Dative Arguments in Psychological Predicates in Spanish

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Abstract

This paper explores the behaviour of dative arguments in the context of psychological predicates in Spanish. We focus on predicates that require a dative experiencer and a nominative stimulus. These constructions have an obligatory dative weak pronoun but also optionally allow a doubled dative NP. We are concerned with what the status of the dative is and why the unmarked order of the sentence is DAT NP + V + DAT PRN + NOM NP. We firstly examine the possibility that the dative NP is the subject but will argue through testing that the NOM NP is SUBJ. We will then propose to treat the dative argument as OBJ$_\theta$. Finally we claim that the unexpected order stems from a mismatch between thematic and functional hierarchies and will analyse the position of the DAT NP as WEAK FOCUS, whose properties will be described in depth in the last sections of the paper.

1 Introduction

1.1 Psychological predicates

Psychological predicates are predicates whose argument structure involves an experiencer and a theme or stimulus/cause. They typically involve concepts such as *fear, enjoy, hate* or *frighten, worry, irritate....* Their arguments map differently depending on the type of predicate and they have traditionally been grouped according to their mapping pattern (Belleti & Rizzi, 1988).

In English, for instance, there is a FEAR group with the experiencer as SUBJ and a FRIGHTEN category where the experiencer is OBJ:

(1) a. I fear spiders.

  b. Spiders frighten me.

Both predicates take, in principle, the same thematic roles, but differ in the way they map those roles into syntactic arguments.[1]

[1]Based on the assumption that *theme* can be considered general enough, even though more specifically we have *theme, stimulus, cause*. This is more clearly seen with *frighten*-type predicates where we get a range of readings/roles which can be more or less causative since the subject can also get an agentive reading (Grimshaw, 1990).

2 Spanish psychological predicates

Spanish shows four classes of psychological predicates, based on their subcategorisation patterns:[2]

1. Verbs that subcategorise for an accusative experiencer: *aburrir* 'to bore', *molestar* 'to disturb', *ofender* 'to offend'...:[3]

    (2) a. Los   niños   enfadan   a   sus madres
    The.M.PL child.M.PL anger.3PL.PRS ACC their mother.PL

    'Children anger their mothers.'

    b. Los   niños   las   enfadan
    The.M.PL child.M.PL 3.F.ACC.PL anger.3PL.PRS

    'The boys anger them'

2. Verbs that behave like the English *fear*, with the experiencer as subject and the stimulus as an object NP (PP or a complement clause): *odiar* 'to hate', *temer* 'to fear', *adorar* 'to adore', *creer* 'to believe'...

    (3) Laura odia   las   películas románticas
    Laura hate.PRS.3SG the.F.PL film.PL   romantic.F.PL

    'Laura hates romantic films.'

3. Reflexive verbs. The pattern for this group consists of an experiencer subject, a reflexive pronoun and an optional phrase such as PP. This class includes reflexive verbs that express a feeling undergone by the experiencer: *aburrirse* 'to get bored', *enfadarse* ' to get angry', *alegrarse* 'to feel happy'...

    (4) Los   niños   se   aburren   (en clase)
    The.M.PL child.M.PL REFL bore.PRS.3PL in   class

    'Children get bored in class.'

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[2]Vogel & Villada (1999) describe five different patterns but two of them become identical in regards to syntactic pattern, which is why we choose to reduce the grouping to four.

[3]Most of the verbs in this group can take an ACC or DAT argument since both patterns are possible. There seems to be a slight change of meaning depending on the pattern - related with volition of the SUBJ, which could be distinguished by analysing it as *cause* -with the ACC- or *stimulus* - with the DAT:

(i) A   los   niños   les   ofende   la   mentira
    DAT the.M.PL child.M.PL DAT.3PL offend.3SG.PL the.F.SG lie
    'Lies offend children = Children find lies offensive.'

Note that in configurations such as (2a) and (i), one same element *a* marks a complement as DAT or ACC. This will be further discussed in 5.1, but we can see the contrast if we compare the weak pronouns that refer to that complement, an ACC *las* pronoun in (2b) and a DAT *le* pronoun in (i). Syntactically, the configuration in (i) is the same as verbs in Type 4, which is why we do not consider them different groups.

4. This group comprises verbs that require a dative experiencer and the presence of a weak pronoun is obligatory: *gustar* 'to like', *doler* 'to hurt', *fascinar* 'to fascinate', *interesar* 'to interest'...

(5) A Laura$_i$ le$_i$ gustan   las   fresas
    DAT Laura 3SG.DAT please.PRS.3PL the.F.PL strawberry.PL

   'Strawberries are pleasing to Laura.'
   ='Laura likes strawberries.'

