S0007-1964, 73b08 UID S0007-1964, 124b5 UID S0007-2319, 10a8 UID S0007-282, 3b06 UID S0007-38, 18a06 UID S0007-421, 21a1 UID S0007-459, 33a26, 27 UID S0007-826, 35b7 UID S0007-881, Tur. 87, Thes.i.492.110e UID S0050-87).

<sup>30</sup> Where the name is the head of the relative clause it is probably clefted. An exception to the observation that neutral alignment occurs in relative clauses is Sg. 10a8 (UID S0007-282), where fronting and clefting occur: *.c .t .p. is airi asbertar étrumma 7 slemna huare nád-techtad*

as in (29) and (30). The structure is therefore similar to the construction described in fn. 14 above, though it does not have any predicate focalization implication, as the antecedent is not a cognate verbal noun.

- (29) *aitribtheid inna cathrach asberr tibur*  
 inhabitant.NOM DEF.GEN.SG.F town.GEN say.PRES.PASS.SG  
 † tiburtum  
 vel  
 ‘an inhabitant of the town which is called Tibur or Tiburtum’ (Sg. 124b5, UID S0007-2319)

- (30) *plebs dei as<ndan>berthe=ni ón*  
 people.NOM god.GEN <REL\1PL.OBJ.REL>say.IMP.F.PASS.SG=1PL that  
 ‘that is, (it is) *plebs dei* we used to be called’ (Ml. 114a7, UID S0006-6921)

In a comment to the verbal form *asndanbertheni* in the Milan Glosses database (Griffith and Stifter 2013), Griffith notes: “the relative seems to imply that *plebs dei* is in subject relation to the verb. This would in turn mean that *as-beir* could take a double object construction “he calls X Y”, which is not recognized in DIL”. Although *plebs dei* is not the subject in (30), it is treated as a direct argument of the following relative verb.<sup>31</sup> In CorPH in fact I have found similar constructions as (30) at Ml. 114a2-3 UID S0006-6921, Sg. 10a8 UID S0007-282, 18a6 UID S0007-421, 33a26 UID S0007-826, 35b7 UID S0007-881, 57b3 UID S0007-1466, 73b8 UID S0007-1964, 124b5 UID S0007-2319, possibly also Ml. 17b9 UID S0006-288. These are all in the passive, but with namee rather than name as the head of the relative clause (“X which is called Y”), except in Sg. 73b8 UID S0007-1964 *bit dechomsuidigthi asbertar* [COP.FUT.3PL decomposite.PL REL\say.PRES.PASS.PL] ‘it will be decomposita that they are called’, as well as in (30).<sup>32</sup> It is worth noting that neutral alignment, as in (29) and (30), is not the only option when either the namee or the name is the head of a relative clause, cp. indirective alignment at Sg. 71a17 (UID S0007-1907) *an-í dian-eperr casus* [DEF.NOM.N-DEICT to.REL-say.PRES.PASS.SG casus(lat)] ‘that to which the name

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*tinfeith* [c t p is for.3SG.N say.PRES.PASS.PL light.NOM.PL and smooth.NOM.PL since NEG.DEF-possess.PRES.3PL aspiration.ACC] ‘c, t and p, therefore they are called “light” and “smooth”, because they have no aspiration’.

<sup>31</sup> Traditionally the name given is treated as a nominal predicate (“predicative nominative” in Thurneysen (1946: 317, § 500)), and therefore viewed as an element which appears in the nominative case. From the point of view of ValPaL coding frames, however, name and namee are separate entities which are treated as separate participants (microroles) to be mapped in the syntactic frame.

<sup>32</sup> Similarly Wb. 9d5 *combi óin-chorp pectho asmberar* [so\_that.COP.PRES.HAB.3SG one-body.NOM sin.GEN REL\say.PRES.PASS.SG] ‘so that it is said to be one body of sin’.

casus is given’ and Sg. 73b8 (UID S0007-1964) *mad hed insin asberthar díib*<sup>33</sup> [if.COP.SBJV.PRES.3SG PRON.N.NOM DIST REL\say.PRES.PASS.SG of.3PL] ‘if that is what is said of them’. Given the properties of the Old Irish passive, it could be claimed that the 1st plural index in (30) is a relic dative, presumably like the 1st singular index in (23) and (24). Neutral alignment is anyhow clearly attested with the synonym *do·gair* at Ml. 20b2, reported in (31), where the namee is an index.

