

Datives in Constructions with Unaccusative *Se*

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Abstract

In this talk I argue that in Spanish there is a type construction, involving a verb with the unaccusative *se* clitic and a dative, where the dative is in fact the external argument, which renders the construction comparable to a transitive structure (in the well-established unaccusative-transitive alternation). A number of tests and criteria are reviewed to support the external argument status of the dative (which in fact can be assimilated to the status of locatives and datives with some impersonal verbs, see Fernández Soriano 1999). These are: unmarked word order, raising and binding. On the other hand, there is also evidence for the non externalized status of other, internal, argument: impossibility of anaphor binding, possibility of being a bare NP, inability to control, among others. I conclude that in these constructions the dative is an instance of quirky case.

Key words: Spanish, quirky case, *se*-unaccusatives, argument structure.

Resum. *Datius en construccions amb el se inacusatiu*

En aquesta xerrada defenso que en castellà hi ha un tipus de construcció, que conté un verb amb la marca *se* d'inacusatiu i un datiu, on el datiu és, de fet, l'argument extern, cosa que fa aquesta construcció comparable a una estructura transitiva (dins l'alternança ben coneguda inacusatiu-transitiu). S'hi revisen tots de proves i criteris que donen suport al caràcter d'argument extern del datiu (que, de fet, és assimilable a l'estatus dels locatius i datius amb alguns verbs impersonals, vegeu Fernández Soriano 1999). Com a indicis, tenim: ordre de mots no marcat, elevació i lligam. D'altra banda, hi ha també indicis del caràcter no externalitzat de l'altre argument, l'intern: impossibilitat de lligam d'anàfores, possibilitat de ser un SN nu, incapacitat de controlar, entre d'altres. La conclusió és que en aquestes construccions el datiu és un exemple de cas capriciós (quirky case)

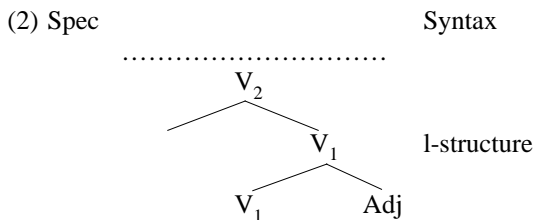
Paraules clau: castellà, cas capriciós, inacusatiu amb *se*, estructura argumental.

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In Spanish, as in other Romance languages, most of unaccusative verbs which have a transitive counterpart (in Hale and Keyser's 1994, 1997 sense) appear with the clitic *se*, which is also both the reflexive and the impersonal clitic. Some examples are provided in (1):

- (1) a. Juan rompió los vasos.
 Juan broke the glasses
 b. Juan quemó la comida.
 Juan burned the food
 c. Los vasos **se** rompieron.
 the glasses SE broke_{PL}
 d. La comida **se** quemó.
 the food SE burned_{SG}

In Levin and Rappaport Hovav's (1995) terms these verbs express an externally caused event and have a «change of state (and position)» meaning. In Hale and Keyser's approach, the transitive structure (1a) is the result of embedding the «complex dyadic» predicate into a monadic V, which allows for the addition of an external argument in syntax. The monadic V, on the other hand, has been related to a CAUSE predicate (see, for example, Harley, 1996). We will come back to this question, but see the structure below:



Mendikoetxea (1998), in the line of Chierchia (1989) and others, proposes that these predicates are very similar to true reflexives, in the sense that the occurrence of *se* correlates to their dyadic nature as well as to the possibility of transitivization. Unaccusative *se* predicates select for a PRO in Spec of vP, which establishes a control relation with the theme. Differences in interpretation are to be related to the nature of the CAUSE predicate. In the unaccusative SE predicate, as opposed to the regular reflexive one, the causing factor is understood statively, that is, not as an action performed by an agent but as an event determined by a property of the theme argument (Chierchia, 1987). Mendikoetxea supposes that in (1c) and (1d) the argument which triggers verbal agreement is both the cause and the theme.

