

# Stylistic applicatives: a lens into the syntax of anticausative *SE*

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## Abstract

This paper deals with an understudied syntactic phenomenon in Chilean Spanish: stylistic applicatives. I contend that it offers evidence supporting the claim that *SE* contributes no meaning to anticausative predicates in Spanish. In these constructions, the presence or absence of *SE* does not alter the interpretation of the sentence, which shows that *SE* is devoid of semantic content. I argue that this property follows from anticausative *SE* being an expletive of the Voice projection. What makes special the stylistic applicatives pattern is that it provides syntactic material that is formally similar to *SE* and can optionally replace its role in the construction by moving into Spec,VoiceP.

**Keywords**— Anticausative markers, clitic clusters, microvariation, stylistic applicatives, Chilean Spanish

## 1 Introduction

Spanish expresses the causative alternation through two distinct mechanisms. On one hand, it features unmarked anticausative verbs, i.e., verbs that require no morphological marking to function as anticausatives. These are verbs such as *hervir* ‘boil’, *mejorar* ‘improve’ and *disminuir* ‘diminish’. The number of lexical items belonging to this class is very limited.

- (1) a. Cosmo hirvió el agua.  
Cosmo boiled.3sg the water  
‘Cosmo boiled the water.’  
b. El agua hirvió.  
the water boiled.3sg  
‘The water boiled.’

In the vast majority of cases, however, Spanish employs a marking strategy to signal the anticausative form of the verb. This is attested in the pair of sentences in (2), where the clitic form *SE* combines with the verb *abrió* ‘opened’ to form an anticausative predicate. This mechanism serves as the primary means by which anticausative constructions are generated in the language.

- (2) a. Cosmo abrió la puerta.  
Cosmo opened.3sg the door  
'Cosmo opened the door.'
- b. La puerta se abrió.  
the door SE opened.3sg  
'The door opened.'

The form *SE* appearing in (2b) belongs to the class of reflexive elements in Spanish, and serves various roles related to voice alternations (e.g., Mendikoetxea 1999, 2012, Trebisacce 2020, Fábregas 2021). Similar scenarios are attested throughout the Romance family (e.g., Dobrovie-Sorin 2017, Martin 2023). The examples in (3) illustrate the paradigm of Spanish reflexive clitics. As can be seen, *SE* functions as a third person reflexive pronoun in the language, allowing to indicate that one of the objects of the verb must be interpreted as being correferential with the grammatical subject.<sup>1</sup>

- (3) a. Yo me peino.  
1SG.NOM REFL.1SG comb.1SG  
'I comb myself.'
- b. Tú te peinas.  
2SG.NOM REFL.2SG comb.2SG  
'You comb yourself.'
- c. Él se peina.  
3SG.NOM REFL.3 comb.3SG  
'He combs himself.'
- d. Nosotros nos peinamos.  
1PL.NOM REFL.1PL comb.1PL  
'We comb ourselves.'
- e. Ellos se peinan.  
3PL.NOM REFL.3 comb.3PL  
'They comb themselves.'

In principle, the functional multiplicity of *SE* suggests two distinct ways of understanding its role in Spanish anticausative predicates. The first one involves the hypothesis reflexive and anticausative constructions have some sort of similarity at the semantic level, and that *SE* contributes the same meaning in both cases. Thus, if *SE* introduces a correferential interpretation between two arguments of the verb in reflexive sentences such as (3c) and (3e), it must be doing something very similar for the anticausative predicate in (2b). Authors like Chierchia (2004) and Koontz-Garboden (2009) hold this point of view.

Conversely, the observation that *SE* surfaces in constructions that are apparently unrelated otherwise might lead to the hypothesis that it contributes no meaning at all (at least for one of them), and that it rather serves a purely formal function. Thus, for instance, its role in anticausative predicates might be that of filling a structural slot left available by the absence of an agentive nominal phrase. This line of hypothesis has been advanced in different ways by Schäfer (2008), Pujalte & Saab (2012), Alexiadou et al. (2015) and Saab (2020), among others.

In this paper, I introduce a novel data set from Chilean Spanish that supports the claim that *SE* contributes no meaning at all to anticausative predicates. The evidence comes from the behavior of *stylistic applicatives*,

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<sup>1</sup>The paradigm in (3) omits 2PL forms, which are fully syncretic with 3PL in American Spanish, e.g., Harris (1998).

an understudied syntactic phenomenon in which a dative-like form surfaces next to a dative clitic in certain contexts. In these scenarios, anticausative *SE* becomes optional, i.e., its presence or absence does not alter the interpretation of the sentence. Crucially, the optionality of *SE* in this construction seems to rely on the availability of other elements in the syntactic representation that are formally similar to it and can, therefore, fulfil its role in anticausative constructions.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 2 presents the phenomenon of stylistic applicatives as attested in Chilean Spanish. Section 3 discusses two puzzling properties of the construction: first, it exhibits restrictions on clitic clusters that do not appear to follow from previously known constraints; second, it requires no *SE*-marking to trigger anticausative interpretations, seemingly showing that this element has no active role in determining the meaning of the construction. Section 4 offers an analysis for the phenomenon: it maintains that the pattern results from a single applicative head being pronounced as two separate clitic forms; since one of them is superficially undistinguishable from a reflexive element, it can replace anticausative *SE*, rendering this element optional. Section 5 expands the proposal to include cases where stylistic applicatives appear in predicates that are not anticausative. Finally, section 6 contains the conclusions.

## 2 The basic pattern

Spanish allows to add a non-core dative argument to a predicate (Cuervo 2003, Pujalte 2012). The relevant phenomenon is exemplified in (4), where a 1sg dative clitic is added to the verb *abrió* ‘opened’ to turn it into a ditransitive predicate. In most of the cases that will be relevant here, the clitic is interpreted as referring to an entity affected by a change of state of a theme object.

- (4) a. Cosmo abrió la puerta.  
Cosmo opened.3sg the door  
‘Cosmo opened the door.’  
b. Cosmo me abrió la puerta.  
Cosmo 1sg.DAT opened.3sg the door  
‘Cosmo opened the door for/on/to me.’

Affected datives like *me* in (4b) can co-appear with marked anticausative predicates, e.g., (5). In these cases, the anticausative marker *SE* and the dative clitic conform a clitic cluster of the form *SE+CL<sub>dat</sub>*, e.g., *se me* in (5).

- (5) Se me abrió la puerta.  
SE 1sg.DAT opened.3sg the door  
‘The door opened for/on/to me.’  
‘I unintentionally opened the door.’

As the glosses indicate, the dative argument in this construction may be interpreted as an unintentional causer of the change-of-state event denoted by the anticausative predicate. This sort of interpretation is systematic for sentences combining affected datives and anticausatives, and is attested in a variety of languages (Kallulli 2006, Schäfer 2008, Alexiadou et al. 2015).

- (6) Joannie zbił się kubek.  
Joanna.DAT broke REFL mug.NOM  
‘Joanna unintentionally broke the mug.’

*Polish*

- (7) Benit i-u thye dritarja.  
Ben.DAT DAT.CL3S-NACT broke.AOR.3S window.NOM  
'Ben unintentionally broke the window.'

*Albanian (Kallulli 2006: 274)*

- (8) Dem Peter zerbrach versehentlich die Vase.  
the.DAT John broke accidentally the.NOM vase  
'Peter accidentally broke the vase.'

*German (Schäfer 2008: 81)*

- (9) A Francesca si ruppe il vaso.  
to.DAT Francesca REFL broke the.NOM vase  
'Francesca unintentionally caused the vase to break.'

*Italian (Alexiadou et al. 2015: 45)*

The Spanish variety spoken in Central Chile also displays the pattern in (5), but it further has the option to convey the same meaning in two alternative ways. The first variant is through a sequence of clitics of the form  $CL_{dat}+LE$ , that seemingly replaces the anticausative marker  $SE$  for the form  $LE$ , which is traditionally the exponent corresponding to a 3sg dative clitic in the language, e.g., (10a). The second option involves a cluster of the form  $SE+CL_{dat}+LE$ , in which anticausative  $SE$  and  $LE$  appear together, e.g., (10b). In both cases, the dative clitic  $CL_{dat}$  is a pronoun referring to the affected entity, while  $LE$  is an invariable element that exhibits no referential property.

- (10) a. Me le abrió la puerta.  
1sg.DAT LE opened.3sg the door  
'The door opened for/on/to me.'  
'I unintentionally opened the door.'
- b. Se me le abrió la puerta.  
SE 1sg.DAT LE opened.3sg the door

There are very few mentions of this phenomenon in the linguistic literature. It was first reported by Kany (1945: 139), and it was later alluded to by Oroz (1966: 174) and Campos (1999: 1571); Silva-Corvalán (2005) discusses the pattern from a sociopragmatic point of view. Kany introduces it as "indefinite redundant  $LE$ ". This denomination assimilates the patterns in (10) to what he calls "redundant  $LE$ ", i.e., instances of dative clitic doubling. Given that  $LE$  in examples like those in (10) does not seem to be "redundant" (i.e., coreferential) with any other element in the sentence, and considering that it introduces no new meaning when compared to the base example in (5), I will refer to it simply as *stylistic LE*.

Stylistic  $LE$  is a non-standard grammatical phenomenon in Chilean Spanish. Its usage is stigmatized from a prescriptive point of view as it is traditionally associated with low levels of education. For instance, Oroz characterizes it as being "more common in working-class environments than among well-educated individuals" (1966: 376). The study by Silva-Corvalán (2005) seems to confirm this sociolinguistic distribution, as it identifies the relevant patterns in the speech of adult individuals who have not completed elementary school. However, in recent years, the construction has seemingly extended to the informal speech of young speakers of Central Chile, irrespective of their educational background; a thorough study is necessary to corroborate this informal observation.

As mentioned, patterns like (10) may arise in contexts combining  $SE$ -marked anticausatives and affected datives. Thus, all verbs that participate in the causative alternation in (2), e.g., *romper* 'break', *hundir* 'sink', are able to host them. As shown in (11) and (12), these verbs not only employ the standard  $SE+CL_{dat}$

clitic cluster combination, e.g., (11a) and (12a), but also may exhibit the patterns involving stylistic *LE*, i.e., *CL<sub>dat</sub>+LE*, e.g., (11b) and (12b), and *SE+CL<sub>dat</sub>+LE*, e.g., (11c) and (12c).

- (11) a. Se me rompió la radio.  
SE 1SG.DAT broke.3SG the radio  
'The radio broke for/on/to me.'  
'I unintentionally broke the radio.'
- b. Me le rompió la radio.  
1SG.DAT LE broke.3SG the radio
- c. Se me le rompió la radio.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE broke.3SG the radio
- (12) a. Se me hundió el bote.  
SE 1SG.DAT sank.3SG the boat  
'The boat sank for/on/to me.'  
'I unintentionally sank the boat.'
- b. Me le hundió el bote.  
DAT.1SG LE sank.3SG the boat
- c. Se me le hundió el bote.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE sank.3SG the boat

The alternation may also be attested with a small series of unaccusative verbs that may combine with *SE* to acquire an inchoative interpretation, e.g., *caer* 'fall', *morir* 'die'.

