

A REINTERPRETATION OF QUIRKY SUBJECTS AND RELATED PHENOMENA IN SPANISH*

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1. *Introduction*

Icelandic is a nominative-accusative SVO language that is well-known to have quirky subjects (Zaenen *et.al.* 1985, Sigurðsson 2004). Quirky subjects are oblique arguments that otherwise behave like surface subjects in every relevant respect. Nominative and quirky subjects are exemplified in (1).

- (1) a. *Við hjálpuðum stelpunum.*
we-NOM helped girls.the-DAT
“We helped the girls.”
b. *Henni líkuðu hestarnir*
her-DAT liked.3PL horses.the- NOM
“She liked the horses.” (Sigurðsson 2004)

It is well-known that Spanish has data that apparently replicates the quirky subject construction. The clearest case are psych verbs where the dative argument, and not the nominative argument, occupies the preverbal position.

- (2) *A ella le gustaron los caballos.*
to her CL like-3PL the horses
“She liked the horses.”

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There are two ways in which the “subjecthood” of the dative in (2) has been understood. Working in Relational Grammar, González (1988) proposes that the dative XP in (2) is an Inversion Nominal (I-Nominal). I-Nominals are underlying subjects that surface as indirect objects. Hence they are expected to show some (albeit not all) of the syntactic properties of subjects. The second kind of analysis takes the preverbal dative to be a quirky (and hence surface) subject. Masullo (1993) first proposed that the dative in (2) can be analyzed as a quirky subject, though different from those of Icelandic. The quirky subject analysis has been recently extended to other constructions in Spanish, such as impersonal constructions in Fernández-Soriano (1999) and to a further class of psych verbs in Rivero (2004), both to be discussed in what follows.¹

In this paper I provide evidence that the dative in (2) is neither an underlying nor a quirky subject. Instead I argue that the “subject” properties they display are unrelated to subjecthood. Rather, I propose that they result from a word order effect whereby in Spanish the preverbal position is occupied by the argument whose semantic role ranks highest in the Thematic Hierarchy.

2. *Spanish preverbal obliques are not oblique subjects*

2.1 *González (1988)*

González (1988) claims that the preverbal datives of verbs like *gustar* “to like”, show two properties characteristic of subjects in Spanish. First, preverbal datives can bind the anaphor *sí mismo* “himself”, but ordinary IOs cannot.

- (3) a. *Al príncipe_i le gustó Soraya para sí mismo_i.*
 to-the prince CL liked Soraya for himself
 ‘The Prince liked Soraya (to keep her) for himself.’
 b. **Marta le habló al psiquiatra_i de sí mismo_i.*
 Marta CL spoke to-the psychiatrist about himself

However, the status of (3a) is not entirely clear. Three speakers of Mexican Spanish were presented with this example and they all rejected it. My sense is that it is perhaps not ungrammatical, but it is clearly very strongly deviant. Furthermore, (3a) and (3b) are not equivalent. In (3a) the anaphor is embedded in a PP adjunct, whereas in (3b) it is in a PP that is an argument of the verb. As noted in Masullo (1993), when the anaphor corresponds to an argument, the

¹ These two ways of analyzing oblique subjects are not mutually exclusive. For instance, Moore and Perlmutter (2000) show that Russian has both I-Nominals and true dative (quirky) subjects. However, I do not make use of this distinction in my analysis since I provide evidence against both the analysis of Spanish preverbal datives as I-Nominals in González (1988) and the analyses that propose that these datives are true quirky (surface) subjects.

preverbal dative is equally unable to bind it, as in (4). In this respect, Spanish is unlike Icelandic, where oblique subjects can indeed bind anaphora.

- (4) a. **A Adriana_i le gusta sí misma_i.*
 to Adriana CL likes herself
 b. **A Marcos_i le preocupa sí mismo_i.*
 to Marcos CL worries himself (Masullo 1993: 310)

This result is confirmed by a text count carried out as part of my research. In all the 20th century oral Spanish texts in Davies (2004), a total of 347 occurrences of the various inflected forms of 3rd person *sí mismo* were found.² Out of these, 305 were bound by the nominative subject (or its corresponding argument in nominalizations) but none were bound by a preverbal dative.³

The second property mentioned by González is the *no... sino* construction. In this construction the null subject of the second predicate is typically coreferential with the subject of the first predicate, as in (5). González claims that the preverbal datives of psych verbs share this property with subjects, whereas ordinary IO do not. The data in (6) is from González (1988).

