

## Chapter 15

# The accusative/dative alternation in Catalan verbs with experiencer object

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Various Catalan psychological verbs that are part of causative sentences with an accusative experiencer (*Els nens van molestar la Maria* or *La van molestar* ‘The kids annoyed Maria’ or ‘They annoyed her’) alternate with stative sentences that change the sentence order and have a dative experiencer (*A la Maria li molesta el teu caràcter* ‘lit. To Maria your character is annoying’). Other psychological verbs, however, can form both types of sentence without changing the accusative morphology of the experiencer (*Els nens van atabalar la Maria* or *La van atabalar* ‘The kids overwhelmed Maria or They overwhelmed her’; *A la Maria l’atabala el teu caràcter* ‘lit. To Maria your character is overwhelming’). I argue that in stative sentences of all these verbs the experiencer is a real dative, regardless of its morphology (dative or accusative). Differential indirect object marking (DIOM) explains why accusative morphology is possible in these constructions.

## 1 Introduction

Since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Ginebra 2003: 16, Ginebra 2015: 147), some Catalan psychological verbs belonging to Belletti & Rizzi (1988)’s type II – which make sentences with an accusative experiencer or AcExp (1a)/(2a) – have appeared with some frequency in both the written and spoken language with a change in sentence order and a dative experiencer (1b)/(2b). This accusative/dative alternation has generated considerable academic debate. In most instances, the rules of the Institute of Catalan Studies (IEC) governing the Catalan language do not countenance this change in case marking, although the IEC’s new normative grammar (GIEC 2016) and the changes introduced on 5 April 2017 to its online normative dictionary (DIEC2 2007) accept the dative case marking – as well



Carles Royo. 2020. The accusative/dative alternation in Catalan verbs with experiencer object. In Anna Pineda & Jaume Mateu (eds.), *Dative constructions in Romance and beyond*, 371–393. Berlin: Language Science Press.

DOI:10.5281/zenodo.3776563 

as the accusative – in some particular predicates: including the verbs *encantar* ‘delight’, *estranyar* ‘surprise’, *molestar* ‘annoy’ and *preocupar* ‘worry’.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. Els nens van molestar la Maria (o la van  
The kids AUX.3PL annoy.INF the Maria.ACC or 3FSG.ACC AUX.3PL  
molestar).  
annoy.INF  
‘The kids annoyed Maria (or They annoyed her).’  
b. A la Maria li molesten els nens.  
to the Maria.DAT 3SG.DAT annoy.3PL the kids  
(lit.) ‘To Maria kids are annoying.’
- (2) Cabré & Mateu 1998: 77  
a. Les teves paraules la van sorprendre, preocupar,  
the your words 3FSG.ACC AUX.3PL surprise.INF worry.INF  
*molestar* molt.  
annoy.INF a\_lot  
‘Your words surprised, worried, annoyed her a lot.’  
b. Li sorprèn, preocupa, molesta que la joventut d’ avui fumi  
3SG.DAT surprises worries annoys that the youth of today smoke  
tant.  
so\_much  
(lit.) ‘To him/her that the youth of today smoke so much is surprising,  
worrying, annoying.’

This change has not had a uniform impact on Catalan dialects. Moreover, notable differences often occur within each dialect and even in the use that a specific speaker makes of these predicates (cf. Cabré & Mateu 1998: 70). Indeed, some predicates have become more entrenched than others, something that is irregularly reflected in several lexicographical collections in the Catalan language. It is common for AcExp verbs in Spanish to present this argument alternation (cf. Mendiàvil Giró 2005; Marín & McNally 2011, among others). For this reason, psychological verbs that are used with dative constructions in Catalan, when they have traditionally been used with accusative constructions (AcExp), have often

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<sup>1</sup>Before publication of the GIEC (2016), the IEC accepted the intransitive nature of the verb *interessar* ‘interest’ as well as an accusative case marking.

been regarded as syntactic calques of the Spanish; yet, some studies describe the change as being inherent to the Catalan language.

This paper argues that in a stative sentence containing these verbs the experiencer is a real dative, not only when it presents the dative morphology, but also when it presents the accusative form (see also Cabré & Fábregas 2020 [this volume] and Ledgeway et al. 2020 [this volume], about the different natures of datives). I also argue that the accusative morphology of such stative sentences is facilitated by a mechanism of differential indirect object marking (DIOM).

## 2 Syntactico-semantic configuration of sentences with accusative and dative

Ynglès (1991) and Cabré & Mateu (1998) point out that the syntactico-semantic configuration differs when some AcExp verbs are used with the accusative and when they are used with the dative: see the contrast in (3).<sup>2</sup> In (1a) and (2a), three components of causative verbs imply a change of state: cause + process (change) + resulting state (cf. Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995; Cabré & Mateu 1998; Rosselló 2008). The verb needs to be followed by an accusative in an eventive sentence of external causation and a neutral subject-verb-object (SVO) order. On the other hand, (1b) and (2b) do not have these three components, and the verb requires the dative in a stative sentence and a neutral object-verb-subject (OVS) order and clitic doubling (see also Fábregas & Marín 2020 [this volume]).

