

Some Dative Subjects Are Born, Some Are Made

María Cristina Cuervo
University of Toronto

1. Introduction

Spanish dative arguments can combine with practically any kind of unaccusative predicate. The list includes stative as well as dynamic verbs such as *gustar* ‘like’, *faltar* ‘lack’, *crecer* ‘grow’, *romperse* ‘break’, *llegar* ‘arrive’, *salir* ‘go out’, *salirse* ‘come off’, *caer* ‘fall’, *caerse* ‘fall down’, *molestar* ‘bother’, *quedar* ‘remain’, *sobrar* ‘be-extra’, *importar* ‘matter’, *doler* ‘hurt’, *alcanzar* ‘reach’, etc. These unaccusative constructions typically involve two arguments: a postverbal nominative and the preverbal, clitic-doubled dative. Sentences (1) to (4) illustrate the constructions with psychological predicates, existentials, dynamic predicates of change and predicates of change of state, respectively.

- (1) *A todos les gustan los gatos*
everybody.DAT CL.DAT like.PL the cats
‘Everybody likes cats’
- (2) *Al libro le faltan las tapas*
the book.DAT CL.DAT lack.PL the covers
‘The book has no covers/ is missing its covers’
- (3) *A los chicos les creció rápido el pelo*
the kids.DAT CL.DAT grew.SG quickly the hair
‘The kids’ hair grew quickly’
- (4) *A Vera se le rompió el televisor*
Vera.DAT CL.REF CL.DAT broke.SG the TV.NOM
‘The TV broke on Vera’

Previous approaches which have studied unaccusative predicates taking dative arguments have focused on the commonalities among these constructions. They have particularly focused on uncovering, describing and explaining the subject properties of the dative argument (Cuervo 1999, Fernández Soriano 1999, 2000, Gutiérrez-Bravo 2006, Masullo 1992; but see Bruhn de Garavito 2002). In all approaches the dative DP is claimed to be the higher argument in the clause or in a thematic hierarchy, and/or to be an external argument, in the specifier of TP or the specifier of a Topic phrase. All the authors assume, implicitly or explicitly, that sentences like those in (1) to (4) have the same structure, and do not note their semantic differences or more subtle syntactic contrasts.

This work studies these unaccusative sentences in more detail and presents three related claims. First, it is shown that dative arguments with unaccusative predicates correspond to three different types which are distinguished semantically. Second, sentences (1) to (4) are argued to derive from three different underlying structures; in other words, it is argued that there are three kinds of unaccusative constructions. Finally, a systematic interaction is revealed between the type of unaccusative construction and the type of dative argument. In particular, contrasts among the structures arise from differences in the licensing position of the arguments. The common subject properties of dative DPs derive from their being the higher argument and from their final subject position, not from all being licensed as an external argument. These structural differences, in turn, generate semantic differences with respect to the interpretation of the dative DP and the predicational properties of the construction.

2. Data

The four unaccusative sentence types presented in (1) to (4) share many morphosyntactic properties. In all cases, there are two argument DPs, one in dative case and one in nominative case (there is no accusative). The word order necessary for neutral stress, wide focus interpretation is Dative > Verb >

Nominative. This word order is consistent with the sentence being ‘about’ the dative DP.

In all cases the dative DP is obligatorily doubled by a clitic; the verb obligatorily agrees in person and number with the postverbal nominative DP; the presence of a dative DP is not required for grammaticality, as illustrated below.

- (1') **A todos gustan los gatos*
 everybody.DAT like.PL the cats
 ‘Everybody likes cats’ No clitic doubling
- (2') —¿*Qué pasa?* (What is going on?)
 —# *Las tapas le faltan al libro*
 the covers CL.DAT lack.PL the book.DAT
 ‘The book has no covers/ is missing its covers’ Wide focus interpretation
- (3') **A los chicos les crecieron rápido el pelo*
 the kids.DAT CL.DAT grew.PL quickly the hair
 ‘The kids’ hair grew quickly’ Verbal agreement
- (4') *Se rompió el televisor*
 CL.REF broke the TV.NOM
 ‘The TV broke’ Absence of dative DP

In spite of its dative case, the obligatory presence of the particle ‘*a*’ and its not triggering verbal agreement, the dative DP exhibits many other subject properties. The following sentences show that several properties that obtain for the nominative DP (and not for the accusative DP) in transitive sentences obtain for the dative DP (and not for the nominative DP) in unaccusative constructions. These tests for subjecthood are based on work by Belletti & Rizzi 1988, Cuervo 1999, Fernández Soriano 1999, 2000, Masullo 1992, McClosky 1997, Suñer 1982, Zubizarreta 1997.