- (5) *Las águilas_i no corren, sino que pro_i vuelan.*
 the eagles not run instead that they.fly
 “Eagles don’t run: they fly.”
- (6) a. *A Juan_i no le gustan las rubias, sino que pro_i prefiere*
 to Juan notCL like the blondes rather that he.prefers
 las morenas.
 the brunettes
 “Juan doesn’t like blondes: he prefers brunettes.”
 b. **La CIA no le pidió explicaciones a Nixon_i, sino que*
 the CIA notCL asked explanations to Nixon rather that
 pro_i obedeció.
 obeyed-3SG
 (“The CIA didn’t ask Nixon for any explanations: he just obeyed.”)

However, it seems to me that this is just a pragmatic effect. An ordinary IO can indeed be coreferential with the *pro* of the second predicate as long as the

² This anaphor inflects for number and gender in Spanish.

³ Of the remaining forms, 30 were logophors, two were bound by the DO, one by an ordinary IO, and in 9 cases it was not possible to determine what the binding element was.

IO is fronted to a topic position, as in (7).⁴ Hence it is reasonable to conclude that the possibility to be coreferential with the second predicate is dependent on topicality and not on subjecthood.

- (7) *?A Luis_i no le dieron acceso al laboratorio, sino que pro_i*
 to Luis notCL they.gave access to.the lab rather that
entró sin permiso.
 entered without permission
 “Luis was not granted access to the lab: he went in without permission.”

2.2 Fernández-Soriano (1999)

Fernández-Soriano (1999: henceforth F-S) analyses two kinds of active intransitive constructions as quirky subject constructions. The first kind are intransitive stative predicates and meteorological verbs that can appear with a preposed locative XP. Some of these predicates (such as *faltar* “lack”) instead take a dative XP as their argument. The second class corresponds to intransitive eventive predicates (like *pasar* “happen”) that alternatively take a locative or a dative XP as an argument. This XP typically also appears in the preverbal position. Both cases are exemplified in (8) and (9), respectively.

- (8) *En Madrid nieva.*
 in Madrid it.snows
 “It snows in Madrid.” (Fernández-Soriano 1999)
- (9) a. *Aquí pasa algo.*
 here happens something
 “Something’s going on here.” (Fernández-Soriano 1999)
- b. *A Juan le pasa algo.*
 to Juan CL happens something
 “Something’s going on with Juan.”

F-S shows that these locative and dative XPs are arguments of these predicates: they are different from adjuncts with respect to extraction from coordinate clauses, interrogative inversion, and the position where they are base-generated. These conclusions will not be contested here. However, I will show that this does not entail that these oblique arguments are quirky subjects. I take (9b) to be a kind of *experiencer-verb-theme* construction akin with (2), and so I suggest it be analyzed as other psych verb constructions addressed

⁴ Most speakers consulted considered (7) less than perfect, but still clearly grammatical.

later in section 2.3. Here I concentrate on evidence that locatives in impersonal constructions are not quirky subjects. The relevant evidence is as follows.

First, there is evidence that the locatives in (8) and (9a) do not occupy the preverbal position in the unmarked case (*contra* F-S). F-S claims that the word order in (8) and (9a) is felicitous in an out-of-the-blue context, a standard diagnostic for unmarked word order. However, it seems that this results from the fact that these data correspond to the habitual present, which is easily amenable to an interpretation where the referent of the locative (a highly definite and individuated NP) has already been introduced in the discourse or is readily identifiable by both the speaker and hearer. Instead, consider a context where speaker A walks into a room and sees speaker B watching the news on television. He then utters the question in (10a). In this context, the answer where the locative PP occupies the preverbal position is robustly infelicitous for all speakers of Mexican Spanish consulted. This points to the conclusion that the locative XP in (8) and (9a) surfaces in the preverbal position not because it is a subject, but rather because it is a fronted sentence topic.

- (10) a. *Qué pasa?*
 “What’s happening?”
 b. *Está nevando en Barcelona.*
 it.is snowing in Barcelona
 “It’s snowing in Barcelona.”
 c. #*En Barcelona está nevando.*
 in Barcelona it.is snowing

Secondly, consider those impersonal verbs that allow for either a locative or a dative argument. F-S claims that, since these dative/locative XPs are quirky subjects, they cannot co-occur in the preverbal position (where Case is assigned), unless the locative is an adjunct as in (11).