- (3) a. Els nens van molestar la Maria *expressament* i els  
 The kids AUX.3PL annoy.INF the Maria.ACC on\_purpose and the  
 mestres també *ho van fer*.  
 teachers also it AUX.3PL do.INF  
 ‘The kids annoyed Maria on purpose and the teachers also did.’
- b. \*A la Maria li molesten els nens *expressament* i els  
 to the Maria.DAT 3SG.DAT annoy.3PL the kids on\_purpose and the  
 mestres també *ho fan*.  
 teachers also it do

Two mechanisms help differentiate the causative structure in (1a)/(2a) from the stative structure in (1b)/(2b). On the one hand, their verbal aspect: the per-

<sup>2</sup>For further information on the proof and examples that show that sentences such as that in (1a)/(2a) are configured differently from those illustrated in (1b)/(2b), see Royo (2017: Section 4.1).

fective aspect contributes to a causative interpretation while the imperfective aspect contributes to a stative interpretation; hence, there is a relation between the lexical aspect of the sentence (eventive or stative) and the verbal aspect of the predicate (perfective or imperfective). And, on the other, the sentence order: a neutral SVO order will be interpreted as causative and a neutral OVS order will be interpreted as stative.

In line with Ynglès (1991); Cabré & Mateu (1998); Rosselló (2008) and GIEC (2016: Section 21.5b-c) for Catalan, Pesetsky (1995) for English, Bouchard (1995) for French and Acedo-Matellán & Mateu (2015) for Spanish, I consider that Catalan psychological verbs with an accusative experiencer (AcExp) generally cause a change of state:<sup>3</sup> in these sentences subjects are agents or inanimate causes and accusative experiencers are strictly speaking patients, even though conceptually they can be regarded as experiencers. I also concur with several authors who point out that the OVS stative construction of some AcExp Catalan verbs is the same as that of psychological verbs with a dative experiencer (DatExp, for example *agradar* ‘to like’; cf. Cabré & Mateu 1998; Ramos 2004; Rosselló 2008; Cuervo 2010, among others): the subject is a stimulus or source of the psychological experience and the dative experiencer is not a patient, it does not undergo a change of state. What is more, clitic doubling occurs when the experiencer phrase appears in preverbal position.<sup>4</sup>

These data suggest that many speakers need to change both the syntactical pattern of AcExp verbs and the sentence order when they use these verbs in a stative construction: the different semantic or lexical-aspectual interpretation of these sentences is reflected in the different syntactic configuration of constructions that contain Catalan AcExp verbs.<sup>5</sup> According to (Ginebra 2003: 14, 29–30),

<sup>3</sup>According to other authors, the characterization of these sentences is different or allows different structures: cf. van Voorst (1992); Arad (1999); Landau (2010); Marín & McNally (2011) and Fábregas (2015). Several authors, including Fábregas & Marín (2012); Fábregas et al. (2012); Marín & Sánchez Marco (2012); Ganeshan (2014) and Viñas-de-Puig (2014), study these constructions in their general analyses of the stative and eventive nature of Spanish sentences with psychological verbs (note Viñas-de-Puig do the same also with Catalan psychological verbs). Acedo-Matellán & Mateu (2015: 83 (4)) also accept that these verbs cause a change of state in Spanish but point out that there is a less common construction of AcExp verbs with the accusative, that is, stative causative transitive (*Este problema la ha preocupado desde siempre*).

<sup>4</sup>Acedo-Matellán & Mateu (2015) have questioned this assumption in psychological verbs in Spanish and draw a distinction between DatExp verbs (unaccusative statives) and AcExp verbs that are constructed with the dative (unergative statives). For a discussion of this issue, see Royo (2017: Section 6.2.4.1).

<sup>5</sup>Several authors claim that the change between causative and stative interpretation implies a change in the Spanish case marking, between accusative and dative respectively: cf. Fábregas (2015); Viñas-de-Puig (2017) and Ganeshan (2019).

however, the examples in (4) show that Catalan can also denote a stative OVS construction without changing from the accusative to the dative with some predicates. These can be AcExp verbs (4a) or non-psychological causative verbs that become psychological by means of a metaphorical expansion of the meaning (4b) (the *psych constructions* described by Bouchard 1995). Therefore, the lexical nature of the verb plays an important role in the alternation since some verbs tend not to construct stative sentences with the dative.

(4) Ginebra 2003: 29–30

- a. Al seu germà l'atabala la nova responsabilitat.  
to.the his brother 3MSG.ACC overwhelms the new responsibility  
(lit.) 'To his brother the new responsibility is overwhelming.'
- b. Al Xavier el destrossa aquesta tensió contínua.  
to.the Xavier 3MSG.ACC destroys this tension constant  
(lit.) 'To Xavier this constant tension is destroying.'

