

Imagery in Language

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Professor Ronald W. Langacker

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SURFACE SYNTAX VERSUS SYSTEMIC IMAGERY

1. Introduction

In formal approaches the notion of “surface syntax” is commonly contrasted with a deep representation which operates as the source for the target structure under scrutiny. Surface syntax may also refer to the manifestation of some grammatical phenomenon which may be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on how that phenomenon relates and contrasts with other constructions in the language. Surface phenomena must always be evaluated with reference to the whole system. The issue shows up every day in linguistic analyses. What is categorized as an applicative by some authors may be seen as benefactive by others (Shibatani 1996), what is assumed to be a “dative shift” may be reinterpreted as a “primary object” phenomenon (Dryer 1986). At issue are several current proposals (Constenla 1997, Bogard 1999) by which a variety of constructions having the reflexive-middle clitic *se* are analyzed as antipassive constructions. In this paper I will try to show that only from a surface syntax approach can they be interpreted as antipassives. I will also show that once we take into account the whole structure of Spanish and the core function of antipassives the construction under scrutiny is best analyzed as a middle construction.

According to the antipassive analysis, the examples in (b) derive from their transitive counterpart in (a). The bare NP direct object of the transitive form is marked with a preposition thus becoming an oblique. The *se* clitic is *par consequence* interpreted as an antipassive marker on the verb:

Constenla (1997)

- 1.a. *El montó la mula*
'He mounted the mule'

ACTIVE

- b. *El se montó en la mula*
He SE mounted LOC the mule
'He got on the mule'
- Bogard (1999)
- 2.a. *Juan aprovechó tu experiencia*
Juan took advantage of your experience
Juan se aprovechó de tu experiencia
Juan took SE advantage of-OBL your experience
Juan SE took advantage of your experience (negative implication)
- 3.a. *Juan compadece a los muchachos*
'Juan pities the boys'
- b. *Juan se compadece de los muchachos*
Juan SE pity of-OBL the boys
'Juan (strongly) sympathizes with the boys'

The analysis consistently accounts for the surface behavior of the construction. In fact there are clear arguments showing that from the transitive construction a new intransitive clause is derived. First, the *se* marked verb requires a prepositional phrase. Bare NPs are banned as can be seen from the examples in (4) which contrast with the (b) examples in (1-3):

- 4.a. * *El se montó la mula*
He SE mount-PST the mule
- b. * *Juan se aprovechó tu experiencia*
Juan SE take-PST advantage your experience
- c. * *Juan se compadece los compañeros*
Juan SE pity the boys

Second, in contrast with transitive construction the oblique prepositional phrase can be omitted. Thus the PP is non-argumental and the construction must be interpreted as intransitive:

- 5.a. *Juan se montó.. y se fue a casa*
Juan SE mounted... and SE went to home
'Juan mounted... and went home'
- b. *Juan se aprovechó ... porque le dieron facilidades*
Juan SE took advantage... because DAT gave facilities
'Juan took advantage... because they let him do so'

- c. *Juan se compadece ... pero no piensa cambiar de postura*
Juan se pities... but not consider change of posture
'Juan has pity... but he does not consider changing his position'

At the level of surface syntax the construction may be seen as an antipassive. There is an NP changing to oblique, the verb is marked by *se* and is now intransitive. The relevant question is whether the notion of antipassive is the right one for this coding pattern. In order to evaluate the analysis in section I, I summarize the functions and the coding patterns of antipassives in languages that have that construction. Two subsections are devoted to revise the problem of individuation and aspect. In section II, I contrast the behavior of the *se*+oblique construction with the antipassive prototype. In section III, I provide an alternative analysis of the *se*+oblique construction as belonging to middle voice. For the constructions under scrutiny I propose to analyze them as two related constructions: energetic and dynamic middles. The final section provides the concluding remarks regarding voice marking patterns in current analyses.

2. The antipassive construction

As is well known, the antipassive construction is commonly found in ergative dominant languages. There are good reasons to find it in that type of languages. In ergative languages the absolute nominal constitutes the natural clause trajectory. In accusative languages the agent subject is the default most prominent participant. Both passives and antipassives have the function of downplaying the most prominent default participant in the language (Maldonado in press), thus passives downplay the agentive nominative subject while the antipassive downplays the absolute non-agentive nominal. As shown in Table 1, the antipassive contrasts with the active direct construction. The active marks the subject agent as ergative while the object patient is absolutive. In the antipassive construction the subject agent is absolutive while the other participant is now an oblique.

Table 1. Antipassive in ergative languages

Active/direct		Antipassive	
S	O	S	
Erg	Abs	Abs	Obl
Trans		Abs	
Intrans			

The marking pattern can be observed in the following Cora example (extracted from Vázquez 2002). The transitive construction in (6.a) involves a subject and a primary object. There are two reasons to have an antipassive construction with the marker *tyi:a*: the object is omitted as in (6.b) or the object is an oblique as in (6.c). In this case the oblique is marked instrumental with the postposition *hemi*:

- 6.a. \emptyset -*ra-ca:wate?e* ACTIVE-DIRECT
 S3SG-PO3SG-believe
 'He believes it.'
- b. \emptyset -*tyi?a-ca:wate?e* ANTIPASSIVE
 S3SG-ANTIPASS-believe
 'He believes.'
- c. *me?hme me-tyá-ca:wate?e-ka?a mi?!-í:-te hemi*
 DEM S3PL-ANTIPASS-believe-PAST die.S3G-ANI-PL with
 'Those believed in ghosts.' (Historias J, 72)

While the marking pattern is clear what may be of interest are the construction's functional load as well as its most outstanding syntactic properties. Let us revise the behavior of the antipassive for the languages that systematically employ that construction.

