

## LOW APPLICATIVE DATIVES IN SPANISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: ACQUISITION OF SEMANTICS AND MORPHOSYNTAX

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**ABSTRACT.** *We investigate the role of Universal Grammar (UG) and its interaction with L1 in the acquisitional process of a variety of Spanish constructions with datives including the Spanish double object construction (Marta le dio un beso a Juan 'Marta gave John a kiss') and its morphosyntactic and semantic properties by Polish-speakers.*

*The DOC in Spanish differs from its Polish counterpart in its morphosyntactic properties (i.e. the dative clitic or the pseudopreposition "a" and only slightly in semantics (interpretation of arguments and in turn restriction on the construction). Results show that L2 learners are mostly sensitive to the morphosyntactic properties of constructions where datives combine with unaccusative and unergative verbs. This provides evidence of UG-constrained acquisition of the L2 learners due to their sensitivity to the morphosyntactic properties not instantiated in their L1, i.e. the dative clitic. However, given the variability among the native speakers, we argue that the performance of the L2 learners can be attributed to a matter of "usage acquisition" with unaccusative and unergative verbs, which is separate from the acquisition on competence needed for clitic doubling in Spanish in general. Our results demonstrate that knowledge and the use of it do not always coincide for clitic doubling in Spanish with unaccusative and unergative verbs, non-transfer predicates and verbs of construction/creation.*

**KEY WORDS.** *Clitics, double object and applicative constructions, dative case.*

**RESUMEN.** *Investigamos el papel de la gramática universal y su interacción con la lengua materna, el polaco, en la adquisición de diferentes estructuras de dativo del español, como la construcción de doble objeto (Marta le dio un beso a Juan) y sus características morfosintácticas y semánticas.*

*En español, la construcción de doble objeto se diferencia de la del polaco por las propiedades morfosintácticas (i.e. el clítico o la pseudopreposición "a") y de forma sutil también por la semántica (la interpretación de los argumentos que da lugar a la restricción de dicha construcción). Los resultados nos demuestran que los aprendices de segunda lengua (L2) son sensibles a los rasgos morfosintácticos de construcciones con dativos que se combinan con los verbos inacusativos e inergativos. Esto prueba que la GU juega un papel en la adquisición de estas construcciones porque los aprendices demostraron sensibilidad a las propiedades morfosintácticas que no constituyen en su L1, i.e. el clítico. Sin embargo, dada la variabilidad que los hablantes nativos manifiestan en el uso de*

*estas construcciones, proponemos que los resultados de los aprendices de L2 se puede atribuir a la “adquisición de uso” con los verbos inacusativos e inergativos, que se diferencia de la “adquisición de competencia” ya que, esta última supone, en general, el conocimiento del doblado de clítico en español. Además los resultados señalan que el conocimiento de doblado del clítico y su empleo no es igual con los verbos de creación/construcción, los verbos de no-transferencia y los verbos inacusativos e inergativos.*

PALABRAS CLAVE. Clíticos, construcción de doble objeto y de applicativas bajas, dativos.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Research has addressed the question whether grammatical elements of the L1 affect the acquisition of an L2. From the morphological transfer view, it is argued that morphological items in the L1, which lack equivalents in the L2, have blocking effects on L2 acquisition of related syntactic structures (Montrul 1997, Whong-Barr & Schwartz 2002, Oh and Zubizarreta 2004). In this paper, we investigate the role of Universal Grammar (UG) and its interaction with the L1 in the acquisitional process of the Spanish double object construction (DOC) and similar constructions by Polish-speakers. More precisely, we examine if abstract morphosyntactic properties (such as the ‘pseudoposition’ *a* in the DOC and similar constructions) as well as complex morphosyntactic properties (the dative clitic), which are underdetermined by the L2 input, show up in the interlanguage grammar. On the semantic level, we study if L2 learners are aware of the restrictions that govern the Spanish DOC and related constructions; namely, the interpretation of non-core arguments.

It has been argued that verbal arguments are divided into two different types: (i) those that are true arguments of the verb; and, (ii) those that are non-core arguments in the sense that there is no evidence that they belong to the basic argument structure of the verb. Thus, non-core arguments are said to be additional in that they involve an argument introducer that is separate from the verb (i.e. “Voice” Kratzer 1996, “Applicative head” Pykkänen 2002). In the spirit of Pykkänen (2002), Cuervo (2003) maintains that in Spanish there are non-core arguments, which are introduced by an applicative head. Semantically speaking, the non-core argument (i.e. applied argument) has three meanings: it can be a recipient (i.e. Low Applicative-‘TO’), as in (1); it can be a source (i.e. Low Applicative-‘FROM’), as in (2); and it can also be a possessor (i.e. Low Applicative-‘AT’), as in (3).

- (1) Juan le dio rosas a María  
 $J_{\text{nom}} \text{ Cl}_{\text{dat}}$  gave roses<sub>acc</sub> to  $M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘John gave María roses’
- (2) Juan le robó el coche a María  
 $J_{\text{nom}} \text{ Cl}_{\text{dat}}$  stole the car<sub>acc</sub> to  $M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘John stole the car from María’
- (3) Marta le admira la chaqueta a María  
 $M_{\text{nom}} \text{ Cl}_{\text{dat}}$  admires the jacket<sub>acc</sub> to  $M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘Marta admires María’s jacket’

From the pattern in sentences (4), (5) and (6) we argue that in Polish there are two dynamic and one stative applicative construction.

- (4) Janek dał róże Marii  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$  gave roses<sub>acc</sub>  $M_{\text{dat}}$   
 'John gave Maria roses'
- (5) Janek ukradł samochód Marii  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$  stole car<sub>acc</sub>  $M_{\text{dat}}$   
 'John stole the car from Maria'
- (6) Marta podziwia kurtkę Marii  
 $M_{\text{nom}}$  admires jacket<sub>acc</sub>  $M_{\text{dat}}$   
 'Marta admires Maria's jacket'

The dative nominals, in (1-6), are not direct arguments of the verb; but are licensed by an applicative head, where the dative DP is licensed as its Specifier.

In this paper, we adopt this view and treat dative nominals as non-core arguments in the sense that there is no evidence that they belong to the basic argument structure of unaccusative verbs; non-transfer predicates and verbs of construction/creation. In addition, we investigate whether Polish L2 learners of Spanish differ from native speakers in relation to the general –universal– aspects of low applicative dative constructions or whether it is the morphological attributes of the Spanish construction that impede the acquisitional process. Furthermore, we examine the extent to which non-native intuitions differ from native ones at the intermediate through near-native levels of competence and how different factors such as the effect of L1 knowledge and UG, the amount of exposure to L2 input and the properties of inherent verb meaning in L2 affect the acquisition of argument structure. We test and compare three hypotheses, the No-Access Hypothesis, the Partial Access Hypothesis and the Access Hypotheses. It will be concluded that Polish L2 learners are sensitive to the subtle morphosyntactic characteristics of the target language (the dative clitic) and that there is evidence of generalizations in the semantic possibilities of low applicative dative constructions beyond the restrictions that regulate Polish.

