DIFFERENTIAL INDIRECT OBJECT MARKING IN ROMANCE (AND HOW TO GET RID OF IT)[1]

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Abstract. In this paper we analyse several verbs in Romance languages which, both intralinguistically and cross-linguistically, are subject to a dative/accusative case alternation. We focus especially on Catalan, as well as Spanish, Asturian and Italian varieties. Our main contribution has to do with the analysis of these alternations as an instance of Differential Indirect Object Marking, since these are indirect objects that, in addition to the dative, may appear in the accusative, and are thus differentially marked. The verbs in question are agentive verbs with a Goal-like complement, as well as psychological verbs with an Experiencer-like complement.

Keywords: differential indirect object marking, dative/accusative alternations, agentive verbs, psychological verbs, indirect object, applicatives, Romance languages

1. INTRODUCTION

Across and within Romance languages, there is a group of verbs that show dative/accusative case alternation in the marking of their complement of person. In this paper we analyse these patterns of case alternation as an instance of Differential Indirect Object Marking, following a term first proposed by Bilous (2011). Traditionally, Differential Object Marking (DOM) refers to Differential *Direct* Object Marking, which is present in several languages across the world. In the Romance area, DOM is present a.o. in Spanish, Sardinian and Romanian. However, we argue that Romance languages display what can be seen –at least within a descriptive perspective– as another kind of DOM, which has gone largely unnoticed until now. This is Differential *Indirect* Object Marking (henceforth, DIOM), which is found with agentive verbs (section 2) and psychological verbs

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(section 3). Focusing on data from Catalan (as well as Spanish, Asturian and Italian varieties), we identify as instances of DIOM (that is, as instances of differently marked indirect objects) occurrences in which a Goal-like or Experiencer-like argument appears in the accusative rather than the dative.

2. DIOM WITH AGENTIVE VERBS

2.1. Overview of the data

In the Romance area, there are several agentive verbs whose complement of person can alternatively take the dative (as expected, given its Goal-like role) (1)–(2) or the innovative accusative case (3)–(4), as shown in the Catalan (a) and Spanish (b) examples below[4]. These are mostly verbs indicating some kind of (physical or metaphorical) transfer, such as: verbs of transfer of communication ('phone', 'write', 'answer', 'inform'), verbs of transfer of possession ('pay', 'rob'), verbs of transfer of contact in a broad sense (violent contact: 'hit', 'beat', 'sting', 'bite'; contact from a distance: 'aim (with a gun)', 'shoot'; linear or hierarchical ordering: 'follow', 'precede')), and verbs of social interaction and related notions (usually involving some kind of metaphorical transfer as well): 'serve', 'order, give orders', 'obey', 'yell', 'pray', 'teach', 'influence', 'applaud', 'whistle', 'lie', 'hang up (on the phone)', 'advise', 'consult', 'ask', 'honk one's horn (at someone)', 'ring the doorbell (at someone)', 'bark'[5].

(1) Dative-marked complement (full DP)
a. **Cat**. El cap paga a l'empleat
b. **Sp**. El jefe paga al empleado
'The chief pays [$_{DAT}$ the employee]'

(2) Dative-marked complement (clitic)
a. **Cat**. El cap li paga
b. **Sp**. El jefe le paga
'The chief pays [$_{DAT}$ him]'

(3) Accusative-marked complement (full DP)
a. **Cat**. El cap paga l'empleat
b. **Sp**. El jefe paga a$_{DOM}$ el empleado
'The chief pays [$_{ACC}$ the employee]'

(4) Accusative-marked complement (clitic)
a. **Cat**. L'empresari el paga
b. **Sp**. El empresario lo paga
'The business owner pays [$_{ACC}$ him]'

In Catalan, the contrast between (1a)–(2a) and (3a)–(4a) clearly instantiates the dative/accusative alternation, which is subject to variation across dialects and

[4] For most examples, we offer parallel sentences in different languages. This is why for each group of multilingual examples we opt for a literal translation with some grammatical remarks, instead of standard glosses, which would be too repetitive.

[5] For an overview, see Pineda (2016: §5), who offers a thorough account of what prescriptive dictionaries and grammars have to say about these verbs, and an exhaustive compilation of examples extracted from literary works, the press, and spontaneous discourse. Other authors have mentioned the existence of these alternations in Catalan (Solà 1994, Cabré and Mateu 1998, Rosselló 2002, Pérez-Saldanya 2004, Ramos 2005 and Morant 2008).

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even across idiolects. The existence of DOM in Spanish means that two animate DPs, one being indirect object (1b) and the other being direct object (3b) will be superficially identical, because both are preceded by *a*. Thus, we need to look at cliticization (2b), (4b)[6].

Let's now take the example of verbs of telephone communication to see how this alternation works in a wider spectrum of Romance languages.

For Catalan, according to the Catalan normative dictionary *Diccionari de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans* (*DIEC2*), the *phone*-verbs *telefonar* and *trucar* are intransitive verbs, so that the person who receives the call is expressed in the dative (5). However, many speakers tend to use the accusative (6).

