

## **Initiators, states and passives in Spanish psych verbs**

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ABSTRACT. The goal of this article is twofold: the first one is to point out to the existence of at least two classes of object-experiencer verbs (henceforth, OEPV) in Spanish with respect to their passive behaviour –casting doubt on Landau (2002), who proposes that passivisation of OEPVs correlates with the availability of pseudo-passives in one language. The second one is to argue that passives of OEPVs match the aspectual and argumental properties of the verbs, in such a way that verbs which do not satisfy the condition that passives must involve events in Spanish must build those events through a repetitive, pluractional interpretation.

**Keywords:** psych predicates, boundaries, passives, pluractionality, agentivity

### **1. The problem**

This chapter deals with two related problems in the characterisation of psychological predicates, and specifically in the analysis of object-experiencer psychological verbs (OEPVs). The language that we will concentrate on is Spanish.

The first problem refers to the aspectual characterisation of these verbs. While subject-experiencer verbs are typically described as denoting states (1), there is no consensus with respect to the aspectual characterisation of the class of OEPVs (2).

- (1) a. temer 'fear'
- b. odiar 'hate'

- (2) a. asustar 'frighten'
- b. preocupar 'worry'

Regarding the aspectual interpretation of OEPVs, virtually all possible proposals have already been made: Grimshaw (1990), Pustejovsky (1991) and Tenny (1994) argue that they are accomplishments; Filip (1996) describes them as activities, while Meinschaefer (2006) proposes that they alternate between activities and accomplishments. Pesetsky (1995) and Van Valin & La Polla (1997) treat them as dynamic causatives, while Arad (1998, 1999), Pylkkänen (2000) and Rothmayr (2009) treat them as causative states or events. Finally, Rozwadowska (2003, 2012) and Marín & McNally (2005, 2011) argue that they are inchoative predicates defining an initial, but not a final, boundary of the event. This last option will be the one that we will assume in this paper, and we will derive the behaviour of OEPVs in passive structures from this characterisation.

In terms of the behaviour of OEPVs in passives, Landau (2002) proposes that OEPVs across languages produce two different patterns. In the first class of languages (3), eventive passives of OEPVs are allowed. In the second class of languages, OEPVs do not allow eventive passives (4).

- (3) Mary was terrified by John. [English]
- (4) \**Maria è stata terrorizzata da Gianni.* [Italian]
- María is been terrified by Gianni*
- Intended: 'Maria was terrified by Gianni'

Landau (2002) argues that the distinction between (3) and (4) is parallel to the availability of pseudo-passive structures in the language. A pseudo-passive construction involves promoting

to the subject position the complement of a prepositional phrase in the active voice, as in (5), for English, which contrasts with Italian in (6).

(5) This bed has been slept in.

(6) \*Questo letto è stato dormito in.

this bed is been slept in

Intended: 'This bed has been slept in'

Underlying to his proposal is the claim that the experiencer in an OEPV is in fact a **covert** prepositional phrase, not an accusative-marked DP, following the structure of (7).

(7) John terrified [P  $\emptyset$  [Mary]]

Therefore, the passivisation of the experiencer of an OEPV would involve extraction from a PP, and English would allow (3) for the same reason that (5) is allowed. Italian would not allow either because, by hypothesis, it disallows A-movement from inside a PP.

So far so good, but problems for the proposal emerge when one finds languages where some OEPVs allow passivisation and other do not. Spanish is such a language. Let us illustrate the problem step by step.

Let us start, initially, from a more or less neutral definition of psychological predicate that allows us to consider some verbs as OEPVs and exclude all the others from the class. The definition in (8) seems to us clear enough as a starting point.

(8) **A psychological predicate is a predicate one of whose arguments denotes an individual experiencing a psychological state.**

The definition is stated in such a way that it does not presuppose which case marking the experiencer receives, which aspectual class the verb belongs to, or whether the experiencer is syntactically or semantically defined.

Starting from this neutral definition, and concentrating on the ability to license passives, Spanish has three different classes of OEPVs: (i) verbs that allow for passives which refer to a specific event, with specific participants; (ii) verbs that only allow passives if **iterativity** is involved; (iii) verbs that do not allow passives, not even with an **iterative** component. We illustrate each one of these three classes, in order, in (9) to (11). **Note that in this broad definition of psychological predicate, *acosar* would be pre-theoretically a psych predicate because it involves that the object feels in a particular way; we will see later whether a more restrictive definition of OEPV also includes this verb.**

(9) [La mujer] declaró *haber sido acosada* por Bill Clinton.

the woman declared having been harrassed by Bill Clinton

[Example taken from corpusdelespañol]

(10) a. Varillal ha sido amedrentado por muchos motorizados.

Varillal has been intimidated by many bikers

[corpusdelespañol]

b. Varillal ha sido amedrentado muchas veces.

Varillal has been intimidated many times

c. \*Varillal ha sido amedrentado por Juan.

Varillal has been intimidated by Juan

(11) a. \*María ha sido aburrida por muchas personas.

María has been bored by many people

b. \*María ha sido aburrida muchas veces.

María has been bored many times

c. \*María ha sido aburrida por Juan.

María has been bored by Juan

Note, crucially, the distinction between (10) and (11). In (10), we see that when the passive refers to a specific event, performed by a specific agent (10c), the result is ungrammatical. Some form of **repetition** is necessary to license the passive, be it in the generic nature of the agent (10a), which refers to a plurality of agents that perform the event possibly at different times, or in an aspectual modifier (10b). This **iterativity** is not enough to save the grammaticality of (11a) and (11b), where the verb still fails to undergo passivisation when referring to a repeated event (11c).

These facts are, in our opinion, incompatible with Landau's otherwise elegant explanation for English and Italian. It is highly unlikely that Spanish allows pseudo-passives only with some experiencers—this language, otherwise, patterns with Italian in not allowing extraction of the complement of a PP. Even if somehow this could be technically implemented, however, it is very unclear how the extraction from the PP would be somehow facilitated by the presence of an **iterativity** component. To the best of our knowledge, it has never been reported that **iterativity** would play this role in a language that rejects pseudo-passives in specific events. These facts suggest that the explanation of the contrast should be, in fact, aspectual, and, in particular, related to the existence of different classes of OEPVs, following the lines initiated by Marín & McNally (2011). In what follows, we will relate the two problems, the aspectual definition of these verbs and the availability of passives, and propose an explanation that we believe accounts for the properties in both sides.