The fact I would like to focus on is that, together with the transitive/agentive alternative, these constructions, in the unaccusative *se* version, have the possibility to take a preverbal dative.

The meaning of the resulting sentence is that the person involved (which would appear in the nominative in the transitive counterpart) does not perform a direct action towards the object: the event taking place only involves him/her in a certain way. So together with the ones in (1), we get structures like the ones in (3):

- (3) a. A Juan se le rompió el coche.
 to Juan SE CL_{DT} broke the car
 'The car broke on John.' / 'John's car broke (on him).'
- b. A Pedro se le ha quemado la comida.
 to Pedro SE CL_{DT} has burned the food
 'The food has burned on Pedro.'
- c. A mí se me ha acabado el dinero.
 to me SE CL_{DT} has finished the money
 'The money has finished on me.' / 'I ran out of money.'
- d. A este estudiante se le han olvidado las respuestas.
 to this student SE CL_{DT} have forgotten the answers
 'This student has forgotten the answers.'

Glosses with benefactive PP's like *on me / him / her* are not quite accurate: sentences in (3) do not mean that the argument in the Dative is affected by the event but that the person is responsible for it without directly intervening in the action. I will sometimes translate it as a TO phrase. As the glosses indicate, the dative can be interpreted as the possessor of the theme, although this is not obligatory.

I will try to give an analysis of the dative which appears in these constructions. The basic claim I would like to maintain is that this dative is an external argument. That is, I accept Mendikoetxea's analysis of unaccusative *se* structures but claim that it changes when the dative is present. In this case, the theme is demoted to internal argument position, although, as can be seen in (3c, d), it triggers verbal agreement. In a structure like (2), then, the higher Spec can bear Nominative or Dative Case, depending on its thematic role. I will therefore claim that the ones in (3) are structures with a quirky subject. In so doing, I will concentrate on three kinds of evidence showing that:

- a) The dative is the element which satisfies the EPP feature of T.
- b) The dative is not only the subject but the external argument of the construction, that is, the subject of predication and the closest element to T.
- c) The theme argument is internal and never «externalizes» when the dative is present, that is, it never raises to Spec TP.
- d) Verbal agreement with the theme is the result of long distance feature checking with T.

It is well known that, within a given language, there are constructions in which the properties usually displayed by subjects seem to be scattered between more than one NP, due to the fact that the nature of those properties is also different

(structural position in which they merge, structural position to which they move, thematic role, Case, agreement, etc.)¹. In the cases under consideration, a dative, which does not agree with the verb, is, we claim, the subject of the construction, in the sense that it is the element of which the event is predicated and occupies the external argument (higher) position.

Let us now go back to the structure in (2). In recent frameworks dealing with different aspects of grammar it has been proposed, on one hand, that there is an additional node above VP: VoiceP (Kratzer, 1996), EventP (Harley, 1995), VP (Koizumi, 1993), TrP (Collins, 1997), (small) *v* (Larson, 1988, Chomsky, 1995, 1998). It is widely accepted also that this node is directly related to the external argument. On the other hand, the idea that some aspects of argument structure are syntactically definable has been extensively developed and formalized. More specifically, in Hale and Keyser's (1994, 1997) framework, the nature of argument structure follows from the properties of heads and the structural relations Specifier and Complement. Adjuncts and external arguments are not part of this I-syntax, since they are excluded from the internal structure of verbs. According to this, there are four types of heads. Some heads do not take complements or specifier (usually nouns fall under this category) and some heads take both (as in the case of prepositions, which are 'dyadic', in the authors' terms).² The other two types of (verbal) heads take a complement. If this is nominal in nature, we will have a transitive or an unergative verb (if the noun conflates with the verb, as in *run*). This type of head, which Hale and Keyser call 'monadic', can take an external argument in syntax: the agent of the predicate. There are also heads which take a complement of an adjectival rather than a nominal nature. This case is more complex because the nature of adjectives makes them select for a Spec. In order to achieve this requirement, the adjective will have to be «parasitic» on a verbal head which will provide the structure with a Specifier. This would be a «complex dyadic» structure which gives rise to unaccusative verbs. That the preverbal NP in unaccusative constructions is an internal argument can be seen by the fact that the structure can be further embedded into a simple (monadic) verb (see (2)), that is, transitivized, as in (4):