A schematic representation of this pattern is found in (6) below:

(6)
```
    (DATIVE NP)   DATIVE CLITIC   V   NOMINATIVE NP
         |                                |
     Experiencer                      Stimulus
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This paper will explore the properties of Type 4 verbs as in (5). The main questions we aim to answer are: (i) what the appropriate GFs of the different participants (experiencer and stimulus) are; (ii) how to characterise the dative argument; (iii) how to deal with doubling and the obligatory presence of the weak pronoun, and (iv) how we can account for the "unexpected" ordering. These issues will be further explored in the following sections.

3   Type 4 psychological predicates *vs.* other predicates that take a dative argument

It is also relevant to place the psychological predicates we are discussing in the context of other predicates that take a dative argument. Dative arguments -in many cases in the form of a weak pronoun- can appear in the context of all types of verbs and have many different meanings.[4] Dative arguments are found in ditransitive constructions with 'give'-type verbs:

(7) a. Juan dio   un regalo a   Laura
       Juan give.PST.3SG a   gift   DAT Laura

      'Juan gave a gift lo Laura'

    b. Juan le   dio   un regalo (a   Laura)
       Juan 3.SG.DAT give.PST.3SG a   gift   DAT Laura

      'Juan gave a gift lo Laura'

---

[4]See Cuervo (2003, pp.29-30) for a list that includes both selected and non-selected datives.

We see in (7a) that we can have the dative noun phrase without the dative weak pronoun, which is something that is not allowed with the psychological predicates at hand:

(8) *A   Laura gustan   las   fresas
    DAT Laura please.PRS.3PL the.F.PL strawberry.PL

   'Strawberries are pleasing to Laura.'
   ='Laura likes strawberries.'

We can also front the noun phrase, which will result in a configuration that is identical to (5), repeated below as (9):

(9) A   Laura$_i$ le$_i$ gustan   las   fresas
    DAT Laura   3SG.DAT please.PRS.3PL the.F.PL strawberry.PL

   'Strawberries are pleasing to Laura.'
   ='Laura likes strawberries.'

(10) A   Laura le   dio   Juan un regalo
     DAT Laura 3.SG.DAT give.PST.3SG Juan a   gift

   'Juan gave a gift lo Laura'

However, (10) is a case of Clitic Left Dislocation (CLLD), that triggers pronominal reduplication and is to be analysed as a topical element. We believe these configurations, even though similar in many aspects, are different in the issues they pose. Most importantly, we believe that the unmarked order of (9) is not the same as with other type of predicates that take dative complements, as the unmarked order for those is found in (7), even if the elements can also be fronted as in (10). This is something this paper will account for in later sections.[5]

4   Subject Issues

4.1   What's the subject?

A first obvious question to answer is to decide what the subject is. However, judging by the array of possible answers to the question, this is not a trivial matter. There have been different

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[5]I thank one of the reviewers for pointing out that these predicates need to be contrasted with other predicates that also take datives. We will not be able to examine this in any further detail in this paper due to space constraints. However, it is worth mentioning that even though we find psychological predicates different enough to merit a separate treatment -or at least the problems they raise differ from other predicates, e.g. status of the subject-, the natural next step is to somehow try to extend this analysis to other predicates, especially when they interact with the pronoun *se*, or with non-selected datives as below, which seem to closely correlate with psychological predicates in regards to unmarked word order :

(ii) A   Laura se   le   cayó   un plato
     DAT Laura REFL 3.SG.DAT fall.PST.3SG a   plate
     'Laura dropped a plate.'

proposals that we are summarising below:

Alarcos Llorach (1994) argues *a*-introduced phrases are PPs and they cannot be subjects at all so the *stimulus* NP is the SUBJ for him.

Mendívil Giró (2002) proposes a system similar to the one shown by languages with ERGATIVE and ABSOLUTIVE case. He claims psychological predicates are to be described as displaying *"lexically conditioned partial ergativity"*. According to him, the dative experiencer would be analysed as an ergative subject whereas the postposed argument would be analysed as an absolutive direct object.

