

**VARIOUS**  
Dimensions  
*of* Contrastive  
**STUDIES**

PRACE  
NAUKOWE



UNIWERSYTETU  
ŚLĄSKIEGO  
W KATOWICACH

NR 3530

**VARIOUS**  
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**STUDIES**

Edited by  
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Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego • Katowice 2016

Editor of the Series: Językoznawstwo Neofilologiczne  
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Copy editor Gabriela Marszołek  
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ISSN 0208-6336  
ISBN 978-83-8012-918-4  
(print edition)  
ISBN 978-83-8012-919-1  
(digital edition)

Publisher  
**Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego**  
**ul. Bankowa 12B, 40-007 Katowice**  
www.wydawnictwo.us.edu.pl  
e-mail: wydawus@us.edu.pl

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First impression. Printed sheets: 20.75 Publishing sheets: 25.0  
Offset paper grade III, 90 g Price: 28 zł (+VAT)

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Printing and binding: "TOTEM.COM.PL Sp. z o.o." SP.K.  
ul. Jacewska 89, 88-100 Inowrocław

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## Chapter 6

# The information structure of Dative Experiencer psych verbs\*

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This paper presents an analysis of Dative Experiencer verbs in Spanish and Polish as compared to English within a parametric variation approach that groups languages into agreement-prominent and discourse-configurational ones. Based on a data elicitation experiment, we account for the surface word orderings of sentences with Dative Experiencers in terms of the feature inheritance theory. Assuming discourse features such as [Top] or [Foc], we argue that English and Polish move Experiencers to TP if they are not discourse-wise marked; otherwise, they move to CP. Spanish may move DEs to TP for both reasons: agreement and discourse.

Key words: psych verbs, Dative Experiencers, feature inheritance, information structure, topic, focus, discourse prominence, agreement prominence

### 6.1 Introduction

This paper falls within the research agenda related to the puzzling “psych phenomenon” (or, in other words, the Experiencer problem) attested cross-linguistically. Although the Experiencer puzzle is closely

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\* This research was funded by the grant 2014/15/B/HS2/00588 from National Science Centre, Poland. The First author’s research has also been funded by the project FFI 2013–41509–P of the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.

related to word order, none of the approaches to the psych phenomenon available in the literature focuses on the information structure (hereafter, IS) of psych predications and on what IS can tell us about the surface ordering of constituents in psych constructions. Therefore, since information structure and word order phenomena go hand in hand, we intend to fill this gap and attempt to look at the psych phenomenon from IS perspective.

We explore discourse functions of arguments of psych verbs, focusing on Dative Experiencers (DE) in sentences like those in (1), to determine the syntactic position they occupy in Spanish, Polish, and English.

- (1) a. A Ángela le gusta ese vestido. (Spanish)  
 b. Angeli podoba się ta sukienka. (Polish)  
 c. That dress pleases Angela/Angela is pleased by that dress. (English)

We believe that by studying the IS properties of DE arguments, not only can we learn more about psych predications, but also we can shed new light on the controversial status of DEs in grammar in general (e.g., their subjecthood properties). Since there is a systematic contrast in the behavior of psych constructions in these three languages, we investigate their word order at the syntax-IS interface, with the aim to account for the observed differences in terms of the typology of languages into agreement-prominent, discourse-prominent, and both, in line with Miyagawa (2010), Jiménez-Fernández (2010), and Jiménez-Fernández and Miyagawa (2014). We propose that the more discourse-prominent a language is the more chances it has to use DEs in OVS order as a non-marked pattern. The subject properties of DEs are derived from their movement to spec-TP.

To confirm the hypothesis that distinct word orderings correlate with distinct IS interpretations and thus to substantiate the importance of IS for the Experiencer problem, we have designed an experiment eliciting acceptability judgments of native speakers of the three languages.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 6.2 we provide a brief introduction to psych verbs. In Section 6.3 we present the basic facts related to DEs. Section 6.4 is devoted to the interrelations between word order and information structure, whereas Section 6.5 describes the experiment whose results form the basis of our analysis presented in Section 6.6, supported by further evidence in Section 6.7. Final conclusions are formulated in Section 6.8.

## 6.2 Introduction to psych verbs

Psychological predicates (often referred to as psych verbs or as Experiencer predicates) provide a serious challenge in all areas of linguistic analysis, because cross-linguistically and systematically they defy numerous predictions formulated on the basis of action predicates. They are standardly illustrated for English with verbs such as *to fear* (Subject Experiencer, SE, class I), *to frighten* (Object Experiencer, OE, class II), and *to appeal to* (Dative Experiencer, DE, class III). Landau (2010: 4 n. 2) defines a psych verb as “any verb that carries psychological entailments with respect to one of its arguments (the Experiencer). A psychological entailment involves an individual being in a certain mental state”. Since psych verbs exhibit special properties, i.e., they “misbehave” in numerous respects, they have stimulated the development of various approaches to the lexicon-syntax interface. Therefore, their analysis is important for the architecture of grammar, in particular for the division of labor between the lexicon and syntax, as well as at other interfaces. Building on the rich evidence developed over the years by numerous scholars, Landau (2010) emphasizes that Experiencers are “grammatically” special. This view, however, is controversial. There are also voices that they are not special at all (see Grafmiller 2013, Żychliński 2013, among others). Many researchers argue that psych verbs are essentially similar to other well-known verb classes (see Pesetsky 1995, Arad 1999, Rothmayr 2004, Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia 2014, among others), but that their special property is that they are usually ambiguous between several regular patterns. What is crucial, and has been repeatedly emphasized in the literature, is that psych effects obtain only in non-agentive contexts. Most OE verbs are three-way ambiguous between stative, causative-eventive, and agentive interpretations. In agentive contexts Experiencer verbs behave like standard transitive Agent-Patient verbs, where the Experiencer behaves like the Patient and where the Agent is more prominent. It is not easy to tease apart different interpretations, and thus the debate about the special grammatical status of Experiencers is still going on.