(5) a. Ell {truca/telefona} a la seva filla
'He phones [$_{DAT}$ his daughter]'
b. Ell li {truca/telefona}
'He phones [$_{DAT}$ her]'

(6) a. Ell {truca/telefona} a la seva filla
'He phones [$_{ACC}$ his daughter]'
b. Ell li {truca/telefona}
'He phones [$_{ACC}$ her]'

As for Spanish *telefonear*, the prescriptive *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* considers this verb to be intransitive, but the *Nueva Gramática de la Lengua Española* (*NGLE*: §16.9q) and the *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* (*DPD*) admit that there is a true case alternation. Thus, the *NGLE* (§16.9q) claims: 'The [alternation] of *telefonear* 'to phone' is very common, as seen in the following: [...] *la telefoneó* [...] '(s)he called her$_{ACC}$' [...] *le telefonarías* [...] 'you would call her$_{DAT}$'' [our translation].

The tendency to mark the complement of person of these verbs in the accusative is also present in other Romance languages, such as Asturian, where in fact the accusative (8) is preferred to the dative (7).

(7) ?Telefonée-y
'I phoned-[$_{DAT}$ him]'

(8) Telefonéelu, telefoneéla
'I phoned-[$_{ACC}$ him], I phoned-[$_{ACC}$ her]' (Xulio Viejo, p.c.)

Also in some Italian varieties the same alternation is found. Thus, in addition to the dative form in (9), the accusative option (10) is also possible, although the latter is limited to the southern Italian varieties. Indeed, evidence of the dative/accusative variation with complements of person in such verbs exists, among others, in Neaopolitan, Altamurano, Calabrese and Sicilian, according to Ledgeway (2000: 52–53; 2009: 844–847).

(9) a. Ogni giorno telefono a mia mamma
'Every day I phone [$_{DAT}$ my mum]' (Grande Dizionario Hoepli Italiano)
b. Ogni giorno le telefono
'Every day I phone [$_{DAT}$ her]'

[6] As Pineda (2014: 125–126) shows, it is important to tease apart these genuine case alternations from instances of so-called *laísmo/loísmo*, a phenomenon occurring in some dialects of Spanish, with very different reasons and properties (as in *La di un libro* 'I gave [$_{ACC}$ her] a book').

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(10) a. *Telefonarono lo zio*
'They phoned [$_{ACC}$ the uncle]' (Gadda, cited by the Accademia della Crusca)
b. *Lo telefonarono*
'They phoned [$_{ACC}$ him]'

Finally, a comment on diachrony is in order. Most of the verbs analysed here also display an interesting diachronic variation. Of particular interest is the case of the verbs meaning 'help'. In Catalan, *ajudar* takes an accusative-marked complement in the majority of varieties, although in some conservative areas the dative case is used, replicating the pattern of Old Catalan. For the Spanish verb *ayudar* the alternation also exists, and has been described as 'a tug-of-war between archaizing and innovative solutions', in such a way that using the accusative is the result of the 'tendency to transitivize verbs or constructions which were originally intransitive and required an object [...] in the dative' [our translation] (Fernández-Ordóñez 1999: 1323). The French verb *aider* also displays this evolution: "In Old and Middle French, *aider* was most often followed by an indirect object [...] headed by the preposition *à* [...], commutable with a pronoun of the type *lui/leur* [...]. Although less frequent, direct objects were also used with *aider* [...]. Furthermore, it was not uncommon for an author to alternate between a direct and an indirect object within the same text" (Troberg 2008: 2).[7] Today, though, although the accusative is the most generalized option (Troberg 2008: 4), the dative option can still be found (Fagard & Mardale 2014: §4.5). In Romanian the verb *a ajuta* 'help' alternates between the original dative-marked complement and the innovative accusative-marked one (Blume 1998 and Kerstin Blume, p.c.).

2.2. Analysis of agentive verbs

The verbs we study are originally unergatives, that is, intransitive verbs with an Agent-like subject. Following Hale and Keyser (1993, 2002), we assume that the underlying configuration of unergatives is a transitive-like structure formed by a light verb and a nominal root, as is systematically attested in languages such as Basque, where an unergative verb such as *talk* is *hitz egin* '(lit.) do word'.[8] Thus, returning to our examples, the Catalan verb *trucar* 'to phone' is assumed to be the result of the conflation of a cognate nominal root TRUC 'phone call' into a light verbal head 'do, give':

(11) L'Anna truca a l'Andreu → L'Anna fa TRUC a l'Andreu
'Anna phones [$_{DAT}$ Andreu]' 'Anna does phone call [$_{DAT}$ Andreu]'

[7] Very interestingly, Fagard and Mardale (2014), in their description of the existence of DOM in French (where it certainly is a restricted but still present phenomenon, as in *Tu l'as vu à lui* 'You [$_{ACC}$ him] have seen *à*$_{DOM}$ him'), argue that *aider*-like verbs, allowing for both an accusative and a dative-marked complement, were at the origin of the emergence of DOM, probably after a process of reanalysis of such double regime verbs.