- (13) a. Se me cayeron las llaves.  
SE 1SG.DAT fell.3PL the keys  
'The keys fell for/on/to me.'  
'I unintentionally dropped the keys.'
- b. Me le cayeron las llaves.  
1SG.DAT LE fell.3PL the keys
- c. Se me le cayeron las llaves.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE fell.3PL the keys
- (14) a. Se me murió la planta.  
SE 1SG.DAT died.3SG the plant  
'The plant died for/on/to me.'  
'I unintentionally killed the plant.'
- b. Me le murió la planta.  
1SG.DAT LE died.3SG the plant
- c. Se me le murió la planta.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE died.3SG the plant

Lastly, stylistic *LE* also appears with psych-verbs formed with *SE* that have a dative experiencer, e.g., *olvidarse* 'forget' and *ocurrirse* 'occur'. These predicates behave like type III psych-verbs in the classification of Belletti & Rizzi (1988), i.e., they are unaccusative. The key property distinguishing them from prototypical type III predicates is that they are dynamic rather than stative (Fábregas & Marín 2020).

- (15) a. Se me olvidó eso.  
SE 1SG.DAT forgot.3SG that  
'I forgot that.'
- b. Me le olvidó eso.  
1SG.DAT LE forgot.3SG that
- c. Se me le olvidó eso.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE forgot.3SG that
- (16) a. Se me ocurrió una idea.  
SE 1SG.DAT occurred.3SG a idea  
'An idea occurred to me.'
- b. Me le ocurrió una idea.  
1SG.DAT LE occurred.3SG a idea
- c. Se me le ocurrió una idea.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE occurred.3SG a idea

Other grammatical contexts do not admit the stylistic *LE* alternation. Thus, for instance, verbs whose lexical entry includes the reflexive element *SE* but have an external argument, e.g., *quejarse* 'complain', also allow to create clitic clusters of the form *SE+CL<sub>dat</sub>*, just as all examples discussed so far. However, introducing *LE* in these configurations produces unacceptable outcomes, i.e., replacing the sequence *se me* in (17a) for the clusters *me le* as in (17b) or *se me le* as in (17c) leads to ungrammaticality.

- (17) a. Cosmo se me quejó.  
Cosmo SE 1SG.DAT complained.3SG  
'Cosmo complained to me.'
- b. \*Cosmo me le quejó (a mí).  
Cosmo 1SG.DAT LE complained.3SG to me
- c. \*Cosmo se me le quejó (a mí).  
Cosmo SE 1SG.DAT LE complained.3SG to me

The same effect is attested with other grammatical configurations that surface as *SE+CL<sub>dat</sub>* but do not combine marked anticausatives and affected datives. For example, the sentence in (18a) exhibits an instance of impersonal *SE* plus a core argumental dative.<sup>2</sup> Just as before, replacing the sequence *se me* in this example for *me le* or *se me le* leads to deviant results, e.g., (18b) and (18c).

- (18) a. No se me dio ni un peso.  
not SE DAT.1SG gave.3SG not.even a peso  
'No money was given to me.'
- b. \*No me le dio ni un peso.  
not DAT.1SG LE gave.3SG not.even a peso
- c. \*No se me le dio ni un peso.  
not SE DAT.1SG LE gave.3SG not.even a peso

<sup>2</sup>See Pujalte (2012) for discussion on the distinction between argumental and non-argumental datives in Spanish.

The restrictions attested in (17) and (18) demonstrate that stylistic *LE* is not merely a surface phenomenon based on the phonological properties of certain clitic clusters. Instead, it seems to rely on grammatical mechanisms accessing core aspects of the underlying syntactic representation.

The distribution of stylistic *LE* is further constrained by the  $\varphi$ -features of the corresponding dative argument. That is, the alternation is only attested with 1SG and 2SG dative clitics, e.g., (19) and (20). All other dative pronouns reject the presence of stylistic *LE*. This is illustrated in (21) for 3SG, (22) for 1PL, and (23) for both 2PL and 3PL (which are syncretic in American Spanish).

- (19) a. Se me cerró la ventana.  
SE 1SG.DAT closed.3SG the window  
'The window closed for/on/to me.'  
'I unintentionally closed the window.'
- b. Me le cerró la ventana.  
1SG.DAT LE closed.3SG the window
- c. Se me le cerró la ventana.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE closed.3SG the window
- (20) a. Se te cerró la ventana.  
SE 2SG.DAT closed.3SG the window  
'The window closed for/on/to you.'  
'You unintentionally closed the window.'
- b. Te le cerró la ventana.  
2SG.DAT LE closed.3SG the window
- c. Se te le cerró la ventana.  
SE 2SG.DAT LE closed.3SG the window
- (21) a. Se le cerró la ventana.  
SE 3SG.DAT closed.3SG the window  
'The window closed for/on/to her/him.'  
'She/he unintentionally closed the window.'
- b. \*Le le cerró la ventana.  
3SG.DAT LE closed.3SG the window
- c. \*Se le le cerró la ventana.  
SE 3SG.DAT LE closed.3SG the window
- (22) a. Se nos cerró la ventana.  
SE 1PL.DAT closed.3SG the window  
'The window closed for/on/to us.'  
'We unintentionally closed the window.'
- b. \*Nos le cerró la ventana.  
1PL.DAT LE closed.3SG the window
- c. \*Se nos le cerró la ventana.  
SE 1PL.DAT LE closed.3SG the window
- (23) a. Se les cerró la ventana.  
SE 2/3PL.DAT closed.3SG the window  
'The window closed for/on/to you/them.'  
'You/they unintentionally closed the window.'

- b. \* Les le cerró la ventana.  
2/3PL.DAT LE closed.3SG the window
- c. \* Se les le cerró la ventana.  
SE 2/3PL.DAT LE closed.3SG the window

For completeness, the data in (24) illustrate two properties of stylistic *LE* patterns that are also attested with standard object clitics. First, while all cases of stylistic *LE* exemplified so far occupy proclitic positions, this element can also be enclitic; the sentence in (24a) shows that the cluster containing stylistic *LE* becomes enclitic when associated to a non-finite verb. Second, the referential dative pronoun appearing together with stylistic *LE* can be doubled, e.g., (24b); since the dative pronoun can only be 1SG or 2SG, the doubling patterns are restricted to the phrases *a mí* ‘to me’ or *a tí/voh* ‘to you’.

- (24) a. Van a caer-te-le las llaves.  
go.3PL to fall-2SG.DAT-LE the keys  
‘The keys will fall for/on/to you.’  
‘You will unintentionally drop the keys.’
- b. A mí se me le ocurrió la idea.  
DAT me SE 1SG.DAT LE occurred.3SG the idea  
‘The idea occurred to me.’

The examples presented thus far illustrate the basic pattern and distribution of stylistic *LE*. The next section discusses in some depth two puzzling properties emerging from these data.

### 3 Two analytical challenges

There are two intriguing characteristics of stylistic *LE* that a proper analysis should aim to capture. First, the phenomenon displays restrictions based on the  $\varphi$ -features of the dative argument, e.g., (21) to (23), that do not seem to follow from any known grammatical principle; in particular, there is no obvious reason for the sequence *nos le* in (22) to trigger ungrammaticality. Second, while anticausative sentences incorporating stylistic *LE* always have the same interpretation, the anticausative marker *SE* is not required to surface in them; this suggests that *SE* has no defining role in determining the meaning of anticausative predicates. These aspects are developed in detail in the following subsections.

#### 3.1 Restrictions based on the features of the dative argument

As shown in the examples from (19) to (23), the dative clitic immediately preceding stylistic *LE* can only bear 1SG or 2SG features; if the dative clitic is 3SG, 1PL or 2/3PL, the pattern yields unacceptable results. The relevant distribution is illustrated in simplified form in (25).

- (25) a. (Se) me le  
SE 1SG.DAT LE
- b. (Se) te le  
SE 2SG.DAT LE
- c. \* (Se) le le  
SE 3SG.DAT LE



- d. \* (Se) nos le  
SE 1PL.DAT LE
- e. \* (Se) les le  
SE 2/3PL.DAT LE

A null hypothesis regarding this distribution is that it follows from general syntactic constraints applying on clitic clusters rather than on specific properties of the construction. To begin with, some of the unacceptable patterns in (25) could be accounted for in terms of syntactic haplology, i.e., a ban against adjacent identical elements (van Riemsdijk 2008, Nevins 2012, Neeleman & van de Koot 2017, i.a.). Neeleman & van de Koot (2017) discuss several examples of this restriction. One of them, originally observed by Bonet (1995), involves the Italian data in (26). Basically, the examples in (26a) and (26b) suggest that the impersonal clitic pronoun *si* and the reflexive clitic *se/si* should be able to form the sequence *si si*.<sup>3</sup> However, this cluster is unacceptable, e.g., (26c), arguably because these elements are too similar to surface one next to the other within the same clitic cluster. Instead, the relevant meaning is expressed through the sequence *ci si* in (26d).

- (26) a. Lo si sveglia.  
him one wakes.up  
'One wakes him up.'
- b. Se lo compra.  
self it buys  
'He/she buys it for himself/herself.'
- c. \* Si si lava.  
one self washes  
'One washes oneself.'
- d. Ci si lava.  
we self washes  
'One washes oneself.'

The unacceptability of the Chilean Spanish clusters *le le* in (25c) and *les le* in (25e) could be accounted for in an analogous fashion. That is, these cases might be deviant simply because they contain sequences of two clitics that are “too similar” to each other, i.e., stylistic *LE* cannot be adjacent to a third person dative clitic because they are identical in some relevant regard. As noticed by Bonet (1995), among others, the identity criterion at play here cannot be formulated in phonological terms only. In the absence of a more precise definition, the fact that both elements are clitics associated to the realization of a non-core dative argument should suffice to consider them identical.

If (25c) and (25e) can be ruled-out in terms of syntactic haplology, accounting for the distribution of stylistic *LE* in (25) reduces to explain the unacceptability of *nos le* in (25d). This is where the problem becomes particularly challenging, as there seems to be no known constraint allowing to capture both the unacceptability of *nos le* in (25d) and the acceptability of *me le* in (25a). To illustrate the complexity of the issue, consider the (weak version of the) *Person Case Constraint* (PCC), a well known condition on clitic clusters.

- (27) PERSON CASE CONSTRAINT (Bonet 1991: 181)

In a combination of a weak direct object and an indirect object, if there is a third person it has to be the direct object.

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<sup>3</sup>As noticed by Bonet (1995: 609), the difference in vowel quality between (26b) and (26c), i.e., the reflexive being pronounced as *si* instead of *se*, is irrelevant to the issue under discussion.

The PCC successfully captures the unacceptability of a sequence of clitics the form *nos le* in ditransitive constructions, as the cluster involves a first person direct object (i.e., *nos*) and a third person indirect object (i.e., *le*).

- (28) \*Ella nos le recomendó.  
 she 1PL.ACC 3SG.DAT recommended  
 ‘She recommended us to her/him.’