2.1. Event incompleteness

A. *Incomplete event.* The most evident manifestation of incompleteness is evidenced in Greenlandic Eskimo where active and antipassive constructions contrast in degree of completion. While the transitive active construction (7.a) depicts a fully developed event, the antipassive (7.b) designates events that may be in the process of being completed but are not yet accomplished:

- Greenlandic Eskimo (Bittner 1987)
- 7.a. *Jaaku-p illu taá-nna sana-pa-a*
 Jacob-ERG house this.SG-ABS build-TR.IND-3S.ERG/3SG.ABS
 'Jacob is/was building this house (may not have finished it)'
- b. *Jaaku illu-mik taá-ssuinnga sana-Ø-pu-p*
 Jacob house-INSTR this-SG.INSTR build-AP-INTR.IND.3SG.ABS
 'Jacob is/was building this house (has not finished it)'

B. *Inaccessible object.* An outstanding property of antipassive constructions is the fact that the event is never fully completed. Incompleteness may show up

in a variety of ways, be it a low degree of object affectedness or simply an event that is not carried out to its full completion. The Chamorro example in (b), contrasts with the transitive in that the oblique locative construction makes the 'dog' unavailable for the agent to directly interact with it. In the transitive the agent has contact with *ga'lago*; in the antipassive he does not. He aims at the dog but he does not get it.

- 8.a. *Un-patek I ga'lago*
 ERG.2SG-kick the dog
 'You kicked the dog'
- b. *Mamatek hao gi ga'lago*
 AP-kick2SG.ABS LOC dog
 'You kicked at the dog'

C. *Partiive meaning.* Affectedness reduction is also expressed by partially imposing some change on the object. As can be seen by the Samoan example (Mosele 1988), the transitive direct designates that the whole object has been eaten, while in the antipassive (9.b) consumption is only partial:

- 9.a. *Sa 'ai e le tiene le i'a*
 PAS eat ERG DET girl DET fish
 'The girl ate (all of) the fish'
- b. *Sa 'ai le tiene i le i'a*
 PAS eat DET girl LOC DET fish
 'The girl ate some of the fish'

D. *Low degree of individuation/identification.* In other languages affectedness reduction is obtained by lowering the degree of individuation of the object. Since strong transitivity involves highly individuated objects the antipassive renders a lower degree of transitivity. In Chamorro the antipassive (10.b) is obligatory when the object is indefinite (Cooreman 1988):

- 10.a. *Ha -kone' i peskadot i guihan*
 ERG.3.SG-catch the fisherman the fish
 'The fisherman caught the fish'
- b. *Mangonne' (guihan) i peskadot*
 AP.catch (fish) the fisherman
 'The fisherman caught a fish'

i. *Low degree of specificity.* A parallel situation is obtained with non specific objects. The degree of transitivity is reduced in the antipassive as

the energy from the subject is widely spread instead of being directed to a particular participant. Lack of specificity is manifested in both animate (11.b) and non-animate objects (12.b). In Greenlandic Eskimo (Bittner 1987) the referent is made non-specific or is left implicit

- 11.a. *atuartut ilaat* *ikiur-tariaqar-pa-ra*
 of.students one.of.them.ABS help-must-VTR.IND-1S.ERG/3SG.ABS
 'I must help one of the students'
- b. *atuartut ilaannik* *ikiu-i-sariaqar-pu-nga*
 of.students one.of.them.INSTR help-AP-must-VINTR.IND-1SG.ABS
 'I must help one of the students' (any student will do)
- 12.a. *qajak atur-unnaar-pa-a*
 kayak.ABS use.no.longer-VTR.IND.3SG.ABS
 'He no longer uses kayak (a particular kayak)'
- b. *qaannamik atur-Ø-unnaar-pu-q*
 kayak-instr use-AP-no.longer-VINTR.IND.3SG
 'He no longer uses kayak (any kayak but could be a particular one)'

Based on these data we can see that antipassives constitute construals in which the patient is located at some mental distance from the subject's sphere of interaction. The oblique nominal not only is marked by some adposition but is also represented with low degree of individuation. Thus affectedness and energy transmission from the subject is always limited or partial.

The conceptual import of the antipassive construction is represented in Figure 2 which contrasts with the representation of the active direct. We can see that the object/patient undergoes some change (the squiggly arrow) as the agent transmits energy successfully (the thick arrow). In the antipassive the transmission is reduced (the dotted arrow) as the object is conceptually distant from the subject. Being distant the object is not clearly defined (the thin line circle) and is it not available for direct interaction.

Antipassive conceptual distance

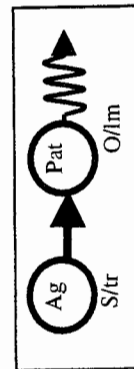


Fig. 1. Active/direct

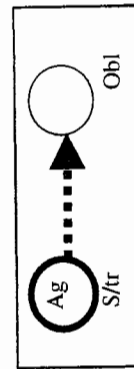


Fig. 2. Antipassive oblique

F. *Object omission*. As shown in (6.b), antipassives may also depict cases where the object is not present. This is a widespread phenomenon normally used for the purpose of establishing generalizations, as in Chamorro:

13. Mang-guaiya yo'
 AP-amar ABS.1SG
 'I love (someone) / I am in love'

There are, however, more specific requirements. In Mam (Mayan) the antipassive does not allow overt non-specific objects (England 1988), thus unspecified objects must be omitted and the construction is antipassive (14.b):

- 14.a. *ma Ø* *-w* *-aq'na-7n-a*
 ASP ABS.3SG -ERG.1SG -work-DS-1SG
 'I worked it (something)'
- b. *ma chin* *aq'naa-n-a*
 ASP ABS.1SG work-AP-1SG
 'I worked' (no implied object)