Dative DPs behave as subjects in Spanish with respect to quantifiers and scope. The preverbal dative DP can be an indefinite negative quantifier and the sentences have neutral stress (5). An indefinite or existential quantifier as the dative argument cannot take narrow scope under a universal quantifier as the nominative argument (6). Wide scope interpretation for the dative DP is the salient reading, if not the only possible interpretation, as in (7).

- (5) *A nadie le gustan los gritos*
 nobody.DAT CL.DAT like.PL the screams
 ‘Nobody likes screams’
- (6) *A un chico se le quemó todo aparato*
 a kid.DAT CL.REF CL.DAT burnt every gadget.NOM
 ‘Every gadget burnt on a kid’
- (7) *A un chico le sobraron lápices*
 a kid.DAT CL.DAT be-extra.PL pencils
 ‘A (certain) kid was left with extra pencils’

The argument that raises from an embedded clause with *parecer* ‘seem’ is the dative DP, just like nominative subjects in transitive constructions (8). Finally, a dative DP can be modified by unstressed *solamente* ‘only’ (9), and it can bind a possessive in the nominative (but the opposite is not true) (10).

- (8) *A Tomás le parecen gustar los zapatos*
 Tomas.DAT CL.DAT seem.PL like the shoes
 ‘Tomas seems to like shoes’
- (9) *A un chico solamente le sobraron lápices*
 a kid.DAT only CL.DAT were-extra.PL pencils
 ‘A kid only was left with extra pencils’
- (10) *A los chicos_i se les quemó su_i (respectivo) dibujo*
 the kids.DAT CL.REF CL.DAT burnt his respective drawing
 ‘The kids got their respective drawings burnt’

To sum up, the four sentence types share properties concerning case, agreement, and the relative structural hierarchy of the dative and nominative DPs. These facts would lead us to believe that there are no systematic differences among the constructions. Once we focus on the semantics of the arguments, however, differences emerge.

In terms of the interpretation of the dative argument, three kinds can be identified. In the case of unaccusative psychological predicates (which fall in Belletti & Rizzi's 1988 third kind), the dative DP is interpreted as the experiencer (the possessor of a certain mental state).

- (11) *A Vera no le gustan / importaron los gritos*
 Vera.DAT not CL.DAT like.PL / mattered.PL the screams
 'Vera doesn't like / didn't mind the screams'

A dative DP with existentials is interpreted as the possessor of the entity identified by the nominative DP (12). A similar situation holds with predicates of change: in this case, the dative is typically interpreted as a dynamic possessor (recipient, (13)), although it could also be a source or a static possessor (14)—as in the Spanish transitive double object construction (Cuervo 2008, Demonte 1995).

- (12) *Al libro le faltan las tapas*
 the book.DAT CL.DAT lack.PL the covers
 'The book has no covers/ is missing its covers'
- (13) *A los chicos les llegó una carta*
 the kids.DAT CL.DAT arrived.SG a letter
 'The kids got a letter'
- (14) *A los chicos les creció rápido el pelo (*del perro)*
 the kids.DAT CL.DAT grew.PL quickly the hair of.the dog
 'The kids' hair grew quickly'

A third kind of role is found in datives with inchoative predicates, which are interpreted as affected by the change of state. In other words, the dative represents an individual related to the (new) state of the nominative DP: in (15), Vera 'gets' a broken TV.

- (15) *A Vera se le rompió el televisor*
 Vera.DAT CL.REF CL.DAT broke the TV.NOM
 'The TV broke on Vera'

This kind of meaning is frequently confused with that of possessor of the object that changes (the relation with an individual found with simple unaccusatives). Although it is common to infer that the individual affected is so because it is the possessor, this is only an inference, not an entailment. In other words, possession of the nominative DP by the dative is not a structural meaning, in contrast with simple unaccusatives (note the difference in the translations). That the meaning of the dative is affected but not necessarily for being the possessor of the nominative DP is confirmed by the acceptability of sentences in which the possessor of the object is explicitly expressed as a genitive phrase (16) (cf. (14)), or in which there is no issue of possession but of something that happens and affects an individual (17) or is accidentally produced by an individual (18).