The paper is organized as follows: we begin by presenting the semantic and morphosyntactic properties of the DOC and low applicative dative constructions in Spanish and Polish, and their analyses. We review relevant work on SLA of argument structure alternations in English and Spanish. We follow with the presentation of the hypotheses, methodology and results of our experiment. Lastly, results are discussed in light of proposals for UG and L1 in SLA.

## 2. COMPARING DITRANSITIVES IN POLISH AND SPANISH

It has been argued that there is dative alternation in Spanish (Masullo 1992, Demonte 1995, Bruhn de Garavito 2000, Cuervo 2003b, Kempchinsky 2004). In particular, that the clitic doubled ditransitive construction corresponds to the English D(ouble) O(bject) C(onstruction), as in (7).

- (7) a. PPC: subj-V-DP<sub>theme</sub>-PP                      b. DOC: subj-CL + V-DP<sub>theme</sub>-a-DP  
 Juan envió una carta a Marta                      Juan le<sub>i</sub> envió una carta [a Marta]<sub>i</sub>;  
 ‘John sent a letter to Marta’                      ‘John sent Marta a letter’

In Spanish, when the goal is not doubled by a dative clitic, the *a*-phrase is a PP, as in (7a). In contrast, when the *a*-phrase is doubled by a dative clitic, the structure corresponds to the English DOC, as in (7b). Cuervo (2003a) argues that in the Spanish DOC the recipient is a DP<sub>dative</sub> and the particle *a* is a “pseudopreposition”, i.e. the expression of dative case. Namely, in Spanish various types of constituents can be marked with dative morphology and display complement properties of a verb even though they cannot be considered one of its arguments, as in (8b).

- (8) a. Benefactive dative                                      b. DOC  
 Luisa compró un libro para Pedro                      Luisa le compró un libro a Pedro  
 L<sub>nom</sub> bought a book<sub>acc</sub> for P                      L<sub>nom</sub> Cl<sub>dat</sub> bought a book<sub>acc</sub> to P<sub>dat</sub>  
 ‘Luisa bought a book for Peter’                      ‘Luisa bought Peter a book’

The PP in (9a) behaves like an adjunct, but the dative argument in (9b) behaves like a complement, as shown by the behavior under *hacerlo* ‘do it’ replacement.

- (9) a. Luisa compró un libro [para Pedro] y Marta lo hizo para su hermano  
 L<sub>nom</sub> bought a book<sub>acc</sub> for P                      and M<sub>nom</sub> it<sub>acc</sub> did for her brother  
 ‘Luisa bought a book for Peter and Marta bought it for her brother’  
 b. \*Luisa le<sub>i</sub> compró un libro [a Pedro]<sub>i</sub> y Marta se lo hizo a su hermano  
 L<sub>nom</sub> Cl<sub>dat</sub> bought a book<sub>acc</sub> to P<sub>dat</sub> & M<sub>nom</sub> him<sub>dat</sub> it<sub>acc</sub> did to her brother<sub>dat</sub>

As seen by the ungrammaticality of (9b), *Pedro*, being introduced by *a* and clitic doubled, behaves like a complement and therefore cannot be left behind under *hacerlo* replacement as opposed to *Marta* in (9a).

Polish displays free-word order, but it has been proposed that it also has a DOC (Owczarzak 2004), as illustrated in (10).

- (10) a. PPC: subj-V-DP<sub>theme</sub>-PP                      b. DOC: subj-V-DP<sub>theme</sub>-DP  
 Janek wysłał list do Marty                      Janek wysłał list Marcie  
 J<sub>nom</sub> sent letter<sub>acc</sub> to M                      J<sub>nom</sub> sent letter<sub>acc</sub> M<sub>dat</sub>  
 ‘John sent a letter to Marta’                      ‘John sent Marta a letter’

As in Spanish, benefactive datives lend support to this analysis, due to the fact that dative morphology as the equivalent of *a* and clitic doubling in Spanish appear in the DOC, as in (11a) but not in the PPC (11b), in which the preposition *dla* ‘for’ parallel to *para* in Spanish is employed.

(11) a. DOC

Janek upiekł urodzinowy tort Marcie  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$  baked b-day cake<sub>acc</sub>  $M_{\text{dat}}$   
 'John baked Marta a b-day cake'

b. Benefactive dative

Janek upiekł urodzinowy tort dla Marty  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$  baked b-day cake<sub>acc</sub> for  $M$   
 'John baked a b-day cake for Marta'

The difference between the Polish construction in (11a) and its Spanish equivalent in (9b) is that on the surface the Polish DOC looks morphologically complex. However, the Spanish structure could be argued to be more complex not only because of its morphology but also due to the presence of the dative clitic and the 'pseudopreposition', which is what constitutes the Spanish DOC.

With respect to the semantic properties of the DOC, in English, Spanish and in Polish, the indirect object must be an intended possessor. Pure locative goals cannot appear in the DOC, as shown by the ungrammaticality of the structures in (12) for English, in (13) for Spanish, and in (14) for Polish. This suggests that the semantic role of the indirect object is quite different for these constructions:

(12) \*John sent London a package

(13) Juan \* (le)<sub>i</sub> envió un paquete (a Madrid)<sub>i</sub>  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$   $Cl_{\text{dat}}$  sent a package<sub>acc</sub> to  $\text{Madrid}_{\text{dat}}$   
 'John sent Madrid a package'

(14) \*Janek wysłał paczkę Warszawie  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$  sent a package<sub>acc</sub>  $\text{Warsaw}_{\text{dat}}$   
 'John sent Warsaw a package'

The role of recipient in DOCs is similar in the three languages. However Polish resembles Spanish and differs from English in that the DOC can have not only the recipient interpretation, but also that of source and of possessor. Cuervo argues that in Spanish a dative argument that appears with a transitive verb, that expresses a transfer of possession focusing on the original possessor rather than on the recipient (i.e. transfer from), is interpreted as the possessive source of the theme expressed as the direct object, as in (15). We suggest that this is also true for Polish, as illustrated in (16).

(15) Juan le quitó la chaqueta a Marta  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$   $Cl_{\text{dat}}$  removed the jacket<sub>acc</sub> to  $\text{Marta}_{\text{dat}}$   
 'John removed the jacket from Marta'

(16) Janek zdjął kurtkę Marcie  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$  removed jacket<sub>acc</sub>  $\text{Marta}_{\text{dat}}$   
 'John removed the jacket from Marta'

Cuervo further argues that the Spanish DOC differs from the English DOC, and expresses a static relation of possession when the verb is an activity verb that does not

express transfer (either literal or metaphorical), as in (17a), or is stative, as in (18a). It seems that the Polish DOC is a mirror image of the Spanish structure. Polish equivalents are presented in (17b) and (18b) respectively.

