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PROVERBS IN THE PHRASEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY FROM THE WORKS OF CORNELIUS TACITUS¹

Abstract: Based on 128 proverbs and sayings attributed to the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus, as listed in the *Latinum in aeternum* collection (Marević 2002), this paper explores the connection between the semantic categories of the quoted phrases and their syntactic structures and aims to prove that, despite the possibility of learning Latin sayings formulaically without surface understanding of Latin grammar, their acceptance and reproduction by Croatian speakers are influenced not only by their semantics but also by their deep structural clarity. For this purpose, all the quoted phrases were subjected to an extensive search for their occurrence in the corpus of the *Croatian Language Repository* (HJR) of the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics. The study tested the representation of various Latin surface structures in the HJR corpus, including accusative with infinitive (ACI), nominative with infinitive (NCI), ablative absolute (ABL.APS.), independent finite sentences in the indicative and subjunctive moods, various nominal and verbal collocations or syntagms and the so-called historical infinitives. The paper has established that phrases from Cornelius Tacitus and other Roman and Latin authors with an indisputable depth structure are accepted and present in the HJR corpus, while those with an unclear depth structure, such as the so-called historical infinitives, are completely absent.

Keywords: Cornelius Tacitus, historical infinitive, type of phraseological unit, deep structure of phraseological unit, syntax of phraseological unit

¹ The paper was translated from Croatian to English by Blaženka Šoštarić.

1. Introduction

The indisputable fame of the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus is usually viewed in the world of historiography through the lens of the significance and prominence of the events he described in his seminal works such as the *Annals*, the *Histories*, or the monumental *Germania*. Since there was no institutional standardization of language in Greek and Roman antiquity as we know it today, the standard as a specific linguistic canon for a particular literary field was established by the best writers in each field, who enjoyed widespread popularity among readers, and, from a linguistic point of view, served as a model for subsequent generations of writers within the same literary field (Vratović 1977). Considering that Tacitus was preceded by eminent historiographers such as Herodotus, Xenophon the Athenian, or Thucydides in Greek literature, and Gaius Sallust Crispus, Cornelius Nepos, and Gaius Julius Caesar in Roman literature, it is assumed that Tacitus could have followed a pre-established path within historiography as a prose and discursive literary form. However, even if Cornelius Tacitus did not introduce any stylistic or linguistic novelty into the historiographical style of antiquity, his widespread acclaim inevitably influenced the phraseological framework of the Latin language across antiquity, the Latin language of the Middle Ages and the Modern Era, and consequently the phraseological thesaurus of primarily European languages that developed under the strong influence of Latin. The Latin language has so far proven to be a linguistic phenomenon that, despite the absence of living native speakers and its fossilized grammatical structure, continues to experience intensive development in two linguistic areas: vocabulary and phraseology. The latter is particularly popular in higher registers of communication, often functioning as a linguistic hallmark of the language of the highly educated classes (Zorić 2024). This perspective, combined with the rich legacy of the written Latin corpus, allows for new quotations of existing ancient and later Latin literature and the creation of new proverbs through a process in which a new quote from ancient literature first becomes popular, then undergoes the process of figurative usage and fossilization (Omazić 2015). Traditionally, famous phrases from the Latin (though not exclusively Roman) literary corpus are referred to as *Dicta*

et sententiae (D&S) or sayings and thoughts (Zorić 2024) and are generally perceived as complete sentences. Since, in modern categorizations, a phraseological unit (PU) does not necessarily have to be a full sentence, and many linguists (Omazić 2015; Grudeva 2014; Andrić 2023) accept even monolexical phrases as phraseological units, it is important to consider the entire phraseological thesaurus derived from Tacitus' works—in particular the phrases that cannot be traced back to older writers and, in other words, the phraseological thesaurus that Tacitus himself popularized. Furthermore, as stated by Shirley L. Arora (1984) "...the most consistently accepted generalization concerning proverbs, in virtually any language, is that their traditionality – the sense of historical-derived authority or of community-sanctioned wisdom that they convey – that makes them "work", makes justified the analysis of proverbs attributed to Tacitus even if he only used them because of their semantics traditionally fitted the context and they weren't the product of his own intellectual effort and in time accepted by the speakers as proverbs. In this sense it is necessary to mention the term "traditionality" as discussed by Wolfgang Mieder. Mieder (1989) stated that "The term "traditionality" includes both aspects of age and currency which a statement must have in order to be considered a proverb." There are proverbs known only in some regions, and there are those used internationally, so it is possible that proverbs used by Tacitus were just popularized by him and that they do not originate from him. However, this won't affect the applicability level of the proverbs seen in Tacitus's work. It will only increase their proverbial nature and make them a quality source for this work. Therefore, the matter of authorship of the analysed proverbs in this sense is irrelevant. Starting from the assumption that Tacitus' phraseological impact on Latin, as well as other European languages, is significant, which will be verified by searching the collection of Tacitus' phraseological thesaurus in the Croatian language, but also by corpus searches of the Croatian language, this paper will also syntactically analyse Tacitus' phraseological thesaurus to determine which type of PU from Tacitus is most often fossilized and whether there are internal or deep linguistic reasons for this.