[8] Actually, analytical patterns of this sort are also found in Romance languages, such as Catalan *fer nones* '(lit.) do sleep' and *fer feina* '(lit.) do work' (see Acedo-Matellán and Pineda forthc.).

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The decomposition in (11) actually reveals a kind of ditransitive structure (‘do a phone call to somebody’), since there is the complement of person, an IO that designates the recipient of a phone call (or the recipient of an answer, some help, applause, a shot, a payment, and so on). In Romance languages, the dative is expected for the IO. However, as seen, in several Romance languages it can also be differently marked, with the accusative. This is what we identify as Differential Indirect Object Marking, or DIOM, borrowing Bilous’ (2011) term. In particular, we were especially inspired by Bilous’ analysis of certain Ukrainian and French verbs that behave similarly to the ones analysed here; however, it is paramount to make clear that Bilous’ work has a much broader scope and a clear typological orientation, and makes numerous predictions expressed in universal terms connecting a cross-linguistically well-defined class of verbs[9]. The goal of this paper is however much more modest and the term *DIOM* is used in a more descriptive way to refer to a particular stage of an ongoing syntactic change with a number of agentive and psychological predicates in Romance languages in general and Catalan in particular. In what follows we describe how DIOM works in our proposal, explaining the expected use of the dative and the innovative, unexpected use of the accusative.

Our proposal explicitly adopts the view that in ditransitive constructions there is a functional head, the so-called Low Applicative, which is responsible for establishing a relationship between the DO and the IO (in particular, this is a transfer-of-possession relationship, in the sense that the DO is eventually possessed by the IO). The term “applicative” was first proposed in the study of Bantu languages, where a variety of extra arguments (including goals) are added to the structure by means of an applicative head (see Marantz 1984, 1993 and Baker 1988). In fact, the applicative proposal offered an elegant analysis for IOs cross-linguistically; the idea that IOs were introduced in the structure by means of applicatives was extended to English and a variety of languages (Pylkkänen 2002) as well as to Romance languages (Cuervo (2003) for Spanish, Fournier (2010) for French and Pineda (2013, 2016) for Catalan and for Romance languages in general).

Thus, adopting the applicative proposal, the structure of (12) can indeed be argued to be a ditransitive structure (13) mediated by an applicative head that relates the IO to the DO (the cognate root *TRUC* ‘phone call’, which will disappear once it conflates with the verb, as indicated by the arrows). [10]

[9] We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to us.

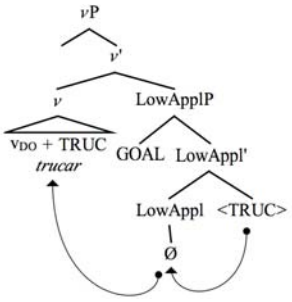
[10] Similar analyses exist for agentive verbs with a Goal complement, such as Cuervo (2003: 161–164) for Spanish, but only for some verbs like *sonreír (‘smile’) – hacer una sonrisa*; McFadden (2004: 126–129) for German *helf*, but with no cognate object; Torrego (2010) for Spanish, but generally for all verbs with *a*-objects, being DOM-marked DOs (i) or IOs (ii):

(i) *El profesor vigila* [DO a_{DOM} *sus alumnos*] (ii) *El profesor habla* [IO *a sus estudiantes*]
‘The teacher watches his students’ ‘The teacher talks to his students’

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(12) L'Anna truca a l'Andreu / L'Anna li truca
'Anna phones [$_{DAT}$ Andreu] / Anna phones [$_{DAT}$ him]'

(13)

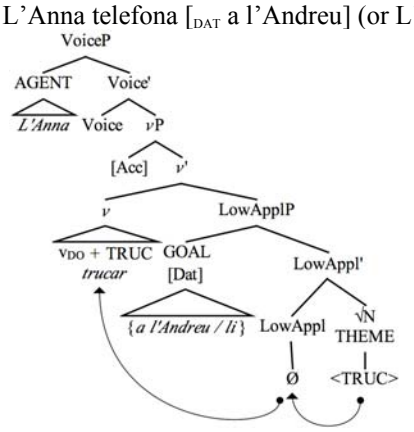


Let us now account for the dative/accusative variation in the encoding of the IO.

2.3. Explaining case alternation

In Romance languages, the applicative head is responsible for the dative case marking of the IO. As argued by Cuervo (2003: 72–77) for Spanish, Fournier (2010: 207–210) for French and Pineda (2013, 2016) for Catalan, the applicative assigns the inherent dative case to the argument in its specifier position (IO/Goal). In turn, the argument located in the complement position (DO/Theme) must move to a position, the specifier of *v*, where it can get the only available case (the default case): the structural accusative. This is what happens in a garden-variety ditransitive construction, such as Catalan *L'Anna dóna un llibre a l'Andreu* 'Anna gives Andreu a book'. However, in the case of the verbs that are the focus of this study, *L'Anna truca (= fa TRUC) a l'Andreu* 'Anna phones [$_{DAT}$ Andreu]', the DO (the cognate nominal TRUC 'phone call') does not undergo this movement; instead, as we said, it conflates with the light verb and gives rise to the verb 'to phone', as illustrated in (14):[11]

(14) L'Anna telefona [$_{DAT}$ a l'Andreu] (or L'Anna [$_{DAT}$ li] telefona)



[11] The IO can be doubled by a clitic (*L'Anna (li) truca a l'Andreu*), as in garden-variety ditransitives (*L'Anna (li) dóna un llibre a l'Anna*). This doubling clitic spells out the applicative head. See Pineda (2013, 2016) for an exhaustive account of optional dative clitic doubling in Romance languages.