- (17) a. Emilio le corrigió el informe a Andreína  
 $E_{\text{nom}} \text{ CI}_{\text{dat}}$  corrected the report<sub>acc</sub> to  $A_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘Emilio corrected Andreina’s report’  
 [Example taken from: Cuervo (2007): ex. 12b]
- b. Janek poprawił reportaż Marcie  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$  corrected report<sub>acc</sub>  $M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘John corrected Marta’s report’

- (18) a. Emilio le admira la paciencia a Ana  
 $E_{\text{nom}} \text{ CI}_{\text{dat}}$  admires the patience<sub>acc</sub> to  $A_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘Emilio admires Ana’s patience’
- b. Ania podziwia kurtkę Marcie  
 $A_{\text{nom}}$  admires jacket<sub>acc</sub>  $M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘Anne admires Marta’s jacket’
- b’. \*Janek podziwia cierpliwość Marcie  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$  admires patience<sub>acc</sub>  $M_{\text{dat}}$

In Spanish, the possessive relation can be alienable or inalienable if the dative DP is animate, as in (17a, 18a). In contrast, in Polish the possessive relation can only be inalienable, as seen by the ungrammaticality of (18b’). If genitive case is used, the construction is felicitous, as shown in (19).

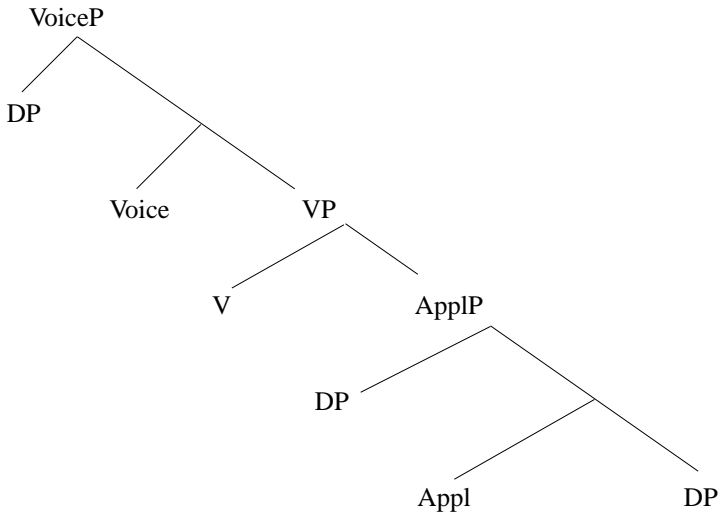
- (19) Janek podziwia cierpliwość Marty  
 $J_{\text{nom}}$  admires patience<sub>acc</sub>  $M_{\text{gen}}$   
 ‘John admires Marta’s patience’

In sum, in Spanish and in Polish, low applicative construction can express a dynamic transfer of possession or a static possession relation. In a dynamic relation, the dative argument is interpreted as the recipient or the source of the theme; in a static relation, the dative is the possessor (Cuervo, 2003).

### 3. AN APPLICATE ANALYSIS OF DOCS

In this paper we adopt an applicative analysis of the DOC following Pylkkänen (2002) and Cuervo (2003). Let us introduce its main features. Low applicatives are defined as heads that relate an individual to the internal argument of the verb, the direct object. As illustrated by the tree structure in (20), the applicative head merges below the verb and relates the applied argument to the theme that it takes as its complement.

(20) Low Applicative



The low applicative head licenses the “extra” argument both semantically and syntactically. This relationship is defined as a dynamic transfer of possession. It is directional and the applied argument is interpreted either as a recipient (i.e. Low Applicative-‘TO’) or a source (i.e. Low Applicative-‘FROM’), depending on the verb and on the subtype of low applicatives that a language has. For instance, the English DOC, as in (21a), is dubbed an instance of a Low Applicative-‘TO’ construction by Pyllkänen (2002) following Marantz (1993), whereas the prepositional structure is not due to the fact that the indirect object is introduced by the preposition ‘to’, as in (21b).

- (21) a. John read Marta a fairytale  
 b. John read a fairytale to Marta

The Spanish clitic doubled constructions, as in (22a), as opposed to the non-clitic doubled structures, as in (22b), display similar syntactic characteristics to the English DOC (Demonte 1995; Cuervo 2003). Consequently, clitic doubled constructions are analyzed as instances of low applicatives.

- (22) a. Juan le leyó un cuento de hadas a Marta    b. Juan leyó un cuento de hadas a Marta  
 J<sub>nom</sub> Cl<sub>dat</sub> read a fairytale<sub>acc</sub> to M<sub>dat</sub>    J<sub>nom</sub> read a fairytale<sub>acc</sub> to M  
 ‘John read Marta a fairytale’    ‘John read a fairytale to Marta’

Cuervo (2003) shows that in Spanish there are three kinds of low applicative structures: two dynamic and one stative. Semantically speaking, the applied argument in the Spanish clitic doubled construction has three meanings: it can be a recipient (i.e. Low

Applicative-‘TO’), as in (23); it can be a source (i.e. Low Applicative-‘FROM’), as in (24); and it can also be a possessor (i.e. Low Applicative-‘AT’), as in (25).

- (23) Juan le dio rosas a María  
 $J_{\text{nom}} \text{ Cl}_{\text{dat}} \text{ gave roses}_{\text{acc}} \text{ to } M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘John gave Maria roses’
- (24) Juan le robó el coche a María  
 $J_{\text{nom}} \text{ Cl}_{\text{dat}} \text{ stole the car}_{\text{acc}} \text{ to } M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘John stole the car from Maria’

- (25) Ana le admira la chaqueta a María  
 $A_{\text{nom}} \text{ Cl}_{\text{dat}} \text{ admires the jacket}_{\text{acc}} \text{ to } M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘Anne admires Maria’s jacket’

From the pattern in sentences (26), (27) and (28) we argue that in Polish there are two dynamic and one stative low applicative construction.

- (26) Janek dał róże Marii  
 $J_{\text{nom}} \text{ gave roses}_{\text{acc}} M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘John gave Maria roses’
- (27) Janek ukradł samochód Marii  
 $J_{\text{nom}} \text{ stole car}_{\text{acc}} M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘John stole the car from Maria’

- (28) Ania podziwia kurtkę Marii  
 $A_{\text{nom}} \text{ admires jacket}_{\text{acc}} M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘Anne admires Maria’s jacket’

As seen by the variety of predicates that produce grammatical low applicative constructions, it is argued that restrictions for low applicatives should be justified as restrictions for the kind of predicate that can participate in this construction given the meanings the applied argument can have.

Cuervo (2007) maintains that the low applicative approach provides a unified analysis of the morphosyntax and semantics of contrasting Spanish and English DOCs, we adopt this view and apply it to Polish. More specifically, languages can differ not only in the subtypes of applicatives they allow, but also in the morphosyntactic properties of the construction, such as the morphological spell-out of the applicative head. It is argued that the English DOC and the Spanish DOC are the same type of construction –low applicatives; but rather it is the coding properties that make them look different. We will assume that this proposal is valid for Polish dative constructions.

