Grammatical relations in Spanish triactant clauses

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Introduction

Grammatical relations like subject and object assign special status to certain constituents of the clause. Such grammatical relations are singeld out by morphological marking (or unmarking) and by their relevance with repect to certain syntactic processes (agreement, passivization, relativization, . . .). Grammatical relations in the clause single out central participants, those which are given special prominence in the conceptualization of the process.

Some conceptual frameworks for linguistic analysis allow only two places for the participants which are given special prominence. This is the case, for example, of subject and object 'syntactic functions' in Dik's Functional Grammar (cf. Dik 1989). Within Cognitive Grammar, Langacker has regarded subject and object as, respectively, the most prominent clausal participant and the second-most prominent clausal participant (Langacker 1991: 321), but, in his opinion, *indirect object* ought not to be considered a grammatical relation of the same type as *subject* and *direct object* (Langacker 1991: 326). In this paper, I support the idea that subject, direct object and indirect object are all three central participants in Spanish clauses. I will approach the meaning of these grammatical relations by observing ditransitive clauses and by opposing them to other triactant clauses.

1. Ditransitive clauses in Spanish: Main formal properties

'Ditransitive' clauses are characterized in Spanish by the presence of the grammatical relations subject [SUBJ], direct object [DO] and indirect object [IO], as in

(1)   [*Pedro*]$_{SUBJ}$ *le dio* [*un libro*]$_{DO}$ [*a María*]$_{IO}$
        'Pedro gave Maria a book'

As stated in traditional grammars of Spanish, the main formal characteristics of these grammatical relations are the following:

The subject is a bare noun phrase that agrees in number and person with the verb. Its unmarked position in the clause is the initial position. Agreement may be the only indication of subject (2).

(2)   *Le dio*$^{3.p.sg}$ *un libro*$_{DO}$ *a María*$_{IO}$
      'He/she gave María a book'

Direct objects are bare noun phrases, clauses, and also noun phrases preceded by the preposition *a*, mostly if human and definite (3c). Their unmarked position in the clause is postposed to the verb. They can be cross-referred by an 'accusative' clitic (*lo* in the examples) variable in gender, number and person, especially when anteposed to the verb. A clitic may be the only indication of the DO (3b–c). These formal characteristics of DOs are shared by the objects of ditransitive clauses (3a) and by the objects of prototypical (mono)transitive clauses (3b–c).

(3)   a.   *El libro*$_{DO}$ *se lo dio Pedro*$_{SUBJ}$ *a María*$_{IO}$
           'Pedro gave Maria the book'
      b.   *Leyó el libro / Lo leyó*
           'He read the book' / 'He/she read it'
      c.   *Vio a Pedro / Lo vio*
           'He saw Peter' / 'He saw him'

Indirect objects are noun phrases which are always preceded by the preposition *a*. In the unmarked cases, they occur after the verb and after the DO. They are usually cross-referenced in the predicate by a 'dative' clitic, like *le* in examples (1) and (2), variable in number and person, but not in gender. Third person dative clitics take the form *se* when followed by an accusative clitic (3a). Apart from ditransitive clauses, this grammatical relation may be found in clauses without DO like example (4).[1]

(4)   *A Pedro*$_{IO}$ *le gusta la lingüística*$_{SUB}$
      'Pedro likes linguistics'

Each of these grammatical relations shows a considerable degree of variation as far as their formal properties are concerned. The main phenomena of this kind are

– Spanish is a relatively free word order language. Any nominal constituent in the clause may occur preverbally or postverbally.
– Some DOs 'take' the preposition *a* and others do not take any preposition.

– In Castillian Spanish, the distribution of third-person clitics is much more complex than it is claimed here. Case is not the only rationale for the choice between them. Many Castillian speakers would prefer (5a) instead of (3c) – *leísmo* –. Both uses are considered correct with human masculine objects. The use of *lo* or *la* referring to what seems an indirect object, as in (5b), is considered vulgar, even if this use is common in Madrid and sometimes found in writing.

(5)   a.   *Le vio*
           'He saw him'
      b.   *La di un regalo*
           'I gave her a present'

– Dative clitics cross-refer full (stressed) IOs (*le ... a María*) in 63.40% of their occurrences. In our corpus, anteposed DOs are cross-referred by accusative clitics in the 42.91% of their occurrences. Cross-referencing of postposed DOs is limited to 1.18% of the examples.

In this paper I will refer to such *actance variation*[2] only marginally, although I must note that it produces interesting prototype effects in Spanish syntactic constructions. There have been attempts to explain the syntactic structure of the clause in Spanish without making any reference to grammatical relations such as the ones I have described, but pointing directly at what I have considered exponents of grammatical relations, i.e., word order, case, agreement, prepositions, etc. I will not discuss this approach now, even though I believe that it is not incompatible with a more abstract approach that handles grammatical relations as basic concepts.

