

Plenary paper. ICLH 2007. Montreal, Quebec.
18th International Conference on Historical Linguistics.
Ms. to appear in the Proceedings by Benjamins.

A diachronic view of Psychological verbs with Dative Experiencers in Spanish and Romanian

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November 2007

Abstract

We offer a diachronic view of Psychological constructions with Dative Experiencers in Spanish and Romanian. First, Old Spanish constructions can be Telic, with a reflexive clitic, or Stative, without reflexive, which guides the syntax of postmedieval Verbs. Second, in earlier Spanish and Romanian, Experiencers can be High Applicatives with a Dative clitic, or Locatives without such a clitic. The Locative type is lost. Third, earlier Spanish and Romanian share nominativeless constructions with Oblique Objects of Emotion, which are now restricted to inalienable possession in Spanish, where Nominative is (almost) dominant.

1. Introduction*

In this paper, we offer a constructionist account of syntactic change, with functional categories guiding the evolution of Psychological Verbs (Psych Vs). We adopt a view where the semantic role of clausal arguments depends upon the entire construction where a root is inserted, with syntax and semantics determined not just by lexical properties of Vs, but functional items in the construction itself (Borer 2005, Hale and Keyser 2002, Marantz 1993, Pylkkänen 2002, a.o.).

We explore changes in Psych constructions with Dative Experiencers (Dat Exp) in Spanish (Spa) and Romanian (Rom), deconstruct them in terms of (a) Aspect, (b) Dat Exp, and (c) Object (Obj) of Emotion, and make three proposals. The first proposal is that in Spa, Aspect divides Psych constructions into two types: those marked by reflexive clitics are Telic, and those morphologically unmarked are Stative. While this factor undergoes no change, it guides the syntax of new postmedieval Dat Exp Vs. The second proposal is that early Spa and Rom share two types of Dat Exp: those marked with Dat clitics are Applicatives, and those not marked by clitics are Locatives. The Locative type is lost in both languages, so Dat clitics now obligatorily mark all Dat Exp. The third proposal is that Spa has changed making Nominative (Nom) almost dominant. In Rom and early Spa, Obj of Emotion can be Oblique in constructions without Nom. In present Spa, nominativeless

constructions are for inalienable possession, not Psych Vs. We connect Oblique Obj of Emotion to a Defective (Def) Tense (T) -no Nom - combined with a Def little v (v): no Accusative. On this view, there are no changes in Rom, but Spa develops a preference for a complete T, against a Def T. In §2, we introduce Old Spa Psych constructions that contrast as to the three factors. In §3, we show how they can account for differences / similarities in the evolution of Spa and Rom.

2. *Two Old Spanish constructions with Dative Experiencers*

Old Spanish exhibits two types of Psych constructions with Dat Exp: (1) and (2) (examples from CORDE: <http://corpus.rae.es/>). We deconstruct them on the basis of three factors making them differ, which pertain to (a) Aspect, (b) Dat Exp, and (c) Obj of Emotion.

(1) *Lo del león non se te deve olvidar.*

The of.the lion.NOM Neg Refl 2.DAT.cl must.3SG forget

“You (DAT) must not forget the (one) (NOM) about the lion.”

Poema de Mio Cid, c. 1140

(2) *A todos plogo mucho con esta abençia.*

to all.DAT pleased.3SG much with this arrival

“They (DAT) were all very pleased with this arrival (PP).”

Libro de Alexandre. 1240–1250

The type in (1) survives without changes, (3a), and retains medieval properties up to the present. Its first property is a reflexive clitic, which we propose marks Aspect (McCready and Nishida 2007, and references): this is a Telic construction. The second property is an obligatory Dat clitic; thus, if there is a Dat NP, the construction shows “obligatory clitic doubling”. In our view, the clitic signals that the Experiencer is an Applicative Phrase. The third property is a Nom Obj of Emotion in agreement with V: a sign of a complete T that must {assign/check/value} Nom.

Constructions with such characteristics are not found in French or Italian, but are not language particular. Bulgarian (Bulg) (3b) (Rivero 2003, 2004), for instance, is similar to (3a). Both sentences mean “John has many ideas”, with parallel (a) reflexive clitics, (b) Dative clitics with Experiencer NPs, and (c) agreeing Psych Vs with Nom Obj of Emotion.