The problems posed by psych verbs which are most prominently addressed in the literature include mapping/linking of psych verbs’ arguments to syntactic positions, on the one hand, and their morpho-syntactic (behavioral) properties of various kinds, on the other. Generally, it is claimed that SE verbs are not different from other transitive stative verbs (e.g., *resemble*). As a consequence, little has been said about SE psych verbs. In contrast, OE and DE verbs have received a lot of attention in the literature and are subject to controversy. Back in the 1970s only two



classes of psych verbs were distinguished, i.e., SE verbs and OE verbs (*please* in English is not different from *frighten*), but Belletti and Rizzi (1988) identify three subclasses of psych verbs: *temere* (SE) verbs, *preoccupare* (OE) verbs, and *piacere* (DE) verbs. This three-way classification is relevant for Spanish and Polish. The three subclasses are listed in (2) below and illustrated for Italian, Polish, Spanish, and English in (3–5):

- (2) a. Class I: Nominative Experiencer, Accusative Theme (*temere* ‘fear’ class):  
 b. Class II: Nominative Theme, Accusative Experiencer (*preoccupare* ‘worry’ class)  
 c. Class III: Nominative Theme, Dative Experiencer (*piacere* ‘please’ class)
- (3) a. *Gianni teme questo.* (Italian)  
 ‘Gianni fears this’.  
 b. *Franek lubi Zosię.* (Polish)  
 ‘Frank likes Sophie’.  
 c. *Ángela adora a sus amigos.* (Spanish)  
 ‘Angela adores her Friends’.
- (4) a. *Questo preoccupa Gianni.* (Italian)  
 ‘This worries Gianni’.  
 b. *To niepokoi Janka.* (Polish)  
 ‘This worries John’.  
 c. *Esas cosas entristecen a Ángela.* (Spanish)  
 ‘These things sadden Angela’.
- (5) a. *A Gianni piace questo.* (Italian)  
 to Gianni pleases this  
 a'. *Questo piace a Gianni.* (Italian)  
 this pleases to Gianni  
 b. *Marysia podoba się Jankowi.*  
 Mary-nom pleases John-DAT  
 b'. *Jankowi podoba się Marysia.*  
 John-dat pleases Mary-NOM  
 ‘John likes Mary’.  
 c. *A Ángela le gusta esto.* (Spanish)  
 to Angela CL pleases this  
 c'. *Esto le gusta a Ángela.*  
 ‘Angela likes this’.

To save U(TAH), Belletti and Rizzi (1988) developed an unaccusative approach to OE and DE verbs involving movement. Belletti and Rizzi’s paper raised a lot of controversy and inspired further research in the area of psych verbs. Although the unaccusativity of OE verbs is questioned, the unaccusative status of DE verbs is fairly uncontroversial. Since the classification as such is also widely recognized, it serves as the background for our discussion in the following sections.

### 6.3 Dative Experiencers

In English there are no DEs: Experiencers surface as either subject or object, depending on the specific verb and its argument structure. In Spanish and Polish there are DEs but their syntactic status is subject to controversy. Masullo (1992) draws a contrast between Spanish preverbal datives and true CLLD-ed (Clitic Left Dislocated) topics and concludes that DEs are subjects. One of the tests Masullo uses is the co-occurrence with adverbs such as *solamente* ‘only’, which are compatible with subjects but not with CLLD-ed topics, as in (6–7):

- (6) *A Marco solamente pueden gustarle las óperas de Verdi.* (Masullo’s ex. 16)  
 ‘Mark alone can like Verdi’s operas’.
- (7) \**A Marco solamente, su novia le regalará una grabación de Verdi.*  
 (Masullo’s ex. 17)  
 ‘To Mark alone, his girlfriend will give him a recording of Verdi’.

From an IS perspective, this test is intended to show that the constituent modified by this adverb has some focus flavor, and hence it is not a subjecthood test. Fernández-Soriano (1999a, b) finds a parallel between Dative Experiencers and true Nominative subjects and draws the conclusion that DEs are subjects. One of the DE subject properties that Fernández-Soriano highlights is that as opposed to other types of Datives (Indirect Objects), DEs are used preverbally in out-of-the-blue sentences (see 8–9 below):

- (8) a. ?? *La comida se le ha quemado a Juan.*  
 the food SE CL-3SG-DAT has burned to Juan-DAT  
 ‘Juan burned the food’/‘the food burned on Juan’
- b. ?? *Se le ha quemado la comida a Juan.* (Fernández-Soriano (1999b: 95[8a]))
- (9) *A Juan se le ha quemado la comida.* (Fernández-Soriano (1999b: 91[3b]))
- (10) # *A Juan le han dado el regalo.*  
 Juan-DAT CL-3PL.-DAT have-3PL. given the present  
 ‘Juan has been given the present (lit. (they) have given Juan the present)’  
 (Fernández-Soriano (1999b: 96, 9f))

While we agree with the data, our interpretation is different: DEs are preverbal not because they are subjects but because they move to spec-TP, as we will show below. By contrast, Tubino (2009) claims that DEs are not quirky subjects, but they can be topicalized in the left periphery of the clause. DEs are generated in an Applicative Phrase within

VP, and undergo movement to spec-TP or to the CP area. The final conclusion reached in Tubino's analysis is "that the concept of 'subject' needs to be revised in Spanish and that Spanish Datives should not be compared with Icelandic quirky subjects." We agree that the notion of subject is not just whatever is placed in spec-TP, because this position can be used for other purposes and also because it does not account for postverbal subjects.

For Polish, Wiland (2013) suggests that objects in OVS sentences move to the left periphery, but this is not applied to DEs. Żychliński (2013) re-assesses Bondaruk and Szymanek's (2007) claims for the subject status of Dative Experiencers in Polish, and concludes that they are not subjects.

In view of the said controversy, it is worth reassessing the status of DEs in Spanish and Polish. Our proposal, substantiated by the analysis presented in the present paper, is that originally these DEs are generated in a position higher than the Stimulus argument of this type of psych verbs (in line with Harley 1995). However, DEs can move to a higher position (spec-TP or spec-CP) for different reasons: (1) to simply value features in T or (2) to further value some discourse feature in T or C, depending on the language (Miyagawa 2010; Jiménez-Fernández 2010; Jiménez-Fernández and Spyropoulos 2013; Jiménez-Fernández and Miyagawa 2014).

#### 6.4 Information structure and word order

In the three languages studied here, psych verbs alternate between SE and OE constructions. Quite often the alternating patterns involve different lexical items with seemingly similar argument types and core lexical meaning. Depending on what participant is the focus of the sentence, speakers will prefer one verb to the other, as presented below with question/answer pairs.

- (11) Q: *What is Angela afraid of/scared of/terrified of?* (Expected Focus on Stimulus; Topic on Experiencer)  
 A: <sup>ok</sup>Angela fears snakes.  
 A': #Snakes frighten Angela.
- (12) Q: *Who is afraid of snakes/scared of/terrified of?* (Expected Focus on Experiencer; Topic on Stimulus)  
 A: #Angela fears snakes  
 A': <sup>ok</sup>Snakes frighten Angela.

- (13) Q: *What's up?* (Expected answer: all-focus)  
 A: <sup>ok</sup>Ángela fears snakes.  
 A': <sup>ok</sup>Snakes frighten Angela.

In Spanish we find exactly the same paradigm:

- (14) Q: *¿De qué tiene miedo Ángela?* 'What is Angela scared of?'  
 A: <sup>ok</sup>Ángela teme a las serpientes. 'Angela fears snakes'.  
 A': #Las serpientes aterrorizan a Ángela. 'Snakes frightened Angela'.  
 (15) Q: *¿Quién tiene miedo de las serpientes?* 'Who fears snakes?'  
 A: #Ángela teme a las serpientes.  
 A': <sup>ok</sup>Las serpientes aterrorizan a Ángela.  
 (16) Q: *¿Qué ocurre?* 'What's up?'  
 A: <sup>ok</sup>Ángela teme a las serpientes.  
 A': <sup>ok</sup>Las serpientes aterrorizan a Ángela.