Based on Zaenen et al. (1985)'s treatment of Icelandic passive constructions, Fernández Soriano (1999) or Masullo (1992) argue for a quirky dative case in Spanish: Masullo (1992) admits some differences with Icelandic and proposes an approach based on Belleti & Rizzi (1988) and points out these predicates are very similar to unaccusatives. He claims that these constituents raise to Spec (IP) and the nominative case is assigned to the postverbal NP via government rather than by specifier-head agreement. Fernández Soriano (1999) claims that this quirky case is morphological and inherent and it allows the phrase bearing it to move to case-marked positions. This is why it can move and merge as external argument where it can satisfy the EPP condition.

Landau (2010) claims that these verbs denote locative relations, the dative is actually an oblique with a null preposition and can be analysed through an extended version of locative inversion.

Cuervo (2010) proposes a specific analysis for psychological verbs which involves a specialised applicative head: "The verbal root combines with a stative *v* and takes the DP 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 specialised head, the applicative Appl. The applicative head licenses the experiencer as its specifier and relates it to the *v*P it takes as a complement."(Cuervo, 2010, p. 29).

Alsina (1996) and Vanhoe (2002) claim that the dative experiencer bears an objective function.

4.2   Subjecthood tests

In order to shed some light on the subjecthood issue, we will test both the dative and nominative noun phrases to establish which one could be analysed as subject. These tests are adapted from Vogel & Villada (1999) and are not necessarily novel but will be helpful in determining how to analyse the different participants. We will use the sentence in (11) to apply the different tests. We are using animate, human participants to avoid possible interference and one singular phrase and one plural to make sure the agreement interactions are clearly noted:

(11) A Laura$_i$ le$_i$ gustan   los   alumnos
     DAT Laura   3SG.DAT please.PRS.3PL the.M.PL student.PL
         experiencer   *stimulus*

     'Students are pleasing to Laura'
     ='Laura likes the students.'

Clitics aside, and generally speaking, Spanish is SVO[6] so SUBJ appears as the first NP in an **unmarked** finite clause. This could mean that the first noun phrase in (11) is subject, in this case that would be a dative.

However, SUBJ requires NOM subject pronouns upon pronominal substitution and in (11) only *los alumnos* can be replaced by a NOM subject pronoun: *ellos* 'they'. Furthermore, the verb which typically agrees with the subject, is agreeing with the stimulus NP in person and number, and this is consistently the case if we change the person and number of the participants:

(12) a. A Laura le   gust**as**   **tú**
        DAT Laura 3SG.DAT please.PRS.2SG 2SG.NOM

        'You are pleasing to Laura'
        = 'Laura likes you.'

     b. A Laura le   gust**o**   **yo**
        DAT Laura 3SG.DAT please.PRS.1SG 1SG.NOM

        'I am pleasing to Laura'
        = 'Laura likes me.'

This could now indicate that the stimulus participant that appears at the end of the sentence is SUBJ. We will test this further below. Namely, we will test the behaviour of these participants in control, raising and causative constructions. We will examine their binding properties in reflexive configurations and their behaviour in passive alternations. We will lastly assess their ability to be 'dropped' as this is a typical feature of subjects in Spanish.

4.2.1 Control

We now test the ability for the NPs involved in psychological verbs constructions to be controlled arguments:

(13) Los   alumnos$_i$ quieren$_i$ gustarle   a   Laura
     The.M.PL student.M.PL want.PRS.3PL please.INF=3.DAT.SG DAT Laura
               stimulus   *experiencer*

     'The students want to be pleasing to Laura.'
     ='The students want Laura to like them.'

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[6]See Solà i Pujols (1992), Vallduví (1993) or Vallduví (2002) for claims that we have VOS or VXS order as standard. This is not a central issue for the paper but it is worth noting that SVO order is not unanimously accepted. We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

(14) *A Laura$_i$ (?le)   quiere$_i$ gustar   los   alumnos
     DAT Laura   3SG.DAT want.PRS.3SG please.INF the.M.PL student.M.PL
         experiencer   *stimulus*

(intended) 'Laura wants students to be pleasing to her.'
=(*intended*) 'Laura wants to like students.'