The rest of the article is structured as follows: sections §2 to §4 discuss each one of the classes of psych verbs in (9) to (11). §5 analyses the contrasts on the basis of their properties, as discussed in those sections, and §6 presents the conclusions.

Since we will be discussing different subclasses of verbs in this chapter, it is perhaps useful to provide a table here where we summarise the properties of each one of the groups and how we will analyse them in section 5, for the sake of clarity.

*Table 1. Roadmap of the analysis*

<b>Class of OEPVs</b>	<b>Type of passive they allow</b>	<b>Aspectual and argument-structural properties</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Class 1 ( <i>acosar</i> 'to harass')	All types of passives	Eventive, agentive	Change of state verbs with Init, Proc, Res and an initiator
Class 2 ( <i>sorprender</i> 'to surprise')	Only <b>iterative</b> passives	Non-eventive, causer (initial boundary)	Verbs denoting only an initial boundary that become eventive by iteration of the boundary
Class 3, subclass 1 ( <i>enfadar</i> 'anger')	No passive	Non-eventive, non-causer (initial boundary, no agent)	They fail to passivise due to the lack of an initiator
Class 3, subclass 2 ( <i>aburrir</i> 'bore')	No passive	Non-eventive, causer (initial boundary followed by a state)	The presence of a state blocks the eventive interpretation of the iterated boundary

The following pages will discuss in detail all these properties and how they connect to each other.

But before doing that, we must say a few words about the methodology used to describe the facts that will be shown in this section. We have combined corpus data with native speaker intuitions. In a first phase, we started from a list of Spanish OEPVs. With that list, we searched in Mark Davies' Corpus del Español for structures corresponding to the eventive passive, which in Spanish involves the verb *ser* –typically in a perfect or perfective form– with the agreeing participle. We then examined the passive structures of the attested forms, and for the verbs with unattested passives we double-checked with native speakers of European Spanish, and against our own intuitions, how natural the passive would be in such cases.

The individual cases we report are among the clearest ones, meaning that all or most native speakers consulted agreed with our judgements. There is considerable variation among speakers about which verbs fall into each one of the classes, and when that happens we report those differences. However, as far as we could see, for individual verbs the availability of the passive correlated always with an aspectual difference.

## 2. Class 1 (*acosar*): verbs that allow passive in an unrestricted way

There is a first class that, being part of the broad pre-theoretical definition of OEPV, accepts eventive passives with episodic meanings. We will argue that these verbs are not really psychological predicates in their grammatical properties, but rather telic verbs of other types whose lexical meaning involves as an entailment that the object experiences some psychological state for the event to culminate. In our research, the verbs in (10) are the typical ones belonging to this group.

- (10) *acosar* 'harass', *consolar* 'comfort', *estimular* 'stimulate', *humillar* 'humiliate', *importunar* 'pester', *ofender* 'offend', *seducir* 'seduce'

The distinctive property of these verbs is that they allow for eventive passives with *ser* 'be' without the help of any **pluractional** meaning. The resulting passive, then, involves a particular instantiation of the passive event in a specific time period, in a specific situation, by a specific agent. This is manifested among other properties in (i) the presence of specific or definite singular agents, not denoting kinds of objects or classes of elements; (ii) the compatibility of these passives with temporal modifiers identifying definite time periods (*ayer* 'yesterday', *a las tres* 'at three o'clock', *la semana pasada* 'last week').

(12) a. *María fue ofendida por Pedro.*

*María* was offended by *Pedro*

b. *Aquel corazón [...] fue consolado por el verdugo.*

that heart was comforted by the executioner

[corpusdelespañol]

c. *He sido estimulado por la señorita de Beuvre y por su padre*

have.1sg been stimulated by the lady of Beuvre and by her father

[corpusdelespañol]

d. *Los Orilones [...] fueron humillados por los Yankees en Nueva York*

the Orilones were humiliated by the Yankees in New York

[corpus]

e. *El ministro fue importunado por un periodista durante sus vacaciones.*

the minister was pestered by a journalist during her holidays

f. *La princesa fue seducida por Julio Iglesias.*

the princess was seduced by Julio Iglesias



In their active construal, these predicates always express caused events where the subject is a volitional agent or a direct causer –we will henceforth refer to these two conceptual classes by the cover term 'initiator' (Ramchand 2008), understood as the entity that triggers an event–. Marín (2010) notes that among the tests that they pass and show that they do involve real (volitional) initiators as subjects one can find the ability to participate in imperative constructions (13) and the presence of nominalisations derived by *-dor* '-er' (14).

(13) a. ¡Humíllalo!

humiliate-him

b. ¡Oféndelo!

offend-him

c. ¡Sedúcelo!

seduce-him

(14) *acosador* 'harasser', *consolador* 'comforting', *estimulador* 'stimulator', *humillador* 'humiliating', *importunador* 'pestering', *ofensor* 'offender', *seductor* 'seducer'

An aspectual property of these verbs is that, as Landau (2010) notes, they are telic. Marín & McNally (2011) show that a general property of OEPVs in Spanish, from a grammatical perspective, is that they are atelic in the specific sense that they do not define a culmination boundary even when they seemingly express a change of state.<sup>1</sup> That this first group of verbs is

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, in some of the verbs of this group, the event structure is identical to standard change of state verbs. As it is the case with a verb like (i), *casi* 'almost' allows for two separate readings with these verbs: one where the adverbial refers to the initial stage of the process ('he almost initiated the action of cutting') and another one where the result of the change is affected ('he did something which as a result almost lead to the object being cut').

telic can be shown in several tests: they allow for *in*-phrases measuring the event (15a), unlike grammatically defined OEPVs in Spanish.

(15) a. Juan sedujo a María en dos horas.

Juan seduced DOM María in two hours

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(i) Juan casi cortó el cable.

Juan almost cut the cable

A: 'Juan almost started the action of cutting the cable'

B: 'Juan manipulated the cable, which at the end was almost cut'

*Acosar* 'harass' allows for the same two readings.