On the other hand, formal properties which are common to more than one syntactic relation reveal common semantic properties. Both formal and semantic properties common to SUBJ, DO, and IO point at the fact that these three syntactic relations correspond to central or focal participants in Spanish clauses. What counts as a central participant must be decided within each language by taking into account both formal and semantic properties. General criteria for identifying central participants include (as tendencies):[3]

– Verbs tend to agree with (some) central participants and not with other (oblique) complements.
– Central participants are usually morphologically unmarked, while other verbal complements are usually marked by adpositions.
– Central participants are usually actantial (i.e., they may be required by the verb). Some oblique complements are also actantial; but for each valency

the most frequent construction is made up of central participants.[4]
- From a semantic point of view, what characterizes central participants is their versatility. Central participants are singled out for special prominence partly irrespectively of their semantic role.

The problematic relation is IO. In my opinion, IO is a central participant in Spanish, like SUBJ and DO, if we rely mainly on the fact that it can be cross-referred by means of a dative clitic. 'Doubling' of complements (cross-reference) being a variant of agreement[5], this possibility defines central participants versus non-central (oblique) ones. Other criteria seem to suggest the same conclusion, except the fact that the preposition *a* is obligatory with 'full' IOs. However, *a* is also found with some DOs. Thus, its presence does not seem enough to neglect the centrality of IOs. The way in which IOs accommodate semantic properties of central participants will be shown in the following pages.

In the following sections, I shall assume that any syntactic structure provides the clause with its own meaning. This meaning is relatively independent from the meaning of the lexical items of which the construction consists. In particular, verbs are conventionally associated with a syntactic construction provided that their respective meanings are compatible; but the verb (together with the other lexical items) elaborates the schematic meaning of the syntactic structure specifying it, and, vice versa, the syntactic construction elaborates the meaning of the verb by selecting a sense from its range of meaning and by modulating the prominence of the schematic entities implied or allowed in the conceptualization of the process.[6]

2. Prototypical ditransitive clauses

About 60% of the triactant clauses in Spanish adopt the ditransitive construction. Such a percentage suggests that we are faced with the unmarked coding in triactant clauses, the structure used unless there is some reason against it. In our corpus, the most frequent verbs with the syntactic schema SUBJ-PRED-DO-IO are *dar* 'give' and *decir* 'say'. These two verbs render 24% of the examples of the ditransitive schema and provide the basic cognitive models for it. Among the most frequent verbs in this schema, there are also verbs of locative displacement such as *poner* 'put', *traer* 'bring', and *llevar* 'take'. Below I put forward a classification of verbs entering the ditransitive construction. The classification tries to account for the cognitive salience of

the most frequent examples (with *dar* and *decir*), most of the other ditransitive verbs being regarded as elaborations and extensions of the meaning of them both. A third class is constituted by verbs whose meaning is connected with that of locative displacement.

Here is a list of the 50 most frequent verbs that I have found in the ditransitive construction, ordered within each class by frequency:

a) 'Giving' and connected senses, i.e., real or intended exchange of concrete or abstract objects: *dar, ofrecer, dejar, devolver, entregar, regalar, prestar, proporcionar, dedicar, tomar, comprar*
b) Verbs of 'saying' and connected senses. I include here verbal communication, illocutionary verbs, teaching and causatives of perception, verbs of permission, etc.: *decir, preguntar, contar, pedir, explicar, permitir, recordar, mostrar, enseñar, gritar, responder, impedir, contestar, agradecer, ordenar, asegurar, comunicar, presentar, indicar, confesar, prometer*
c) Locative displacement: *poner, traer, quitar, llevar, tender, mandar, echar, dirigir, sacar, pasar, enviar*
d) Creation and other verbs that are most frequently found in (uni)transitive constructions: *hacer, producir, abrir, ver, costar, tener*

For classes (a), (b) and (c), some examples from our corpus are given in (6), (7) and (8), respectively:

(6) a. *Es tuyo. Te lo REGALO.* (SUR: 104)[7]
         'It is yours. I'm giving it to you.'
     b. *<Queremos> que nos ENTREGUE a María Pandora* (LAB: 201)
         '<We want> you to surrender Maria Pandora to us.'

(7) a. *Le PIDIÓ que alcanzara a Santiago Nasar para prevenirlo.* (CRO: 102)
         'She asked him to run after Santiago Nasar and tell about the danger.'
     b. *No estaba dispuesta a PERMITIRle que me tratara como a una ignorante.* (JOV: 92)
         'I couldn't allow him to treat me as if I was ignorant'
     c. *Le ENSEÑÓ al telegrafista una fórmula suya para seguir usando las pilas agotadas.* (CRO: 32)
         'He showed the telegraphist his formula to continue to use the run down batteries.'

(8)   a.   *Seguía pensando en él mientras su madre le PONÍA compresas de árnica.* (CRO: 92)
'She continued to think of him while her mother was putting compresses of arnica on her.'

   b.   *Recordó el 'basset hound' que el tío Juan le HABÍA TRAÍDO de Londres cuando era niño.* (JOV: 117)
'He remembered the basset hound that uncle Juan had brought him from London when he was a child.'

   c.   *Ella le LLEVÓ la brocha, el jabón, el espejo de colgar y la máquina con la cuchilla nueva.* (CRO: 66)
'She brought him the brush, the soap, the mirror and the razor with the new blade.'

Although we must take into account that we are dealing with different cognitive domains, it is reasonable to suppose that the meaning of the ditransitive construction has as its most central sense that of a transfer of an object to a human recipient. Most of the verbs and examples cited refer to a dynamically oriented event in which the subject is typically the source and also the agent, which impels the concrete or abstract referent of the DO from its own sphere of control to that of the recipient (IO).