- (4) a. The wind [turns [V [the leaves red]]
 b. John [clears [the screen A]]

So, in Hale and Keyser's view, external arguments (agents or causers) are introduced in the syntactic structure by a separate verbal head, different from the one which contains the lexical verb and its internal arguments. The presence of an agent is thus structurally derived by projecting an adequate specifier position.³

1. See Harley (1995) for a discussion of the properties usually attributed to subjects and how they show in different constituents.
2. See Hale and Keyser (1997) for more details. Here we will be concerned by the other two types.
3. Kratzer (1996) makes a similar proposal. Her claim is also that the external argument is not an argument of the verb and has to be added via a sort of secondary predication. She further proposes

On the other hand, Harley (1995), provides the head above VP with content and supposes that it can be of two different types: CAUSE versus BECOME/ HAPPEN. This head, which she calls EventP, appears with all eventive verbs. Harley further claims that only the first type of head (CAUSE) can have a Spec, which will end up being an external argument with an agent/causer thematic role. It should be noted also that this argument has the property of being the **initiator** of the event. So Harley (1995) states the facts from another perspective: she claims that the separate head that is added to both (di)transitives / unergatives and unaccusatives is an abstract head with semantic content. If it is CAUSE, it will take a Spec (an external argument). If this abstract head is of the type HAPPEN / BECOME it will not merge with an external argument. It thus appears with unaccusatives.

In Fernández Soriano (1999) some evidence is provided for the claim that the Spec of EventP can be filled in both cases (CAUSE and BECOME/ HAPPEN). That is, the nature of the abstract head will not determine the emptiness of its Spec but the type of argument that it will take as its Spec. The idea is that the event node, when BECOME / HAPPEN, can have its Spec filled by a locative (or a dative) argument in some cases. More specifically, in impersonal predicates such as the ones with *haber* «there be», *sobrar* «to exceed» / «to be extra», *faltar* «to miss / lack», *constar* «to state», on one hand, and *suced*, *ocurrir* «to happen» as well as meteorological verbs, on the other, a locative phrase appears as an external argument. The locative argument is in some sense an initiator of the event, given that it always denotes a place where the event or state originates. This fact is related to its ability to appear in subject position.⁴ The evidence for the claim that the locative is a (quirky) subject comes from different grounds. Among other things, the locative can never be a bare NP, in contrast with internal arguments or adjuncts ((5a) vs. (5b)). Second, it is the locative which raises in raising constructions (5c); and third, a quantifier in the locative phrase can bind a pronoun in the theme but not vice versa ((5d) vs. (5e)). Again, this is not the case for adjunct locatives (5f). I provide some examples in (5), but see Fernández Soriano (1999) for details:

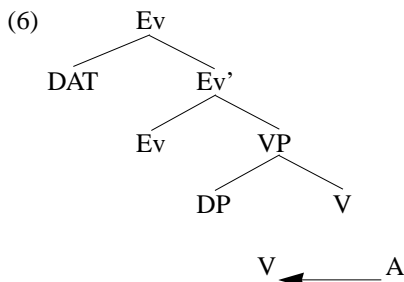
- (5) a. *En restaurantes grandes faltan camareros.
 in big restaurants lack waiters
- b. En restaurantes grandes no hay que invertir dinero.
 in big restaurants one should not invest money
- c. Aquí parece {sobrar / faltar / ocurrir} algo.
 here seems to be-extra/ lack / happen something
 (#Algo parece {sobrar / faltar / ocurrir} aquí.)

that there is a VoiceP node above VP, which is a functional category that introduces the external argument and is also responsible for accusative Case assignment. Marantz (1984) also argues for the proposal that external arguments do not appear in the lexical representation of verbs.

