



Animarse a sí mismo, enfadarse sin motivo:

Restrictions on the formation and interpretation of reflexive constructions with experiencer verbs

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OE verbs and their reflexives

- highly disputed fields of research
- OE verbs: transitive verbs with an experiencer as their direct object
 - *frighten, annoy*
 - *animar, enfadar*
- not a homogeneous class
- diversity reflected in reflexive constructions
 - *animarse* and *enfadarse* differ in preferred interpretation
 - some OE verbs do not reflexivize

What has (not) been done

- Syntactic classification
 - Psych causative alternation? (cf. Alexiadou & Iordăchioaia 2014)
- Semantic classification
 - aspectual semantics (e.g. Marín & McNally 2011)
- Missing: explanation for frequency asymmetries

What I will do

- corpus-based study on a small, semantically diverse set of Spanish OE verbs
- productivity and frequency of OE verbs
- available interpretations
 - “anticausative”
 - true reflexive
 - both? more?
- correlate PPs
- find a pattern & develop hypothesis

- Introduction ✓
- Corpus study
 - Study design
 - Quantitative results
 - Qualitative results
- Observations & hypotheses
- Cross-linguistic comparison

Corpus study: Study design

Selection of verbs

- 15 verbs
- selection criteria
 - semantic diversity
 - behaviour of similar verbs in other languages
 - classification in previous works (Gehrke & Marco 2015, Marín 2015, Marín & McNally 2011, Rott & Verhoeven 2019)
- *aburrir, acosar, agobiar, agradar, animar, apaciguar, asustar, divertir, enfadar, fascinar, intimidar, irritar, molestar, preocupar, sorprender*
- prediction: no reflexive constructions for some of them (*acosar, agradar, apaciguar*)

Corpus & Query

- CORPES XXI: contemporary Spanish, 21st century
- Query
 - no restrictions in text type & variety
 - first: total frequency
 - second: restriction to 3rd person
- measured values
 - absolute occurrences
 - normalized frequencies of 3rd person forms and their reflexive constructions
 - ratio of reflexives among the occurrences
- data extraction
 - 100 most recent occurrences for 3SG and 3PL with *se* for each verb

Corpus study: Quantitative results

General frequency

- huge differences in frequency
- Total frequency
 - most frequent: *preocupar* (34,547 tokens / 122.82/million)
 - least frequent: *apaciguar* (1,267 / 4.53)
- 3rd person
 - most frequent: *sorprender* (15,732 / 55.92)
 - least frequent: *apaciguar* (419 / 1.48)

Corpus study: Quantitative results

Table 1: Overview of frequencies

Verb	Frequency (absolute)	Frequency per 1m words	Frequency of 3SG (absolute)	Frequency of 3SG per 1m words	Frequency of 3PL (absolute)	Frequency of 3PL per 1m words
preocupar	34.547	122,82	12.482	44,37	2.856	10,15
sorprender	28.974	103,01	13.731	48,81	2.001	7,11
molestar	13.022	46,29	7.013	24,93	1.437	5,10
animar	12.472	44,34	5.393	19,17	1.800	6,39
asustar	8.676	30,84	3.463	12,31	1.048	3,72
divertir	6.540	23,25	1.917	6,81	902	3,20
aburrir	4.504	16,01	1.448	5,14	539	1,91
fascinar	3.931	13,97	1.583	5,62	453	1,61
enfadar	3.160	11,23	774	2,75	113	0,40
agradar	2.998	10,65	1.987	7,06	302	1,07
irritar	2.778	9,87	1.001	3,55	208	0,73
acosar	2.317	8,23	484	1,72	432	1,53
intimidar	1.780	6,32	427	1,51	180	0,63
agobiar	1.437	5,10	473	1,68	229	0,81
apaciguar	1.276	4,53	309	1,09	110	0,39

Frequency of reflexive constructions

- crucial value: ratio of occurrences with *se* among all 3rd person occurrences
- reflexive occurrences of all 15 verbs
- significant variance: ratio 0.01 — 0.84
- possible groupings
 - 0.84 - *enfadar*
 - 0.57, 0.53 - *divertir* and *aburrir*
 - 0.39-0.44 - *preocupar*, *animar*, *asustar*, *apaciguar*
 - 0.16-0.18 - *molestar*, *sorprender*, *irritar*
 - below that, no clear-cut groups; 0.11, 0.07, 0.04 - and 2 verbs with 0.01 - *acosar* and *agradar*
- differences singular vs. plural?
- Verbs that should not reflexivize, but do: *agradar*, *acosar*, *apaciguar*

Corpus study: Quantitative results

Table 2: Frequency of reflexive constructions

Verb	Frequency of 3SG per 1m words	Frequency of 3SG with "se" per 1m words	Share of se constructions (3SG)	Frequency of 3PL per 1m words	Frequency of 3PL with "se" per 1m words	Share of se constructions (3PL)	Share of se constructions (3SG/PL)
enfadar	2,75	2,30	0,84	0,40	0,35	0,88	0,84
divertir	6,81	3,30	0,49	3,20	2,43	0,76	0,57
aburrir	5,14	2,67	0,52	1,91	1,07	0,56	0,53
preocupar	44,37	17,95	0,40	10,15	5,93	0,58	0,44
animar	19,17	7,70	0,40	6,39	2,74	0,43	0,41
asustar	12,31	4,77	0,39	3,72	1,62	0,44	0,40
apaciguar	1,09	0,39	0,36	0,39	0,18	0,46	0,39
sorprender	48,81	7,86	0,16	7,11	1,94	0,27	0,18
molestar	24,93	4,43	0,18	5,10	1,02	0,20	0,18
irritar	3,55	0,61	0,17	0,73	0,08	0,12	0,16
intimidar	1,51	0,16	0,11	0,63	0,06	0,11	0,11
agobiar	1,68	0,09	0,06	0,81	0,06	0,08	0,07
fascinar	5,62	0,19	0,03	1,61	0,06	0,04	0,04
agradar	7,06	0,03	0,01	1,07	0,00	0,01	0,01
acosar	1,72	0,01	0,01	1,53	0,01	0,01	0,01