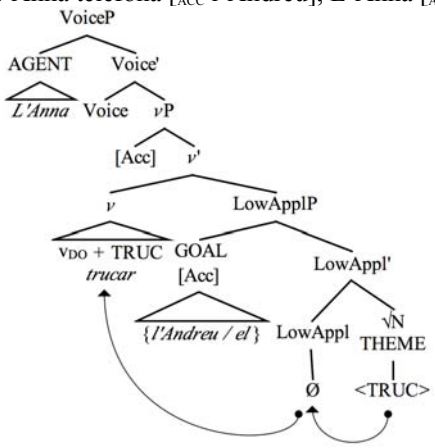
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In short, what should be borne in mind is the fact that the IO designates the recipient of the phone call (either a full DP *a l'Andreu* or a clitic *li*) and gets dative thanks to the presence of the applicative head.

Under the view that the unergative verbs we are dealing with can be decomposed into a transitive structure like *fer TRUC* 'do phone call', we expect the complement of person to be an IO bearing the dative, as seen. However, in Romance there is variation at this point, since the very same complement of person can also bear the accusative.

Indeed, several semantic and syntactic tests show that these accusative-marked complements, regardless of their case marking, are still IOs, but with an unexpected case marking (DIOM). In favour of the idea that these accusative-marked complements continue to be IOs one can argue that they refer to a participant that is not a Patient (as one would expect of a typical DO), but rather a recipient ('phone', 'write', 'answer' + complement of person), a beneficiary ('help' + complement of person) or a maleficiary ('rob' + complement of person). These semantic roles are all included under the term *Goal*. The consequence of this semantic fact is that the structures with those verbs must contain a position for such Goal-like complements, and this position is precisely the specifier of the applicative head, as we saw above. Indeed, the Goal status of the complements of our verbs is also confirmed when we look at the cross-linguistic behaviour of the predicates that interest us, since they normally take oblique or dative complements – as shown by Chung (1978) for Austronesian languages, Arad (1998) for Hebrew, Svenonius (2002) and Jónsson (2013) for Icelandic and Blume (1998) for a variety of languages (such as German, Polish, Hungarian, Romanian and several Polynesian languages).[12]

(15) L'Anna telefona [$_{ACC}$ l'Andreu], L'Anna [$_{ACC}$ el] telefona



[12] There are also syntactic tests indicating that we are not dealing with DOs, but with differently marked IOs. One such test is the incompatibility with secondary predicates (ia), as expected with IOs (ib) (Pylkkänen 2002: 15), and in contrast to what happens with DOs (ic). See the Catalan examples:

(i) a. ??*Han robat la Maria$_i$ tranquil·la$_i$
'They robbed Maria$_i$ quiet$_i$'
b. *Han donat un llibre a la Maria$_i$ enfadada$_i$
'They gave a book to Maria$_i$ angry$_i$'
c. Han vist la Maria$_i$ tranquil·la$_i$
'They saw Maria$_i$ quiet$_i$'

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Therefore, even when the complement of person of our verbs bears the accusative, we claim that it is an IO and occupies the very same position as the standard, dative-marked IO, as illustrated in (15) for Catalan.

It remains to be seen why the argument in the specifier position is in the accusative instead of the dative. In other words, the origin of this syntactic variation needs to be explained. In our view, we should look for the answer in the properties of functional categories and more specifically in the characteristics of the applicative head.[13] Crucially, applicatives do not behave alike across languages; their case-assigning properties may change from one language to the other (Pylkkänen 2002, Cuervo 2003, Fournier 2010). Indeed, in the structure in (14) we had a Romance-like applicative head, that is to say, an applicative that assigns the dative to the argument in its specifier. On the other hand, we argue that in (15) we have an English-like applicative head, that is, an applicative that does not assign the inherent dative case to the argument located in its specifier, the goal, so that the default inherent case, the accusative, is assigned to the argument in the complement position, the theme (although in this case the object *TRUC* is finally conflated with verb). As Fournier (2010: 209) points out, the English-like applicative does not assign the dative because this case is not available: "Si une langue possède un Cas inhérent compatible avec la sémantique du verbe et qui peut s'associer au rôle sémantique du Récepteur/But/Possesseur, la tête ApplB° [=Applicatif Bas, LowAppl] vérifie ce Cas inhérent dans sa position de Spec. Sinon, elle vérifie le Cas inhérent par défaut de son complément (soit ACC)". The key fact is that the applicative assigns the inherent accusative case to the DO/Theme and, even if this object conflates, the applicative has already sold out its case-assigning capacity, so that the IO/Goal, which still lacks a case, must move to check structural accusative case. This is indeed how applicatives work in a language like English, where the so-called Double Object Construction (DOC) obtains (*John gives Mary a book*), with two accusative-marked objects (one bears the inherent accusative, the other the structural accusative). At the same time, the fact that the Goal is in the accusative case explains why, in these constructions in English, it is the IO that can passivize (i.e., *Mary was given a book*) – recall that only arguments in the structural case can become the subject of a passive sentence.