- (11) [*En Barcelona [nos pasó lo peor]*].
 in Barcelona to.us happened the worst
 “When we were in Barcelona, the worst happened to us.”

However, impersonal constructions *do* allow for simultaneous co-occurrence of the dative and locative XPs, as in (12), which casts doubts on their “subject” status. Again, this indicates that the presence of the locative XP in [Spec, T] in (8) and (9a) is not related to its status as an argument, but rather to information structure considerations (i.e. topicalization; cf. Section 3).

- (12) *En esta colonia nos faltan policías.*
 in this neighborhood to.us lack policemen
 “We do not have enough policemen in this neighborhood.”
 (*When we are in this neighborhood, we don’t have enough policemen).

Finally, a third argument is found in long *wh*-extraction. A clear distinction between subjects (nominative and quirky) and non-subject fronted topics is that topics block long *wh*-extraction (Zaenen *et. al.* 1985, Masullo 1993; the data in (13) is from Goodall 2001). As shown in (14), the preverbal locative XPs of impersonal constructions behave like topics in this respect, not like subjects.

- (13) a. *A quién crees [que Juan le dio el premio]?*
 to whom you.think that Juan CL gave the prize
 “Who do you think that Juan gave the prize to?”
 b. **A quién crees [que el premio se lo dieron]?*
 to whom you.think that the prize CL CL they.gave
- (14) a. **Qué_i dices [que en Barcelona pasó t_i la semana pasada]?*
 what you-say that in Barcelona happened the week past
 b. ??*Cuántos días_i dices [que en Barcelona nevó t_i la semana pasada]?*
 how-many days you-say that in Barcelona snowed the week past

2.2 Rivero (2004)

Icelandic quirky subjects show the peculiar property that they block person agreement between the verb and the nominative argument (Sigurðsson 2004). Accordingly, 1st or 2nd person agreement in (15a, b) is impossible. Instead, the verb form of the quirky subject construction requires default 3rd person agreement and so nominative objects can only be 3rd person, as in (15c).

- (15) a. **Ég veit að honum líkum við.*
 I know that him-DAT like-1PL we-NOM
 b. **Ég veit að honum líkid þið.*
 I know that him-DAT like-2PL you-PL-NOM
 c. *Ég veit að honum líka þeir.*
 I know that him-DAT like-3PL they-NOM
 “I know that he likes them.”

Rivero claims that there is a class of psych verbs in Spanish (*antojar* “to fancy”, *olvidar* “to forget”, and *ocurrir* “to come up with an idea”) that replicates the Icelandic pattern. She provides examples like (16) as evidence that, just as in Icelandic, in the corresponding Spanish examples agreement is not possible with a 1st or 2nd person nominative argument.

- (16) a. *A Ana siempre se le antojan los mismos chicos*
 to Ana always CL.3.REFL CL.DAT fancy-3PL the same guys
 “Ana always takes a fancy to the same guys.”
- b. **A Ana siempre os le antojáis vosotros.*
 to Ana always CL.2PL CL.DAT fancy-2PL you-NOM.PL
- c. **A Ana siempre nos le antojamos nosotros.*
 to Ana always CL.1PL CL.DAT fancy-1PL we-NOM

However, Rivero’s observation is actually incorrect. It seems that there is more than one factor responsible for the ungrammaticality of (16b-c), but examples with 2nd person singular subjects show that it does not have to do with subjecthood. Subject to some obvious pragmatic restrictions (the verbs *olvidar* “forget” and *ocurrir* “to come up with an idea” are odd with animate or human subjects), these verbs *can* show second person agreement, as in (17).

- (17) *Tú te me antojas para el papel de príncipe.*
 you-NOM CL.2SG CL.1SG fancy-2SG for the role of prince
 “I fancy you for the role of prince” (i.e. *Hamlet* in a play).

It seems that examples like (16b-c) are ungrammatical not because of the “subjecthood” of the dative argument, but rather because they show a sequence of clitics that is disallowed in Spanish. Rivero herself notes this when she links the behavior of (16b-c) to the *Person-Case Constraint* of Bonet (1994:36).