One can be tempted to assume that object omission is the extreme case of low degree of individuation/identification. The rational would be the following: as the object loses definiteness and individuation, at some point, it could simply be deleted. This is not the case. As pointed out by Cooreman (1988) not all languages having an antipassive with omitted objects also have an antipassive with an oblique phrase. The fact that in specific situations the object may be omitted does not make a language have an antipassive construction. Object omission may be motivated by pragmatic contexts where i) it may be evident form context ii) it may be left out due to topic avoidance. While object omission may take place in just about any language, its grammaticized form does not. The most obvious case where the object may be omitted is one where it is naturally associated with the verb by world knowledge:

15. *Desde que escribes — estás insoportable*
 'Since you started writing you are unbearable'

By cultural association LITERATURE and its hyponyms (*poetry, narrative, etc.*) are inferred as potential objects of *write*. While languages having the antipassive construction use the antipassive marker to signal that the object has been deleted, in those like Spanish object omission is pragmatic, its grammaticized form does not exist. The object referent is retrieved via

anaphora, context relevance or world knowledge. Since object omission can take place in any language via pragmatic conditioning while the oblique phrase is a grammaticized form exclusive of languages having a clear antipassive construction, the universal tendency is for obliques to grammaticized independently of the existence of omitted objects (Cooreman 1988). As I will show, Spanish may have deleted objects while the grammaticized oblique antipassive construction is not attested.

Aspect is the other realm in which antipassives tend to show a consistent behavior. In the next section I revise the most outstanding aspectual properties of antipassives.

2.2. Aspect

The aspectual behavior of antipassives seems to be quite consistent. As shown by Tsunoda (1988) antipassives tend to encode imperfective events. This is to be expected. Since the event is incomplete the endpoint of the action is never profiled. In contrast, the ongoing process tends to be highlighted. As I show below, the best manifestations of imperfective antipassive constructions are habitual, iterative and non-punctual.

A. *Habitual*. Habitual aspect encodes generic actions or tendencies for actions to happen. In the Tsutsujil antipassive example (Dayley 1985) what matters is the subject's tendency to sell cheaply, not a specific act of selling:

16. *Ja nuutee7 b'aráata nk'ayin wi7*
 The my.mother cheap 3SG.ABS.sell.AP EMPH
 'My mother sells cheap'

B. *Repetitive*. While the direct transitive construction normally focuses on a specific punctual event, antipassives tend to encode iterative actions whose conclusion is yet to unfold. In Chamorro (Cooreman 1988) the antipassive is commonly used to designate repetitive actions. It is not the case that the subject in (17) hit the dog once, but he kept pounding on it repeatedly:

17. *Mang-galuit gue' ni ga'лаго*
 AP-hit ABS OBL the dog
 'He pounded on/repeatedly hit the dog'

C. *Non-punctual*. Particularly common is the use of the antipassive construction to designate events that are not punctual. This is quite close to generic events, however in contrast with cases where the object is not present in the West Greenlandic Eskimo (Fortescue 1984: 86) the object encoded is not a particular one. The generic reading is obtained by marking *inuit* 'people' instrumental and the construction is consistently imperfective. The act of killing is not tied to a specific event or time frame instead the event happened in some unspecified time. This can be observed in the way (18.b) contrasts with (18.a):

- 18.a. *inuit tuqup-pai*
 people.ABS kill-VTR.IND.3SG.ERG.3PL
 'He killed the people'
 b. *inun-nik tuqut-si-vuq*
 people-INSTR killed-AP-VINTR.IND/3SG.ABS
 'He killed people'

The facts so far observed allow us to make basic generalizations about the behavior of antipassive constructions. They are summarized in Table 1:

Table 2. Antipassive properties

Incomplete event	Low individuation	Imperfective aspect
Lack of contact	Indefinite object	Habitual
Incomplete event	Non specific	Repetitive
Low affectedness	Generic	Non punctual
Partitive meaning	Object omission	

Table 2 shows that antipassive constructions designate incomplete events where the subject does not have direct contact with the object or is not able to fully exploit it or modify it. This type of conceptualization correlates with a variety of phenomena where the object is low in the scale of individuation/identification (indefinite, non specific, etc.), and aspect tends not to be perfective. This all makes sense for these features guaranty that the event will not highlight a fully completed event. To the extent that this is a correct characterization of the antipassive construction we are now in a position to evaluate whether the Spanish examples in question can properly be characterized as antipassive. The next section analyzes the Spanish data.

3. The non-antipassive behavior of Spanish

A revision of the alleged Spanish antipassive examples shows not only that they do not conform to the antipassive prototype but in fact they have exactly the opposite properties. The nominal in the oblique phrase shows a high degree of individuation and aspect is consistently perfective. I will revise not only aspect and individuation, but moreover the construction's functional load.

3.1. Aspect

Consider first the aspectual configuration. All examples are perfective. They all show up naturally in past perfective tense.

19. a. *Juan se aprovechó de tu experiencia*
Juan SE take-PST advantage of your experience
'Juan took advantage of your experience'
- b. *Juan se compadeció de los muchachos*
Juan SE pity-PST of the young men
'Juan had pity of the young men'
- c. *Juan se despidió de los excursionistas*
Juan SE greet-PST of the hikers
'Juan waved goodbye to the hikers'
- d. *Carlos se evadió de la justicia*
Carlos SE avoid-PST of the justice
'Carlos escaped from the justice'

This behavior is consistent across-the-board. In non-past tenses the reading is punctual, as in the following future tense example:

20. *El gobierno no se desviará de la política económica actual*
The government not SE deviate-FUT of the policy economic current
'The government will not deviate from the current economic policy'

Crucially used in present tense these examples are marginal unless they are interpreted as historical present events which, as we know, are past perfective events put in present to designate current relevance (Langacker 1987b):

21. a. ?? *Juan se aprovechó de tu experiencia*
Juan SE take-PRES advantage of your experience
'Juan takes advantage of your experience'

- c. ?? *Juan se despidió de los excursionistas*
Juan SE greet-PRES of the hikers
'Juan greets the hikers goodbye'
- d. ?? *Carlos se evadió de la justicia*
Carlos SE avoid-PRES of the justice
'Carlos escapes from the justice'

Even *compadecerse*, a verb of emotion, requires extra context for the present tense to be legal:

22. *Juan se compadeció de los muchachos cuando los ve sufrir*
Juan SE pity-PRES of all the young men when OBI.PRON-PL see suffer
'Juan has pity of the young men when he sees them suffer'

Notice that even then the reading is iterative, not perfective. Juan feels for the young men every time he sees them suffer. Imperfective aspect is definitely not associated with the SE+oblique construction.