2. *Methods*

2.1 *Sources and corpus*

The primary source for the D&S originating from the work of Cornelius Tacitus is the extensive collection *Latinum in aeternum* (LIA), Marević (2002), which contains 18,632 entries. The large number of entries, their alphabetical order, the sequential numbering assigned to each phrase, and the highly precise data on the origin of individual phrases, which record not only the writer to whom the authorship is attributed, but also the specific work from which the phrase originates, make this collection a perfect source for compiling a catalogue of phrases attributed to the works of Cornelius Tacitus. All phrases attributed to Tacitus from the LIA have been transcribed into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with eight vertical columns. The first column records the number assigned to the phrase in the LIA; the second column contains the original Latin phrase; the third column contains the preferred translation of the phrase into Croatian according to the LIA; the fourth column indicates the source of the phrase; the fifth column includes various notes; and the sixth column categorizes the type of phrase according to the categories proposed by Omazić (2015). The seventh column records the frequency of the Latin phrase per million words in the Croatian Language Repository of the Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics (HJR), while the eighth column indicates the frequency of the preferred Croatian equivalents of each Latin phrase in the HJR. The HJR corpus was selected because previous research on the frequency of Latin sayings has already been carried out using this resource (Zorić 2024), which revealed that, in the case of reversible binomials within this corpus, it is necessary to enter a two-part phrase in reverse word order and that possible modifications of the same phrase should also be entered into the corpus to achieve more comprehensive results.

2.2 *Catalogue of phrases attributed to Cornelius Tacitus according to LIA*

In the *Latinum in aeternum* (LIA) collection, 128 phrases attributed to Cornelius Tacitus were identified and listed in alphabetical order in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, accompanied by

relevant data: the sequential number in the LIA, the Latin phrase quote, the preferred translation quote, and the reference to the origin of the phrase within Tacitus' literary works. A separate column was designated for the categorization of each phrase, based on the classification proposed by Omazić (2015). According to this categorization, the extracted catalogue contains 67 thoughts and proverbs, as illustrated in example (1), which represent the largest group. The second most numerous category consists of nominal collocations, with 30 examples, as shown in example (2). Verbal collocations occupy the third position, with a total of 17 examples, as demonstrated in example (3), while the least frequent are simple quotations, with only 14 instances, which, intuitively, have not yet undergone the full transformation into proverbs, as seen in example (4):

- (1) *Honesta mors turpi vita potior.*/Časna je smrt bolja nego sramotan život. (An honourable death is better than a shameful life.)
- (2) *Secreta pectoris.*/Intimne tajne. (Intimate secrets.)
- (3) *Praestare terga.*/Okrenuti leđa. (To turn one's back.)
- (4) *Ut quisque flagitium navaverat.*/Kako je i koliko tko doprinio ovom zlu. (How and how much anyone has contributed to this evil.)

In the syntactic categorization, 71 catalogued phrases are full sentences in the strict sense of the term, containing an explicit predicate, as in example (5), or featuring an ellipsis in which the predicate *est/sunt* is implied, as in examples (1) and (6):

- (5) *Exercitatio artem parat.*/Vježba stvara vještinu. (Practice makes perfect.)
- (6) *Breves et infausti populi amores.*/Kratka je i zlokovna ljubav naroda. (The love of the people is short and sinister.)