However, the PCC cannot be the restriction behind the unacceptability of *nos le* in (25d). If this was the case, the analysis would wrongly predict the ungrammaticality of *me le* in (25a) as well. That is, since *me le* also incorporates a first person direct object (i.e., *me*) and a third person indirect object (i.e., *le*), it violates the PCC too, e.g., (29). Therefore, sentences containing this sequence of clitics should be as ungrammatical as sentences containing *nos le*. Thus, the PCC does not capture the acceptability contrast between (25a) and (25d).

- (29) \*Ella me le recomendó.  
 she 1SG.ACC 3SG.DAT recommended  
 ‘She recommended me to her/him.’

Rivero (2008) proposes a further condition governing the functioning of clitic clusters: the *Quirky Person Restriction*. It establishes that first and second person reflexives cannot combine with third person dative clitics. She illustrates the effects of this constraint with examples involving plural reflexives: as can be seen in (30a), pairing the third person reflexive clitic *se* and the third person dative clitic *le* is fully acceptable in Spanish; however, if the reflexive is instead the 1PL form *nos*, as in (30b), the result is deviant. Given that Rivero’s constraint precludes the formation of a clitic cluster of the form *nos le*, it could be responsible for the unacceptability of (25d).

- (30) a. A Cosmo se le olvidaron ellos.  
 DAT COSMO 3.REFL 3SG.DAT forgot.3PL they.NOM  
 ‘Cosmo forgot about them.’  
 b. \*A Cosmo nos le olvidamos nosotros.  
 DAT COSMO 1PL.REFL 3SG.DAT forgot.1PL we.NOM  
 ‘Cosmo forgot about us.’

However, just as the PCC before, the Quirky Person Restriction does not allow to explain the acceptability contrast between (25a) and (25d). While Rivero’s observations are based on data involving plural reflexives only, the restriction she proposes should apply as well to 1sg and 2sg reflexives. In particular, it correctly predicts that the 1sg reflexive *me* cannot combine with *le*, e.g., (31). Since this prediction is incorrect for *me le* in (25a), it follows that the Quirky Person Restriction is not the principle behind the distribution of stylistic *LE*.

- (31) \*A Cosmo me le olvidé yo.  
 DAT COSMO 1SG.REFL 3SG.DAT forgot.1SG I.NOM  
 ‘Cosmo forgot about me.’

The interim conclusion seems to be that the distribution of stylistic *LE* is, at least partially, governed by construction-specific criteria rather than by general restrictions on clitic clusters. In particular, this means that a proper analytical proposal should aim to capture the ungrammaticality of (25d) as a result of the morphosyntactic properties of the construction.

### 3.2 Optionality of *SE*

As mentioned in the introduction, a line of analysis for anticausative *SE* involves the assumption that this element is responsible for the anticausative interpretation of the predicate. A specific implementation of this intuition is due to Chierchia (2004) and Koontz-Garboden (2009). The core idea of their proposal is that anticausative predicates obtain through a process of reflexivization. That is, they maintain that the relation between a causative verb and its anticausative counterpart is identical to the relation between transitive and reflexive predicates: it is mediated by the semantic contribution of a reflexive element such as *SE*.

Reflexivization can be understood as a semantic operation that co-identifies two arguments of a predicate. Thus, a reflexive element like *SE* would take as an argument a relation  $\mathfrak{R}$  between two elements and return the set of pairs in which these elements are identical. Koontz-Garboden (2009: 83) formalizes this idea as in (32).

$$(32) \quad \llbracket se \rrbracket = \lambda \mathfrak{R}. \lambda x. \mathfrak{R}(x, x)$$

To exemplify, consider the causative form of the verb *abrir* ‘open’. As can be seen in (33), it denotes a relation between two arguments  $x$  and  $y$ , in which some action or property  $\beta$  of  $y$  causes  $x$  to be open.

$$(33) \quad \llbracket abrir \rrbracket = \lambda x. \lambda y. \exists \beta [\beta(y) \text{ causes open}(x)] \quad \text{causative verb}$$

According to the theory of Chierchia (2004) and Koontz-Garboden (2009), the semantic contribution of *SE* equates to co-identifying both arguments. That is, the anticausative marker is an element that takes the externally caused event in (33) and turns it into the internally caused event in (34), in which some relevant property of the theme argument  $x$  is interpreted as playing a role in the change of state of  $x$ .

$$(34) \quad \llbracket abrirse \rrbracket = \lambda x. \exists \beta [\beta(x) \text{ causes open}(x)] \quad \text{anticausative verb}$$

As a result, an anticausative sentence like (2b), repeated for convenience in (35), receives a reading akin to “some property of the door caused it to become open”.

- (35) La puerta se abrió.  
       the door SE opened.3SG  
       ‘The door opened.’

This theory elegantly derives both the semantics of anticausative predicates and the observation that reflexive and anticausative morphological markings tend to be the same. In particular, the explanation relies on the semantic import of a constituent appearing in both types of construction.

This proposal encounters a significant problem when applied to examples involving stylistic *LE*. As discussed, this element surfaces with marked anticausative predicates; this is corroborated by the fact that all relevant examples allow interpreting the dative argument as an unintentional causer, e.g., (36). Despite this, the sentence in (36b) does not exhibit the reflexive element *SE* that is supposed to be responsible for its anticausative interpretation. Therefore, it provides straightforward evidence against the meaningful *SE* thesis.

- (36) a. Se me abrió la puerta.  
       SE 1SG.DAT opened.3SG the door  
       ‘The door opened for/on/to me.’  
       ‘I unintentionally opened the door.’

- b. Me le abrió la puerta.  
1SG.DAT LE opened.3SG the door
- c. Se me le abrió la puerta.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE opened.3SG the door

In principle, the theory by Chierchia (2004) and Koontz-Garboden (2009) could deal with the absence of *SE* in (36b) by assuming that the reflexive element in this sentence is phonologically null. Chierchia (2004: 41–42) argues that in anticausative predicates with no *SE*-marking “the reflexive operator is lexically incorporated into the meaning of the verb without any morphological reflex”. In principle, this idea accounts for verbs such as *hervir* ‘boil’ in (1) or *mejorar* ‘improve’ in (37), which participate in the causative alternation without introducing any morphological markings in the anticausative variant. That is, the anticausative interpretation of (37b) obtains from a null reflexive that has been integrated into the semantics of the verb.<sup>4</sup>

- (37) a. Los dueños de la empresa mejoraron los sueldos.  
the owners of the company improved.3SG the salaries  
‘The owners of the company improved the salaries.’
- b. Los sueldos mejoraron.  
the salaries improved.3PL  
‘The salaries improved.’

The same type of logic could be applied to account for (36b): perhaps *SE* does not surface in this example because its anticausative meaning is already incorporated into the verb.

This solution, however, is inadequate for the stylistic *LE* phenomenon. Since every verb participating in the alternation displays the three variants exemplified in (36), then null reflexives would have to be optional in order to account for the systematic presence/absence of *SE* in examples such as (36b) and (36c), i.e., a verb like *abrir* ‘open’ in (36) should have the option to form anticausative predicates with and without *SE*. This kind of optionality does not fit the behavior of anticausative predicates in Spanish: anticausative verbs either require *SE* or they do not. For instance, verbs like *mejorar* ‘improve’, which do not need *SE* to form an anticausative predicate, typically reject the presence of this marker, e.g., (38).

- (38) \* Los sueldos se mejoraron.  
the salaries SE improved.3PL  
‘The salaries improved.’

Similarly, verbs like *quebrar* ‘crack’, whose anticausative variants exhibit *SE*, cannot form anticausative predicates without this element, e.g., (39).

- (39) a. Cosmo quebró el florero.  
Cosmo cracked.3SG the flower.vase  
‘Cosmo cracked the flower vase.’
- b. \* El florero quebró.  
the flower.vase cracked.3SG  
‘The flower vase cracked.’

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<sup>4</sup>This aspect of the theory is part of Chierchia’s (2004) version. In Koontz-Garboden’s (2009) implementation, only *SE*-marked anticausatives involve reflexivization.

- c. El florero se quebró.  
the flower.vase SE cracked.3sg  
'The flower vase cracked.'

Thus, both types of verb belong to well-defined classes. Assuming that examples such as (36b) incorporate null reflexives in the same way as unmarked anticausatives do goes against this observation.

Moreover, if unmarked anticausatives and stylistic *LE* sentences without *SE* were similar in that they have a null reflexive, then the former should be able to participate in the stylistic *LE* alternation. This is not borne out. Only *SE*-marked verbs license stylistic *LE* can do it, e.g., (40). Verbs such as *mejorar* 'improve' cannot participate in the alternation, no matter *SE* surfaces or not in the predicate, e.g., (41b).

- (40) a. Se me quebró el florero.  
SE 1sg.DAT cracked.3sg the flower.vase  
'The flower vase cracked for/on/to me.'  
'I unintentionally cracked the flower vase.'
- b. Me le quebró el florero.  
1sg.DAT LE cracked.3sg the flower.vase
- c. Se me le quebró el florero.  
SE 1sg.DAT LE cracked.3sg the flower.vase
- (41) a. \*Se me mejoró el sueldo.  
SE 1sg.DAT improved.3sg the salary  
'The salary improved for/on/to me.'
- b. \*Me le mejoró el sueldo.  
1sg.DAT LE improved.3sg the salary
- c. \*Se me le mejoró el sueldo.  
SE 1sg.DAT LE improved.3sg the salary

Further evidence that unmarked anticausatives are different from examples such as (36b) comes from the peculiar behavior of the verb *hervir* 'boil'. As already shown in (1), repeated for convenience in (42), this verb does not require *SE* to participate in the causative alternation.

- (42) a. Cosmo hirvió el agua.  
Cosmo boiled.3sg the water  
'Cosmo boiled the water.'
- b. El agua hirvió.  
the water boiled.3sg  
'The water boiled.'

However, it is marginally possible to add *SE* to it to produce an anticausative predicate, e.g., (43). Thus, this element does seem to exhibit some optionality regarding the overtness of its anticausative marking.

- (43) ?El agua se hirvió.  
the water SE boiled.3sg  
'The water boiled.'

Both anticausative predicates in (42b) and (43) may combine with affected datives with different results: only the *SE*-marked variant triggers the unintentional causer interpretation.<sup>5</sup> Unmarked anticausatives combined with affected datives never make this reading available in Spanish.

- (44) a. Me hirvió el agua.  
 1SG.DAT boiled.3SG the water  
 ‘The water boiled for/on/to me.’  
 b. Se me hirvió el agua.  
 SE 1SG.DAT boiled.3SG the water  
 ‘The water boiled for/on/to me.’  
 ‘I unintentionally boiled the water.’

Since (44b) combines anticausative *SE* and an affected dative, it should be able to participate in the stylistic *LE* alternation, e.g., (45). Interestingly enough, the variant that does not include *SE* in (45a) is interpreted just as if *SE* was part of its structure, i.e., it is synonymous with (44b) rather than (44a). This, once again, proves that examples such as (45a) cannot be equated with unmarked anticausatives and, therefore, they do not involve null reflexives.

