

# New Perspectives in Role and Reference Grammar

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

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# ROMANCE ANTICAUSATIVES: A CONSTRUCTIONIST RRG APPROACH

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## Abstract

In this paper, I will account for anticausative constructions as being located in the centre of an active-passive continuum ranging from real reflexive constructions to reflexive passives. My claim will be that the continuum can be modelled using the activity-calculus elaborated in Kailuweit (2005) for different classes of verbs of emotion. It will be shown that RRG Constructional Schemas can be used to account for the language-specific particularities of anticausative constructions in different Romance languages.

## Keywords

Anticausative variation, Romance languages, activity-calculus, constructional schemas

## 1. Introduction

In the below examples which express the eventualities of “hurt” and “save”, Brazilian Portuguese [BP]<sup>1</sup> shows an interesting contrast where the presence or absence of the pronominal element in anticausative constructions is concerned.

- (1) hurt (arg<sub>1</sub>, arg<sub>2</sub>) (e.g. John hurt Louis with a knife)  
BP: João machucou Luis.  
John hurt Louis

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<sup>1</sup> The BP data were presented by Ulrich Reich at the workshop *Linking Romance*, FU Berlin, February 2009.

- (2) hurt (arg<sub>1</sub>, arg<sub>2</sub>) (e.g. Louis fell from the roof of his house)  
 BP: Luis machucou.  
       Louis hurt
- (3) hurt (arg<sub>1</sub>, arg<sub>2</sub>) (e.g. Louis hurt himself preparing sushi)  
 BP: Luis se machucou.  
       Louis himself hurt
- (4) save (arg<sub>1</sub>, arg<sub>2</sub>) (e.g. Louis has saved the file)  
 BP: Luis salvou o arquivo.  
       Louis saved the file
- (5) save (arg<sub>1</sub>, arg<sub>2</sub>) (e.g. somebody—it doesn't matter who—has saved the file)  
 BP: O arquivo salvou rápido.  
       The file saved quickly

As we will see later in detail, all Romance languages allow for transitive/bare intransitive pairings as illustrated by BP *salvar* “save” although they occur with other verbs. Hence, they seem to permit a causative alternation as already described for English,<sup>2</sup> without a pronominal element stemming from Latin *sibi* “self”. In addition, there is evidence in French, Italian, Spanish, and also in German—to mention a non-Romance language—for verbs of the *machucar* (“hurt”)-type in BP, i.e. verbs allowing for both a pronominal and bare intransitive construction. However, as far as the other Romance languages and German are concerned, an alternating verb does not denote the eventuality of “hurt”.

As for linking from semantics to syntax, the appearance of the pronominal construction in BP seems to be triggered by a semantic feature of the argument which I will informally call “responsibility”. While neither *Luis* in (2) nor *o arquivo* “the file” in (5) are responsible for the change of state, *Luis* in (3) unintentionally performs an action to himself that leads to an injury. Onomasiologically, this linking problem seems to be the reason why this evident semantic difference is not coded in other Romance languages. Although examples parallel to those with *machucar* “hurt” are not especially easy to detect in BP, formally identical pairings found in French and Italian do not seem to reflect the same straightforward semantic contrast stipulated for BP *machucar*.

Section 2 of this paper gives an overview of the phenomenon of causative and anticausative alternation, focusing on the concept of internal versus external causation. In Section 3, it will be shown that in the Romance languages, three formal classes of alternating verbs can be

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995: Ch.3).

distinguished: verbs marking the anticausative with a pronominal element, verbs with a formally identical causative and anticausative variant and finally verbs allowing for both a marked and unmarked anticausative construction. Section 4 focuses on the semantics of the two constructions. They will be placed on an activity continuum, ranging from the real reflexive construction to reflexive passives. My claim in Section 5 will be that the continuum can be modelled using the activity-calculus elaborated in Kailuweit (2005) for different classes of verbs of emotion. Finally, it will be shown in Section 6 that RRG Constructional Schemas can be used to account for the language-specific particularities of anticausative constructions in different Romance languages. Hence, this paper will contribute to the current discussion about to what extent RRG can be considered a variant of Construction Grammar.

## 2. The (Anti-)Causative Alternation

The given BP data appear to be instances of what has been called the causative alternation (Smith 1970; Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995). As Sánchez López (2002: 80) points out, the transitive variant should be interpreted as a two-place predicate with a cause argument filling the subject position and an undergoer argument realized as a direct object. The undergoer appears as the subject of the intransitive or pronominal construction, while the cause argument can be realized as an adjunct. The data from BP has been slightly modified to ensure that the transitive and the intransitive or pronominal variant denote a corresponding type of eventuality:

- (6) a. A queda machucou Luis.  
the fall hurt Luis
- b. Luis machucou por causa da queda  
Luis hurt because of the fall
- (7) a. João machucou Luis sem querer.  
John hurt Luis by accident
- b. Luis se machucou por causa de uma  
Luis himself hurt because of a  
inadvertência preparando sushi.  
inattentively preparing sushi
- (8) a. A tecla Control+S salvou o arquivo.  
the button Control+S saved the file
- b. O arquivo salvou com a tecla Control+S  
the file saved with the button Control-S

While the transitive variant is generally labelled the causative construction, there is a lot of terminological inconsistency as far as the intransitive variants are concerned. In accordance with Schäfer (2008),<sup>3</sup> I will call both the pronominal and the bare intransitive construction anticausative. As Labelle (1992: 397) and Sánchez López (2002: 86) point out, the widespread term inchoative for the intransitive variant(s) is misleading, because only a few of the intransitives refer to the beginning of an action or an action soon to take place. According to Sánchez López (ibid.), *arrepentirse* “regret” is inchoative, *hundirse* “sink” denotes the beginning and the completion of a process and *secarse* “dry” is not inchoative:

- (9) a. Juan se arrepintió. (“John started to feel sorry.”)  
 b. El barco se hundió. (“The ships started to sink/The ship sank.”)  
 c. La ropa se secó. (“The clothes dried.”)

BP *machucarse* is clearly not inchoative either. *Luis se machucou* in (7b) does not mean that he started to hurt himself, but that the action is already completed.

Haspelmath’s (1993) documenting of the whole range of morphological procedures to mark either the causative or the anticausative construction was the beginning of an extensive, but fruitless discussion on which of the two constructions should be considered the basis construction disseminated in the literature.

Van Valin (2005: 46) emphasized that there is evidence for both derivation directions. It has been claimed (cf. Van Valin ibid.) that derivation of the anticausative construction by means of a pronominal element is the default case for Romance languages. Nonetheless, the bare intransitive construction has also been documented in all Romance languages.<sup>4</sup> For BP, a tendency towards the loss of the pseudo-reflexive has been proven (cf. Nunes 1995; Carvalho 2006). However, the direction of the derivation will not be discussed in this paper.