If the accusative case we find with the complements of person of our verbs is obtained in the same way as in English DOCs, we will expect passivization to be possible. This prediction is borne out by the following examples in which we can easily observe the possibility of passivizing these complements of person in Catalan, Spanish, Barese, Neapolitan and Calabrese respectively (16).

[13] The idea that variation is located in functional heads comes from the so-called Borer-Chomsky conjecture (Baker 2008: 353–355), according to which all parameters of variation are attributable to differences in the features of particular items (functional heads) in the lexicon.

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(16) a. Maragall ha estat telefonat personalment pel president (Press)
'Maragall has been phoned in person by the president'
b. Esquivias fue telefoneado por el Delegado del Gobierno (Press)
'Esquivias was phoned by the Government's Delegate'
c. Maríjə ha státə təlefonátə (dò marítə)
'Mary has been phoned (by her husband)' (Andriani 2011: 53–54)
d. Socrama fuje telefunata
'My mother-in-law was phoned'
e. Ancora un signu statu telefunatu
'I have not been phoned yet' (Ledgeway 2000: 30–31)

It is important to explain why it is that some Romance varieties are unable to assign the inherent dative case to the IO/Goal, and therefore make use of an English-like applicative. In English this is so because no dative case is available, and we argue that in the Romance varieties where the English-like applicative is found the dative is not available either. Specifically, we postulate that there is a sort of *dilution* of the morphological dative case. Although the dative is not completely lost in Romance (see clitics), it is crucial to note that in the particular context of verbs with one single complement (e.g. 'phone' + compl. person) the process by which the dative loses its distinctiveness is more likely to occur.[14] In contrast, it is much less likely when there are two complements (e.g. 'send' + compl. thing + compl. pers), thus explaining why in Romance regular ditransitives the distinction between dative and accusative is clearly preserved. [15]

The dative/accusative alternation analysed reveals an ongoing syntactic change, which ultimately leads to a true transitivization of such verbs. This can be seen as the result of a strategy of optimization at the interfaces, i.e., related to "general considerations of computational efficiency" (Chomsky 2005: 1). As Pineda (2016: §5.6) shows, a number of separate stages can be distinguished: (i) absence of DIOM (always dative), (ii) alternation between dative (no DIOM) and accusative (DIOM), (iii) semantic exploitation of the alternation (e.g., accusative for more affected complements of person), (iv) generalization of the accusative for all complements of person of a given verb, and transitivization of the structure, with the complement of person becoming a garden-variety DO, as shown by several syntactic tests, such as compatibility with secondary predicates, behaviour in causative contexts, participial agreement, partitive cliticization, and others, all extensively reported by Pineda (2016: §5.6.3).

[14] Phonetics may also encourage the loss of the case distinction, as occurs in Catalan (see Ramos 2005, Navarro 2013), where a DO *el nen* 'the kid' and an IO *al nen* 'to the kid' do not differ in pronunciation ([əl] *nen*).

[15] In Central Brazilian Portuguese, the dilution is complete: dative clitics are gone and the English-like applicative appears even in verbs with two complements (ditransitive constructions): *João deu Maria o livro* ('John gave Maria the book') (Torres and Salles 2010: 191). See also Ledgeway (2000: 46–56) for similar *double accusative* ditransitive constructions in southern Italian varieties.

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3. DIOM WITH PSYCH-VERBS

3.1. Overview of the data

We find a second group of verbs with case alternations in the marking of their single complement of person. They are psych-verbs such as 'annoy', 'worry' or 'surprise' (Belletti & Rizzi's (1988) type II psych-verbs). On the one hand, these verbs can be used in causative constructions, with the neutral word order SVO; they denote a change of state whose subject is an Agent or a Cause, and the complement is an Experiencer in the accusative, conceived as Patient-like.[16]

(17) **Spanish**
Los skin-heads molestaron a Luisa → Los skin-heads la molestaron
the skin-heads annoyed DOM $\text{Luisa}_{\text{ACC}}$ → the skin-heads CL_{ACC} annoy
(Mendívil Giró 2005: 261)

(18) **Asturian**
Los neños molesten a María → Los neños molésten la
the kids annoy DOM $\text{Maria}_{\text{ACC}}$ → the kids annoy CL_{ACC} (Xulio Viejo, p.c.)

(19) **Catalan**
Els nens molesten la Maria → Els nens la molesten
the kids annoy ART $\text{Maria}_{\text{ACC}}$ → the kids CL_{ACC} annoy (Solà 2009: §54.1)

The very same verbs can also appear in a stative configuration, with a neutral word order OVS, whose subject is a stimulus/source of the emotion; the complement of person is an Experiencer, no longer seen as Patient-like, which can now appear in the dative – in addition, if it is a full DP, it must be clitic-doubled, as shown below.