(3) a. *A Juan se le ocurren muchas cosas.* Spa

To John.DAT Refl 3DAT.cl occur.3PL many things.NOM

b. *Na Ivan mu se priviždat mnogo nešta.* Bulg

To Ivan.DAT 3DAT.cl Refl imagine.3PL many things.NOM

“John imagines many things.”

By contrast with (1), Old Spa (2) has no exact counterparts at present, and different properties. As to Aspect, *plazer* “please” is never reflexively marked, which indicates Stative status. Second, *plazer* can appear with a Dat Exp NP and no clitic;¹ this is a sign that the Exp in (2)

is Locative, an option that disappears. Third, (2) has no Nom, a default V, and an Oblique Obj of Emotion: a sign that T is defective, so does not value case. At present, Spa nominativeless constructions are restricted to inalienable possession and require a clitic, as in (4).

- (4) *(A todos) les duele en la planta del pie.* Spa
All.DAT 3DAT.cl hurt.3SG in the sole of.the foot

“Everybody (DAT) is hurting on the sole (PP) of the foot.”

Pattern (2) is lost, but is not language specific. It has counterparts in Rom, with Exp NPs without clitic, (5a), and oblique Obj of Emotion (5b) (Rom examples from Wikisource).² Present Rom nominativeless constructions, (6), require a Dat clitic, and clitic doubling with a Dat NP.³

- (5) a. *Că așa place lui Dumnezeu.* Rom

Because so please.3SG the.DAT God.

“Because in this way it pleases God (DAT).”

A. Ivireanul, *Didahii*, 1710

- b. *Alegeți -vă un domnu dintre voi,*
choose –2DAT.cl a king among you,
pe cine v - a plăcè.
P who 2DAT.cl- will please.

“Choose for yourselves a king amongst you whom (PP) pleases you (DAT).” I.Neculce, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei*. 1743

- (6) *Lui Ion îi place de ceva.* Rom
John.DAT 3DAT.cl please.3SG of something

“Something pleases John.”

In §3, we examine the three factors that distinguish (1) from (2) to establish (a) changes in Old Spa Vs, (b) developments in new Spa Dat Exp Vs, and (c) past and present contrasts between Spa and Rom.

3. *The three functional factors in diachrony*

The factors in §2 guide change in Vs. The first factor is Aspect encoded in a reflexive. The second factor is that earlier Dat Exp can be Applicatives with a Dat clitic, or Locatives without clitic. The third factor is Defective T (no Nom), which is excluded in Psych constructions in later Spa, not Rom. Let us examine each in turn.

3.1. *Aspect and the history of Spanish Psych Vs*

In Old Spa, reflexive clitics in constructions with Dat Exp mark Aspect. Namely, reflexively marked constructions are Telic, and unmarked ones are Stative. This difference survives up to now, and guides the syntax of new postmedieval Psych Vs. On the one hand, Stative constructions with new Dat Exp Vs such as *apetecer* “yearn, appeal to” and *gustar* “like” are never reflexively marked. On the other hand, there are interesting postmedieval developments in reflexive marking that have escaped attention, and can be understood from a constructionist perspective. Let us begin by examining the syntactic development of two new Stative Vs

in postmedieval Spa in 3.1.1, before we turn to Telic developments in 3.1.2.

3.1.1. *Postmedieval Stative constructions*

In CORDE, Psych *apetecer* “yearn, appeal to” is first documented c. 1400 with a Nom Exp along the lines of (7a), and *gustar* “like” first appears in 1534 with a Psych reading and a Nom Exp: (7b). Both dates are earlier than those documented in the existing literature on Spa.

(7) a. *Mas a vn deseamos o apeteçemos ser nobles politica mente.*

More still wish.1PL or yearn.1PL be noble politically

“We wish or yearn even more to be noble politically.”

Mejía, F. *Libro intitulado nobiliario vero.* 1477-1485

b. *Gustaron mucho de lo que miser César Gonzaga había dicho.*

Liked.3PL very much of what Mr. C.G. had said

“They (NOM) liked a lot what Mr. C.G. had said.”