What is more, with AcExp verbs such as those identified by Cabré & Mateu (1998) – *molestar*, *preocupar*, *sorprendre* (see (2)) – speakers may hesitate between accusative and dative case marking in OVS stative sentences. Some examples of this hesitation in a Catalan/Spanish bilingual newspaper are shown in (5). The print edition of the paper includes an OVS sentence with the verb *preocupar* 'worry' that governs the accusative in Catalan (5a) and the dative in Spanish (5b); on the other hand, in the Catalan online edition the same sentence appears with a dative (5c). Examples (6) and (7) show the same hesitation with the verb *molestar* 'annoy', in the same news item reported by six media in Catalan on 5 December 2012: three use the accusative (6) and three the dative (7).<sup>6</sup>

(5) *La Vanguardia*, 15 May 2015, p. 15 (headline)

- a. Catalan, printed version  
Per\_què a CiU la preocupa Ciutadans  
why to CiU.F 3FSG.ACC worries Ciutadans.SG
- b. Spanish, printed version  
Por\_qué a CiU le preocupa Ciutadans  
why to CiU.F 3SG.DAT worries Ciutadans.SG

<sup>6</sup>The three sentences in the accusative use direct speech while the three in the dative use indirect speech, which may indicate that the person making the statement conceptualizes the verb differently from the journalists who report it.

- c. Catalan, online version  
 Per\_què a CiU li preocupa Ciutadans  
 why to CiU.F 3SG.DAT worries Ciutadans.SG  
 (lit.) ‘Why to CiU Ciutadans is worrying.’
  
- (6) a. VilaWeb (headline)  
 Rigau: ‘A Wert el molesta l’ èxit del model d’  
 Rigau to Wert 3MSG.ACC annoys the success of.the model of  
 immersió’  
 immersion  
 (lit.) ‘Rigau: “To Wert the model of immersion’s success is annoying”.’
- b. *El Periódico de Catalunya* (headline)  
 Rigau: “A Wert el molesta l’ èxit de la immersió  
 Rigau to Wert 3MSG.ACC annoys the success of the immersion  
 lingüística”  
 language  
 (lit.) ‘Rigau: “To Wert the language immersion’s success is annoying”.’
- c. *Ara* (headline)  
 Rigau: “A Wert, el\_que el molesta és l’ èxit del model  
 Rigau to Wert what 3MSG.ACC annoys is the success of.the model  
 educatiu català”  
 educational Catalan  
 (lit.) ‘Rigau: “What is annoying to Wert is the Catalan educational  
 model’s success”.’
  
- (7) a. 3/24, [www.ccma.cat](http://www.ccma.cat) (headline)  
 Rigau creu que a Wert li molesta “l’ èxit” del  
 Rigau believes that to Wert 3SG.DAT annoys the success of.the  
 model català  
 model Catalan
- b. [diaridegirona.cat](http://diaridegirona.cat) (headline)  
 Rigau creu que a Wert li molesta “l’ èxit” del model  
 Rigau believes that to Wert 3SG.DAT annoys the success of.the model  
 català  
 Catalan  
 (lit.) ‘Rigau believes that to Wert the Catalan model’s “success” is  
 annoying.’

c. *El Punt Avui*

La titular d'Ensenyament, creu que a Wert li  
 the minister of Education believes that to Wert 3SG.DAT  
 “molesta” el model “d'èxit” de l'escola catalana.  
 annoys the model of success of the school Catalan  
 (lit.) ‘The minister of Education believes that to Wert the model “of  
 success” of the Catalan school is annoying.’

In fact, if in (1b) and (2b) we replace the dative clitic with the accusative clitic – *A la Maria la molesten els nens*; (*A ella*) *La sorprèn, preocupa, molesta que la joventut d'avui fumi tant* – our discussion above about distinguishing these sentences from those in (1a) and (2a) is still valid: they are useful ways of characterizing both constructions differently, but they do not help determine the case marking.

The ability of Catalan to construct a stative sentence with an AcExp verb and an accusative experiencer makes it necessary to analyse this accusative in those cases of hesitation with the dative (that is, in OVS stative sentences). We need to know whether the order of the sentences and clitic doubling in Catalan are sufficient to denote a lexical-aspectual change in the sentence or whether a change in case marking is also required.

### 3 Nature of the accusative and dative experiencer in OVS stative sentences

In the sentences in (1b)/(2b) and (4)–(7), whether the verb governs the accusative or the dative, the subject is a stimulus of the emotion and the object is not a patient but an experiencer of the whole event in a more prominent structural position than that occupied by the stimulus. It can be shown that this experiencer argument, regardless of whether it is accusative or dative, is not a topicalized element and that it has properties of a subject: cf. examples a and b in (8)–(13). It behaves just like the experiencer in sentences with DatExp verbs such as *agradar* ‘like’ (see the c examples in (8)–(13)) and other canonical subjects (see the d examples in (8) and (12) and example (10e)): it behaves quite differently from topicalized objects (see the d examples in (9)–(11) and (13)).<sup>7</sup>

The experiencer can link an anaphora in the subject (cf. Demonte 1989; Eguren & Fernández Soriano 2004) (8), be modified with the adverb *només* ‘only’ (cf.

<sup>7</sup>In examples (8)–(13), as in the other examples employed in this paper, I conduct a descriptive rather than a prescriptive assessment.