3.2. Individuation

As for the individuation parameter, the oblique nouns are definite, specific and highly individuated. Consider again the examples in (19). In (19.a) there is a specific noun being possessed. All other cases involve a specific determiner. Moreover in (19.d) *la justicia* is a unique instance of a type. These highly individuated nouns are questionable or banned when used as indefinite as shown in (23a–b):

23. a. ?? *Juan se aprovechó de una experiencia*
Juan SE take-PST advantage of an experience
'Juan took advantage of an experience'
- b. * *Carlos se evadió de una justicia*
Carlos SE avoid-PST of a justice
'Carlos escaped from a justice'

In the absence of the core properties of the antipassive we must conclude that these are not instances of an antipassive construction. What is more important is that the functional load of these examples is tangentially opposite to the antipassive expected reading.

3.3. Functional load

As shown in Table 2, antipassive constructions designate incomplete events in which there is a low degree of affectedness. Other transitivity reduction effects are related to the fact that the subject has no direct access to the object. If the SE+oblique construction were an antipassive we should expect to find parallel meanings. A revision of the alleged antipassive examples given by Constenla and Bogard will show that the effects are in fact contrary to those expectations. In many SE+oblique examples there is either an increase of dynamism of the event or a higher degree of participation by the subject. Consider first degree of subject involvement. In the (b) examples below the subject is more involved in the event than in the plain transitive construction. Example (24.a) would be uttered in journalistic writing when the young men were reported to have had an accident. In contrast (24.b) would be more adequate if *Juan* knew the young men and felt pity for them. Similarly the transitive *lamentar* would correspond to a superficially regrettable event like missing a concert or a party while *lamentarse* in (25.b) would express the deep pain imposed by hearing offensive words from a beloved one:

- 24.a. *Juan compadece a los muchachos*
'Juan pities the young men'
b. *Juan se compadece de los muchachos* (intensive)
Juan SE pity of.OBL the
'Juan sympathizes with the young men'
25. *Juan lamentó no ir al concierto*
'Juan regretted missing the concert'
b. *Juan se lamentó de oír tus palabras* (intensive)
Juan SE lamented OBL hearing your words
'Juan lamented your words'

The SE+oblique construction designates an increase in subject involvement that pertains to a *dynamic* view of the event. Another instance of dynamism is the case where the SE+oblique construction designates punctual events. The construction focuses on the specific moment in which the change-of-state takes place. The effect thus obtained is a sudden or rapid change of location. In (26.b) the verb can take modifiers such as *de pronto* 'suddenly' while the plain transitive (26.a) requires more context to take them:

- 26.a. *Juan soltó la cuerda*
'Juan left the cable line'
b. *Juan se soltó de la cuerda (de pronto)* (punctual)
J. SE let go of.OBL the line (suddenly)
'Juan let go of the line'

As can be expected, dynamism and punctuality may coincide. In (27.b) the construction focus is the actual moment in which the change of location takes place. But the action itself happens in one jump, not so in the transitive construction (27.a):

- 27.a. *El montó la mula*
He mounted the mule
b. *El se montó en la mula* (punctual/dynamic)
He SE mounted on the mule > 'He got on the mule'

Another instance of the punctual/dynamic construal is (28.b) where the subject acts energetically as he waves good bye. The event focuses on the specific moment of waving, which the subject does energetically. In contrast, the transitive event remains neutral about both the time span of the action and how energetically it is construed:

- 28.a. *Juan despidió a los visitantes*
Juan dismiss the visitors
b. *Juan se despidió de los visitantes* (punctual/dynamic)
Juan SE said good bye of.OBL the visitors
'Juan said good bye to the visitors'

Likewise, in the SE+oblique construction (29.b) the government change-of-direction is seen as sudden and even unexpected while the transitive simply designates a policy change:

- 29.a. *El gobierno no desviará la política económica actual*
'The government won't sway the current economical plan'
b. *El gobierno no se desviará de la política económica actual*
The government won't SE drift away .OBL the current economical plan
'The government won't drift away from the current economical plan'
(punctual/dynamic)

Even more dramatic is the case of *evadir* 'avoid', which SE derives into a new verb designating a sudden escape:

30. a. *Carlos está evadiendo la policía*
'Carlos is avoiding the police'
b. *Carlos se está evadiendo de la policía*
(punctual/dynamic)
'Carlos SE is avoiding from.OBL the police'
'Carlos is escaping from the police'

Another instance of energy increase is represented by *aprovechar* 'take advantage'. Without the clitic SE it simply means 'to take advantage' of something. The clitic SE derives a negative reading by which the subject surpasses the limits of the norm in taking advantage of something or someone:

31. a. *Juan aprovechó tu experiencia*
'Juan took advantage of your experience'
b. *Juan se aprovechó de tu experiencia*
(negative implication)
'J. take SE advantage of.OBL your experience'
'Juan took advantage of your experience'

Summing up, the alleged antipassive examples designate three types of related meanings:

- higher degree of subject involvement in the event,
- a punctual and sudden characterization of events and
- a combination of both punctual and energetic events.