Furthermore, 31 phrases are nominal phrases (7), while 26 phrases can be characterized as infinitive complements or infinitive phrases, which are ready to form predicates as required, or simply serve as quotation forms in the infinitive (8):

- (7) *Egregium publicum./Visok standard u državi.* (High standard in the state.)
- (8) *Alieno more vivere./Živjeti po željama drugih.* (To live according to the wishes of others.)

The comparison between the syntactic categorization of Tacitus' phrases and their phraseological classifications revealed that all 67 sayings and proverbs (*Dicta et Sententiae*, D&S) are clear sentences containing a predicate in the present indicative tense. Additionally, 27 out of 30 collocations are nominal syntagmas, while all verbal collocations are, in fact, infinitive complements or quotation infinitives of phrases. Only those quotations that have not yet evolved into sayings or proverbs exhibit a more diverse syntactic structure: four are clear sentences, six are quotation infinitive phrases, and four are nominal syntagmas.

2.3 Findings of the Croatian Language Repository corpus search

A search of the Croatian Language Repository (HJR) corpus, maintained by the Institute of the Croatian Language and Linguistics, identified occurrences in the original Latin form for only five phrases from those listed in *Latinum in aeternum* (LIA). These are: *Dictum sapienti sat (est)*, predominantly in its elliptical form as *Sapienti sat*, with 25 occurrences; *Sine ira et studio*, with 16 occurrences; *In vino veritas*, with 7 occurrences, *Corruptissima re publica plurimae leges*, with 1 occurrence, and *Ex tempore dicere*, also with only one occurrence. Possible phraseological modifications exemplified in (9), (10), (11), and (12), were tested in the HJR corpus search engine, and the number of their occurrences was added to the total number of occurrences of the parent phrase (9).

- (9) *Dictum sapienti sat.*
- (10) *Dictum sapienti sat est.*
- (11) *Sapienti sat est.*
- (12) *Sapienti sat.*

In either its full or elliptical form, *Dictum sapienti sat*, *In vino veritas*, and *Corruptissima re publica plurimae leges* are classified syntactically as clear sentences. *Sine ira et studio* is cat-

egorized as a prepositional phrase, while *Ex tempore dicere*, functioning as an adverbial phrase, is considered an infinitive complement or an infinitive phrase. A review of Croatian equivalents of these phrases in the same Croatian Language Repository (HJR) corpus identified occurrences for 14 equivalents of Latin phrases attributed to Cornelius Tacitus in *Latinum in aeternum* (LIA). These are: *Tijekom vremena* (Over time) – 146 occurrences; *Okrenuti leđa* (Turn one's back) – 69 occurrences; *Posljednja bitka* (The final battle) – 19 occurrences; *Za pametnoga je dosta kazano* (Enough has been said for the wise) – 14 occurrences; *Sklopiti mir* (Make peace) – 13 occurrences; *Otkriti tajne* (Uncover secrets) – 12 occurrences; *Bez mržnje i sklonosti* (Without hatred and bias) – 9 occurrences; *Dragovoljna smrt* (Voluntary death) – 4 occurrences; *U vinu je istina* (In wine, there is truth) – 3 occurrences; *Pokazati svoju hrabrost* (Show one's courage) – 3 occurrences; *Intimne tajne* (Intimate secrets) – 2 occurrences; *Pojaviti se u javnosti* (Appear in public) – 1 occurrence; *Trenutačna smrt* (Instant death) – 1 occurrence; *Oplakivati smrt* (Mourn death) – 1 occurrence. During the search for Croatian examples, the number of occurrences of phraseological modifications was also examined. The method applied in the search for Latin examples (9), (10), (11), and (12) was similarly applied to the Croatian variants, as demonstrated in examples (13), (14), and (15), by adding the occurrence count of phraseological modifications (14) and (15) to the original example (13):

(13) *Za pametnoga je dosta kazano.* (Enough has been said for the wise.)

(14) *Pametnome dosta.* (Enough for the wise.)

(15) *Pametnomu dosta.* (Enough for the wise.)