Consequently, I suggest the correspondences of (I) as prototypical of ditransitive clauses in Spanish:

(II)

SUBJECT	PRED	DO	IO
Agent/Source		Object	Receiver

with some variants for it in the three main domains in which we find the construction

MOVEMENT	Agent/Source	Displaced Object	Target Place
GIVING	Initial Possessor (Donor)	Transferred Object	Final Possessor (Receiver)
SAYING	Speaker	Message	Hearer

The most concrete cognitive domain, namely locative displacement, may act as a model for other domains. In fact, locative displacement may imply change of control over the displaced object, and as a consequence, change of 'possession'. Change of possession typically (though not necessarily) implies change of location. As for verbs of saying, the use of the same construction may be a case of the conduit metaphor (Reddy 1979). It goes without saying that metaphorical extensions of the ditransitive construction do not need

a change of verb. For example, the verb *mandar* ('send'/'order') is typically related to a locative domain when its object is concrete (9a), but to a communicative domain when its object is a clause (9b).

(9)   a.   *Estaba muy agradecida por la porción de pastel de boda que le HABÍAN MANDADO.* (CRO: 58)
'She was very grateful for the portion of wedding cake that they had sent her.'

   b.   *Le MANDÓ que se levantara.*
'He ordered him to stand up.'

Likewise, verbs of giving can be used to refer to a communicative event, also depending on the nature of their object (for example, *darle una información a alguien* 'to give someone some information'). On the contrary, verbs of verbal communication, causatives of perception or verbs of permission are never found in concrete predications of giving or movement.

However, although directionality is a component of prototypical ditransitive clauses, I have already proposed (relying on frequency) that prototypical ditransitive verbs are *dar* and *decir* and not locative verbs like *poner* or *llevar*. Such prototypicality has a semantic base. Irrespectively of the directive sense of the ditransitive construction, the IO is not simply the target of a movement (either literal or metaphorical). More important is the fact that, as a result of the process, the IO has the DO within its own sphere of influence or control, leading to the implication of transitive relations between IO and DO, in which the IO of the ditransitive (causative) occupies the subject slot of the monotransitive (*darle algo a alguien* [give] → *alguien tiene algo* [have]; *mostrarle algo a alguien* [show] → *alguien percibe algo* [perceive/see]; *enseñarle algo a alguien* [teach] → *alguien sabe algo* [know]).[8] This fact gives the IO a potentially active role, revealed also by the high percentage of animate IOs (92% of our corpus). Therefore, there is some affinity between IO and Subject. However, there is also some important formal and semantic proximity between IO and DO to which I will refer later.

3.   Deviations from the prototype: IO = Source

Not all ditransitive constructions can be easily explained as an abstract movement from the subject to the IO. The main deviations from the prototype concern verbs whose IO can mark the Source point. Among these, there are some

verbs that I have already cited: *quitar* 'take away'/'remove', *sacar* 'take out', *tomar* 'take' and *comprar* 'buy'. Other similar verbs are:
alejar, arrancar, descolgar, descargar, extraer, retirar; adquirir, arrebatar, robar, hurtar, aceptar, conseguir, coger, restar, conquistar, ganar, sustraer, cobrar; copiar, plagiar, imitar

Typical pairs showing contrast with the prototypical ditransitive are given in examples (10) and (11). The examples in (b) are the converse of those in (a):

(10)   a.   *Le puso el marco al cuadro.*
              'He framed the picture.'
         b.   *Le quitó el marco al cuadro.*
              'He took the frame off the picture.'

(11)   a.   *Andrés le vendió un coche a Mariano.*
              'Andrés sold a car to Mariano / Andrés sold a car of Mariano's.'
         b.   *Mariano le compró un coche a Andrés.*
              'Mariano bought a car from Andrés / Mariano bought Andrés a car.'

(11a) and (11b), in perfective aspect, can refer to the very same situation; however, it is commonly admitted that there is an important difference in their conceptualization concerning which participant is considered most responsible for the event described. By choosing the verb, we choose the agent and the main protagonist. What is important about the structure of (10) and (11) in Spanish is that the IO can encode both the final place or final possessor and the initial place or initial possessor. Furthermore, both senses can be present in (11a) and (11b), that is, in (11a) Mariano can be either the buyer or the owner of a car that is sold by Andrés, and in (11b) Andrés can be either the seller or the receiver of a car bought by Mariano.

The general principle behind (10) and (11) is that IOs in Spanish cannot be accounted for solely with reference to semantic roles. IOs may correspond to the apparently contradictory roles Recipient and Source. This proves its semantic versatility.

4.   Non-actantial IOs

In many cases, the IO encodes an entity that is not an actant, that is, that it is not part of the valency of the verb. Spanish grammars (for example,

Fernández Ramírez 1951: 33–37) often call this element 'dative of interest' to distinguish it from true indirect objects, although there are no consistent formal differences between them. Most (if not all) transitive verbs in Spanish admit an additional participant as IO. Very frequently, this construction arises when the DO establishes an inalienable relation with the IO (12a). This is the so-called 'sympathetic dative'. The alternative is to encode the referent of the IO as a possessor within the Object (12b).