- (16) *A Vera se le rompió el televisor de Agustín*
 Vera.DAT CL.REF CL.DAT broke the TV.NOM of Agustín
 'Agustín's TV broke on Vera'
- (17) *A Vera se le cerraron las puertas*
 Vera.DAT CL.REF CL.DAT closed.PL the doors
 'The doors closed on Vera'
- (18) *Al carpintero se le salieron dos clavos*
 the carpenter.DAT CL.REF CL.DAT came-off two nails.NOM
 'Two nails came off on the carpenter'

3. Analysis

The four types of unaccusative predicates form a natural class with respect to several of their morphosyntactic properties, but are distinguished by semantic properties of the construction: the interpretation of dative arguments (which group them in three kinds), as summarized in Table 1.

	Psychological <i>gustar</i> ‘like’	Inchoative <i>romperse</i> ‘break’	Existential <i>faltar</i> ‘lack’	Change <i>crecer</i> ‘grow’
Normal word order	Dative – V – Nominative			
Verbal agreement	With Nominative DP			
Clitic doubling	Obligatory			
Argument hierarchy	Dative > Nominative			
Dative semantics	Experiencer	Affected	Possessor (recipient, source)	

Table 1. Distribution of morphosyntactic and semantic properties among unaccusative constructions

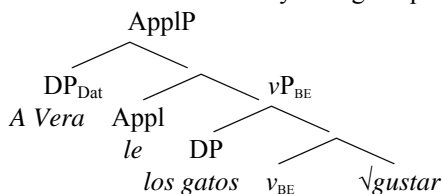
An optimal analysis of the data must be sufficiently detailed as to derive the semantic differences in interpretation of datives among predicate types, while being general enough as to account for the morphosyntactic similarities. In this section I develop an analysis that makes a structural distinction among three kinds of unaccusative constructions: 1) psychological predicates, 2) simple unaccusatives, and 3) inchoatives. Semantic distinctions are later shown to derive directly from these differences. First, the structures are introduced, and their morphosyntactic similarities and differences are highlighted. In section 4, predictions of the analysis are tested in relation to properties of the two argument DPs.

3.1. Psychological predicates

Psychological predicates of the third type such as *gustar* ‘like’ are characterized by the experiencer argument being expressed as a dative DP, obligatorily doubled by a clitic in Spanish, and the ‘theme’ or stimulus of the experience expressed by a nominative DP. The predicate names the type of experience. The structure in (20) represents the underlying structure of a sentence like (19).

- (19) *A Vera le gustan los gatos*
 Vera.DAT CL.DAT like.PL the cats
 ‘Vera likes cats’

- (20) Unaccusative structure 1: Psychological predicates



The verbal root combines with a stative *v* and takes the DP *los gatos* as its specifier. The experiencer is added to the structure not as an argument of the verb, but as an extra, external argument, licensed by a specialized head, the applicative Appl. The applicative head licenses the experiencer as its specifier and relates it to the vP it takes as a complement. Since Appl is merged above the vP, it is a high applicative: it introduces an individual and relates it to an event (as defined by Pylkkänen 2008).

3.2. Simple unaccusatives: existentials and predicates of change

Existentials and simple unaccusatives predicates which express a dynamic non-agentive event correspond to the prototypical unaccusative structure: the grammatical subject is licensed as an object.

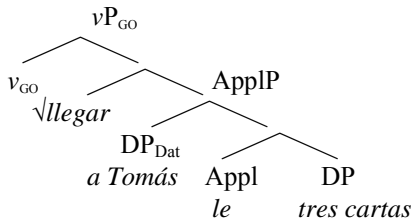
(21) a. Existentials

Al libro le faltan las tapas
 the book.DAT CL.DAT lack.PL the covers
 ‘The book has no covers/ is missing its covers’

b. Predicates of change

A Tomás le llegaron tres cartas
 Tomás.DAT CL.DAT arrived.PL three letters
 ‘Three letters arrived for Tomás’