Since only three of the corpus-confirmed Croatian phrases can be directly linked to their Latin counterparts as sources—*Za pametnoga je dosta kazano* (Enough has been said for the wise), *U vinu je istina* (In wine, there is truth), and *Bez mržnje i sklonosti* (Without hatred and bias)—while all other phrases may have developed independently of the Latin language or the specific Latin phraseological thesaurus, particularly in the case of collocations and verbal collocations, conducting exhaustive searches in the

HJR corpus for all possible modifications of Croatian examples loses its meaning. This applies especially when dealing with non-citational cases in nominal collocations or non-citational verb forms, tenses, and moods in verbal collocations, as neither the quotation occurrence nor the total potential number of occurrences can be definitively associated with the influence of the Latin phraseological thesaurus, including the one originating from Cornelius Tacitus. For example, it would be meaningless to investigate all case forms (17) or modifications (18), (19) of a phrase such as *Dragovoljna smrt* (Voluntary death) (16), whose origin from a Latin phrase cannot be established and which could have arisen independently of the Latin language. In such cases, the search is limited to the basic example in its quotation form, and the phrase is marked as “not necessarily influenced by the Latin language.”

(16) *Dragovoljna smrt*

(17) *Dragovoljn* smrt**

(18) *Dobrovoljn* smrt**

(19) *Svojevoljn* smrt**

On the other hand, for the preferred Croatian variant of the Latin phrase *Sine ira et studio*, which is *Bez mržnje i sklonosti* (Without hatred and bias) (20), and which can be confidently traced to the works of Cornelius Tacitus, it is entirely appropriate to examine the occurrence of all modifications. For such a search in the HJR corpus, it is most effective to input the beginning of the phrase *Bez mržnje i* and manually review each occurrence. This approach reveals occurrences of modifications (21), (22), (23), and (24).

(20) *Bez mržnje i sklonosti.* (Without hatred and bias.)

(21) *Bez mržnje i naklonosti.* (Without hatred and favor.)

(22) *Bez mržnje i želje za osvetom.* (Without hatred and desire for revenge.)

(23) *Bez mržnje i (namjerne) sklonosti.* (Without hatred and (deliberate) bias.)

(24) *Bez mržnje i suda.* (Without hatred and judgment.)

By making a different lexical choice in the initial part of the phrase, i.e. replacing the word *mržnja* (hate) with the word *srdžba* (anger) and entering a partial phrase, i.e. its beginning as *Bez srdžbe* (Without anger), followed by repeated manual search, another occurrence is distinguished that can be considered a modification of the same phrase originating from *Sine ira et studio* (25).

- (25) *Bez srdžbe i bez svake pristranosti.* (Without anger and without any bias.)

This results in the number of occurrences for the Croatian example *Bez mržnje i sklonosti* being not 2, but 9, when the occurrences of its modifications are included. A precise count of the occurrences of all modifications of both Latin and Croatian phrases can indicate the syntactic acceptability of Latin phrases or their Croatian variants among speakers of the Croatian language. This is because, within the strict syntactic structure of an expression or sentence—whether in its phrasal or formal structure—a phrase borrowed from one language is typically used as an equivalent phrase in the sentence of another language, maintaining the same syntactic role, regardless of the fact whether it is borrowed in its original form or translated.

Since the HJR corpus consists of 90 million words (i.e., occurrences), the total frequency per million occurrences for relevant Latin and Croatian examples is calculated by dividing the number of occurrences by 90, as presented in the following table:

Table 1. The total frequency per million occurrences for relevant Latin and Croatian examples

LIA serial number	Proverb	Number of Latin phrase occurrences per million words in HJR	Preferred translation	Number of preferred Croatian equivalent occurrences of Latin phrase per million words in HJR	Derived from Latin
16724	<i>Tempore progrediente.</i>	0.00	<i>Tijekom vremena.</i>	1.62	not necessarily from Latin
12683	<i>Praestare terga.</i>	0.00	<i>Okrenuti leđa.</i>	0.77	not necessarily from Latin
16503	<i>Supremum certamen.</i>	0.00	<i>Posljednja bitka.</i>	0.21	not necessarily from Latin
3024	<i>Dictum sapienti sat (est).</i>	0.28	<i>Za pametnoga je dosta kazano.</i>	0.16	
11231	<i>Pacem componere.</i>	0.00	<i>Sklopiti mir.</i>	0.14	not necessarily from Latin
1025	<i>Arcana revelare.</i>	0.00	<i>Otkriti tajne.</i>	0.13	not necessarily from Latin
15663	<i>Sine ira et studio.</i>	0.18	<i>Bez mržnje i sklonosti</i>	0.10	
13411	<i>Quaesita mors.</i>	0.00	<i>Dragovoljna smrt.</i>	0.04	not necessarily from Latin
6643	<i>In vino veritas.</i>	0.08	<i>U vinu je istina.</i>	0.03	
18318	<i>Virtutem praestare.</i>	0.00	<i>Pokazati svoju hrabrost.</i>	0.03	not necessarily from Latin
15110	<i>Secreta pectoris.</i>	0.00	<i>Intimne tajne.</i>	0.02	not necessarily from Latin
6302	<i>In publicum egredi.</i>	0.00	<i>Pojaviti se u javnosti.</i>	0.01	not necessarily from Latin