(12)   a.   *La enfermera le vendó* [*el brazo*]$_{DO}$ [*al paciente*]$_{IO}$.
         b.   *La enfermera vendó* [*el brazo del paciente*]$_{DO}$.
              'The nurse bandaged the patient's arm.'

The syntactic structure of (12a) focuses on the fact that the referent of the IO is involved in and affected by the process as far as the DO, as an integral part of it, is affected. (18b) foregrounds only what Langacker (1984) calls the 'active zone' directly affected (the arm).

Every transitive clause accepts an additional participant as IO, but not all non-actantial IOs bear a relationship of possession with some other participant. In the example (17), quoted by Fernández Ramírez (1951: 37), reference to an additional participant is made by means of *le*, because the biactant predication *la rama del avellano nublaba el sol* ('The hazel branch hid the sun') is relevant only as far as it involves the IO (*le*) and affects him. This is the 'commodi et incommodi dative'.

(13)   *Cortó una rama del avellano que le*^{DAT} *nublaba el sol*
         'He cut off a hazel branch that hid the sun from him'

The incorporation of a participant not necessary for the occurrence of the event gives the IO (mainly non-actantial IOs) remarkable discourse properties. Barnes (1985: 189–192) notes that datives in French (and his observation is entirely applicable to Spanish) present entities that are usually pragmatically presupposed (given). The non-actantial character of these IOs (not needed for the occurrence of the event) is compensated by their discursive prominence as a reference-point. This is a general property of IOs and it yields the relatively high percentage of IOs whose only realization is a clitic (84% in our corpus), or that 90% of full Noun Phrases functioning as IO are definite descriptions.

Therefore, non-actantial IOs also show the semantic versatility of Spanish IOs and another relevant property: givenness in discourse or, rather, high topicality.

5. Triactant clauses without IO: Prep Obj as third actant

Most verbs that admit the ditransitive construction also enter into constructions whose third actant is not cliticizable in le and must be considered as an oblique adjunct or prepositional object [PrepObj]. The resulting syntactic construction is schematized in (II):

(II)   A1$_{SUB}$ V A2$_{DO}$ *prep* A3$_{PREPOBJ}$

In this case, the preposition used with the third actant is variable and depends on the conceptualization of the relationship that this entity bears with the rest of the event. Given the directional value of prototypical ditransitive construction, it is expected that the preposition *a* will continue to be used (although now with non-cliticizable complements). We also find the prepositions *en* (locative), *de* (source) and *con* (copresence) with other verbs. I give a list of the most frequent verbs that, apart from the ditransitive construction, govern each of those prepositions. I do not include here those verbs accepting the same constructions and whose PrepObj is not an alternative to an IO, either because they do not accept the ditransitive construction or because the resulting acceptions are completely different.

A: *acercar, agregar, arrimar, arrojar, dirigir, echar, enviar, lanzar, llevar, mandar, pasar, tirar, traer; devolver, entregar; unir; atribuir, dedicar, achacar; oponer, contraponer*

EN: *apoyar, arrimar, asestar, clavar, colgar, colocar, dejar, dibujar, esconder, guardar, introducir, meter, montar, ocultar, pegar, pintar, plantar, poner, prender, provocar, reconocer*

DE: *quitar, alejar, apartar, arrancar, arrebatar, descargar, excluir, extirpar, retirar, sacar, separar, sustraer, tomar, vaciar; adquirir, conseguir, comprar, hurtar, recibir, robar; encargar, pedir, requerir, reclamar, copiar, plagiar, imitar*

CON: *comparar, confrontar, juntar, unir; consultar, discutir*

Examples of the constructional variation are given below in (14–17). The examples in (a) are ditransitive – with the clitic *le(s)* cross-referring an IO-, the examples in (b) have PrepObj instead of IO:

(14)   a.   *La azafata LES ARROJABA puñados de caramelos Sugus.*
             (LAB: 40)
             'The hostess threw handfuls of Sugus sweets at them.'

       b.   *Una señora despuntaba judías verdes y las ARROJABA A una jofaina.* (LAB: 34)
             'A woman was snipping green beans and throwing them into a bowl.'

(15)   a.   *LE PUSO una chimenea al salón.*
             'He added a fireplace to the lounge furniture.'
       b.   *PUSO una chimenea EN el salón.*
             'He put a chimney piece in the lounge.'

(16)   a.   *LE ALEJÉ la bicicleta.*
             'I took the bicycle away from him.'
       b.   *Ya antes había advertido cómo tía Elisa procuraba ALEJARLA DE nuestro padre.* (SUR: 73)
             'I had already noted how Aunt Elisa tried to keep her away from our father.'

(17)   a.   *Prefirió CONSULTÁRSELO A Cristo Bedoya.*
       b.   *Prefirió CONSULTARLO CON Cristo Bedoya.* (CRO: 103)
             'He preferred to ask Cristo Bedoya about it.'