Other possible candidates might include: *abhor* or *detest* vs. *disgust* or *revolt*; *dislike* vs. *bother*, *bug*, or *annoy*; and *love* or *enjoy* vs. *delight*. Our intuition is that if intonation is not taken into account, speakers will select a specific psych verb, based on the relevant IS interpretation. Typically, topics occur in initial position, whereas information focus tends to occupy the final position in the sentence (Zubizarreta 1998). In addition, when DEs are taken into consideration, there is also a difference in preference depending on the IS-reading, both in Spanish and Polish:

- (17) a. Q: *¿Qué le gusta a Ángela?* 'What does Angela like?'  
 A: A Ángela le gusta la pasta. 'Angela likes pasta'.  
 B: #La pasta le gusta a Ángela. 'Pasta pleases Angela'.  
 b. Q: *Co smakuje Ani?* 'What does Ann like?' (lit. 'What tastes to Ann?')  
 what tastes Ann-DAT  
 a. A: Ani smakuje makaron.  
 Ann-DAT tastes pasta-NOM  
 'Ann likes pasta.' (lit. 'To Ann tastes pasta.')
- b. B: #Makaron smakuje Ani.  
 pasta-NOM tastes Ann-DAT
- (18) a. Q: *¿A quién le gusta la pasta?* 'Who likes pasta?'  
 A: #A Ángela le gusta la pasta.  
 B: La pasta le gusta a Ángela.  
 b. Q: *Komu smakuje makaron?*  
 who-DAT tastes pasta-NOM  
 A: #Ani smakuje makaron.  
 Ann-DAT tastes pasta-NOM  
 B: Makaron smakuje Ani.  
 pasta-NOM tastes Ann-DAT  
 'Angela/Ann likes pasta'.

- (19) a. Q: *¿Te has enterado de la noticia?* (Have you heard the last news?)  
 A: A Ángela le gusta la pasta.  
 B: #La pasta le gusta a Ángela.
- b. Q: *Słyszales najświeższe nowinki?*  
 A: *Ani smakuje makaron.*  
 Ann-DAT tastes pasta-NOM  
 B: *Makaron smakuje Ani.*  
 pasta-NOM tastes Ann-DAT  
 ‘Angela/Ann likes pasta’.

Our data so far points towards two conclusions: (1) IS influences the choice of the relevant psych verb in the three languages; and (2) the pattern OVS with DEs can be used in out-of-the-blue sentences (all-focus sentences), which according to Erteschik-Shir (2007), Contreras (1983), Fernández-Soriano (1999a), among others, favor the use of the basic/unmarked word order of the relevant language.

## 6.5 The experiment

From the preceding discussion the following generalization emerges: given the distinction between agreement-prominent languages and discourse-prominent languages, the more agreement-prominent a language is (English) the more chances it has to use the pure SVO pattern. On the other hand, the more discourse-prominent a language is, the more chances it has to use OVS as a canonical pattern with DEs.

Our working hypotheses are as follows:

1. Although the canonical pattern in the three languages is SVO, Spanish and Polish also display OVS as far as psych verbs are concerned.
2. OVS is an unmarked pattern when instantiated in all-focus sentences where O is a DE.
3. OVS is a marked pattern when the object DE is Topic.
4. SVO is marked when the object DE is Information Focus
5. The subject properties of DEs are derived from the connection between the syntactic position occupied by the DE and its discourse interpretation.

To verify the validity of these hypotheses, we have designed three different tests to confirm that different word orderings correlate with distinct IS interpretations. We have asked native speakers of the three languages

to provide their acceptability judgments. Two sentences were provided for each question, but the options were three: either one or the other sentence or both. The answers were controlled for in terms of intonation by giving phonological information which could help speakers in their choices. This is motivated by fact that intonation changes the topic/focus distinction. English (with rigid word order) uses phonology to discriminate between different IS readings, whereas Spanish and Polish (with free word order) under neutral intonation employ IS-based rearrangements. Our goals in the tests were as follows: (1) to see how alternating psychological verbs are processed by speakers in a specific IS-interpretation, and (2) to check whether Spanish and Polish favor the use of preverbal DEs in neutral contexts (all-new sentences). For English we had 31 responses, for Spanish 29, and for Polish 26. The test was run by using Google Drive.

### 6.5.1 Testing alternating psych verbs in English

- (20) Q: *What is Angela scared of?*  
 A: Angela fears *snakes*. (emphasis on snakes)  
 B: *Snakes* frighten Angela. (emphasis anywhere except on snakes)  
 C: Both
- (21) Q: *Who is scared of snakes?*  
 A: Angela fears snakes. (emphasis anywhere except on Angela)  
 B: Snakes frighten *Angela*. (emphasis on Angela)  
 C: Both
- (22) Q: *What's the matter?*  
 A: Angela fears snakes. (no special emphasis)  
 B: Snakes frighten Angela. (no special emphasis)  
 C: Both

### 6.5.2 Testing alternating psych verbs in Spanish

- (23) Q: *¿A qué tiene tanto miedo Ángela?* 'What is Angela so scared of?'  
 A: Ángela teme a las serpientes. 'Angela fears snakes.'  
 B: Las serpientes aterrorizan a Ángela. 'Snakes frighten Angela.'  
 C: Ambas ('both')
- (24) Q: *¿Quién tiene miedo a las serpientes?* 'Who is so scared of snakes?'  
 A: Ángela teme a las serpientes.  
 B: Las serpientes aterrorizan a Ángela.  
 C: Ambas ('both')

- (25) Q: *¿Qué sucede?* 'What's happening?'  
 A: Que Ángela teme a las serpientes.  
 B: Que las serpientes aterrorizan a Ángela.  
 C: Ambas ('both')

### 6.5.3 Testing alternating psych verbs in Polish (other than DE verbs):

- (26) Q: *Czego boi się Ania?* 'What does Ann fear?'  
 A: <sup>ok</sup>Ania boi się węży. 'Ann fears snakes'.  
 B: #Węże przerażają Anię. 'Snakes frighten Ann'.  
 C: Obie ('both')
- (27) Q: *Kto się boi węży?* 'Who fears snakes?'  
 A: <sup>ok</sup>Ania boi się węży. 'Ann fears snakes'.  
 B: #Węże przerażają Anię. 'Snakes frighten Ann'.  
 (28) Q: *O co chodzi?* 'What's the matter?'  
 A: <sup>ok</sup>Ania boi się węży.  
 B: <sup>ok</sup>Węże przerażają Anię.  
 C: Obie ('both')