(ii) Juan casi acosó a María.

Juan almost harassed DOM María

A: 'Juan almost starting the action of harassing María'

B: 'Juan interacted with María, who at the end was almost harassed'

The ambiguity does not emerge in verbs of the other two groups.

(iii) Group 2 (only pluractional passives)

Juan casi agobió a María.

Juan almost stressed DOM María.

'Juan almost managed to stress María'

(iv) Group 3 (no passives)

Juan casi aburrió a María.

Juan almost bored DOM María

'Juan almost managed to stress María'

'It took Juan two hours to seduce María'

b. \*Juan preocupó a María en dos horas

Juan worried DOM María in two hours

Intended: 'It took Juan two hours to worry María'

Secondly, the verbs in this group are compatible with *terminar* 'to finish', which the other two classes of OEPVs do not allow –as explained in detail by Marín & McNally (2011)–.

(16) Juan terminó de humillar a Pedro.

Juan finished of humiliating DOM Pedro

'Juan finished humiliating Pedro'

(17) \*Juan terminó de aliviar a Pedro.

Juan finished of relieve DOM Pedro

(18) \*Juan terminó de aburrir a Pedro.

Juan finished of boring DOM Pedro

This raises the question of whether the verbs of this group are in fact, grammatically and structurally, OEPVs. Alternatively they could be viewed as predicates belonging to other grammatical classes –telic events, perhaps achievements or accomplishments–. In such case their 'psychological' properties would be the effect of their lexical meaning. In other words, we propose that an appropriate grammatically-relevant definition of OEPV should refer to their grammatical properties, perhaps reflected in the configurations where they intervene, not on the lexical meaning of their roots.

If the verbs of this class are indeed psychological only in the sense that their meaning involves some psychological state, but have properties that are different from grammatically defined OEPVs, then it is expected that they would allow eventive passives.

In fact, note that with some of these verbs the notion that the object experiences a psychological state is not an entailment required by the lexical semantics of the verb, but rather an implicature that can be defeated. This is the case of (19a, 19b), while in other cases the notion that the object experiences some mental state seems to act as an entailment (19c, 19d).

(19) a. Durante la fiesta, Pedro acosó a María, pero esta no se dio cuenta.

during the party, Pedro harassed DOM María, but she not SE gave notice

'During the party, Pedro harassed María, but she didn't notice'

b. Después del examen, Carlos consoló al estudiante, pero este siguió sintiéndose igual.

after the exam, Carlos comforted the student, but he continued feeling same

'After the exam, Carlos comforted the student, but he felt exactly the same'

c. Julio Iglesias sedujo a la bailarina, \*pero esta no se dio cuenta.

Julio Iglesias seduced DOM the ballerina, but she not SE gave notice

'Julio Iglesias seduced the ballerina, ??but she didn't notice'

d. Pedro estimuló a sus estudiantes, ??pero estos ni se inmutaron.

Pedro stimulated DOM his students, but they not.even blinked

'Pedro stimulated his students, ?? but they didn't even blink'

The conclusion is that these verbs should not be considered OEPVs even if on the surface they involve the experiencing of some mental state: (i) grammatically, they are telic, causative events which to some extent (ii) allow in some cases the cancelation of the implicature that the object experiences a mental state as a result of the event.

Their accepting eventive passives is unsurprising, then: they are transitive eventive predicates that take accusative objects in the active form. We have suggested that the psychological component in these predicates follows from their lexical semantics, but they are differentiated from grammatical OEPVs in their aspectual behaviour. Thus, a strict grammatical definition of OEPV should not include these predicates within the class. In contrast, the remaining two classes of predicates here, the ones that have at least some difficulty in allowing the eventive passive, fall within the restrictive definition of OEPV.

### 3. Class 2 (*sorprender* 'surprise'): verbs that only admit non-specific passives

As we saw in §1, the verbs that belong to this second group reject eventive passives with specific individual initiators and denoting non-pluractional situations. They cannot locate the situation in a definite time period and as such they are incompatible with expressions such as *ayer* 'yesterday' or *a las tres* 'at three o'clock'. Instead, they prefer expressions that trigger pluractionality, some form of habituality (cf. in particular Carlson 2011) or in general define extended time periods that involve iterativity (*muchas veces* 'many times', *frecuentemente* 'frequently', *en cada momento* 'at each moment', etc.).

Another manifestation of this same principle is that their initiator, when expressed, tends to denote a kind of objects, in the singular or in the plural, not definite individuals, or a group of undifferentiated entities that produce the psychological effect in possibly different time periods. The first set of properties show that these verbs allow passives only when there is a notion of pluractionality related to the predicate. This is illustrated in (20), where the expressions that force the definite reading of the time period or the agent are italicised.

- (20) a. \*El general fue asustado *por su hermana*.  
the general was frightened by his sister

b. \**La semana pasada* Luis fue desmotivado *por Ana*.

the week last Luis was demotivated by Ana

In contrast, in (21) we show how the general notion of pluractionality licenses the passives of the same verbs. This pluractionality is manifested in the use of some adverbs of repetition, or initiators that refer to groups of entities. Note that, as expected from repeated eventualities that could be construed as statements about habitual situations (Bertinetto & Lenci 2011) in Spanish, this sometimes involves marking the auxiliary with imperfective aspect (21a).

(21) a. El general era sorprendido *constantemente por personas con malas noticias*.

the general was surprised constantly by people with bad news

b. Pedro fue aliviado *por todos y cada uno de sus colegas*.

Pedro was relieved by all and each one of his colleagues

c. Carlos fue desmotivado *muchas veces por sus familiares*.

Carlos was demotivated many times by his relatives

Importantly, this does not mean that this class of verbs rejects singular definite agents in the passive form. However, these are only allowed when they can be directly related to concepts composed of entities belonging to the same class –therefore, very similar to a kind interpretation–, collective entities composed of a relevant number of members (22), or abstract nouns that introduce implicit participants that can be interpreted as a plurality of individuals (23). In either case, the interpretation is that each one of these entities might have triggered the mental state at a different time period, therefore avoiding the reading in which there is only one specific moment at which the situation holds.