Side findings

- evidence for asymmetries between different varieties of Spanish
 - large proportion of reflexive occurrences of *animar* in the River Plate Region
 - almost all reflexive occurrences of *intimidar* from Latin America
- Haspelmath et al. (2014) on form-frequency correspondence: generally confirmed, but does not hold for all verbs

Corpus study: Qualitative results

enfadar

- anticausative interpretation dominant

(1) *Se enfadó.*

(Calderón, Reyes: El jurado número 10. Madrid: Martínez Roca, 2013.)

- majority without correlate PP
- *con* PPs: direction of anger systems - speech act interpretation?

(2) *un día se enfadó por teléfono con su interlocutor*

(Tomás-Valiente Lanuza, Francisco; Francisco Pardo, Juan Manuel de: La justicia y sus puñetas. Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2015.)

- cause of emotion in subordinate clauses
- tendency towards situative and abstract correlates

animar

- majority interpretable as proper reflexives
- frequent pattern: *animarse a* + INF

(3) *Uno de los científicos se animó a dar ejemplos más ilustrativos.*

(Paz Soldán, Edmundo: «Doctor An». Las visiones. Madrid: Páginas de Espuma, 2016.)

- imperatives

(4) *Anímese y ofrezca a un animal un nuevo hogar y una nueva familia llena de amor.*

(Zúniga, Ana: «Sé padrino de una mascota y cambia su vida». El Heraldo. Tegucigalpa: elheraldo.hn, 2016-06-08.)

- ambiguity between anticausative and reflexive interpretation

(5) *la mayoría se animó a escribir y socializar su experiencia*

(Melgar, María Fernanda; Ferreira Szpiniak, Ariel: «¿Y si mezclamos ciencia con café?». Melgar, María Fernanda (...) [et al.] [comp.]: Ciencia con aroma a café: los científicos y la comunicación pública de su quehacer. Río Cuarto: Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto, 2016.)

sorprender

- mostly anticausatives
- occasional impersonal uses
- large part with correlate PP
- frequent pattern: *sorprenderse al* + INF

(6) *Se sorprendían al ver que era infalible*

(Paz Soldán, Edmundo: Iris. Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: Aguilar, Altea, Taurus, Alfaguara, 2014.)

- majority with explicit indication of the cause

fascinar

- almost exclusively “anticausatives”
- vast majority with correlate PP
- among the correlates: eventualities, inanimate entities, humans

agradar, acosar

- most results actually not reflexive constructions
- impersonal and reciprocal uses
- two reflexive occurrences of *agradar*

(7) *La verdad es que se agradaba a sí mismo.*

(Clavel, Ana: *Cuerpo náufrago*. México D. F.: Alfaguara, 2005.)

apaciguar

- reflexive constructions very frequent: ratio 0.39
- many non human subjects
- not experiencers
- cases with human experiencers: OE *apaciguar* does reflexivize (contradicting Gehrke & Marco 2015)

Observations & Hypotheses

Correlation between reflexive ratio and properties of the correlate

- Hypothesis
 - OE verbs occurring more frequently in reflexive constructions are more likely to have situative subjects in the transitive use
 - OE verbs occurring less frequently in reflexive constructions are more likely to have sentient subjects in the transitive use
- empirical evidence needed
- matches classification by Marín (2015: 22)
 - verbs allowing for an agentive subject have a lower reflexive ratio
 - only exception in the data: *fascinar*

Observations & Hypotheses

Correlation between reflexive ratio and frequency of correlate PPs

- tendency in the data
- the higher the reflexive ratio, the lower the frequency of correlate PPs

Cross-linguistic comparison

Reflexive OE verbs in German

- asymmetries
- difference between German and Spanish: OE verbs without reflexive constructions
- proportions with and without reflexive constructions similar (ongoing study on 74 verbs)
- some ambiguous between “anticausative” and reflexive
- some yield speech act interpretations
- cross-linguistic tendencies? - systematic comparison needed

Conclusion

Findings

- OE verbs diverge in frequency and reflexivization
- correlation between reflexive ratio and semantics
- correlation between reflexive ratio and correlate PPs

To Dos


- empirical evidence for hypothesis on correlation between reflexive ratio and transitive subjects
- quantifiable evidence for the frequency of correlate PPs
- consideration of correlations to other syntactic parameters of OE verbs, e.g. case marking

Corpus

- REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Banco de datos (CORPES XXI) [en línea]. *Corpus del Español del Siglo XXI (CORPES)*. <<http://www.rae.es>> [02-29/05/2020]

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Thank you for listening!
I am looking forward to our
digital discussion.