8747	<i>Mors praesens.</i>	0.00	<i>Trenutačna smrt.</i>	0.01	not necessarily from Latin
16493	<i>Suprema deflere.</i>	0.00	<i>Oplakivati smrt.</i>	0.01	not necessarily from Latin
2336	<i>Corruptissima re publica plurimae leges.</i>	0.01	<i>Kad je država najpokvarenija, ima najviše zakona.</i>	0.00	
4174	<i>Ex tempore dicere.</i>	0.01	<i>Govoriti bez priprave.</i>	0.00	not necessarily from Latin

The statistics obtained for the HJR corpus indicate that Tacitus is most frequently quoted in written Croatian through three original Latin phrases: *Dictum sapienti sat (est)*—primarily in its elliptical form *Sapienti sat*—followed by *Sine ira et studio* and *In vino veritas est*, also predominantly in its elliptical form *In vino veritas*. Of the three phrases mentioned, two are undoubtedly sentences in the present active indicative. On the other hand, if Croatian phrases that do not necessarily originate from Tacitus' Latin expressions are excluded from the focus, the most prevalent Croatian variants of Tacitus' phrases are: *Za pametnoga je dosta kazano* (Enough has been said for the wise), commonly in its elliptical forms *Pametnome dosta* or *Pametnomu dosta*; *Bez mržnje i sklonosti* (Without hatred and bias); and *U vinu je istina* (In wine, there is truth), often in the elliptical form *U vinu istina*.

2.4 Other relevant premises

The Latin language uses a range of syntactic constructions that are either unused in contemporary Croatian or absent altogether throughout the recorded history of the Croatian language. Among these, *Exceptional Case Marking* (ECM) constructions, particularly the accusative with infinitive (*accusativus cum infinitivo*, ACI), occupy a prominent position. While their existence in the Croatian language has been documented, they are considered marginal and certainly outside the linguistic standard (Zorić 2019). Due to this marginality, such constructions may be regarded as unacceptable to the average Croatian speaker (Zorić 2019). Nevertheless, Latin phrases containing accusatives with

infinitives are still accepted, regardless of whether they originate from Horace (26), Suetonius, are attributed to Emperor Vespasian (27), or derive from unknown sources (28).

- (26) *Caelo tonantem credidimus Iovem regnare.*/Vjerovali smo da Jupiter vlada nebom kad smo čuli gdje grmi. (We believed that Jupiter ruled the sky when we heard the thunder.)
- (27) *Decet imperatorem stantem mori.*/Caru priliči da umre stojeći. (It is advantageous that the emperor dies standing.)
- (28) *Decet regem discere legem.*/Dolično je da i kralj izučava zakone. (It befits the king to learn the law.)

Although examples of accusatives with infinitives such as (26), (27), and (28) can be found in *Latinum in aeternum* (LIA), they do not appear in the HJR corpus. However, it is important to highlight instances of accusatives with infinitives that are well represented in their original form and structure within the same HJR corpus. A notable example is provided by Lucius Annaeus Florus in his work *Epitome rerum Romanarum*, a phrase allegedly used by Cato the Elder to conclude his speeches in the Roman Senate (29). This phrase is not only structured as an accusative with an infinitive, which is quite foreign to the Croatian language, but it is also a periphrastic conjugation, which the Croatian language does not recognize either. The presence of such a phrase in the HJR corpus, with 13 occurrences (equal to 0.14 per million words), demonstrates that it is deeply acceptable and understandable to the speakers of the Croatian language, indicating that it belongs to a deeply attested syntactic structure.