(22) Unaccusative structure 2: simple unaccusatives



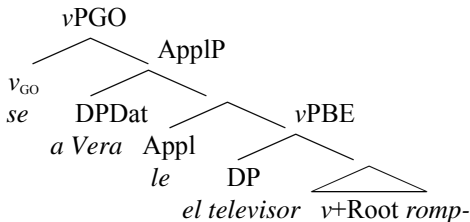
The verbal root takes a complement, typically a DP which gets nominative case. If a dative argument is added to the structure, it is licensed by an applicative head that takes the object DP as its complement. This corresponds to Pyllkkänen’s low applicative: a DP related to another individual (the nominative DP). Thus, the unaccusative verb takes the whole ApplP as its complement, just as a (di)transitive verb in a double-object construction (Cf. Baker 1996). The contrast between existentials and predicates of change is expressed solely as features of the verbal head v , stative v_{BE} in the case of existentials, dynamic v_{GO} in the case of predicates of change.¹

3.3. Inchoatives: predicates of change of state

Predicates of change of state, signalled by the presence of *se*, should be distinguished from simple unaccusatives. The intransitive, inchoative variant of causative verbs expresses a complex event consisting of an unspecified dynamic event and a resulting state, named by the verbal root.

(23) *A Vera se le rompió el televisor*
 Vera.DAT CL.REF CL.DAT broke the TV.NOM
 ‘The TV broke on Vera’

(24) Unaccusative structure 3: Inchoatives



In (24) the change sub-event is expressed in the syntax as a vP layer which, in turn, embeds the stative vP that expresses the resulting state. The argument that undergoes the change of state is licensed as the specifier of the lower stative vP . The dative DP is licensed by an applicative head which takes this stative vP as its complement. As a result, the dative DP is semantically related with the resulting state, not directly with the object DP as a low applicative. As we shall see, the fact that the ApplP is the

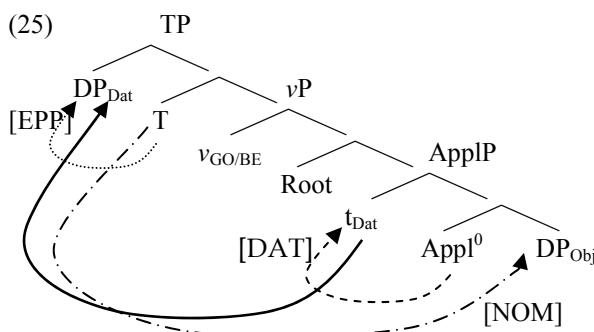
¹ It is important to note that the contrast between telic predicates of change, such as *llegar* ‘arrive’ and *morir* ‘die’, and atelic predicates of change, such as *crecer* ‘grow’ and *caer* ‘fall’, is not expressed structurally. The relevant structural contrast is between simple, mono-eventive predicates of change, and bi-eventive inchoative verbs that express a change of state (that is, a change and a final state), such as *romperse* ‘break’ and *caerse* ‘fall down’.

complement of the higher ν is also relevant for the interpretation of the dative argument.

3.4. Morphosyntactic properties

The structures presented above can account for the morphosyntactic properties shared by all unaccusative dative constructions. In all cases, the dative DP is obligatorily doubled by a clitic: this is directly related to the properties of applicative heads in Spanish. Dative case is inherent case, checked with the applicative head that licenses the dative DP. The clitic is obligatorily present because it is the morphological spell-out of the applicative head.

The dative argument in all constructions exhibits subject properties. These properties, however, do not arise from the dative DP being the same kind of (external) argument (only the dative with psych predicates is an external argument). Subject properties of the dative DP related to binding and movement directly arise as a consequence of its being the higher argument in all unaccusative constructions. Other subject properties (word order, scope, predication, etc.) derive from the dative DP moving to subject position, the specifier of TP, as illustrated for simple unaccusatives in (25).



While the higher dative DP moves to subject position and checks EPP, verbal agreement and nominative case are established as a consequence of the relation of T with the lower DP.

The structural differences among unaccusative constructions reside on the licensing of arguments. The specifics and consequences of these differences are presented in the next section.

4. Predictions of the analysis

One of the crucial contrasts among the unaccusative configurations presented above lies in the licensing position of the nominative argument. The four unaccusative predicate types are grouped in two kinds according to the position in which the lower, nominative argument is licensed: specifier or complement. In turn, this contrast produces a difference in terms of the type of complement the Appl head takes – a ν P or a DP – and relates to the dative DP. These contrasts generate a series of predictions with respect to the syntactic and semantic behaviour of the constructions and are ultimately at the root of the explanation for the diverse but predictable interpretation of the dative arguments.