In order to determine the verbs that enter the causative alternation, Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995: 90s) distinguish between internally and externally caused eventualities. The distinction is based on Smith

<sup>3</sup> The term “anticausative” was used in Spanish by Moreno Cabrera (1984).

<sup>4</sup> See Rothemberg (1974), Centineo (1995), and Carvalho (2006) for the French, Italian, and European Portuguese data, respectively. Sánchez López (2002: 89) cites a study of Levy (1994), who attests 25 cases of bare intransitives out of 300 Spanish causative-anticausative pairs.

(1970: 107), who describes eventualities denoted by verbs like *open* or *break* as controlled by an external cause, whereas for eventualities such as those denoted by verbs like *laugh* or *play* control cannot be relinquished. Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995: 91) reject the term “control”, because the distinction can be extended to non-agentive verbs, e.g. verbs of emission.

The semantics of internal and external causation can be captured as follows:

With an intransitive verb describing an internally caused eventuality, some property inherent to the argument of the verb is “responsible” for bringing about the eventuality [...] Unlike internally caused verbs, externally caused verbs by their very nature imply the existence of an “external cause” with immediate control over bringing about the eventuality described by the verb: an agent, an instrument, a natural force, or a circumstance. (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995: 91s)

According to Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995), the distinction between internal and external causation should lead to two clear-cut classes: externally-caused intransitives should behave as unaccusatives, but internally-caused intransitives as inergatives. While the former allow for a transitive causative variant and reject embedding with MAKE,<sup>5</sup> the latter should only extend their argument structure by means of the MAKE construction.<sup>6</sup>

As Labelle (1992) claims for French and Sánchez López (2002) for Spanish, in Romance languages the difference between internal and external causation should be reflected by the absence or presence of the pseudo-reflexive clitic. Labelle’s argumentation is based on Rothemberg (1974), who developed a similar idea using the terms external and internal causation:<sup>7</sup>

... pour les verbes intransitifs [...] l’élément lexical assumant la fonction de sujet est le siège de l’action, du processus qui est vu comme se développant organiquement à partir de lui et rien qu’à partir de lui

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<sup>5</sup> Sánchez López (2002: 90) illustrates this behaviour with the following examples: i. *El viento cerró la ventana* (“The wind closed the window”) / ii. \**El viento hizo cerrar la ventana* (“The wind made the window close”).

<sup>6</sup> Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995: 90) cite the following examples taken from Smith (1970: 107): i. *The green monster made Mary shudder* / ii. \**The green monster shuddered Mary*.

<sup>7</sup> Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995: 85, 294) only cite Rothemberg (1974) in an endnote as a general source of inspiration.

grâce à ses qualités inhérentes [...] Quant aux verbes en construction pronominale [...] l'élément lexicale assumant la fonction du sujet est également le siège de l'action, du processus qui est vu comme se développant à partir de lui. Le *se* de la récession marque pourtant que ses qualités inhérentes [...] sont insuffisantes à elles seules pour permettre la réalisation de l'action ou du processus. (Rothemberg 1974: 67)

(“...for intransitive verbs [...] the lexical element assuming the function of the subject is the host of the action, i.e. of the process that is seen as developing organically out of it and only out of it because of its internal qualities [...] As far as the pronominal construction is concerned [...] the lexical element assuming the function of the subject is the host of the action, too, i.e. of the process that is seen as developing out of it. However, the *se* of the recession marks that its internal qualities [...] are insufficient on their own to bring about the realisation of the action or the process.” [Translation R.K.]

However, the data is more complex. There is no clear-cut line between the two groups of verbs. The syntactic behaviour of bare intransitives in the Romance languages and in German is not consistent. We have already seen that in several Romance languages, bare intransitive verbs also enter the causative alternation. There are a considerable number of verbs (such as Italian *aumentare* “increase” or German *kochen* “cook” that only allow for the bare intransitive construction and show a transitive variant.<sup>8</sup> While Labelle (1992) assumes that alternating French bare intransitives are unergatives, the choice of BE for compound tenses that we observe for most alternating bare intransitives in Italian and German hints at their unaccusativity. For modern Spanish, which no longer displays auxiliary variation, Mendikoechea (1999) and Sánchez Lopez (2002) also tend to classify alternating bare intransitives as unaccusatives. Nonetheless, unaccusativity is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for entering the causative alternation. While Italian unaccusative *aumentare* “increase” allows for a causative variant, the corresponding German unaccusative verb *steigen* does not. On the contrary, the German unergative *kochen* “cook” permits a causative construction.

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<sup>8</sup> In fact, Rothemberg (1974) seems to be the first systematic approach to alternating verbs in French. She leaves no doubt that the alternation is possible with and without pronominal marking.

- (10) a. I prezzi (*\*si*) sono aumentati. (“The prices increased.”)  
 b. Gianni ha aumentato i prezzi. (“John increased the prices.”)  
 (Folli 2002: 117s)  
 c. Die Preise sind gestiegen. (“The prices increased.”)  
 d. \*Hans hat die Preise gestiegen. (“John increased the prices.”)
- (11) a. Die Kartoffeln haben (*\*sich*) gekocht. (“The potatoes cooked”)  
 b. Hans hat die Kartoffeln gekocht. (“John cooked the potatoes.”)

In addition, the fact that the same verb in different languages appears in different anticausative constructions casts doubt on a clear correspondence between pronominal marking and external causation:

- (12) a. Se hundió el barco. (“The ship sank.”) (Menikoechea 1999: 1587)  
 b. La barca è affondata. (“The ship sank.”) (Folli 2002: 73)

In the following example, the relationship between marking and external causation should be acknowledged as a tendency. This can be formalized by Hypothesis I:

- (13) HYPOTHESIS I: If the difference between internal and external causation is coded, external causation will be coded with the pronominal construction and not with the bare intransitive construction.

### 3. Verb Classification

While the ongoing change in BP makes it difficult to classify the alternating verbs into different subgroups according to the morphological marking of their anticausative variant, such verb lists have been compiled for French, Italian and Spanish. Based on a detailed study of Rothemberg (1974), Labelle distinguishes three subgroups for French:<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See Heidinger (2009, 2010) for a diachronic approach that focuses on the quantitative relationship between the two constructions in the history of French. According to Heidinger, the pronominal construction spread at the expense of the bare intransitive (“labile”) construction; however, about 300 “labile” verbs still exist in Modern French.

