

## ***Gustar*-type verbs**

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### **4.1. Introduction**

When comparing the verbal structures of English and Spanish, grammatical accounts underscore the differences between English *like* and Spanish *gustar*. Despite their closeness in meaning, these predicates exhibit a divergent syntactic behavior: whereas *like* codes as subject the entity that experiences a certain feeling, and as object the stimulus responsible for that feeling, *gustar* expresses the experiencer through an indirect object (or dative) and the stimulus through the subject, illustrated in the examples (4.1) and (4.2).

(4.1) I liked the book

(4.2) Me gustó el libro

Other verbs that share structural features with *gustar* appear in the following examples<sup>1</sup>:

(4.3) A Miguel ya no le *apetecía* jugar al parchís. (Ternura: 50, 4)

‘Miguel did not feel like playing Parcheesi anymore.’

(4.4) El dulce les *repugnará*. (Glenda: 57, 11)

‘The cake will disgust them.’

(4.5) Le *pareció* reconocer la música que sonaba. (Carta: 185, 2)

‘S/he thought s/he recognized the music that was playing.’

(4.6) Nunca una mujer le *importó* como Viviana. (Historias: 60, 2)

‘Never before had a woman mattered to him as Viviana did.’

In view of these examples, it could be argued that in Spanish there is a particular selection of a syntactic pattern typical of verbs of feeling or emotion. The situation, however, is more complex since the range of the so-called “*verba sentiendi*” (i.e. psychological verbs) also comprises verbs that adhere to a transitive syntactic pattern, with a coding similar to that for English *like*:

(4.7) La *había amado* en secreto varios años. (Crónica: 11, 1)

‘He had loved her in secret for several years.’

(4.8) La Mujer Pirata *odiaba* al abuelo. (Ternura: 99, 13)

‘The Woman Pirate hated the grandfather.’

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<sup>1</sup> The textual examples included in this paper are derived from the ARTHUS corpus (Archivo de Textos Hispánicos de la Universidad de Santiago). The quantitative data provided here have been obtained from the Base de Datos Sintácticos (BDS), based on an analysis of the corpus under Professor Guillermo Rojo’s supervision. For further information on the database, the reader is directed to <http://www.bds.usc.es>.

(4.9) Yo *detestaba* a los hombres altaneros. (Crónica: 35, 6)

‘I detested haughty men.’

(4.10) Tía Delia *creía* haber visto a abuela. (Sur: 49, 10)

‘Aunt Delia thought that she had seen Grandma.’

Therefore, the same semantic class of predicates is represented by, at least, two classes of syntactic constructions<sup>2</sup>.

## 4.2. The Transitivity Hypothesis

In Spanish, the most frequent syntactic configuration of biactant predications corresponds to the transitive construction, in which the arguments take on the grammatical relations of subject and direct object. According to the data from the BDS (cf. footnote 1), of a total of 91,465 clauses with two participants, 68,011 (that is, 74.36%) display the subject-direct object pattern. From a semantic viewpoint, the transitive construction prototypically encodes actions initiated by an agent and transferred to a patient<sup>3</sup>.

With regard to *gustar*-type verbs (henceforth GTVs), their subject-indirect object pattern deviates from the transitive prototype in that they exhibit a configuration that can be best characterized as experiencer-stimulus, which is clearly distinct from the transitive agent-patient configuration. The hypothesis defended here is that both levels –syntactic and semantic– are intimately related, and that the manifestation of a particular nontransitive configuration (i.e., one with an indirect object) constitutes the syntactic manifestation of the semantically marked character (i.e., marked with respect to the transitive prototype) of the clause in question.

Following Hopper and Thompson’s (1980) framework, it will become evident that GTVs determine the lower transitivity of the clauses that they configure, in opposition to the higher transitivity of the prototypically transitive clauses. The present study will analyze the semantic characteristics of the clauses with GTVs, with special emphasis on some of the transitivity parameters proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980:252).

### 4.2.1. Participants of the verb

The first parameter mentioned by Hopper and Thompson (1980) refers to the number of participants or arguments contained in a clause. It is understood that a highly transitive clause will have two or more participants, whereas a clause lower in Transitivity will typically exhibit one participant. Although Hopper and Thompson (1980:252, and footnote 1) do not explicitly define the concept of “participant”, they cite Dixon’s (1979) A (for Agent) and O (for Object), which in a restrictive interpretation coincide with the subject and object of a prototypically

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<sup>2</sup> One should also consider as a typical construction of “*verba sentiendi*” that one found in clauses of pronominal and prepositional object construction, exemplified in *Me alegraba de tenerlo a mi lado* (Historias: 156, 13) ‘Having him beside me made me happy’; *Jano se olvidó de Betina* (Carta: 111, 13) ‘Jano forgot about Betina’; *Se encaprichó con la chiquilla* (Sonrisa: 301, 22) ‘S/he took a liking to the little girl’.

<sup>3</sup> Thus, despite their syntactic configuration, examples (4.7-4.10) do not conform to the transitive prototype.

transitive clause. It follows that the English clause *Jerry likes beer* (1980:254) contains two participants, whereas the Spanish clause *Me gusta la cerveza* (*I like beer*) features only one, since 'the experiencer [...] appears in an oblique case' (1980:254). However, by denying an O(bject) status to the dative experiencer in *Me gusta la cerveza*, Hopper and Thompson (1980) weaken their assertion that '[w]e make no claims about the grammatical relations that the NP arguments referring to these participants [A & O] might bear to the verb' (1980; 252, footnote 1).

In order to properly tackle the study of the GTVs, it is necessary to overcome the limitations inherent in the traditional analysis of clauses, which is based on a surface interpretation of the transitivity/intransitivity dichotomy. Such an approach merely reduces the distinction to the presence or absence of a certain type of clausal constituent, the direct object, considered "the object", with other possible complements being demoted to an ancillary or peripheral status.

Valency (or Dependency) Grammar, which takes Tesnière's (1959) work as its starting point, distinguishes between actants and circumstants according to their governed nature. Another, more formal distinction is superimposed on this one. It identifies with the circumstants the presence of prepositional marking or of certain causal affixes. In contrast to the circumstants, the actants lack prepositional marking and correspond to less-marked cases, such as nominative and accusative. Nevertheless, the difference between actants and circumstants (or core vs. oblique) cannot be reduced to the selection of certain concrete markings, but rather is felt by many linguists to exist at a more general level, with case marking being just one of its manifestations (Thompson 1997:60).

Although Thompson (1997:61) points out that 'Languages differ in the extent to which they make a morphological distinction between noun phrases serving core and oblique roles', core participants are regarded as those that take on the functions of subject and direct object, which are precisely the arguments that lack prepositional marking in English. On the other hand, from a typological viewpoint, core functions are represented by the only argument of an intransitive verb, and the agent and patient of a transitive verb (S, A and O in Dixon's (1979) terminology). In this sense, we arrive at a rather restrictive interpretation of the concept of core arguments, since it mirrors the traditional distinction between transitive and intransitive.

With regard to GTVs, there are reasons to argue that, apart from the subject, the indirect object (or dative) is also a core function in the clause. From a semantic viewpoint, it displays enough heterogeneity to prevent a simple association between syntactic function and semantic role. An argument with the function of indirect object can be an experiencer (*Me gusta la cerveza*, i.e., *I like beer*), a recipient (*Le mentí a Juan*, i.e., *I lied to Juan*), a goal (*Le entregué los documentos a tu hermano*, i.e., *I handed the documents to your brother*), a benefactive (*Le preparé la cena*, i.e., *I prepared dinner for him*), or a possessor (*Le lavé la cara al niño*, i.e., *I washed the child's face*), etc.

In considering the syntactic features of core functions, we might expect that the process of grammaticalization of expressive devices would lead to less marking in morphological encoding. However, this does not mean that core functions are universally characterized by syntactic features such as a lack of prepositional marking, as in English. In Spanish, for example, the presence of the preposition *a* with animate direct objects, as in *He visto a María* 'I have seen Mary', does not deny the core character of the direct object, nor does its presence justify the alignment of the indirect object with oblique participants.

There is a significant index of expression shared by subject, direct object and indirect object -the three core functions of the Spanish clause- which is the agreement with the verb. This

agreement is marked by inflectional categories for the subject function (person and number suffixes on the verbal stem), and by unstressed pronouns for the direct and indirect object functions, (proclitics or enclitics to the verbal form). These agreement markers are illustrated in the example in (4.11), where *se* marks the indirect object and is coreferential with *Juan*, *la* marks the feminine singular direct object and is coreferential with *la bicicleta*, and the suffix *-mos* marks 1pl and is coreferential with *nosotros*.

- (4.11) *La bicicleta se la regalaremos nosotros a Juan*  
 The bicycle IO.3 DO.3fsg give FUT1pl we to John  
 ‘We will give the bicycle to John’.

The presence of the clitic totals nearly 100% in the GTV examples. That is, based on the count of the tokens of *gustar* with the subject-predicate-indirect object structure, 1218 of the 1221 examples in the data base, or 99.75%, contained the clitic.