4. This is probably a way to restate Grimshaw's (1990) idea about an «aspectual dimension», which is parallel to the thematic hierarchy. In this author's framework, elements which participate in the first sub-event of the predicate are realized as external arguments.

- d. En cada trabajo publicado constará / figurará el nombre de
 in each published work will be-stated / appear the name of
 su autor.
 its author
- e. *El nombre de cada autor constará en su trabajo.
 The name of each author will be-stated on his work
- f. *Contra cada pared debes apoyar su estantería correspondiente.⁵
 against each wall you-must lean its corresponding shelf

I would like to extend that analysis to these cases and suppose that a structure like (6) is adequate for unaccusative *se* structures with a dative. The event node, when CAUSE will take an external argument in the Nominative, and when BECOME / HAPPEN, in the dative case. So what I would like to propose is that the dative in structures like (3) is generated in the Spec of the Ev node above VP, just were the subject of the corresponding transitive sentences would appear. The structure would then be something like the one below (in which we abstract away from the position of the clitic *se*):



As can be expected, if we are correct, the dative structure can never undergo transitivity / causativization, not even appear with analytical causatives. With respect to the possibility to form analytical causatives, dative structures contrast with unaccusative SE structures with no dative, as the following examples show:

- (7) a. *Juan hizo a Pedro olvidársele su nombre. (cf. ... olvidarse
 Juan made Pedro forget-SE-CL_{DT} his name forget-SE
 de su nombre.)
 of his name
- b. *El viento hizo hundírseme el barco. (cf. ... hundirse
 the wind made sink-SE-CL_{DT} the boat (on me) sink-SE
 el barco.)
 the boat

5. These sentences are good without the quantifier-pronoun relation.

- c. *Juan (se) olvidó a Pedro el coche
 Juan (SE) forgot to Pedro the car
- d. *Tu respuesta hizo disipárseme las dudas. (cf.... disiparse
 your answer made vanish-SE-CL_{DT} the doubts vanish-SE
 mis dudas.)
 my doubts

It has been claimed (Chierchia, 1995) that, since these structures involve a propositional function, a process of expletivization is required to provide an external argument for predication. This can be done by externalizing the theme or, we would like to claim, by merging of a dative argument in Spec of EvP.

There are other facts which indicate that the above analysis may be on the right track. I will concentrate on them in what follows:

1. The dative occupies the subject position

1.1. The first piece of evidence has to do with constituent order. The order shown in (3) is the unmarked one for these structures: sentences like (8a, b) are odd, with normal intonation, in clear contrast with (8c), with a preposed theme but no dative.

- (8) a. ?? Se le quemó la comida a Juan. / ?? La comida se le
 SE CL_{DT} burned the food to Juan / the food SE CL_{DT}
 quemó a Juan.
 burned to Juan
- b. ?? Se le hundió el barco a Juan. / ?? El barco se le hundió
 SE CL_{DT} sank the ship to Juan / the ship SE CL_{DT} sank
 a Juan.
 to Juan
- c. La comida se ha quemado.
 the food SE has burned
- d. El barco se ha hundido.
 the ship SE has sunk

In fact, information structure considerations indicate that the dative appears in the position usually occupied by (agentive) subjects. The preferred position for the dative in the cases under study is preverbal, and it is interpreted as unmarked, topic, just like subjects usually are. More specifically, if focus propagates in a direct path from the most embedded element (Zubizarreta, 1998; Cinque, 1993)⁶ it would

6. See also Contreras (1983), Suñer (1982) for a detailed discussion of neutral information structure of sentences in Spanish..

never get to the dative if this had moved from complement or adjunct position. The consequence of this would be that the whole structure containing a preverbal dative could never be interpreted as focus, but this is contrary to fact. A way to test the unmarked status of some particular word order is provided by the possibility of the sentence to be an answer to a question like *what happens/ happened?*, as proposed, among other, by Contreras (1983). In contrast with elements preposed by topicalization, focalization or left dislocation, the occurrence of a dative in preverbal position with the predicates under study does not affect the «neutral» information structure of the sentence. Sentences in (9a) through (9c) are examples all of which can be appropriate answers to the initial question, whereas (9d), with postverbal dative, cannot. (9e, f) show that this is not the case for postverbal agentive subjects and for other preposed arguments and adjuncts. Specifically the preposed dative in unaccusative *se* structures contrasts with left dislocated goal datives, as (9f) shows:

- (9) ¿Qué ha pasado / pasó?
 what has happened / happened?
- a. A Juan se le ha quemado la comida.
 to Juan SE CL_{DT} has burned the food
- b. Al niño se le ha perdido el bolígrafo.
 to he kid SE CL_{DT} has lost the pen
- c. A tu hermano se le ha roto el coche.
 to your brother SE CL_{DT} has broken the car
- d. El coche se le ha roto a tu hermano.
- e. #Ha roto el vaso el niño.
 has broken the glass the kid
- f. #A Juan le han dado el regalo.
 to Juan CL_{DT} they-have given the present

1.2. Raising. When appearing under raising verbs like *parecer* «seem» it is the dative which raises to Spec of matrix TP. Raising of the theme is impossible if the dative is present. This is why sentences like (10b) are odd (maybe unless pronounced with marked intonation):

- (10) a. A Juan parece habersele roto el coche.
 to Juan seems to-have-SE-CL_{DT} broken the car
- b. ?? El coche parece habersele roto a Juan.
 the car seems to-have-SE-CL_{DT} broken to Juan
- c. A María parece perdersele el niño continuamente.
 to María seems to-lose-SE-CL_{DT} the kid all-the-time

- d. ?? El niño parece perderse a María continuamente.
 the kid seems to-lose-SE-CL_{DT} to María all-the-time
 ‘María seems to lose the kid all the time.’

Note that the equivalent structures without the dative are perfect with raising of the theme, so it is the dative which blocks the theme from moving to Spec TP. Although for some speakers the structure with raising of the dative are not perfect, the important fact is that raising of the theme is impossible (for all speakers) if the dative is present, but not in the unaccusative *se* structure, as can be seen in (11):

- (11) a. El coche parece haberse roto.
 the car seems to-have-SE broken
 b. Todo parece arreglarse sin problema.
 everything seems to get-fixed without problem
 c. La comida parece quemarse.
 the food seems to-burn-SE
 d. Este niño parece perderse continuamente.
 this kid seems to-get-lost all-the-time

In this respect, this dative contrasts both with goals, which never block raising of the subject, and with experiencers of psych verbs, which are supposed to be in a high position (cf. Belletti and Rizzi, 1987), as (10’) shows. This, we would like to claim, is because the theme in psych verbs is externalized.

- (10’) a. Juan parece habérselo dicho a Pedro.
 ‘Juan seems to have told John about it.’
 b. Tu respuesta no parece haberle molestado.
 ‘Your answer does not seem to have bothered him.’
 c. La obra parece gustarle al público.
 ‘The play seems to be pleasant to the audience.’

What this contrast indicates is that the dative argument is closer to matrix T than the theme, a fact which is consistent with the structure proposed in (6). We are facing a special case of quirky dative, similar to the one analyzed for Icelandic (see Chomsky, 1998), but which generates in the embedded clause.

1.3. Binding. In the constructions under study, a quantifier in the dative phrase can bind a pronoun in the theme and the opposite does not hold. This shows again that the dative argument is higher than the theme. See sentences in (12):

- (12) a. A cada cocinero se le quemó su pescado.
 to every cook SE CL_{DT} burned his fish
 ‘Each cook’s fish burned on him.’

- b. *Cada pescado se le quemó a su cocinero.
 Every fish SE CL_{DT} burned to its cook
 'Each fish burned on its cook.'
- c. A cada participante en el concurso se le escapó su canario.
 to each participant in the contest SE CL_{DT} escaped his canary
 'The canary of each participant escaped.'
- d. *Cada canario se le escapó a su propietario.
 each canary SE CL_{DT} escaped to its owner

The star indicates that there can be no binding relation. Of course, sentences (12b) and (12d) are good if the pronoun in the dative DP is not bound by the quantifier in the theme (abstracting away from marked word order). The crucial data here are those in (12b) and (12d), which show that the theme cannot bind the dative. This is never the case either for agentive subjects with respect to goal datives or for left dislocated direct objects (probably due to the presence of the clitic. See Suñer 1996, Zubizarreta 1999).