- (45) a. Me le hirvió el agua.  
 1SG.DAT LE boiled.3SG the water  
 ‘The water boiled for/on/to me.’  
 ‘I unintentionally boiled the water.’  
 b. Se me le hirvió el agua.  
 SE 1SG.DAT LE boiled.3SG the water

To sum up, the anticausative marker *SE* is optional with stylistic *LE*: the construction preserves the same interpretation no matter this element is present or not in the sentence. This posits a straightforward challenge to any theory that hinges on the assumption that *SE* is an essential component of anticausative semantics.

## 4 Proposal

The conclusion of the previous section allows to posit a very plain conjecture: if there are sentences that have the same interpretation with and without anticausative *SE*, then it must be the case that this element is devoid of meaning. In other words, the optionality of *SE* in pairs such as (40b) and (40c) suggests that *SE* is a semantically vacuous marker fulfilling a purely formal role in anticausative predicates. This section develops an analysis of the stylistic *LE* phenomenon along these lines.

In principle, the analysis will focus on verbs that participate in the causative alternation through *SE*-marking, e.g., (11) and (12). Section 5 will discuss later how the proposal can be extended to account for unaccusatives verbs with *SE*, e.g., (13) and (14), and for psychological predicates combining dative experiencers and *SE*, e.g., (15) and (16).

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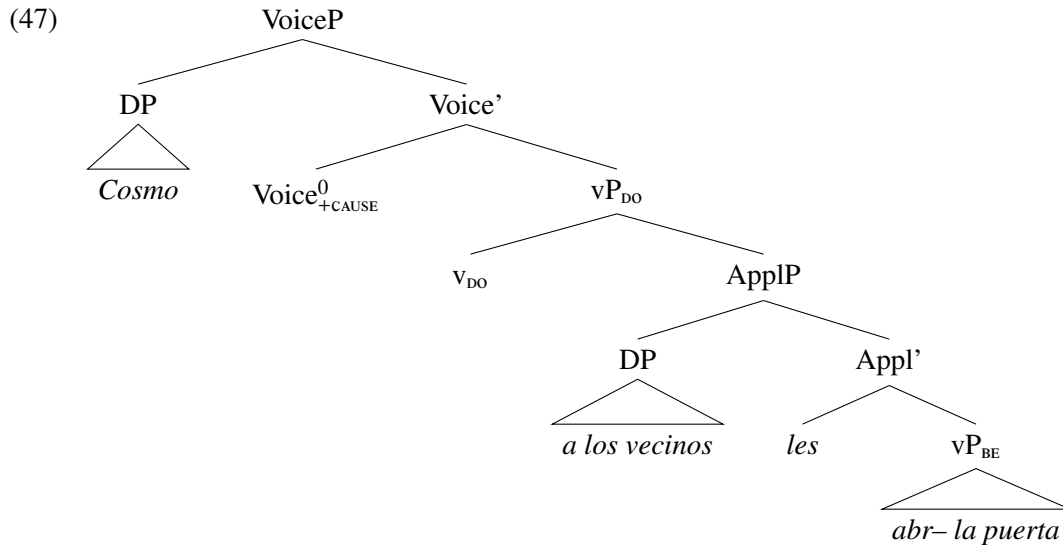
<sup>5</sup>The subjects in the examples in (44) are postverbal. This is because the SV order in the first sentence, i.e., *el agua me hirvió*, has the preferred interpretation of ‘the water boiled me’. While this reading is still available in (44a), it is less salient and allows for an easier inspection of the relevant meaning.

## 4.1 Assumptions

I take that non-core dative arguments in Spanish are introduced through applicative heads (Cuervo 2003, Pujalte 2012, i.a.). According to this, a dative DP expressing a non-core argument merges in the specifier position of a projection ApplP; the dative clitic associated to this DP is the realization of the functional head Appl<sup>0</sup>. The interpretation of these elements depends on the position of ApplP in the syntactic spine. In particular, dative arguments interpreted as affected entities are *high applicatives* in the terminology of Pykkänen (2008), i.e., they result from ApplP dominating the lexical projection of the verb. More generally, I adopt the scheme proposed by Cuervo (2003: 113) as the basic blueprint for predicates with affected datives. To illustrate, take the sentence in (46).

- (46) Cosmo les abrió la puerta a los vecinos.  
 Cosmo 3PL.DAT open.3SG the door DAT the neighbors  
 ‘Cosmo opened the door for the neighbors.’

The structure in (47) depicts the analysis of this example according to Cuervo (2003). As can be seen, the applicative head surfacing as the 3PL dative clitic *les* combines with a vP<sub>BE</sub> denoting a state (i.e., the door being open), while ApplP is selected by a head v<sub>DO</sub> introducing a dynamic subevent; the combination of v<sub>DO</sub> and v<sub>BE</sub> result in the bi-eventive configuration proper of causative predicates.



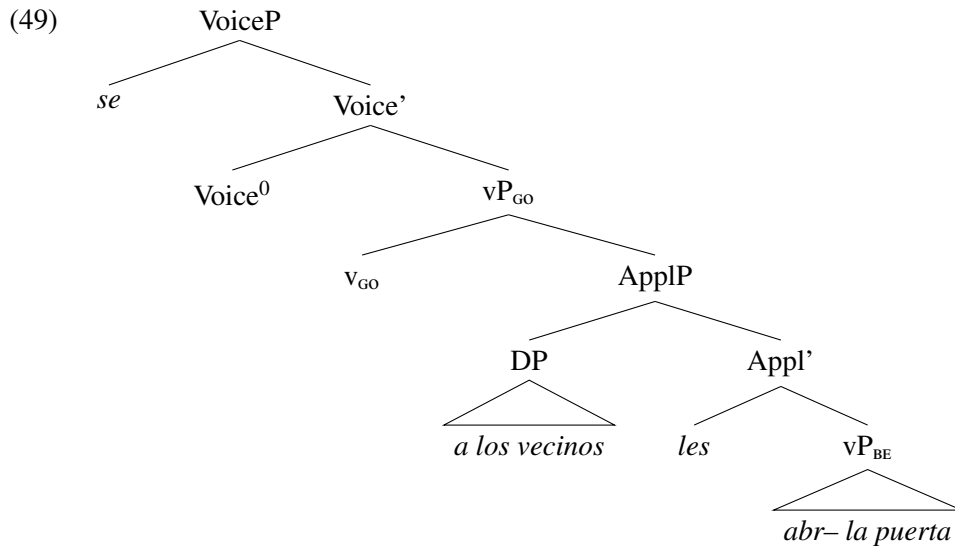
To discuss the structure of anticausative predicates, take the sentence in (48), which replaces the subject *Cosmo* in (46) for the anticausative marker *SE*.

- (48) Se les abrió la puerta a los vecinos.  
 SE 3PL.DAT open.3SG the door DAT the neighbors  
 ‘The door opened for/on/to the neighbors.’  
 ‘The neighbors unintentionally opened the door.’

The hypothesis to explore here is that the anticausative marker is devoid of semantic content and contributes no meaning to this sentence; instead, it merely satisfies a formal requirement of anticausative predicates. This assimilates the functioning of anticausative markers to that of expletive pronouns, i.e., both are dummy objects whose only purpose is to fill a slot in the syntactic representation. Such an approach to anticausative

markers has been advanced in different ways by Schäfer (2008), Pujalte & Saab (2012), Wood (2014), Alexiadou et al. (2015), Saab (2020), among others; for concreteness, I will adapt the theory in Schäfer (2008) for the remainder discussion.

Schäfer's (2008) theory revolves around the properties of the VoiceP projection. As is known, Voice is a functional head that introduces a causer in its specifier position (Kratzer 1996). For instance, for the proper noun *Cosmo* to be understood as the agent of (46a), it needs to be selected as the specifier of VoiceP as shown in (47b). According to Schäfer (2008) and other authors, anticausative predicates recruit a semantically vacuous instance of Voice, i.e., they contain a version of the head that does not introduce a causer. Such a dummy version of Voice, however, still requires a constituent in its specifier position due to its purely formal subcategorization features. By assumption, a reflexive pronoun is introduced in this position as an expletive element; Schäfer (2008) speculates that reflexives are particularly well-suited to fulfil this function as they are inherently non-referential. Thus, according to the assumptions adopted so far, an anticausative predicate like the one in (48) receives the schematic analysis in (49b), with the reflexive *SE* being inserted in the specifier position of VoiceP.<sup>6</sup>



Notice that the scheme in (49) also differs from (47) in terms of the higher vP layer in the structure. That is, while (47) includes a head  $v_{DO}$ , (49) incorporates  $v_{GO}$  in the same position. In Cuervo's (2003) system,  $v_{GO}$  introduces a subevent of change. While appearing typically in unaccusative predicates,  $v_{GO}$  may combine with  $v_{BE}$  as in (49) to compose inchoative events.

A final assumption concerns the meanings arising from the representation in (49). I take that the non-core dative argument in this structure can be interpreted either as an affected entity (i.e., with the reading 'the door opened for the neighbors'), or as an unintentional causer (i.e., with the reading 'the neighbors unintentionally opened the door'). This clarification is necessary as authors like Cuervo (2003, 2020) and Schäfer (2008) conjecture that these interpretations stem from two distinct syntactic structures. While such hypothesis could be compatible with the proposal to be developed here, adopting it would increase the complexity of the analysis without gaining any empirical coverage.

<sup>6</sup>The structure in (49) departs from Cuervo's (2003) assumptions in two regards. First, she takes *SE* to be the realization of the head  $v_{GO}$ . Second, she maintains that  $vP_{GO}$  does not require a VoiceP projection. This latter claim seems compatible with the idea that anticausatives incorporate a semantically vacuous flavor of Voice<sup>0</sup>: in both cases, the causer-introducing meaning is absent from the representation.



Consider the sentences in (50). As can be seen, they are all ambiguous between the two interpretations.

- (50) a. Se me cae la caja.  
SE 1SG.DAT falls.3SG the box  
'The box falls for/on/to me.'  
'I am unintentionally dropping the box.'
- b. Me le cae la caja.  
1SG.DAT LE falls.3SG the box
- c. Se me le cae la caja.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE falls.3SG the box

While the verb *caer* 'fall' in (50) allows the 1sg dative pronoun *me* to be interpreted as an unintentional causer, this reading can be blocked by simply replacing the DP *la caja* 'the box' with the DP *el pelo* 'the hair', as in (51).

- (51) a. Se me cae el pelo.  
SE 1SG.DAT falls.3SG the hair  
'My hair is falling.'
- b. Me le cae el pelo.  
1SG.DAT LE falls.3SG the hair
- c. Se me le cae el pelo.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE falls.3SG the hair

The examples in (51) are not ambiguous. If the relevant interpretations relied on different underlying structures, then the unavailability of one of the readings should follow from the ungrammaticality of the corresponding syntactic representation. However, there is no obvious reason why replacing the lexical content of a DP would trigger ungrammaticality. The absence of the relevant interpretation in (51) rather seems to stem from world knowledge: the unintentional causer reading is unavailable in (51) simply because such a meaning would be implausible, as hair loss is a spontaneous process. Thus, what determines the ambiguity of examples such as (50) is not their syntax, but what pragmatics can do with the compositional meaning of a structure such as (49).<sup>7</sup> In fact, it is possible to recover the unintentional causer reading in (51) by simply adding some more context to the utterance: if one imagines a scenario in which the speaker carries a bag full of hair, then these sentences could be interpreted as 'I unintentionally drop the hair'. Overall, the case for positing a distinct syntactic structure for the unintentional causer reading seems somewhat weak when considering the formal properties of the construction (at least for the Spanish data).