### 6.5.4 Testing DEs and IS in Spanish

- (29) Q: *¿Qué le gusta a Ángela de comer?* 'What does Angela like to eat?'  
 A: A Ángela le encanta la pasta. 'Ángela loves pasta.'  
 B: La pasta le encanta a Ángela.  
 C: Ambas ('both')
- (30) Q: *¿Sabes qué?* 'You know what?'  
 A: A Ángela le encanta la pasta.  
 B: La pasta le encanta a Ángela.  
 C: Ambas ('both')
- (31) Q: *¿A quién le gusta la pasta?* 'Who likes pasta?'  
 A: A Ángela le encanta la pasta.  
 B: La pasta le encanta a Ángela.  
 C: Ambas ('both')

### 6.5.5 Testing DEs and IS in Polish

Below are examples of verbs with DES. The examples are carefully selected from the point of view of IS, though sometimes, as is the case with every lexical choice, the verbs are not exactly synonymous. The preferred answers are indicated, as follows from the experiment. The initial condition is unmarked intonation (neutral sentence stress).

- (32) Q: *Kogo podziwia Ania?* 'Whom does Ann admire?  
 A: <sup>ok</sup>Ani imponują artyści. 'Ann is impressed with artists'.  
 Ann-DAT impress artists-NOM  
 B: #Artyści imponują Ani. 'Artists impress Ann'.  
 Artists-NOM impress Ann-DAT  
 C: Obie ('both')
- (33) Q: *Kto zachwyca Zosię?* 'Who impresses Sophia?  
 who-NOM impresses Sophia-ACC  
 A: <sup>ok</sup>Zosi imponuje Franek. 'Sophie is impressed with Frank'.  
 Sophie-DAT impresses Frank-NOM  
 B: #Franek imponuje Zosi. 'Frank impresses Sophie'.  
 Frank-NOM impresses Sophie-DAT  
 C: Obie ('both')
- (34) Q: *Co nowego?/Co słychać?* 'What's new?'  
 A: <sup>ok</sup>Zosi imponuje Franek. 'Sophie is impressed with Frank'.  
 Sophie-DAT impresses Frank-NOM  
 B: <sup>ok</sup>Frane imponuje Zosi. 'Frank appeals to Sophie'.  
 Frank-NOM impresses Sophie-DAT  
 C: Obie ('both')

### 6.5.6 Statistics and discussion of results

In this section we present the results obtained in the three languages. We start with verb alternates in English:

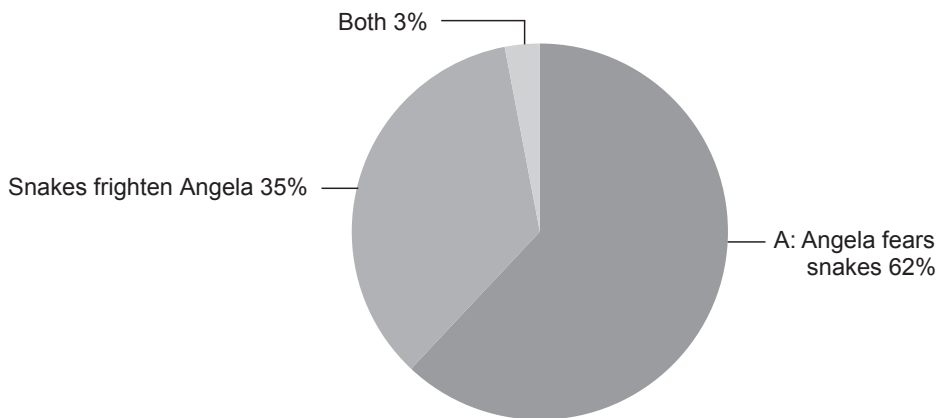


Figure 1. Q: *What is Angela scared of?*



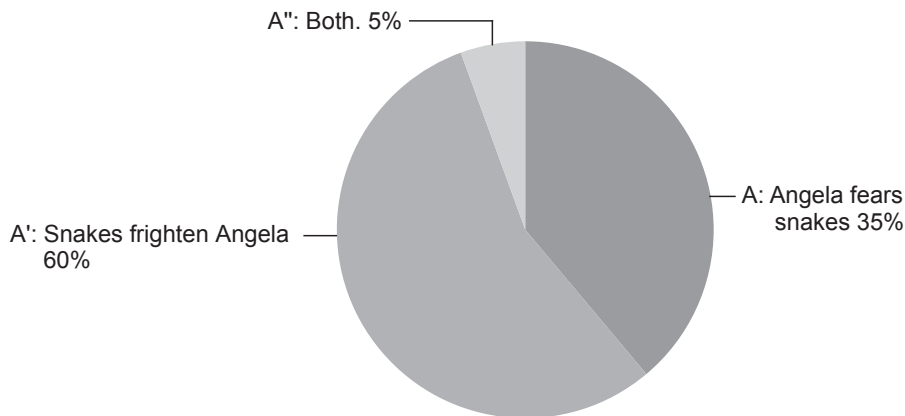


Figure 2. Q: *Who is scared of snakes?*

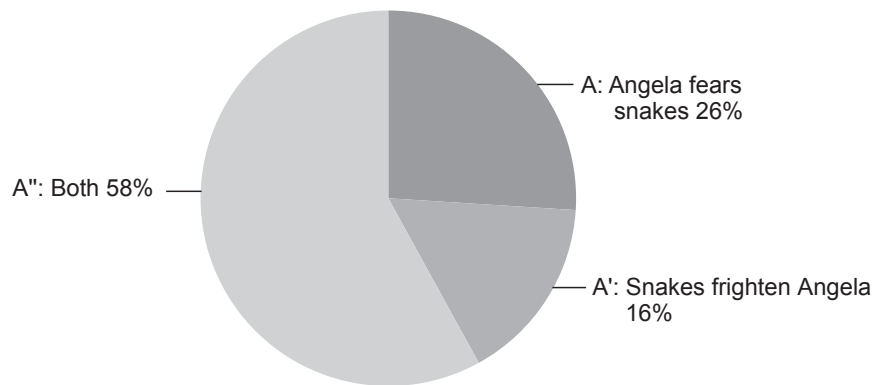


Figure 3. Q: *What is the matter?*

As is clear from Figure 1, in English, in responses to the questions about the stimulus of the event, the tendency is to place the information requested in the question in the last position in the answer. This is typically the position corresponding to Information Focus and given that English is a B-accent language, it is the locus for the neutral stress. This situation favors the use of the verb *fear*, since the stimulus is instantiated in the object position. Hence *snakes* is the IF which satisfies the information request in the question. Contrastingly, *Angela* is a G-Topic, thereby occupying an initial position. In Figure 2 the question about the Experiencer forces the new information in the answer to be placed in final position. This explains why informants prefer *frighten*, thereby focusing on the OE *Angela*<sup>1</sup>. Finally, in all-focus sentences Figure 3 shows

<sup>1</sup> English shows a strong inclination towards psychological adjectives, as opposed to psych verbs such as *frighten*. Our informants always commented that *Angela is frightened of snakes* is more natural. Note, however, that this is a lexical choice that need not concern us here. We thank Michelle Sheehan, Laura Bailey, and Charles Curran for suggestions and discussion on English data.

that speakers use both patterns with no particular preference. This is expected provided that the sentences follow the canonical clause pattern in English, SVO, in which all the constituents convey new information.