- (12) e. Cada coche lo entregaron a su dueño.
 each car they CL_{AC} delivered to its owner
- f. Cada padre le dio el regalo a su hijo.
 each parent CL_{DT} gave the present to his child.

So what we have in (12b) and (12d) is a «direct object» (in the sense that it is internal to VP) with no doubling, which explains the impossibility of binding. This suggests that the theme in unaccusative *se* constructions with a dative does not raise out of VP. We will give further support to this idea in what follows.

2. Internalization of the theme

2.1. One piece of evidence (following Mendikoetxea, 1998) for considering unaccusative verbs with no dative as reflexive is the fact that they can take an adjunct with an anaphor. In this case the antecedent, i.e., the theme, is interpreted as the sole cause of the event. In fact, this author, following Chierchia (1989), claims that the surface subject is associated both with the theme thematic role and the cause thematic role assigned to the external argument, a subject (PRO) which serves as an antecedent for the anaphor:

- (13) a. El barco se hundió por sí mismo.
 the boat SE sank by itself
- b. La puerta se abrió por sí misma.
 the door SE opened by itself

Now, if the dative is present, the anaphoric adjunct is impossible, irrespective of the position of theme. This is shown in (14):

- (14) a. *El barco se me hundió por sí mismo.
 the boat SE CL_{DT} sank by itself
- b. *A Juan se le abrió la puerta por sí misma.
 to Juan SE CL_{DT} opened the door by itself

That is, the theme cannot bind an anaphor if the dative appears. In fact, any «residue» of reflexivity is lost in a structure with a dative, despite the appearance of clitic *se*. This can be taken as evidence that the dative, in fact, is the external argument and that the theme never raises above VP. Note that even if we do not accept the reflexive analysis in which a PRO is present to bind the anaphor and suppose that it is the theme itself which binds the adjunct, once externalized, the fact remains that the dative prevents this relationship, which suggests that the theme is frozen in its lower position. That this contrasts have to do with structural binding and not with any semantic property is shown by the fact that non anaphoric expressions with similar meaning such as *por sí solo* «alone», are not incompatible with the dative.

2.2. *Bare NP themes*. It is a well known fact that bare NP's cannot be preverbal subjects in Spanish, since they are obligatorily interpreted as existential (generic NP's must be preceded by a definite article, see Longobardi 1994). In fact, following Diesing (1992) we can claim that bare NP's cannot be external to VP. This seems to be the reason why sentences such as (15a) are impossible (with unaccusative interpretation), according to Mendikoetxea (1998), since the theme must obligatorily externalize to control the PRO in Spec vP and to satisfy predication. This, again, makes these verbs similar to true reflexives in the author's approach. But if the dative is present, bare NP's are allowed in *se* constructions. I take this to mean that the theme remains inside VP in this cases and it is the dative which satisfies the predication requirement. I provide some examples in (15b, c, d).

- (15) a. *Se rompen vasos.
 SE break glasses
- b. A Juan se le rompen vasos continuamente.
 to Juan SE CL_{DT} break glasses all-the-time
- c. A Juan se le olvidan cosas.
 to Juan SE CL_{DT} forget things
 'Juan forgets things.'
- d. Al abuelo se le caen cosas.
 to-the grandfather SE CL_{DT} fall things
 'Grandfather drops things.'

3. Quirky subjects

So the proposal I would like to put forward is that in constructions with unaccusative *se* a quirky case marked phrase may appear as an external argument. Since

the requirement for an external argument can only be fulfilled by pure merge, not by movement (see Chomsky, 1998), we claim that the dative is merged in the external argument position. In Chomsky's (1998) framework quirky case has the following properties:

- a) It is a theta-related inherent case with an additional structural case feature, which has to move to a structural case checking position, namely Spec TP.
- b) If phi features of T which check structural case delete, we have default T; if they remain, we have remote agreement with some lower accessible nominative.
- c) The theme cannot move to Spec TP because active quirky DT is closer (Intervention effect).