- (31) *is airi d<a>rogart=som noib*  
 is for.3SG.N.ACC <3SG.M.OBJ>call.PRF.3SG=3SG.M saint.ACC  
 ‘it is for that that he has called himself a saint’ (Ml. 20b2, UID S0006-491)

The data in this Section confirm the cross-linguistic prediction that *guidid*, *for·cain* and *múinid* are typical ditransitives, which imply an animate recipient-like argument, and show that their argument pattern alternations correspond to cross-linguistic alternations of their translational equivalents: they may foreground syntactically either of the two non-agent arguments, allowing promotion to direct objecthood of either argument, predominantly combined with omission of the other one in Old Irish. On the other hand, *linaid* and *in·tuigethar* imply a pivotal argument, the filled container and covered person/thing respectively, which cannot be omitted and always performs object role (or subject with the passive) whatever the coding frame, including the one exemplified in (26). The behaviour of the arguments of the ditransitives meaning ‘name, give a name’, i.e., *ainmnigidir* and *as·beir do*, is different yet and it has been shown that only *as·beir do* allows a coding alternation. In order to compare nominal and pronominal argument coding across alternations with ditransitives, in Section 5 I will therefore concentrate on the first three verbs, taking into account also *as·beir do*.

## 5. Overview and discussion

In Roma (2021), I have shown that Old Irish intransitive or weakly transitive verbs allow transitive constructions, such as direct objects and objective genitives, more easily when these arguments are pronominal indexes, mostly infixed pronouns – possessives for verbal nouns – or relativized arguments. Other less frequent genitive arguments such as subjective genitives with transitives also

<sup>33</sup> Strictly speaking, this is an instance of a slightly different construction with the third argument flagged with *de* ‘of, from’ rather than *do* ‘to’, but the structure is the same as with *do* and the two constructions appear to overlap somehow, cp. Wb. 10d8 *ní don=daum storidíu act=is dín=ni preceptorib ar=is díin asrobrad an=dede=so* [NEG.is to,DEF.DAT.SG=ox.DAT material.DAT but=is of.1PL-1PL teacher.DAT.PL for=is of.1PL say.PRF.PASS.SG DEF.NOM.N=pair.NOM=PROX] ‘it is not of the natural ox, but of us preachers, for it is of us these two things have been said’, where *do* of the first constituent *dondaum* contrasts with *de* of the following ones *dínni* and *díin*.

tend to be pronominals. The data in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 suggest that valency reduction strategies and object alignment alternations with ditransitives are also affected by the different behaviour of pronominal arguments, including relativized arguments.

More generally, arguments that rank high in the Extended Animacy Hierarchy, reported in (32), such as speech act participants, human pronominals and, possibly, deities, apparently enjoy larger syntactic freedom since they may appear in constructions such as, to mention only those discussed here, labile valency alternations and secundative alignment instead of indirective.

(32) Extended Animacy Hierarchy (Croft 2022, with references)

First/second person pronoun < third person pronoun < (human proper noun) <  
human common noun < animate common noun < inanimate common noun

Since, in addition to what has already been noted in the literature, lability and the alignment alternations with ditransitives discussed here seem to be more widespread starting from the highest positions in the hierarchy, one may conclude that case-marking alternations in Old Irish are prone to follow or sensitive to the Animacy Hierarchy. Case-marking alternations or differential argument marking should be meant here as alternations or alignment changes whereby arguments indexed on the verb, subjects or objects, may correspond to different semantic roles, for example the subject of *fo-botha* can either correspond to the scared or the scaring entity (Section 4.1) and the direct object of *for-cain* can either correspond to the taught content or to the teachee (Section 4.2).

Alignment changes are classified according to whether they are coded in the verb form, as is the case with passives, or they are left uncoded on the verb, as is the case with so-called dative shift (Hartmann, Haspelmath and Taylor 2013, Questionnaire Manual 8.1; Malchukov and the Leipzig Valency Classes Project team 2015: 33–36). The case alternations discussed here are *prima facie* cases of uncoded alternations, since they are not diathetic alternations affecting verb inflection paradigms. However, both pronominal direct arguments (indexes) and relative marking (relative endings, initial mutations, pronominal index class) involve a coding split and affect primarily the morphology of the verbal complex in Early Irish, including the opposition between absolute and conjunct. Therefore, the distinction between alternations coded (only) on arguments and coded through verb inflection or derivation is blurred in these cases. For example, the distinction between active and reflexive relies primarily on the same morphological changes as the alternation between nominal and pronominal objects (see (5), (7), (8) and (9) above), and in both cases verb inflection and the verbal complex is affected. Similarly, the promotion of the recipient-like argument of *guidid* ‘ask’ and *for-cain* ‘teach’ to direct object is allowed when the

theme-like argument is omitted (see (15), (19), (20)) and, crucially, when it is the verb that hosts the argument as a pronominal index – which therefore comes close to an applicative morpheme – or, in relative clauses, it is the verb form that codes its syntactic role. The pronominal object index is also a feature of instances of *múinid* ‘teach’ with promoted teachee (see (23) and (24)). The promotion of the recipient-like argument of *as-beir do* ‘name’ and the consequent neutral alignment as in (29) and (30) is allowed only with the passive and when either of the arguments is relativized.