With regard to the semantico-pragmatic implications, the central functions encode the most prominent participants in the process described by the predication, which is reflected in the degree of topicality they display when compared to the degree of topicality of noncentral or peripheral participants.

The indirect object undoubtedly presents a high degree of topicality, as shown in the distribution of its categorical realizations in our corpus. Within the framework of the Topic Continuity Theory (Givón 1983), clitics would display the highest topicality; the clitic conjunction and full form would imply a lower degree of topicality; and finally, with the full form without clitic being the least topical. The BDS data regarding of indirect objects provide the results in Table 4.1.

Clitic only	9727	78,66%
Clitic + full form	1654	13,38%
Full form	1085	8,77%
TOTAL	12466	100%

Table 4.1. Degree of topicality in Indirect Objects (clitics highly topical, clitic + full form less topical, full form only least topical).

Thus, there are semantic and syntactic reasons supporting the idea that the indirect object in Spanish is a core function, and not an oblique one. In contrast to Hopper y Thompson’s (1980), we claim that the clauses in (4.2-4.6) have two participants, thus matching the number of participants present in prototypically transitive clauses.

However, there are obvious syntactic differences between a direct and an indirect object in Spanish. Apart from the differences in case between the accusative (direct object) and dative (indirect object) clitics (*lo, los, la, las* vs. *le, les* respectively), the full NP indirect object is obligatorily marked by the preposition *a*, whereas the direct object is marked with *a* only when it possesses certain features involving animacy and/or definiteness.

There are also differences in the possibility of passivization, which is blocked for indirect objects, as illustrated by the examples in (4.12) and (4.13).

- (4.12) a. La nueva maestra les gusta a los niños  
‘The children like the new teacher.’  
b. \*Los niños son gustados por la nueva maestra  
‘The children are liked by the new teacher.’
- (4.13) a. Los niños quieren a la nueva maestra  
‘The children love the new teacher.’  
b. La nueva maestra es querida por los niños  
‘The new teacher is loved by the children.’

An explanation for the impossibility of passivization in the case of (4.12b) involves the selection of semantic roles GTVs. One must bear in mind that the function of passivization is make into a theme a constituent other than the subject, i.e., the direct object in Spanish. However, in GTVs the indirect object is treated as an unmarked theme, and as such there is no need to passivize it (cf. Table 4.4 below).

Another syntactic difference between the Spanish direct and indirect objects is relativization. Whereas direct objects allow relative “que” without preposition,

- (4.14) La maestra *que* quieren los niños.

‘The teacher that the children love.’

indirect objects require that the preposition *a* precede the relative<sup>4</sup>:

- (4.15) Los niños *a los que* les gusta la nueva maestra.

‘The children that like the new teacher.’

Nevertheless, the analysis of a copious and diverse corpus reveals that the differences between the direct and indirect object are not as clear-cut as they seem in light of the above examples, since there are numerous verbs that show vacillation between both constructions. The uncertainty is compounded by those cases that feature a first- or second- person object clitic, whose form does not allow us to discern between accusative and dative

- (4.16) Las leyes ya no me afectan (Pasajero: 34, 12)

‘The laws do not affect me anymore.’

- (4.17) Te fastidia recordar el pasado (Ayer: 35, 4)

‘It bothers me to remember the past.’

Even when a 3p clitic is involved, the vacillation between accusative and dative turns out to be somewhat random.

- (4.18) Lo que realmente *lo* preocupaba era una ceremonia, de fecha próxima, en la que se presentaría ante la reina (Historias: 131, 18)

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<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, in the oral language it is frequent the use of the relative without preposition: “Me han hablado muy bien de la obra; ahora, que hay gente [...], que hay gente **que** [a la que] le gusta mucho y otra **que** [a la que] no le ha convencido demasiado” (Madrid: 371, 27) ‘I have been told very good things about the play; now, that there is people [...], that there is people that like it very much and other that has not been convinced enough’.

‘What really worried him was a ceremony, coming right up, at which he would introduce himself to the queen.’

- (4.19) Dentro de cincuenta años, esos bienes que tanto *le* preocupan no le servirán de nada (Historias: 70, 10)

‘In fifty years from now, those possessions that worry you so much will be useless.’

Such difficulty in distinguishing direct from an indirect objects represents another argument in favor of considering indirect objects as a participant and not as an oblique in Spanish.

#### 4.2.2. *Kinesis, Aspect & Punctuality*

Three of the transitivity parameters proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980) deal with ‘aspectuality’. The authors contend that highly transitive clauses are action clauses, that is, dynamic clauses involving telicity and punctuality. On the other hand, low transitivity corresponds to static (i.e., non-dynamic) clauses, which are atelic and non-punctual.

If our approach to GTVs is correct, we would expect the predicates of GTVs take stative, atelic and nonpunctual clauses. Indeed, the behavior of GTVs seems to point in this direction. Some GTVs exhibit incompatibility with the perfective aspect. And although we find this with a reduced number of verbs (*atañer* ‘concern’, *competer* ‘be incumbent upon’, *concernir* ‘concern’, *convenir* ‘suit, be good for’, *incumbir* ‘be up to, concern’, which are inherently imperfective), this shows the correlation between perfectivity and high transitivity on one hand, and imperfectivity and low transitivity on the other<sup>5</sup>.

- (4.20) a. Os conviene refrescaros. (Caimán: 37, 9)

‘It is not good for you guys to freshen up.’

- b. \*? Os convino refrescaros.

‘Freshening up was good for you guys.’

- (4.21) a. A ti no te incumbía hablar de ellos realmente (Sevilla: 192, 17)

‘It was really not up to you to talk about them.’

- b. \*? a ti no te incumbió hablar de ellos realmente

‘It was really not up to you to talk about them.’

A feature that generally characterizes stative clauses as opposed to dynamic ones is that the former do not carry a habitual or frequentative interpretation when used in the present (4.22), contrary to what happens with dynamic clauses, as shown by the sentence in (4.23):

- (4.22) A Ana le gusta Juan (\*todas las semanas / \*cada tarde / \*con frecuencia).

‘Ana likes Juan (\*every weekend / \*every evening / \*frequently).’

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<sup>5</sup> Hopper and Thompson (1980:271) observe that ‘if the Aspect is perfective, the interpretation –other things being equal- has properties allowing the clause to be classified as more transitive; but if the Aspect is imperfective, the clause can be shown on independent grounds to be less transitive.’

(4.23) Ana visita a su abuela (todas las semanas / cada tarde / con frecuencia).

‘Ana visits her grandmother (every weekend / every evening / frequently).’

The incompatibility between stativity and habituality not only affects GTVs but also stative predicates with transitive argument structure, such as those in (4.7-4.10) above. In the same vein, the progressive-based test has been used as a key argument in the distinction between dynamic and stative. It is generally contended that stative predicates are anomalous in the progressive (cf. Marín Gálvez 2000:71). Indeed, as we have confirmed through the BDS, the verb type that combines with the *estar* + gerund construction (analogous to English *to be* + *-ing*) is the one which denotes acts and operations particularly evident to the faculties of sensation, (Fernández Ramírez 1960:534), such as those in (4.24) and (4.25).

(4.24) El viejo ya está abriendo a Simonetta (Sonrisa: 147, 13)

‘The old man is already opening [himself] to Simonetta.’

(4.25) Mira: yo la estoy acariciando (Ternura: 31, 18)

‘Look: I am caressing her.’

Nevertheless, it turns out that practically any verb, supported by the appropriate context, can be used in the *estar* + gerund construction, although not all verbs convey the same semantic implications in this construction. Following Halliday’s (1985:109) stance regarding English, it can be similarly claimed that, in Spanish, the *estar* + gerund construction is the marked option with nondynamic clauses, and that its use in such instances –undoubtedly infrequent– does not add a semantic feature that can be labeled as ‘progressive’, but rather other features, such as ‘ingressive’ or ‘intensive’

(4.26) Me está apeteciendo un café.

‘I am feeling like having a coffee.’

(4.27) No nos está gustando nada tu comportamiento

‘We are not liking your behavior at all.’

Another test that has been adduced to prove the difference between stative and dynamic situations is the possibility (or lack thereof) of combining *parar de* (de Miguel 1999). It seems that *parar de* is only compatible with clearly dynamic situations.

(4.28) \*Esa película no para de gustarme

‘That movie does not stop liking me.’

(4.29) \*La propuesta no paró de interesarles.

‘The proposal did not stop interesting them.’

In sum, there are reasons to believe that GTVs have stative (and thus, low transitive) clauses. Therefore, GTVs contrast with prototypically transitive predicates, which have active (and thus, highly transitive) clauses. Nevertheless, among the clauses exhibiting the transitive syntactic pattern (subject-direct object), we also find abundant examples of stativity (with verbs such as those cited in 4.7-4.10), thus making it impossible to establish a direct relationship between syntactic pattern and the stative or dynamic nature of the situation denoted by the verb.