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<sup>7</sup>A similar effect can be observed with idiomatic expressions using the verb *caer* 'fall', as in (i). In these examples, the predicate triggers an interpretation akin to a psych-verb, in which the dative argument is interpreted as the experiencer. Notably, the unintentional causer reading is also blocked here, even though the corresponding syntactic structures are arguably parallel to those in (50) in the relevant aspects.

- (i) a. Se me cae la cara de la vergüenza.  
SE 1SG.DAT falls.3SG the face of the shame  
'I am so embarrassed.'
- b. Me le cae la cara de la vergüenza.  
1SG.DAT LE falls.3SG the face of the shame
- c. Se me le cae la cara de la vergüenza.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE falls.3SG the face of the shame

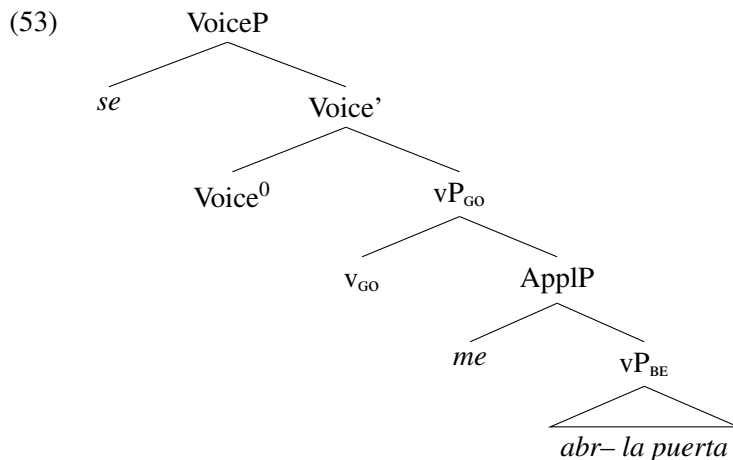
There are also practical reasons to disregard a separate syntactic representation for unintentional causers. On one hand, the fact that a sentence can receive this type of interpretation is completely orthogonal to the stylistic *LE* phenomenon: as seen in previous examples, the alternation applies no matter this reading is available or not. On the other hand, this assumption would make the analysis unnecessarily more complex. Consider the following. The formal contrasts attested in (51) already requires positing three underlying grammatical representations capturing each of the alternatives. If the ambiguity of each sentence is also to be explained in grammatical terms, then the pattern would require six distinct structural analyses. This move would be justified if it allowed to capture some property of the construction but, as discussed, there seems to be no obvious empirical gain on pursuing this path.

## 4.2 *LE* as an applicative marker

Let's consider again the initial data in (5) and (10), repeated for convenience in (52). As discussed, General Spanish generates a clitic cluster of the form *SE+CL<sub>dat</sub>* in contexts combining marked anticausatives and affected datives, e.g., *se me* in (52a). Chilean Spanish has two further ways of expressing the same meaning: a cluster *CL<sub>dat</sub>+LE*, e.g., *me le* in (52b), or a cluster *SE+CL<sub>dat</sub>+LE*, e.g., *se me le* in (52c).

- (52) a. *Se me abrió la puerta.*  
 SE 1SG.DAT opened.3SG the door  
 'The door opened for/on/to me.'  
 'I unintentionally opened the door.'
- b. *Me le abrió la puerta.*  
 1SG.DAT LE opened.3SG the door  
 'The door opened for/on/to me.'  
 'I unintentionally opened the door.'
- c. *Se me le abrió la puerta.*  
 SE 1SG.DAT LE opened.3SG the door

The system depicted throughout subsection 4.1 allows to posit a syntactic analysis for (52a) in the same lines as (49). The relevant structure is depicted in (53). As can be seen, the 1sg clitic pronoun *me* is the realization of the applicative head, while *SE* is inserted in Spec,VoiceP to satisfy the subcategorization features of Voice<sup>0</sup>.



To account for the patterns in (52b) and (52c), it is necessary first to advance a hypothesis about what *LE* is in this type of sentences. There are a few clues that might lead to an answer. As already discussed, stylistic *LE* seems to contribute no meaning to the sentence. While it resembles a 3sg dative pronoun, it is morphologically invariable and exhibits no referential properties. It surfaces next to a 1sg or 2sg dative clitic, forming in all cases the sequences *me le* or *te le*. Moreover, it appears in predicates argued to involve applicative arguments.

I contend that the clitic sequences *me le* and *te le* attested in the relevant examples are instances of multiple exponence, i.e., they involve the realization of a single syntactic object as two separate exponents. Intuitively, this process can be conceived as the division of an abstract element into two morphological units. In this case, the element undergoing the division is the applicative head  $\text{Appl}^0$ .

Take the structure in (53). In this representation, the applicative head serves two functions at the same time. On one hand, it is a functional element introducing a dative argument to the predicate. On the other, it is the dative argument itself, i.e., it is a first person pronoun. In General Spanish, both roles collapse into a single exponent: the dative pronoun *me*. Chilean Spanish, however, displays the option of separating these functions into two dative-related elements: *LE* and *me*. The former is a pronoun-like form signalling the presence of an applicative head in the structure. The latter is the argument being added by the applicative head. These elements surface as the sequence of clitics *me le*.

From a descriptive point of view, this amounts to assigning *LE* the role of an applicative marker, as it is an invariable element introducing an adjacent dative pronoun into the predicate. Thus, a language neutral denomination for the phenomenon under study in this article could be that of *stylistic applicative*.

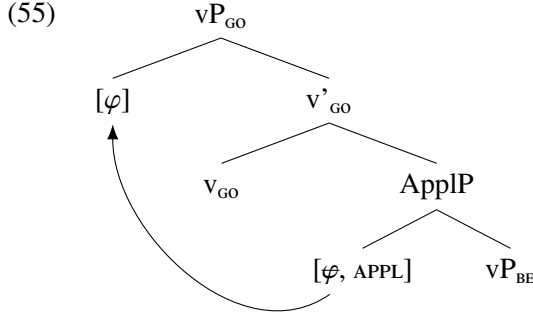
Within the Distributed Morphology tradition, the type of multiple exponence described above is captured through the *Fission* operation (Noyer 1992, Halle & Marantz 1993, Halle 1997, Arregi & Nevins 2012, i.a.). Fission is a morphological mechanism that takes a terminal node consisting of a bundle of features and splits it into two parts, each of them comprising features that co-occurred within the original node. This definition provides a formalization for the process being proposed for Chilean Spanish. That is, an applicative head in Spanish can be said to contain two types of features: (i)  $\varphi$ -features and (ii) at least a categorial feature  $[\text{APPL}]$  that identifies the element as an applicative head. In Chilean Spanish, Fission creates two exponents from these features by pronouncing them separately. The schematic rules in (54) illustrate the operation.

- (54) a.  $\text{me}_{[\varphi, \text{APPL}]} \longrightarrow \text{me}_{[\varphi]} \text{le}_{[\text{APPL}]}$   
 b.  $\text{te}_{[\varphi, \text{APPL}]} \longrightarrow \text{te}_{[\varphi]} \text{le}_{[\text{APPL}]}$

While Fission provides a rationale for the appearance of *LE* in structures involving applicative arguments, I will not adopt it as a primitive grammatical rule in my analysis. The main reason for this is that Fission is generally assumed to apply post-syntactically at PF (e.g., Arregi & Nevins 2012: 4). This means that the two new units created through it cannot feed syntactic operations such as Merge or Move, which apply at an earlier stage in the derivation. Such a result is incompatible with the explanation for the optionality of anticausative *SE* in stylistic applicative constructions that will be presented later in section 4.3. Instead, I will follow the intuition by McGinnis (1995) and attempt to capture the effects of Fission within the syntactic component through *Feature Movement* (Hiemstra 1986, Cheng 2000, Sabel 2000, i.a.).

The basic idea behind this mechanism is that syntactic movement can target a proper subset of the formal features of a constituent. Thus, a head  $\beta$  probing a feature on a constituent  $\alpha$  may attract to  $\text{Spec}_{\beta\text{P}}$  a bundle of features of  $\alpha$ ; since, as a result, the features of  $\alpha$  are distributed in two separate nodes, both of them may receive pronunciation independently. Accordingly, to capture the splits sketched in (54), I propose that the head  $v_{\text{Go}}$  attracts the set of  $\varphi$ -features of  $\text{Appl}^0$  to its specifier position, leaving behind the categorial

feature [APPL], e.g., (55). As shown in (54), the node with the  $\varphi$ -features is pronounced as the dative pronoun *me* or *te* (depending on the value of the Person feature), while the stranded [APPL] feature is realized as the dative-like form *LE*.



As depicted in (25), stylistic *LE* only appears with 1SG or 2SG dative pronouns. This means that the movement operation in (55) is selective, and only applies for certain configurations of  $\varphi$ -features on the applicative head. To capture this property, I propose that the head  $v_{GO}$  probes for a [SINGULAR] feature on  $\text{Appl}^0$ , and therefore only attracts to  $\text{Spec}, vP_{GO}$  bundles of  $\varphi$ -features specified as such. This predicts that stylistic *LE* is unable to co-appear with plural dative pronouns, which explains straightforwardly the ungrammaticality of the sequences *nos le* (*nos* = 1PL.DAT) in (25d) and *les le* (*les* = 2/3PL.DAT) in (25e). The remaining ungrammatical pattern *le le* (*le* = 3SG.DAT) in (25c) can be ruled out due to syntactic haplology, just as discussed in 3.1. The resulting accounts for the restrictions on the distribution of stylistic *LE* are summarized in (56).

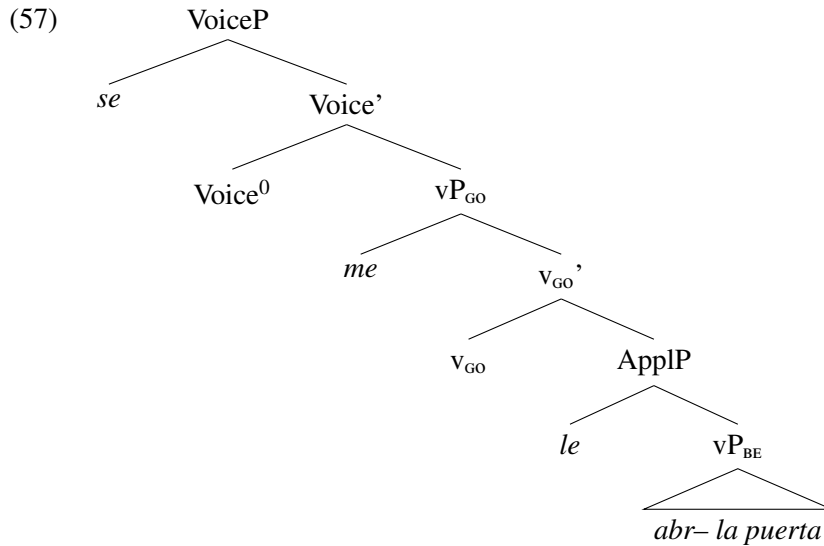
- (56)
- |    |               |                                 |
|----|---------------|---------------------------------|
| a. | (Se) me le    | ✓                               |
| b. | (Se) te le    | ✓                               |
| c. | * (Se) le le  | ✗ due to haplology              |
| d. | * (Se) nos le | ✗ due to restriction on plurals |
| e. | * (Se) les le | ✗ due to restriction on plurals |

As can be seen, this treatment provides a rationale for the grammaticality contrast between the clitic sequences *me le* and *nos le*. As discussed, this could not be accounted for in terms of previously known constraints on clitic clusters such as the PCC or the Quirky Person Restriction.