(20) **Sp.** A Luisa le molesta que salgas por la noche
to $\text{Luisa}_{\text{DAT}}$ CL_{DAT} annoys that (you) go out at ART night
(Mendívil Giró 2005: 261)

(21) **Ast.** A María molésten-y los neños
to $\text{Maria}_{\text{DAT}}$ annoy-CL_{DAT} the kids (Xulio Viejo, p.c.)

(22) **Cat.** A la Maria li molesten els nens
to ART $\text{Maria}_{\text{DAT}}$ CL_{DAT} annoy the kids (Solà 2009: §54.1)

In Catalan, however, the dative is not the only option for the encoding of the Experiencer in the stative OVS-structure above (22). Actually, it is quite recent,

[16] For examples with psych-predicates, usually displaying different word orders and clitic doubling, we offer word-to-word glosses.

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since it appeared only in the first half of the 20th century (Ginebra 2003: 16, 2015: 147), concurrently with the accusative (23).

(23) **Cat.** A la Maria li/la molesten els nens
to ART Maria $CL_{DAT/ACC}$ annoy the kids

Importantly, the lexical nature of the verbs plays a role here, since some type II psych verbs resist the dative option (24a), as well as other non-psych verbs which take a psychological reading by a metaphorical expansion of meaning (psych constructions in Bouchard's (1995: 265–269) terms) (24b).[17]

(24) **Cat.** a. Al Julià el commou recordar tots aquells esdeveniments
to+ART Julià CL_{ACC} moves to remember all those events
b. A la Montse la bloqueja aquesta nova situació
to ART Montse CL_{ACC} blocks this new situation (Ginebra 2003: 29–30)

In what follows, we provide an analysis of the different configurations of type II psych-verbs. The accusative-marked Experiencer in (17)–(19) is the expected option for the DO in a transitive causative configuration (25). The dative-marked Experiencer in (20)–(22) is also the expected case-marking for the IO in a stative configuration (36). However, the accusative marking that may appear in Catalan in stative constructions such as (23) and (24) is not the expected option: we will argue that the use of the accusative for these IOs is an instance of DIOM, that is, they are differentially marked IOs (37b).

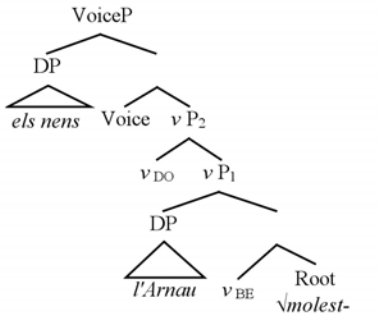
3.2. Analysis of psych-verbs

As proposed by Pesetsky (1995) for English, Bouchard (1995) for French, Acedo-Matellán & Mateu (2015) for Spanish, and Ynglès (1991), Cabré & Mateu (1998) and Rosselló (2008) for Catalan, we consider the SVO transitive sentences with Belletti & Rizzi's (1988) type II psych-verbs to be causative sentences triggering a change of state in the Experiencer (conceived as a Patient). We follow Cuervo (2003: 13–14) in assuming the causative complex structure in (25), with two verbal heads *v*P – the higher one for the causing event (vP_{DO}) and the lower one (vP_{BE}) for the caused event. In this structure the surface subject is the external argument licensed by Voice and the object DP is licensed as the specifier of the lower *v*P.

[17] As for the nature of the *a* heading the DP in (23)–(24) and (26)–(31), see fn. 18.

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(25) Els nens han molestat l' Arnau
the kids have annoyed ART Arnau$_{ACC}$



When the order is reversed from SVO into OVS and the verbal aspect is imperfective, we obtain a stative construction and the dative appears (20)–(22) – although in Catalan the accusative is also possible (23) and in fact in some cases the most general option (24). Besides the sentence word order, the grammatical aspect contributes to the difference between the causative and the stative structure of these psych-verbs, since the perfect tense contributes to the causative interpretation (25) and the imperfect tense (e.g. present) contributes to the stative one (20)–(24). Grammatical and lexical aspects are thus related.

Regardless of the case-marking, the subject is now conceived as a stimulus or source of the psychological experience and the complement is no longer conceived as a Patient but as an Experiencer of the whole event, in a prominent structural position with respect to the stimulus. Thus, whether the clitic is in the dative or the accusative, the Experiencer is a non-topicalized element with subject-like properties: it can bind an anaphor within the subject (26) (Demonte 1989: 185–190, Eguren & Fernández Soriano 2004: 130), it can be modified by the adverb 'only' (27) (Cuervo 1999: 21), it allows *Wh*-extraction (28) (Belletti & Rizzi 1988: 337–338), it can be a generalized indefinite quantifier in initial position (29) (Belletti & Rizzi 1988: 338, Masullo 1992), it does not admit a comma separating it from the rest of the sentence in Catalan (30) (Ginebra 2003: 28–29, 2005: §280) and it controls the subject of an infinitival sentence (31) (Campos 1999, Alsina 2008: §S 20.2.3.3).