- (18) *Person-Case Constraint* (PCC): If DAT then ACC-3rd

The PCC states that in the presence of a dative clitic, the other clitic must be a 3rd person accusative clitic. We can modify its definition according to some more current assumptions, namely; (a) the clitic *se* has no person specification (Heap 1998), and; (b) the [dative] feature is exclusive to 3rd person clitics (Grimshaw 2001), i.e. 1st/2nd person clitics never bear it. Now we can redefine (18) as a purely morphological filter on possible clitic sequences as in (19), a notational variant of the PCC. This filter disallows the co-occurrence of clitics specified for [person] with dative clitics, irrespective of their relative order.

(19) SPANISH CLITIC-SEQUENCE FILTER

* [person] ; [dative]

Examples (16a) and (17) comply with this filter, but the clitic sequences in (16b-c) do not. The sequence *os le* in (16b), for instance, has a 2nd person clitic and a dative clitic. In contrast, the clitic sequence in (16a) has a dative clitic, but the clitic that precedes it (*se*) has no person specification, so (19) is satisfied. In turn, in the clitic sequence in (17) both clitics have a [person] specification, but neither of them bears a [dative] feature and so again (19) is satisfied. Summing up, the ungrammaticality of Spanish (16b-c) is unrelated to subjecthood: it is the result of a purely morphological constraint on clitic sequences in Spanish. The dative XP does not block agreement with the nominative argument, which can show full agreement with the verb as long as the resulting clitic sequence complies with (19). As such, there is no relation between the Spanish data in (16) and the Icelandic data in (15).

2.3 Masullo (1993)

Masullo (1993) is the first and most comprehensive proposal that the preverbal datives in (20a) are akin to the Icelandic preverbal dative in (20b).

(20) a. *A ella le gustaron los caballos.*

to her CL like-3PL the horses

“She liked the horses.”

b. *Henni líkuðu hestarnir*

her-DAT liked-3PL horses.the- NOM

“She liked the horses.”

(Sigurðsson 2004)

Masullo (1993) shows that the Spanish preverbal IOs in constructions like (20a) are not left-dislocated topics in an A-bar position. These results seem well motivated and will not be contested here. However, it does not seem that from this fact alone we can conclude that (20a) is a quirky subject construction. Specifically, Sigurðsson (2004) identifies three properties that crucially distinguish quirky subjects from the non-subject preverbal obliques of German (see also Zaenen et. al. 1985). Spanish has none of these properties and so it is not like Icelandic, but like German, which does not have quirky subjects.

The first property is that quirky subjects block person agreement between the verb and the nominative argument. We have seen that preverbal datives in Spanish do not have this property. The other two properties (also identified as crucial diagnostics for quirky-subjecthood in Zaenen *et.al.* 1985) are in fact also shown to be absent in Spanish by Masullo. First, Icelandic quirky subjects

participate in Conjunction Reduction, as in (21). This kind of construction, where a nominative subject is coreferential with a deleted dative in the second conjunct, is not possible in Spanish.

- (21) *Ég hafði mikið að gera og _____ var samt ekki hjálpað.*
 I-NOM had much to do and e-DAT was still not helped
 “I had much to do and was nonetheless not helped.”
- (22) **Ana ama a los perros y _____ gustan los caballos.*
 Ana loves ACC the dogs and like-3PL the horses
 (Ana loves dogs and likes horses).

It might be argued that (22) is ungrammatical not because of the impossibility of coreferentiality under conjunction reduction, but rather because preverbal datives in Spanish always require a dative clitic (deleted under reduction in (22)) to double them. This is illustrated in (23).

- (23) *??A ellos les mandé sus papeles y _____ di sus credenciales.*
 to themCL I.sent their documents and gave their IDs

This may ultimately show that, because of this independent variable, the conjunction reduction test cannot be applied in Spanish. However, it should be noted that while (22) and (23) are both impossible, there is still a fairly clear contrast between them: (23) is quite bad, but (22) is almost unparsable.

The third defining property of quirky-subjecthood, (originally observed in Zaenen *et.al.*1985) is that quirks can be controllees in infinitival clauses.⁵

- (24) *Hún vonast til [að PRO leiðast ekki bókin].*
 she hopes that for PRO-DAT bore not the.book-NOM
 “She hopes not to find the book boring.” (Sigurðsson 2004)

But again, Masullo (1993) notes that Spanish preverbal obliques do not have this property, as shown in (25). Crucially, the nominative argument of the

⁵ Observe that the possibility of an oblique to control a PRO is not a valid test for subjecthood in Spanish. This is because all kinds of non-subjects can control into infinitival clauses in this language, as in (i), where a post-verbal accusative direct object controls a nominative PRO.