### 4.2.3 Volition and agency

Among the transitivity features proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980), there are two that refer to the semantic characteristics of the participant A: volition and agency. Higher transitivity is correlated with the volitional and agentive aspect of A, whereas the absence of volition and agency in A is related to a lower transitivity in the clause.

Volition and agency refer to the degree of involvement of participant A in the situation described by a given clause. Volition depends on the voluntary and conscious nature of A's participation, while agency is given, according to Hopper y Thompson (1980), by Silverstein's<sup>6</sup> Animacy hierarchy, since it largely coincides with the degree of topicality of the entity in question. Both volition and agency are interrelated, as the agentive potentiality, and in particular a high degree of animacy, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for volition.

A number of researchers working on typologically unrelated languages have demonstrated that the possibilities of using a non-canonical transitive coding increase when the animacy of the subject is lowered in the Animacy hierarchy (Dixon 1979:85ff, Comrie 1981:121, and Lazard 1994:200-204). This tendency is also confirmed by Spanish data. The subject-direct object clauses and the subject-indirect object clauses display a highly different picture regarding the animate vs. inanimate character of their subjects:

	Animate	Inanimate
Direct object clauses	58318 (85.75%)	9693 (14.25%)
Indirect object clauses <sup>7</sup>	1879 (28.35%)	4748 (71.65%)

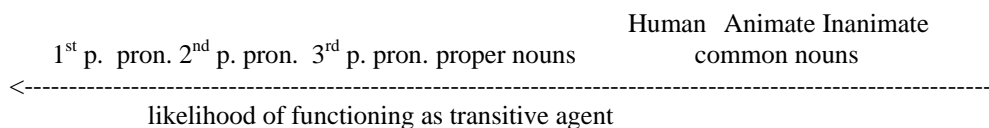
Table 4.2. Frequencies and percentages of animate vs. inanimate subjects in two-participant clauses.

The low degree of animacy that characterizes the subject in the subject-indirect object pattern is also corroborated by the frequency of clausal subjects in this pattern when it is contrasted with the rather exceptional presence of a subject clause in the transitive pattern:

	Clausal subject	Others
Direct object clauses	589 (0.86%)	67422 (99.14%)
Indirect object clauses	1666 (25.14%)	4748 (74.86%)

Table 4.3. Frequencies and percentages of clauses functioning as subject

<sup>6</sup> Dixon's (1979:85) representation of the hierarchy is the following:



<sup>7</sup> These data include all the subject-indirect object clauses in our database, not only the data pertaining to GTVs.



Examples of GTVs with clausal subjects are the following:

(4.30) Me agrada que penséis lo mismo (Coartada: 50, 33)

‘It pleases me that you guys think the same.’

(4.31) Al viejo le gusta que ella no bisbisee oraciones (Sonrisa: 182, 14)

‘The old man likes that she doesn’t whisper prayers.’

The data from Table 3 show that the clauses containing the subject-indirect object pattern clearly deviate from the transitive prototype, which includes among its components a highly agentive, and therefore, a highly animate subject, while a clausal subject such as that in (4.30-4.31) occupies the lowest level on the animacy hierarchy, and consequently, exhibits the lowest potentiality of agency. Thus, those verbs that are combined alternatively with a direct object (accusative clitic) or an indirect object (dative clitic) reject the transitive pattern when they are combined with a clausal subject. Let us compare (4.32) and (4.33):

(4.32) a. Le sorprendió mucho el comienzo de la Guerra

‘The beginning of the War surprised her/him a lot.’

b. Le sorprendió mucho que comenzase la Guerra

‘It surprised her/him greatly that the War began.’

(4.33) a. El comienzo de la guerra la sorprendió en París.

‘The beginning of the war surprised her in Paris.’

b. \* Que comenzase la guerra la sorprendió en París.<sup>8</sup>

\*’That the war began surprised her in Paris.’

The tendency shown by certain verbs to adhere to the transitive pattern if the subject is animate, and to the indirect object pattern if the subject is inanimate, had already been observed by grammarians such as Cuervo (1874:fn. 121) y Fernández Ramírez (1951:192), and, more recently, by García (1975:307-316). Copious examples from our corpus corroborate that tendency, illustrated by the following pairs:

(4.34) Una chica de Nueva York toma el barco a una isla del Caribe, donde **la** [DO] espera el novio para casarse. Parece una chica muy buena, y llena de ilusiones, que le cuenta todo al capitán del barco, que es buen mocísimo, y él mira al agua negra del mar, porque es de noche, y después la mira a ella como diciendo ‘esta no sabe lo que **le** [IO] espera’. (BMA, 163-164)

‘A girl from New York takes the ship to a Caribbean island, where her fiancé is waiting to get married. She seems like a very good girl, full of hope, who tells everything to the ship’s captain, who is staring into the black water, because it is

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<sup>8</sup> These examples are variants of those presented by Givón (1976:170): *La guerra le sorprendió mucho* ‘The war surprised him a lot’ and *La guerra lo sorprendió en París* ‘The war surprised him in Paris’.

nighttime, and then he starts looking at her as if to say ‘she doesn’t know what she’s in for.’

- (4.35) a. Sabía que el sólo decírselo a él iba a aliviarla, pero no lo hizo para no preocuparlo [DO]. (ATC, 484)

‘She knew that her just telling him was going to relieve her, but she did not tell him in order not to worry him.’

b. Lo que más le [IO] preocupaba de la muerte al doctor Urbino era la vida solitaria de Fermina Daza sin él. (ATC, 75)

‘What worried Dr. Urbino most about death was Fermina Daza’s lonely life without him.’

With respect to the feature of volition, which according to Hopper y Thompson’s (1980) view, characterizes the participant A in canonical transitive clauses, it is absent in clauses with GTVs. Since inanimate subjects, which typically appear with GTVs (cf. Table 4.2), are inherently non-volitional, the litmus test to determine the presence of volition in participant A constitute those GTV constructions containing an animate subject, as exemplified below.

- (4.36) Hoy precisamente, doy una comida y quiero presentarte a mis amigos, *les vas a encantar*. (Diego: 138, 11)

‘Precisely today, I am hosting a meal, and I want to introduce you to my friends. They are going to like you.’

- (4.37) JAVIER.- Ganas dinero y follas con quien te apetece.  
ADELA.- Y, a veces, con *quien me conviene* (Cinta: 102, 23)

‘JAVIER.- You make some money and ball whoever you please.’

‘ADELA.- And, sometimes, who (also) suits me.’

- (4.38) Que no seas pelmazo, que *ya no me importa Jose* (Ochenta: 67, 29)

‘Don’t be a bore, I am no longer interested in Jose.’

- (4.39) ¿Quién de los dos le gustaba al francés? (Jóvenes: 154, 4)

‘Which of the two did the Frenchman like?’

Among the signs that are adduced to show the volitional or controlled character of a situation, are the compatibility with the imperative, the possibility of functioning as complement of a verb of command/obligation, and the combinability with manner adverbials (see Dik1989: 96-97; Di Tullio 1996:225).

None of these tests yield positive results with clauses containing GTVs:

- (4.40) \*Encántales a mis amigos.

‘Make my friends like you.’

- (4.41) \*Te sugiero / ordeno que le convengas a Juan.

‘I suggest / order that you be right for Juan.’

- (4.42) \*La convencí / persuadí de que le gustase al francés.  
'I convinced / persuaded her that the Frenchman like her.'
- (4.43) \*Jose le importa deliberadamente / cuidadosamente / a propósito a Pedro.  
'Pedro matters to Jose deliberately / carefully / on purpose.'

Similarly, the impossibility of constructing an impersonal passive depend on the non-agentive character of the predication (see Levy 1994:357):

- (4.44) \*Se les encanta a los amigos  
'One is enjoyed by the friends.' (rough translation)

Therefore, the semantic implications of the animate subjects accompanying GTVs include neither agentivity, nor volition, nor control of the situation described by the clause, and are interpreted in a way similar to inanimate subjects, as a cause or stimulus of the state in which the the experiencer finds her/himself.

#### 4.2.4. *Affectedness & Individuation of O*

With regard to the features of the O argument, Hopper and Thompson (1980) claim that the degree of transitivity is correlated with the affectedness and individuation of this participant. A clause will become more transitive to the extent to which O becomes affected by the process described in the clause, as is the case, for instance, with created or altered Os. With respect to the O appearing with GTVs, coded as the indirect object, it would be difficult to assert that it is affected in Hopper and Thompson's (1980:252-253) sense, i.e., '[t]he degree to which an action is transferred to a patient is a function of how completely that patient is AFFECTED', since the clauses containing these predicates do not refer to an action, nor can it be claimed that the participant O becomes affected. Rather, O is the basis of a stative situation. The fact that the affectedness feature does not apply to the O of GTVs is conditioned by the fact that such a participant is not the patient in an action clause, but rather, the experiencer of a state.