Verbs which necessitate the pseudo-reflexive construction only (Class A):

- (14) *s'alléger* “become lighter”, *s'abêtir* “turn into a morin”, *s'agrandir* “become bigger”, *s'allourdir* “become heavier”, *s'amaigrir* “become thinner”, *s'améliorer* “improve”, *s'américaniser* “become Americanised”, *s'assécher* “dry out”, *s'engourdir* “become numb”, *s'enkyster* “encyst”, *s'humidifier* “become humid”, *se calcifier* “calcify”, *se civiliser* “become civilised”, *se couvrir* “become covered”, *se nuancer* “nuance”, *se poisser* “become sticky”, *se rabougrir* “shriveled up”

Verbs which entail only or mainly the bare intransitive construction (Class B):

- (15) *cuire* “cook”, *durcir* “harden”, *éclater* “burst”, *fonder* “melt”, *grandir* “grow”, *grosser* “grow bigger”, *maigrir* “grow thinner”, *moisir* “mould”, *pourrir* “rot”, *sécher* “dry”, *vieillir* “age”

Finally, verbs that are can be utilised in both constructions (Class C):

- (16) *caraméliser* “carmelize”, *élargir* “widen”, *enfler* “swell”, *épaissir* “thicken”, *gonfler* “inflate”, *noircir* “blacken”, *ramollir* “soften”, *refroidir* “cool”, *rétrécir* “get narrower”, *rougir* “become red”

For Italian, Folli (2002) establishes the same classes as Labelle (1992) for French,<sup>10</sup> but the verbs belonging to a class do not always denote the same eventualities.

- (17) Class A: *alterare* “alter”, *aprire* “open”, *arrotolare* “roll up”, *bagnare* “wet”, *capovolgere* “turn up side down”, *chiudere* “close”, *dividere* “divide”, *estendere* “extend”, *restringere* “shrink”, *rompere* “break”, *rovesciare* “overturn”, *sbriciolare* “crumble”, *sfilacciare* “fray”, *svegliare* “wake up”
- (18) Class B: *affondare* “sink”, *allungare* “lengthen”, *augmentare* “increase”, *bollire* “boil”, *cambiare* “change”, *diminuire* “decrease”, *guarire* “heal”, *invecchiare* “age”, *maturare* “mature”, *migliorare* “improve”

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<sup>10</sup> Cavalho (2006) affirms the existence of the same three classes for European Portuguese.

- (19) Class C: *asciugare* “dry”, *bruciare* “burn”, *congelare* “freeze”, *cuocere* “cook”, *fondere* “melt”, *gelare* “freeze”, *ingrandire* “enlarge”, *raffreddare* “cool”, *riscaldare* “heat”, *sgonfiare* “deflate”

Schäfer (2008) proves the existence of the same three classes in German. Based on the Corpus of Written Language COSMAS-II at the IDS Mannheim, he accounts for 17 German verbs that allow for both the marked and unmarked construction (Class C).<sup>11</sup>

As far as I know, the existence of Class C in Spanish has not been explicitly highlighted in the literature. Mendikoetxea (1999: 1604s), who cites the classification of Labelle (1992), does not give a corresponding list of Spanish verbs alternating in their anticausative construction. She only hints at *aclarar* “clear up” and *oscurecer* “darken”, which alternate with different object classes.

- (20) a. El día ha aclarado. (“The day has cleared up.”)  
 b. El día ha oscurecido de repente. (“Suddenly, the day has clouded over.”)
- (21) a. El jersey se ha aclarado por sí solo. (“The sweater has bleached itself.”)  
 b. Su fama se ha oscurecido por sí solo. (“His fame has dimmed on its own.”) (Mendikoechea 1999: 1599)

The small group of verbs of ‘internal causation’<sup>12</sup> compiled by Mendikoechea (1999: 1597) could be a starting point to proving the existence of the three classes in Spanish:

- (22) *adelgazar* “slim”, *arder* “burn”, *aumentar* “increase”, *crecer* “grow”, *empeorar* “worsen”, *empezar* “start”, *empobrecer* “impoverish”, *encoger* “shrink”, *enfermar* “sicken”, *enfriar* “cool”, *engordar* “fatten up”, *ennegrecer* “blacken”, *enrojecer* “flush”, *ensanchar* “widen”, *ensordecer* “deafen”, *envejecer* “age”, *floreecer* “blossom”, *germinar* “sprout”, *hervir* “boil”, *mejorar* “ameliorate”, *palidecer* “pale”

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<sup>11</sup> Schäfer (2008: 24-28) also refers to Greek examples which make the same distinction between three classes through the presence or absence of non-active morphology. I will not discuss Greek data in this paper.

<sup>12</sup> The term is taken from Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995). I will come back to its semantic implications in the next section.

Most of them seem to be Class B verbs, however some are clearly Class A verbs, which always take the pronominal element as their intransitive variant:

- (23) *enfriarse* “cool”, *enfermarse* “sicken”

Sánchez López (2002: 89-93) includes some verbs of internal causation in this list:

- (24) *ascender* “ascend”, *menguar* “wane”, *finalizar* “finish”, *rejuvenecer* “rejuvenate”

Nonetheless, some of the verbs allow for both the pronominal and the bare intransitive construction. Hence, Class C verbs also exist in Spanish:

- (25) *adelgazar(se)* “slim”, *empeorar(se)* “worsen”, *empobrecer(se)* “impoverish”, *encoger(se)* “shrink”, *engordar(se)* “fatten up”, *ennegrecer(se)* “blacken”, *enrojecer(se)* “flush”, *ensanchar(se)* “widen”, *envejecer(se)* “age”, *hervir(se)* “boil”, *mejorar(se)* “improve”, *rejuvenecer(se)* “rejuvenate”

More examples of verbs can be found in the Spanish online Corpora (CREA of the Real Academia Española and Corpus of Español by Mark Davies). Not all verbs are equally accepted as instances of Class C. The use of *hervirse* was not found in CREA and is not accepted by the Dictionary of the Real Academia, but has been confirmed by sources in Argentina and Venezuela. For them, the pronominal variant tends to have the reading of “boil over”:

- (26) El agua se hirvió. (“The water boiled (over).”) [non standard]

Sánchez López (2002: 91) denies the existence of a transitive variant for *enrojecer* “flush”, but this variant is attested in CREA:

- (27) a. \*La vergüenza enrojeció a Juan. (“The shame flushed John.”)  
(Sánchez López 2002: 91)  
b. Se degustó una potente sangría, que enrojeció a más de uno los carrillos. (CREA) (“They tasted a strong sangria that made many of them rosy-cheeked.”)