In (13) we see that the stimulus NP can be subject of *querer* and is therefore controlling the subject of the XCOMP psychological predicate. We cannot do the same with the dative phrase as seen in (14). In order to get the intended reading we would need to construct a sentence such as the one below in (15), but that would imply making Laura the stimulus and the students the experiencer:

(15) Laura quiere   gustarles   a   los   alumnos
     Laura want.3SG.PRS like.INF=DAT.3PL DAT the.M.PL student.PL

'Laura wants to be pleasing to the students.' ='Laura wants the students to like her.'

If we want the subject of the control predicate to be the experiencer of the psychological predicate, we need to introduce a finite embedded clause, but the relationship between the two is of a different nature:

(16) Laura quiere   que le   gusten   los   alumnos   (a
     Laura want.PRS.3SG that 3.DAT.SG please.PRS.SBJV.3PL the.M.PL student.M.PL DAT
     ella)
     her

'Laura wants students to be pleasing to her.'
='Laura wants to like students.'

Based on the control tests, the stimulus participant is more likely to be SUBJECT. We now move on to raising tests.

4.2.2 Raising

In raising constructions, the SUBJECT of the embedded predicate "*raises*" to the subject position of the matrix clause. The relevant description for Spanish raising constructions is the following:

(17) a. Juan parece   amable
        Juan seem.PRS.3SG kind

        'Juan seems kind.'

     b. '*seem* <XCOMP > SUBJ'
              (↑ SUBJ) = (↑ XCOMP SUBJ)

(18) a. Juan parece ser amable
　　　Juan seem.PRS.3SG be.INF kind

　　　'Juan seems to be kind.'

　　b. '*seem* <XCOMP > SUBJ'
　　　　(↑ SUBJ) = (↑ XCOMP SUBJ)

It follows, then, that the participant that can appear in the matrix clause is to be considered the subject of the psychological predicate:

(19) Los　　alumnos　　parecen　　gustarle　　　　　a　　Laura
　　The.M.PL student.M.PL seem.PRS.3PL please.INF=(3.DAT.SG) DAT Laura

　　'Students seem to be pleasing to Laura.' = 'Laura seems to like the students.'

Again, it looks like the stimulus participant can do that, which points at the likelihood that it is the SUBJ. It is worth noting that (19) is not a very natural sounding sentence. The preferred alternative would be (20):

(20) A　Laura parecen　　gustar=le　　　　los　　alumnos
　　DAT Laura seem.PRS.3PL please.INF=3.DAT.SG the.M.PL student.M.PL

　　'Students seem to be pleasing to Laura.' = 'Laura seems to like the students.'

Consider, however, that even though (20) shows the dative experiencer right in front of the raising predicate, *parecer* agrees with the students in number and person. We can also change the person to show this more clearly:

(21) A　Laura parec**éis**　　gustar=le　　　　**vosotros**
　　DAT Laura seem.PRS.2PL please.INF=3SG.DAT 2PL.NOM

　　'You guys seem to be pleasing to Laura.' = 'Laura seems to like you guys.'

This does not seem to support a view of treating the experiencer as SUBJECT but rather, it points out c-structural tendencies for the dative experiencer to appear first in the sentence, and we see no f-structure differences between (19) and (20).

We can therefore conclude that the raising test favours the treatment of the stimulus as SUBJ.

4.2.3　Causatives

Vogel & Villada (1999) believe that the behaviour of the participants as possible subjects of the causative predicate *hacer* 'to make' provides data about both their syntactic and semantic properties. However, psychological verbs do not admit embedding when the participants are tested as agents of the causative verb. Neither Stimulus NPs or Experiencer NPs can be the agent of causation and the only way to convey such readings would be by introducing another clause with an added agent:

(22) *Los   alumnos   hicieron   a   Laura gustarle
    The.M.PL student.M.PL make.PST.3PL DAT Laura like.INF=(DAT.SG)

    'The students made Laura like them.'

(23) a. ?Los   alumnos   hicieron   que a   Laura le   gustaran
        The.M.PL student.M.PL make.PST.3PL that DAT Laura DAT.3SG like.PST.SBJV.3PL
        (ellos   / los   alumnos)
        (NOM.3.PL / the.M.PL student.M.PL)

        'The students made Laura like them.'

(24) Los   alumnos   hicieron   que a   Laura le   gustasen
    The.M.PL student.M.PL make.PST.3PL that DAT Laura DAT.3SG like.PST.SBJV.3PL
    las   fresas
    the.F.PL strawberry.PL

    'The students made Laura like strawberries.'

This implies altering the sentence too much, so we consider it is not applicable for the task at hand due to obvious semantic restrictions so we will therefore discard it as a subjecthood test.

4.2.4   Binding properties in reflexive constructions