For its part, the 'individuation' feature is interpreted as a cluster concept with the following properties: proper noun, human-animate, concrete, singular, countable and referential-definite. Such properties refer to the distinctiveness of O, whose transitivity is lowered to the extent that O is characterized as common, inanimate, abstract, plural, uncountable and nonreferential. In extreme cases, we find clauses that do not really have two participants, but rather one participant (A) with O-incorporation. In this view, the Os in sentences such as *el niño tiene hambre* (lit. the boy has hunger) 'the boy is hungry', *la peonza da vueltas* (lit. the top gives spins) 'the top is spinning', *los escolares hacen novillos* (lit. the student make young bulls) 'the students play hooky', *esa cara da miedo* (lit. that face gives fright) 'that face is scary, are not considered arguments, but rather they are part of complex predicates, with the resulting clauses being interpreted as intransitive<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> With respect to this type of verb-noun combinations in English, Thompson and Hopper (2001:34) state: 'These V-O compounds are low in Transitivity because it is difficult to maintain that O is individuated or affected. In fact, for clauses with V-O compounds, it is not clear whether they should even be considered two-participant clauses at all.'

Hitherto we have seen that clauses containing GTVs are characterized as having low transitivity. However, upon examining features of the O participant of the GTV clauses in our corpus, we find that the degree of individuation of the entity would correspond in Hopper y Thompson's (1980) hypothesis, to clauses of high transitivity. Indeed, almost all examples with GTVs contain a human, concrete, countable and referential-definite indirect object. There are, however, some observations by Hopper y Thompson that seem to contradict considering a highly individuated O as an indicator of high transitivity. That is, the authors claim that the transitivity of the clause can be reduced 'when there is an anomalous A-O relationship, viz. when the O is higher than the A in the [Agency] hierarchy' (273).

Indeed, GTVs favor a type of construction in which the O participant surpasses A on the transitivity hierarchy, such that the high animacy of O would reduce the degree of transitivity of the clause. In order to minimize the effect of such a contradiction, Hopper y Thompson (1980: 273) state that it 'is the reduction of the 'Agency' of the A which accounts for the anomaly in the A-O relationship, not the fact that the O is high on the hierarchy.' This statement reestablishes the authors' initial idea that the human-animate character of O is a sign of high transitivity.

Nevertheless, we offer the following data, which counter the above idea. First, if we assume that the canonical or deviant character of a certain syntactic configuration is correlated with its frequency, those features that characterize the object most frequently will be the ones that will allow us to qualify the object as prototypical. With regard to the animacy of the O participant in transitive constructions, the data from Spanish are convincing: of a total of 68,010 subject-direct object clauses only 12,834, or 18,9%, display animate Os, from which we can conclude that the prototypical O will be inanimate. Second, according to the criterion of syntactic marking, a prototypical O will exhibit a morphologically less marked construction<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, we must conclude that those Os marked with the preposition *a* (typically animate and definite) cannot be considered prototypical objects. Third, the inanimate character of O is also given by the semantic definition of transitivity. It is assumed that a prototypical transitive clause refers to a transfer from an agent to a patient, roles which are defined by Langacker (1991: 210) with the following words:

The archetypal 'agent' role is that of a person who volitionally carries out physical activity which results in contact with some external object and the transmission of energy to that object. The polar opposite of an agent is an inanimate 'patient', which absorbs the energy transmitted by externally initiated physical contact and thereby undergoes some change of state.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, the correlation between the different parameters that make up the Transitivity Hypothesis leads us to consider the inanimate O as a feature of high transitivity. If Hopper and Thompson's approach were correct, we would expect an animate O to be correlated with the parameters of kinesis, volition, agency, etc. that characterize highly transitive clauses. However, there are copious verbs in Spanish that show the opposite situation, i.e., they present more

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<sup>10</sup> "The core A, S, and O arguments are more likely to be systematically morphologically unmarked than are the other arguments" (Thompson 1997: 64).

<sup>11</sup> Likewise, Comrie (1981:121) argues that "the most natural kind of transitive construction is one where the A is high in animacy and definiteness, and the P is lower in animacy and definiteness".

features of high transitivity when they have an inanimate O (coded as a direct object) than when they have an animate O (coded as an indirect object) (see section 4.5 below).

### 4.3. "Dative subjects"

In light of the relationship between clauses such as (45) and (46),

(4.45) A María le gusta la música.

‘María likes music.’

(4.46) María ama la música.

‘María loves music.’

the existence of a relation between the indirect object in (4.45) and the subject in (4.46) was proposed in early formalist accounts. The relationship was analyzed transformationally as a rule of subject-object exchange called FLIP by Lakoff (1970:126), and Psych-movement by Postal (1971)<sup>12</sup>. For its part, Case Grammar attributed the same interpretation, in terms of case frames, to both constructions, based on its supposed synonymy (see Fillmore 1968:30).

Later, Relational Grammar interpreted constructions illustrated by (4.45) as involving inversion, which consisted of demoting the underlying subject to a surface indirect object, and promoting the underlying object to a surface subject, known as *unaccusative advancement*.

Among the specific arguments for the existence of “dative-subject” verbs in Spanish is that dealing with nominalizations. As noted by Fernández-Soriano (1999:125), the nominalization of a three-argument verb such as *entregar* ‘hand in’ retains the preposition *a* for the indirect object, as in (4.47),

(4.47) La entrega del premio a Juan

‘The presentation to Juan of the award’

whereas the indirect object of a verb like *faltar* (“to lack”) –which is generally thought of as a type of GTV- is obligatorily preceded by *de*, the preposition that appears with subjects.

(4.48) La falta de valor de / \*a Juan (nominalization of *A Juan le falta valor.*)

‘Juan’s lack of courage’

(‘Juan lacks courage.’)

In Fernández-Soriano’s view, the obligatory selection of *de* in (4.48) suggests that *Juan* may be an underlying (i.e. a deep) subject, a so-called “dative subject.”

As for the nature of the subject in GTVs such as *gustar* ‘like’, its status as an underlying object has often been pointed out, appealing to the fact that it does not retain the preposition *de*, typical of subjects in nominalizations, but rather it is accompanied by the preposition *por*, as shown in (4.49).

(4.49) a. A Juan le gustan las cerezas.

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<sup>12</sup> The analysis of these authors refers to examples such as *The music pleases me y I like the music*. The degree of parallelism between Spanish and English is high enough to assume the same transformational rules for the Spanish examples.

‘Juan likes cherries.’

b. El gusto de Juan por las cerezas

‘Juan’s liking for cherries’

Campos (1999:1560) mentions the coreferentiality test with temporal infinitival constructions, according to which the indirect object position of GTVs (e.g. *gustar* in [4.50]) controls the subject position of the infinitive. Thus, in terms of its control properties, the indirect object in (4.50) corresponds to the subject position of verbs denoting dynamic situations (e.g. *escribir*), where the subject controls the infinitive subject position, as indicated in (4.51).

(4.50) A Lucy<sub>i</sub> le gustaba Ronny<sub>j</sub> antes de e<sub>i,\*j</sub> conocer a Otto.

‘Lucy<sub>i</sub> liked Ronny<sub>j</sub> before e<sub>i,\*j</sub> meeting Otto.

(4.51) A Ronny<sub>j</sub> le escribía Lucy<sub>i</sub> antes de e<sub>i,\*j</sub> conocer a Otto

‘Ronny<sub>j</sub> used to write to Lucy<sub>i</sub> before e<sub>i,\*j</sub> meeting Otto.

However, other tests employed by generative grammarians to identify the subject do not support the presence of “dative subjects” with GTVs. For example, Fernández-Soriano (1999:123-124) attempts to show that the compatibility with small clauses is possible in constructions such as those in (4.52)-(4.56).

(4.52) Me falta café.

‘I need coffee.’

(4.53) Me pasa algo.

‘Something is wrong with me.’

(4.54) Me consta que eres el mejor.

‘I know for a fact that you are the best.’

(4.55) Nos dieron las dos.

‘It was 2 two o’clock (and we were still at it.)’

(4.56) A Marta le fue bien en Buenos Aires.

‘It went well for Marta in Buenos Aires.’

Nevertheless, of the examples in (4.52-4.56), only (4.55) and (4.56) are compatible with a small clause co-indexed with the indirect object, as shown in (4.57) and (4.58), respectively.

(4.57) Nos<sub>i</sub> dieron las dos *borrachos*<sub>i</sub>

‘We were drunk at two o’clock.’

(4.59) Mal me<sub>i</sub> fue *ausente*<sub>i</sub> pero peor *presente*<sub>i</sub>

‘It went badly for me when I was absent, but much worse when I was present.’

However, the constructions featured in (4.52), (4.53), and (4.54) are incompatible with indirect object small clauses<sup>13</sup>. This incompatibility is found with to all GTVs. However, GTVs do admit subject small clauses, as exemplified in

- (4.59) A María<sub>i</sub> Juan<sub>j</sub> le desagrada borracho<sub>j</sub> / \*borracha<sub>i</sub>  
'María<sub>i</sub> dislikes Juan<sub>j</sub> drunk<sub>j</sub>/\*i.'