Boscán, J. *El cortesano de Baltasar de Castiglione.* 1534

Later, both Vs adopt Dat Exp, first *apetecer* - (8a) – and later *gustar*:

(9a). Delgado shows an early use with both Vs: (8b) and (9a).

(8) a. *Basta; poco me apetece.*

Enough; little 1DAT.cl yearn.3SG

“Enough; he appeals little to me.”

Cervantes, M. *Comedia famosa de la entretenida.* 1615

b. *Ponen dentro de él alguna cosa que les apetece.*

Put.3PL inside of it some thing that 3DAT.cl yearn.3SG

“They place inside of it something that appeals to them.”

Delgado, J. *Historia general*. c. 1754

(9) a. *Hasta se pueden comer crudos, ..., como á cada uno le gustare.*

Even Refl can eat raw, ..., as each one.DAT 3DAT.cl like.3SG

“They can even be eaten raw, ..., in the way each (DAT) would like.”

Delgado, J. *Historia general*. c.1754

b. *A mí me gustan tanto en los sermones estos cuentecitos.*

I.DAT 1DAT.cl like.3PL so.much in the sermons those little.tales

“I (DAT) like those little tales (NOM) in sermons so much.”

Isla, J. *Fray Gerundio de Campazas*. 1758

The patterns in (8-9) share properties of both medieval (1) and (2). On the one hand, *apetecer* and *gustar* always enter atelic constructions without reflexive clitic. Thus, as to Aspect, they resemble *plazer* “please” in (2). On the other hand, such Vs adopt the other properties in (1), not those in (2). That is, they always appear with Dat clitics, so with clitic doubling with a Dat NP: (9a-b). In our terms, new Vs choose the Applicative not the Locative structure in §3.2. Also, *apetecer* and *gustar* always choose Nom in agreement with V, not oblique Obj of Emotion. In our terms, new Vs combine with the complete T in §3.3. Deconstructing constructions into three functional factors, then, is useful to show that Aspect undergoes no change, and two other medieval items are on the

wane: (a) Locative structure for Dat Exp, and (b) absence of Nom correlated with a Defective T.

3.1.2. *Postmedieval telic constructions*

The diachrony of telic constructions is basically unknown. As sketched here for the first time as far as we can tell, it supports a constructionist approach. Vs still extant in the telic pattern, such as *antojarse* “fancy” in (10), offer no new insights, but the isolated use of *acaesçer* “happen” with a Psych meaning in (11) is challenging from a constructionist perspective.

(10) *Et antojó- se-le de ir a alguna cosa.*

And fancy-Refl-3DAT.cl of go to some thing.

“And he fancied to go to something.” *Calila e Dimna*. 1251

(11) *Non se me acaesçio de uos lo preguntar.*

Neg Refl 1DAT.cl happen of you it ask

“It did not occur to me to ask you about it.”

Manuel, J. *Libro de los estados*. 1327-1332

The V in (11) is not used as a Psych predicate in Spa, but we observe that it can acquire the relevant reading in the atelic construction, which supports the constructionist view. That is, Juan Manuel “knows” the relevant properties of the construction, so can make a novel application of its syntax and semantics with the appropriate results, even though a precise lexical entry with such characteristics did not exist. Similar

interesting insights come from 16th c. *entrujar* “understand” in (12). This V did not survive, but was used with a Nom Exp as in (12a), and in the atelic pattern with a reflexive clitic and a Dat Exp clitic in (12b). The last use shares all the familiar properties of (1), and (10).

(12) a. *Muy bien te entrujé.*

Very well 2ACC.cl understood.1SG

“I understood you very well.”

Timoneda, J. *La comedia de los Menemnos*. 1559

b. *San junco, santo según se me entruēja ...*

Saint Junco, saint according Refl 1DAT.cl understand.3SG

“Saint Junco, a saint as far as I can understand...”

Rueda, L. *Farsa del sordo* . c. 1545 – 1561

Finally, we adopt a constructionist view to sketch the development of telic *ocurrirse* “imagine”, which to our knowledge has escaped notice. In CORDE, *ocurrir* as Psych V meaning “occur to someone, think” is first documented without reflexive c. 1400: (13). This V begins to be reflexively marked c. 1570, (14), which is rare until the 19th c.