McGinnis (1997) has analyzed some quirky datives with adversative interpretation which appear in languages like Georgian which parallel very much the ones under consideration. This author shows that these datives satisfy the EPP feature in T by moving to Spec TP. McGinnis has proposed the existence of another node located above VP but below EvP in Georgian, which following Marantz (1980) she calls R. Below I give the Georgian examples (taken from McGinnis, 1997).

- (16) a. Deideb-s nino da-e-mal-a-t.
 aunts-DT Nino-NPR Prfx-R-hide-AOR-PL
 'The aunts had Nino hidden on them'
- b. Dede-b-s svileb-i da-e-cr-a-t.
 mothers-DT sons-Nom Prfx-R-cut-AOR-PL
 'The mothers had the sons wounded on them.'

For the cases under study, I will propose a similar analysis, but I will depart from McGinnis approach in that I will not propose any additional node. My proposal is that a Spec position can also be projected in the case when the event head is of the BECOME / HAPPEN type (in Harley's 1996 terms).

The structures under consideration, in fact, display a special behavior when appearing in embedded infinitives which show that the theme is never in subject position. If the theme could occupy the subject position, we would expect that it would be able to control in control structures (one of the properties usually attributed to subjects). But this is not what happens if the dative is present. On the contrary, in non-restructuring verbs,⁷ control of PRO by the theme is impossible, as shown in (17a) and when restructuring has not taken place (as can be seen by the absence of clitic climbing) the sentences with preverbal theme and dative are ungrammatical, as the contrast between (17b, c) and (17d, f) shows.

- (17) a. * El canario intentó escapárseme.
 the canary tried to-escape-SE-CL_{DT1pSg}

7. See Luján (1980) for an analysis of verbs which allow clitic climbing in Spanish.

- b. El canario de Juan se me quiere escapar.
 the canary of Juan SE Cl_{DT1pSg} wants to-escape
- c. * El canario de Juan quiere escaparse.
 the canary of Juan wants to-escape-SE-Cl_{DT1pSg}
 'John's canary wants to escape from me.'
- d. La comida se me empezó a quemar.
 the food SE CL_{DT1pSg} started to burn
- f. * La comida empezó a quemarse.⁸
 the food started to burn-SE-Cl_{DT1pSg}

Of course, all the sentences in (18) with the enclitic SE, i.e. with no climbing, but without the dative are perfect, which shows that it is the presence of the dative which blocks control of embedded PRO:

- (18) a. El canario quiere escaparse.
 the canary wants to-escape-SE
- b. El canario intentó escaparse.
 the canary tried to-escape-SE
- c. La comida empezó a quemarse.
 the food started to burn-SE

If clitic climbing is a diagnose for restructuring (Rizzi 1978) it is expected that only if the latter has taken place the theme is allowed to be preverbal. This facts also argue in favor of the hypothesis that in restructuring constructions there is no PRO in subject position, but only a VP (see Wurmbrand 1997). If the dative was not in subject position and the theme could appear there, the above contrast would remain unexpected, that is, we would be facing a case of obligatory clitic climbing, maybe the only one, which should be accounted for.

One piece of evidence which seems to indicate that the dative is merged in a high position in unaccusative *se* constructions (the one usually occupied by agents) comes from the scope of adverbs like , *de nuevo*, *otra vez* «again». It has been noted (see von Stechow, 1995, among others) that these adverbs are ambiguous in the sense that they can modify the event or the (change of) state resulting from the event expressed by the predicate. This is the reason why a sentence such as (19a) has two possible readings, (19b) and (19c):

- (19) a. John broke the car again.
 b. It was the second time John breaks the car.
 c. It was the second time the car has been broken.