These cases conform to a general phenomenon of *dynamicity* (Maldonado 1993) where energetic events contrast with *absolute* ones (Langacker 1991) precisely in that the former profiles the energy being used in the event while absolutes are neutral in that respect. All these cases involving a dynamicity increase argue against an antipassive interpretation of the data and beg for an alternative analysis. In the following section I argue for a middle voice interpretation of all the alleged antipassive examples, as they constitute a coherent subsystem highly motivated by a basic middle conceptualization of events.

4. A Middle Voice Analysis

In this section I will show that the properties of middle systems fully account for the variety of phenomena observed in so called antipassive constructions.

I stress that increase/decrease of subject involvement is a phenomenon to be expected in middle voice. In this realm the Spanish *se* middle marker encodes events remaining in the dominion of the subject. Focus is given to the change-of-state undergone by the subject. All other participants are of secondary importance and are coded as obliques.

Middle voice involves a variety of constructions in which "the action is performed with special reference to the subject" (Smyth 1956: 390). Indeed the subject is "...inside the process of which he is the agent". Benveniste (1950: 149). In cognitive grammar terms a middle constructions depicts actions that remain in the subject's dominion (Maldonado 1999, in press). Instead of transferring energy to the object the force projection remains in the subject. As pointed out by (Kemmer 1993, 1994) there are situations that lend themselves to be coded in middle terms. One can expect internal emotions and mental images to be coded as middle constructions. This is in fact the case, the prototype for the middle are verbs of emotion as Classical Greek *olophyre-sthai* 'lament'. Yet there are other situations that by nature do not involve other participant than the subject. The following is a representative group of situations extracted from Kemmer (1993):

Table 3. Basic middle voice situations

Grooming or body care	Indirect middle
Latin lavo-r 'wash'	Turkish ed-in 'acquire'
Indonesian ber-dandan 'get dressed'	Classical Greek kta-sthai 'acquire for oneself'
Non translational motion	Emotion middle
Kanuri tân-t-în 'stretch one's body'	Gaugu Yimidhir dumiba-adhi 'get a shock or fright'
Latin revert-o-r 'turn'	Mohave mat-îba-v 'be angry'
Chan in body Posture	Hungarian bán-kod- 'grieve, mourn'
Indonesian ber-lutut 'kneel-down'	Emotive speech actions
Gaugu Yimidhir 'daga-adhi 'sit down'	Latin quero-r 'complain'
Translational motion	Cl. Greek olophyre-sthai 'lament'
Pangwa i-nu-xa 'climb up'	Turkish döv-ün 'lament'
Gaugu Yimidhir 'madha-adhi 'climb up'	Cognition middle
French s'en aller 'go away'	Indonesian ber-pikir 'be cogitating'
	Pangwa -i-sala 'think over, consider'
	Spontaneous events
	Indonesian ber-henti 'come to a stop'
	French s'évattouir 'vanish'
	Hungarian kelet-kez- 'originate, occur'

The fact that these situations involve only the subject predicts that languages lacking a middle system will use instead intransitive verbs (Kemmer 1993). The intransitive English verb *wash* corresponds to Latin *lavo-r* and Spanish *lavar-se*. The restriction of middles to depict events remaining in the subject's dominion is

consistent. The case of spontaneous events corresponds to situations where the initiative force is downplayed to simply conceptualize the thematic subject change-of-state. In many cases the middle event depicts bodily motion, in others mental, psychological and emotional verbs where the action takes place within the subject. Self benefaction is also common as the event is self-projected for the subject benefit. With this schematic representation we may now evaluate the behavior of the SE+oblique construction.

4.1. Energetic middles

Let us address the problem of energy increase. The fact that energy is “introjected” naturally explains both the energy reduction and the energy increase in the event. Energy decrease operates as a control reduction problem about things happening internally. This is characteristic of verbs of cognition. The highest degree of control is attained when the subject interacts with another participant in order to control it or affect it. As some mental phenomenon happens internally the degree of required control diminishes. The opposite situation also takes place particularly regarding verbs of emotion. Energy increase follows from the fact that energy is internally driven for higher degree of subject participation. Both phenomena actually take place in middle systems. Yet for Spanish energy increase is much more productive.

The only instance of energy decrease is the case of *olvidarse* ‘forget’ and *acordarse* ‘remember’ where in contrast with the transitive verb the middle subject has less control over the minded issue. García (1975) has analyzed these cases as a control reduction phenomenon characteristic of verbs of cognition. The transitive use is willful and controlled as attested by the fact that it can take modifiers designating high degree of control (*con todas mis fuerzas* ‘with all my strength, *meticulosamente* ‘meticulously’). These modifiers are marginal in the SE+oblique construction as (32.b) and (33.b) show:

- 32.a. *Te olvidé con todas mis fuerzas*
 ‘I forgot you with all my strength’
 b. *Me olvidé de ti (??con todas mis fuerzas)*
 ‘I forgot about you (??with all my strength)’
- 33.a. *Recordaba meticulosamente las palabras de su padre*
 ‘He remembered meticulously the words of his father’
 b.?? *Se acordaba meticulosamente de las palabras de su padre*
 ‘He remembered meticulously the words of his father’

The SE marker diminishes the degree of subject control with verbs of cognition. In contrast with verbs of emotion the use of SE increases the level of subject participation. This is attested by the fact that the dative nominal *Juan* in (34.a) becomes nominative via the SE construction in (34.b):

- 34.a. *Los niños le molestan a Juan. No sabe jugar con ellos*
 the children DAT bother to Juan. Not know play-INF with they
 ‘Children bother Juan. He doesn’t know how to play with them’
 b. *Juan se molesta con los niños*
 Juan MID bother with the children
 ‘Juan gets bothered by the children’