(22) Sus últimos años, pasados en la pobreza, fueron aliviados

his last years, passed in the poverty, were relieved

*por la amistad de un grupo de jóvenes artistas* admiradores de su figura

by the friendship of a group of young artists admirers of his image

(23) los graves y permanentes dolores [...] sólo pueden ser aliviados por la compasión.

the serious and permanent pains only can be relieved by the compassion

'Those serious and constant sufferings can only be relieved by the compassion [of people]'

The avoidance of the definition of a specific time period and a definite individual participant can also be obtained by eliminating any syntactically explicit expression of the agent, with or without adverbial modifiers defining pluractionality.

(24) a. \*La directora fue desmotivada por su jefe.

the director was demotivated by her boss

b. La directora fue desmotivada constantemente por las autoridades durante su

the director was demotivated constantly by the authorities during her

mandato.

mandate

'The director was constantly discouraged by the authorities during her mandate'

Some of the OEPVs that, on the examination of the Corpus del Español combined with the native speaker intuitions, belong to this group are listed in (25).

(25) aliviar 'relieve', apaciguar 'calm down', asustar 'scare', atemorizar 'frighten', confundir 'confuse', contrariar 'disappoint', deslumbrar 'fascinate', desmotivar 'demotivate', excitar 'excite', fastidiar 'annoy', frustrar 'frustrate', perturbar 'distress', sorprender 'surprise'

Is the restriction on passive related to the psych version directly, or is there an accidental lexical connection between the list of verbs in (25) and the properties of their passives? We believe that it can be shown that the restriction on passive directly follows from the psych interpretation of these verbs, which again suggests that the crucial factor here is the grammatical properties of the verb and not the type of root or lexical item involved. The evidence comes from some of the predicates in (25) that have a non-psychological use. The specific eventive passive is allowed in these verbs when the psych interpretation is not activated, and impossible when it is activated. A good example of this type of verb is *sorprender* 'surprise'. In Spanish, this verb has a non-psych perception reading where the object does not hold a 'surprise' mental state: it just means to find someone in the course of an action that maybe that person should not have been doing (26a). This contrasts with the psych reading, where it is necessary that the object holds that psychological state (26b).

(26) a. Juan sorprendió a su hijo quemando papeles.

Juan surprised DOM his son burning papers

'Juan caught his son burning papers'

b. Juan sorprendió a su hijo al regalarle un caballo.

Juan surprised DOM his son when giving-him a horse

'Juan surprised his son when he gave him a horse'



Crucially for our purposes, the first sentence allows a non-iterative passive, while the second, which is the real OEPV version of the verb, rejects it (28a). As expected, the iterative version of (28b), where the repetition is expressed by the fact that the agent expresses a collectivity of individuals, is accepted.

(27) El hijo de Juan fue sorprendido por su padre mientras quemaba papeles.

the son of Juan was surprised by his father while burned papers

'The son of Juan was caught burning papers by his father'

(28) a. \*El hijo de Juan fue sorprendido por su padre al regalarle un caballo.

the son of Juan was surprised by his father when give-him a horse

Intended: 'The son of Juan was surprised by his father when he gave him a horse'

b. John Williams fue sorprendido por sus fans con este vídeo.

John Williams was surprised by his fans with this video

Let us now move to the argument structure properties of these predicates, which also play a role in the analysis. Pesetsky (1995) develops a distinction between the Causer-of-emotion (CoE), the entity that triggers a mental state, and the Target-of-emotion (ToE), the entity which the mental state is directed to. One relevant property of all the verbs in this second group is that the subject in the active version can in every case be an entity different from the Target-of-Emotion. This is illustrated in (29), where the Target-of-Emotion, expressed as a prepositional complement, coexists in the syntactic structure with a subject interpreted as the (non-necessarily volitional) causer.

(29) a. Pedro agobió a María con el examen.

Pedro stressed DOM María with the exam

- b. Pedro alivió a María acerca de las notas.  
Pedro relieved DOM María about the grades
- c. Pedro asustó a María con el cáncer.  
Pedro frightened DOM María with the cancer
- d. Pedro perturbó a María con unas fotos.  
Pedro distressed DOM María about some photos
- e. Pedro sorprendió a María con su regalo.  
Pedro surprised DOM María with his present
- f. Pedro desmotivó a María acerca de su trabajo.  
Pedro discouraged DOM María about of her work

Note that the subject in such cases behaves as a causer of emotion that might be volitional:

- (30) a. ¡Desmotiva-lo!  
demotivate-him
- b. ¡Sorpréndela!  
surprise-her
- c. ¡Asústa-lo!  
frighten-him

It is also possible that in the absence of these prepositional complements the subject is interpreted also as the Target-of-Emotion, as in *El trabajo desmotiva a María* 'The task demotivates María', where the task can be the object that María directs the demotivation at as well as the entity that causes the feeling. **In such cases, the only overt argument is satisfying both roles.**

As far as aspect is concerned, these verbs comply with Marín & McNally's (2011) generalisation about OEPVs, as they behave as atelic inchoative predicates. Specifically, these display the behaviour of inchoative verbs which do not denote a stative component.

Their aspectual behaviour can be shown to correspond to only a left boundary of an event '[' through several tests. First of all, the predicates are not telic (*\*María terminó de sorprender a Juan* 'María finished surprising Juan'), confirming that they lack a closing boundary of change and therefore that they only express the initial boundary. The progressive periphrasis, correspondingly, receives a preparatory stage reading (roughly 'is about to' and not 'is in the process of'). With the expected pragmatic flexibility, (31a) means María has not reached the mental state that is described as *aliviada* 'relieved', but is close to it.<sup>2</sup>

(31) a. La situación está aliviando a María.

the situation is relieving DOM María

b. La situación está desanimando a María.

the situation is discouraging DOM María

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<sup>2</sup> Yet another property of progressive forms of these verbs, related to their denoting only an initial boundary, is that they do not produce contradictory readings when coordinated with prospective aspect. In (i), because the verb only denotes an initial boundary, the progressive does not mean that the state is being reached. This contrasts with a verb from the third group, which contains a stative component (ii), where there is contradiction.

(i) Se está desmotivando y se va a desmotivar.

SE is demotivating and SE goes to demotivate

'She is getting demotivated, and she will get demotivated'

(ii) ??Se está aburriendo y se va a aburrir.