- (29) *Ceterum censeo Carthaginem esse delendam.*/Uostalom mislim da Kartagu valja razoriti. (Moreover, I am of the opinion that Carthage must be destroyed.)

The accusative with an infinitive construction is not only deeply understood and accepted by Croatian speakers, despite not being actively used in the language—which typically prefers explicit object clauses with the conjunction *da*—but the dependent part

of the construction is even modified through a syncretism of the Latin and Croatian languages. In this adaptation, the main clause *Ceterum censeo* remains in Latin, while the phrase continues with a Croatian explicit object clause introduced by *da*, containing content that deviates from the original, as seen in example (30)

- (30) *Ceterum censeo, (da) treba naplatiti porez na miraz.*
(Moreover, I am of the opinion that a tax should be imposed on the dowry.)

The situation is similar in the case of the nominative with infinitive (NCI) constructions, which are not used in the Croatian language, as exemplified by the saying (31) attributed to Pope Boniface VIII:

- (31) *Qui tacet, consentire videtur./Tko šuti, čini se da pristaje (odobrava).* (Those who are silent seem to agree (consent)).

Since the nominative with an infinitive is fundamentally a control construction or a sentence with implicit subject control (Zorić 2019), its acceptance in the original Latin presents no difficulty for Croatian speakers familiar with Latin or those who, through formulaic repetition, understand the approximate meaning of its components. Consequently, this saying appears not only in *Lat-inum in aeternum* (LIA) but also in the HJR corpus, with four Latin occurrences, equivalent to 0.04 per million words. One of these occurrences is modified in Latin to reflect Croatian syntax by transforming the main clause from a nominative with infinitive construction into a simple present indicative, using the same verb that originally served as the dependent infinitive complement (32). This modified form clearly does not originate from Latin, as it is not listed as a modification in LIA:

- (32) *Qui tacet, consentit./Tko šuti, slaže se.* (Those who are silent, consent.)

In the HJR corpus, we also find three Croatian occurrences of this saying (33), (34), and (35), with example (35) representing

a syntactic modification in which a relative clause avoids translating the nominative with infinitive construction as an agentless (though not subjectless) main clause:

- (33) *Tko šuti, čini se da odobrava.* (Those who are silent, seem to approve.)
- (34) *Tko šuti, znači da se slaže.* (Those who are silent, mean to approve.)
- (35) *Tko šuti, taj i odobrava.* (Those who are silent, approve.)

Regarding the Latin ablative absolute construction (ABL.ABS), it is present in both LIA and the HJR corpus (36), (37), (38), and (39):

- (36) *Re bene cognita./Upoznavši dobro stvar.* (Having thoroughly understood the matter.)
- (37) *O fortunatam natam, me consule, Romam./Sretna li Rima koji se rodio za moga konzulata!* (O fortunate Rome, born during my consulship!)
- (38) *Ab Urbe condita/Od osnutka Rima.* (From the founding of the City (Rome)).
- (39) *Signo dato./Na dani znak.* (At the given signal.)

Since neither the ablative absolute construction exists in Croatian, its acceptance among Croatian speakers can be explained through deep universal syntax. The ablative absolute usually stands in the place of an adverbial marker of time or cause in a sentence, meaning it expresses a deep temporal or causative relationship. This can also be expressed on the surface level through dependent temporal or causal clauses or prepositional phrases. While Latin prefers the use of ablative absolutes, the Croatian language uses subordinate clauses or prepositional phrases with the same deep meaning. Thus, quoting original Latin ablative absolutes is entirely appropriate when expressing a deep temporal or causal relationship in a Croatian sentence, where it would otherwise appear as a subordinate temporal or causal clause or simply an adverbial phrase. It appears that the syntactic use of the subjunctive as the predicate of an independent Latin sentence

does not pose an obstacle to the understanding, acceptance, or quoting of any Latin saying in the HJR corpus, such as in example (40), which appears in five Latin and eight Croatian occurrences, corresponding to 0.05 per million words for the Latin variant and 0.09 for the Croatian variant.

- (40) *Sit venia verbo./Neka (mi) bude dopušteno reći.* (May it be permitted (for me) to say.)