Both Relational Grammar, as well as Generative Transformational Grammar give precedence to the behavioral properties over the coding properties, minimizing the importance of the coding that identifies subjects (agreement with the verb, absence of preposition) from indirect complements (dative clitic showing agreement, the preposition *a*). For our part, we interpret such coding as crucial in the syntactic characterization of arguments. Moreover, we do not consider appropriate the distinction of several (more or less deep) levels of syntactic function. However, we acknowledge the similarities between the sentences such as (4.45) (*A María le gusta la música* 'María likes music') and (4.46) (*María ama la música* 'María loves music').

Unlike the generativist formulations described above, we believe that the relationship between the such as (4.45) and (4.46) are to be interpreted in terms of different semantic and discourse values. Although both sequences can refer to the same reality, the different syntactic coding of the participants is not random at all, but rather it fits a different semantic and discourse configuration. With respect to the corresponding English sentences (*John likes music* and *Music pleases John*), Danes< (1968:61) proposes two different semantic patterns: the first would consist of "bearer of attitude – attitude – object of attitude", whereas the second would be made up of "source (cause) – effecting – recipient of effectation".

Before studying the features that distinguish the clauses in (4.45) and (4.46), we will discuss the similarities between both structures, starting with a diachronic reference to the issue at hand. In the earlier stages of their respective histories, both English *like* as well as Spanish *gustar* had a different argument structure than what they have now. In Old English, the element that currently takes on the form of subject was coded as the object, as in *him like oysters* vs. *he likes oysters*.<sup>14</sup> With regard to *gustar*, it was used as a transitive verb in Old Spanish. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century this transitive pattern coexists with a pattern with prepositional object, and by the 18<sup>th</sup> century documentation emerges showing *gustar* with 'dative subjects'.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> It cannot be said, for example, (4.52') \*Me falta café despierta, (4.53') \* Me pasa algo sola, (4.54') \*Me consta segura que eres el mejor.

<sup>14</sup> Examples taken from Jespersen (1924:160).

<sup>15</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, we find old constructions such as (i), as well as constructions with prepositional objects, as shown in (ii)

(i) [...]si ya no gustas que la discreción y sciencia de Tirsi y de Damón te alumbren de la ceguedad en que estás [...]

if you don't like that the discretion and science of Tirsi and Damon enlight your blindness in which you are...

(ii) Quién no gusta de verlo entretenerse?

'Who doesn't like to see him amuse himself?'

For its part, continental Portuguese still has the construction found in (ii). Therefore, one cannot accept Rotaetxe's (1999:27) generalization that in their evolution, languages often pass from a dative construction to an direct object one, and never the other way round. Although the changes undergone by English *like* seem to support such a

However, the structural changes are not restricted to the verbs *like* and *gustar*. As Whitley (1998) points out, many of the so-called psych verbs have presented different syntactic patterns over time, a variability that is not observed in prototypically transitive verbs, which are more syntactically stable.

Focusing on the evolution of *gustar*, we observe that the transition from the transitive to the 'dative subject' argument structure has been accompanied by a semantic change that adheres to Hopper and Thompson's (1980) Transitivity Hypothesis. As Whitley indicates (1998:138), "[i]n the semantic change of *gustar* from a tasting agent to a satisfied experiencer, there was a decrease in 'kinesis', 'volitionality' and 'agency'". However, regardless of the direction of the structural variation, it is unquestionable that the change reveals a close link between the subject of the transitive pattern and the indirect object of the intransitive one.

From a typological perspective, this relationship is supported by data from several languages. For example, in the Indo-European context it is shown in the emergence of the verb of possession 'have' from a dative construction containing the copula 'be', as exemplified by the Latin examples in (4.60)-(4.61).

(60) Mihi est liber  
to me (DAT) is book (NOM)  
'I've got the book.'

(61) Habeo librum  
I have book (ACUS)  
'I've got the book.'

The dative, or indirect object represents a certain degree of activity on the part of the participant, which is linked to its prototypically animate character. This degree of activity sets the participant apart from the indirect object (characterized as non-active), while bringing it closer to the subject, which in turn corresponds to a prototypically active participant. The relationship between indirect object and subject also manifests itself in the fact that the dative can code the agent complement of the passive construction in languages such as Old Persian and Pre-Classical Latin (see Herslund (1988:292-293), Mongolian (Comrie 1976:276), or Japanese (Marantz 1984:140)).<sup>16</sup>

Another characteristic that draws the indirect object toward the subject and moves it away from the direct object is the feature of independent existence that we attribute to the entity represented by the indirect object. This is one of the properties that Keenan (1976) assigns to the subject.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the independent existence characterizes the indirect object that accompanies GTV.

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statement, Spanish *gustar*, along with verbs such as *faltar*, *admirar*, and so on illustrate the opposite situation (see Whitley 1998:128).

<sup>16</sup> With regard to this information, we should also mention the position attributed to the experiencer on the control continuum proposed by Comrie (1981:53-56), a position that brings the experiencer closer to the agent, but separates it from the patient.

<sup>17</sup> 'The entity that a b[asic]-subject refers to (if any) exists independently of the action or property expressed by the predicate' (Keenan 1976: 312-313).



Finally, the pragmatic-informative properties also attest to the close relationship between the indirect object in a clause like (4.45) and the subject in clauses such as (4.46). In both instances, it is the relatively more active participant that occupies the thematic position, independently of the syntactic function it performs.

The data about the position with respect to the verb that have been mentioned for *gustar* clearly indicate the thematization of the indirect object vis-à-vis the subject. Contrary to the most common association between subject and discourse theme, in clauses with GTVs the unmarked discourse theme is not the subject, but rather the indirect object, and as such it occupies the first position in the clause, whereas the subject follows the verb.<sup>18</sup>

	Subject <sup>19</sup>		Indirect object	
Preposed	125	(9.98%)	236	(19.33%)
Postposed	678	(54.15%)	29	(2.37)
Implicit, clitic, or fixed order	449	(35.86%)	985	(80.67%)
TOTAL	1252		1221	

Table 4.4. Frequencies and percentages of preposition and postposition of subject and indirect object for *gustar*.

#### 4.4. Direct construction vs. inverse construction

We begin this section with a terminological note. Following the terminology employed to refer to the patterns under consideration, we will consider a “direct construction” the pattern found in clauses such as *María ama la música* ‘María loves music’ (in [4.46]), an “inverse construction” the pattern identifiable in *a María le gusta la música* ‘María likes music’ (in [4.45]).<sup>20</sup>

As we have seen in the previous section, some authors claim that the differences between these constructions are limited to the most superficial syntactic level, and that underlyingly we would be dealing with an identical configuration. An argument against this view is the existence of sentence pairs containing the same lexical items that exhibit divergent interpretations.

- (4.62) a. *María admira la rapidez con que dibujas*  
 ‘María admires the quickness with which you draw’  
 b. *A María le admira la rapidez con que dibujas*

<sup>18</sup> These quantitative data have been obtained from the BDS (see footnote 1).

<sup>19</sup> The total frequency of the subject is slightly higher than that of the indirect object due to the existence of clauses without indirect object.

<sup>20</sup> Both terms have been used extensively in Relational Grammar, although authors from other schools have also employed similar terminology. For instance, Bossong (1997:260) contrasts the terms “généralisation” and “inversion”, whereas Whitley (1998) distinguishes “direct construction” from “reverse construction”.

‘María is astonished by how fast you draw.’

(4.63) a. Juan apetece una casa propia.

‘Juan fancies having his own house.’

b. A Juan le apetece una casa propia

‘Juan fancies having his own house.’

(4.64) a. Antonio repugna el dulce.

‘Antonio finds the sweet disgusting.’

b. A Antonio le repugna el dulce

‘The sweet disgusts Antonio.’

If we adopt a functional approach, we need to account for the existence of two different constructions for the expression of the same content. That is, we must justify the functional output of the two constructions.

Whitley (1998:130) suggests that there is difference in terms of control between the constructions:

Verbs that stayed in or moved to type 1 [the direct construction] suggest a common denominator of choice or control. One can choose to love, hate, hope, use, even take responsibility for it, while pleasure (*gustar*, *placer*), pain (*doler*), and sorrow (*pesar*) in type 3 [the inverse construction] are feelings that simply happen to experiencer.

Nevertheless, the attribution of control or responsibility to the subject participant of the direct construction is debatable. It is not clear to what extent one can love, hate or admire something or somebody as a result of a conscious, volitional effort. If we try strictly linguistic tests, the result is not any clearer. It is true that some verbs like *amar* (“love”) or *pensar* (“think”) are compatible with the imperative:

(4.65) “Amaos los unos a los otros”, dijo Jesucristo

“‘Love one another”, said Jesus Christ.’

(4.66) Piénsalo con calma

‘Think it over calmly.’

