

## 9.2. Inchoative Interpretations in Stimulus-Subject Experiencer Verbs.

The second case of lexical pattern conforming to the selection principle in a subtle way has already introduced: this is Croft's generalization (cf. §3.4. above) that an inchoative interpretation is possible in a Stimulus-subject psychological verb but never in an Experiencer-subject verb: the progressives and clefts in (47) and (48) are diagnostics for such an interpretation (Dowty 1979:163-165):

(47) *Stimulus-subject psych verbs (non-stative contexts)*

- a. The birthday party is surprising/pleasing Mary (right now)
- b. What happened to Mary was that the birthday party surprised/pleased her.

(48) *Experiencer-subject psych verbs (non-stative contexts)*

- a. \*Mary is being surprised at/ is liking the birthday party (right now)
- b. \*What happened to Mary was that she was surprised at/ liked the birthday party.

Recall that this was observed to agree with the Proto-Role selection hypothesis, since change-of-state (which the Experiencer undergoes in these cases, not the Stimulus) is the Proto-Patient property which tips the scale in the direction of the Stimulus-Subject/Experiencer-Object form.

Once again it seems natural to ask whether a difference which occurs systematically across all the psychological verbs in the lexicon, and in all the four languages Croft observed, is the result of (and is perpetuated solely through) independent learning for each such verb, i.e. is coincidental, or whether the Proto-Role selection principle could somehow act as a semantic acquisition default to facilitate conformity to this pattern.