In reflexive constructions we find one single NOM NP argument that would have both the roles of experiencer and stimulus:

(25) Los   alumnos   se   gustan
    The.M.PL student.M.PL REFL like.PRS.3PL

    'The students like themselves/ each other.'

We could not possibly have a similar sentence with the dative binding to the reflexive:

(26) a. *A   Laura se   gusta
        (DAT) Laura REFL like.PRS.3SG

        'Laura likes herself.'

    b. Laura se   gusta
       Laura REFL like.PRS.3SG

       'Laura likes herself.'

This test can easily be considered borderline and could merit being discarded. However, it clearly shows that a dative argument does not bind to the reflexive. The only nominative participant of a psychological predicate construction is the stimulus, which again seems to argue for its treatment as subject, even if it is not the most solid test.

4.2.5 Passivisation

Constructions with psychological predicates do not admit a passive alternation, since they do not have an agentive argument that can be suppressed.

(27) a. *Los   alumnos   son   gustados   por Laura
          The.M.PL student.M.PL be.PRS.3PL like.M.PL.PART by   Laura
              stimulus   *experiencer*

      'Students are liked by Laura.'

      b. *A Laura   es   gustada   por los   alumnos
          DAT Laura   be.PRS.3SG like.PSTPART.F by   the.M.PL student.PL
              experiencer   *stimulus*

      'To Laura is liked by the students.'

This rules out the possibility of applying a passive test to determine the subject in the constructions we are examining.

4.2.6 Ability to 'pro-drop'

It is a well known feature of Spanish that it is a language that has subject drop, so the subject of the sentence does not have to be overtly realised. This is exemplified in (28) below:

(28) a. Laura llora   b. Llora
          Laura cry.PRS.3SG   cry.PRS.3SG

      'Laura cries.'   'He/she cries.'

We test the ability of the participants in psychological predicates constructions to be dropped without altering the meaning of the sentence:

(29) A   Laura le   gustan
      DAT Laura 3SG.DAT like.PRS.3PL

      'They please Laura'
      ='Laura likes them.'   [dropped stimulus]

(30) Los   alumnos   gustan
      the.M.PL student.M.PL like.PRS.3PL

      'Students please ≅ students are liked.'   [dropped experiencer]

We see in (29) and (30) that both the stimulus and the experiencer can be dropped. However, the original meaning is only retained in (29). We believe that in (30) we have a different lexical operation that turns the verb into a one-place predicate with some sort of passive reading. This test indicates, therefore, that the stimulus participant is the likely subject in these constructions with psychological predicates.

4.2.7 Summary of results

Even though some tests cannot be successfully applied and there were some semantic restrictions, the results as summarised in (31) indicate that the stimulus participant has to be mapped as SUBJECT.

		CONTROL	RAISING	CAUSATIVE	BINDING	PASSIVE	PRO-DROP
(31)	CAUSE/ STIMULUS NP	✓	✓	N/A	✓?	N/A	✓
	EXPERIENCER NP	X	X	N/A	X	N/A	X

Once we have argued that the stimulus is SUBJECT, we move on now to discuss how to best characterise the experiencer dative argument. We will consider treatments as OBLIQUE, OBJECT or OBJECT$_\theta$ and will ultimately argue that OBJECT$_\theta$ is the best fit for the properties that this participant displays.

5 Characterisation of the experiencer

5.1 Experiencer as OBL

We believe that 'a' is not a preposition but a grammatical marker as seen in object constructions:

- It marks human/animate objects as ACC:

  (32) a. Peino   el   pelo
       Comb.PRS.1SG the.M.SG hair

       'I comb the hair.'

  b. Peino   **a**   Marta
     Comb.PRS.1SG ACC Laura

     lit.'I comb Laura'
     'I comb Laura's hair.'

- It also marks the beneficiary/recipient in double object constructions as DAT

  (33) Doy   un regalo **a**   Marta
       give.PRS.1SG a   gift   DAT Marta

       'I give a present to Laura.'

We therefore consider the *a*-introduced phrase as a dative NP and believe it is better treated as an objective function.

5.2 Experiencer as OBJ

Vanhoe (2002) treats the experiencer dative argument as the primary object, mainly based on the idea that secondary objects need to appear with another object.

Alsina (1996) does not distinguish between types of objects and explains different case assignment through the following convention:

(34) "*Case Assignment Convention*:

    a A direct function (one that has the feature [obl -]) must take the marked feature value [DAT +] if it is mapped onto an argument that is either thematically a goal or more prominent than another argument expressed as a nondative function and if it is not the expression of the external argument.