A similar situation is attested in Spanish:

(35) Q: *¿A qué tiene tanto miedo Ángela?*

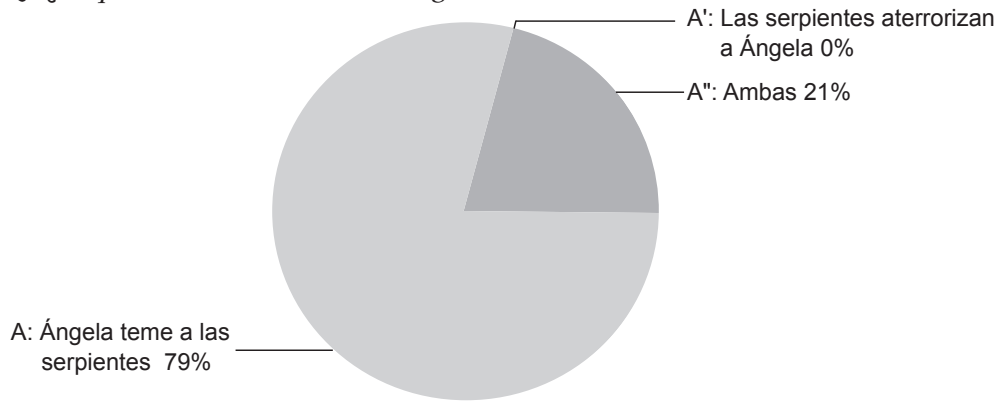


Figure 4. Focus on the Stimulus

(36) Q: *¿Quién tiene miedo a las serpientes?*

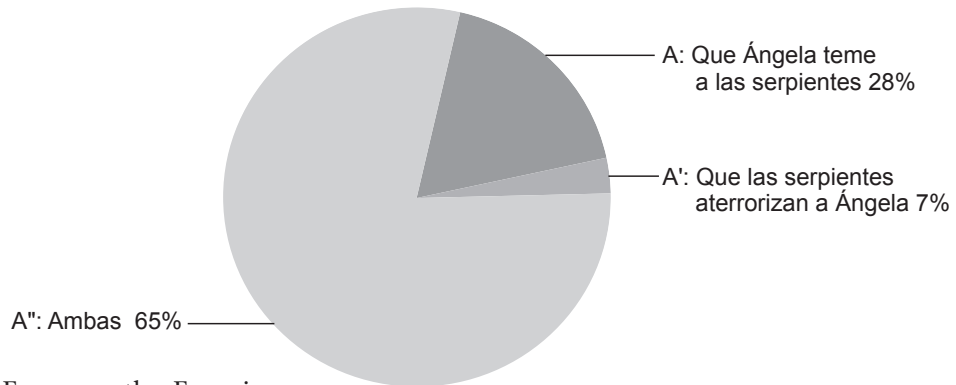


Figure 5. Focus on the Experiencer

(37) Q: *¿Qué sucede?*

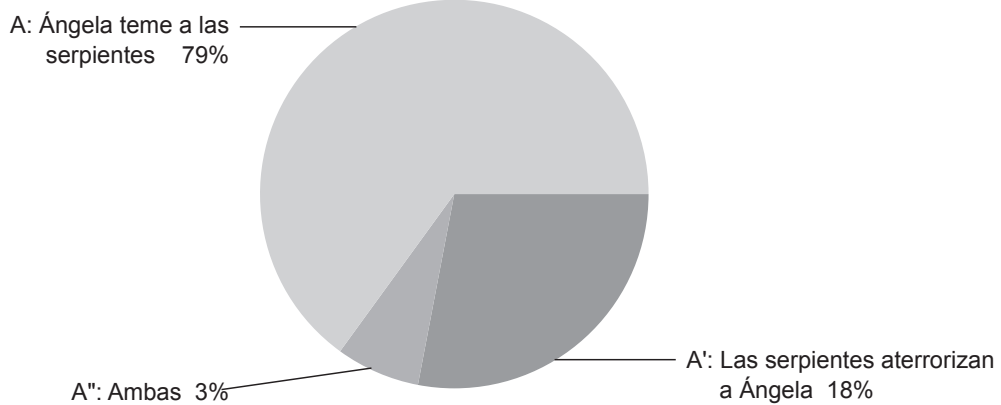


Figure 6. All-focus sentence

Finally, an analogous picture emerges in Polish:

(38) Q: *Kogo tak bardzo irytują książki Chmielewskiej?*

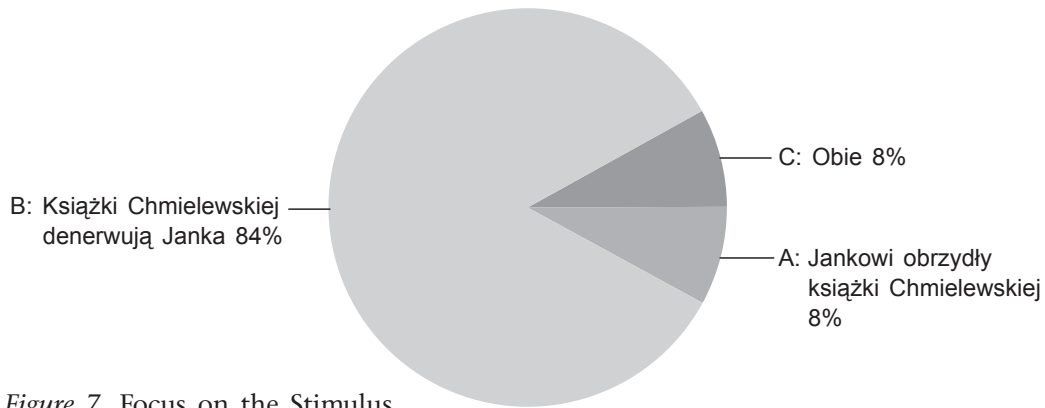


Figure 7. Focus on the Stimulus

(39) Q: *Czego brzydzi się Franek?*

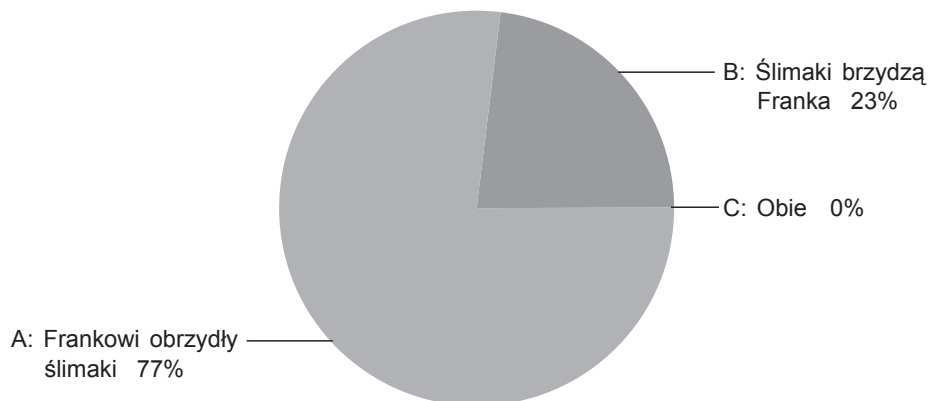


Figure 8. Focus on the Experiencer

(40) Q: *Co nowego?/Co słychać?*

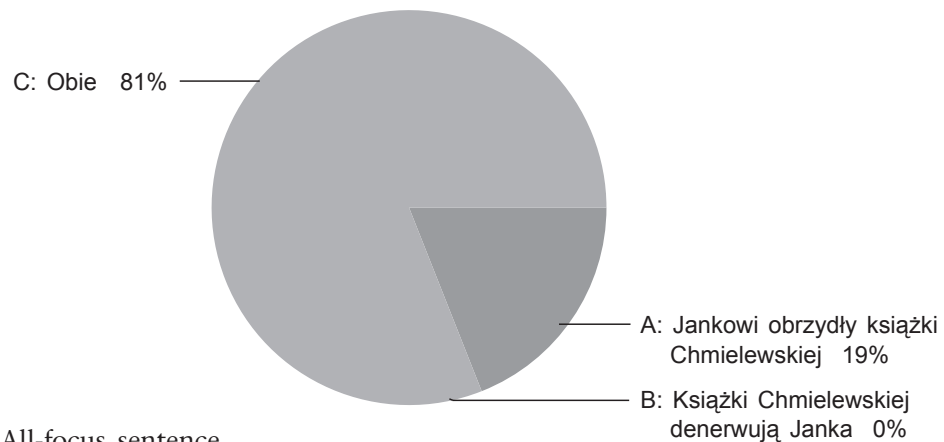


Figure 9. All-focus sentence

With respect to the use of DEs, Spanish shows a clear preference for the pattern OVS when the DE is the topic and the rest of the sentence is the comment. This is illustrated in Figure 10. However, the pattern SVO is favored when the DE is IF, as shown in Figure 11. Finally, informants crucially select the pattern OVS for all-focus sentence in clear opposition to hypothetically unmarked SVO. This can be observed in Figure 12 and leads us to conclude that OVS is also an unmarked pattern when O is a DE in Spanish, confirming the validity of our working hypotheses 3 and 4.