### 3.1. *Low Applicatives in Spanish*

The Spanish DOC is morphosyntactically different from its English equivalent, but not from its Polish counterpart. For instance, in contrast with English, a dative DP in Spanish and Polish DOCs can be fronted by *wh*-movement similar to the PP in the PPC, as shown in (29) for Spanish and (30) for Polish.

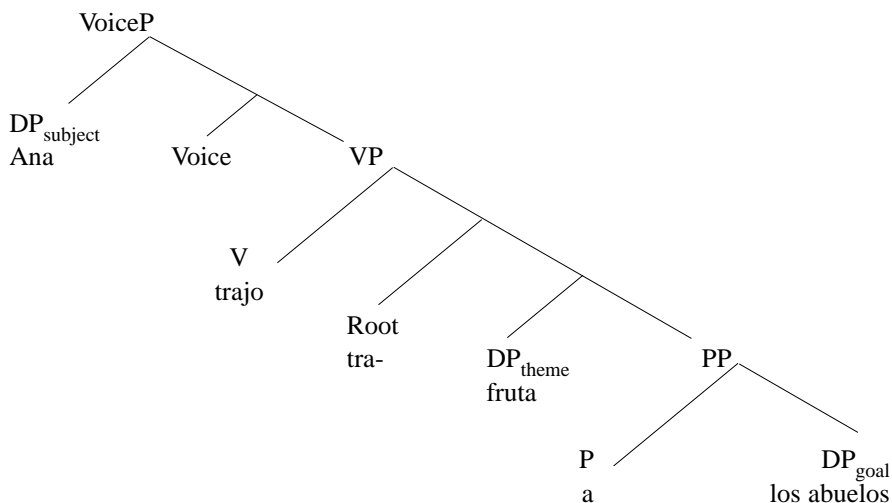


(29) ¿A quién le hizo escones Emilio? (Cf. ¿Para quién hizo escones Emilio?)  
 to whom<sub>dat</sub> Cl<sub>dat</sub> did scones<sub>acc</sub> E<sub>nom</sub>? (Cf. For whom did scones<sub>acc</sub> E<sub>nom</sub>?)  
 ‘For whom did Emilio bake scones?’

(30) Komu Janek upiekł urodzinowy tort? (Cf. Dla kogo Janek upiekł urodzinowy tort?)  
 who<sub>dat</sub> J<sub>nom</sub> baked b-day cake<sub>acc</sub>? (Cf. For whom J<sub>nom</sub> baked b-day cake<sub>acc</sub>?)  
 ‘For whom did John bake a b-day cake?’

The only surface difference between the PPC and DOC in Spanish is the presence of the clitic. The structure of the clitic-doubled DOCs, however, conforms with the semantic and syntactic criteria attributed to low applicative constructions. There is no surface difference between the PPC and DOC in Polish since there is no clitic doubling. Cuervo (2007, 2003b) claims that in Spanish the alternation with and without the clitic correlates with syntactic and semantic phenomena that cannot be attributed to the mere presence of a clitic. Along with Demonte (1995) she argues that structures without a clitic correspond to a structure formed with a DP theme structurally higher than the goal or locative PP, whereas sentences with clitic-doubling correspond to the DOC, i.e. to a structure where the DP<sub>dative</sub> is higher than the theme. The Spanish DOC is illustrated in the tree structure of (31):

(31) Ana trajo fruta a sus abuelos  
 A<sub>nom</sub> brought fruit<sub>acc</sub> to her grandparents<sub>dat</sub>  
 ‘Ana brought fruit to her grandparents’



[Taken from Cuervo (2003): in the framework of Kratzer (1994, 1996)]

It is argued that the dative clitic is the morphological Spell-out of the applicative head (we could argue that the applicative head, if indeed there is an applicative head, in Polish as in English is phonetically null (Pylkkänen 2002)). Cuervo maintains that the Spell-out of the dative clitic accounts for the necessity of clitic-doubling when there is a “true dative argument” as well as eliminating additional structure such as clitic phrases (as proposed by Demonte 1995), which are not independently required. The author further claims that the applicative head is also responsible for the inherent case of the dative DP, as dative *a* is not a preposition but a case marker in the DOC. We claim that this analysis can also be used for Polish.

In sum, we adopt the analysis for low applicative dative constructions in Spanish in order to investigate whether Polish L2 are aware of the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of the Spanish constructions with datives that can be considered low applicative with unaccusative verbs, non-transfer verbs and verbs of creation/construction.

#### 4. L2 ACQUISITION OF THE DOC AND RELATED CONSTRUCTIONS

In addition to the L2 acquisition of the DOCs, L2 research sought to determine whether DOCs as opposed to the prepositional counterpart created more learnability issues for L2 learners. In this section, we present the acquisitional process of the DOC in English, as well as, the L2 acquisition of Spanish related constructions.

##### 4.1. *L2 acquisition of the English DOC*

Whong-Barr and Schwartz (2002) compared the acquisition of English to- and for-dative alternation with three groups of children whose L1 backgrounds were English, Japanese and Korean. These languages have different properties: Japanese disallows all DOC constructions and Korean has the equivalent of for-dative verbs but disallows the to-dative verbs. There were four types of DOCs made up of licit and illicit to-datives and for-datives. The results showed that all groups allowed illicit to-DOCs, evidencing overgeneralization, like in L1 acquisition. Furthermore, the Japanese, but not the Korean L2 learners, allowed illicit for-DOC, which is consistent with L1 influence. The authors maintain that their results support the Full Access/Full Transfer Hypothesis (Schwartz & Sprouse 1994, 1996), which proposes that the initial state of L2 acquisition is the grammar of the L1 and that the L2 development occurs through UG.

Oh and Zubizarreta (2004) investigated the role of overt morphology in L2 acquisition through a case study of the goal (i.e. ‘Give someone something’) and benefactive (i.e. ‘Buy someone something’) DOCs in the English interlanguage of 65 adult L1 Korean speakers. Unlike Whong-Barr and Schwartz (2002), they argue that Japanese and Korean has a DOC. The results from the study show that illicit benefactive-DOCs are more strongly rejected than illicit goal-DOCs. The authors point out that this

rejection asymmetry is also observed in the acquisition of licit DOCs. Namely, licit benefactive-DOCs are less accepted than licit goal-ones.

They interpret their results as a possible L1 transfer of overt verbal morphology which has a blocking effect on the acquisition of English benefactive-DOCs, thus delaying the acquisition of licit benefactive-DOCs with respect to licit goal-DOCs. Their study relates to ours in that we research whether morphosyntactic properties of the Spanish dative alternation will impede the acquisitional process of the various types of DOC possible in Spanish.

In our study we also take into account morphology to determine if it will impede the acquisition process of the different types of low applicative datives in Spanish. In principle, Polish L2 learners should not be totally constrained since Polish is morphologically rich. However the languages differ in the morphological representation of Spanish versus Polish low applicative constructions. Thus we investigate if this morphological difference will affect the acquisition of Spanish low applicative datives.