The notion of increase of subject participation associated with the middle marker SE is independently motivated in other parts of the Spanish middle system. As shown in previous work (Maldonado 1992, 1999) the middle marker SE profiles energetic events. In the case of transitive constructions this is manifested as a transitivity increase which further extends to what I have called full involvement constructions (Maldonado 2000). Notice from (35) that SE designates the location where the hat ends up. Now in (36) the SE marker does nothing but EXPLOIT TO MAXIMAL EXTENT WHAT THE VERB ALREADY CONTAINS. The construal takes place with verbs of concrete or abstract consumption (*comer* ‘eat’, *beber* ‘drink’, *saber* ‘know’, *leer* ‘read’, etc), whose most schematic meaning is TO BRING THE OBJECT INTO THE SUBJECT DOMINION for further exploitation. Notice that the meaning of SE, instead of being redundant, profiles the inferences drawn from the core meaning of the verb. Thus with *conseguir* ‘obtain’ the clitic SE underlines the benefaction implied in the verb meaning: bringing something into the subject dominion.

35. *Adrián se puso el sombrero* LOCATION
 ‘Adrian put on his hat’
 36.a. *Adrián consiguió un empleo maravilloso*
 ‘Adrian got himself a marvelous job’
 b. *Adrián se consiguió un empleo maravilloso* BENEFACTIVE
 ‘Adrian got himself a marvelous job’

In the case of verbs of consumption *comer* ‘eat’ *fumar* ‘smoke’ etc. and its abstract manifestations *saber* ‘know’ the subject not only brings the object into her dominion but also exploits it in different ways. The middle marker SE takes such exploitation to maximal extent designating that Adrian has read the whole

These data suggest that the first set of alleged antipassive examples are naturally accounted for by the middle voice construction which is already motivated for independent needs in the system. There is another advantage of the middle voice analysis. Deponent middles are accounted for naturally without having to list them as exceptions. Languages having a middle system tend to have a class of deponent verbs with no transitive or intransitive counterpart. The following are examples from (Kemmer 1993):

43.	Latin	<i>oblivisco-r</i>	'forget'
		<i>vereo-r</i>	'tear'
	Turkish	<i>hastal-án</i>	'get sick'
	Icelandic	<i>elda-st</i>	'grow old'
		<i>ótta-st</i>	'fear'
	Gugu Yimidhirr	<i>daga-adhi</i>	'sit down'
	Fula	<i>'oppin-o</i>	'squat'
		<i>hiim-o</i>	'think, reflect'
	Sanskrit	<i>manyat-e</i>	'he thinks, believes'

Notice first that our definition of middles as events remaining in the subject's dominion explain naturally the fact that these verbs are deponents. They need not have a transitive counterpart for they do not presuppose another participant. Many of these verbs do not derive from a transitive form. They are simply construed as basic middles. The non-derivative interpretation of middle constructions has already been put forward in current cognitive analyses (Manney 2001 for Modern Greek, Nava and Maldonado in press for Tarascan). Moreover Spanish deponent verbs designate dynamic readings. Notice from (44.a–c) that the subject deeply participates in the emotional act:

- 44.a. *Juan se arrepintió de sus tonterías*
'Juan regretted his foolish acts'
- b. *Juan se jactó de sus buenos resultados*
'Juan bragged of his good results'
- c. *Juan se quejó de la política económica*
'Juan complained about the economic policy'

These verbs were all intransitive in early Spanish until the XVII century, when the optional use of SE became obligatory as the high degree of the subject's involvement lexicalized. That the physical manifestation of an emotional feeling is not only volitional but intense can be seen by the fact that

con desgano 'unwillingly', *sin realmente sentirlo* 'without really feeling it' render the construction unacceptable:

- 45.a. **Juan se jactó de sus buenos resultados con desgano*
'Juan bragged about his good results unwillingly'
- b. **Juan se quejó de la política económica con desgano*
'Juan complained about the economic policy unwillingly'

- 46.* *Juan se arrepintió de sus tonterías sin realmente sentirlo*
'Juan repented of his foolish actions without really feeling it'

Moreover the intense involvement of the subject can be seen from the fact that the middle construction can take volitional modifiers while the plain intransitive construction cannot:

- 47.a. *Juan se quejó de la política económica cuidadosa/agresivamente*
'Juan complains about the economic policy carefully/aggressively'
- b. * *Los políticos lloran cuidadosa/agresivamente*
'Politicians cry carefully/aggressively'

These facts give enough evidence that the clitic SE instead of antipassive is a middle marker depicting a high degree of subject involvement in the event.

As for the obliqueness of the prepositional phrase, it is explained not as a meaningless preposition derived from a demotion process but as an informative adposition designating the source of the impulse driving the subject's internal change-of-state. Thus in (47.a) the economic policy is the source, the impulse from which the subjects reacts. This is consistent in all cases so far considered. We are now in the position to address the problem of punctual and dynamic events.

4.2. Dynamic middles

In previous work (Maldonado 1988, 1993, 1999) I have shown that the main function of the Spanish middle marker is to focus in the core of the event. This schematic representation emerges naturally from the prototype. To the extent that the event remains in the subject dominion attention is centered on the change-of-state undergone by the subject. The forces driving the event are of secondary importance for the middle construction. When the middle applies to a transitive construction attention is focused on the change-of-state thus the initiative force is

downplayed. This quite productive pattern derives the middle spontaneous constructions in (b) (also called pseudopassives, reflexive passive, inchoatives and so on) from the transitive examples in (a). The transitivity reduction in these cases is evident:

- 48.a. *El niño rompió la taza*
'The boy broke the cup'
b. *La taza se rompió*
'The cup broke'
- 49.a. *El niño perdió la pluma*
'The boy lost the pen'
b. *La pluma se perdió*
'The pen got lost'

Now what is interesting is the fact that the middle also derives energetic events from intransitive verbs. Langacker (1991) has proposed a basic contrast between ABSOLUTE events depicting processes that do not profile any sort of energy and ENERGETIC ones where some type of energy is profiled. The contrast is clearly manifested in (50), where a falling event can be seen in an absolute construal as is the case of the rain simply falling in a neutral manner versus the energetic with Adrian falling suddenly, accidentally and unexpectedly:

- 50.a. *La lluvia (*se) cae* b. *Adrián se cayó*
'Rain falls' 'Adrian fell down'

Notice that the use of *se* in the absolute construal (50.a) is ungrammatical. Of importance is the fact that unexpectedness is an extra layer of energy profiling. In this type of construal the speaker's expectations are put in profile. Since the falling event is not seen as common or neutral Adrian's fall runs against the speaker's expectations. We have a force-dynamic construal of the event via subjectification. The event is energetic not only in that it happens suddenly but the counter-expectation construal makes it even more dynamic.