However, it does not seem possible to use the imperative with verbs such as *apetecer* ‘fancy, feel like’, *repugnar* ‘disgust’. Nevertheless, certain contrasts between direct and inverse constructions lend credence to the idea that the direct construction implies a certain degree of agentivity on the part of the subject that is absent from the inverse construction. Thus, in saying *he tenido una idea* ‘I have had an idea’ or *he pensado que podríamos ir a la fiesta* ‘I thought that we could go to the party’, we assume responsibility for the mental activity represented, whereas

if we say *se me ha ocurrido una idea* ‘an idea has occurred to me’ or *se me ha ocurrido que podríamos ir a la fiesta* ‘it has occurred to me that we could go to the party’, we do not admit our participation in the making of the thoughts that are reproduced. Thus, they would escape the conscious control of our mind.

Proof regarding how the different degree of agentivity affects the selection of the construction is given by the verbs *recordar* ‘remember’ and *olvidar* ‘forget’. Although both refer to similar cognitive process, the language attributes more agentivity to the action of remembering than to that of forgetting. Therefore, only the latter verb allows the inverse construction<sup>21</sup>:

(4.67) a. María recordó el cumpleaños de Juan.

‘María remembered Juan’s birthday.’

b. \*A María se le recordó el cumpleaños de Juan.<sup>22</sup>

‘María remembered Juan’s birthday.’

(4.68) a. María olvidó el cumpleaños de Juan.

‘María forgot Juan’s birthday’

b. A María se le olvidó el cumpleaños de Juan.

‘María forgot Juan’s birthday.’

On the other hand, the differences in control between direct and inverse constructions are also reflected in the (im)possibility of functioning as complement of a verb that implies volition, such as *intentar* ‘try’. Thus, we can say *intentó olvidar a María* ‘S/he tried to forget María’, but not *\*intentó que se le olvidara María*.

From a typological point of view, there are reasons to think this. Like Spanish, languages are equipped with more than one way of conceptualizing psychic processes (see Wierzbicka 1999:58-59). This is found in Russian, in which one can express the fact of ‘being sad’ with three different constructions:

(4.69)

a. *On byl grusten*

he-NOM was-MASC sad-MASC

b. *.Emu bylo grustno*

he-DAT (it)was-NEUT sad(ADV)NEUT

c. *On grustil*

he-NOM sad(VERB)-PAST.MASC”. (Wierzbicka 1999:59).

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<sup>21</sup> Proof independent of the more agentive character of *recordar* is the possibility of the causative construction with this verb, as in *Juan le recordó la hora de la cita a María* (“Juan reminded María the time of the appointment”), which is not possible with *olvidar* (*\*Juan le olvidó la hora de la cita a María*).

<sup>22</sup> This sequence would be possible as a reflexive passive, not as an inverse construction.

As Wierzbicka (1999:60) points out:

All these sentences can be roughly glossed as ‘he was sad’, but in fact they differ in meaning. In particular sentence [b] implies that the sadness was involuntary and was, so to speak, ‘happening to the experiencer’, whereas [c] implies active involvement by the experiencer, and suggests that he is bringing about his own sadness by thinking certain thoughts.

The semantic and constructional parallelism between (4.69b) y (4.69c) above with the inverse and direct construction, respectively, is evident.

A similar situation is found in Polish, which presents as many direct constructions as inverse ones in order to represent the same type of processes:

(4.70)

a. Ania podziwiała Piotra.

Ania:NOM admired Piotr:ACC

‘Ania admired Piotr.’

b. Ani imponuje Piotr.

Ania:DAT impressed Piotr: NOM

‘Piotr impressed Ania. / Ania was impressed by Piotr’ (Dabrowska 1997:70)

Thus, the experiencer is coded, according to the construction, as nominative or dative. Dabrowska asks herself about the basis of this distinction and concludes that it is based on the existence of two ways of conceptualizing mental experiences, which revolve around two different theories. On the one hand, we have the ‘craftsman model’, according to which the mental experience is conceived as an action undertaken by the experiencer who manipulates mental objects (ideas, images, experiences). This model corresponds to the coding of experiencer as nominative. On the other hand, we have the ‘mental arena model’, which conceives the mind as a container of ideas that executes the activities of thinking, feeling, etc., as spontaneous processes that take place in the experiencer’s personal sphere. According to this model, the sensations, feelings and beliefs are conceived by attributing to them an independent existence outside the experiencer<sup>23</sup>. This model corresponds to the dative experiencer (see Dabrowska 1997:77).

The existence of the two types of constructions, direct and inverse, would corroborate the cognitive validity of both theories. According to Dabrowska for Polish, the coding of the experiencer through the nominative is interpreted as the default option, with the dative construction requiring a special motivation (see 1997:79).

We can also explain the existence of two different codings for psychological processes through the prototypical configuration of the biactant predications, which can be summed up as the transference of an action from an agent to a patient. The verbs that adjust more naturally to this semantic configuration have been called “primary transitive verbs”<sup>24</sup>, and pose no problems with

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<sup>23</sup> “We tend to think of ideas as objects that enter and leave our minds and of emotions as waves that overwhelm us and sweep us away” (Dabrowska 1997: 42)

<sup>24</sup> A. Andrews (1985: 68) defines “primary transitive verbs” as “the class of two-argument verbs taking an Agent and a Patient (e.g. kill, eat, smash)”.

regard to the syntactic construction that they select: the agent is coded as subject and the patient as direct object. Situating ourselves within Dowty's (1991) framework, which deals with a set of semantic implications for the Proto-Roles of Agent and Patient, we can say that for "primary transitive verbs" the subject has all the Proto-Agent features, whereas the object displays all the properties of the Proto-Patient<sup>25</sup>.

Nevertheless, in the case of psychological processes, the selection of subject and object is less obvious, since the participants are not so evidently specialized as Proto-Agents or Proto-Patients. Rather, we need to acknowledge that both the experiencer and the stimulus have Proto-Agent properties: the experiencer has property b ('sentence (and/or perception') of the Agent Proto-role, whereas the stimulus has property c ('causing an event or change of state in another participant') of the Agent Proto-role. Thus, both the experiencer and the stimulus can be candidates to be coded as subject, as is the case in Spanish.

#### 4.5. Two types of inverse constructions

So far, our discussion regarding inverse constructions has centered on those verbs that code the indirect object as the experiencer of the process. The identification of the indirect object function is given by indicators such as the pronominalization by the dative clitic and the impossibility of passivization:

- (4.71) a. *Le apetece un largo trago de vino.* (Sonrisa: 26, 5)  
'He fancies a long swig of wine.'
- b. \**Un largo trago de vino es apetecido por él.*  
'A long swill of wine is fancied by him.'

The list of verbs that meet those conditions is relatively limited:

- (4.72) *agradar* 'please', *alcanzar* 'affect', 'be sufficient for', *apetecer* 'fancy', *atañer* 'concern', *competer*, *concernir* 'concern', *convenir* 'be good for', *desagradar* 'displease', *doler* 'hurt', *extrañar* 'find strange', *gustar* 'like', *importar* 'matter', *incumbir* 'concern', *parecer* 'seem', *pasar* 'happen', *pesar* 'regret', *placer* 'please', *repugnar* 'disgust', *suceder* 'happen', *tocar* 'be posted, win, be one's turn, concern'

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<sup>25</sup> "Contributing properties for the Agent Proto-Role:

- a. volitional involvement in the event or state
- b. sentence (and/or perception)
- c. causing an event or change of state in another participant
- d. movement (relative to the position of another participant)
- (e. exists independently of the event named by the verb)

Contributing properties for the Patient Proto-Role:

- a. undergoes change of state
- b. incremental theme
- c. causally affected by another participant
- d. stationary relative to movement of another participant
- (e. does not exist independently of the event, or not at all)" (Dowty 1991:572)

Some of these verbs also have an subject-direct object construction whose semantic configuration is no longer stimulus-experiencer, but agent-patient. If the direct object is compulsorily inanimate, both constructions correspond to two clearly distinct meanings, as shown by the examples in (4.73) and (4.74).

(4.72) a. Los abogados han convenido las condiciones del contrato [D.O.]  
'The lawyers have agreed the conditions of the contract.'

b. Al abogado [I.O.] le convienen las condiciones del contrato  
'The conditions of the contract are good for the lawyer.'

(4.74) a. El gobierno importa alimentos [D.O.] de Australia  
'The government imports food from Australia.'

b. Al gobierno [I.O.] no le importa tu opinión  
'Your opinion does not matter to the government.'

In other instances, the direct object can be animate, like the indirect one, but there are also differences of meaning between the two:

(4.75) a. Voy a extrañar a Mariana [D.O.], por ser la última mujer de mi vida.  
(Historias: 56,4)

'I am going to miss Mariana for being the last woman of my life.'

b. A él [I.O.] también le extraña que, de repente, lo tan ansiado parezca recuerdo de cosa ya olvidada. (Sonrisa: 232,17)

'He also finds strange that, suddenly, that which was so craved seems a memory of something already forgotten.'