(26) A la Maria {**li / la**} molesta aquesta imatge de si mateixa
to ART Maria CL$_{DAT/ACC}$ annoys this picture of herself
(27) Només a la Maria {**li / la**} molesten els nens
only to ART Maria CL$_{DAT/ACC}$ annoy the kids
(28) Els nens que a la Maria {**li / la**} molesten són aquests
the kids who to ART Maria CL$_{DAT/ACC}$ annoy are these
(29) A ningú no {**li / el**} molesten els nens
to nobody don't CL$_{DAT/ACC}$ annoy the kids
(30) A la Maria$_{(*, / Ø)}$ {**li / la**} molesten els nens
to ART Maria$_{(*, / Ø)}$ CL$_{DAT/ACC}$ annoy the kids
(31) A la Maria {**li / la**} molesta rebre pressions
to ART Maria CL$_{DAT/ACC}$ annoys receive pressures

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As a consequence, we argue that the (dative/accusative-marked) Experiencer is an IO. Further evidence in favour of its syntactic status comes from its placement in initial position as a DP (see the contrasts in (32)–(33) and (34)–(35)) (Royo in prep.). Let us take the case of *molestar* and *commoure*, both psych-verbs that can be used in the transitive causative configuration (32) and in the stative one (34). In the former case, these verbs follow the pattern of regular transitive causative verbs (33): the Experiencer upon which the Agent causes a change is in the accusative (optionally marked with DOM, as is typical of left-topicalized DOs in Catalan). When the very same verbs *molestar* and *commoure* appear in the stative configuration (34), which is made obvious by the use of the imperfective aspect, their behaviour aligns with Belletti & Rizzi's type III psych-verbs (*please*-type) (35) and they appear with a dative Experiencer.

(32) a. {A / Ø} la Maria$_{(,)}$ l' han molestat amb contínues interrupcions
{DOM / Ø} ART Maria$_{(,)}$ CL$_{ACC}$ have annoyed with constant interruptions
b. {A / Ø} la Maria$_{(,)}$ l' han commogut amb mostres d' afecte
{DOM / Ø} ART Maria$_{(,)}$ CL$_{ACC}$ have moved with displays of affection

(33) {A / Ø} la Maria$_{(,)}$ l' han mullat amb una mànega
{DOM / Ø} ART Maria$_{(,)}$ CL$_{ACC}$ have wetted with a hose

(34) a. {A / *Ø} la Maria$_{(*,)}$ li/la molesta el record d' aquell dia
{to / *Ø} ART Maria$_{DAT(*,)}$ CL$_{DAT/ACC}$ annoy the memory of that day
b. {A / *Ø} la Maria$_{(*,)}$ la commou el record d' aquell dia
{to / *Ø} ART Maria$_{DAT(*,)}$ CL$_{ACC}$ moves the memory of that day

(35) {A / *Ø} la Maria$_{(*,)}$ li agrada el record d' aquell dia
{to / *Ø} ART Maria$_{DAT(*,)}$ CL$_{DAT}$ likes the memory of that day

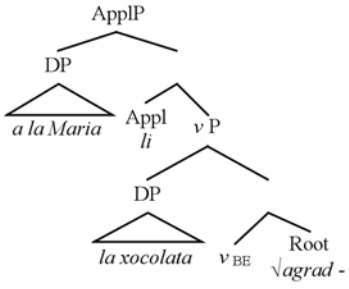
Thus, in (34) there is a real IO and the structure will contain a functional projection to introduce it in a higher position, compatible with the Experiencer semantics. This dedicated projection is a High Applicative Phrase (Pylkkänen 2002, Cuervo 2003, 2010), which licenses the IO in its specifier position and relates it to the whole event.[18] According to Cuervo (2003: 132), "high applicative datives have the same basic meaning, something like 'the event is oriented to the dative'", as 'experiencer' (stative predicates) or as 'benefactive /malefactive' (dynamic predicates).

[18] Thus, we argue that in sentences (23)–(24), (26)–(31), (34) as well as (36b) and (37b), where the *a*-DP is coindexed with an accusative clitic, the *a* is a dative marker (just like (35) and (36a), with a dative clitic), and not an instance of DOM (which is possible in Catalan with topicalized DOs *A la Maria, l'he vist* 'DOM Mary, I saw her' or relative pronouns DOs *El noi a qui he vist* 'The boy DOM who I saw').