A further phenomenon to notice is the fact that the absolute event can actually involve some energy which actually may remain in the base. The case of *subir* 'go up' (51.a) and *ir* 'go' (52.a) illustrate this fact as they constitute continuous, on-going, absolute actions with a long traceable trajectory. This event type contrasts with a punctual event *irse* 'leave' in (52.b) or with a sudden and abrupt change *subirse* (51.b) which are said to be energetic:

- 51.a. Juan subió el Popocatepetl b. Juan se subió a la silla
'Juan went up the P. mountain' 'Juan got on the chair (jumping)'
52.a. Valeria fue al bar b. Valeria ya se fue (al bar)
'Valeria went to the bar' 'Valeria left (for the bar)'

The aspectual contrast is attested by the fact that *subir* can be elongated by adverbs like *poco a poco* 'bit by bit'; in contrast, in the SE+oblique middle construction the event takes place in one shot:

- 53.a. *Subió la montaña poco a poco*
'He went up the mountain bit by bit'
b. *Había un ratón y se subió a la silla de un salto*
'There was a mouse and he went up the chair in one jump'

We can see now that middle dynamic construal accounts naturally for the dynamic behavior of the SE+oblique construction. All the alleged antipassive cases conform to the middle dynamic construal which is needed in the system for independent reasons. No *ad hoc* derivation is needed to account for them. From (26) to (30) we showed a variety of examples that depicted dynamic constrictals. I have already underlined that in most SE+oblique examples there was a higher degree of subject involvement that contrasted with the neutral energy transmission of their transitive counterparts. Moreover, the event was consistently seen as dynamic since it depicted either punctual energetic actions or abrupt and sudden changes. The last set of middle examples (50–53) provided dynamic readings which match exactly the alleged antipassive cases.

One point must be clarified. In the antipassive analysis the case of *Montarse en la mula* 'Mount on the mule' is analyzed by Constenla as derived from the transitive *montar la mula* 'mount the mule'. This is a recurrent misleading analysis of motion verbs in Spanish. *Montar* lexicalizes both a transitive and an intransitive reading. Yet it behaves like other intransitive verbs of motion *subir* 'go up', *bajar* 'go down', *salir* 'go out' and so forth: *Montó/subió al segundo piso* 'He mounted/went up the second floor'. In fact the modal reading is normally coded with a prepositional verb *Montar a caballo* 'horse back riding'. The transitive use parallels the well known transitive derivation from intransitives verbs commonly found in verbs of motion as in *correr la carrera* 'run the race' and *correr el programa* 'run the program' where the path becomes object as affected by the subject's action. The transitive reading of affectedness *montar la mula* 'mount the mule' is quite distant from the subject motion meaning shared by the intransitive and the middle constrictals: *montar* 'mount on something' and *montarse* 'mount on something fast and energetically'.

Here are some additional energetic examples that must not be seen as antipassives. As expected from middle dynamic configuration the event is restricted to a specific point in time and is carried out energetically as in (54.a). Also the change-of-state or location is sudden and abrupt (54.b-c) or rapid and energetic (54.d), precisely the configuration found in middle Spanish constructions:

- 54.a *Juan se despidió de los visitantes con un fuerte abrazo*
 'Juan said good bye to the visitors with a strong hug.'
 b. *La caída de la bolsa hizo que el gobierno se desviara de la política económica actual*
 'The stocks drop made the government make a sudden change'
 c. *A Juan se le acabó la fuerza y se soltó de la cuerda*
 'John ran out of energy and he let go off the cable'
 d. *Cuando estaba a punto de atraparlo Carlos se evadió de la policía*
 'When they were about to get him Carlos escaped from the police'

The internal coherence of the data presented here argues against the antipassive interpretation of the problem and provides enough evidence in favour of the middle voice analysis.

5. Conclusions

The case of the SE+oblique construction provides an excellent opportunity to evaluate different analyses. I have shown that at the level of surface syntax the antipassive analysis provides a tenable description of the construction. It is the case that the presence of the clitic SE co-occurs with an overt prepositional phrase in most cases introduced by the preposition *de* 'of'. And it is no less true that in contrast with its transitive counterpart the construction represents a decrease in transitivity. Now it is not the case that all transitivity reduction must be bluntly matched with an antipassive construction. In deciding a construction type we would want to know about the effects of that construction with respect to the whole system in a specific language. We would also want to know whether the properties of that construction match its outstanding properties *vis a vis* those of related and unrelated languages. Crucially we would want to know about its functional load as much as the principles motivating its existence. This may be a requirement not particularly important for formal theories. Yet a cognitive approach to language emerges from that fundamental "content requirement" (Langacker 1987a) by which any