There are some other verbs that seem to reveal differences in their semantics that go hand in hand with their use with an indirect (or direct) object, although both mention of both constructions does not always appear in the dictionaries. For example, the verb *encantar* 'love' exhibits two, clearly differentiated meanings, shown in (4.76)-(4.77).<sup>26</sup>

(4.76) Someter [a alguien o algo] a una acción que sobrepasa lo natural por medio de la magia (Seco 1999, entry for *encantar*)

'Subject [somebody or something] to an action that beyond the natural by means of magic.'

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<sup>26</sup> *Repeler* ('repel, repulse') exhibits a similar behavior, since it presents a transitive pattern in all its meanings, except in the sense of 'make somebody feel disgust or aversion' (Diccionario de la Real Academia Española, entry for *repeler*), which undoubtedly favors the dative: *A usted, amiga mía, le repele visceralmente el tipo humano al que pertenece Alvar* (Renglonés) 'You, my friend, are viscerally repulsed by the human type Alvar belongs to.'

- (4.77) Gustar o complacer extraordinariamente [a alguien (*cd*)] (ibíd.)  
'Like or please very much.'

Both uses are listed as transitive, contrary to the common tendency in Spanish. Nevertheless, in the same dictionary (i.e. that of Seco et al. 1999), there is an example with an accusative clitic for the sense in (4.76): *al escupirles en la cara logra encantarlos, y quedan como muertos por el día* 'when s/he spits them in the face, s/he manages to enchant them, and they remain like dead for the day'; and another example with a dative clitic for the meaning in (4.77): *Le encanta la música* 'S/he loves music'. The possibility of *leísmo* for the latter example is out of the question, since the dative clitic can have a feminine referent, as in *a María le encanta la música* 'María loves music'. According to the BDS data (see footnote 1), of a total of 96 appearances of *encantar* with the meaning in (4.77) above, 26 exhibit a dative clitic (*le/les*, whether alone or accompanied by a phrase introduced by *a*) and 70 have first- and second-person clitics, i.e., syncretic forms that neutralize the distinction between accusative and dative. In light of these data, we can claim that in its meaning of predicate of affection, *encantar* displays the inverse construction linked to the GTVs.

Significantly more complex is the behavior observed in a large set of verbs that has the possibility of appearing with the accusative or the dative, without there being any clear semantic difference between them. Among these verbs, we cite the following:

- (4.78) *abrumar* 'overwhelm', *aburrir* 'bore', *admirar* 'admire', *afectar* 'affect', *afligir* 'grieve', *alegrar* 'make happy', *angustiar* 'distress', *apasionar* 'fascinate', *apenar* 'sadden', *asombrar* 'amaze', *asustar* 'scare', *atemorizar* 'frighten', *aterrar* 'terrify', *aterrorizar* 'terrorize', *atormentar* 'torment', *atraer* 'attract', *avergonzar* 'shame', *cansar* 'tire', *complacer* 'please', *consolar* 'console', *convencer* 'convince', *decepcionar* 'disappoint', *deleitar* 'delight', *desanimar* 'dishearten', *descontentar* 'displease', *desconsolar* 'distress', *desesperar* 'exasperate', *disgustar* 'disgust', *distraer* 'amuse', "distract", *divertir* 'amuse', *emocionar* 'move', touch', *entretener* 'amuse, entertain', *entristecer* 'sadden', *entusiasmar* 'love', *escandalizar* 'scandalize', *espantar* 'scare away', *estorbar* 'bother', *exasperar* 'exasperate', *fascinar* 'fascinate', *fastidiar* 'annoy', *favorecer* 'favor', *halagar* 'flatter', *impresionar* 'impress', *incomodar* 'inconvenience', *inquietar* 'unsettle', *interesar* 'interest', *intranquilizar* 'worry', *intrigar* 'intrigue', *irritar* 'irritate', *maravillar* 'amaze', *molestar* 'bother', *obsesionar* 'obsess', *ofender* 'offend', *pasmar* 'astonish', *perjudicar* 'be bad for', *preocupar* 'worry', *reconfortar* 'comfort', *satisfacer* 'satisfy', *seducir* 'seduce', *sorprender* 'surprise', *tranquilizar* 'calm down'

Given that these are verbs that appear in dictionaries with the "transitive" label, one would expect them to take accusative objects (i.e., direct objects) in non-*leista* dialects. However, the grammarians' accounts about the fluctuation in case-marking of these verbs are not only recent. With respect to the verb *admirar*, Bello (1847:§749) states that it projects accusative case in *un objeto nos admira* 'an object admires us', while Cuervo (1886-1893, s.v. *admirar*) claims that if we interpret the *admirar* 'cause admiration', as in Bello's example, this entry takes the dative, since the accusative is associated with the meaning 'consider with admiration'. Other verbs for

which Cuervo (1886-1893) postulates a dual case marking are *agradar*<sup>27</sup> ‘please’, *desagradar* ‘displease’, *contentar* ‘please’, *cansar* ‘tire’, *descontentar* ‘displease’, *disgustar* ‘annoy’.

More recently, several scholars have attempted to identify the factors that determine the selection of accusative or dative case marking among verbs belonging to this class<sup>28</sup>. The factors that have been alluded to are related to the nature of the subject and object participants, as well as to the aspectual content of the predicate as a whole. The features that have been mentioned fit into the predictions of Hopper and Thompson’s (1980) Transitivity Hypothesis (with certain modifications regarding the characteristics of the object participant; see section 4.2.4 above “*Affectedness & Individuation of O*”), in the sense that the accusative object is associated with highly transitive clauses, whereas the dative object corresponds to clauses of low transitivity.

With regard to the aspectual configuration of the predicate, we argue that clauses with direct object marking tend to denote dynamic and telic events, whereas indirect object marking corresponds to states and atelic dynamic states. The following examples with the verb *atraer* ‘attract, appeal’) clearly illustrate how direct object marking appears in a clause that expresses an action of a physical nature (4.79), while indirect object marking appears in a clause expressing a psychic reaction on the part of the experiencer (4.80)<sup>29</sup>:

(4.79) Los rugidos del león atrajeron al cazador, quien, sacándolo del fondo del foso, lo metió en una gran jaula y se lo llevó (1Infan: 21, 26)

‘The roaring of the lion attracted the hunter, who took it out of the bottom of the pit, put it in a big cage, and took it with him.’

(4.80) El libro estaba encuadernado en piel y tenía el canto dorado, pero a ella no le atraía. (Sur: 104, 30)

‘The book was bound in leather and had a gilded spine, but did not appeal to her.’

The aforementioned differences in telicity can be observed in the following examples with *convencer*, (4.81) in its telic sense, and (4.82) in its atelic one:

(4.81) La ha convencido y se casarán en cuanto arreglen los papeles. (Sonrisa: 329,23)

‘He has convinced her and they are going to get married as soon as they straighten the paperwork out.’

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<sup>27</sup> According to Cuervo (1886-93 s.v. *agradar*), at that time the *Diccionario de la Real Academia* considered this verb as transitive. In its current edition, both *agradar* and *desagradar* are regarded as intransitive.

<sup>28</sup> Examples of particularly relevant studies are: Hurst (1951), García (1975), Roldán (1975), García and Otheguy (1977), Levy (1980), Orange (1982), Uber (1986), Whitley (1995) and (1998), di Tullio (1995), Roegiest (1995).

<sup>29</sup> Each example is associated with a meaning different from that in Seco et al. (1999). *Atraer* in (77) means ‘(of a person or thing) to make somebody or something (D.O.) come closer to him/her/it or to where s/he it is by means of a physical force or impulse of an instinctive or voluntary nature’; whereas in (78) it means ‘(of a person or thing) to bring it about that somebody or something (D.O.) have a feeling of affection, inclination or desire towards him/her/it’.



- (4.82) Veo que a usted le gusta el ambiente porque veranear por ahí en un poblacho, eso no le convence. (Madrid: 31,24)

‘I see that you like the atmosphere, because spending the summer in a dump, that does not convince you.’

For Di Tullio (1995:256), the verbs in question ‘can denote complex events as well as states in each of their alternative forms, the accusative and the dative.’ In complex events, the activity carried out by the subject triggers a change in the psychological state of the object. As Di Tullio (1995:258) points out, the activity implies dynamism and control on the part of the subject, and the resulting event is telic since it entails culmination or outcome. On the other hand, the sentence with a dative-marking verb implies neither dynamism nor control, nor is it delimited, since it does not entail an outcome (1995:258). The impossibility of the imperative and the progressive constitutes proof of the stative nature of the predicate with dative marking.

Following Croft (1986), Dowty (1991) points out that the psychological predicates that code the stimulus as subject (*please, frighten*, etc.) can be interpreted as inchoative or stative (unlike verbs such as *like, fear*, etc., whose subject is experiencer, and are interpreted only as stative). The inchoative interpretation implies a change of state in the experiencer, ‘coming to experience an emotion or a new mental state’ (Dowty 1991:580), such that this argument would have a Proto-Patient implication absent of the stative interpretation. Consequently, the experiencer in the inchoative interpretation would be a ‘better’ Patient (Dowty 1991:580) than the experiencer in the stative interpretation. This would explain, as Ackerman and Moore (1999:24) note, the distribution of object marking in Spanish: accusative (prototypical direct object) in the inchoative predicate, and dative (non-prototypical object) in the stative predicate.