To summarise this section: The contrast illustrated by BP *machucar* “hurt” seems to correspond to a largely attested complexity concerning the anticausative variant of verbs entering the causative alternation. French, Italian, German and also Spanish exhibit verbs that allow for both the marked and the unmarked anticausative variant. In the next section, I will account for the differences between the two constructions in order to shed some light on the given semantic contrast for BP *machucar*.

## 4. Semantic Contrasts between the Two Anticausative Constructions

### 4.1. Participant orientated Differences

The BP data hint at a semantic difference concerning the “responsibility” of the argument denoted by the subject of two anticausative constructions. First of all, it must be stated that there is little evidence for the existence of the contrast shown in the *machucar/salvar*-examples, both in BP and in the other (Romance) languages. As far as BP is concerned, my sources would not exclude the pronominal construction with inanimate subjects, as the given *salvar*-data would suggest:

- (28) a. A roupa (se) rasgou. (“The clothes tore.”)  
 b. A mesa (se) quebrou. (“The table broke.”)  
 c. A comida (se) estragou. (“The food rotted.”)

It would be fruitless to cite counter-evidence in order to prove that the contrast does not exist. Based on the given data, a more interesting point could be made by Hypothesis II:

- (29) HYPOTHESIS II: If a contrast of responsibility is coded, the subject of the pronominal construction of a single verb will denote an argument more responsible for the outcome of the action than the argument denoted by the subject of the bare intransitive construction of the same verb.

Besides the given data for BP, there is evidence in other languages to prove the accuracy of Hypothesis II. The contrast is lexicalised with French *brunir* “tan, brown” and with the corresponding German *bräunen*.

- (30) a. Les baigneurs brunissent. (“The bathers got a tan.”)  
 b. Les baigneurs se brunissent au soleil. (Rothemberg 1974: 160)

- (“The bathers got a tan in the sun.”)  
 c. Le poulet brunit. (“The chicken browned.”)  
 d. \*Le poulet se brunit.

The pronominal construction implicates an intentionally acting subject. On the contrary, the bare intransitive construction seems odd with such a subject.

- (31) a. Paul s’est bruni pour paraître plus séduisant. (“Paul got a tan to look more attractive.”)  
 b. ??Paul a bruni pour paraître plus séduisant.

For other verbs that naturally take a human subject, these differences are subtle, but still detectable for native speakers. The following example from CREA suggests a certain responsibility of the person denoted by the logical subject of the infinitive:

- (32) ... él prefirió empobrecerse poco a poco y continuar operando la cafetería, a venderla y quedarse rico. (CREA) (“He preferred getting poorer and poorer keeping the coffee shop open to becoming rich by selling it.”)

My sources found the sentence less acceptable without the pseudo-reflexive. In the same sentence they preferred the pronominal construction in the following pair:

- (33) a. ??Juan empobreció por su propia culpa. (“John impoverished by his own fault.”)  
 b. Juan se empobreció por su propia culpa.

Another piece of evidence stems from embedding constructions with MAKE. Folli (2002: 105ss) discusses the embedding under causative *fare* “make” for Italian. In Italian, the embedded infinitive appears obligatorily without the clitic:

- (34) a. La mamma fa pettinare Maria. (“Mum makes Maria comb her hair.”)  
 b. \*La mamma fa pettinarsi Maria. (Folli 2002: 104)

For Class A verbs, Folli (2002: 105) observes that only a “transitive” reading is available.

- (35) Maria fece chiudere la finestra  
 => Maria made someone close the window  
 => \*Maria closed the window (Folli 2002: 105)

On the contrary, for Class B verbs the test with embedding under *fare* shows ambiguity.

- (36) Maria fece diminuire la temperatura.  
 => a. Maria made the temperature decrease.  
 => b. Maria had someone decrease the temperature. (Folli 2002: 122)

The same holds for Class C verbs:

- (37) Maria fece fondere il cioccolato.  
 => a. Maria made the chocolate melt.  
 => b. Maria had someone melt the chocolate. (Folli 2002: 131s)

The Spanish Class C verb *empobrecer* “impoverish” seems to show the same contrast as the Italian *fondere: hacer empobrecer* in the *a*-example is ambiguous. The construction could denote a process caused directly by the government itself or indirectly towards another causer, e.g. the banking sector. The sentence in *b* is unambiguous: the government is interpreted as the direct causer.

- (38) a. El gobierno hizo empobrecer a la clase media.  
 => The government impoverished the middle class.  
 => The government had someone impoverish the middle class.  
 b. El gobierno empobreció a la clase media.  
 => The government impoverished the middle class

Notice that Spanish, in contrast to Italian, allows for the embedding of real reflexives without clitic-deletion:

- (39) La madre le hizo peinarse a María. (“Mum made Maria comb her hair.”)

The embedding of Class A verbs under *hacer* “make” is not very common, but well attested.

- (40) a. Hizo buena carrera, pero en la última curva el patín se le fue mucho, lo hizo abrirse un poco y separarse de la baranda. (CREA) (“He did a good race, but in the final curve the skate broke away, made straighten out a little bit and separate from the boards.”)

This example is not ambiguous: indirect causation can be excluded. As far as *empobrecerse* “impoverish” is concerned, analogous examples read quite strangely in the eyes of my sources.

- (41) #El gobierno hizo empobrecerse a la clase media. (“The government made the middle class impoverish.”)

The example seems to suggest the interpretation that the government indirectly caused the impoverishment of the middle class, and yet that the middle class is being held accountable for its own impoverishment the same time, an interpretation that does not make a lot of sense. Note that with *empobrecerse* intentional acting is not completely excluded. In this case, the pronominal construction could be considered a real reflexive construction and allows for embedding under *hacer*:

- (42) a. Jesús se empobreció por amor a vosotros. (2 Cor 8,9) (“Jesus made himself poor out of love for you.”)  
 b. Diós hizo empobrecerse a Jesús. (“God caused Jesus to make himself poor.”)

To sum up, the preference for the embedding of the bare infinitive with a Class C verb such as *empobrecer(se)* shows that a certain responsibility for her unintentional behaviour can be attributed to the human being denoted by subject of these verbs when they occur in the pronominal construction. This corroborates the findings for BP *machucar* “hurt”.