8. For some speakers sentences in (17 a, c, f) are no completely ungrammatical, but sensibly worse that (17b, d), so a contrast obtains anyway.

One possible structural correlation of this is that the adverb *again* can leave *John* outside its scope, if it modifies VP, or inside its scope, if it modifies EvP. Interestingly enough, the same ambiguity obtains with the sentences we are analyzing. As the glosses indicate, the adverb can leave out of its scope only the dative, not the theme or any other internal argument. So (20a) may mean that the car may have broken on someone else previously (or that someone broke it previously), but not that another car broke before. The same holds for the food burning in (20b)

- (20) a. A Juan se le ha roto el coche de nuevo.
 to John SE CL_{DT} has broken the car again
 'John's car broke on him again.'
- b. A ti se te quemó la comida y a mí se me ha quemado de nuevo.
 to you SE CL_{DT} burned the food and to me SE CL_{DT} has
 burned again
 'The food burned on you and it has burned on me again.'

As expected, one can never get this ambiguity with datives as goals: in (21c) the interpretation in which the prize was given to someone else is out, Cela must have received the Nobel prize twice :

- (21) A Cela le han dado el premio Nobel de nuevo.
 to Cela CL they-have given the Nobel prize again.

What these examples show is that the element in the nominative is always under the scope of *again*, a fact which suggests that it does not move outside VP, but behaves as (object) themes usually do.

Mendikoetxea claims that the external argument of unaccusative *se* constructions, a coindexed PRO in her approach, is associated with the causing subevent whereas the internal argument is related to the central subevent. It is interesting in this respect to note the behavior of the verb *olvidarse* 'forget'. With this verb, the only possibility is for the dative to appear, that is, there is no unaccusative *se* structure with no dative. A sentence like (22a) is ungrammatical unless interpreted as an impersonal *se* construction. This is clear from the impossibility of (22c), which can only be interpreted as unaccusative:

- (22) a. * Se olvidan las cosas.
 SE forget the things
- b. Se me olvidan las cosas.
 SE CL_{DT} forget the things
 'I forget things.'
- c. * Se olvidó traerme el libro.
 SE forgot to-bring-ME the book

If the sentence should be understood as reflexive, i.e. , as involving a PRO which is both the cause and the theme, we would not expect the dative to be obligatory, but this seems to be the case when the process is understood necessarily as involving a human argument which performs a particular action or in which the process originates. This is the case of *olvidar* «forget», which selects for a human external argument, the case of which will depend on its theta-role, that is, on it being a real causer / agent or as the «source» of the event. Interestingly enough, if this argument is understood as affected by the result of the event, we get a reflexive verb in which *se* refers to it and the theme appears in the oblique case (*me olvidé de decírtelo*, «I forgot to tell you»).

As for agreement, maybe some distinction is in order, in the line pursued by Sigurdsson (1996) and Boeckx (1997) for Icelandic (see also Chomsky, 1998), given the impossibility of structures such as (23), similar to the ones brought up by Perlmutter (1970):

- (23) a. * Te me olvidaste.
 CL_{RF} CL_{DT} forgot_{2pSg}
 ‘I forgot about you.’
- b. * Te me olvidé.
 CL_{RF} CL_{DT} forgot_{1pSg}
 ‘You forgot about me.’
- c. * Me le olvidé.
 CL_{RF} CL_{DT} forget_{1pSg}
 ‘He forgot about me.’

The ones above do not seem to be instances of the well known ME LUI constraint (Bonet, 1990) because there is no contrast between (23a) and (23b). On the other hand, we may assume they show the impossibility for person long distance agreement. For most dialects, though, there is a contrast, noted by Perlmutter with the verb *escapar*, «to escape»:

- (24) a. Te me escapaste.
 CL_{RF} CL_{DT} escaped_{2pSg}
- b. * Te me escapé.
 CL_{RF} CL_{DT} escaped_{1pSg}

That is, we can have 2nd person agreement with the theme if the dative is 1st person, but not vice versa. Note that **te le escapaste* is ungrammatical. I will leave the question open here.

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