Recalling the typology of person described in Section 3, it could therefore be claimed that the prominent inflectional behaviour of person in Old Irish is what allows the alternations described in Section 4, labile behaviour and recipient promotion to direct object, and, more generally, transitive constructions with intransitives (Roma 2021). There are however two drawbacks to this claim. The first one is due to the occurrence of nominal arguments, or pronominals with lexical behaviour, in argument promotion constructions, i.e. *dia* ‘God’ with *guidid* ‘ask’ (Table 3) and *cách* ‘everyone’, *alaile* ‘another’ with *guidid* ‘ask’ and *for-cain* ‘teach’ respectively (17, 21). These instances suggest that ranking high in the Extended Animacy Hierarchy is one of the favouring factors for recipient promotion to direct object (secundative alignment), as already noted in the literature on ditransitives and in particular regarding the alternations with ASK and TEACH (see Malchukov, Haspelmath and Comrie 2010b: 20–22, 48–51, with references; Napoli 2020: 116–124 on Old Italian and on the evolution from Latin to Modern Italian). However, the omission of the theme-like argument appears to be the most frequent factor for Old Irish.

The second proviso is connected with the general higher frequency of pronominal arguments, which for some verbs makes valency frames with nominal arguments virtually unattested in CorPH (see the observations in Section 4.1 about *fo-botha* ‘scare’ and *londaigidir* ‘get angry’; Table 7 and Table 8 about *in-tuigethar* ‘cover’ and *ainmnigidir* ‘name’; the teachee with *múinid* ‘teach’ in Wb. is exclusively pronominal, Table 5). Table 9 reports the figures and percentages of pronominal arguments that occur in CorPH with all the verbs, out of Nichols’ (2017a) sample, that can be classified as labile.<sup>34</sup> It shows that pronominal arguments in general are by far the most frequent type of argument,<sup>35</sup> so that the fact that some alternations are only attested with pronominal arguments may be simply due to chance.

<sup>34</sup> As stated in Section 4.1, these verbs are *ar-olsaici*, *fercaigidir*, *londaigidir*, *fo-botha*, *tírmagid*, *dirgid*, *do-fiuschi*, *lasaid* and *reithid*.

<sup>35</sup> While for object promotion with ditransitives (Section 4.2) only object arguments are relevant, for labile verbs of course A-like and S-like arguments are taken into account as well as O-like arguments.



Table 9. Pronominal arguments in CorPH with labile verbs in the sample

occurrences of labile verbs in the sample	49	
number of arguments with labile verbs in the sample	66	
number of pronominal arguments with labile verbs in the sample (excluding relative gaps)	42	63%
number of pronominal arguments with labile verbs in the sample (including relative gaps)	50	75%

Nevertheless, the absence of active anticausative constructions with nominal arguments might still be statistically significant. Table 10 below reports the figures for active causative and passive/ reflexive anticausative behaviour as opposed to active anticausative for the four verbs that attest both constructions in CorPH (*ar·oslaici*, *fercaigidir*, *londaigidir* and *fo·botha*). It shows that while pronominal arguments may appear with any frame, nominal arguments tend to appear in non-labile constructions (left column).

Table 10. Nominal and pronominal arguments in labile verbs alternations

	active/deponent causative and passive/reflexive anticausative	active/deponent anticausative	total
at least 1 nominal argument	7	0	7
pronominal argument(s)	13	15	28
total	20	15	

## 6. Conclusions

The data gathered for this study suggest that while labile behaviour (Section 4.1) seems to be allowed only with pronominal arguments indexed on the verb, alternations in case marking with ditransitives (Section 4.2) are frequent with pronominal objects but rather follow the Extended Animacy Hierarchy, although they mostly combine with a valency reduction strategy, namely argument omission. At least the first kind of alternation, therefore, which is a typical valency reduction/expansion strategy, could be considered a consequence of the highly inflectional behaviour of pronominal arguments, including relativized arguments, as described in Section 3. To say the least, lability goes hand in hand with the inflectional behaviour of pronominal arguments: since pronominal arguments are indexes and affect the verbal complex in the first place, alternations that exclusively involve pronominal arguments can be considered coded alternations as defined in the ValPaL Project (Hartmann, Haspelmath and Taylor 2013, Questionnaire Manual 8.1; Malchukov and the Leipzig Valency Classes Project team 2015: 33–36).