4.1. Licensing of nominative argument

In the analysis presented in Section 3, the nominative argument is licensed either as specifier of ν P or as a complement of the (verbal) root. According to this, unaccusative constructions group psych predicates and inchoatives together, and contrast them with existentials and predicates of change.

- (26) Nominative DP licensed as a specifier
- Psychological predicates: *gustar, importar, molestar*
 - Inchoatives: *romperse, quemarse, abrirse*
- (27) Nominative DP licensed as a complement
- Existentials: *quedar, faltar, sobrar*
 - Predicates of change: *llegar, crecer, salir*

This grouping in terms of licensing position of the nominative DP generates the expectation that the members of each group behave as a natural class with respect to some syntactic and/or semantic properties. Indeed, the two groups differ in a syntactic property—the distribution of bare nouns—and a semantic property—the predicational nature of the construction.

The distribution of bare nouns in Spanish has been claimed to signal subject position (Suñer 1982), underlying structure (Torrego 1989), incorporation (Masullo 1992), etc. Despite differences of focus and analysis, what most authors point to is that the possibility of an argument of being a bare noun in Spanish depends on its being generated in object position. If this generalization is correct, our analysis predicts that bare nouns as the nominative argument should be allowed in the case of simple unaccusatives (existentials and predicates of change), since they are licensed as complements of the verb, as generally claimed for the sole argument of unaccusatives (since Perlmutter 1978). Sentences (28) show that this is the case. In contrast, bare nouns should be disallowed for the postverbal nominative argument of psychological and inchoative predicates if they are indeed licensed as specifiers of the verbal phrase. This predication is borne out, as illustrated in (29).²

(28) Bare nouns licensed as a complement: acceptable

a. Existentials

Al libro le faltan hojas
 the book.DAT CL.DAT lack.PL pages
 ‘The book is missing some pages’

b. Predicates of change

A Joaquín le salieron granitos
 Joaquín .DAT CL.DAT came-out.PL pimples
 ‘Joaquín got pimples’

(29) Bare nouns licensed as a specifier: ungrammatical

a. Psychological predicates

**A todos les gustan gatos*
 everybody.DAT CL.DAT like.PL cats
 ‘Everybody likes cats’

b. Inchoatives

**A Laura se le derritió chocolate*
 Laura.DAT CL.REF CL.DAT melted chocolate.NOM
 ‘Some chocolate melted on Laura’

With respect to the semantics, the two kinds of unaccusative constructions differ in the expected way in the relation between the nominative DP and the verb. The existence of a predication relation between the nominative DP and the verb (to the exclusion of the dative) groups psychological and change of state predicates together: sentences in (30) are ‘about’ the nominative DP. This is expected if the nominative DP is licensed as the specifier of vP (specifier of *v* + the root); that is, an internal subject.³ In contrast, there is no predication between the nominative and the verb in existentials or predicates of change: sentences in (31) are presentational sentences and the DP must appear postverbally even in the absence of a dative argument.

² This ungrammaticality has been noted in the literature (see, among others, Bruhn de Garavito 2002 and Masullo 1992), but it has not received a unified structural account.

³ There seems to be a difference between psychological and inchoative predicates with respect to the presence of a dative argument, in the sense that a dative experiencer could be argued to be implied with psych predicates, as in (30a), but not in (30b). This question is further deepened by the issue of whether implicit arguments are syntactically present or not (Rizzi 1986). Although the current approach presents all datives as applicatives, and as such never licensed directly by a verb, I leave these issues open here, noting that what is crucial is the relation between the postverbal DP and the predicate in the (syntactic and/or phonological) absence of a dative argument.

- (30) Nominative DP is a specifier: predication
- a. Psychological predicates
Los gatos nunca molestan
 the cats.NOM never bother.PL
 ‘Cats are never bothersome’
 - b. Change of state (inchoatives)
El televisor se rompió
 the TV.NOM CL.REF broke
 ‘The TV broke’
- (31) Nominative DP is a complement: no predication
- a. Existentials
*Faltaron dos sillas (*Dos sillas faltaron)*
 lacked.PL two chairs
 ‘There were two chairs too few’
 - b. Predicates of change
*Crecieron muchas flores (*Muchas flores crecieron)*
 grew.PL many flowers
 ‘Many flowers bloomed’

Building on Suñer (1982), Cuervo (2008) proposed the following generalization, which ties the distribution of bare nouns and predication in structural terms (where the notion of subject is understood as specifier of a verbal projection).