Cuervo 1999) (9), allow *Wh*-extraction (cf. Belletti & Rizzi 1988) (10), be an indefinite generalized quantifier in initial position (cf. Belletti & Rizzi 1988; Masullo 1992; Cuervo 1999) (11), control the subject of an infinitive clause (cf. Campos 1999; Alsina 2008) (12) and it cannot be separated, in Catalan, by a comma from the rest of the sentence (cf. Ginebra 2003; 2005) (13).

- (8) a. OVS AcExp, **dative/accusative**  
 A l' Albert<sub>i</sub> {li<sub>i</sub> / el<sub>i</sub>} molesta aquesta fotografia de  
 to the Albert 3SG.DAT / 3MSG.ACC annoys this photo of  
 si\_mateix<sub>i</sub>.  
 himself  
 (lit.) 'To Albert this photo of himself is annoying.'
- b. OVS AcExp, **accusative**  
 A l' Albert<sub>i</sub> el<sub>i</sub> neguiteja aquesta fotografia de si\_mateix<sub>i</sub>.  
 to the Albert 3MSG.ACC disturbs this photo of himself  
 (lit.) 'To Albert this photo of himself is disturbing.'
- c. DatExp, **dative**  
 A l' Albert<sub>i</sub> li<sub>i</sub> agrada aquesta fotografia de si\_mateix<sub>i</sub>.  
 to the Albert 3SG.DAT likes this photo of himself  
 'Albert likes this photo of himself.'
- d. Subject, **dative**  
 L' Albert<sub>i</sub> envia una fotografia de si\_mateix<sub>i/\*j</sub> a la Núria<sub>j</sub>.  
 the Albert.SBJ sends a photo of himself to the Nuria.DAT  
 'Albert sends a photo of himself to Nuria.'
- (9) a. OVS AcExp, **dative/accusative**  
 Només a l' Albert {li / el} molesta aquesta situació.  
 only to the Albert 3SG.DAT / 3MSG.ACC annoys this situation  
 (lit.) 'Only to Albert this situation is annoying.'
- b. OVS AcExp, **accusative**  
 Només a l' Albert el neguiteja aquesta situació.  
 only to the Albert 3MSG.ACC disturbs this situation  
 (lit.) 'Only to Albert this situation is disturbing.'
- c. DatExp, **dative**  
 Només a l' Albert li agrada la cervesa.  
 only to the Albert 3SG.DAT likes the beer  
 'Only Albert likes beer.'



d. Topicalized dative

?Només a l' Albert li vaig prendre el bolígraf.<sup>8</sup>  
 only to the Albert 3SG.DAT AUX.1SG take.INF the pen

(10) a. OVS AcExp, **dative/accusative**

La situació que a l' Albert {li / el} molesta és  
 the situation that to the Albert 3SG.DAT / 3MSG.ACC annoys is  
 aquesta.  
 this  
 (lit.) 'The situation that to Albert is annoying is this.'

b. OVS AcExp, **accusative**

La situació que a l' Albert (el) neguiteja és aquesta.  
 the situation that to the Albert 3MSG.ACC disturbs is this  
 (lit.) 'The situation that to Albert is disturbing is this.'

c. DatExp, **dative**

Els llibres que a l' Albert (li) han agradat són aquests.  
 the books that to the Albert 3SG.DAT have.3PL liked are these  
 'The books that Albert liked are these.'

d. Topicalized dative

??Els llibres que a l' Albert (li) he donat són aquests.  
 the books that to the Albert 3SG.DAT have.1SG given are these

e. Preverbal subject

Els llibres que l' Albert m' ha donat són aquests.  
 the books that the Albert.SBJ 1SG.DAT has given are these  
 'The books that Albert gave me are these.'

(11) a. OVS AcExp, **dative/accusative**

A ningú (no) {li / el} molesta aquesta situació.  
 to nobody NEG 3SG.DAT / 3MSG.ACC annoys this situation  
 (lit.) 'To nobody this situation is annoying.'

b. OVS AcExp, **accusative**

A ningú (no) (el) neguiteja aquesta situació.  
 to nobody NEG 3MSG.ACC disturbs this situation  
 (lit.) 'To nobody this situation is disturbing.'

<sup>8</sup>This sentence is acceptable with a stressed intonation: *Només A L'ALBERT...*