Admittedly, however, the data gathered so far are scanty and cannot be considered conclusive. Nichols' (2017a) updated list of sample verbs devised to detect basic valency orientation has been slightly expanded for this study so as to include more than one verb for each pair; likewise, the list of ditransitive verbs so classified in Malchukov et al. (2010a) and included in ValPaL's core meanings has been expanded in order to take into account non-prototypical ditransitives as well. CorPH, for its part, is a medium-size database, which includes 13123 verb occurrences and 5340 verbal noun occurrences. Nevertheless, these data do not seem to be sufficient to draw firm conclusions regarding the favouring factors for the aforementioned alternations. This preliminary survey suggests that either the sample of verbs or the corpus to be searched should be expanded. Given the high dispersion of occurrences (too few for each verb), it is probably the expansion of the corpus that could grant clearer results.

**Appendix.** Nichols' (2017b) item responses for Old Irish (colored rows pertain to lexical behaviour)

1	Person of A indexed on verb.	1,0	
2	Person of O indexed on verb.	1,0	
3	Person of possessor indexed on possessum (head of possessive NP).	1,0	
4	Auto-person: the person of an independent pronoun is indexed on the pronoun itself, as a separate morpheme from the root.	0,5	independent pronouns + emphatic particles can be considered instances of auto-person with person indexes
5	Person of the possessor of an argument indexed on the verb.	0,0	
6	Person of external possessor indexed on the verb.	0,0	
7	Possessive relative: the person of a gapped subject of a relative clause is indexed on the head noun.	0,0	
8	Person is marked on or attracted to the negative morpheme, which is separate from the lexical verb.	1,0	
9	Generic pronoun base: the independent pronouns share the same root, which does not contain person as part of its meaning.	0,0	

10	Unique root per person or person-number, with person as a lexical property of the root.	1,0	
11	Roots or stems rhyme, alliterate, etc. along person or number lines.	1,0	
12	There is no closed class of pronouns.	0,0	
13	Pronouns have the same cases (i.e., case categories) as nouns.	0,0	
14	Pronouns have the same case morphology as nouns.	0,0	
15	Pronouns have the same root or stem flexivity as nouns.	0,0	
16	Pronouns have different number categories from nouns.	1,0	
17	Pronouns have the same number markers as nouns.	0,0	
18	Any multiple marking of person per argument.	0,5	with emphatic particles
19	A and O markers are formally identical.	0,0	
20	Person is the outermost verb inflection.	1,0	
21	Person is the outermost noun inflection.	1,0	
22	Inclusive/exclusive distinguished in independent pronouns.	0,0	
23	Inclusive/exclusive distinguished in verb person indexes.	0,0	
24	Inclusive/exclusive distinguished in noun possessive indexes.	0,0	
25	Inclusive/exclusive distinguished in auto-personon pronouns.	n/a	
26	Person and number discrete or factored out in independent pronouns.	0,0	
27a	Person and number discrete or factored out in verb person index for A.	0,0	
27b	Person and number discrete or factored out in verb person index for O.	0,0	
28	Person and number discrete or factored out in noun possessive indexes.	0,0	(but mutation alone distinguishes number in 3rd person)
29	Person and number discrete or factored out in auto-person on pronouns.	0,0	

30	Noun genders distinguished in independent pronouns.	0,0	
31a	Noun genders distinguished in verb person index for A.	0,0	
31b	Noun genders distinguished in verb person index for O.	0,0	
32	Noun genders distinguished in 3rd person independent pronouns.	0,5	only in SG
33a	Noun genders distinguished in 3rd person verb index for A.	0,0	only with emphatic particles
33b	Noun genders distinguished in 3rd person verb index for O.	0,5	only in SG
34	Inherent (lexical) gender in pronominals.	0,0	
35	Natural gender (not noun genders) distinguished in independent pronouns.	0,0	
36	Natural gender (not noun genders) distinguished in 3rd person independent pronouns.	0,0	
37	Natural gender (not noun genders) distinguished in verb person index for A and/or O.	0,0	
38	Verb person index(es) cumulative with TAM.	1,0	
39	Person involved in hierarchical marking on verbs.	1,0	emphatic particles
40	Person involved in inverse marking on verbs.	0,0	
41	Conjunct/disjunct marking on verbs.	0,0	
42	Person determines access to (hierarchical, promiscuous) number marking on verbs.	0,0	only with passive

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