    b All other direct functions take the default feature value [DAT -]".

<div align="right">(Alsina, 1996, p. 175)</div>

Since we have seen that dative arguments cannot become subjects of passive constructions, but accusative objects can, he proposes to constrain the dative to ensure it does not appear as subject:

(35) "*Nondative Subject Constraint*:
    $*\left[\,[\text{SUBJ} +]\,[\text{DAT} +]\,\right]$" <div align="right">(Alsina, 1996, p. 179)</div>

Even though Alsina (1996)'s analysis would certainly work, we believe both objects have enough differences to merit distinct grammatical functions and we would not need any specific constraints to prevent the dative from being mapped as a subject since that follows from the properties of the OBJECT_θ as we will see in the next section.
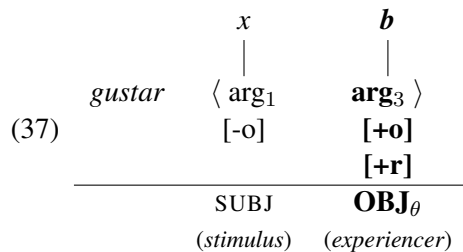
5.3 Experiencer as OBJ$_\theta$

Following Kibort (2007), Kibort (2008) and Kibort (2013), we have a template with available slots as follows:

(36) $\langle \text{arg}_1 \quad \text{arg}_2 \;\; \text{arg}_3 \;\, \text{arg}_4 \;\, ... \;\; \text{arg}_n \rangle$
   [-o/-r] [-r] [+o] [-o]   [-o]

The arg_1 slot is to be occupied by the SUBJ, i.e. *stimulus* NP. If we said that the next more prominent participant maps onto arg_2, the experiencer should be OBJ. However, if we claim the *experiencer* NP maps onto arg_2, then we are also entailing it has a [-r] feature, which will make it available to become the subject of a passive construction. With the flexibility shown by Kibort (2007)'s version of Lexical Mapping Theory, we do not necessarily need to map to all the argument slots in order: arg_1, arg_2, arg_3... Participants can be mapped onto any of the slots, provided they have the features associated with that slot.
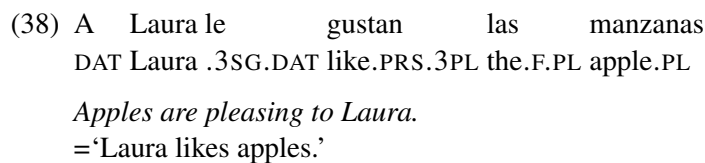
The fact that we have a participant with distinctive morphology (dative case) and its unavailability to become subject of a passive indicate that we should map this argument onto the arg_3 slot with [+o] [+r] features. We subsequently describe our psychological predicates with a dative experiencer as follows:

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
& x & b \\
& | & | \\
gustar & \langle\ \text{arg}_1 & \textbf{arg}_3\ \rangle \\
(37) & \text{[-o]} & \textbf{[+o]} \\
& & \textbf{[+r]} \\
\hline
& \text{SUBJ} & \textbf{OBJ}_\theta \\
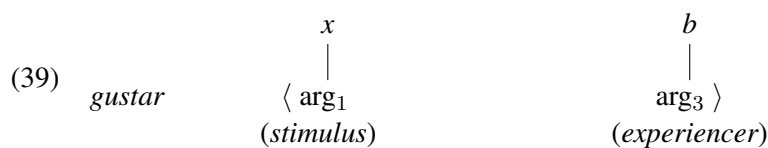& (stimulus) & (experiencer)
\end{array}
$$

We have so far argued that the stimulus NP is SUBJECT and the experiencer argument maps as OBJ$_\theta$. We will now explore the unexpected ordering by which the dative experiencer appears left fronted and the subject appears postverbally.

6   Unexpected order and doubling

As previously shown, the unmarked order of constructions with psychological predicates is as seen in (38):

(38) A   Laura le   gustan   las   manzanas
      DAT Laura .3SG.DAT like.PRS.3PL the.F.PL apple.PL

Apples are pleasing to Laura.
='Laura likes apples.'

This ordering of elements is consistent with the thematic hierarchy illustrated below following Dowty (1991). However, it seems to divert from the assumption that Spanish is a SVO language with preverbal subjects.

$$
\begin{array}{cccc}
& x & & b \\
& | & & | \\
(39)\quad gustar & \langle\ \text{arg}_1 & & \text{arg}_3\ \rangle \\
& (stimulus) & & (experiencer)
\end{array}
$$

(40) *agent $\langle$ instr./experiencer $\langle$ patient $\langle$ source/ stimulus /goal*   (Dowty, 1991)

Furthermore, in this type of constructions we can have both a dative NP and a dative weak pronoun referring to the same participant, a phenomenon known as doubling. We will now assess some discourse properties that will help us deal both with doubling and the unexpected order in an elegant manner.

6.1 Weak Focus

A preliminary sensible approach to this issue would be to treat the dative noun phrase as part of information structure and give it a discourse function such as TOPIC or FOCUS. R.A.E (2010) explains that topics in Spanish can appear at the beginning of the sentence but one key feature of topics is the presence of commas in writing or the equivalent intonation in speech. An example of topic in Spanish is clitic dislocation:

(41) a. Llamé   a   Juan
          call.PST.1SG ACC Juan

          'I called Juan'

      b. A   Juan **lo**   llamé
          ACC Juan 3.M.SG.ACC call.PST.1SG

          'Juan, I called'