Schäfer (2008) puts forward another complex piece of evidence for the same contrast. In German, only bare intransitive constructions allow for a dative causer. The contrast is subtle, but clear when we exclude the *dativus incommodi* reading by adding *aus Versehen* “by mistake”:

- (43) a. Die Flasche leerte sich mir. (\*aus Versehen)  
 The bottle emptied itself to me by mistake  
 b. Die Flasche lief mir aus Versehen aus.  
 The bottle leaked to me by mistake out

- (44) a. Dem Chemiker verflüssigte sich (\*aus Versehen) das Präparat.  
 To the chemist liquidified itself by mistake the compound  
 b. Dem Chemiker schmolz aus Versehen das Präparat.  
 To the chemist melted by mistake the compound  
 (Schäfer 2008: 47)

As we have already seen, bare intransitives entering the causative alternation also permit a causative adjunct:

- (45) a. Marie a rougi de honte. (Labelle 1992 : 401) (“Mary flushed with shame.”)  
 b. El paro aumenta con la inflación. (Sánchez López 2002: 89)  
 (“The unemployment increases with the inflation.”)

If we consider these examples in line with Labelle (1992) and Sánchez López (2002) as instances of denoting internally-caused eventualities, internal causation does not seem to be incompatible with, in the words of Labelle (1992: 401), “the existence of a triggering cause”, but rather the process that the subject-argument undergoes “is presented as happening autonomously”. The dative causer could be considered another syntactical coding of a triggering cause. Nonetheless, causative adjuncts can also be found with the pronominal construction:

- (46) a. Die Tür öffnete sich durch einen Windstoß  
 The door opened itself by a blast  
 (Schäfer 2008: 127)  
 b. Toda la flota se hundió con el temporal  
 All the fleet SE sank with the storm  
 (Sánchez López 2002: 80)

Hence, causation expressed by the dative causer has to be of another quality. Notice that this construction is possible neither in French nor in BP. On the contrary, in Spanish and Italian the dative causer construction can be attested for both marked and unmarked anticausative constructions. According to Schäfer (2008: 69), the following examples can not only have a *dativus incommodi* reading, but a dative causer as well:

- (47) a. A Juan se le rompieron las gafas  
 to John SE DAT-CL broke the glasses  
 b. A Juan le hirvió la leche  
 to John DAT-CL boiled-over the milk

- (48) a. A Francesca le            ruppe il vaso di cristallo per errore  
           to Francesca DAT-CL broke the cut glass     by mistake  
       b. A Francesca è bollito fuori il latte per errore  
           to Francesca is boiled over the milk by mistake  
       (Schäfer 2008: 69)

Schäfer (2008: 66s) concludes that there is no semantic blocking at all, but a syntactic reason for the incompatibility of the dative causer with the pronominal construction in German: the dative causer and the pseudo-reflexive pronoun would have to be projected to the same specifier position, while the Spanish and Italian pseudo-reflexives are clitics that are attached to the verbal head. In this paper, I will not discuss the different syntactic representations that Schäfer's study focuses on.

If we consider the German data only, the contrast could be semantically interpreted in light of the *machucar*-alternation. If the pseudo-reflexive could hint at a higher degree of responsibility of the argument expressed by the subject in the sense of Hypothesis II, then there would be a cognitive dissonance with the dative causer that denotes the same semantic function. Of course, the Spanish and Italian data do not confirm such an inference.

My Spanish sources corroborate the data given by Schäfer for *romperse* "break". As far as *hervir* "boil" is concerned, they clearly prefer the non-standard pronominal variant, indicating that only this variant expresses the unintended change of state of boiling over; the intransitive variant is not seen as meaningful.

- (49) a. A Juan se le hirvió la leche. ("John involuntary caused the milk  
           to boil over.")  
       b. #A Juan le hirvió la leche. ("John involuntary caused the milk  
           to boil.")

The anticausative alternation here is interpreted aspectually, a reading which has been put forward in the literature and will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

## 4.2. Aspectual Differences

Although the given data from BP does not suggest any aspectual difference, this topic will be briefly dealt with, since aspectuality has played a major role for the analysis of the causative alternation in Romance languages. Zibri-Hertz (1987) claims that the two constructions

differ in telicity in French: marked anticausatives are supposed to be telic and unmarked anticausatives atelic. Sánchez López (2002: 86) adopts this analysis for Spanish. Following Fernández Lagunilla and de Miguel (1999), she highlights the fact that marked anticausatives denote a change of state of cumulative character and focus on a resulting state. This could be proved by the existence of a resultative construction with *estar* + participle that is excluded for at least some unmarked anticausatives:

- (50) a. Está hundido. (Sánchez López 2002: 86) (“It is sunk.”)  
 b. \*Está ascendido. (ibid.: 92) (Lit. “It is ascended.”)

Folli (2002) bases her syntactic analysis of Italian anticausatives on aspectual grounds:

- (51) a. La sedia si è rota in un secondo. (“The chair broke in a second.”) (Folli 2002: 97)  
 b. ?La sedia si è rotta, ma non è rotta. (“The chair broke, but it is not broken.”) (ibid.: 98)
- (52) a. La temperatura è diminuita per un’ora. (“The temperature decreased for an hour.”) (ibid.: 118)  
 b. La temperatura è diminuita, ma non è diminuita completamente. (“The temperature decreased, but it has not totally decreased.”) (ibid.: 120)

This data is to some degree problematic. As “in un secondo” is not a span of time in which a cumulative change of state could occur, *rompersi* “break” is classified as an achievement rather than as an accomplishment, but is still a telic verb. Nonetheless, Schäfer (2008) cites a set of counterexamples to Folli’s claim:

- (53) a. La sua sfera d’influenza si è estesa per molti anni. (“Her sphere of influence expanded for years.”)  
 b. La sua sfera d’influenza si è estesa, ma non si è estesa completamente. (“Her sphere of influence expanded, but is not yet completely expanded.”)
- (54) a. La caffettiera è scoppiata in un secondo. (“The coffee machine exploded in a second.”)  
 b. ??La caffettiera è scoppiata, ma non è scoppiata completamente. (“The coffee machine exploded, but it has not completely exploded.”) (Schäfer 2008: 17s)

Labelle also states:

It is not the case that the intransitive construction expresses the imperfectivity or atelicity of the process, while the reflexive construction expresses the perfectivity of [sic] telicity of the process. (Labelle 1992: 195)

But otherwise she assumes that:

The aspectual flavour of the distinction between the intransitive construction and the reflexive construction is an indirect consequence of the semantics of the constructions. (ibid.)

My sources clearly prefer the marked construction of Class C verbs in telic contexts as we have already seen for *hervir* “boil” versus *hervirse* “boil over”:

- (55)
- a. Con el gobierno peronista la clase media se ha empobrecido en pocos años. (“With the peronist government, the middle class impoverished in a few years.”)
  - b. ?Con el gobierno peronista la clase media ha empobrecido en pocos años.
  - c. La clase media ha empobrecido pero todavía no es pobre. (“The middle class has impoverished, but is not yet poor.”)
  - d. ?La clase media se ha empobrecido pero todavía no es pobre.