#### *4.2. L2 acquisition of Spanish DOC and related constructions*

Slabakova (2002) investigated Spanish ditransitive constructions as part of her study on the acquisition of the compounding parameter (Snyder 1995). Her data showed that 77% of the English L1 advanced learners of Spanish correctly rejected DOCs that were a literal translation from English. This gives evidence that L2 learners can go beyond the grammar of their L1. Bruhn de Garavito (2000, 2006) researched the acquisition of ditransitive predicates paying attention to both their semantics and syntax, although she did not provide a direct comparison of L2 knowledge in the two areas of grammar. Her study considered the final stage of acquisition and the role of transfer in the final state by contrasting two groups of near-native speakers: L1 French and L1 English. She reports that L1 English group reliably distinguished grammatical from ungrammatical double objects when the dative was [+human] but not when it was [+inanimate]. They also accepted the double object with a possessor role, which is not possible in English. The author argues that her results show that the near-natives went beyond their L1 and arrived at generalizations that require a subtle linguistic analysis of the input guided by UG, contra Hawkins and Chan (1997) and Smith and Tsimpli (1995). This was more evident in the French group than in the English group (ie. there are no DOCs in French).

Cuervo (2007) investigated L2 acquisition of the Spanish dative alternation with special emphasis on how English speakers learn the semantic and morphosyntactic properties of the Spanish DOC. The results show that L2 subjects recognized double objects in Spanish as distinct from the prepositional variant and showed sensitivity to certain semantic properties. They accepted DOCs in cases in which they are possible in English, but they also accepted them or failed to reject them with some verbs or meanings that are impossible in the English DOC, showing overgeneralization of the construction with respect to their L1. Cuervo reports that overgeneralizations were mostly restricted to DOCs in which a human dative argument could be understood as the

recipient or source of the theme DP. In Bruhn de Garavito's (2000) study, the English advanced group accepted human and possessor datives, however in Cuervo (2007) L2 learners performed at chance levels when the dative argument was inanimate and they rejected possessor datives. She explains this phenomenon by maintaining that these learners misanalyzed the requirement of the construction, considering it to be constrained by the animacy of the dative, not admitting a wider notion of possession that includes alienable possession between two inanimate entities. These data show that L2 learners' knowledge is constrained by a linguistic generalization on a notion that affects licensing of arguments and their morphosyntactic properties in many languages: animacy. This supports the full-access hypothesis.

With respect to morphosyntax of the Spanish DOC, Cuervo (2007) found out that although the L2 accuracy was usually lower, L2 learners correctly rejected all of the ungrammatical conditions that were rejected by the Control group, thus showing sensitivity to the morphosyntactic properties tested: clitic agreement, case, word order, the status of the element *a*, and *wh*-extraction. Cuervo argues that L2 learners' rejection of agreement mismatches provides evidence of knowledge of the role of the clitic, a structure not part of their L1 grammar: subjects understood that the clitic doubles the dative *a*-phrase and that doubling is not restricted to human datives.

## 5. HYPOTHESES

In this paper, we investigate three opposing views of L2 acquisition and their implications: the No-Access Hypothesis (Bley-Vroman 1989), the Partial Access Hypothesis (Hawkins and Chan 1997) and the Full Access Hypotheses (White 2003b). In particular, we compare the acquisition of L2 Spanish by native Polish speakers with respect to applicative constructions. Let us recall the specific morphosyntactic implications that the construction entails:

- (i) clitic doubling is obligatory in the presence of a dative argument with unaccusative verbs, non-transfer predicates (stative and non-directional activity verb) as well as verbs of creation/construction.
  - a. *Le llegaron dos cartas a Daniela*  
 $Cl_{dat}$  arrived two letters<sub>nom</sub> to  $D_{dat}$   
 'Daniela got two letters'
- (ii) in the presence of the dative clitic, [ $CL \dots a + DP_{dative}$ ], *a* cannot be changed to a full preposition since it is a case assigner.
  - b. *Mi madre le lavó los pantalones \*(para mi hermano)*  
 my mother<sub>nom</sub>  $Cl_{dat}$  washed the pants for my brother  
 'My mother washed the pants for my brother'
- (iii) lastly, in the absence of the dative clitic, [ $\emptyset \dots a + DP_{dative}$ ], *a* does not function as a case assigner and thus needs to be changed to a correct preposition.

### 5.1. *The No-Access Hypothesis*

The No-Access Hypothesis predicts that L1 and adult L2 are distinct from a variety of viewpoints, all boiling down to the fact that adults no longer have access to the learning mechanisms and innate knowledge source (i.e. UG) that L1 acquires have. Under this view, Polish speakers will have difficulties learning the properties of the Spanish applicative construction that is not instantiated in their L1. In particular, due to the lack of access to UG and given that the input underdetermines the morphosyntactic properties of the construction, L2 learners, according to this hypothesis, will have difficulties with the dative clitic and the role of the particle *a*. This argues for a case-by-case learning of the Spanish low applicative construction.

### 5.2. *The Partial-Access Hypothesis*

The Failed Functional Features Hypothesis (FFFH) advocates that functional features are subject to a critical period and cannot be acquired beyond childhood unless they are instantiated in the L1. In addition, the L2 syntactic representations will be different from their native counterparts where the speaker's L1 does not have the same functional feature inventory of the L1, and can only acquire categorical knowledge of the areas of the L2 grammar that his L1 functional feature inventory allows. By this hypothesis, we assume that the difference will lie in the features of the applicative head since in Polish the features of the applicative head are phonetically null whereas in Spanish they are spelled out by the dative clitic (Cuervo 2003), showing the [person] and [number] features of the dative DP. In light of this hypothesis, the Polish L2 learners will not produce this applied marker due to their L1.

### 5.3. *The Full-Access Hypothesis*

The full-access hypotheses predict that L2 learners should, in principle, be able to acquire the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of the Spanish dative construction even if those properties are underdetermined by positive input. Specifically, Polish L2 learners should make appropriate generalizations with respect to clitic doubling and the role of *a* with unaccusative verbs, verbs of construction/creation and non-transfer predicates. In other words, under this proposal, L2 learners should be able to go beyond the restrictions that affect Polish datives, accepting a wider range of meanings and making UG-licit generalizations for the Spanish low applicative construction.

## 6. METHODOLOGY

In order to determine the hypotheses concerning the knowledge of the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of Spanish low applicative construction by L2 speakers, we used a grammaticality judgment (GJ) task. The GJ task tested constructions

with datives that can be considered low applicatives with: unaccusative verbs, non-transfer predicates and verbs of creation/construction. For each test sentence, subjects had to indicate whether the sentences were grammatical and were also asked to provide the correct version of the sentences that they believed to be ungrammatical. We believe that this is more informative in terms of their competence than just having a scale from 1 to 5. Due to the possibility of drawing the learners' attention to similar structures, we isolated the test item sentences from their ungrammatical counterparts so that the L2 learners' judgments would reflect as much as possible their unconscious knowledge of the target language. Sentences were presented as a list rather than in pairs.