(13) *Commo no me ocurriese que Responder*

Since Neg 1DAT.cl occurred what to.answer

a palabras tan eficazes dixele:

to words so efficient told.1SG -3DAT.cl

“Since it did not occur to me what to answer, I told him:”

López de Ayala, P. *Caída príncipes*. 1402

(14) *Diremos aquí lo que se nos ocurriere.*

Will.say.1PL here that which Refl 1DAT.cl would.occur

“We will say here whatever occurs to us.”

Horozco, S. *Libro de los proverbios glosados* 1570 – 1579

For several centuries, Psych *ocurrir* / *ocurrirse* can alternate, as in (15a-b), probably with different flavors: Stative (“have”) / Telic (“imagine”).

(15) a. *Ahora no me ocurre otra demostración.*

Now Neg 1DAT.cl occurs another demonstration

“Now another demonstration does not come to my mind.”

Luzán, I. *Arte de hablar.* 1729

b. *Al reflexionar sobre ello se me ocurren dos motivos.*

At.the reflect over it Refl 1DAT.cl occur.3PL two reasons

“When thinking of it, I can imagine two reasons.”

Luzán, I. *Defensa de España.* 1742

Around 1850, reflexive *ocurrirse* in (15b) becomes dominant. By 1900, it displaces nonreflexive Psych *ocurrir* in (15a). In the 20th c., then, *ocurrirse* becomes a specialized inherently reflexive V of creation “imagine”, and *ocurrir* specializes as “happen”. This recent dichotomy is due to the diachronic effect of the Telic Psych construction.

In §3.1, we argued that in Spa, Aspect is encoded in a functional category- a reflexive clitic-, and is not an idiosyncratic lexical property. This factor guides the syntax of Dat Exp Vs up to the present.

3.2. *Dative Experiencers in the history of Spanish and Romanian*

We propose that Old Spa and Rom Dat Exp divide into two types: those expressed by a clitic and clitic doubling are High Applicatives: (16). We also propose in a more tentative tone that those with just a Dat NP without clitic are Prepositional Locatives as in (17). The Locative type is lost, and the Applicative type survives.

(16) High Applicative (Pylkkänen 2002, Cuervo 2003, Diaconescu 2004, a.o.):

T [_{AppIP} Exp [_{Appl}' [_{Appl} CL] [_{VP} V [_{NP} Obj of Emotion]]]]

(17) Locative (Freeze 1992, a.o.):

T [_{VP} V [_{PPLocative} Exp_{Dat} [_P'[_P] [_{NP}Obj of Emotion]]]]

To make (16-17) understandable, we compare older Dat Exp to current Indirect Objects (IOs). According to Cuervo (2003) and Diaconescu and Rivero (2007), when contemporary IOs are expressed by a Dat clitic or clitic doubling as in (18a-b), they are Low Applicatives comparable to so-called Goals in the English Double Object Construction (DOC): *John gave Mary a book*. By contrast, when IOs are expressed by Dat NPs without clitics as in (19a-b), they are in Prepositional Ditransitive Constructions (PDP) similar to the Goal in *John gave a book to Mary*.

(18) a. *Micaela le envía una carta a María.* Spa

Micaela 3DAT.cl sends a letter to Mary

b. *Mihaela îi trimite Mariei o scrisoare.* Rom

Micaela 3DAT.cl sends Mary.DAT a letter

“Micaela sends Mary a letter.” =English DOC

- (19) a. *Micaela envía una carta a María.* Spa
b. *Mihaela trimite Mariei o scrisoare.* Rom

“Mihaela sends a letter to Mary.” =English PDC

We propose a similar difference between the two types of earlier Dat Exp. On the one hand, Dat Exp marked by clitics / clitic doubling are High Applicatives as in (16), as in (Pylkkänen 2002, Cuervo 2003, Diaconescu 2004). They sit above VP, establish a relation between an individual and an event, and have the Dat clitic as head. On the other hand, earlier Exp expressed by just a Dat NP such as Old Spa (2) and (20a-b), and Rom (5a) and (21a-b) are Prepositional Locatives, which disappear: (17). Given that only the Applicative type survives in both languages, clitic doubling is now obligatory with Exp Dat NPs.