One key aspect of the mechanism depicted in (55) is that it attributes core characteristics of the stylistic *LE* phenomenon to properties of  $v_{GO}$ , a functional head that appears in anticausative and unaccusative predicates (Cuervo 2003). This allows for a microparametric account (Kayne 2005) of why only Chilean Spanish can produce the clitic clusters *me le* and *te le* in the relevant contexts: what distinguishes this dialect is that  $v_{GO}$  may optionally trigger movement of the  $\varphi$ -features of the applicative head, while  $v_{GO}$  in other Spanish varieties never triggers this operation. I contend that this is the only microparameter that is required to account for the lack of stylistic *LE* in General Spanish. Thus, the remaining properties of the construction must arise from aspects of the Spanish grammatical system that are common to all Spanish varieties.

By adopting the derivational step in (55), it is possible to offer an analysis of examples such as (52c), which exhibit a sequence of clitics of the form *SE+CL<sub>dat</sub>+LE*. These examples involve movement of a bundle of  $\varphi$ -features from  $\text{Appl}^0$  to  $\text{Spec}, vP_{GO}$ . As discussed, the features in the specifier position of  $vP_{GO}$  surface as a 1SG or 2SG dative pronoun, while  $\text{Appl}^0$  is spelled-out as *LE*. Then, a semantically vacuous Voice head selects

$vP_{GO}$ , and hosts the reflexive *SE* as an expletive element in its specifier position. The structure corresponding to this description is depicted in (57).



### 4.3 Two ways to fill Spec,VoiceP

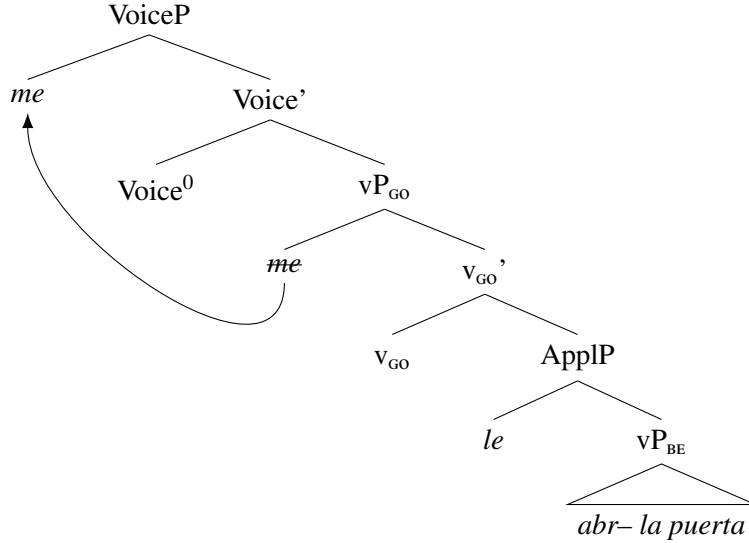
There remains to offer an analysis of sentences with stylistic *LE* that do not include the anticausative marker *SE* in them, e.g., (52b). This amounts to provide an account for the optionality of this element in pairs such as (52b) and (52c).

I contend that the optionality of *SE* can be explained by using the same logic traditionally applied to certain patterns involving subject expletives. Consider the English examples in (58). It is well-known that English sentences require the preverbal subject position to be filled in order to be grammatical, e.g., (58a). There are two ways in which this position can be occupied: either an expletive element is inserted there, e.g., (58b), or a constituent occupying a lower position in the structure moves there, e.g., (58c).

- (58) a. \* Is a man in the room.  
b. There is a man the room.  
c. A man is in the room.

I will apply the same approach to elements occupying the Spec,VoiceP position within Schäfer's (2008) theory of anticausatives. That is, I take that there are two ways to fill this syntactic slot. First, the specifier of VoiceP can be occupied by inserting the reflexive pronoun *SE* as an expletive element, e.g., (57); as discussed, this produces a clitic cluster of the form *SE+CL<sub>dat</sub>+LE* when combined with a stylistic applicative. Alternatively, I propose that the specifier position of VoiceP can be taken by an element already present in the syntactic representation. In the context of a stylistic applicative, this element is the dative pronoun in Spec, $vP_{GO}$ : it moves to Spec,VoiceP to satisfy the subcategorization requirements of  $Voice^0$ , thereby preventing insertion of *SE* and producing a clitic sequence of the form *CL<sub>dat</sub>+LE*. The syntactic structure in (59) illustrates this derivation with the sentence in (52b).

(59)



This mechanism needs to be properly constrained in order to avoid overgeneration. Consider the pair of sentences in (60). The anticausative predicate in (60a) clearly involves insertion of *SE* in Spec,VoiceP. According to a simplistic understanding of the operation depicted in (59), it should also be possible to fill this position by moving into it the dative pronoun *me*. However, as shown in (60b), the resulting pattern is ungrammatical as an anticausative predicate.

- (60) a. Se me abrió la puerta.  
 SE 1SG.DAT opened.3SG the door  
 ‘The door opened for/on/to me.’  
 ‘I unintentionally opened the door.’  
 b. \*Me abrió la puerta.  
 1SG.DAT opened.3SG the door

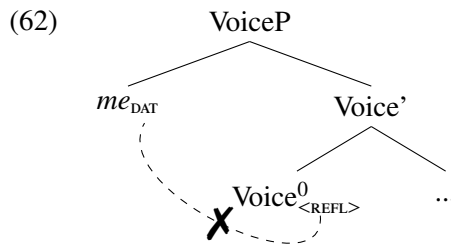
There are two complementary ways to prevent overgeneration when filling the Spec,VoiceP position through movement. The first one appeals to widely adopted constraints on syntactic operations: the *Structure Preservation Principle* (Emonds 1970) and the *Head-movement Constraint* (Travis 1984, Baker 1988). The rule of thumb deriving from these principles is that heads must move to head positions while phrases must move to specifier positions (plus locality considerations that I will leave aside). These restrictions explain the ungrammaticality of (60b) in a very simple manner: as previously discussed, the pronoun *me* in (60b) is the surface form of the applicative head; since *me* is a head, it cannot move to Spec,VoiceP.

However, further constraints are needed as, in principle, a full phrase could move to Spec,VoiceP and satisfy its selectional requirements. For instance, there is nothing preventing the DP *la puerta* ‘the door’ in (60b) from checking the selectional features of Voice<sup>0</sup> by moving into its specifier position. This is clearly not wanted. To prevent this, I assume that the causative and the semantically empty versions of Voice<sup>0</sup> subcategorize for different types of specifiers. As proposed by Schäfer (2008) and others, I take that the former carries a <D> feature that needs to be checked by merging a DP in Spec,VoiceP. The latter, I propose, carries a <REFL> feature, which requires an element pertaining to the class of reflexive pronouns to merge in Spec,VoiceP.

- (61) a. Voice<D> causative Voice<sup>0</sup>  
 b. Voice<REFL> semantically empty Voice<sup>0</sup>

This guarantees that only reflexive elements may occupy the Spec,VoiceP position in anticausative sentences, i.e., by assumption, only *SE* and other elements in its paradigm may satisfy the selectional requirements of anticausative Voice<sup>0</sup>.

Now, a problem arises for the movement operation depicted in (59). If Spec,VoiceP in anticausative sentences requires a reflexive, how does it end up being occupied by a dative pronoun? In principle, this should trigger a mismatch issue: the <REFL> subcategorization feature in Voice<sup>0</sup> cannot be satisfied by a dative (non-reflexive) element.



I contend that the reason why 1sg and 2sg dative pronouns may appear in Spec,VoiceP in structures like (59) is that these elements are syncretic with 1sg and 2sg reflexives, cf. (63). That is, the type of mismatch depicted in (62) is tolerated at the grammatical level because the elements occupying Spec,VoiceP according to the proposed analysis share their surface form with reflexive pronouns.

(63)

	SPANISH DATIVE PRONOUNS	SPANISH REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS
1SG	<i>me</i>	<i>me</i>
2SG	<i>te</i>	<i>te</i>
3SG	<i>le/se</i>	<i>se</i>
1PL	<i>nos</i>	<i>nos</i>
2/3PL	<i>les/se</i>	<i>se</i>

Several authors have pointed out that syncretic forms can repair type mismatches akin to the one depicted in (62), e.g., Schütze (2003), van Riemsdijk (2006), Bhatt & Walkow (2013), Himmelreich (2017). The descriptive observation seems to be that in a configuration where a constituent of type  $\alpha$  is required for a syntactic dependency but only a constituent of type  $\beta$  is available, the resulting sentence is acceptable if  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are systematically expressed by the same exponent.

An illustrating case of this repairing effect comes from free relative clauses in German. As is known, these are relative structures with no head, so the *wh*-phrase in the periphery of the embedded sentence must satisfy the selectional requirements of both the matrix and the subordinate verbs. In the example in (64), the verbs *mag* ‘likes’ and *hasst* ‘hates’ need an accusative complement; this requirement is satisfied for both verbs by the accusative *wh*-pronoun *wen* ‘whom’ heading the free relative.

- (64) Hans mag<sub><ACC></sub> [ *wen*<sub>ACC</sub> Maria hasst<sub><ACC></sub> ].  
Hans likes who Maria hates  
‘Hans likes whoever Maria hates.’

*German (Himmelreich 2017: 15)*

The sentence in (65) illustrates a case mismatch. The matrix verb *vertraut* ‘trusts’ needs a dative argument, while the embedded verb *mag* ‘likes’ requires an accusative argument. Since the selectional requirements of both verbs cannot be satisfied at the same time, ungrammaticality obtains.

- (65) Hans vertraut<sub><DAT></sub> [ \**wem*<sub>DAT</sub>/\**wen*<sub>ACC</sub> Maria mag<sub><ACC></sub> ].  
 Hans trusts who Maria likes  
 ‘Hans trusts whoever Maria likes.’