When we can choose between an IO and a Prepositional Phrase that cannot be cross-referred by *le*, the basic sense of the latter is locative, while the IO is associated with the notions of affectedness and involvement in the described event, together with the inclusion of the object within its domain. This is the reason why the differences in construction tend to correlate the opposition /±animate/, as corroborated in (14). However, there are also inanimate IOs (15) and PrepObj with human referents (16–17). The examples in (15) are illustrative of the difference in meaning between the two constructions: in (15b), the PrepObj presents *el salón* 'lounge' merely as a place, the final space in which the object is located (in the same way we may locate a box, some books or anything else there); on the other hand, in (15a) the IO presents the action as affecting the lounge as a discrete entity, as a whole constituted not only by its own spatial limits but also by its furniture, arrangement and other intrinsic characteristics. As a consequence, the construction with PrepObj includes (apart from the subject) only one centre of attention (what happens to the DO), whereas the ditransitive clause has two (what happens to the DO and what are the consequences of this for the IO).

The ditransitive construction, thus, combines the fact that within an action chain the subject acts primarily upon the DO, with the fact that the effects on

the IO have greater cognitive salience. This latter fact is here associated with the inclusion of the DO within the spatial domain of the IO. In other cases, the salience of the IO is provided by its humanness, as a potential controller of the DO.

The high cognitive salience of IO and the higher degree of affectedness and involvement of IOs over Prep Objects is now added to the high topicality of IOs. All this is a natural consequence of their status as central participants.

6.   The selection of DO

We have observed some alternations between IOs and PrepObjs that have nothing to do with the essential meaning features of SUBJ and DO. There are also some triactant constructions with PrepObjs whose DOs seem to correspond to the third actant of ditransitive clauses. The full range of triactant constructions is given in (18), and an example of each one, with the verb *cargar* 'load' is given in (19)

(18)   a.   PRED A1$_{SUB}$ A2$_{DO}$ A3$_{IO}$
        b.   PRED A1$_{SUB}$ A2$_{DO}$ A3$_{PrepObj}$
        c.   PRED A1$_{SUB}$ A3$_{DO}$ A2$_{PrepObj}$

(19)   a.   *LE cargó las maletas*$_{DO}$ *al coche*$_{IO}$.
             'He loaded the cases ['to'] the car.'
        b.   *Cargó las maletas*$_{DO}$ *EN el coche*$_{PrepObj}$.
             'He loaded the cases into the car.'
        c.   *Cargó el coche*$_{DO}$ *DE maletas*$_{PrepObj}$.
             'He loaded the car with cases.'

This change of object has been extensively studied, and sometimes a transformational relation has been proposed to account for the similarities and differences between these constructions. In my opinion, there is no need to posit such a transformation. I contend that the composite meaning of the clause is a product of the meaning of the verb (and the other lexical items) and the meaning of the construction. If we keep the same lexical items, the differences in meaning must be attributed to the construction, and not to the verb.

As in other languages, the choice of DO between A3 and A2 is lexically governed. Most verbs I have listed in previous paragraphs only accept A2 as DO. Other verbs in Spanish are construed only with A3 as DO[9]. Some verbs,

finally, admit the three constructions. Below I show a list of some triactant verbs allowing A3 as DO:

a) Locative:

DO = A3 or DO = A2

– *Cargar, ceñir, embutir, espolvorear, plantar, pintar, sembrar*
– *Descargar, aligerar, aliviar, limpiar, vaciar* DO = A3
– *Llenar, cubrir, embadurnar, ensuciar, manchar, poblar, recargar, rellenar*
– *Desembarazar, desclavar, desnudar, despoblar, purificar*

b) Transfer:

DO = A3 or DO = A2

– *Indemnizar, reintegrar, satisfacer, compensar, resarcir, …*

DO = A3

– *Abastecer, alimentar, armar, aprovisionar, atiborrar, avituallar, dotar, surtir*
– *Privar, librar, desabastecer, despojar, desposeer, desproveer*

c) Information:

DO = A3 or DO = A2

– *Advertir, asegurar, avisar, confirmar, informar, …*
– *Alabar, aplaudir, aprobar, castigar, corregir; perdonar, premiar, suspender*

DO = A3

– *Cerciorar, convencer, enterar, persuadir, disuadir, alertar*
– *Interrogar; acusar, culpar*

d) Other:

DO = A3 or DO = A2

– *Coger, asir, agarrar, acariciar, arañar, azotar, besar, golpear, tocar*
– *Curar, dañar, lastimar, quemar*
– *Cambiar, mudar*

The main problem with the constructions I am now considering has nothing to do with abstract case-roles accounting for the similarities but with explaining what the reason for choosing one entity or another as DO is. This selection provides different cognitive representations of the event. It is well established by Croft (1991: 173 ff.) and Langacker (1991: 322) that the DO corresponds to the endpoint of the action chain that is profiled by the clause. The differences in meaning resulting from the selection of the DO can be observed in the examples with *cargar* in (19). In (19b), *maletas* marks the endpoint of the profiled portion of the event and has a relation figure / ground with the oblique object *el coche*. In (19c), it is *el coche* that marks the endpoint of the event and the relation figure / ground is reversed.

Many semantic characteristics of the clause derive from the selection of the DO: the aspectual values of the clause, the relative affectedness and the supposedly holistic interpretation of the entity referred to by the DO. It goes without saying that the exact interpretation of these semantic properties depends on the verb selected and the cognitive domain where it is placed. We will see this with some examples.

