

### Datives and stativity in psych predicates

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THE DATA. As noted by many (eg., Rivero & Cornilescu 2007), dative-experiencer psych verbs are systematically stative, while reflexively-marked ones involve some form of dynamicity (Marín & McNally 2011) (1), (2); sometimes, the same verb allows both structures, correlating with the aspectual distinction (3).

- (1) a. A Juan le agrada París (\*rápidamente). DAT  
to Juan him.dat pleases Paris (\*quickly)  
b. A Juan le gusta Sandra (\*rápidamente). DAT  
to Juan him.dat likes Sandra (\*quickly)
- (2) a. Juan se olvida de todo (rápidamente). REFL  
Juan SE forgets of all (quickly)  
b. Juan se acuerda de todo (rápidamente). REFL  
Juan SE remembers of all (quickly)
- (3) a. A Juan le preocupan las cosas (\*rápidamente). DAT  
to Juan him.dat worry the things (\*quickly)  
b. Juan se preocupa por las cosas (rápidamente). REFL  
Juan SE worries for the things (quickly)

The correlation between datives and stativity is also reflected in accusative / dative alternating psych verbs, as it is also well-known (eg., Cifuentes Honrubia 2015).

- (4) a. A María las tormentas la asustan (rápidamente). ACC  
to María the storm her.acc frighten (quickly)  
b. A María la oscuridad le asusta (\*rápidamente). DAT  
to María the darkness her.dat frightens (\*quickly)

THE PROBLEM. These data provide three puzzles with respect to what datives are. The first one is why datives are associated in principle with stative predicates, as witnessed by the contrasts above; this would suggest that datives have something to say in defining the predicate's Aktionsart. The second is that, paradoxically, when another non-nominative argument is present, the predicate is dynamic, thus overriding the association between stativity and datives. Compare (5) to (2a): in (5) we have a dative next to the reflexive, and that does not stativise the predicate.

- (5) A Juan se le olvidan las cosas (rápidamente). DAT+REFL  
to Juan SE him.dat forget the things (quickly)

Third, a general problem is triggered by the semantic meaning associated to datives. Cross-linguistic accounts of the prototypical value of datives (eg. Næss 2009) are recipients, goals, purposes and benefactives, next to experiencers. Intuitively at least the three first classes involve a notion of transfer which should impose a dynamic change, which is at odds with the association between datives and statives noted before.

ANALYSIS. Our proposal is that (following Landau 2010) experiencers are fake datives; in actuality, an experiencer dative argument is a locative introduced by a possibly empty P. As we will show, this explains the three properties without further

assumptions. The reason why experiencer datives are in principle associated to stativity is that stativity is how Aktionsart is interpreted when it lacks positive properties: dynamicity has to be licensed by a path-like element, and involves the presence of an eventive head. The experiencer, being hidden inside a P layer, would not be able to license dynamicity or interact with an eventive head. In the absence of accusative arguments, then, the default interpretation of Aktionsart is the only one possible: stativity (We assume, following Landau 2010 also, that accusative construals in psych verbs do not involve syntactically defined experiencers, but are pure change of state verbs).

- (6) a. [P [dat]] EXPERIENCER  
       b. [dat] REAL DATIVE

Given that the association between stativity and experiencer datives is not defined positively through a [+stative] feature, but by default through absence of possible checking relations, it follows that when an accusative or a reflexive (which following Medova 2009 we take to be endowed with accusative marking) are present in the structure, the projection of eventive heads and the licensing of dynamicity becomes possible. Note that this account is empirically and theoretically superior to the alternative solution that the projection introducing datives (ApplP or any equivalent projection) is selected or selects a stative head: this would not exclude sole experiencer datives in dynamic construals, as an eventive head could be combined with a stative head, and would be at odds with the range of dative constructions identified in Cuervo (2003), some of them associated to dynamic verbal projections.

Finally, with respect to the third puzzle –why the transfer component of datives does not trigger dynamicity in experiencer construals–, the proposal that the dative is embedded inside P explains it: the P layer prevents the dative from defining change in the verb. Moreover, we argue that datives do not denote a full transference relation, consisting of an initial boundary, a path and a final boundary (7), but just denote a boundary ‘[’ which embedded inside the P layer is interpreted as contact between the state and the experiencer, in accordance with Fábregas’ (2007) proposal for the Spanish preposition *a* ‘at’, used to mark all datives in Spanish.

- (7) a. [-----] b. [

This in fact guarantees that in (8) we make no entailment that the students learn Spanish (i.e., that the object reaches the goal), but we make it that the teacher ‘sends them’ knowledge about Spanish.

- (8) El profesor enseñó español a los estudiantes.  
       the teacher taught Spanish to the students

### Selected references

**Cuervo, M. C.** (2003). *Datives at large*. Unpublished PhD, MIT. // **Fábregas, A.** (2007). The exhaustive lexicalisation principle. *Nordlyd*, 34(2), 165-199. // **Landau, I.** (2010). *The Locative Syntax of Experiencers*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press. // **Marín, R. & L. McNally.** (2011). Inchoativity, change of state and telicity. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 29(2), 467-502. // **Næss, Å.** (2009). How transitive are EAT and DRINK verbs. In J. Newman (ed.), *The linguistics of eating and drinking*, 27-43, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.