The task included 84 test sentences, of which 50 were test items (i.e. the distribution consisted of 25 grammatical and ungrammatical Spanish applicative dative constructions) and 34 were distractors. Test items consisted of clitic doubled structures with the above mentioned predicates. In each case, a grammatical sentence with the relevant morphology of the applicative construction in Spanish was contrasted with an ungrammatical sentence lacking the morphosyntactic marker, as in (32a) and (32b):

- (32) a. Elena [le]<sub>i</sub> manchó los zapatos [a Elisa]<sub>i</sub>  
 $E_{\text{nom}}$   $Cl_{\text{dat}}$  soiled the shoes<sub>acc</sub> to  $E_{\text{dat}}$   
 'Elena soiled Elisa's shoes'
- b. \*Elena [Ø]<sub>i</sub> manchó los zapatos [a Elisa]<sub>i</sub>  
 $E_{\text{nom}}$  soiled the shoes<sub>acc</sub> to  $E_{\text{dat}}$   
 'Elena soiled Elisa's shoes'

In Table 1, we present the verbs used in the grammaticality judgment task.

Unacc. Verbs	Non-Transfer Verbs	Verbs of Creation
<b>Faltar</b> 'be lacking'	<b>Admirar</b> 'admire'	<b>Reparar</b> 'repair'
<b>Llegar</b> 'arrive'	<b>Pisar</b> 'step on'	<b>Mecanografiar</b> 'type'
<b>Salir</b> 'exit'	<b>Besar</b> 'kiss'	<b>Lavar</b> 'wash'
<b>Venir</b> 'come'	<b>Examinar</b> 'examine'	<b>Cocinar</b> 'cook/bake'
<b>Florecer</b> 'bloom'	<b>Manchar</b> 'stain'	<b>Guisar</b> 'cook'

Table 1. Verbs tested in the Grammaticality Judgement Task.

After removing responses of 0 (following White 2003), statistical analyses were performed. Before the GJ task was administered, all participants were asked to complete

a questionnaire outlining their personal, educational and language background.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, in order to ensure comparability of subjects at the proficiency level, the L2 learners were divided into Intermediate (n=16), Advanced (n=15) and Near-Native (n=16) groups on the basis of an independent proficiency measure, which was adapted from the *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera* (DELE) (Salamanca, Spain) consisting of a vocabulary test and a cloze test.

## 7. PARTICIPANTS

An experimental group and a control group participated in this study. The experimental group consisted of 47 students of Spanish as a foreign language, aged 19-50 years. They were recruited from the *Instituto Cervantes* in Warsaw, Poland. All the teachers at the *Instituto Cervantes* are native specialists in teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language. Fourteen native speakers of Spanish acted as controls; they represented varieties of Spanish (Mexico, Argentina and Spain).

## 8. RESULTS

### 8.1. *Unaccusative Verbs with Low Applicatives*

Recall that whenever there is a dative argument, there is a clitic that doubles it in this type of construction. If there is no clitic, there is no dative argument, but a PP introduced by the preposition *a*. The hypothesis thus is that, in Spanish, clitic doubling is obligatory with unaccusative verbs. As Figure 1 shows, the L2 group is not as accurate as the Control group at judging clitic doubled structures with unaccusative verbs as grammatical applicative constructions.

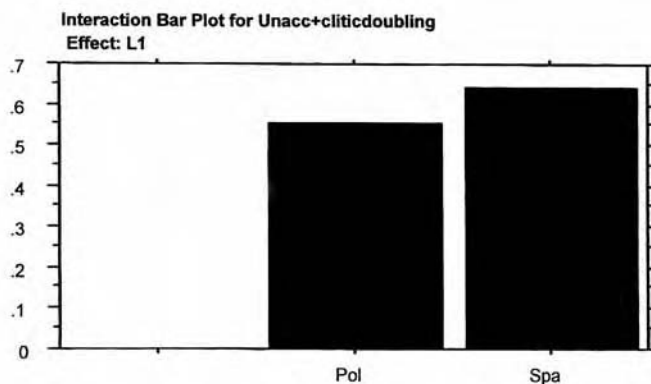


Figure 1. *Unaccusative Verbs with a Low Applicative Dative (ANOVA by L1)*.

Table 2 reports production of overt morphology in obligatory contexts, i.e. the production of the dative clitic with unaccusative verbs in the presence of the dative applied argument.

	<b>Low Applicative</b>	<b>PPC</b>
<b>Groups</b>	<b>CL + a DP<sub>Dat</sub></b>	<b>∅ + a DP</b>
Intermediate	95%	62%
Advanced	72%	46%
Near-native	76%	53%
Control	80%	65%

Table 2. *Unaccusative Verbs with Low Applicatives.*

Although the native speakers and L2 learners seem to be aware of the constraint proposed for low applicative constructions with unaccusative verbs, the results in Table 2 indicate that clitic doubling is not an obligatory factor with unaccusative verbs. In sum, group results reveal that L2 learners and native speakers do not treat the dative argument as the argument of the low applicative head, due to the consistent replacement of [... CL ... a + DP<sub>Dat</sub>] with [... CL... de/para + DP] and the removal of the dative clitic in the clitic doubled constructions, which constitutes the Spanish low applicative construction.

To our knowledge, Polish datives with unaccusative verbs have not been analyzed as low applicatives, but as Topic or Focus Phrases (Owczarzak 2004). The sentences in (33), look like Cuervo's Low Applicative-'TO' constructions in Spanish, thus it could be argued that Polish provides indirect evidence to conclude that Spanish clitic doubled structures with unaccusatives are perhaps not instances of the Low applicative-'TO' after all.

- (33) a. Jankowi brakuje pieniędzy      b. Jankowi wyszły pryszczyki  
       John<sub>dat</sub> lacks money                J<sub>dat</sub> exit pimples  
       'John lacks money'                 'John got pimples'
- c. Jankowi zakwitły piękne tulipany  
       J<sub>dat</sub> bloomed beautiful tulips  
       'Beautiful tulips bloomed for John'

Polish L2 learners transferred not only syntactic but also semantic L1 knowledge into the target language. More specifically, the Polish equivalent of *llegar* 'arrive', *venir* 'come', *salir* 'exit' disallow dative arguments with inanimate and animate themes, as is seen by the ungrammaticality of (34).



- (34) a. \*Jankowi przyjechały dwa listy      a'. \*Jankowi przyjechała mama  
       J<sub>dat</sub>        arrived        two letters      J<sub>dat</sub>        arrived        mom  
       'Two letters arrived for John'      'John's mom arrived'
- b. \*Jankowi wyszła książka      b'. \*Jankowi wyszła mama  
       J<sub>dat</sub>        came out book      J<sub>dat</sub>        came out mom  
       'John's book got published'      'John's com came'
- c. \*Jankowi przyszła paczka      c'. \*Jankowi przyszła mama  
       J<sub>dat</sub>        came parcel      J<sub>dat</sub>        came mom  
       'John received a parcel'      'John's mom came'

In addition, in Polish the equivalent of the verb *salir* is acceptable with some inanimate themes such as 'pimples', but is rejected with an inanimate theme such as 'book', presumably because a book cannot grow on its own and a pimple can. This shows that Polish L2 learners are sensitive to the subtle semantic differences in Spanish unaccusative verbs, since the same is true in Spanish where *A Juan le salió un libro* ('Juan's book came out' (= published)) can only have a metaphorical interpretation.