SE is boring and SE goes to bore

Intended: 'She is getting bored and she will get bored'

c. La abuela está consolando a María.

the grandmother is comforting DOM María

d. El profesor está desmotivando a María.

the teacher is discouraging DOM María

Another test related to a verb denoting only an initial boundary of change is that in the present these predicates prefer a habitual reading, not one where the action is necessarily taking place in the present moment. In (32f), for instance, one must interpret that María gets surprised with each one of the drawings that her son produces, sequentially, and not that there is a precise moment at which the collective set of drawings surprises her. It is clear that this property is similar to the one that we find in the passives.

(32) a. María se asusta con las ratas.

María SE scares with the rats

b. María se atemoriza con las ratas.

María SE frightens with the rats

c. María se confunde con las operaciones.

María SE confuses with the calculations

d. María se contraría con su trabajo.

María SE disappoints with her job

e. María se deslumbra con el éxito de su jefe.

María SE fascinates with the success of her boss

f. María se sorprende con los dibujos de su hijo.

María SE surprises with the drawings of her son

To conclude, we see that this class of verbs is characterised by the presence of initiators potentially distinct from Target-of-State predicates, and lack a stative component in their denotation.

Let us move now to the third class of verbs –the second that correspond to the grammatical definition of OEPVs–

#### 4. The two subclasses in group 3 (*enfadar* and *aburrir*): verbs that reject the passive form

This third and last group is the one where eventive passives are totally excluded. All these verbs are unattested in eventive pasives in Corpus del Español, and our own native intuitions as well as those of the speakers consulted confirm that not even a pluractional passive would be allowed in their case. These verbs include *aburrir* 'bore', *apasionar* 'be passionate about', *apenar* 'make sad', *apesadumbrar* 'make sad', *consternar* 'dismay', *deprimir* 'depress', *desesperar* 'exasperate', *enfadar* 'anger', *enfurecer* 'make furious', *enojar* 'make angry', *enorgullecer* 'make proud', *entristecer* 'make sad', *entusiasmar* 'excite', *espantar* 'frighten', *fascinar* 'fascinate', *desilusionar* 'disappoint', *indignar* 'outrage', *interesar* 'make interested', *mosquear* 'annoy', *obnubilar* 'bewilder', *obsesionar* 'obsess', *ofuscar* 'obfuscate', and *preocupar* 'worry'.

As we showed for the second group, here the impossibility of having a passive form is directly related to the psych interpretation of the verb. The verb *espantar* 'to frighten' has a use as a caused motion verb ('to chase away') (34a) next to the psych version (34b). The first one has a passive version (35a), but not the second (35b).

(34) a. Juan espantó        las moscas.

Juan chased-away the flies

b. Las arañas espantan a        María.

the spiders frighten DOM María

(35) a. Las moscas fueron espantadas por Juan.

the flies were chased-away by Juan

b. \*María fue espantada por las arañas.

María was frightened by the spiders

Even though all the verbs allow for a version where they denote the corresponding change of state, all the verbs in this group reject any form of eventive passive, **irrespective of the iterative interpretation of the event.**

(36) a. \*María fue aburrída por Pedro.

María was bored by Pedro

b. \*María ha sido aburrída muchas veces.

María has been bored many times

c. \*María era aburrída a cada paso por estudiantes que entraban a su despacho.

María was bored at each step by students that entered to her office

That said, in the third group there are two subclasses of verbs in terms of both their aspect and argument structure; both properties conspire to exclude them from the passive version.

Unlike the second class, some of these verbs only allow, in the active voice, the Target-of-Emotion reading of the subject. Consider (37), which is a critical example in this sense.

(37) a. La situación enfadó a María.

the situation angered DOM María

b. Pedro enfadó a María.

Pedro angered DOM María

It is clear that in (37a) it is only possible to interpret that the situation is the entity that María directs the anger at. However, intuitively it seems that Pedro in (37b) could be the causer of the emotion. We will argue now that this is not the case, despite appearances. First of all, the imperative of this form is marginal.

(38) ¿;Enfáda-lo!

anger-him

Second, consider (39), where we have added a prepositional complement that is apparently a target-of-emotion.

(39) Pedro enfadó a María con su artículo.

Pedro angered DOM María with his article

Despite the surface appearance, it is possible to show that *con su artículo* is not the entity that María is angry at, but just an instrument or facilitator that María uses to direct her anger at Pedro. The formal test is the impossibility of (40a) in contrast to (40b). Here we assume that the stative participle can only introduce the target of emotion, not the causer: what the participle denotes is not the event that can be initiated, but the state that can hold as a relation between the experiencer and the object that the emotion is directed at.

(40) a. \*María está enfadada con el artículo de Pedro.

María is angry with the article of Pedro

b. María está enfadada con Pedro.

María is angry with Pedro

In other words: that the apparent subject of the active version can become in the stative passive the complement of the participle shows that it is not the causer of the emotion, but its target. The following set of examples shows the same restriction as *enfadar*.

- (41) a. Pedro enoja a María con las fotos (María está enojada con Pedro / Pedro angers DOM María with the photos (María is angry with Pedro / \*con las fotos).  
with the photos)
- b. Pedro apena a María con las fotos (María está apenada con Pedro / Pedro saddens DOM María with the photos (María is saddened with Pedro / \*con las fotos).  
with the photos)
- c. Pedro cabrea a María con las fotos (María está cabreada con Pedro / Pedro angers DOM María with the photos (María is angry with Pedro / \*con las fotos).  
with the photos)
- d. Pedro enfurece a María con las fotos (María está enfurecida con Pedro / Pedro angers DOM María with the photos (María is furious with Pedro / \*con las fotos).  
with the photos)
- e. Pedro desespera a María con las fotos (María está desesperada / Pedro exasperates DOM María with the photos (María is exasperated con Pedro / \*con las fotos).



with Pedro / with the photos

- f. Pedro indigna a María con las fotos (María está indignada con Pedro  
Pedro outrages DOM María with the photos (María is outraged with Pedro  
/ \*con las fotos)  
/ with the photos)

The other subgroup, however, allows the subject to be interpreted as the causer of the psychological state, and uses a second argument as the target of emotion. An example of this type of verb is *aburrir* 'bore'.