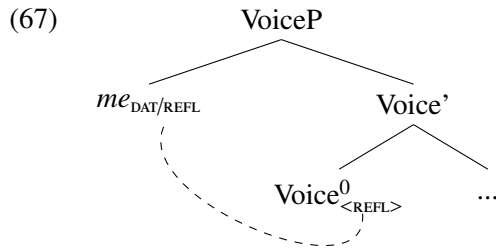
German (Himmelreich 2017: 15)

Unacceptability can be avoided if the *wh*-phase heading the free relative is syncretic for the case values required by the matrix and the embedded verbs. The sentence in (66) has two verbs with conflicting needs, just as the previous example: *mag* ‘likes’ requires an accusative argument while *treibt* ‘drives’ requires a nominative argument. Since the form of the pronoun in this example is the same for nominative and accusative, the case mismatch is repaired.

- (66) Hans mag<sub><ACC></sub> [ *was*<sub>ACC/NOM</sub> Maria zur Weißglut treibt<sub><NOM></sub> ].  
 Hans likes what Maria to rage drives  
 ‘Hans likes whatever infuriates Maria.’

German (Himmelreich 2017: 52)

This is the same effect I contend is attested when a dative pronoun like *me* in (59) moves to Spec,VoiceP: since 1sg reflexive and dative pronouns share the same exponent in Spanish, their type mismatch is repaired through syncretism. I take that this process allows the dative pronoun to check the <REFL> subcategorization feature in Voice<sup>0</sup>, in the same way that the pronoun *was* ‘what’ in (66) satisfies the distinct selectional requirements of two verbs, cf. (67). While the example in (66) concerns case matching, arguably the same type of process may be invoked for the DAT–REFL mismatch, as reflexives in Spanish conform a morphological paradigm parallel to a case declension.



The system presented throughout this section can be summarized as follows: besides introducing an expletive *SE* in anticausative Spec,VoiceP as proposed by Schäfer (2008), the Spanish grammar also has the option of moving into this position a maximal projection that is syncretic with reflexive elements. This situation, however, seems to be rare. In the case under study, it was first necessary for the applicative head to undergo a Fission-like process to create a proper candidate to move into Spec,VoiceP. In this scenario, there is no insertion of *SE*, which accounts for the optionality of this element in the context of stylistic applicatives.

## 5 Extending the analysis to (other) unaccusative contexts

As discussed in section 2, stylistic applicatives in Spanish may surface with (i) *SE*-marked anticausative predicates, (ii) unaccusative predicates that may combine with *SE*, and (iii) type III psychological predicates formed with *SE*. The analysis presented in the previous section was devoted to account for the phenomenon in anticausative contexts. In this section, I will extend the proposal to the latter two scenarios.

Let's consider first the case of unaccusative verbs marked with *SE*. The relevant examples were presented in (13) and (14), and are repeated for convenience in (68) and (69).



- (68) a. Se me cayeron las llaves.  
SE 1SG.DAT fell.3PL the keys  
'The keys fell for/on/to me.'  
'I unintentionally dropped the keys.'
- b. Me le cayeron las llaves.  
1SG.DAT LE fell.3PL the keys
- c. Se me le cayeron las llaves.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE fell.3PL the keys
- (69) a. Se me murió la planta.  
SE 1SG.DAT died.3SG the plant  
'The plant died for/on/to me.'  
'I unintentionally killed the plant.'
- b. Me le murió la planta.  
1SG.DAT LE died.3SG the plant
- c. Se me le murió la planta.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE died.3SG the plant

In principle, *SE* does not seem to alter the syntax or the semantics of these verbs. As can be seen in (70) and (71), both *caer* 'fall' and *morir* 'die' have an unaccusative syntax even without *SE*. Moreover, adding the reflexive seemingly preserves the interpretation of each example.<sup>8</sup>

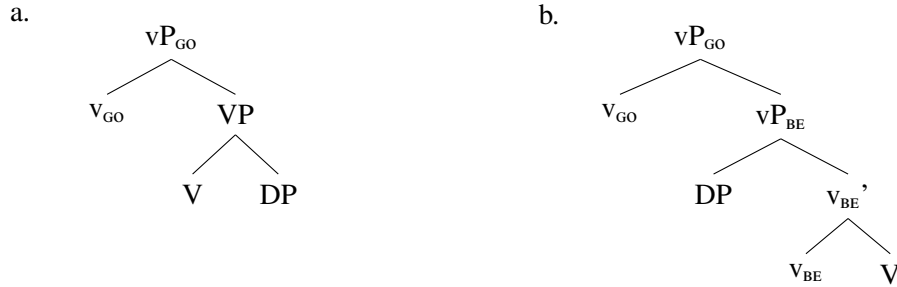
- (70) a. Cayó una persona al río.  
fell.3sg a person to.the river  
'A person fell in the river.'
- b. Se cayó una persona al río.  
SE fell.3sg a person to.the river
- (71) a. Murió nuestra mascota.  
died.3sg our pet  
'Our pet died.'
- b. Se murió nuestra mascota.  
SE died.3sg our pet

However, the presence/absence of *SE* in these sentences does determine some key differences. According to Cuervo (2015), these differences follow from the examples without *SE* in (70a) and (71a) being simple unaccusative verbs, while the *SE*-marked variants in (70b) and (71b) involve inchoative predicates. In Cuervo's system, the underlying structure of the former includes a single head  $v_{GO}$ , which introduces a dynamic event of change, e.g., (72a); in the case of the latter, the representation contains two event introducers,  $v_{GO}$  and  $v_{BE}$ , which compose a bi-eventive structure, e.g., (72b).

(72)

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<sup>8</sup>As noticed by Cuervo (2015: 408), the fact that both variants of these verbs are unaccusative argues against analyses of anticausative *SE* as a reflexivization operator (Chierchia 2004, Koontz-Garboden 2009); see 3.2 above.



A first contrast between these predicates is that only unaccusatives can combine with bare nouns. As shown in (73) and (74), the inchoative *SE*-marked variants of these verbs do not accept these nominals.

- (73) a. Caen piedras.  
           fall.3PL stones  
           ‘Stones are falling.’  
       b. \*Se caen piedras.  
           SE fall.3PL stones
- (74) a. En esa guerra murieron inocentes.  
           in that war died.3PL innocents  
           ‘In that war innocent people died.’  
       b. ?? En esa guerra se murieron inocentes.  
           in that war SE died.3PL innocents

The same effect is attested with other inchoative predicates, e.g., *SE*-marked anticausatives.

- (75) \*Se derritieron mantecas.  
       SE melted.3PL butters  
       ‘Butters melted.’

This is captured by the structures in (72). The DP argument in the inchoative structure in (72b) is the “subject” of the stative vP, i.e., it occupies the Spec,vP<sub>be</sub> position. Since bare nouns cannot be subjects in Spanish, they cannot merge into this position. In contrast, the DP argument in the unaccusative structure in (72a) is an object, i.e., the complement of V. Therefore, the former restriction does not apply in this case.

A further prediction stemming from the structures in (72) is that the unaccusative variants without *SE* cannot host affected datives. As discussed in 4.1, these non-core arguments occupy a position between the vP<sub>go</sub> and vP<sub>be</sub> projections, which only appear together in the inchoative structure in (72b). As the example in (76) shows, this prediction is borne out.

- (76) \*Le murió la planta.  
       dat.3sg died.3sg the plant  
       ‘The plant died for/on/to him.’

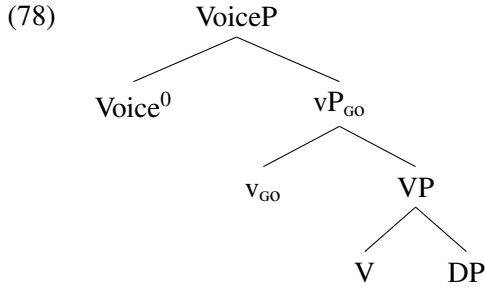
In contrast, it is perfectly grammatical to introduce an affected dative in an inchoative structure with *SE*.

- (77) Se le murió la planta.  
       SE dat.3sg died.3sg the plant

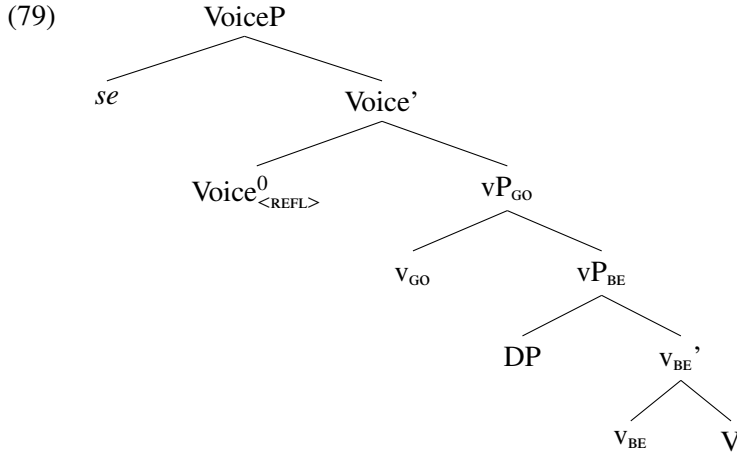
‘The plant died for/on/to him.’  
‘He/she unintentionally killed the plant.’

The analysis I propose for these constructions combines Cuervo’s structures in (72) and aspects of Saab’s (2020) take on *SE*-marked unaccusative verbs. Saab deals with *SE* in examples such as (70b) and (71b) in the same way as he does with anticausative *SE*, i.e., he treats them as elements that are inserted in Spec, VoiceP to fulfill an expletive-like role. He contends that Voice<sup>0</sup> is semantically vacuous in unaccusatives with and without *SE*, but only in the *SE*-marked variants it carries a subcategorization feature requiring insertion of the reflexive. Thus, according to him, the morphological distinction in pairs such as (70) and (71) reduces to the presence/absence of a formal feature in Voice<sup>0</sup>.

Adopting Saab’s idea, I take that the instance of Voice<sup>0</sup> that does not require *SE* combines with the unaccusative structure in (72a). This produces a representation like (78), which is the underlying structure proposed for the predicates in (70a) and (71a).



On the other hand, the instance of Voice<sup>0</sup> requiring insertion of the reflexive selects the inchoative structure in (72b). This results in the representation in (79), which corresponds to the predicates in (70b) and (71b).



From this point on, the analysis for the stylistic *LE* examples in (68) and (69) follows the lines depicted throughout section 4. That is, the base sentences in (68a) and (69a) result from the scheme in (80), which is basically the structure in (79) with an applicative projection between vP<sub>GO</sub> and vP<sub>BE</sub>. Notice that (80) is entirely analogous to the representation provided in (53).



