

Revisiting dative clitic doubling through reverse psych verb sentences in two word orders

The grammaticalization process to transform Old Spanish dative bound pronouns into agreement-marking verbal affixes (cf. Company Company 2001; *inter alia*) has not completely reached its final stage, yielding complex distributional patterns of dative clitic doubling (datCLD) in modern Spanish. In this paper, we analyze the very little studied morphosyntactic variation involving reverse psych verbs like *gustar*, *importar*, *interesar*, etc., in order to shed new light on the current stage of datCLD.

With verbs like *gustar*, dative clitic doubling is widely assumed to be obligatory when appearing in sentences with the canonical [IO V S] order (cf. ex. 1). However, corpora data from European Spanish (ES) show that in sentences with a [S V IO] order (ex. 2a&b) datCLD is largely optional, exhibiting similar variation observed in ditransitive sentences with a recipient IO. In view of the data in (1) and (2), we address two questions involving psych verb sentences: QA: Why does the distribution of datCLD differ in two word orders?, and QB: does datCLD exhibit any systematic distributional patterns in the [S V IO] order? Regarding QA, we argue that in the two word orders, the IO assumes two different thematic roles, and this contributes to the obligatory vs. optional variance of datCLD. In order to answer QB, we conducted a quantitative analysis of online corpus data from ES and tested referential effects on datCLD.

The most recent minimalist analysis of psych verb sentences comes from Cuervo (2003), who argues that the IO (dative) in Spanish be analyzed as a functional projection “ApplicativeP”, whose head must be filled by a dative clitic with the specifier position occupied by its coreferent lexical IO. An experiencer IO is analyzed as a High Applicative, whose head takes a stative *v*P as its complement (cf. Structure in 3). This analysis is only intended to account for sentences with an [IO V S] order, where datCLD is obligatory. However, if we try to extend the analysis to the sentences in (2), we’d run into problems: a) How can we allow DP_{nom} , and not DP_{dat} , to move to the [Spec,TP] to satisfy the EPP?, and b) what would be the semantic difference between (2a) & (2b), given that *a la gente* in (2a) would be treated as an IO but as a PP in (2b) according to Cuervo’s analysis? An easy solution does not seem to be readily available for either problem.

Alternatively, we posit – contrary to Cuervo – that the postverbal argument in (2b) is equally an IO as in (2a) (cf. Pineda 2013) and propose [IO V S] and [S V IO] do not come from the same underlying source but constitute two independent constructions. First, observe that [IO V S] and [S V IO] sentences differ in information structure: $[FOCUS IO V S]$ (or alternatively, $[[TOP IO] [FOCUS V S]]$) and $[[TOP S] [FOCUS V IO]]$, respectively, with their respective preverbal argument located in the subject position (cf. Casillez-Suárez 2004). Second, they also differ in meaning (though not in truth value). The first construction signifies [IO EXPERIENCE an emotive feeling *E* about *S*], where the IO is properly an experiencer. With respect to [S V IO] sentences, first note that a [S V] sentence signifies [S HAVE property *P*], something akin to a copulative sentence with an Adjective., as also noted by Cuervo. This is evident in ex. 4, where the psych verb *agradar* is put into contrast with two adjectives *mejor* and *bueno*. So, when we add an IO to a [S V] string, this IO is no longer interpreted as an experiencer but as ‘to whom/to what’ [S having *P*] is relevant. We call such a role a “relativizer”, which may not be animate, i.e., sentient, as shown in ex. 5.

So, to answer QA, it appears that that datCLD in modern ES is largely optional for what Cuervo qualifies as the “Low Applicative” dative, which includes the goal/recipient IO as well as the source IO (Gutiérrez Ordóñez 1999; *inter alia*) and somewhat extends to the benefactive IO (Vázquez Rozas 1995) for its proximity to the recipient IO. Now, the relativizer IO also belongs in the same applicative category for its postverbal placement and its semantic similarity (“TO”) to the recipient IO. Thus, datCLD is optional for this IO in accordance with the general patterns.

With respect to QB, we examined possible correlations between the occurrence of datCLD and six hierarchically ordered referential categories characterizing the IO. Our statistical (multiple logistic regression) analysis of our corpus data (1,437 tokens of [S V IO] sentences/clauses with and without datCLD, encompassing 13 verbs associated with dat/nom case marking) yielded the following output: a) animacy, pronominality, individuality, and number achieved significance while definiteness and referentiality proved to be non significant. Excluding the [+pronominal] IO, which always required datCLD, the general pattern we found among the significant categories is the following: the higher value in each category, i.e., [+animate], [+individual], or [+singular] favored datCLD, while its lower counterpart, [-animate], [-individual] (mass, collective & group), or [-singular], respectively, disfavoring datCLD. A qualitative analysis of tokens containing a negative quantifier IO suggested that specificity might also be relevant. The results of a frequency test show that objects that are [+anim, +ind, +sg] (*Pedro, el niño,...*) are more likely to be clitic-doubled than those that are [-anim] (*la economía del país,...*), [+anim, +ind, -sg] (*las mujeres, muchos,...*), or [+anim, -ind] (*el público, la empresa,...*). These findings indicate that datCLD is not free of constraints as often portrayed in past studies (Suñer 1988; *inter alia*) but tends to be restricted to most individuated objects.

From the findings of our study, we see two profiles of datCLD that are in a stark contrast. In one domain, datCLD manifests the canonical agreement patterns (Corbett 2006) for being obligatory unconditionally. In the other, datCLD is obligatory only for a pronominal IO, and its overall rate of occurrence for a non-pronominal IO is low (24%), fluctuating greatly among verbs (0~50%). Nevertheless, in this latter environment, a new role of datCLD is emerging, i.e., to mark “explicitly” an individuated, thus, the most prototypical IO, i.e. [+animate, +individual, +singular] IO. Given these sharply different behaviors of datCLD, the “one role fits all” approach, commonly taken in syntactic studies, becomes hard to sustain.

DATA/REFERECES

- (1) *Al público LE/* Ø gusta la obra.*
- (2)a. *No sé qué es lo que LE gusta a la gente de mí.*
(Cambio 16, nº 996, 24/12/1990.)
- b. ... *el fútbol que se está viendo en Estados Unidos no Ø gusta a la gente.*
(La Vanguardia, 06/07/1994.)
- (3) Structure for *A Daniela le gustan los gatos* (Cuervo 2003, (3), p. 6)
[ApplP[DPdat *a Daniea* [Appl *le* [vP *los gatos* BE_{root} *gust-*]]]]
- (4) *Lo que agrada no es lo (que es) mejor y, con frecuencia, lo (que es) bueno.*
(Díez Rodríguez, Luis Mateo. 2002. *El oscurecer* (Un encuentro). Novel)
- (5) ... *nada importa a la verdad de la fábula que los ciervos no pueden comer queso.*
(El país, 11/10/1980)

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