Their intuitions can be captured by Hypothesis III:

- (56) HYPOTHESIS III: If an aspectual contrast is coded with the same verb, the pronominal construction will be interpreted as telic, and the bare intransitive construction as atelic.

### 4.3. Interim Conclusion

Starting from the BP data, slight but consistent semantic tendencies between the two anticausative constructions have been observed. The three hypotheses which have been put forward throughout this paper are interconnected in an organic way. The pronominal construction is—paradoxically—the more causative one of the two anticausative constructions. The different degrees of causativity of the subject argument of intransitive constructions can be organized into a hierarchy:

- (57) a. REAL REFLEXIVES WITH INTENTIONAL DIRECT CAUSER  
 Example: *Jesus se empobreció por amor a vosotros.* (“Jesus made himself poor out of love for you.”)  
 >
- b. MARKED ANTICAUSATIVES WITH INTENTIONAL INDIRECT CAUSER  
 Example: *Paul s’est bruni pour paraître plus séduisant.* (“Paul got a tan to look more attractive.”)  
 >
- c. MARKED ANTICAUSATIVES WITH UNINTENTIONAL RESPONSIBLE CAUSER  
 Examples: *Luis se machucou por causa de uma imprudência preparando sushi.* (Lit. “Louis hurt himself because of carelessness preparing sushi.”)/*Juan se empobreció por su propia culpa.* (“John impoverished by his own fault.”)  
 >
- d. INTERNAL CAUSATION  
 Examples: *Luis machucou por causa da queda.* (Lit. “Louis hurt because of the tumble.”)/*La voiture ralentit.* (“The car slowed down.”) (Rothemberg 1974: 192)  
 >
- e. GENERIC EXTERNAL CAUSATION  
 Example: *La production se ralentit.* (“The production slowed down.”) (Rothemberg 1974:192)  
 >
- f. REFLEXIVE PASSIVES  
 Example: *Se firmaron los convenios.* (“The treaties were signed.”)

I would like to make two comments. First, the hierarchy reflects contrasts as far as they are coded. That means that the BP example *o arquivo salvou rapido* (“the file saved quickly”) should not be

interpreted as an instance of internal causation. BP shows a tendency towards loose pronominal constructions. Therefore, it may resemble English in that the difference between external and internal causation is (generally) not expressed by using morphological marking.

Second, the preference found in the Spanish data for combining the marked construction with a dative causer (see above: *A Juan se le hirvió la leche*) obviously contradicts the German data if we take them as evidence for a higher degree of causativity in the marked construction.<sup>13</sup> The Spanish data should be seen, too, in the light of general tendency, a tendency that is exactly opposed to the one observed for BP. In Spanish, the pronominal construction seems to extend to almost all anticausatives. If the contrast of the two constructions can be used to code differences in causativity—as we have seen for *empobrecer(se)* “impoverish”—this coding seems to neutralise in contexts of a dative causer interpreted as an unintentional external non-generic causer. The pseudo-reflexive does not code any higher degree of causativity in these contexts, but operates as an aspectual marker. The fact that higher perfectivity is in line with higher causativity (expressed by the dative causer) could be explained by the general affinity of causation and telicity. Most causative constructions are telic, although caused atelic states (*the dogs frightened the boy*) or activities (*The girl bounced the ball around*) have been attested (cf. Van Valin and LaPolla 1997: 97).

## 5. The Theta-System Revisited

The modelling of the semantic findings of the last section within a linking theory will be effected in two steps. First, I would like to shed some light on the formal coding of semantic roles. My considerations are inspired by Rozwadowska (1988) and Reinhart (2002). The different degrees of causativity will be coded by means of the feature-value calculus developed for verbs of emotion in Kailuweit (2005). In the second step, the calculus will be integrated in a linking theory based on Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2005).

In Kailuweit (2005), I suggested a feature-based graduation to determine the argument’s activity degree for verbs of emotion. The calculus is based on three features—cause [c], mental [m] and result [r]—which are denoted by the values +, – and ±. [c] is a strong proto-agent feature, [m] is a weak proto-agent feature and [r] is a strong proto-patient

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<sup>13</sup> As far as I can see, there is no syntactic explanation of these facts in line with Schäfer’s (2008) approach, either.

feature. The presence [+] of a strong feature will duplicate the value of the presence of a weak feature. If an argument is underspecified for one feature [±] the value will be half.

+c	±c	-c	+m	±m	-m	-r	±r	+r
4	2	0	2	1	0	0	-2	-4

Figure 1: Theta-features and values

Reinhart (2002) assumes that all transitive verbs taking a [+c, ±m]-argument as subject enter the causative alternation. She does not distinguish between different variants of anticausatives. Therefore, she proposes a simple rule for the reduction of the external argument. The only distinction she makes is in the nature of the object-argument of the transitive construction.

- (58) a.  $\text{open}_{\text{acc}}([+c], [-c-m] \dashrightarrow R_e(\text{open})[-c-m]$   
 b.  $\text{worry}_{\text{acc}}([+c], [-c+m] \dashrightarrow R_e(\text{worry})[-c+m]$

It is beyond the focus of this paper to comment on verbs of emotion although some of them show interesting parallels to change of state verbs which demand causative alternation. In Kailuweit (2005), I argued that the Romance pseudo-reflexive constructions of the *worry*-type are instances of anti-passive constructions, an argument which will not be elaborated on in this paper.

As far as the causative alternation is concerned, Reinhart's analysis is by far too coarse-grained. Nonetheless, her analysis of real reflexives will serve as a starting point for a finer grained formalisation of the results already obtained in the last section.

- (59) a.  $\text{shave}_{\text{acc}}([+c+m]_1, [-c-m]_2)$ : *Lucie shaved him.*  
 b.  $R_s(\text{shave})([+c+m]_1)$ : *Max shaved.* (Reinhart 2002)

For Reinhart (2002), real reflexives always reduce the object argument. Since the focus of this paper is not on real reflexives, I will concur with this analysis without further discussion,<sup>14</sup> adding just the missing third feature [r] which will be necessary for the distinction of finer linking differences:

<sup>14</sup> This analysis is not without problems for Italian (cf. Müller 2005).

- (60) a.  $\text{machucar}_{\text{acc}} ([+c+m-r]_1, [-c-m+r]_2)$ : *João machucou Luis.*  
 b.  $R_s(\text{machucar})([+c+m-r]_1)$ : *Luis se machucou intencionalmente.*

The transitive construction shows the highest possible activity contrast. A prototypical controlling agent and causer ( $[+c+m-r]$ ) brings about a change of state in a prototypical causatively affected patient  $[-c-m+r]$ . The semantics of the agent is not changed by the reflexive construction.

