

On the transitivity potential of Spanish unergative verbs denoting physiological processes

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The verbs that express physiological processes constitute an interesting area of study since they are unique in describing actions related to bodily functions common to all human beings. However, they have not been fully addressed in the literature (Thalberg 1972; Snell-Hornby 1983; Rice 1988; Dixon 1991; Fellbaum 1990; McClure 1990). In ADESSE (2002-2024), the corpus-based project currently being developed at the University of Vigo around the hypothesis that the meaning of a verb determines its syntactic behavior, Spanish unergative physiological verbs seem to enter eight intransitive clausal patterns and two transitive structures in which they are complemented by a direct object that is either the actor (*Golpearon con sus puños hasta sangrarlos sobre la puerta*) or the product (*Murió vomitando sangre*) involved in the process described in the sentence.

In order to examine if their transitivity potential is as stated in previous studies, I have carried out a corpus-based analysis on 19 Spanish belonging to this particular class (*babear, bostezar, cagar, dormir, eructar, escupir, estornudar, hipar, llorar, mear, orinar, reír, respirar, roncar, sangrar, sudar, toser, excretar, and vomitar*) in the European and American varieties of Spanish included in the Royal Spanish Academy CREA and CORPES XXI corpora and in Davies' *Genre/Historical* and *Web/Dialects* corpora.

Its most significant findings will show that the transitivity potential of Spanish unergative physiological verbs is higher than originally expected, since it cannot be reduced just to the two aforementioned transitive patterns: the so-called cognate object construction (*Sudaba un sudor frío*) (Cano Aguilar 1981; Huddleston and Pullum 2002; De Swart 2007; Real Puigdollers 2007, 2008; RAE and ASALE 2009; Wilson 2019) and lexical causative structures (*En la orilla, una mujer duerme a su niño*) (Cano Aguilar 1977; Mourelle De Lema 1981; Moreno Cabrera 1984; Heidinger 2015; Vivanco Gefaell 2016; López García 2018). In addition to these, in my corpus four other transitive structures have been attested with them; namely, the preposition-drop alternation (*Él aún meaba la cama*) (Levin 1993; Esquivel Rodríguez 2010), and three patterns prototypical of satellite-framed languages, such as English, owing to the incorporation of a manner component into their verbs (Talmy 1985; 2000), which represent new cases of mixed behaviour between the satellite (Germanic languages) and verb-framed (Romance languages) typologies; specifically, resultatives (*José Luis había sudado hasta la sobriedad*) (Goldberg 1995; Kaufmann and Wunderlich 1998; Boas 2003; Folli 2002; De Cuyper 2004; Morita 2009; Rodríguez Arrizabalaga 2014, 2022c; Riaubiené, 2015), reaction object

constructions (*Parecía dispuesto a vomitar su decepción*) (Levin 1993; Martínez Vázquez 2014a, 2014b; Bouso 2021), and the Spanish equivalent of the English *away* construction (*Ahí seguirá Antonio, roncando la borrachera en el sofá*) (Jackendoff 1997; Kim 2010; Rodríguez Arrizabalaga 2022a, 2022b). Given that the research on these particular structures in English has been extensively investigated within the framework of Construction Grammar, the analysis presented will be based on this grammatical theory; specifically, on Goldberg's approach (1995, 2006, 2019).

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