- c. DatExp, **dative**  
 A ningú (no) li va agradar la pel·lícula.  
 to nobody NEG 3SG.DAT AUX.3SG like.INF the film  
 ‘Nobody likes the film.’
- d. Topicalized dative  
 \*A ningú (no) li vaig donar el quadre.  
 to nobody NEG 3SG.DAT AUX.1SG give.INF the painting
- (12) a. OVS AcExp, **dative/accusative**  
 A l’ Albert<sub>i</sub> {li / el<sub>i</sub>} molesta PRO<sub>i</sub> parlar en públic.  
 to the Albert 3SG.DAT / 3MSG.ACC annoys PRO speak.INF in public  
 (lit.) ‘To Albert speaking in public is annoying.’
- b. OVS AcExp, **accusative**  
 A l’ Albert<sub>i</sub> el<sub>i</sub> neguiteja PRO<sub>i</sub> parlar en públic.  
 to the Albert 3MSG.ACC disturbs PRO speak.INF in public  
 (lit.) ‘To Albert speaking in public is disturbing.’
- c. DatExp, **dative**  
 A l’ Albert<sub>i</sub> li<sub>i</sub> agrada PRO<sub>i</sub> parlar en públic.  
 to the Albert 3SG.DAT likes PRO speak.INF in public  
 ‘Albert likes speaking in public.’
- d. Subject  
 L’ Albert<sub>i</sub> vol PRO<sub>i</sub> arribar aviat.  
 the Albert.SBJ wants PRO arrive.INF early  
 ‘Albert wants to arrive early.’
- (13) a. OVS AcExp, **dative/accusative**  
 A l’ Albert<sub>(\*)</sub> {li / el} molesta aquesta situació.  
 to the Albert 3SG.DAT / 3MSG.ACC annoys this situation  
 (lit.) ‘To Albert this situation is annoying.’
- b. OVS AcExp, **accusative**  
 A l’ Albert<sub>(\*)</sub> el neguiteja aquesta situació.  
 to the Albert 3MSG.ACC disturbs this situation  
 (lit.) ‘To Albert this situation is disturbing.’

c. DatExp, **dative**

A l' Albert(\*,) li agrada aquesta situació.  
 to the Albert 3SG.DAT likes this situation  
 'Albert likes this situation.'

d. Topicalized object

(A) L' Albert(,) l' he vist que plorava.  
 DOM the Albert 3MSG.ACC have.1SG seen that cried.3SG  
 'Albert, I saw that he cried.'

## 4 OVS sentences with AcExp verbs and an accusative experiencer

The analysis conducted in section §3 highlights the similarity between the dative experiencer in sentences with DatExp verbs and the experiencer object in OVS stative sentences with AcExp verbs, whether the morphology is dative or accusative. When the experiencer has accusative morphology, there is evidence to show that it is in fact a dative if we place it in sentence-initial position by using a relative pronoun ((14a)-(14b)) (adjectival relative clause and noun relative clause),<sup>9</sup> an interrogative pronoun ((14c)-(14d)) (direct and indirect interrogative) or a determiner phrase (14e). In this context, the experiencer can optionally take either accusative or dative morphology in the corresponding agentive sentences with AcExp verbs (16), which is similar to how the person semantic object behaves in transitive sentences of non-psychological verbs, whether they are causative or not (17). But in stative sentences with AcExp verbs (14), the experiencer in initial position behaves like the dative experiencer in the corresponding sentences with DatExp verbs (15): it can only be dative, even though in (14) the morphology is still an accusative clitic within the sentence (cf. Royo 2017: Section 4.3.4).

To illustrate this contrast, the examples below are of stative sentences with imperfective verbal aspect (14)-(15) and causatives and non-causative transitives with perfective aspect (16)-(17). What is more, in (14) and (16) I use an AcExp verb that can easily be conceived of as causative of change of state, such as *atabalar* 'overwhelm', unlike other AcExp verbs such as *molestar* 'annoy', which in some contexts can have the meaning of *desagradar molt* ('displease a lot').

<sup>9</sup>In the examples, I do not consider the use of the relative often referred to as the *relatiu popular* (cf. Ginebra 2005: 154–155), which is always marked with an asterisk.

- (14) a. És una persona {a qui / \*que} (I') atabala  
 is.3SG a.F person.F to whom.DAT / who.ACC 3FSG.ACC overwhelms  
 el record d' aquell fracàs.  
 the memory of that failure  
 (lit.) 'He/She is a person to whom the memory of that failure is  
 overwhelming.'
- b. {A qui / \*Qui} (I') atabala el record d' aquell  
 to whom.DAT / who.ACC 3SG.ACC overwhelms the memory of that  
 fracàs és \*(a) la Maria.  
 failure is to the Maria.DAT  
 (lit.) 'To whom the memory of that failure is overwhelming it is to  
 Maria.'
- c. {A qui / \*Qui} (I') atabala el record d'  
 to whom.DAT / who.ACC 3SG.ACC overwhelms the memory of  
 aquell fracàs?  
 that failure  
 (lit.) 'To whom the memory of that failure is overwhelming?'
- d. Voldria saber {a qui / \*qui} (I')  
 would\_like.1SG know.INF to whom.DAT / who.ACC 3SG.ACC  
 atabala el record d' aquell fracàs.  
 overwhelms the memory of that failure  
 (lit.) 'I would like to know to whom the memory of that failure is  
 overwhelming.'
- e. \* (A) la Maria(\*,) I' atabala el record d' aquell  
 to the Maria.DAT 3FSG.ACC overwhelms the memory of that  
 fracàs.<sup>10</sup>  
 failure  
 (lit.) 'To Maria, the memory of that failure is overwhelming.'
- (15) a. És una persona {a qui / \*que} no (li) agrada el  
 is.3SG a person to whom.DAT / who.ACC NEG 3SG.DAT likes the

<sup>10</sup>In examples (14e) and (15e) the asterisk indicates that these sentences cannot be constructed without the preposition *a* at the beginning of the sentence. With the preposition *a*, they are fully acceptable sentences.

record d' aquell fracàs.

memory of that failure

'He/She is a person who doesn't like the memory of that failure.'