However, the semantics of the marked anticausative variant of *brunir* “tan” cannot be described correctly if we adopt Reinhart’s proposal to simply delete the argument realised as the subject of the transitive variant. The subject of the marked anticausative construction is obviously not a prototypical patient, but an intentional indirect causer of the change of state. Although he would not get a tan without the help of the sun, he is exposing his body intentionally. Thus the object argument of the transitive construction is promoted semantically. The person denoted by this object becomes an indirect causer of the change of state that his body undergoes when the argument is realised as the subject of the intransitive construction. Notice that the argument takes the value  $\pm$  for the r-feature. This corresponds to the fact that the argument undergoes a change of state, but is not prototypically causatively affected. We are dealing with an anticausative construction. Hence, neither the c-feature nor the r-feature can acquire a +value:

- (61) a.  $\text{brunir}_{\text{acc}} ([+c+m-r]_1, [-c-m+r]_2)$ : *Le soleil a bruni Paul.*  
 b.  $\text{brunir} ([\pm c+m\pm r]_1)$ : *Paul s’est bruni pour paraître plus séduisant.*

The human being denoted by the subject of *machucar-se* “hurt” in BP does not intentionally bring about the change of state that he or she is the victim of. Nonetheless, his or her responsibility can be coded by the  $\pm$ -value for the m-feature:

- (62) a.  $\text{machucar}_{\text{acc}} ([+c+m-r]_1, [-c-m+r]_2)$ : *João machucou Luis.*  
 b.  $\text{machucar} ([\pm c\pm m\pm r]_1)$ : *Luis se machucou por causa de uma inadvertência preparando sushi.*

Unmarked anticausative constructions denoting internal causation do not code any responsibility of the human being or object denoted by the subject-argument. This is coded by a negative value for the m-feature. It could be argued that a human being has intrinsic properties that lead to

injuries when falling down, especially from a roof as suggested by the given BP data:

- (63) a. machucar<sub>acc</sub> ([+c+m-r]<sub>1</sub>, [-c-m+r]<sub>2</sub>): *João machucou Luis.*  
 b. machucar ([±c-m±r]<sub>1</sub>): *Luis machucou por causa da queda.*

A slightly more passive argument appears in the subject position of marked anticausatives. As these constructions typically denote external causation, the c-feature takes a negative value. Note that the telicity effect is not caused by a higher value for the r-feature. This is in line with the argumentation of Labelle (1992) and Schäfer (2008). Telicity is only an indirect effect of the higher patienthood of the argument due to its c-feature value:

- (64) a. ralentir<sub>acc</sub> ([+c+m-r]<sub>1</sub>, [-c-m+r]<sub>2</sub>): *La crise économique ralentit la production.*  
 b. ralentir ([-c-m±r]<sub>1</sub>): *La production se ralentit.*

Leaving the semantic field of anticausatives, reflexive passives take a prototypical patient subject [-c-m+r], an argument that ranks at the lower pole of the activity hierarchy. It is identical to the object argument of the corresponding active transitive construction:

- (65) a. firmar<sub>acc</sub> ([+c+m-r]<sub>1</sub>, [-c-m+r]<sub>2</sub>): *Los ministros firmaron los convenios.*  
 b. firmar ([-c-m+r]<sub>1</sub>): *Los convenios se firmaron.*

The following summarises the causativity-degree hierarchy:

[+c+m-r]	6	<i>Luis se machucou intencionalmente.</i>
[±c+m±r]	2	<i>Paul s'est bruni pour paraître plus séduisant.</i>
[±c±m±r]	1	<i>Luis se machucou por causa de uma inadvertência preparando sushi.</i>
[±c-m±r]	0	<i>Luis machucou por causa da queda.</i>
[-c-m±r]	-2	<i>La production se ralentit.</i>
[-c-m-r]	-4	<i>Los convenios se firmaron.</i>

Figure 2: Anticausative constructions in the centre of an activity hierarchy

Note that the same verb *machucar* “hurt” appears in three different constructions. This raises the question of whether the linking between the semantics of each sentence and the syntactic construction is determined by different lexical entries or whether the constructions interfere to convey a certain interpretation. This question will be dealt with in the final section of this paper.

## 6. A Constructionist RRG Approach

A projectionist approach has been put forward by Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995): The meaning of a sentence and the linking of the arguments of the predicate is determined by the meaning of the predicate. Hence, each verb should be classified according to whether it denotes externally-caused or internally-caused eventualities. On the contrary, a constructionist view of the anticausative alternation can already be found in Rothemberg (1974):

Un même verbe peut également se trouver dans l’une ou l’autre construction avec le même sujet [...] on peut rencontrer aussi bien *l’effort ralentit* que *l’effort se ralentit*, dans le premier cas, par l’emploi de l’intransitif, le processus est considéré comme un processus naturel se réalisant uniquement grâce aux qualités inhérentes du sujet [...] alors que dans le second cas on tient pour indispensable l’intervention d’autres facteurs... (Rothemberg 1974 : 192)

“The same verb can equally enter one or the other construction with the same subject [...] We can find just as well *l’effort ralentit* as *l’effort se ralentit*, in the first case, the uses of the intransitive marks that the process is considered as naturally developing only because of the inherent qualities of the subject [...] whereas in the second case we consider the intervention of other factors as indispensable.” [Translation R.K.]

In this section, I will sketch a constructionist approach to linking based on the semantics-to-syntax algorithm of RRG (Van Valin 2005). The organisation of RRG stipulates the existence of constructional schemas that intervene during the linking process in order to spell out the language-specific characterisation of a special construction. It always consists of a list of syntactic, morphologic, semantic and pragmatic particularities that characterise the specific construction in a specific language.

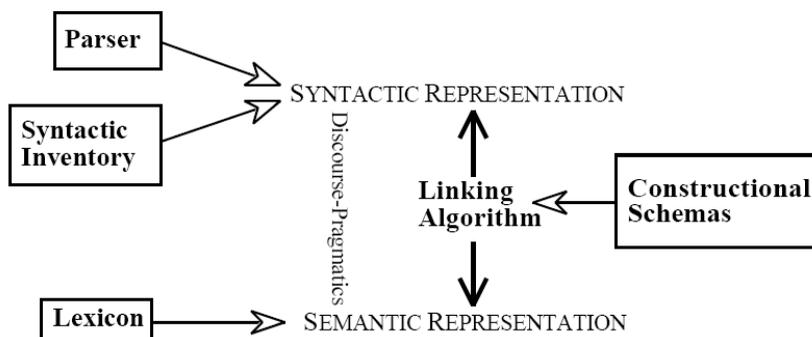


Figure 3: Organisation of RRG (Van Valin 2005: 134)

My claim is that the two anticausative variants can be represented as constructional schemas that interact with the information stored in lexical entries. As one could infer from the lists given in Section 2, for many verbs there exist arbitrary, language-specific restrictions that determine whether the verb takes on the pronominal construction, the bare infinitive construction or both. These idiosyncrasies are stored in the lexicon. Verbs that can potentially enter both constructions are lexically underspecified. Their lexical entry does not have to be doubled, but the semantic differences will be conveyed by a specific constructional schema.