Focus on the other hand cannot be elided since they highlight or give prominence to a particular part of the discourse. When a focus is fronted, the subject appears postverbally, in a configuration that in many cases mirrors that of interrogative or exclamative sentences. An example of focus in Spanish is contrastive focus:

(42) A   JUAN llamé,   no a   Laura
        ACC Juan call.PST.1SG NEG ACC Laura

        'I called Juan, not Laura

Note that even though *a Juan* is fronted in both (41b) and (42), only (41b) requires pronominal reduplication. As noted by Leonetti & Escandell-Vidal (2009, p.157), there are however other constructions that display fronting of an element but do not fit comfortably in the description of focus or topic: "These constructions seem to have mixed properties: on the one hand, they resemble clitic dislocations in that the fronted constituent does not bear any emphatic stress; but, at the same time, like in contrastive focalisation, the construction does not include any resumptive clitic." Benincà (2004) shows evidence of a weak/unmarked focus in medieval Romance languages:

(43) a. **Autre chose** ne pot li roi trouver
          another thing not can the king find

          'The king cannot find any other thing.'   [OLD FRENCH]

      b. **Mal cosselh** donet Pilat
          Bad advice   gave Pilate

          'Pilate gave bad advice.'   [OLD PROVENÇAL]

      c. **Con tanta   paceença** sofria   ela esta enfermidade
          with so-much patience   suffered her this desease

          'She endured this desease with huge patience.'   [OLD PORTUGUESE]

d. **Bon vin** fa   l'uga negra
   good wine makes the   wine grape

   'Black grapes make good wine.'   [OLD MILANESE]

e. **Ciò** tenne il re   a grande maraviglia
   This has   the king as a   great   wonder

   'The king regards this as a great wonder.'   [OLD FLORENTIN]

This weak focus fronting strategy is still used in Spanish (also in Sicilian and Sardinian) (Batllori & Hernanz, 2015):

(44) a. **Mucho** me   temo   que la crisis no ha   tocado
     Much   1SG.DAT fear.PRS.1SG that the crisis NEG have.PRS.3SG touch.PASTPART
     fondo
     bottom

     'I am afraid the crisis is not over yet.'

b. **Eso mismo** pienso   yo
   That same   think.PRS.1SG 1SG.NOM

   'I think the same.'

Weak focus fronting presents the following properties:

- It involves leftward fronting of a constituent

- No intonation/prosodic prominence

- Only one weak focus allowed

- Adjacency between the fronted element and the finite verb which necessarily pushes the subject to appear in postverbal position:

  (45) a. **Algo**   estarán   tramando   estos   niños
       Something be.FUR.3PL plot.PRSPART this.M.PL child.PL

       ' These children must be up to something.'

  b. ***Algo** estos niños estarán tramando

- No resumption in object fronting constructions (ruling out CLLD):

  (46) a. **Algo**   estarán   tramando   estos   niños
       Something be.FUR.3PL plot.PRSPART this.M.PL child.PL

       ' These children must be up to something.'

  b. ***Algo**$_i$ **lo**$_i$ estarán   tramando   estos   niños
     Something 3SG.M.ACC be.FUR.3PL plot.PRSPART this.M.PL child.PL

     ' These children must be up to something.'

All of these properties fit with the behaviour we have observed for the dative noun phrase in psychological predicate constructions so we will incorporate the notion of weak focus into our analysis in the following section.

6.2 Dative NP as weak focus

If we treat **a Laura** in (38) as weak focus, it follows that we have a postverbal subject, no prosodic prominence and we are not dealing with a case of resumption so the weak pronoun must be something else. We can consider the weak pronoun as the argument the verb subcategorises for and then the dative NP is a weak focus that is linked anaphorically with the OBJ_θ, which will result in the f-structure in (47) below with the corresponding equations as in (48):

(47)
$$
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{PRED} & \text{`LIKE} < (\text{SUBJ})\ (\text{OBJ}_\theta) >\text{'} \\[2mm]
\text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`APPLES'} \\ \text{INDEX} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{NUM} & \text{PL} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \\[6mm]
\text{OBJ}_\theta & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`PRO'} \\ \text{INDEX} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{DAT} \end{bmatrix} \\[8mm]
\text{WFOC} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`LAURA'} \\ \text{INDEX} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{DAT} \end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}
$$