With locative verbs, the process is temporally co-extensional with the spatial extension of the object (Dowty 1991). Consequently, the clauses with the 'mover' as DO are telic if the object is a discrete entity. The event is accomplished when this entity is within the intended location, regardless of whether this location has ill-defined limits. But, if the A3 is a DO, it is this entity that defines the accomplishment of the event once the limits of the DO have been reached. This leads to the holistic interpretation attributed to DOs at least since S. Anderson (1971) and to the fact that verbs of filling (like *llenar*) – but not necessarily verbs of emptying (*vaciar*) – are construed with A3 as DO (20b) vs. (20c).

(20)   a.   *Vierte agua EN el baño.*
             'He/she is pouring water into the bath.'

        b.   *Llena el baño DE agua.*
             *Le llena el agua al baño.
             *Llena agua en el baño.
             'He/she is filling the bath with water.'

        c.   *Vacía el baño DE agua.*
             Le vacía el agua al baño.
             Vacía el agua del baño.
             'He/she is emptying the water out of the bath.'

However, for A3 to be DO, it is not necessary that the surface or volume becomes completely occupied. In the example (21), the wall may or may not be completely occupied by the paint. The entire wall changes its state (from not dirty to dirty) even if a small zone (the 'active zone' again) is dirtied.

(21)   *Manchó la pared DE pintura.*
         'He/she dirtied the wall with paint.'

Verbs of verbal communication like *decir* are typically constructed with the message [A2] as DO and the hearer [A3] as IO presenting communication as a directional transfer. On the contrary, verbs like *convencer* (22), that select the

hearer as DO, foreground the effect on this entity and refer to a perlocutionary act. Note that verbs allowing both constructions, like *avisar* (23) can focus either on the transmission of the intended message (23a) or on the felicity of the accomplished transmission (23b). Only the ditransitive construction of (23a), with the Receiver as IO, not as DO, allows a context that explicitly denies that the transmission was accomplished, an interpretation in which the transmission of information has no effects.

(22)   *Santiago Nasar LA CONVENCIÓ DE que se adelantara mientras él se ponía la ropa de montar.* (CRO: 25)
         'S.N. convinced her to go ahead while he put on his riding clothes.'

(23)   a.   *Alguien que nunca fue identificado había metido por debajo de la puerta un papel dentro de un sobre, en el cual LE AVISABAN a Santiago Nasar que lo estaban esperando para matarlo [...] El mensaje estaba en el suelo cuando Santiago Nasar salió de su casa, pero él no lo vio, ni lo vio Divina Flor ni lo vio nadie hasta mucho después de que el crimen fue consumado.* (CRO: 21)
             'Somebody, who was never identified, had slipped a piece of paper under the door where S. N. was told that they were waiting to kill him. The message was on the floor when S.N left home, but he did not see it, D.V. did not see it either, nobody saw it until a long time after the crime was committed.'

        b.   *... en el cual AVISABAN a S.N. DE que lo estaban esperando para matarlo.*
             '... where they warned S. N. of the fact that they were waiting (for him) to kill him.'

All the last examples of this section, though they include verbs that I have classified in different groups, involve an intrinsic relationship between their IO (a person) and the DO (his acts, his location, his body parts, etc.) in the ditransitive construction. The appraisal of certain acts or qualities is applicable to the person that produces them (24). In (25), the verb *cambiar* 'change' can take as the DO a person or some aspect of her. Likewise, the contact with a part (verbs like *coger* 'take', *besar* 'kiss', *tocar* 'touch') implies the contact with the whole. When the whole is selected as DO, the part must be backgrounded as PrepObj (26b).

(24)   a.   *LE*_{IO} *alabaron su trabajo*_{DO} .
              'They praised [him] his work.'
       b.   *LA*_{DO} *alabaron POR su trabajo.*
              'They praised him for his work.'

(25)   a.   *El mal sabor de ese recuerdo LE*_{IO} *cambió la vida*_{DO} .
              (CRO: 68)
              'The nasty taste of that memory changed his life.'
              [lit. '... changed him the life.']
       b.   *Los invitados LO*_{DO} *cambiaban DE lugar para que no estor-*
              bara. (CRO: 48)
              'The guests moved him from place to place so that he wouldn't
              be in the way.'

(26)   a.   '... *besarLE*_{IO} *el anillo*_{DO} *al obispo*_{IO} (CRO: 15)
              lit. 'to kiss the ring to the bishop'
       b.   *LA*_{DO} *besaba EN el pelo.* (GLE: 99)
              'He was kissing her hair.' [lit. 'he was kissing her in the hair']

I have been arguing that the variation in the selection of DO and IO is
due to the fact that they are, together with the subject, central participants in
Spanish clauses. If this is correct, then the three triactant structures I have
commented on differ in which actants have been given special prominence,
as shown in (27) by means of the brackets:

(27)   a.   [A1_{SUBJ} A2_{DO} A3_{IO}]
       b.   [A1_{SUBJ} A2_{DO}] A3_{PrepObj}
       c.   [A1_{SUBJ} A3_{DO}] A2_{PrepObj}

7.   Conclusion: triactant clauses and central participants in Spanish

SUBJ, DO an IO are singled out by their capability to be integrated in the
predicate, either by means of agreement affixes of number and person (sub-
ject) or by clitics like *lo* and *le* (DO and IO). The versatility in meaning, the
unmarked forms (bare NP or preposition *a*) and their high frequency within
each valency are also related to centrality.