It can be inferred from the item results that *llegar* (7.69%) is the least favored predicate to appear with a clitic doubled dative applied argument, *faltar* (69%), *salir* and *florecer* (85%), *venir* (35%). Most Polish L2 learners kept the dative clitic with unaccusative verbs, but changed the case assigner *a* to *de*, as in (35). Recall that in clitic doubled constructions with unaccusative verbs, *a* is argued to be a morphological marker of dative case and not a full fledged preposition.

- (35) El verano pasado le florecieron todos los rosales      **DE** mi vecino  
       The summer past Cl<sub>dat</sub> bloomed all the rose bushes of my neighbour  
       'Last summer, all my neighbour's rose bushes bloomed'

In some instances L2 learners removed the dative clitic from the construction altogether and kept the sequence [a + DP<sub>DAT</sub>], as in (36). This further suggests that they treated *a* as a full fledged preposition, and not a "pseudopreposition".

- (36) A causa del accidente [—] llegó tarde la novia a Víctor  
       of cause of accident arrived late the girlfriend to V<sub>dat</sub>  
       'Due to the accident, Victor's girlfriend arrived late'

Very rarely did the L2 learners supply the missing dative clitic. It can be inferred from the item results that due to L1 transfer Polish speakers rejected those unaccusative verbs whose dative arguments were inanimate and animate, as in (34). We suggest that constructions with some of the unaccusative verbs, such as *llegar* sounded 'artificial' and were not considered 'natural' by native speakers and therefore were judged ungrammatical.

8.2. *Non-Transfer Predicates with Low Applicatives*

A dative nominal can relate to a direct object in the context of non-transfer predicates, whether they are stative or dynamic. In Polish, a dative nominal is felicitous in the context of stative non-transfer predicates, as in (37).

(37) Robert zazdrości pracę Jankowi

$R_{\text{nom}}$  envies job  $J_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘Robert envies John’s job’

In addition Polish allows for dynamic non-transfer predicates to appear with dative nominals, as in (38), which resemble Possessor Dative Constructions.

(38) Janek poplamił bluzkę Marcie

$J_{\text{nom}}$  stained blouse<sub>acc</sub>  $M_{\text{dat}}$   
 ‘John stained Marta’s blouse’

With non-transfer predicates, we tested whether the behavior of L2 learners would support the hypothesis that the dative nominal functions as the possessor of the direct object as opposed to the intended recipient, which is what happens with unaccusative verbs (Cuervo 2003). Table 3 shows the acceptance of dative applicatives with non-transfer predicates for the L2 group and the Control group.

	Low Applicative	PPC
Groups	CL + a DP <sub>Dat</sub>	∅ + a DP
Intermediate	91%	54%
Advanced	65%	55%
Near-native	78%	65%
Control	86%	74%

Table 3. *Non-transfer Predicates with Low Applicative Datives*<sup>9</sup>.

Recall that in Polish there is no clitic doubling, but the dative argument can appear with non-transfer predicates, stative or dynamic, resembling Possessor Datives, where the dative marked nominal acts simultaneously as possessor and complement to the verb (Landau 1999). Due to L1 interference, we argue that the Polish L2 learners show a tendency for consistently removing the dative clitic from the construction, as in (39), and judging as grammatical test sentences without the dative clitic, as in (40).

- (39) Cuando estaban jugando en el patio, Roberto [—] pisó la cola al gato  
 When were playing in the patio, R<sub>nom</sub> stepped the tail<sub>acc</sub> to the cat<sub>dat</sub>  
 ‘When they were playing in the patio, Roberto stepped on the cat’s tail’
- (40) \*Como siempre Ana admira la ropa a Marta  
 as always A<sub>nom</sub> admires the clothes<sub>acc</sub> to M<sub>dat</sub>  
 ‘As always, Ana admires Marta’s clothes’

Group results of native speakers show that some reject the dative clitic with non-transfer predicates in the presence of the dative argument. Their judgments vary with respect to the different types of non-transfer predicates and for this reason we will discuss this matter in the item analysis, since some structures are grammatical without the clitic, whereas some need to be clitic doubled.

We speculate that the L2 learners fare poorly since they treat the Low Applicative-‘AT’ construction as an instance of a genitive construction. More specifically, in the semantic interpretation of the Low Applicative-‘AT’ construction there are two variables for individuals that relate to the event: the theme (i.e. direct object) and the possessor (i.e. dative argument). In the interpretation of a genitive construction there is only one, the theme. We claim that due to their L1, the Polish L2 learners treat the Spanish dative with non-transfer predicates, as in (41), as an instance of a Possessor Raising construction.

- (41) La abuela les besó la frente a sus nietos  
 the grandmother<sub>nom</sub> Cl<sub>dat</sub> kissed the forehead to her grandchildren<sub>dat</sub>  
 ‘The grandmother kissed the grandchildren’s forehead’

To sum up, as hypothesized the Polish L2 learners treated the Low Applicative-‘AT’ construction as a genitive construction due to their L1. In particular, this is because Polish has Possessor Dative constructions, which explains why Polish speakers have native like intuitions in some instances. This is supported in the group and individual results by cases where L2 learners removed the dative clitic and changed *a* to *de*, which we propose constitutes evidence for the hypothesis that they interpreted the clitic doubled construction with non-transfer predicates as a genitive construction.

### 8.3. Verbs of Creation/Construction with Low Applicatives

It has not been shown that in Polish there exist low applicative constructions of the Spanish type with verbs of creation/construction, nevertheless it is possible to add a dative argument to structures with such verbs. As Figure 2 illustrates, both native speakers and Polish L2 learners demonstrate reliable knowledge of the clitic doubled construction with verbs of creation/construction.

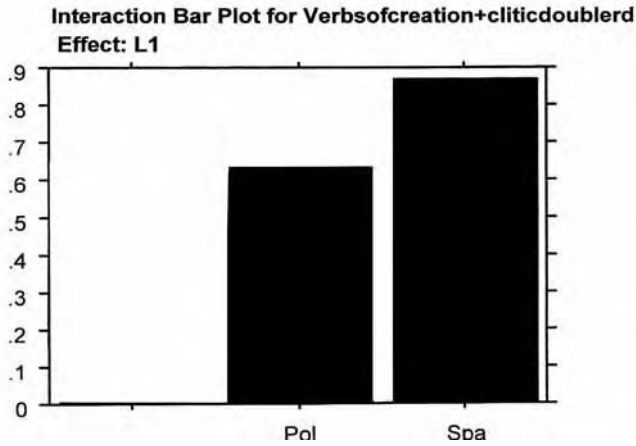


Figure 2. *Verbs of Creation/Construction with Low Applicative Datives [ANOVA by L1].*

The behavior of the Control group and the Polish L2 learners is in compliance with the constraint proposed for low applicatives with these verbs, i.e. that the dative clitic is obligatory in the presence of the [a + DP<sub>DAT</sub>], as shown in Table 4.