In Latin, the independently used subjunctive can function as a deep adhortative, jussive, prohibitive, dubitative, deliberative, or optative mood. In the cited example (40), it serves as a jussive, as its surface means of expression, and in Croatian, the imperative is used as the surface expression.

3. Discussion

The main question of this study is whether phraseological corpus research can provide valuable syntactic insights that may serve as evidence or at least provide guidance on the syntax in a writer's works, or highlight specific syntactic findings and understandings of the source language. There are several reasons suggesting this possibility. Tacitus' language and style encompass indicative sentences, independent subjunctive sentences, and sentences with specific case markings (the so-called ECM constructions) where, according to some linguists within the generative framework (Chomsky 1981; Birtić and Brač 2016: 314), elements are raised from the infinitive clause to the object position in the main clause. These constructions are traditionally known as accusative with infinitive (ACI) constructions, control sentences with infinitive complements, or the so-called sentences with implicit subject control (Gnjatović and Matasović 2013; Zorić 2019). Among these are also the nominative with infinitive constructions (NCI) and other non-clausal phrases without predicates. Cornelius Tacitus is also traditionally associated with the use of historical infinitives, or sentences that contain verbs solely in the infinitive form (Andresen 1874; Appellmann 1888; Carstensen 1962; Gortan et alii 1982; Huebenthal 1881; Lasnik and Mamoru 1991; Laws 1864; Maixner 1877; Mohr 1878; Nikolaeva 2014; Nurmela

1944; Rosén 1995). While the status of all these sentence types and non-clausal phrases has been studied and confirmed in Latin as well as in many global languages—including recent studies (Nikolaeva 2014; Rosén 1995)—the precise status of the so-called historical infinitives still requires clear definition, as the predicate of an independent finite sentence is established by assigning a grammatical subject to the verb (Radford 2004). Such predicates are absent in the constructions identified as historical infinitives in Tacitus' texts, at least when considering that these constructions are separated by periods from their surrounding text in Tacitus' editions. In formulating the conclusions of this study, it might be argued that the results of the corpus search in the Croatian language, such as in the HJR, are not relevant for drawing conclusions about Latin syntax. However, the definition of a sentence as a phrase containing a predicate—even if elliptical—or a subject and predicate, or formally as a predicate phrase (VP) where the subject obligatorily occupies the specifier position of the verb phrase (specV), reflects a conventional or deep understanding of what constitutes the deep structure of an independent finite sentence (NP VP), contributing to linguistic universality. Therefore, even though Croatian speakers are not native Latin speakers, those who understand Latin, such as some native speakers of Croatian, should possess an innate sense of sentence structure in Latin, as well as an understanding of non-clausal phrases. In this context, it is significant that the Croatian HJR corpus predominantly lists independent finite sentences (NP VP) as Tacitus' phrases. In the case of Tacitus' thoughts and proverbs, all are exclusively predicate or elliptical sentences, with a smaller number of nominal syntagmas, while other syntactic categories in the corpus of adopted phrases remain marginal. None of Tacitus' phrases from the LIA examined in the HJR corpus are structured as the so-called historical infinitives, nor do any originate from historical infinitive constructions. It might again be argued that this is due to the absence of the historical infinitive construction in the Croatian language. However, a counterargument can be found in the phrase *Ab Urbe condita* in the HJR corpus, which appears 37.5 times per million words. This phrase is structured in Latin as an ablative absolute, a construction unknown to Croatian. However, since it functions as an adverbial of time in the ablative of time, corresponding to deep