(48) $(\uparrow \text{WFOC CASE}) =_c (\uparrow \text{OBJ}_\theta \text{ CASE})$
$(\uparrow \text{WFOC INDEX}) =_c (\uparrow \text{OBJ}_\theta \text{ INDEX})$

This possible analysis raises issues immediately: the WFOC has to be bound by the OBJ_θ; this relation must be local, i.e. bound by the OBJ_θ in its mother's structure and we are also introducing a new type of DF which is not necessarily ideal.

We can easily combine this problematic analysis with the idea of weak focus by adding a [WFOC +] feature in the f-structure of the GF and correlate that with a phrase structure rule that states that if the SPEC IP position is occupied by something other than the SUBJ GF, then that f-structure must have the WFOC + feature. The weak pronoun will be PRO or simply agreement[7] and we can deal with it following Bresnan (2001)'s approach to River Plate Spanish object clitics.

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[7]The weak pronoun is most likely undergoing grammaticalization. We see the process is more completed with psychological predicates as the weak pronoun is obligatory, as opposed to the dative in double object constructions where, even if its presence is preferred by many speakers, it is still optional or to the accusative pronoun, which has an even more restricted distribution when the NP is present.

(49)
$$
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{PRED} & \text{'LIKE}< (\text{SUBJ}) (\text{OBJ}_\theta)>\text{'} \\
\text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'APPLES'} \\ \text{INDEX} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{NUM} & \text{PL} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \\
\text{OBJ}_\theta & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'LAURA'} \\ \text{INDEX} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{CASE} & \text{DAT} \\ \text{WFOC} & + \end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}
$$

C-structurally, the OBJ$_\theta$ occupies SPEC IP, which triggers the postverbal position of the subject. This is supported by the fact that if we already have a weak focus in that position, the OBJ$_\theta$ cannot appear at the beginning -unless given discourse prominence-:
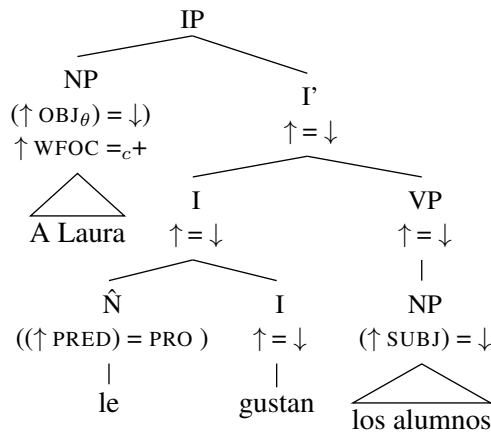
(50) Mucho le   gustan   (a Laura) las   manzanas (a Laura)
       much 3SG.DAT like.PRS.3PL DAT Laura the.F.PL apple.PL DAT Laura

Apples are very pleasing to Laura.
='Laura likes apples a lot.'

6.3 Remaining issues: postverbal SUBJ

An issue remains with the postverbal position of the subject and that is how to characterise it in the c-structure. We discard the possibility of having three branches stemming from the IP with two specifiers, which leaves us with the possibility of either adding a new S to the structure since it includes the subject or introducing a headless VP. It is not clear whether proposing a category S is actually plausible for Spanish so we will introduce a headless VP. LFG assumes that daughters of phrasal categories are optional so the head of a maximal phrase such as VP does not need to appear. This has been proposed for languages that place tensed verbs in I, which Spanish does (see Sells (2001) or King (1995) for distribution of verbs in Swedish and Russian):

(51) A   Laura le   gustan   los   alumnos
       DAT Laura 3SG.DAT like.PRS.3PL the.M.PL student.PL

'Laura likes the students.'

(52)

```
                        IP
              ┌─────────┴─────────┐
             NP                   I'
      (↑ OBJ_θ) = ↓)           ↑ = ↓
      ↑ WFOC =_c +        ┌───────┴───────┐
         △                I               VP
      A Laura           ↑ = ↓            ↑ = ↓
                   ┌──────┴──────┐         │
                   N̂             I         NP
            ((↑ PRED) = PRO )  ↑ = ↓   (↑ SUBJ) = ↓
                   │            │          △
                   le         gustan   los alumnos
```

7 Summary and conclusion

In this paper we have seen that thematic prominence, together with c-structure pre-verbal position, point at the possibility that the experiencer could be SUBJ. However, the real SUBJ is the post-verbal stimulus and the experiencer is interpreted as the logical subject. Thematic hierarchy is more prominent and reflects on c-structure, leaving the f-structure untouched. We have shown that the c-structure position of the experiencer can be ensured by adding a [WFOC +] feature to the description of the OBJ_θ. Treating the experiencer as weak focus also explains the postverbal position of the subject and why doubling is not to be considered an instance of clitic left dislocation.

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