	<b>Low Applicative</b>	<b>PPC</b>
<b>Groups</b>	<b>CL + a DP<sub>Dat</sub></b>	<b>∅ + a DP</b>
Intermediate	89%	64%
Advanced	77%	70%
Near-native	85%	76%
Control	100%	86%

Table 4. *Verbs of Creation/Construction with Low Applicative Datives.*

Substitution of the “pseudopreposition” *a* with *de*, whether in the clitic or the non-clitic doubled structure, was consistent. Most Polish L2 learners at the near-native level ignored the dative clitic and they interpreted the dative argument as the possessor, rather than the intended recipient, as in their L1. Recall that the inherent meaning of a low applicative construction is that it establishes a possession relation between the direct object and the dative argument, yet these L2 learners behaved as if the non-clitic and clitic doubled structures were infelicitous constructions with *a* and as if the possession relation had to be illustrated through the preposition *de*. We can thus conclude that Polish L2 learners did not treat *a* in *a Benito* as an instance of overt morphological case marker of dative case, but as a full fledged preposition, as in (42).

- (42) Después de un mes el mecánico reparó el coche de Benito → L2 sentence  
 after of a month the mechanic<sub>nom</sub> repaired the car<sub>acc</sub> of Benito  
 ‘After a month, the mechanic repaired Benito’s car’

We propose that due to L1 the Polish L2 learners removed the dative clitic from the constructions. In sum, our group results support the hypothesis that due to the lack of clitic doubling in Polish, L2 learners interpret the dative argument as a possessor instead of it being the intended recipient and treat *a* as a full fledged preposition instead of as a case assigner.

It has been proposed that a low applicative selects three elements: the verb, the direct object and the dative. In Spanish, a low applicative is represented through the clitic doubling of the dative argument with such predicates. Judgments of native speakers’ are challenging for this proposal, since their behavior shows that it is not obligatory to clitic double the dative argument with verbs of creation/construction because there also exists the prepositional construction without the clitic; therefore judgments are consistent with the possibility of having two types of constructions, one with the clitic and one without it.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

Argument structure alternations represent a learnability problem in both L1 and L2 language acquisition. It seems that verbs are ‘choosy’ about the syntactic and semantic environments in which they occur and this in turn poses a problem for language acquisition. In our study, we explored how Polish speakers learn the semantic and morphosyntactic properties of Spanish Low Applicative constructions of the -‘TO’ and -‘AT’ types. Results indicate that L2 learners are sensitive to the subtle morphosyntactic characteristics of the target language, even though these are absent in their L1. They also show evidence of some generalizations in the semantic possibilities of datives beyond the restrictions that regulate Polish.

Our results evidence that Polish L2 learners did not use the applied morpheme (i.e. dative clitic) as a productive morphological element (i.e. as a feature of the applicative head) of the low applicative structure, but rather they treated it as an unanalyzed form, which appeared in syntactically and semantically appropriate contexts in the experiment, but it was either removed by L2 learners or judged ungrammatical. Results show that most of the answers of the experimental group are in the 60% and since it is a quantitative difference only, and there is variability among native speakers with verb-specific constructions, in particular with unaccusative verbs, we argue that it is not that the Polish L2 learners have not been able to acquire all the properties of clitic doubling with these predicates, but that some individual verbs sounded artificial in the test sentences and as a result native and non-native speakers judged the low applicative dative structures ungrammatical or would provide an alternative sentence to capture the meaning of the relevant construction.

Recall that in low applicative dative constructions in Spanish the applied argument bears no semantic relation to the verb; it only bears a transfer of possession relation to the direct object. In addition, a low applicative takes a verb phrase as one of its arguments. The results from the Grammaticality Judgment-task show that Polish L2 learners did not recognize this subtle syntactic characteristic of Spanish. They consistently removed the applied morphological marker, the dative clitic, and treated *a* as a full fledged preposition by changing it to *de* 'of' in order to establish the possession relation with verbs of creation/construction, such as *reparar* 'repair'. Our results show that native speakers did not treat the dative clitic as an applied marker either, but rather as an extra element that was unnecessary in some of the low applicative structures. Interestingly, some of the Spanish linguistic structures which have generated a lot of theoretical discussion turned out not to be accepted by native speakers. The various structures studied provide key insights into L2 acquisition that bear on competence matters and on usage matters, as well as on the production of certain Spanish linguistic structures, which may prove critical for understanding intuitions of ordinary speakers against those of linguists. In sum, given the variability among the native speakers, we propose that the performance of the L2 learners can be attributed to a matter of "usage acquisition" with unaccusative verbs, non-transfer predicates and verbs of creation/construction, which is separate from the acquisition on competence needed for clitic doubling in Spanish. Knowledge and the use of knowledge do not always coincide (White 1999).

Cuervo (2007) investigated L2 acquisition of the Spanish dative alternation with special emphasis on how English speakers learn the semantic and morphosyntactic properties of the Spanish DOC. The results show that L2 subjects accepted DOCs in cases in which they are possible in English, but they also accepted them or failed to reject them with some verbs or meanings that are impossible in the English DOC, showing overgeneralization of the construction with respect to their L1. This behavior is also noted in our study of Polish L2 learners of Spanish with low applicative structures. Cuervo further reports that overgeneralizations were mostly restricted to DOCs in which a human dative argument could be understood as the recipient or source of the theme DP. In Bruhn de Garavito's (2000) study, the English advanced group accepted human and possessor datives, however in Cuervo (2007) and in our study, L2 learners performed at chance levels when the dative argument was [+human]. Our data supports the claim that these learners misanalyzed the requirement of the construction, considering it to be constrained by the animacy of the dative, not admitting a wider notion of possession that includes alienable possession between two inanimate entities in low applicative constructions. These data show that L2 learners' knowledge is constrained by a linguistic generalization on a notion that affects licensing of arguments. This supports the full-access hypothesis.

It would be of interest to deepen the exploration of the relationship between morphology and syntax in second language acquisition, particularly in view of proposals such as Lardiere's (2003, 2005) and White's (2003). In order to do so, it would be interesting to test the general level of processing of verbal morphology (i.e. clitics) in all

types of clitic constructions in Polish speakers at different stages of development of Spanish as a second language. If what impedes their full acquisition of the applicative constructions is their inability to process clitics one would expect that, as that general ability develops and increases, their capacity to identify applicative constructions, which require verbal morphology would also increase. If, on the other hand, the ability to process clitics is specific to each construction and it progresses from argument clitics to clitics involved in applicatives then we would have to explore the relative weight of argument structure versus morphology as clues for syntactic development.

## NOTES

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1. The questionnaire is from the Language Acquisition Lab, University of Ottawa (Dept. of Modern Languages and Literature).

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