linguistic unit must have both phonological and semantic content. Thus a preposition does not show up to simply mark some type of demotion but reflects a particular conceptualization. Crucially from this view a construction exists as a consequence of a particular type of conceptualization being expressed in a specific manner. To the extent that such construction encodes adequately the type of meaning being conferred we may expect for it to become conventionally accepted as the proper way to express some concept. The notion of imagery as defined by Langacker (1987a, 1991) refers to the speaker's capacity to conceptualize an event in alternative ways. Imagery explains both individual variation and systemic organization in language. To the extent that the coding pattern of some image is shared by a linguistic community we may expect for it to become a regular expression in a language. It is also the case that the more transparent and the more motivated is the coding of an image the more it tends to be privileged over more opaque construals. This is not restricted to one language. Transparent patterns tend to appear language after language. Patterns with high cue cost show late in language acquisition and are not crosslinguistically recurrent. For high cost forms to become frequent they must also have high cue validity (Bates and MacWhinney 1989). It is interesting to observe that antipassives are not that frequent even in ergative languages where the construction is commonly found. Both Cooreman (1994) and Zavala's (1997) counts show very low productivity as compared to active, passive and inverse constructions. Its low frequency is probably due to the fact that the antipassive is a doubly marked representation. The default construction is one where the (thematic) subject is absolute and the representation of the agent is of secondary importance (it may be absent or marked for genitive, locative, etc.). From this basic form a transitive direct construction is obtained marking the agent as ergative. The antipassive is derived from this marked construction to encode situations where the object is distanced from the Agent's sphere for interaction. Energy transmission and affectedness are thus reduced. I have shown that Spanish not only does not conform to the coding restrictions of antipassives but also exhibits the opposite restrictions (high degree of object individuation, perfective aspect). Moreover the SE+oblique construction, as opposed to the antipassive is astonishingly frequent. Crucially the functional load of the construction is totally different. While antipassives designate a decrease in affectedness and dynamism the SE+oblique construction pairs up with middle constructions in depicting a high degree of dynamism: the event is punctual or sudden and the subject's involvement in the event is even higher than in the plain transitive construction.

Looking at the whole system, the antipassive interpretation simply lists a variety of disperse constructions with no internal coherence. In contrast, the

middle analysis provides an account needed for the language on independent grounds. As already defined, middle voice constructions designate a variety of events that remain in the subject's dominion. This has two opposite effects in a language which are represented in the following network of schemas. In the transitive prototype (Figure 1') we have the classical action chain (Langacker 1991) where the subject volitionally transmits energy to the object. From this construal the middle reduces the degree of subject control over the object. This is particularly the case of verbs of cognition: *Recordar a María* 'Remember María' (volitionally and in detail) > *Acordarse de María* 'Remember María' (María comes to mind with less precision). This is represented in Figure 2' where the subject simply has contact with some mental object instead of actually being able to mentally control it and manipulate it as is the case of Figure 1'. Now the middle more commonly depicts the opposite reading where the degree subject involvement is higher than in the plain transitive construction. This can take place in several forms, either the experiencer takes a more agentive representation changing from dative to nominative (*A Juan los niños le molestan* 'Children bother Juan' > *Juan se molesta con los niños* 'Juan gets bothered by children') or an already nominative agentive subject is even more energetic in his mental and emotional experience (*Juan compadece a los muchachos* 'Juan feels for the young men' *Juan se compadece de los muchachos* 'Juan empathizes with the young men'). Figure 7 represents the latter example where the energy is internally projected in the subject (the black arrow inside the circle) as some external element constitutes the source prompting his mental/emotional activity (the dotted arrow from the source to the agent). There is another source for the dynamic construction: from the absolute construal as best represented by intransitive thematic constructions (Figure 6), the middle construction makes the event energetic; motion is not seen as neutral movement *subir* 'go up' but is conceptualized as rapid or even sudden *treparse* 'get on something fast'. Figure 8 represents the case of *desviarse* 'deviate' where the middle construction focuses on the actual point in which the change of trajectory takes place. For expository purposes I have simplified the representation of the Spanish middle system. The graphic representation shows that the middle system constitutes an area in between two polar extremes active direct transitive constructions and absolute intransitive events. From one extreme the Spanish middle construction may diminish the energy profiling as it departs from the transitive prototype. Yet it may also depict an increase in

² The prefix change form *re-* to *a-* is a historical fact that matches the construal change. In other verbs no prefix change is observed in the same type of construal change. See for example the contrast between *olvidar* and *obvidarse* in (32).

energy input as the subject augments his/her degree of involvement in the event. Also from the intransitive pole the middle imposes a dynamic reading where the subject's motion is seen as punctual, rapid and even sudden. The middle is literally in the middle of the voice continuum.

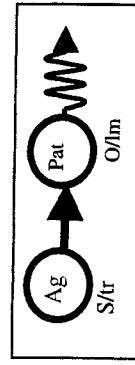


Fig. 1'. Active/direct

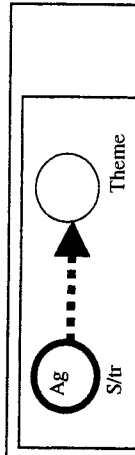


Fig. 2'. Middle low control

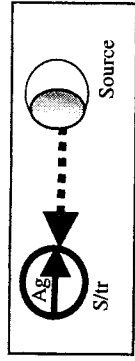


Fig. 7. Middle involvement increase

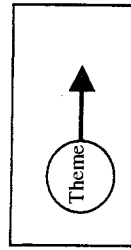


Fig. 6. Absolute construal

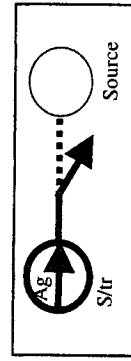


Fig. 8. Media involvement increase

While the notion of "imagery" refers to alternative ways to construe an event, image formation also refers to the internal coherence that a variety of construals hold for the system as a whole. While surface syntax may be used to detect problems in coding patterns we need systemic imagery to bring together several constructions constituting one complex conceptual unit with a high degree of motivation. The case of the middle Spanish conforms to that systemic representation.

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