The nature of the subject argument determines the marking of the object: If the subject is animate and possesses the will to act consciously, the likelihood that the experiencer/patient is coded as an accusative object increases notably (see [4.83] below). However, if the subject is inanimate it is more likely that the experiencer will be dative (see [4.84] below).

- (4.83) No buscó a Diego, no quería molestarlo. (Diego: 59,6)

‘S/he did not seek out Diego. S/he did not want to bother him.’

- (4.84) También le molestaba mucho que Agus se metiera el dedo en la nariz (Ternura: 90,26)

‘It also bothered him a lot that Agus picked his nose.’

Strictly speaking, it cannot be claimed that all the apparently [+animate] subjects can be interpreted as agents with the verbs under consideration in this article. Di Tullio (1995) distinguishes those cases in which the animate subject denotes an individual with agentive potentialities, like the implicit subject of *molestar* in (4.83) above, from other situations in which the animate reference is understood as a summation of properties, body parts, characteristics, or behaviors (Di Tullio 1995:257, as shown by the subject of *atraer* in (4.85).

- (4.85) Los [estudiantes] más comprometidos en la lucha seguían en la Facultad. A David le atraían (Jóvenes: 156, 39)

‘The students that were most committed to the struggle continued on in the Department. David was attracted by them.’

The subject of human reference in (4.85) behaves like the subjects of GTVs, which, as we have pointed out (cf. 4.2.3 above), lack volition and control over the situation, independently of their subcategorization features.

With regard to the characteristics of the object, it seems that the way in which it participates in the event can also condition the functional selection. The less active the object argument is, and the more directly affected by the situation it is, the more likely it is to be coded as a direct object. In particular, when the affectedness is physical, there is a tendency to use the accusative, whereas psychic affectedness tends to correlate with the dative. In this respect, we can adduce, for example, Hurst's (1951:76) data on the verb *irritar*, which favors the use of the dative in a sequence such as *a ella le irritan mis atenciones* 'my affections irritated her (dative)' vis-à-vis the physical meaning of *la irritaba el roce de la cinta* 'the rubbing of the tape [on her skin] irritated her (accusative)'. By the same token, the possibilities of passivization are reduced for the psychological uses of the verbs listed in (4.78). Compare, for instance, the sentences in (4.86) to their counterparts in (4.87):

(4.86) a. Al ladrón lo sorprendió la policía en el interior de la vivienda

'The police surprised the burglar in the inner part of the house.'

b. El ladrón fue sorprendido por la policía en el interior de la vivienda

'The burglar was surprised by the police in the house.'

(4.87) a. Al ladrón no le sorprendió la actuación de la policía.

'The police intervention did not surprise the thief.'

b. \* El ladrón no fue sorprendido por la actuación de la policía.

(\*'The thief was not surprised by the police intervention.'

Ackerman & Moore (1999:9), following Treviño (1992), explain the contrast between 'direct affectedness' and 'non-direct affectedness' using the examples in (4.88)-(4.89).

(4.88) Los perros LO molestan siempre que llega ebrio.

'The dogs harass HIM (DO) every time he comes home drunk.'

(4.89) Los perros LE molestan (\*siempre que llega ebrio).

'The dogs bother HIM (IO) (\*every time he comes home drunk).

In (4.88), we have an object that is more prototypically patient than the one in (4.89), which accounts for its coding as a direct object. In (4.89), however, the object participant does not undergo a change of state, and is not directly affected, but rather is the experiencer of a new stative situation. Again, one can test this: only (4.88) allows passivization.

With respect to the dialectal extension of the accusative-dative alternation of the verbs in (4.78), we have to point out that there are instances of interference due to the phenomenon of *leísmo*. In such circumstances, the alternation only has an effect on the feminine form, with the exception of those varieties that exhibit both *leísmo* and *laísmo*. Apart from that, it has been pointed out that in certain varieties (e.g. those in Argentina, Chile, Peru), accusative case marking has been generalized for the verbs listed in (4.72), that is, the GTVs (see Fernández-Ordóñez 1999: 1325). The example with *concernir* 'concern' illustrates this solution.

(4.90) Algo que *lo* concernía tan íntimamente quizá lo descalificara para juzgar.  
(Historias: 93, 2)

‘Maybe something that concerned him so intimately disqualified him from judging.’

Thus, the alternation between accusative and dative case marking for verbs of affectedness is a phenomenon that itself varies somewhat in the Spanish-speaking domain. Although the factors that we have pointed out in this section undoubtedly play a role in the syntactic coding of the object participant, it must be interpreted, not as a set of rules that are applied rigidly, but rather as general tendencies that account for a large number of cases, but that do not exclude the existence of examples that go against the predictions.

There is one more factor that contributes to the alternation of object marking in verbs of emotion: the relatively low frequency with which speakers are forced to choose between one or the other construction. Emotion verbs express an internal process of the experiencer, in such a way that a speaker can more easily appreciate his/her own feeling when s/he is the one affected, but has only indirect evidence of the process when the experiencer is another person<sup>30</sup>. This is why in discourse there are more cases in which objects are first person pronouns than those in which objects are third person pronouns. Since the syncretism of the Spanish pronominal system excludes the possibility of making a case distinction between direct and indirect object in all but the third person, speakers are freed from having to choose between the two forms when using the first (and second) person pronoun.

We have provided statistical analyses in our data that seem to confirm this line of argumentation. Since it is commonly understood that conversational oral language is the most representative of the spontaneous language use, we have limited the statistical analyses to data from oral texts and the theatrical texts of the data ARTHUS (see footnote 1). We also limited the verbs under our investigation to a small sample: *alegrar* ‘please’, *asombrar* ‘surprise’, *disgustar* ‘displease’, *divertir* ‘enjoy’, *interesar* ‘interest’, *molestar* ‘bother’, *preocupar* ‘worry’, *sorprender* ‘surprise’ y *tranquilizar* ‘calm’. Results indicate that there were 21 cases of third person pronoun while there were 133 cases of first person pronouns (86.4%). Needless to say, a more extensive quantitative study needs to be done, but the data discussed in our study still provide an important indication for the relative frequency of the pronominal forms in real discourse.

But, why is it considered that a low frequency of use favors variation? The answer to this question is based on the assumption that linguistic structures result from conventionalization of frequently used discourse forms. That is, following claims by Givón (1979), Du Bois (1985), or Hopper (1998), we believe that grammar emerges from discourse and thus a frequency factor is essential to account for the emergence and evolution of the syntactic structures. As pointed out by Du Bois (1985:363), “grammars code best what speakers do most”. Thus, we believe that the accusative-dative alternation in emotive verbs cannot be accounted for either way--generalizing either accusative or dative for all the cases of the same verb--since its frequency of use is not sufficient to force grammaticalization. We do note tendencies for some of these verbs to be used in a fixed construction in order to express a certain meaning (cf. example 4.76 with the verb *encantar* ‘like’), but the majority of verbs have not lexicalized both accusative and dative

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<sup>30</sup> As Mithun (1991: 522) says, “Speakers do not claim to feel what another individual is feeling”. Cf. also Melis (1999).

constructions, which leaves ample room –one with accusative, the other with dative constructions-; instead two variants of construction coexist.

#### 4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have carried out an analysis of the GTVs within the framework of the Transitivity Hypothesis proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980). First, we have argued that, together with DOs and subjects, IOs should be considered part of the core argument structure of GTVs. After examining the characteristics of the constructions containing GTVs and paying special attention to the parameters proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980), we have demonstrated that constructions containing GTVs exhibit low transitivity.

In sections 4.3. and 4.4., we have analyzed the syntax and semantics of the GTVs as compared to transitive constructions with emotion verbs. In contrast to formalist approaches that defend assigning the same semantic configuration to both types of construction, we have seen how the functionalist approach leads us to make a semantic distinction between the two structures. In support of this argument, we put forward typological data bearing out the existence of a cognitive basis for the constructional contrast.

Finally, in section 4.5., we examined the properties of those verbs that fluctuate between the construction with IO and the construction with DO. We found that the alternation between the two structures follows perfectly from the predictions made in the Transitivity Hypothesis: sentences with accusative object tend to be dynamic and telic, and tend to have an animate and agentive subject, and their objects tend to be inactive and physically affected. By contrast, sentences with dative objects are usually stative, atelic, have no agentive subject, and their objects are affected psychologically. The choice between accusative and dative objects is, thus, an indication of the degree of transitivity of the sentence as a whole.

In any case, we have to remember that speakers ultimately choose the most appropriate construction for each case, depending on the meaning they intend to convey. If high transitivity is coded by means of the accusative construction, we are able to say only that as a sentence becomes increasingly prototypically less transitive, the greater the possibility is of the dative construction appearing. It is, however, difficult to determine exactly at which point such a change will systematically occur. In this area, we are dealing with statistically significant tendencies, not categorical rules

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