- (i) *Nosotros contratamos a Carlos_i [sin PRO_i titularse].*
 we hired ACC Carlos without to.graduate-CL
 “We hired Carlos without him having graduated.”

infinitival psych verb can be a controllee, as in (26) which is evidence that this argument is the true grammatical subject of these psych constructions.

(25) **Carlos_i hizo todo lo posible [para ec_i gustar-le_i las matemáticas].*
 Carlos did all that possible for to.like-CL.DAT the maths
 (Carlos did everything possible to like maths).

(26) *Carlos_i hizo todo lo posible [para ec_i gustar-le_j a María_j].*
 Carlos did all that possible for to.like-CL.DAT to María
 “Carlos did everything possible (in order) for Mary to like him.”

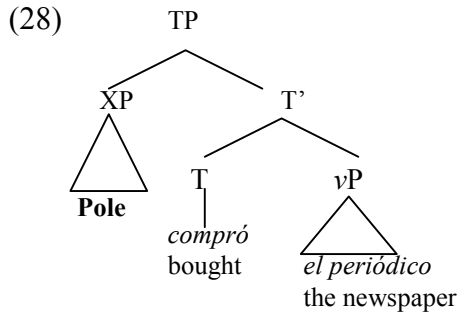
The evidence thus shows that Spanish (like German) does not have any of the three crucial properties that define quirky subjects. However, it is also fairly clear from Masullo (1993) that the preverbal *experiencers* of psych verbs are not just any fronted indirect object. The two clearest pieces of evidence are their unmarked word order and their relation to long *wh*-extraction. As illustrated in (20a), these datives occupy the preverbal subject position even though Spanish is otherwise an SVO language. More importantly, as noted in Masullo (1993), just like preverbal transitive subjects, preverbal dative experiencers do not block long *wh*-extraction (cf. 13-14):

(27) *Cuándo_i dijo Marta [que a Marcos se le ocurrió esa idea t_i]?]*
 when said Marta that to Marcos CL CL occurred that idea
 “When did Marta say that Marcos came up with that idea?”

In this respect, Spanish preverbal datives are like Icelandic quirks (Zaenen *et.al.* 1985). In the following section I sketch out a proposal that accounts for both these facts. Instead of using the notion of quirky subject, the alternative analysis suggests that these facts are unrelated to subjecthood altogether.

3. *An alternative analysis*

My claim is that the notion of “subject”, nominative or quirky, is not useful for understanding the word order and long *wh*-extraction facts just discussed. Instead I propose that the relevant element is the XP that occupies the specifier of the highest inflectional projection, irrespective of its grammatical relation. To disassociate this specifier from any specific grammatical relation I refer to it as the **Pole** of the clause (see Gutiérrez-Bravo 2002 for a full definition).



Building on Masullo (1993) and on the Generalized TP analysis of Zubizarreta (1998), I propose that preverbal subjects, dative experiencers, and preverbal topics all have [Spec, T] as their final landing site. Hence all these different preverbal XPs correspond to the Pole in the examples below.⁶

- (29) a. [_{TP} *Pedro compró* [_{vP} *el periódico*]].
 Pedro bought the newspaper
- b. [_{TP} *A ella le gustaron* [_{vP} *los caballos*]].
 to her CL like-3PL the horses
 “She liked the horses.”
- c. [_{TP} [*El periódico*]_{TOPIC} *lo compró* [_{vP} *Pedro*]].
 the newspaper CL bought Pedro
 “The newspaper, Pedro bought it.”

The Pole is a terminological notion that is entirely independent of the subject (nominative or quirky): it has no relation to argumenthood either, since any argument or adjunct can function as the Pole of the clause. The Pole is simply a place-filler for the specifier of the highest inflectional projection. It can be thought of as the element that satisfies an EPP requirement like (30).

- (30) EPP
 Clauses must have Poles

⁶ Strictly speaking, my proposal is that the Pole is a relational notion: if [Spec, T] is the highest inflectional specifier, then whatever XP occupies this position is the Pole, but when there is a further inflectional phrase above TP, then the specifier of this phrase is the Pole. This issue is tangential for our current discussion and so Pole is equated with [Spec, T] in what follows. However, it should be noted that CP is not an inflectional projection and so [Spec, C] can never be the Pole of the clause. This is one property of the Pole that makes it different from Rizzi’s (1994) notion of Root Specifier. Furthermore, in my proposal any clause with an inflectional layer must have a Pole, irrespective of whether it is a root or subordinate clause. In this respect, the notion of the Pole is again quite different from the notion of Root Specifier.