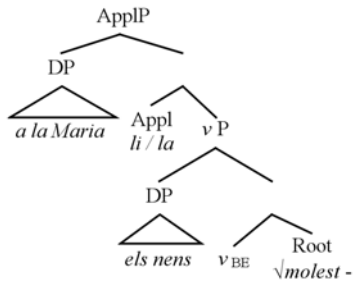
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The fact that not only the dative case (22) but the accusative as well (23)–(24) can appear in the OVS-pattern might lead us, apparently, to reject the view that these are stative unaccusative constructions like Belletti & Rizzi's type III (*please*-verbs) – also with OVS neutral word order –, a construction that seems incompatible with an accusative object. As we shall see, we can maintain the view that the verbs studied here have the same structure as *please*-type verbs, arguing that, in addition to the dative case expected for the IO within this structure, the accusative is also possible as a result of DIOM. Thus, we consider that type III (36a) and type II (36b) verbs in stative OVS sentences share the same structure (Cabré & Mateu 1998, Ramos 2004, Rosselló 2008, Cuervo 2010).[19] In particular, we follow the structure proposed by Cuervo (2003: 135, 2010: 201) for type III (36a) verbs and extend it to type II verbs (36b) in stative sentences: the dative DP, in the higher position, is licensed by a high applicative phrase outside the *v*P, whereas the nominative DP, in a lower position, is the subject of a stative predicate.

(36) a. A la Maria li agrada la xocolata
to ART Maria CL_{DAT} likes the chocolate



b. A la Maria {li / la} molesten els nens
to ART Maria $CL_{DAT/ACC}$ annoy the kids

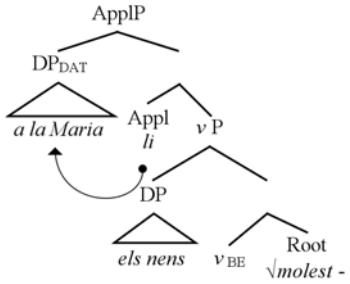


It remains to be explained why in (36b) in addition to dative case marking, the accusative is also possible; in Romance languages, the external argument position is not expected for an accusative-marked argument. We saw alternating psych-verbs such as *molestar* 'annoy' in (23), and even verbs for which the accusative is the most generalized option, such as the psych-verb *commoure* 'move' (24a) and the metaphorically psych-verb *bloquejar* 'block' (24b). As shown above, regardless of the clitic case-marking, the Experiencer is a non-topicalized element with subject-like properties (26)–(31) and syntactically it is a real IO (see the contrasts in (32)–(35)). As seen for agentive verbs in section 2, here too DIOM can explain how, in addition to the dative (37a), the Experiencer can also bear the accusative (37b).

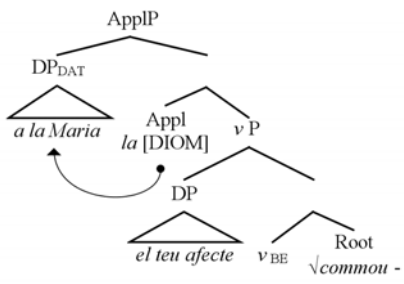
[19] But see Acedo-Matellán and Mateu (2015), who reject this claim and offer an alternative analysis.

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(37) a. A la Maria li molesten els nens
to ART Maria CL_{DAT} annoy the kids



b. A la Maria la commou el teu afecte
to ART Maria CL_{ACC} moves your affection



In the next section we shall explain why DIOM comes into play with psych-verbs.

3.3. Explaining the case alternation

Syntactic variation may be caused by the conception that speakers have of the world (Ramos 2002: 399), by the linguistic conceptualization of certain communicative contexts (Rosselló 2008: §S 13.3.7.3) or by the different conceptualization of transitivity (Ynglès 2011: 113–115, Pineda 2012). These phenomena suggest there are conceptual mechanisms that influence the syntactic construction of sentences.

The dative is expected in these sentences, since Romance (high and low) applicatives assign this case (recall section 2.3 above). Thus the accusative here is an instance of DIOM, as seen with *molestar* (23). DIOM is especially widespread with verbs that are unlikely to be conceived as stative because within the speakers' mind they are closely related with a change-of-state causative semantics: this is the case of *commoure* 'move' and *bloquejar* 'block' (24), as well as *atabalar* 'overwhelm', *amargar* 'embitter, oppress', *emocionar* 'move, touch', among others. From this perspective, DIOM (accusative-marking) can be seen as an *anti-stativization* mechanism in the speakers' conceptualization, although the construction itself is stative, as shown in (37b) (Royo in prep.). All in all, in Catalan the dative-marked option (i.e., the absence of DIOM) is more widespread, especially among young speakers (Ramos 2004: 132–133) – not only with verbs easily conceivable as stative, such as *molestar* 'annoy', which acquires the stative reading of 'be annoying to, not like at all' (or *preocupar* 'worry' = 'be saddened by'), but also with the initially unlikely verbs above. In other words, speakers are using DIOM less. This tendency is even more widespread in Spanish, which perhaps has partially influenced Catalan evolution.

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4. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have analysed dative/accusative alternations in the marking of the complement of person of agentive and psych-verbs in several Romance languages. We have shown that accusative-marked complements of person are instances of differentially marked IOs. Thus, we have dealt with IOs that can appear in the dative or, if for structural and semantic reasons DIOM applies, the accusative. Likewise, we have shown that DIOM is actually a link in the chain of ongoing syntactic changes and that, ultimately, speakers are using it less (probably for reasons of economy); in agentive verbs, they are consolidating the use of the accusative in a true process of transitivization, and in psych-verbs they are abandoning DIOM and openly preferring the dative option.

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