By splitting the applicative head in (80) through feature movement, cf. (55), the structure in (81) obtains. This representation describes the stylistic *LE* examples in (68c) and (69c). As before, the scheme in (81) is familiar from previous discussion: it is entirely analogous to the representation in (57).

$$(81) \quad [\text{VoiceP } se \text{ } [\text{Voice'} \text{ Voice}^0 \text{ } [\text{vP}_{GO} \text{ } me_{\varphi} \text{ } [\text{v}_{GO'} \text{ } v_{GO} \text{ } [\text{AppIP } le_{APPL} \text{ } [\text{vP}_{BE} \text{ } DP \text{ } [\text{v}_{BE'} \text{ } vP_{BE} \text{ } V \text{ } ]]]]]]]]]]$$

Finally, if the dative pronoun *me* in (81) moves to Spec, VoiceP prior to *SE* insertion, (82) obtains. This is the structure corresponding to the examples in (68b) and (69b). It is entirely equivalent to the representation in (59).

$$(82) \quad [\text{VoiceP } me_{\varphi} \text{ } [\text{Voice'} \text{ Voice}^0 \text{ } [\text{vP}_{GO} \text{ } \cancel{me}_{\varphi} \text{ } [\text{v}_{GO'} \text{ } v_{GO} \text{ } [\text{AppIP } le_{APPL} \text{ } [\text{vP}_{BE} \text{ } DP \text{ } [\text{v}_{BE'} \text{ } vP_{BE} \text{ } V \text{ } ]]]]]]]]]]$$

As shown in (80), (81) and (82), instances of stylistic *LE* with *SE*-marked unaccusative predicates receive basically the same analysis as their counterparts with *SE*-marked anticausatives. Evidence supporting a common analysis comes from the fact that dative arguments in both types of structure may receive an unintentional causer interpretation.

Now, let's consider the behavior of psych-verbs licensing stylistic *LE* and determine whether the same line of analysis applied so far can be extended to them. For convenience, the relevant examples are repeated in (83) and (84).

- (83) a. Se me olvidó eso.  
SE 1SG.DAT forgot.3SG that  
'I forgot that.'
- b. Me le olvidó eso.  
1SG.DAT LE forgot.3SG that
- c. Se me le olvidó eso.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE forgot.3SG that

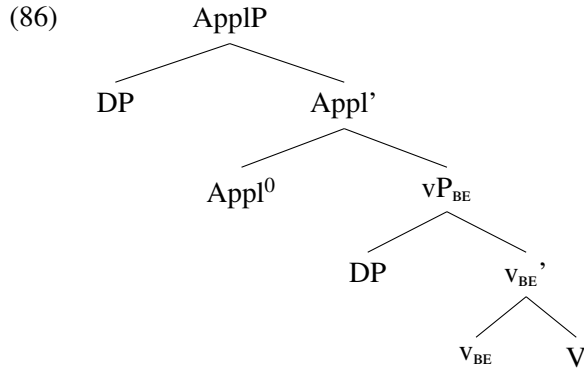
- (84) a. Se me ocurrió una idea.  
SE 1SG.DAT occurred.3SG a idea  
'An idea occurred to me.'
- b. Me le ocurrió una idea.  
1SG.DAT LE occurred.3SG a idea
- c. Se me le ocurrió una idea.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE occurred.3SG a idea

As previously mentioned, these sentences involve *SE*-marked predicates that behave at the surface level like type III psych-verbs. That is, they form unaccusative configurations in which the dative argument is interpreted as an experiencer, much in the same way as verbs like *gustar* 'like' in (85c).

- (85) a. A Cosmo se le olvidaron los libros.  
DAT Cosmo SE 3SG.DAT forgot.3PL the peaches  
'Cosmo liked the peaches.'
- b. A Cosmo se le ocurrió la respuesta.  
DAT Cosmo SE 3SG.DAT occurred.3PL the answer  
'The answer occurred to Cosmo.'

- c. A Cosmo le gustaron los duraznos.  
 DAT Cosmo 3SG.DAT liked.3PL the peaches  
 ‘Cosmo liked the peaches.’

Cuervo’s (2003) analysis for psych predicates of the *gustar* type is sketched in (86). As can be seen, she proposes a structure in which a high applicative attaches to a stative  $vP_{BE}$  projection; the experiencer DP is introduced as the specifier of ApplP.



This analysis captures the observation that dative experiencer psych-verbs in Spanish are systematically stative (Marín & McNally 2011, Fábregas & Marín 2020). For instance, they reject speed adverbials such as *rápido* ‘quickly’, e.g., (87).

- (87) A Juan le gusta Sandra (\*rápido).  
 DAT Juan 3SG.DAT likes.3SG Sandra quickly  
 ‘Juan (quickly) likes Sandra.’

The stativity of psych verbs with dative experiencers contrasts sharply with the dinamicity displayed by *SE*-marked psych-verbs such as *olvidarse* ‘forget’ or *acordarse* ‘remember’. As can be seen in (88), these verbs can combine with speed adverbials.

- (88) a. Juan se olvida de todo (rápido).  
 Juan SE forgets of all quickly  
 ‘Juan (quickly) forgets everything.’

A further property showing that *gustar*-like predicates are stative while *acordarse*-like ones are dynamic is that only the latter trigger episodic or habitual interpretations when in present tense. For instance, (88) means that Juan habitually has episodes of forgetting everything. Such a reading is impossible to obtain in (87), since in this case there is a unique and permanent event of liking Sandra.

This distinction is important because the psych predicates licensing stylistic *LE* in (83) and (84) involve both dative experiencers and *SE*-marking. Fábregas & Marín (2020) observe that, in cases like these, the resulting predicates are dynamic; they conjecture that the dynamic interpretation associated to structures with *SE* overrides the stative contribution of the dative experiencer. As shown in (89) and (90), their observations are correct for the patterns under discussion here: all relevant examples accept modification by speed adverbs and trigger habitual interpretations in the present tense.

- (89) a. Se me olvida rápido el número.  
SE 1SG.DAT forget.3SG quickly the number  
'I (habitually) forget the number quickly.'
- b. Me le olvida rápido el número.  
1SG.DAT LE forget.3SG quickly the number
- c. Se me le olvida rápido el número.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE forget.3SG quickly the number
- (90) a. Se me ocurre rápido la solución.  
SE 1SG.DAT occurs.3SG quickly the solution  
'The solution (habitually) occurs to me quickly.'
- b. Me le ocurre rápido la solución.  
1SG.DAT LE occurs.3SG quickly the solution
- c. Se me le ocurre rápido la idea.  
SE 1SG.DAT LE occurs.3SG quickly the solution

Thus, these patterns combine aspects of the predicates in (87) and (88): on one hand, they have the basic syntax of type III psych-verbs like *gustar* 'like'; on the other, they encode dynamic rather than stative events. To account for this mixture, I begin by assuming that the underlying structures of the base cases in (83a) and (84a) recruit the scheme that Cuervo (2003) postulates for type III psych predicates in (86). I contend that this configuration serves as the complement for a dynamic  $v_{GO}$  head; I take this to have the effect of giving a non-stative interpretation to an otherwise stative predicate. Finally, *SE* is inserted as the specifier of a semantically null Voice projection selecting  $vP_{GO}$  as its complement. The resulting representation is sketched in (91).

- (91) [VoiceP *se* [Voice' Voice<sup>0</sup> [ $vP_{GO}$   $v_{GO}$  [AppIP *me* <sub>$\varphi$ +APPL</sub> [ $vP_{BE}$  DP [ $v_{BE}$ ,  $vP_{BE}$  V ]]]]]]]

Notice that (91) is parallel to the structure proposed for *SE*-marked anticausatives in (53) and identical to the analysis for *SE*-marked unaccusatives in (80). This amounts to stating that these psych predicates have an underlying inchoative representation. Cuervo (2020) suggests dealing with examples such as (85a) in these terms, as she contends that the experiencer interpretation of the DP in these sentences "could be the result of the psychological nature of the predicate in an inchoative structure, in which a dative argument would typically be read as an accidental causer" (Cuervo 2020: 32).<sup>9</sup> Since (53) and (80) are, by assumption, structures able to trigger unintentional causer interpretations on dative arguments, the analysis depicted in (91) converges with Cuervo's conjectures.

Once the analysis for the base scenarios has been advanced, accounting for the patterns with stylistic *LE* follows the steps depicted in section 4. That is, the examples in (83c) and (84c) depart from the scheme in (91) in that the applicative head undergoes a Fission-like process and splits into the dative pronoun *me* and the applicative marker *LE*; the corresponding analysis is depicted in (92). Likewise, (83b) and (84b) depart from (92) in that the dative pronoun *me* moves to Spec, VoiceP, preventing insertion of *SE*; the corresponding structure is the one in (93).

- (92) [VoiceP *se* [Voice' Voice<sup>0</sup> [ $vP_{GO}$  *me* <sub>$\varphi$</sub>  [ $v_{GO}$ ,  $v_{GO}$  [AppIP *le*<sub>APPL</sub> [ $vP_{BE}$  DP [ $v_{BE}$ ,  $vP_{BE}$  V ]]]]]]]
- (93) [VoiceP *me* <sub>$\varphi$</sub>  [Voice' Voice<sup>0</sup> [ $vP_{GO}$  *me* <sub>$\varphi$</sub>  [ $v_{GO}$ ,  $v_{GO}$  [AppIP *le*<sub>APPL</sub> [ $vP_{BE}$  DP [ $v_{BE}$ ,  $vP_{BE}$  V ]]]]]]]

<sup>9</sup>Notice, however, that Cuervo argues that affected datives and unintentional causers involve different syntactic structures, an assumption from which I depart here. See 4.1 above for discussion.

Summing up, the analysis of stylistic applicatives in anticausative contexts also holds for the remaining syntactic configurations licensing the pattern. In particular, by extending the proposal in section 4 to other types of predicates, a more fine-grained characterization of the distribution of stylistic applicatives emerges: the phenomenon arises with *SE*-marked inchoative predicates incorporating a (high) applicative head.

## 6 Concluding remarks

In this paper, I have presented data supporting the claim that *SE* contributes no meaning to Spanish anticausative predicates. The evidence comes from the behavior of stylistic applicatives, an understudied syntactic phenomenon in Chilean Spanish where the clitic form *LE* appears alongside 1sg and 2sg dative clitics in the context of *SE*. In this construction, the presence or absence of anticausative *SE* does not alter the interpretation of the sentence, which strongly suggests that this element is devoid of semantic content.

I advanced a syntactic account of stylistic applicatives that captures the most salient properties of the pattern. The proposal consists on two parts. First, I claim that the relevant microparameter enabling stylistic applicatives in Chilean Spanish has to do with the possibility of pronouncing an applicative head as two separate exponents, a dative pronoun and the applicative marker *LE*. At the technical level, multiple exponence was captured through feature movement: the  $\varphi$ -features of the applicative head are proposed to move to a higher position and receive phonological realization as a dative pronoun, while the categorial features of the head remain in-situ and are pronounced as *LE*. By assuming that this “splitting” operation only targets sets of  $\varphi$ -features specified as [SINGULAR], the analysis captures restrictions on the form of the resulting clitic clusters that do not follow from constraints such as the PCC or the Quirky Person Restriction.

The second part of the analysis follows the hypothesis that the anticausative marker *SE* is an expletive that satisfies formal properties of the Voice head. When the “split” of the applicative head occurs, a further possibility arises: the resulting dative pronoun may “replace” *SE* and move to Spec,VoiceP. According to this, there are two ways to fill this position: by inserting the reflexive *SE* as an expletive element or by moving a constituent there. By assumption, only elements that are syncretic with reflexives can move into Spec,VoiceP.

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