- (42) a. Pedro aburre a María.

Pedro bores DOM María

- b. María se aburre con Pedro.

María SE bores with Pedro

- c. María está aburrida con Pedro.

María is bored with Pedro

- (43) a. Pedro aburre a María con la película.

Pedro bores DOM María with the movie

- b. María se aburre con la película.

María SE bores with the movie

- c. María está aburrida con la película.

María is bored with the movie

What characterises this second subgroup of verbs in contrast to the class that lacks a causer of emotion is that they all belong, within Marín & McNally's (2011) classification, to the

predicates that in addition to the onset boundary of the change also specify the result state. In all the cases in (44) the progressive is interpreted with the object already experiencing the state denoted by the verb, in contrast to what characterised the verbs in the group discussed in §3.

- (44) a. La situación está aburriendo a María.  
the situation is boring DOM María
- b. La situación está angustiando a María.  
the situation is stressing DOM María
- c. La película está apasionando a María.  
the movie is making-passionate DOM María
- d. La situación está apesadumbrando a María.  
the situation is saddening DOM María
- e. El concierto está entusiasmando a María.  
the concert is making-enthusiastic DOM María
- f. La situación está conmocionando a María.  
the situation is shaking DOM María
- g. La situación está disgustando a María.  
the situation is upsetting DOM María
- h. La película está entristeciendo a María.  
the movie is saddening DOM María
- i. La situación está fascinando a María.  
the situation is fascinating DOM María
- j. La situación está ilusionando a María.  
the situation is exciting DOM María
- k. La charla está interesando a María.

the talk is interesting DOM María

l. El problema está obsesionando a María.

the problem is obsessing DOM María

m. Su hijo está preocupando a María.

her son is worrying DOM María

Thus, here we have two subclasses of predicates: the first class lacks any type of eventuality-initiating argument (agent or causer of emotion, CoE), while the second class can have that argument but is characterised by the aspectual property that the predicates included there denote a state in addition to the onset boundary. Let us now move to the analysis, where we will use the characterisation of the three groups of verbs –the last one subdivided in two classes– to explain why they behave differently in terms of their passive construction.

## 5. Analysis

We base our analysis on the two following fairly uncontroversial assumptions about the *ser* 'be' passive in Spanish.

First of all, we assume that the *ser* passive of an eventive verb is still eventive. This is what we assume differentiates it from so-called passives with *estar*, which denotes the state related to the original verb (cf. Alarcos 1970, Lázaro Carreter 1980, Navas Ruiz 1987, Gómez Torrego 1988, Brucart 1990, among many others). This can be shown with a number of tests, for instance that the first can combine, as an infinitive, with a perception verb. Note that the perception verb requires an event (45a) and rejects states (45b); the same contrast identifies the *ser*-passive as eventive (45c) and the *estar*-passive as stative (45d).

(45) a. Vi (a Juan) escribir el libro.

saw.1sg DOM Juan write the book

'I saw Juan write the book'

b. \*Vi (a Juan) estar enfermo.

saw.1sg DOM Juan be sick

Intended: 'I saw that Juan was sick'

c. Vi (a Juan) ser arrestado.

saw.1sg DOM Juan be arrested

'I saw Juan be arrested'

d. \*Vi (a Juan) estar arrestado.

saw.1sg DOM Juan be detained

Our second assumption will be that any passive structure requires an initiator argument, independently of whether it controls the event or not, is volitional or not, or is conscious or not. This is what licenses a distinction between anticausatives (Schäfer 2008) and passives, as illustrated in (46).

(46) a. La televisión se rompió.

the television SE broke

'The TV stopped functioning'

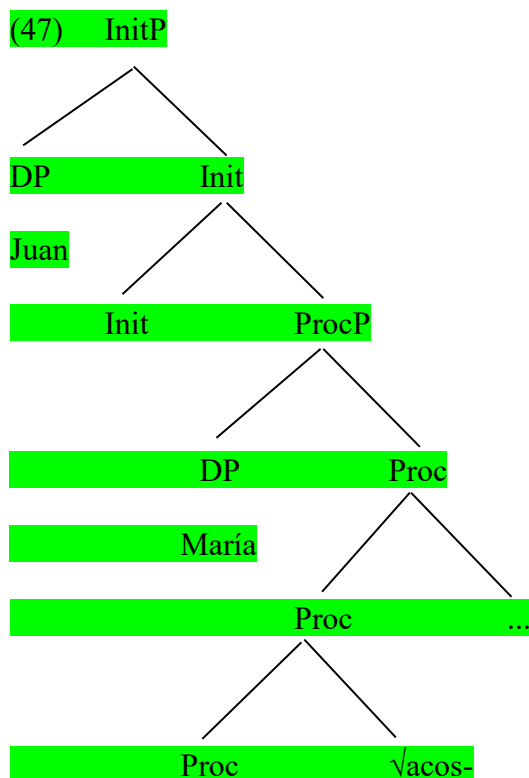
b. Se rompieron televisores por parte de los hinchas.

SE broke televisions by part of the hooligans

'TVs were broken by the hooligans'

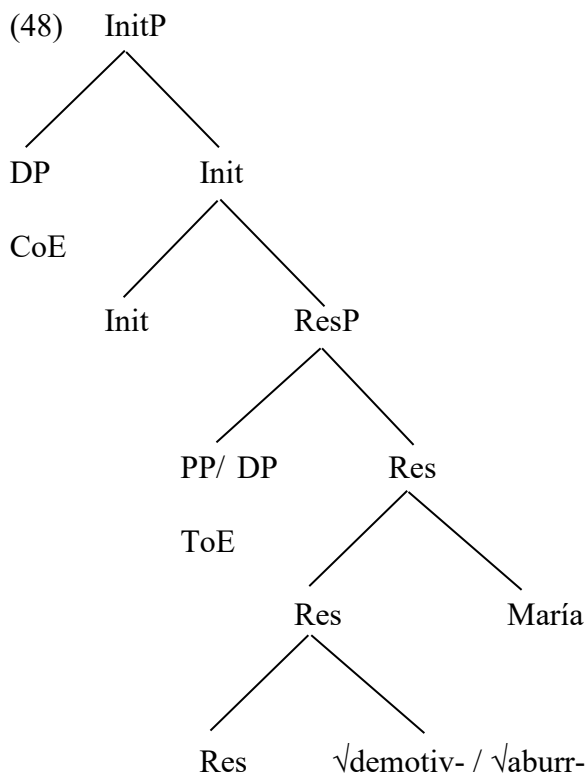
Even though we would like our analysis to be neutral with respect to how each particular theory represents the internal structure of lexical verbs, for the sake of concreteness we will take as a