cases of source (if considered as a prepositional phrase indicating separation) or scope, measure, extent, or proportion (if considered through the deep meaning of the ablative absolute itself) (Marković 2012), or more precisely, as a temporal marker—which this study favours in the context of the ablative absolute—and since deep cases are linguistic universals, native Croatian speakers perceive such constructions as natural and evidently use them more frequently. It is also noteworthy that this phrase originates from Titus Livius, a Roman and Latin historian and one of Tacitus' predecessors. Although it must be considered that the human brain processes formulaic linguistic units faster than non-formulaic ones (Tabossi et alii 2009: 533–535), this finding should be even more valuable for Latin. Despite the fact that the majority of speakers or listeners of Latin *Dicta et Sententiae* are unable to analyse formulaic Latin due to a lack of knowledge of Latin syntax and lexicon, it is important to highlight that the transmission of phrases into the recipient language, in this case, Croatian, has over centuries been facilitated by individuals familiar with Latin syntax. Nevertheless, even these experts in Latin syntax, who incorporated numerous ablative absolutes, accusatives, and nominatives with infinitives into the Croatian phraseological thesaurus, did not transfer a single Tacitean historical infinitive into that thesaurus as a proverb, thought, or quotation, even when transformed into an indicative sentence. Considering that the historical infinitive is essentially a historiographical infinitive, some presence of such phrases in the citation of Cornelius Tacitus or other Latin historians would be expected. However, no examples have been found in the HJR corpus, neither in the sample of 128 Tacitus' phrases obtained through a comprehensive search of the LIA collection, nor in the sample of all 1,270 phrases from both known and unknown authors in the LIA collection that begin with the letter "A" (Zorić 2024). It appears that the surface syntactic structure and morphology of Latin expressions originating from Tacitus or other authors, as examined in this study, do not have a decisive influence on the understanding, acceptance, or quotation of these expressions in the Croatian language—provided that the deep structure of these expressions is universally validated across languages, regardless of whether they constitute full sentences or sub-sentential phrases.

4. Conclusion

In the *Latinum in aeternum* collection, 128 phrases traditionally attributed to the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus were identified. Among all the quoted phrases, 71 are syntactically validated sentences in either full or elliptical form, a category that includes all 67 semantic thoughts and proverbs. The remaining 57 phrases are sub-sentential phrases, most commonly nominal phrases with genitive attributes or related noun syntagmas, categorized semantically as nominal collocations, followed by verbal collocations in third place. In their original Latin form, the most frequently quoted phrases in the Croatian Language Repository corpus of the Institute of the Croatian Language and Linguistics are: *Dictum sapienti sat (est)*, predominantly in its elliptical form *Sapienti sat*, with 25 occurrences; *Sine ira et studio*, with 16 occurrences; *In vino veritas*, with 7 occurrences; *Corruptissima re publica plurimae leges*, with 1 occurrence; *Ex tempore dicere*, also with 1 occurrence. All of these are syntactically clear (mostly elliptical) sentences, except for *Sine ira et studio*. Since other syntactic types of Tacitus' sayings have no occurrences in Latin within the HJR, the quotation of syntactic accusative with infinitive (ACI), nominative with infinitive (NCI), ablative absolute (ABL.APS), and independent subjunctives—which do not exist in Croatian—was tested using sayings from other or unknown authors. It was found that the absence of such constructions in the Croatian language does not hinder their use by Croatian speakers. This is because these constructions, as surface syntactic forms, express deep or universal linguistic structures. However, this does not apply to historical infinitive structures—that is, sentences where the predicate is an infinitive. This strongly suggests that historical infinitives cannot align with deep linguistic phenomena on a universal level. The absence of quotes featuring historical infinitives from Tacitus' works in Croatian implies their unacceptability as validated syntactic structures. Since the infinitive lacks its own specifier of verbal action, it cannot form an independent sentence due to its incompatibility with the deep function of the predicate. This results in its complete avoidance in both the *Latinum in aeternum* collection and the HJR corpus. On the other hand, the absence of surface structures such as ACI, NCI, and ABL.APS is not a barrier to the use and quotation of

such Latin expressions in Croatian. In fact, they are frequently quoted in modified forms, including partially combined Latin-Croatian modifications.

4.1 Future research

Expanding the understanding of the interplay between phraseology and syntax can be achieved by examining the deep or universal syntax present within the limited phraseological corpora of a given language or within borrowed phraseological corpora in another language. This can further support the hypothesis that speakers of a language do not accept borrowings of syntactic structures that lack deep validation, while they do accept borrowings of surface structures from another language that may not exist in their own, as long as these structures are deeply validated. It is particularly important to investigate whether, in the source language of the tested phraseological corpus, phrases whose surface structures lack deep validation are quoted as idiomatic expressions. For instance, it would be valuable to examine whether other ancient authors in the Latin corpus quote historical infinitive structures from Tacitus' works or from the works of other authors. A lack of mutual quotation of historical infinitives among ancient authors would provide additional strong evidence that these structures are not validated as independent deep sentence constructions.

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