Morphologically, syntactically, and semantically,<sup>15</sup> anti-causative constructions are language-specific phenomena, but not universal syntactic devices. They can, however, be considered voice constructions and imply a universal argument reduction rule:

- (66) General characterisation of basic voice constructions:
- a. Privileged Syntactic Argument [PSA] modulation voice: permits an argument other than the default argument [...] to function as PSA.
  - b. Argument modulation voice: gives non-canonical realization to a macrorole argument. (cf. Van Valin 2005: 116)

The general linking algorithm from semantics to syntax stipulates the selection of an appropriate syntactic template for a semantic representation following these general rules:

<sup>15</sup> Pragmatic differences will not be dealt with in this paper.

- (67) a. Syntactic template selection principle:  
 The number of syntactic slots for arguments and argument-adjuncts within the core is equal to the number of distinct, specified argument positions in the semantic representation of the core.
- b. Language-specific qualifications of the principle in (a):
1. All cores in the language have a minimum syntactic valence of 1.
  2. Argument-modulation voice constructions reduce the number of core slots by 1. [...] (Van Valin 2005: 130)

Therefore, for both constructions, the general rules stipulate the realisation of the non-Actor-argument as subject (=PSA) and the reduction of the core slots to one. The constructional schemas intervene in order to spell out the language-specific characterisations of a voice construction. In the following outline, I will restrict myself to anticausative constructional schemas for Spanish, French and BP:

- (68) CONSTRUCTION: Spanish marked anticausatives  
 SEMANTICS:  
 Actor: deleted; Undergoer [-c-m+r]: promoted => {[-c-m±r] v  
 [±c-m±r] v [±c±m±r] v [±c+m±r]}; telicity: (+)  
 SYNTAX:  
 PSA: Undergoer; Intransitivity: unaccusative; Dative causer: +  
 MORPHOLOGY:  
 Marking: reflexive  
 PRAGMATICS:  
 ...
- (69) CONSTRUCTION: Spanish unmarked anticausatives  
 SEMANTICS:  
 Actor: deleted; Undergoer [-c-m+r]: promoted => [±c-m±r];  
 telicity: (-)  
 SYNTAX:  
 PSA: Undergoer; Intransitivity: unaccusative; Dative causer: (+)  
 MORPHOLOGY:  
 Marking: -  
 PRAGMATICS:  
 ...
- (70) CONSTRUCTION: French marked anticausatives  
 SEMANTICS:  
 Actor: deleted; Undergoer [-c-m+r]: promoted => {[-c-m±r] v

$[\pm c \pm m \pm r] \vee [\pm c + m \pm r]$ ; telecity: (+)

SYNTAX:

PSA: Undergoer; Intransitivity: unaccusative; Dative causer: –

MORPHOLOGY:

Marking: reflexive

PRAGMATICS:

...

- (71) CONSTRUCTION: French unmarked anticausatives

SEMANTICS:

Actor: deleted; Undergoer  $[-c - m + r]$ : promoted =>  $[\pm c - m \pm r]$ ;

telecity: (–)

SYNTAX:

PSA: Undergoer; Intransitivity: unergative;<sup>16</sup> Dative causer: –

MORPHOLOGY:

Marking: –

PRAGMATICS:

...

- (72) CONSTRUCTION: BP marked anticausatives

SEMANTICS:

Actor: deleted; Undergoer  $[-c - m + r]$ : promoted =>  $\{[-c - m \pm r] \vee$

$[\pm c \pm m \pm r] \vee [\pm c + m \pm r]\}$ ; telecity: (+)

SYNTAX:

PSA: Undergoer; Intransitivity: unaccusative;<sup>17</sup> Dative causer: –

MORPHOLOGY:

Marking: reflexive

PRAGMATICS:

...

- (73) CONSTRUCTION: BP unmarked anticausatives

SEMANTICS:

Actor: deleted; Undergoer  $[-c - m + r]$ : promoted =>  $\{[-c - m \pm r] \vee$

$[\pm c - m \pm r]\}$ ; telecity: (–)

SYNTAX:

PSA: Undergoer; Intransitivity: unaccusative;<sup>18</sup> Dative causer: –

MORPHOLOGY:

Marking: –

PRAGMATICS:

...

---

<sup>16</sup> According to Labelle (1992).

<sup>17</sup> According to Carvalho (2006).

<sup>18</sup> According to Carvalho (2006).

As far as language-specific particularities are concerned, the constructional schema accounts for syntactical differences, such as the lack of a dative causer construction in French and BP or the unergativity of French unmarked anticausatives, if we follow Labelle's argumentation. However, this paper is mainly concerned with language-specific semantics. The different accessible semantic interpretations of the two constructions in each language can be inferred from the schemas.

The difference between internal vs. external causation can be captured by the different kinds of undergoer promotion. While the unmarked anticausatives in Spanish and French convey a type of undergoer promotion [ $\pm c$ - $m\pm r$ ] that corresponds to the semantics of internal causation, marked anticausatives in French are restricted to the other three types of undergoer promotion. On the contrary, Spanish marked anticausative constructions allow for expressing eventualities of internal causation, too. In BP it is the other way round: unmarked anticausative constructions denote both internal causation and external causation, as illustrated by the data given for *saltar*.

## 7. Conclusion

(Anti-)causative variation is more complex than the well-known distinction of internal vs. external causation suggests. Anticausatives differ from passives by the fact that their argument is semantically promoted in comparison with the object argument of the transitive construction, denoting neither a prototypical patient nor a prototypical causer. In many languages, anticausatives can be divided into three classes, which is the case for Spanish. The semantics of anti-causativity are an effect of the constructions that an individual verb can enter. Marked and unmarked constructions vary according to the language in the degree of causativity-promotion they convey to the undergoer-argument of the transitive construction. It has been proven that RRG's constructional schemas are powerful tools for dealing with a fine-grained semantic and syntactic analysis of anticausative constructions.

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