- (20) a. *A ella plazia de cassar con el.*
She.DAT pleased of to.marry with him
“It pleased her (DAT pronoun) to marry him.”

López de Ayala, P. *Crónica del rey don Pedro*. c. 1400

- b. *E plogo mucho al rrey con ellos.*
And pleased much the king.DAT with them
“And the king (DAT NP) was very pleased with them.”

López de Ayala, P. *Crónica del rey don Pedro*. c. 1400

- (21) a. *Și cu o învățătură de cele ce plac lui*
And with a teaching of those which pleased he.DAT

“And with a teaching of those that pleased him (DAT pronoun).”

N. Basarab, *Invățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab*. 1650

b. *Și tot cela ce pofteste ca să placă mie.*

And every one who wishes that Subj please I.DAT

“And everyone who wishes that he pleases me (DAT pronoun).”

A. Ivireanul, *Didahii*. 1710

Earlier Spa and Rom display two structures for Dat Exp, so clitic doubling seems optional. We mentioned in note 1 that in 13th-15th Spa, clitic doubling with *plazer* “please” is infrequent. However, it can be found: (22). Likewise, in 17th c. Rom, doubling with *a plăcea* “please”, while not obligatory, is possible: (23). Thus, the two languages display both Applicative and Locative structures for Dat Exp.

(22) *Que el cardenal viniessa quando le a el pluguiesse.*

That the cardinal come when 3DAT.cl he.DAT please

“Let the cardinal come whenever he (DAT CL+ pronoun)

pleases.” López de Ayala, P. *Crónica del rey don Pedro*. c. 1400

(23) a. *Râmlenilor le plăcea a râde.*

Romans.the.DAT 3DAT.cl pleased to laugh

“It pleased the Romans (DAT NP + CL) to laugh.”

M.Costin, *De neamul moldovenilor*.1686

Old Spanish offers an interesting link between Aspect and Applicative / Locative structures in need of future study. On the one hand, in the early period there is a one-to-one correlation between Telicity and Applicative

structure. Namely, Telic constructions with a reflexive such as (1) and (10) **always** express Dat Exp with clitics, so with the Applicative structure. The correlation between Atelicity and Locative structure exists, but is obscured by a quantitative preference for clitics. Namely, Atelicity cooccurs with Locatives because in Atelic constructions with Vs such as *plazer* “please” and no reflexive, Exp Dat NPs preferably appear without Dat clitics (see note 1). However, the correlation between Atelicity and Locatives is obscured because Dat Exp are often expressed with just a Dat clitic with all Vs, including the *plazer*-type. In simple terms, since Dat clitics are so common, Applicative structures are quantitatively dominant with all Vs. This effect grows when new postmedieval Vs such as *apetecer* / *gustar* adopt the Applicative structure exclusively, so always appear with Dat Exp clitics. It remains to determine what is the precise path followed by older Vs that continue, such as *placer*, when they abandon the Locative structure in favor of the Applicative structure.

To conclude with Dat Exp, earlier Spa and Rom have two types defined by functional categories in syntactic constructions: those with clitics are Applicative, and those without clitics are Locative. The Locative type dies in both languages, so Dat Experiencers must now be expressed by clitics doubled or not. In Old Spanish, Locatives combined only with Stative constructions, not with Telic ones. Since Locatives are replaced by Applicatives, this distinction is lost, making later Spa resemble Rom.

3.3. *Objects of Emotion in the history of Spanish and Romanian*

Old Spa and Rom differ from present Spa in sharing Psych Vs with (a) oblique Obj of Emotion, (b) no Nom, (c) default V, and (d) no Acc: Old Spa (2) and (21a-b), Rom (6a) and (22a-b). We take this to indicate that Nom is not dominant (see Reuland 2000). We follow Lavine and Freidin (2002), and associate such a case pattern with a Def T without a Nom property or expletive category, combined with a Def little *v* without Acc, as in (25).

(25) $T_{def} \quad [_{vP} v_{def} [V \quad [_{PPLocative} P \quad NP[Object\ of\ Emotion]]]]$

Lavine and Freidin show that Russian nominativeless constructions require a phrasal constituent before V, so they propose that T_{def} has an EPP feature in that language. By contrast, Spa and Rom nominativeless constructions can be V-initial as in (20b), so we assume that no EPP on T_{def} in Romance. Alternatively, the feature can be satisfied by a (default) V-inflection.