- b. {A qui / \*Qui} no (li) agrada el record d' aquell  
to whom.DAT / who.ACC NEG 3SG.DAT likes the memory of that  
fracàs és \*(a) la Maria.  
failure is to the Maria.DAT

'Maria is the one who doesn't like the memory of that failure.'

- c. {A qui / \*Qui} no (li) agrada el record d' aquell  
to whom.DAT / who.ACC NEG 3SG.DAT likes the memory of that  
fracàs?  
failure

'Who doesn't like the memory of that failure?'

- d. Voldria saber {a qui / \*qui} no (li)  
would\_like.1SG know.INF to whom.DAT / who.ACC NEG 3SG.DAT  
agrada el record d' aquell fracàs.  
likes the memory of that failure

'I would like to know who doesn't like the memory of that failure.'

- e. \* (A) la Maria(\*,) no li agrada el record d' aquell fracàs.  
to the Maria.DAT NEG 3SG.DAT likes the memory of that failure  
'Maria doesn't like the memory of that failure.'

- (16) a. És una persona {a qui (l') / que} han  
is.3SG a.F person.F to whom.DAT 3FSG.ACC / who.ACC have.3PL  
atabalat contínuament amb insídies.  
overwhelmed continuously with malicious\_acts

'He/She is a person who somebody has overwhelmed continuously with malicious acts.'

- b. {A qui (l') / Qui} han atabalat  
to whom.DAT 3SG.ACC / who.ACC have.3PL overwhelmed  
contínuament amb insídies és (a) la Maria.  
continuously with malicious\_acts is DOM the Maria.ACC

'Maria is the one who somebody has overwhelmed continuously with malicious acts.'

- c. {A qui (l') / Qui} han atabalat amb  
to whom.DAT 3SG.ACC / who.ACC have.3PL overwhelmed with

aquestes insídies?

these malicious\_acts

'Who has somebody overwhelmed with these malicious acts?'

- d. Voldria saber {a qui (l') / qui} han  
would\_like.1SG know.INF to whom.DAT 3SG.ACC / who.ACC have.3PL  
atabalat amb aquestes insídies.

overwhelmed with these malicious\_acts

'I would like to know who somebody has overwhelmed with these malicious acts.'

- e. (A) la Maria<sub>(,)</sub> l' han atabalat contínuament  
DOM the Maria.ACC 3FSG.ACC have.3PL overwhelmed continuously  
amb insídies.

with malicious\_acts

'Somebody has overwhelmed Maria continuously with malicious acts.'

- (17) a. És una persona {a qui (l') / que} han  
is.3SG a.F person.F to whom.DAT 3FSG.ACC / who.ACC have.3PL  
{mullat / vist} amb una mànega.  
wet / seen with a hose

'He/She is a person who somebody has {wet / seen} with a hose.'

- b. {A qui (l') / Qui} han {mullat / vist} amb una  
to whom.DAT 3SG.ACC / who.ACC have.3PL wet / seen with a  
mànega és (a) la Maria.  
hose is DOM the Maria.ACC

'Maria is the one who somebody has {wet / seen} with a hose.'

- c. {A qui (l') / Qui} han {mullat / vist} amb una  
to whom.DAT 3SG.ACC / who.ACC have.3PL wet / seen with a  
mànega?  
hose

'Who has somebody {wet / seen} with a hose?'

- d. Voldria saber {a qui (l') / qui} han  
would\_like.1SG know.INF to whom.DAT 3SG.ACC / who.ACC have.3PL  
{mullat / vist} amb una mànega.  
wet / seen with a hose

'I would like to know who somebody has {wet / seen} with a hose.'

- e. (A) la Maria<sub>(,)</sub> l' han {mullat / vist} amb una  
 DOM the Maria.ACC 3FSG.ACC have.3PL wet / seen with a  
 mànega.  
 hose  
 'Somebody has {wet / seen} Maria with a hose.'

Bearing in mind that stative sentences of AcExp verbs are constructed with a real dative, regardless of the morphology of the experiencer clitic, I use the abbreviation Dat(>|<Ac)Exp to differentiate these constructions from both AcExp causatives and DatExp statives. The abbreviation can be used in cases of hesitation between the accusative and the dative form and, at the same time, to differentiate Dat(>Ac)Exp when the morphology is dative and Dat(<Ac)Exp when the morphology is accusative.