(41) Q: *¿Qué sorprendió tanto a Ángela?*

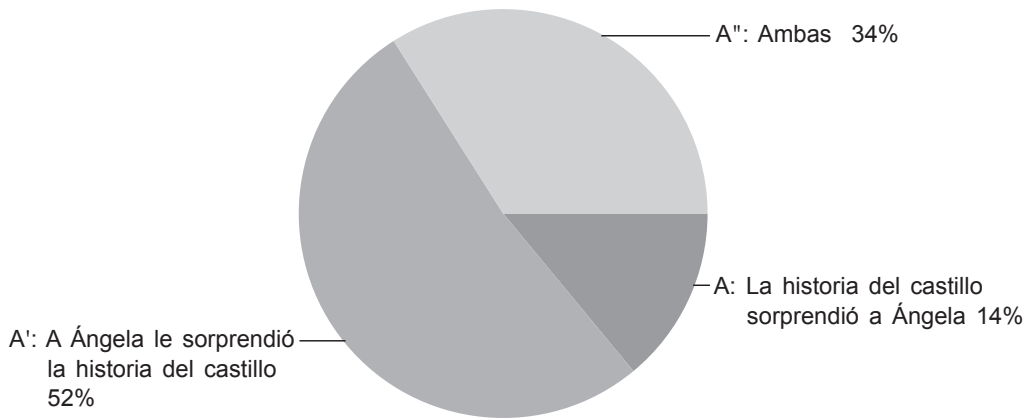


Figure 10. Focus on the Stimulus

(42) Q: *¿A quién sorprendió tanto la historia del castillo?*

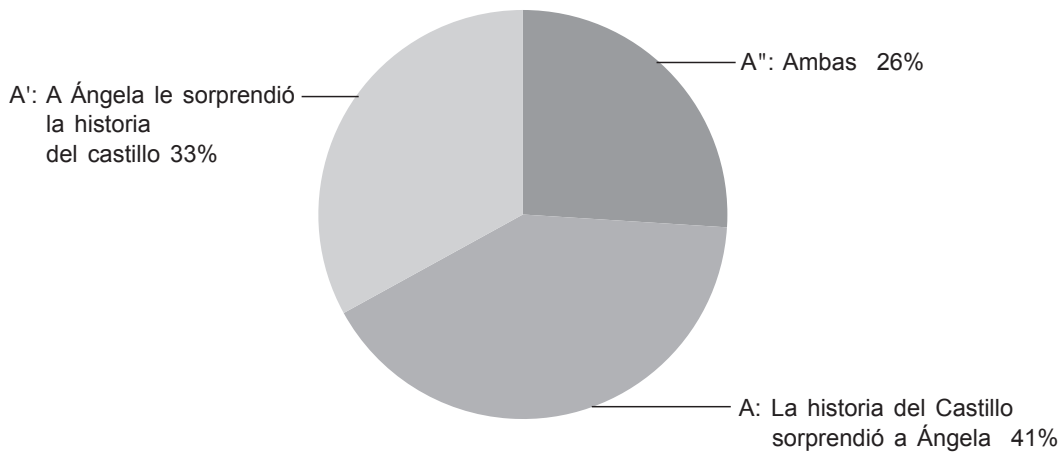


Figure 11. Focus on the Experiencer

(43) Q: *¿Qué ocurre?*

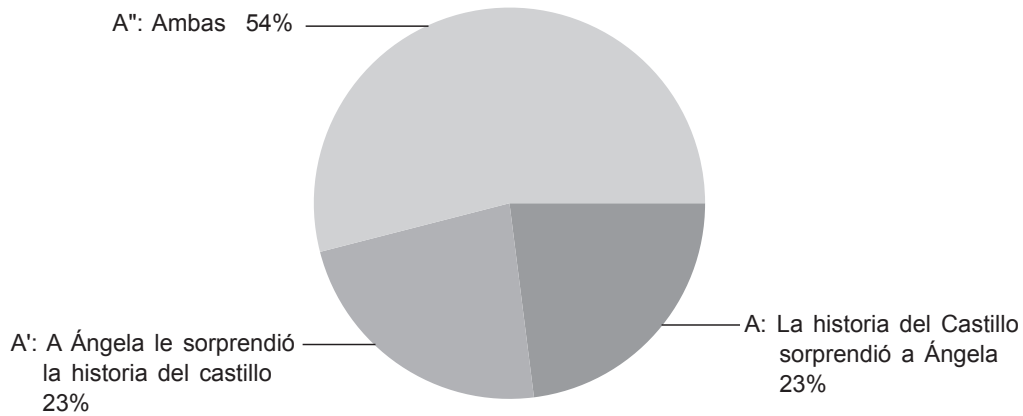


Figure 12. All-focus sentence

In Polish we obtain similar results except for all-new sentences. Figure 13 (example 44) illustrates the speakers' preference for OVS when DE is topic, whereas Figure 14 (example 45) makes clear that informants select the pattern SVO when DE is IF. However, in contrast to Spanish, Polish does not exhibit any preference for OVS in all-focus sentences. Much to the contrary, Polish informants have chosen both SVO and OVS in neutral contexts, as shown in Figure 15 (example 46). This can be explained if we assume that in all-focus sentences, at least some languages can use an Aboutness-Topic (Frascarelli 2007; Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007). In other words, informants in Polish feel that they can use SVO with DE in object position simply because they have made the subject in SVO or the O in OVS the starting point of the message that they are conveying.

(44) Q: *Kto zachwyca Zosię?*

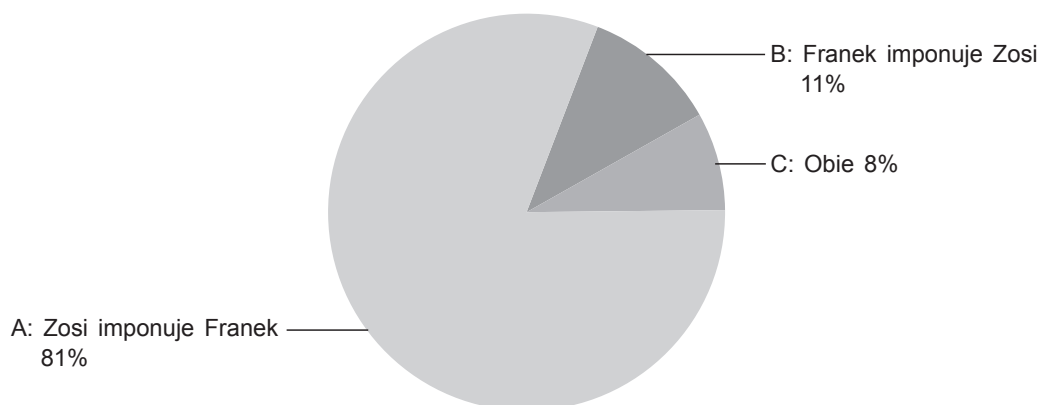


Figure 13. Focus on the Stimulus

(45) Q: *Kto lubi gramatykę generatywną?*

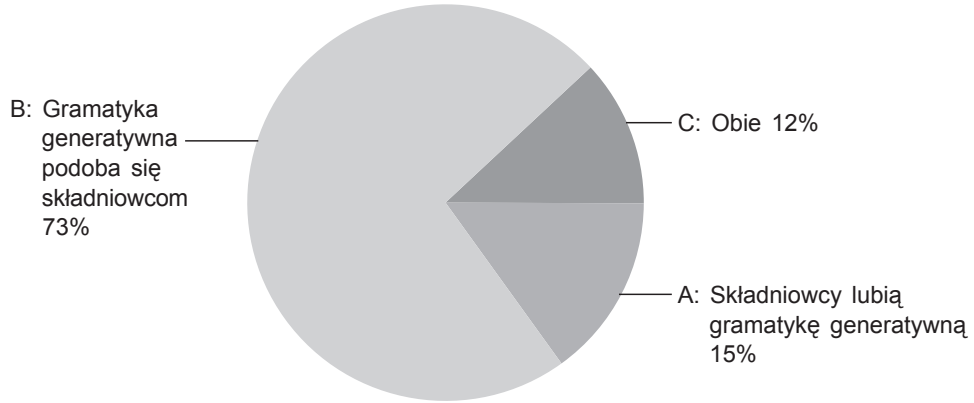


Figure 14. Focus on the Experiencer

(46) Q: *Co nowego?/Co słycać?*

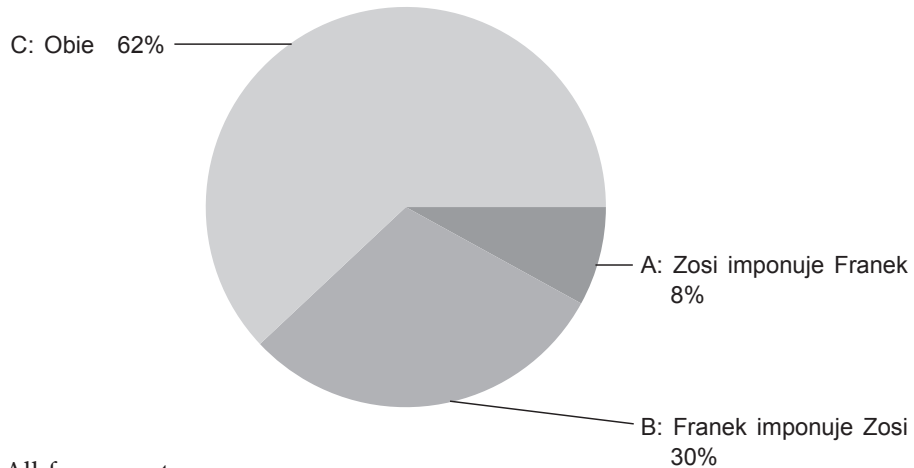


Figure 15. All-focus sentence

From the data and the results we have obtained we arrive at the interim conclusion that our working hypotheses are only partially validated. Spanish OVS with DEs is unmarked; Polish OVS is derived establishing the O as Aboutness-Topic, it may also use SVO with DEs in neutral contexts; and English sticks to the unmarked pattern SVO.