Other than nominativeless constructions, Old Spa and Rom share with present Spa familiar constructions with (a) Nom Obj of Emotion, and (b) an agreeing V, as in (25-26). We assume that those combine a Nondefective T with a Nom property for the Obj of Emotion, coupled to a Def *v* without Accusative.

(25) *Algunas pleytesias que traya en Aragon que plazian*

Some homages that brought.3SG in Aragon that pleased.3PL

al rrey don Pedro ...

the king.DAT don Pedro ...

“Some homages that he brought to Aragon that pleased (3PL)
king don Pedro (DAT) ...”

López de Ayala, P. *Crónica del rey don Pedro*. c. 1400

- (26) *Ce Domnului acela om place.*
because god-the.DAT that man.NOM pleases
“Because that man (NOM) pleases God (DAT NP).”

Dosoftei, *Psaltirea în versuri*. 1673

Old Spa offers an interesting correlation between T / Nom and Aspect.
Old Spa telic Vs such as *olvidarse* “forget” combine with Nom, not
Oblique Obj of Emotion: (27). Thus, in the early period, the combination
Nondef T + Def *v* correlates with Telicity. In other words, Nom is
dominant in Telic constructions.

- (27) *Entendra bien las cosas que oyere & non se*
Will.understand.3SG well the things that hear & Neg Refl
le oluidaran.
3DAT.cl will.forget.3PL

“He will understand well the things he hears and he (DAT) will
not forget (3PL) them.” Alfonso X. *Lapidario*, c. 1250

By contrast, clear Nom Objects of Emotion with Old Spa stative *plazer*
and *pesar* “pain” are surprisingly infrequent. In the 13th-14th c., most Obj
of Emotion with *plazer* “please” and *pesar* are oblique with default V,

indicating that Def T+ Def ν most often correlates with Atelicity in this period. When Nondef T becomes dominant, and most constructions must contain a Nom, so that the only option with Dat Exp Vs is with a Nom Obj of Emotion, the contrast naturally disappears. The course of this change awaits study. In sum, Obj of Emotion show two cases in Rom and Old Spa, but only Nom with an agreeing V in present Spa. We associate such a situation with the functional categories T and ν . In Spa, Nom= nondefective T becomes the only option in Psych constructions.

To conclude, in this paper we identified three functional items in Psych constructions, and adopted a constructionist point of view to provide insights into their diachronic evolution.

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* Rivero is subsidized by SSHRC Grant 410-2006-0150, and Diaconescu by SSHRC MCRI Grant 412-2004-1002.

Abbreviations: Acc =Accusative; Appl= Applicative; cl = clitic ;
Bulg =Bulgarian; Dat = Dative; Def = Defective; Exp = Experiencer; IO
= indirect object; Neg =Negation; Nom= Nominative; Nondef =
Nondefective; Obj = Object; NP = Noun Phrase; PDP = Prepositional
Ditransitive Construction; PL= Plural; SGL= Singular; Spa = Spanish;
psych = psychological; Refl= Reflexive; Rom = Romanian; T = Tense;
v = little v; V = Verb; VP = Verb Phrase.

¹ In 13th-15th Spa, clitic doubling with *plazer* “please”, *desplazer* “displease”, and *pesar* “pain” is infrequent. As a case in point, in the *Conde Lucanor* we found only 3 examples of doubling with *plazer* “please” (2 identical), and none with *pesar* “pain”. *El Libro de los estados* contains no doubling. Up to 1492, CORDE offers frequent cases of *displazer* “displease” with just Exp Dat NPs, but only 5 with Dat NPs combined with Dat clitics, that is with clitic doubling.

² We consider *pe* an oblique marker in earlier Rom. On this view, *a plăcea* “please” does not assign Acc, so contains Def v (see §3.3).

³ Quantificational and overt / null generic Dat Exp are exceptions in both Spa and Rom: they do not require clitics. Thus, Spa *La música gusta a muchos* “Many like music” and parallel examples in Rom are grammatical.