From a semantic point of view, central or focal participants are the enti-
ties foregrounded in a clause, those whose relations are profiled and those to
which the hearer's attention is directed. Selection of central participants is

mainly a matter of construal, of what entities are considered by the speaker
as being primarily involved in the event or primarily relevant to it.

As for the semantic contrast between participants, I find Langacker's pro-
posal very illuminating: a verbal predicate profiles a relation between a tra-
jector (the subject) and a landmark (the object), where the subject is proto-
typically agent (or rather the top of the profiled action chain) and the object
is prototypically patient (or rather the bottom of the action chain). We have
already seen that this can explain many semantic properties of the change of
object with verbs like *cargar* and those cited in section 6. However, Lan-
gacker does not recognize more than two central participants and we need to
accommodate the IO of Spanish ditransitive clauses as well.

'Giving' and 'saying' provide idealized cognitive models for ditransitive
clauses that are compatible with the view of the subject as initiator and the DO
as endpoint. If, however, we take into consideration the relative prominence
of clausal participants, it seems evident that Subject and IO are the most
prominent entities in such models: the ditransitive clause typically profiles a
relationship between two persons accomplished by means of an object or a
message.

On the other hand, only the DO is produced or directly manipulated by
the Subject and the IO gains some control over the object and can become
the subject of processes resulting from giving and saying (having, receiving,
answering ...). Considering its semantic role, Langacker (1991: 327) defines
'notional indirect object' as 'an active experiencer in the target domain'. To
be in the target domain is a common trait with prototypical direct objects. To
be an active participant is a common trait with prototypical subjects.

All this leads us to arrange Spanish central participants in the hierarchy of
(28) that reflects the polarization between subject and direct object and places
indirect object somewhere in the middle of the hierarchy.[10] This is primarily
a hierarchy of activeness and topicality.

(28)   Hierarchy of central participants (activeness and topicality)
       SUBJ > IO > DO

As a hierarchy of relative activeness, prototypical agents are associated
with the subject, prototypical patients with the DO. IOs, typically associated
with experiencers or receivers, are located somewhere in the middle of the hi-
erarchy. Humanness being a typical condition for agentivity, the distribution
of animate entities over central participants is coherent with the higher rela-
tive activeness of SUBJs and IOs. The typical correspondences are: SUBJ =

human, DO = inanimate, IO = human. In table 1, I reflect the percentage of human referents for each central participant in the ditransitive clauses of our corpus.

Table 1. Human referents in ditransitive clauses

SUB	DO	IO
90%	3%	91%

But humanness is not only a matter of agentivity; it is also a matter of empathy. A hierarchy of animacy (Silverstein 1976) tends to correlate with the attention flow in the clause, so that many actance variations are correlated with this hierarchy (Lazard 1984). Thus, the high percentage of human IO also shows the great salience of IOs among the participants. In fact, the IO corresponds to the most salient of the participants that do not initiate the event (see Barnes 1980: 252–253).

It is important to highlight that activeness and prominence of participants is a matter of degree that crucially depends on which are the entities mentioned in the clause. As shown in Table 2, the DO is most frequently human when it is not contrasted with an IO (as in monotransitive clauses, where the percentage of human DO rises to 17%), or when it is contrasted with an oblique complement, that provides a base for the profiled portion of the clause (as in triactant clauses of 18b and 18c). The higher percentage of human referents shows that DO, as a central participant, is more salient than PrepObj.

Table 2. Human referents in non-ditransitive clauses (DO and PrepObj)

	DO	PrepObj
SUBJ – PRED – DO	17%	–
SUBJ – PRED – DO – PREPOBJ	35%	10%

Saliency of central participants does not depend only on their semantic role and intrinsic characteristics such as humanness. It is also a matter of discourse values. Entities salient in discourse (following Givón (1976 and many other works), those having a higher degree of topicality), tend to be encoded as central participants. As a matter of fact, agentivity and animacy are also related to topicality, but I am referring to topicality now simply as discourse-relatedness. We come back to the examples in (19) with *cargar*, rephrased below as (29–30) to see that entities just mentioned in previous

discourse are hardly coded as oblique objects. In (29), we are talking about the cases, so that *las maletas* takes the central functions DO (*las*), while *el coche* may be either locative prepositional object (29a) or IO (29b). In (30) we are talking about the car, so that *el coche* may be referred to by means of the central function DO (*lo* in (30a)) or IO (*le* in (30b)), but not as a locative (30c). *Maletas* may be either central (30b) or oblique (30a)

(29)   Context:
    ¿Qué pasó con las maletas? ¿Qué hicieron con las maletas?
    ['What about the cases?']

    a.   *Las$_{DO}$ cargaron en el coche.*
        'They loaded them into the car.'

    b.   *Se las$_{DO}$ cargaron al coche$_{IO}$.*
        'They loaded them [in]to the car.'

    c.   *Cargaron el coche$_{DO}$ *de ellas / ?con ellas.*
        'They loaded the car (*with them).'