## 6.6 The analysis: A feature-inheritance approach to DEs

In this section we present our analysis of psych constructions within a parametric variation approach. We claim that English and Pol-

ish move Experiencers to TP if they are not discourse-wise marked; otherwise, they move to CP. Spanish may move Experiencers (including DEs) to TP for both reasons (agreement and discourse). Miyagawa (2010) makes a typological classification of languages depending on the kind of grammatical features inherited by T. Languages can be grouped into two types: agreement-based languages and discourse-configurational languages (cf. É. Kiss 1995). In the same vein, Jiménez-Fernández (2010) has claimed that there are languages which are both agreement-based and discourse-configurational. This typology is sketched below:

- (47) **Feature Inheritance** ( $\varphi$ : agreement features,  $\delta$ : discourse features) (Adapted from Jiménez-Fernández and Miyagawa 2014)
- |    |   |                    |
|----|---|--------------------|
| a. | $C_{\varphi, \delta} \gg T_{\varphi} \dots$         | English            |
| b. | $C_{\varphi, \delta} \gg T_{\delta} \dots$          | Japanese           |
| c. | $C_{\varphi, \delta} \gg T_{\varphi, \delta} \dots$ | Spanish and Polish |

From this feature-based typology we can infer that a discourse feature such as [Top] or [Foc] is inherited by (and hence lowered onto) T; the EPP or Edge Feature (EF) under T triggers movement of the probed category to spec-TP (Jiménez-Fernández 2010). We claim that in English Experiencers are real subjects, so they move via agreement to spec-TP, but also they can be moved to Spec-CP if they are topics. In Spanish DEs move to spec-TP regardless of whether they are part of an all-focus sentence or they have a special discourse function (topic). In the latter case, topic features are lowered from C to T. Concentrating on DEs, in line with Jiménez-Fernández and Miyagawa (2014), we propose that when DE is a G-Topic, it moves to spec-TP, and its [Top] feature is valued via AGREE with T. On the other hand, following Jiménez-Fernández and Spyropoulos (2013), we claim that the [Foc] feature of IF is valued via AGREE with V. In both cases the relevant discourse feature has been lowered from C to T/v to V:

- (48) DE as G-Topic; S as IF

$[_{CP} [C \emptyset] [_{TP} a \text{ Ángela} [_{T} \text{le gusta} + \emptyset] [_{VP} [_{vP} \text{le gusta} + \emptyset] [_{VP} a \text{ Ángela} [_{V} \text{le gusta}] \text{ la pasta}]]]]]$			
[Top]	[past-tns]	[Foc]	[3rd, SG]
	[3rd, SG]		[Foc]
	[Top]		
	[EF]		

When DE is IF it remains in its original position and values its [Foc] with V; the Stimulus S moves to spec-TP and values its [Top] feature with T:

## (49) DE as IF

[<sub>CP</sub>[<sub>C</sub>∅] [<sub>TP</sub> la pasta [<sub>T</sub> le gusta+∅] [<sub>vP</sub> [<sub>v</sub> le gusta+∅] [<sub>vP</sub> a Ángela [<sub>v</sub> le gusta] la pasta]]]]  
 [Top] [pres-tns] [Foc] [Fœ] [3rd, SG]  
 [3rd, SG]  
 [Top]  
 [EF]

Finally, in all-new sentences there are no discourse-driven movement. The only important features are agreement-features and the relevant all-focus interpretation is decided on at the interfaces. Given the Attract Closest Principle, the Edge Feature in T will trigger movement to T of the closest DP, namely the DE.

## (50) All-focus dative constructions

[<sub>CP</sub>[<sub>C</sub>∅] [<sub>TP</sub> a Ángela [<sub>T</sub> le gusta+∅] [<sub>vP</sub> [<sub>v</sub> le gusta+∅] [<sub>vP</sub> a Ángela [<sub>v</sub> le gusta] la pasta]]]]  
 [pres-tns] [3rd, SG]  
 [3rd, SG]  
 [EF]

For Polish we propose that discourse features are retained at C, the phasal head. Thus for those cases in which DE is a G-Top, we maintain that DE moves to CP. Since there is no feature inheritance in the vP, the [Foc] feature remains in v and agrees with the [Foc] feature in the DP subject:

## (51) DE as G-Topic; S as IF

[<sub>CP</sub> Marii [<sub>C</sub>∅] [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>T</sub> podoba się+∅] [<sub>vP</sub> [<sub>v</sub> podoba się+∅] [<sub>vP</sub> Marii [<sub>v</sub> podoba się] muzyka klasyczna]]]]  
 [Top] [Top] [pres-tns] [Fœ] [3rd, SG]  
 [EF] [3rd, SG] [Foc]

‘Maria likes classical music’.

In those cases where DE is IF and the Stimulus S is preverbal we suggest that S moves to CP:

## (52) DE as IF

[<sub>CP</sub> muzyka klasyczna [<sub>C</sub>∅] [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>T</sub> podoba się+∅] [<sub>vP</sub> [<sub>v</sub> podoba się+∅] [<sub>vP</sub> Marii [<sub>v</sub> podoba się] muzyka klasyczna]]]]  
 [Top] [Top] [pres-tns] [Fœ] [Foc] [3rd, SG]  
 [EF] [3rd, SG] [3rd, SG]

‘Classical music pleases/appeals to Mary’.

Thirdly, in all-focus sentences Polish C has a non-interpretable [Top] feature which makes speakers always select a constituent as the sentence topic, the A-Top, what the sentence is about. Accordingly, either the DE or the S must move to CP:



## (53) S as A-Top

[<sub>CP</sub> muzyka klasyczna [<sub>C</sub> ∅] [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>T</sub> podoba się+∅] [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V</sub> podoba się+∅] [<sub>VP</sub> Marii [<sub>V</sub> podoba się] muzyka klasyczna]]]]  
 [Top] [Top] [pres-tns] [3rd, SG] [3rd, SG]

‘Classical music pleases/appeals to Mary’.

## (54) DE as A-Top

[<sub>CP</sub> Marii [<sub>C</sub> ∅] [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>T</sub> podoba się+∅] [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>V</sub> podoba się+∅] [<sub>VP</sub> Marii [<sub>V</sub> podoba się] muzyka klasyczna]]]]  
 [Top] [Top] [pres-tns] [3rd, SG] [3rd, SG]

‘Mary likes classical music’.

This accounts for the apparently mixed basic word order. Polish always uses SVO as the canonical pattern, the counterexample with DEs is just illusory. With respect to English, the SVO pattern can be used in all-focus sentences, and hence S moves to spec-TP. However, it can also be employed in contexts where S is a G-Top. If Bianchi and Frascarelli (2010) are right when they say that G-Tops in English do not require movement (as opposed to Romance), we can simply say that the [Top] feature in C is valued via long-distance AGREE with S, so there is no need for S to move to spec-TP. Our analysis accounts for the subject properties of Spanish DEs in that DEs are always moved to spec-TP, the typical subject position. They have no subject properties per se; they acquire subject properties via movement to a subject position (A-position).

## 6.7 Conclusions

The purpose of our study has been two-fold: (1) to test the exact position targeted by Experiencers in the three languages under study (spec-TP or spec-CP; A-position vs. A'-position); (2) to analyze the information structure properties of psych constructions. With regard to the first point, we have argued that topic fronting in Spanish has A-properties to claim that it involves movement to spec-TP, whereas in English and Polish topics undergo movement to spec-CP.

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