starting point Ramchand (2008) in the technical representation. However, we depart from her assumptions in two respects: (i) following García Pardo (2018), we allow Init and Res to combine directly without an intervening eventive head (against Ramchand 2008: 44; see also Fábregas & Marín 2015); (ii) to represent lexical meaning, we assume roots as separate nodes, attached to the highest verbal head as Acedo-Matellán (2016) proposes. Our specific proposal is that the relevant classes of OEPVs discussed here should be assigned three distinct structures. The verbs of the first group (§2: **telic verbs** with lexical semantics involving a mental state) should be represented as accomplishments or achievements introducing initiators, as in (47). Even though the class can be aspectually eclectic, what is relevant for us is that both an initiator and an eventive component (ProcP) are present



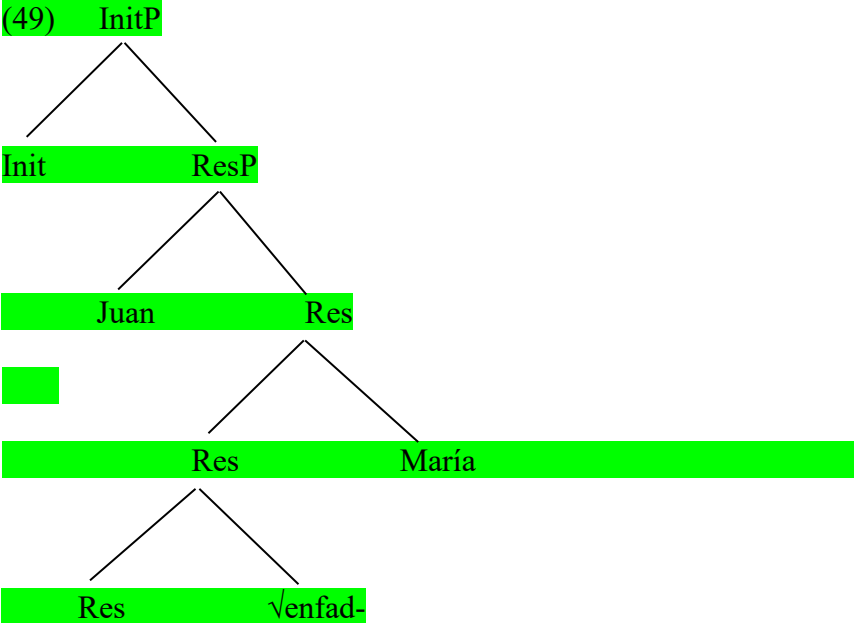
These verbs contain at least two subevents, one of them dynamic (Proc). The initiator (as specifier of Init) is the subject in the active version, and the object at a minimum would be the entity that undergoes an eventive process denoted by Proc.

Second, (48) expresses the structure we assume for the verbs in the second group (§3). What defines them, as we saw, is that they contain an initiator (Init), but they do not denote a fully eventive predicate, due to the absence of Proc (cf. Fábregas & Marín 2015). This implies that there will be an initiator, and that, as far as aspect is concerned, there will not be a telic reading of a change of state because the absence of Proc forces an interpretation of the eventuality **as only denoting the initial boundary of the eventuality** (cf. also Marín & McNally 2011, Fábregas & Marín 2017, García Pardo 2018). Beyond the second class, also verbs like *aburrir* in the third class (§4) display this structure, which could be roughly characterised as agentive states.



What this means is that we assume that the distinction between the two subclasses of verbs in Marín & McNally (2011) –with or without a separate state component after the boundary– should not be reflected in a deep structural difference between the two classes. Rather, the structure in (48) is compatible with both interpretations, because the presence of Init manages to define the onset boundary, and the presence of Res could define a stative component. We assume that the lexical information of the root determines whether the stative component should be considered independent of the boundary or should be left underspecified.

Moving now to the subgroup of the verbs in the third class, *enfadar* 'anger', which both lack an initiator and a stative component in their denotation, we propose that they should be treated as in (49): basically, the structure is the same as in (48), only that in them the InitP layer is defective (Schäfer 2008) and does not introduce its own specifier. Here, therefore, no causer of emotion is introduced.



With these structures in mind, it is immediately obvious why the first group of verbs allows passives. (47) satisfies both properties of passives in a straightforward way. ProcP is present, and therefore there is an eventive component, and InitP introduces a specifier that gets the initiator interpretation assigned. Unsurprisingly, then, all verbs belonging to this class can build an eventive passive with *ser*.

The structure in (49) will not participate in eventive passives because of two reasons: (i) the predicate lacks an eventive component, and (ii) there is no initiator, as the subject is assigned the interpretation of Target-of-Emotion (ToE). Lacking both elements, it is clear that nothing would license the eventive passive in this case.

The structure in (48) requires further clarification, because it is shared by two groups of verbs that behave differently in terms of the eventive passive. Remember what these two classes are:

i) (48) is the structure of all the predicates from the second group, such as *sorprender* 'surprise' (§3), which can license an eventive passive provided that there is a component of pluractionality.

ii) (48) also represents the predicates from the third group (§4) that introduce a causer of emotion –thus an initiator–, such as *aburrir* 'bore'. The verbs in this class cannot have a passive under any circumstance.

As both types of predicates satisfy the condition that they should have an initiator, we will focus on their aspectual properties as the reason for the divide between the two groups. Interestingly, the two classes of predicates are differentiated in their aspectual properties, as we saw during the discussion. The class of *sorprender* 'surprise' has been shown to contain only verbs that in their psychological interpretation denote the onset boundary without any independent reference



to the stative component (50a), while the class of *aburrir* 'bore' displays the behaviour of the verbs that specify the stative component in addition to the boundary (50b).