The notion of the Pole is a purely structural notion, closely akin to the notion of *onset* in syllable structure. Since it corresponds solely to a specific structural position, it can indeed be the case that it is occupied by the subject argument of the verb, as in (29a). Presumably, this is (almost) the only option in languages like English where nominative Case must be checked in [Spec, T]. However, as illustrated in (29b-c), I assume that this is not the case in Spanish, where essentially any fronted constituent may land in the Pole position. In these cases, the notion of the Pole allows us to describe the highest inflectional specifier without making reference to the subject grammatical relation. In what follows, I make use of the distinction between subject (understood as a grammatical relation) and Pole (a purely structural position) to account for the apparent quirky-subject phenomena in Spanish in a way that makes no reference to subjecthood. Specifically, I show that the dative arguments of psych verbs happen to surface in the Pole position because unmarked word order in this language is regulated by the Thematic Hierarchy and not by the subject grammatical relation. Hence it is unsurprising that these datives lack the characteristics of true subjects, either quirky or nominative.

I propose that, in the unmarked case, the Pole in Spanish is the argument that ranks highest in the Thematic Hierarchy (Gutiérrez-Bravo (2002): (see also Contreras (1976), Masullo (1993); also Belletti and Rizzi (1988) for Italian).

(31) AGENT > EXPERIENCER > THEME > LOCATION

Consider now how the notion of the Pole and the Thematic Hierarchy derive the observed word order facts. The theta roles of a transitive verb are *agent* and *theme*. Hence the SVO order results from the generalization that the highest argument in the Hierarchy occupies the Pole position in the unmarked case. This same analysis derives the IO-V-S order of the psych clauses discussed so far. The arguments of these psych verbs are a nominative subject which is a *theme* and a dative *experiencer*. In this case the IO has the Theta Role that ranks highest in the Hierarchy. Consequently, it is not the subject, but rather the IO that surfaces in the highest inflectional specifier.

- (32) a. [_{TP} *Pedro compró* [_{VP} *el periódico*]]. (i.e. 29a) **S V O**
 b. [_{TP} *A ella le gustaron* [_{VP} *los caballos*]]. (i.e. 29b) **IO V S**

A different class of Spanish psych verbs behaves in a similar way. The class including verbs like *amar* “love” and *odiar* “hate”, is different from *gustar* in that its arguments are a nominative *experiencer* and an accusative *theme*. The grammatical relations associated with each of these theta roles are

Secondly, subjects can control into purpose clauses if their predicates have the *volitionality* entailment, but not otherwise. Again this is what is observed in Spanish. As shown in (36b), the nominative argument of the IO-V-S construction cannot control into the purpose clause.

- (36) a. *Los niños molestan a Juan [para hacerlo llorar].*
 the children bother ACC Juan for to-make-him cry
 “The children bother Juan in order to make him cry.”
- b. **A Juan le molestan los niños [para hacerlo llorar].*
 to Juan CL bother the children for to-make-him cry
 (The children irritate Juan in order to make him cry.)

We thus observe that subjecthood is not relevant for regulating unmarked word order in Spanish. Instead, with the notion of the Pole the generalization can be established that, in the unmarked case, the Pole in Spanish is the argument that ranks highest in the Thematic Hierarchy. This in turn allows us to establish a descriptive generalization of the long *wh*-extraction facts in (13a) and (27). Concretely, we can now state the generalization that unmarked Poles do not block long *wh*-extraction, whereas XPs that land in the Pole position as a result of topicalization do. Again, no reference to subjecthood need be made.

4. *Conclusions*

In this paper I have argued against an analysis of Spanish preverbal obliques as quirky subjects. While Spanish does have non-topical preverbal datives, they do not have the defining properties of quirky subjects. I have proposed that the notion of subject is not helpful for understanding the word order phenomena observed in these cases. Instead I have proposed the notion of the Pole of the clause, which is the XP that occupies the highest inflectional specifier. I have shown that unmarked word order observes the generalization that the Pole is the argument that ranks highest in the Thematic Hierarchy. This analysis accounts for the fact that dative arguments surface in the preverbal position of some Spanish verbs, without compromising the evidence that the nominative argument of these verbs is the true grammatical subject.

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