## 5 Argument structure of stative sentences with AcExp verbs

According to Rosselló (2008: Sections 13.3.6.2a-b and 13.3.7.2b) and the GIEC (2016: 21.2.2b and 21.5a), one characteristic of Catalan psychological verbs with an experiencer object (AcExp and DatExp) is that they can elide their object in the absolute use of the verb. Sentences with the absolute use of these predicates can express the property of a stimulus to affect a hypothetical experiencer, a stative construction with both DatExp verbs (18a) and AcExp verbs (18b), which in this case does not express an action.<sup>11</sup>

- (18) a. La xocolata agrada ('és agradable'); La família importa ('és  
 the chocolate likes is pleasant the family matters is  
 important').  
 important  
 (lit.) 'Chocolate is pleasant.' (lit.) 'Family is important.'
- b. Els nens molesten ('són molestos'); El teu caràcter atabala  
 the kids annoy are annoying the your character overwhelms

<sup>11</sup>The GIEC (2016: 21.2.2b and 21.5a) points out that in absolute use those verbs that have an instrumental value (*tallar* 'cut', *obrir* 'open', *tancar* 'close', *tapar* 'cover', etc.), which like AcExp verbs are generally causative of change of state, express a property of the subject rather than a particular action.

(‘és atabalador’).  
 is overwhelming  
 (lit.) ‘Kids are annoying.’ (lit.) ‘Your character is overwhelming.’

Following Cuervo’s proposal (2003: Section 1.3.3.2) for verbs that she calls *predicational statives*, all the sentences in (18) have an underlying stative unaccusative structure. For sentences with an experiencer, we need a functional head that introduces a dative with experiencer semantics and the characteristics of a subject in a hierarchically superior position and which relates it to the whole event that indicates a property of the stimulus: a high applicative head (external argument), with the dative in the position of specifier (cf. Pykkänen 2008; Cuervo 2003; 2010; see also Cuervo 2020 [this volume]) (19).<sup>12</sup>

- (19) a. DatExp  
       A la Maria li           agrada la xocolata.  
       to the Maria 3SG.DAT likes   the chocolate  
       (lit.) ‘To Maria chocolate is pleasant.’  
       b. Dat(>|<Ac)Exp  
       A la Maria {li           / la}           molesten els nens.  
       to the Maria 3SG.DAT / 3FSG.ACC annoy.3PL the kids  
       (lit.) ‘To Maria kids are annoying.’

The unaccusative structure of (19a) for DatExp verbs matches Belletti & Rizzi’s (1988) characterization of type-III predicates. The construction of (19b), however, requires some additional clarifications. Apparently, we should reject an unaccusative structure with an accusative experiencer – and in Catalan we do not expect an accusative to be an external argument – but if we bear in mind that it is a superficial accusative and that it is really a dative (cf. §3 and §4), this objection disappears. We also need to explain how some verbs can optionally use the accusative and dative forms (5)-(7), and other verbs the accusative form in OVS stative sentences, whether they are AcExp (4a) or causative predicates with a metaphorical psychological meaning (4b).

In these sentences, the experiencer is a non-topicalized element with subject properties and a real dative, regardless of the form it takes. The syntactic mechanism that can explain sentences in which the experiencer has apparent accusative

<sup>12</sup>Other authors explain the variability between the stative and the causative reading of these verbs without a high applicative head that introduces the experiencer in the stative construction (see Viñas-de-Puig 2014; 2017, and references therein). For example, Viñas-de-Puig proposes that in both readings the experiencer is licensed for a Sv<sub>EXP</sub> head above the root, in a basic stative structure, which will take a causative reading by adding a Sv<sub>CAUS</sub> above the Sv<sub>EXP</sub>.



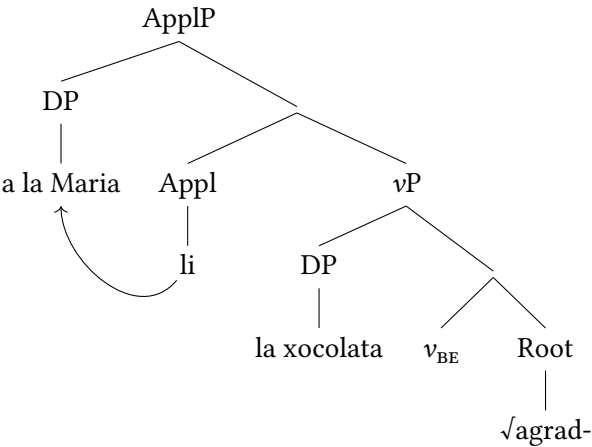


Figure 1: Structure of DatExp verb sentence

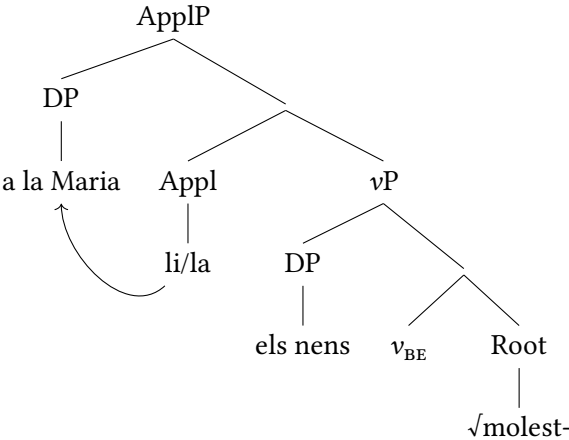


Figure 2: Structure of Dat(>|<Ac)Exp verb sentence

morphology (20b) is differential indirect object marking or DIOM (cf. Bilous 2011; Pineda 2016, 2020; Pineda & Royo 2017), which is not necessary when the clitic takes dative morphology (20a).