(30)   Context:
    ¿Qué pasó con el coche? ¿Qué hicieron con el coche?
    ['What about the car?']

    a.   *Lo$_{DO}$ cargaron de maletas'*
        'They loaded it with cases.'

    b.   *Le$_{IO}$ cargaron (las) maletas$_{DO}$.*
        'They loaded (the) cases [in]to it.'

    c.   *?Cargaron maletas$_{DO}$ (*en él).*
        'They loaded cases (*into it).'

As a clue to the higher topicality of IOs over DOs and the higher topicality of DO over non-central entities, I have also examined the percentage of the use of clitics and/or pronouns in our corpus. The results are given in Table 3. The high percentage of pronominalization of IOs shows that, in general, they are given in previous discourse. Combined with PrepObjects in triactant clauses, DOs show higher percentages of pronominalization. All this leads to the scales of (31):

(31)   Relative topicality in triactant clauses
    subj-pred-do-io: subj > io > do
    subj-pred-do-prepobj: subj > do > prepobj

Table 3. Clitics and/or personal pronouns (vs. noun phrases or other constituents)

	DO	IO	PrepObj
SUBJ-PRED-DO-IO	11%	80%	–
SUBJ-PRED-DO-PREPOBJ	36%	–	5%

Both DOs and IOs have been said to be affected by the process. However, in biactant clauses the entity typically affected is the object, and in triactant clauses, as we have seen, the DO has a greater range of variation. Thus, from this perspective, the DO is less marked than the IO. Similarly, effected entities (objects that exist as a result of the process, messages and propositions created by mental or illocutionary processes, effected abstract entities, etc.) and, I presume, modified entities are exclusive values of DO. All this makes the DO the nodal participant, the participant critically involved in an event.

(32)   *Affectedness* in triactant clauses
         DO > IO > SUBJ

Noun Phrases functioning as IO are always morphologically marked by preposition *a*. This provides a common thread with directional oblique adjuncts and shows their relative marginality or independence. The preposition *a* also appears with DOs showing a higher degree of potential activeness and topicality, that is, those semantically more similar to IOs. All this hinges on the fact that grammatical relations are not discrete monolithic constructs. There seems to be two scales governing Spanish central participants: (28) is a scale of relative activeness and topicality and formally correlates with the frequency of agreement/cross-referencing. (33) is a scale of markedness, with the preposition *a* contributing to differentiate the right elements from the subject and to make them semi-oblique.

(33)   *Markedness*
         SUBJ < DO [zero-marked < a-marked] < IO

A final remark: In some languages the 'true object', i.e., the first object slot, in prototypical ditransitive clauses is occupied by the Receiver. Such languages are in line with the proposal by Hopper and Thompson (1980) that high transitive clauses need a highly individuated object (that is, preferably human and definite). Depending on the syntactic behaviour of 'notional indirect objects', Langacker (1991: 325) recognizes three types of languages:

There are languages in which a 'notional indirect object' is always oblique, others where it consistently behaves like a direct object, and still others (like English) that allow either option. It is therefore not uncommon for apparent direct objects to have semantic roles thought to be characteristic of indirect objects.

I believe that Spanish central participants are governed by the hierarchy shown in (28), and that prototypical objects are polarized against the subject as endpoint, affected, inactive and non topical. Then, IOs are not prototypical objects. Their saliency allows them to be considered relevant participants, but, from the formal point of view (necessary presence of the preposition *a* and unmarked position after the DO), they occupy a relatively secondary place among central participants. From the semantic point of view, the main change in a dynamic process is produced in the DO, and affectedness of IOs is inferred from affectedness of DOs. Thus, from the behaviour of IOs in Spanish, a further possibility must at least be added to Langacker's typology: languages that allow a third central participant or, put another way, languages in which the 'notional indirect objects' behave partly like central participants (motivated by topicality), partly like oblique (motivated by their relative semantic marginality).

Notes

1. See Vázquez Rozas (1995) on Spanish indirect objects, and especially on this construction.
2. The term is borrowed from Lazard (1984), who also shows how the formal variations in syntactic construction are semantically motivated according to universal principles.
3. I have exposed at great length criteria for centrality and their application to Spanish in García-Miguel (1995: 27–52)
4. Higher frequency is usually a consequence of semantic unmarkedness.
5. I have developed this thesis in García-Miguel (1991).
6. This view is analogous to the conceptions found in Goldberg's (1992) account of the English ditransitive construction.
7. All data referring to percentages of use and all examples followed by an abbreviation of text and page are taken from the syntactic database of the University of Santiago de Compostella, based on a syntactically analyzed corpus of contemporary Spanish of about 1 500 000 words. This database contains roughly 150 000

analyzed clauses from spoken and written texts. The research project leading to the compilation and analysis of this corpus was led by Guillermo Rojo.

8. See Barnes (1980) for a more elaborate account of this semantic relation

9. In order to decide which construction a triactant clause shows, the entity whose role is more similar to that of the DO in the ditransitive construction will be considered as A2. So, by definition, the verbs cited until now fit the constructional schema of (18A).

10. This hierarchy is inspired in E. García's (1975) insightful explanation of the Spanish pronoun system. According to her, the meaning of the 'pronominal' accusative clitic *lo* is 'least active participant', whereas that of the dative clitic *le* is 'less active participant'. The meaning of the verbal affixes of agreement with the subject is inferred to be 'most active participant'. See also Roegiest (1990).

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