- (50) a. [  
b. [-----

How is that difference relevant both to explain why (50a) can only form eventive passives when **the event is repetitive**, while (50b) never allows an eventive passive?

### **6. How to obtain an eventive process when there is none**

The problem, then, is why only some verbs corresponding to the structure in (48) allow for passives, but on the condition that the **event is interpreted as iterative**. Once (48) satisfies the condition that there should be an initiator, the distinction between the two classes of verbs must be aspectual.

**In a nutshell, what we will argue for in this section is that it is possible to build a non-dynamic event by iteration of a (left or right) boundary, provided that the result of this iteration cannot be interpreted as overlapping with a state, because in that case it would correspond to a non-dynamic aspectual component. This implies assuming, contra Piñón (1997), that the addition of a series of boundaries does not give as a result another boundary –interpreted as a point in time or space–, but rather a path object that is composed of different distinct points. In other words, we assume that boundaries represent points in time, and that a sequence of points forms a path.**

- (51) [+ [+ [+ [+ ... = -----

In order to understand how this is allowed within the system, it is important to remember that dynamicity is not necessary for a passive; **the points within the path defined by the process can, but do not have to, represent distinct stages of the same eventuality for the eventive passive to be allowed.** This is of course the case of any eventive verb, as the class in (47). It is also the case of a second class of transitive eventive predicates where the process is homogeneous and lacks any change component –hence being necessarily atelic–. This class of verbs (Fábregas & Marín 2017) is represented for instance by *gobernar* 'govern', *bloquear* 'block' and *mantener* 'maintain', which represent all non-dynamic processes where an initiator applies some force to keep a particular state unchanged.

(52) a. Juan gobernó España.

Juan governed Spain

b. El camión bloquea la carretera.

the truck blocks the road

c. Juan mantiene a su madre.

Juan maintains DOM his mother

These predicates accept the eventive passive, showing that dynamicity is not required to license passives provided that the eventive component is present.

(53) a. España fue gobernada por Juan.

Spain was governed by Juan

b. La carretera fue bloqueada por el camión.

the road was blocked by the truck

c. Su madre fue mantenida por Juan.

his mother was supported by Juan

We contend that the second group of verbs builds eventive passives exactly under the same conditions as this class of predicates. Their only difference is that they do not contain a Proc component, but instead they denote just an onset boundary. Because of this, pluractionality is crucial for these verbs to be licensed in the passive, as we will strive to show now.

The first thing to be noted is that transitive achievement verbs show a surprising resistance to form passives. In our account, this is no surprise, because we are arguing that the constraints on the eventive passive are not satisfied by one single boundary. Consider, for instance, *perder* 'lose' (54).

(54) a. ??Las llaves de casa fueron perdidas por Juan.

the keys of home were lost by Juan

b. Las llaves de casa eran perdidas a cada momento por sus hijos.

the keys of home were lost at each moment by her sons

'The home keys were constantly lost by her sons'

Even though the class of transitive achievements is not particularly abundant, similar cases are *ganar el partido* 'win a match', *olvidar la cena* 'forget the dinner', *chocar las manos* 'shake the hands' or *disparar un revolver* 'shoot a gun', among others.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Other cases of transitive achievements allow the passive with less difficulty, but then one can identify intervening factors that suggest that the verb does not denote a mere boundary. For instance, the phase verbs *empezar* 'start' and *terminar* 'finish' (plus synonyms) denote boundaries, but with NP arguments trigger syncategorematic readings where a durative event is understood (cf. *finish dinner* = 'finish eating / preparing dinner'; cf. Pustejovsky 1995). Verbs like *encontrar* 'find' or *descubrir* 'discover' express eventualities where there is the component of acquiring some entity or knowledge by the subject, therefore potentially involving durative situations pragmatically associated with them. We leave for further research the exploration of why these predicates seem to allow passives, and in general of the conditions that allow achievements to allow passive in the unexpected cases.



(57) ...-----...

Thus, one has to guarantee that the repetition of the boundary to create a body does not produce a state; if that was the case, then repetition would not satisfy the eventive passive. The eventive interpretation in the class of *sorprender* 'surprise' predicates is allowed by the fact that in their representation they do not include already an extended object with stative properties.

In contrast, the *aburrir* 'bore' class, also conforming to the structure in (48), already encodes in its aspectual information a body consisting on an extended temporal object: the stative component that follows the onset boundary. Thus, when one tries to apply pluractionality to obtain a path out of the onset boundary, the resulting body is indistinguishable from the state that the predicate already denotes. Schematically, starting from (58a), the iteration of the boundary produces (58b). The result is an unbounded path, and the state present before the iteration is also an unbounded path. Both objects are representationally identical within the theory, and the verb is atelic. Therefore the two bodies will be merged in a single body. The problem is that such body would have contradictory properties: eventive and stative at the same time (58c).

(57) a. [-----

b. ([ + [ + [ + [ + [ ... = -----)-----

c. \*-----...-----...

Consequently, repeating the event any number of times cannot save that class of verbs in an eventive passive. The predicates remain as stative, lacking an eventive component, and therefore the passive with *ser* is impossible for that class.

## 7. Conclusions

In this article we have discussed the eventive passives of psychological verbs in Spanish. We have proposed that an analysis that is based in the aspectual and argumental properties of the predicates within the OEPV class is well suited to account for the different behaviours of OEPVs under eventive passives, and in particular of the otherwise unexpected property that some OEPVs only allow eventive passives when they involve some form of repetition.

In arguing for this type of approach, we have discussed in some detail the presence of initiators in different groups of OEPVs as well as the distinct aspectual properties that these predicates display.

Going back to the starting point of the paper, our results make it unlikely that the availability of passives in OEPVs could be straightforwardly explained by the availability of passives where the subject is extracted from a PP constituent. However, we have not discussed here why English allows psych passives and Italian, as described in the literature, does not. Our results suggest that the explanation should be found in the aspectual and argumental properties of the Italian OEPVs against those of the English equivalent class, but we have not conducted this investigation in this chapter. Time will tell whether the hypotheses presented here can be successfully extended to other languages or not –it is in principle possible that the passive is sensitive to different properties of the verbs in different languages, as already suggested in Áfarli (1992)–, but at least we hope to have been able to argue in favour of a particular way of accounting for these facts in Spanish.

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