The Bare Noun Phrase Constraint, revised

“An unmodified common noun cannot be the subject of a predicate under conditions of normal stress and intonation”

4.2. Licensing of dative argument

The contrast in the base position of the nominative DP has consequences for the licensing of a dative argument. A DP licensed as a complement of the verb can be the complement of an applicative head that merges below the verb: a low applicative that relates two individuals. This is the case of dative arguments with simple unaccusatives. The interpretation of these datives as dynamic or static possessors, just as in double object constructions under transitive verbs, is therefore expected.

- (32) Low applicatives below stative or dynamic *v*: a relation between two individuals
- Existentials: *quedar, faltar, sobrar*
 - Predicates of change: *llegar, crecer, salir*

Assuming the nominative DP in psychological and inchoative constructions is licensed as a specifier of *v*P, that is, *above* the verb, and not as complement, the dative argument cannot be a low applicative.⁴ In these configurations, datives are licensed outside the *v*P, taking it as its complement: they are high applicatives by Pylkkänen’s definition. We therefore expect them not to be interpreted as directly related to the nominative DP. We have seen that, indeed, datives with psychological and inchoative predicates are interpreted as related to the stative *v*P, not as the possessors of the nominative DP.

- (33) High Applicative above stative *v*: a relation between an individual and a state
- Psychological predicates: *gustar, importar, molestar*
 - Inchoatives: *romperse, quemarse, abrirse*

There is a further contrast, however, between the experiencer dative in psychological constructions and

⁴ Thus, these datives cannot be low applicatives *by definition*. See Cuervo (to appear) for further structural arguments for the impossibility of an applied argument of applying to a DP in specifier position.

datives in inchoatives which, as we showed in section 2, are interpreted as affected by the change of state of the nominative DP. Does this interpretation depend on the meaning of particular verbs or can it be accounted for as deriving from the structure? The key to deriving the interpretation of affected datives as a structural meaning lies in considering not only what the Appl head takes as its complement but, crucially, what the Appl phrase is a complement of. Datives in inchoatives differ in interpretation from datives in psych predicates because they appear as specifiers of an Appl phrase selected as the complement of another vP , the dynamic event of change. As a specifier of a phrase embedded under another verbal layer, this dative argument participates in two (sub-)events: this is the definition of affectedness as a structural meaning (Alsina 1992). The generalization in (33) should therefore be revised to distinguish between high (unembedded) applicatives and middle applicatives.

- (34) High Applicative above stative v : a relation between an individual and a state
 ○ Psychological predicates: *gustar, importar, molestar*
- (35) Middle applicative between dynamic v and stative v : an affected individual
 ○ Inchoatives: *romperse, quemarse, abrirse*

4.3. Interaction between types of unaccusatives and types of datives

According to the analysis developed in Section 3, unaccusative constructions differ in terms of the number of events (simple or bi-eventive structures), type of events (stative or non-agentive-dynamic) and licensing position of the sole argument DP. Thus, inchoative constructions are the only bi-eventive unaccusatives and are distinguished by the presence of *se* (analyzed here as the spell-out of the higher verbal head v ; see Folli & Harley 2005 for a somewhat similar approach). Simple unaccusatives are distinguished by their sole argument being licensed as a complement of the (verbal) root (the ‘typical’ unaccusative predicates). Within simple unaccusatives, existentials differ from predicates of change on the type of event and, accordingly, the type of v : stative vBE in existentials, dynamic vGO in predicates of change. Finally, unaccusative psychological predicates are distinguished by their (nominative) argument being licensed as a specifier of a stative vBE , not as a complement.

The analysis developed provides the elements to account for the three semantic contrasts found among dative arguments in unaccusative constructions. The three types of unaccusative configurations correspond one-to-one to three types of dative arguments, as illustrated in Table 2. This highlights the fact that the meaning of dative arguments is structural: their interpretation depends on two factors: 1) the general meaning of applied argument (a general meaning of possession or orientation) dependent on the Appl head that licenses the dative DP, and 2) the structural position of the Appl head. The structural position of Appl involves not only considering what the complement of Appl is—which tells low applicatives from other datives—, but also what ApplP is a complement of, that is whether ApplP is selected or not—which tells middle applicatives apart from high applicatives. Being structural, the interpretation of Spanish dative arguments is predictable.