- (20) a. Dat(>)Exp  
 A la Maria li molesten els nens.  
 to the Maria.DAT 3SG.DAT annoy.3PL the kids  
 (lit.) ‘To Maria kids are annoying.’
- b. Dat(<Ac)Exp  
 A la Maria I’ atabala el teu caràcter.  
 to the Maria.DAT 3FSG.ACC.DIOM overwhelm the your character  
 (lit.) ‘To Maria your character is overwhelming.’

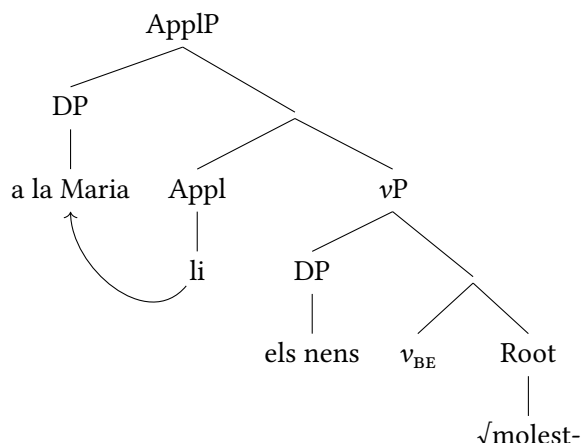


Figure 3: Structure of Dat(>Ac)Exp verb sentence

The dative case marking of these sentences is congruent with the semantic and syntactic characteristics of the experiencer and with the function of the high applicative heads in a Romance language like Catalan. A DIOM accusative morphology would allow speakers to use these constructions with verbs that are difficult to conceive of as stative, because in the minds of speakers they are closely related to verbs that cause a change of state (4). The morphological aspect of the experiencer depends on the lexical characteristics of the verb: even though the sentence is always stative, we can regard DIOM as being an anti-stativization mechanism in the minds of speakers. In this sense, it is significant that non-psychological causative verbs with a metaphorical psychological meaning present the superficial accusative form in OVS stative sentences (*destrossar* ‘destroy’, *enfonsar*

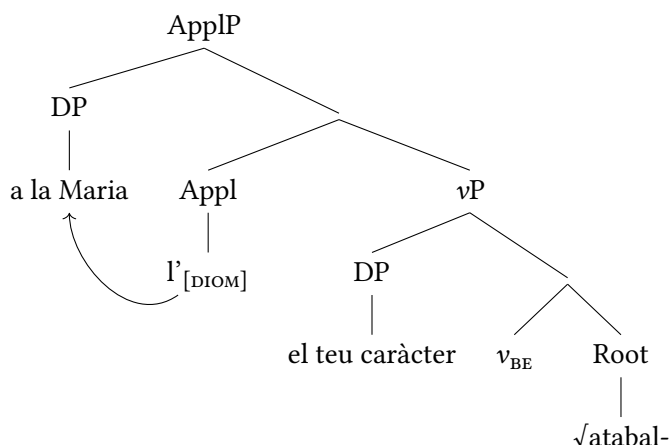


Figure 4: Structure of Dat(&lt;Ac)Exp verb sentence

‘sink’). Like some psychological verbs (*commoure* ‘move, touch’, *esparverar* ‘terrify’),<sup>13</sup> they are verbs that speakers conceptualize habitually as being causative of change of state, unlike other verbs that more readily permit a stative conceptualization in certain contexts: for example, *molestar* ‘annoy’, which can sometimes have the meaning of *desagradar molt* (‘displease a lot’).<sup>14</sup>

This explanation takes into account the conceptual mechanisms that can, according to several authors, affect the construction of sentences and syntactic change: the speakers’ conception of the world (cf. Ramos 2002), the linguistic conception of particular communicative contexts (cf. Rosselló 2008) and the different conceptualization of transitivity (cf. Ynglès 2011; Pineda 2012).

## 6 Conclusions

The main argument presented in this article is that in stative sentences of Catalan AcExp predicates, the experiencer is a real dative. In stative sentences of some AcExp verbs and other non-psychological causative verbs with metaphorical psychological semantics, the experiencer may present an external accusative morphology by means of differential indirect object marking (DIOM). DIOM is the manifestation in the minds of speakers of their difficulty to conceive certain

<sup>13</sup>Ginebra (2003: 14, 29–30) offers more examples of OVS stative sentences of this type with a superficial accusative in both verb types, that is, psychological and non-psychological verbs with metaphorical psychological meaning.

<sup>14</sup>For an explanation of other factors that intervene so that an AcExp verb can participate in sentences such as Dat(<Ac)Exp or Dat(>Ac)Exp, see Royo (2017: Section 5).

verbs as being stative or, in other words, of their tendency to conceive of them as being causative of change of state.

## Abbreviations

The abbreviations used in the glosses of this chapter follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules. Additional abbreviations: DOM differential object marking.

## Acknowledgments

This study has been supported by research project FFI2014-56258-P (Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad). I would like to thank Jaume Mateu for specific comments made in relation to this paper and Anna Pineda for encouraging me to present this research in public and to have it published.

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