Type of unaccusative	Nom. licensed as	Predic of Nom.	Bare Nom. NPs	Compl of Appl	ApplP selected by	Type of dative	Role of dative
Simple (stative or dynamic)	Compl	No	Yes	DP	Root	Low Appl	Recipient Possessor
Inchoative	Spec	Yes	No	vP	v	Middle Appl	Affected
Psychological					--	High Appl	Experiencer

Table 2. Interaction between types of unaccusatives and types of datives

5. Not about the lexicon

So far, one could assume that the licensing and interpretation of dative arguments with unaccusative predicates, although structurally systematic, ultimately depends on lexical properties of verbs associated in verbal classes. I would like to emphasize that this is not dependant on lexical properties. Spanish has three types of applicative heads, high, low and middle, and they seem to combine freely with different types of predicates as long as their structural requirements are met, without consideration to whether the predicate typically appears as a two-argument verb or not. Further evidence for this approach comes from verbs that participate in more than one configuration and from light verb constructions.

5.1. Verbs in more than one construction

Some verbs can appear in more than one type of configuration (this is what constitutes the basis for the so called ‘argument structure’ alternations). Some verbs even appear in different types of unaccusative structures. This is the case of *doler*, which can state a property of an individual and take a dative experiencer, as in (36), or can express the state of being in pain, as in (37).

- | | | | | | | |
|------|---|-----------|---------------|----------------------|--|----------------|
| (36) | <i>A Carolina</i> | <i>le</i> | <i>dolió</i> | <i>esa inyección</i> | | Experiencer |
| | Carolina.DAT | CL.DAT | hurt | that injection | | Predication |
| | ‘That injection was painful for Carolina’ | | | | | |
| (37) | <i>A Agustín</i> | <i>le</i> | <i>duelen</i> | <i>los pies</i> | | Possessor |
| | Agustín.DAT | CL.DAT | hurt.PL | the feet | | No predication |
| | ‘Agustín's feet hurt’ | | | | | |

Doler in (36) patterns with psych verbs of the *gustar* ‘like’ kind. In the absence of a dative, it expresses a property of the nominative DP (there is predication: *Esa inyección duele* ‘that injection hurts’) and can be paraphrased as ‘produce pain’ or ‘be painful’. A dative DP in this case relates to the stative vP, not directly to the nominative DP, and is accordingly interpreted as an experiencer.

In contrast, *doler* in (37) does not express a property of the feet: there is no predication and the verb cannot appear without a dative DP (**Los pies duelen* ‘feet hurt’). The dative argument is interpreted as the inalienable possessor of the body part; sentence (37) is closer to a locative paraphrase such as ‘Agustín is hurting at the feet’. Other verbs that pattern with this ‘non-predicational’ *doler* are what Masullo 1992 calls verbs of bodily function/sensation, and include *arder* ‘burn’, *picar* ‘itch’, *sangrar* ‘bleed’, *temblar* ‘tremble’, etc. (Masullo 1992:48-52).⁵

5.2. Light verb constructions: *v* + bare noun/adjective

Light verb constructions provide a more direct way of looking into the syntactic pieces that form a verbal meaning. Many apparently transitive or ditransitive light verb constructions, such as *hacer falta* ‘do lack, need’, *dar miedo* ‘give fear, frighten’, can appear with dative arguments. A closer examination of their structure, however, reveals that the configuration formed by the light verb and the bare noun is an unaccusative configuration parallel either to a psychological *gustar*-type configuration or to a simple, existential structure.

- | | | | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| (38) | <i>A Agustín</i> | <i>le</i> | <i>dan</i> | <i>miedo</i> | <i>*(las) tormentas</i> | Experiencer |
| | Agustín.DAT | CL.DAT | give | fear | the storms | Predication |
| | ‘Agustín is afraid of storms’ | | | | | |
| (39) | <i>A Carolina</i> | <i>le</i> | <i>hacen falta</i> | <i>(dos) cartas</i> | | Possessor |
| | Carolina.DAT | CL.DAT | do | lack | two letters | No predication |
| | ‘Carolina needs (two) letters’ | | | | | |

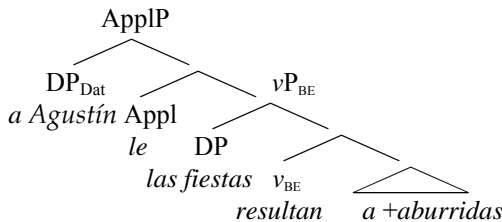
⁵ His analysis of these predicates is different from the one presented here. Masullo proposes that these predicates correspond to the *gustar* class, “except that the dative argument is not lexically predetermined [i.e. licensed by the verb] but arises instead from [abstract] incorporation [of the head noun of the object DP into the verb].”

Syntactic and semantic properties of the sentences (word order, clitic doubling, interpretation of dative arguments, predicational relations, restrictions of bare nouns, etc.) can all be predicted from the configurations assigned by the present analysis.

Copular verbs such as *ser* ‘be’, *parecer* ‘seem’, *resultar* ‘turn out to be’, etc., can take an adjective and form light verb constructions which, again, parallel psychological predicates, as illustrated in (40).

- (40) a. *A Agustín le resultan aburridas *(las) fiestas* Experiencer
 Agustín.DAT CL.DAT turn-out boring the parties Predication
 ‘Agustín finds parties boring’

b.



To sum up, data from verbs appearing in multiple unaccusative configurations and from light verb constructions provide further support for a constructionalist approach to the analysis of dative arguments in unaccusative predicates.⁶ These data highlights how sentential meanings arise from constructions rather than from argument structures associated with particular verbs.

6. Conclusions

A detailed analysis of unaccusative sentences in Spanish has revealed that there exist three types of unaccusative underlying structures. In all types, a dative argument can be added and, typically, appear pre-verbally, doubled by a dative clitic. Three different semantic types of dative arguments—analyzed as applicatives—have been shown to correspond one-to-one to each type of unaccusative construction.

The constructionalist approach developed here is able to account for the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of unaccusative constructions with and without dative DPs. It further provides elements to reveal and account for parallels with datives in transitive constructions.

Two general conclusions emerge from this analysis, one with respect to dative arguments, another with respect to unaccusativity. Dative arguments with unaccusative constructions are analyzed as arguments licensed by a specialized head, the applicative head. This means that dative arguments are not arguments of the verb, not even in those cases in which we seem to have the intuition that a certain verb implies them, as with psychological predicates of the *gustar* type. Although this might seem rather extreme, it is at the basis of the explanation of why we can predict the meaning of a dative argument from the configuration in which it appears: their interpretation is directly computed from the structure in which they are licensed, rather than from the idiosyncratic meaning of verbs. This brings dative arguments closer together to external arguments and distinguishes them from direct objects, licensed by the verb (Kratzer 1996, Levin 1999, Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995, Marantz 1984, Nash 2002, Pykkänen 2008, among many others).

The claim that there exist three types of unaccusative predicates or configurations implies that unaccusativity is not a unified phenomenon. Unaccusativity does not correspond to a single underlying structure in which a sole argument is licensed in object position. Unaccusativity seems to be, rather, an epiphenomenon (see also Moro 1997). Individual languages should be inspected at the time of relating unaccusativity with specific morphosyntactic characteristics. For instance, we have seen that in Spanish the acceptability of bare nouns as a postverbal nominative argument is not a true diagnostic of (all) unaccusatives. Further, apparently transitive light verb constructions behave like unaccusatives. What does seem to distinguish two-argument unaccusatives in Spanish is the distribution of subject

⁶ See Cuervo 2008 for further evidence from dative arguments with unaccusative verbs which alternate between a *se* and a *se*-less variant, such as *caer(se)* ‘fall (down)’, *salir(se)* ‘go out (off)’.

properties between the nominative and the dative arguments (McCloskey 1997), which do not present several of the asymmetries found between subjects and objects in transitive configurations. Dative DPs exhibit subject properties in unaccusative constructions and only in unaccusative constructions. They exhibit the same subject properties across unaccusative constructions and, at the surface level, they can only be distinguished semantically. This, however, is not because dative arguments are all ‘born’ subjects, that is, external arguments, but because being the higher argument, their movement to subject position neutralizes the differences in base structure.

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