

Conceptual distance and transitivity increase in Spanish reflexives

RICARDO MALDONADO

*Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
and Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro*

1. The problem

Although impersonal, passive-like and true reflexive constructions in Romance have been analyzed from a variety of perspectives with different degrees of success, the study of the wide variety of remaining reflexively-marked constructions is undoubtedly underrepresented in linguistic analysis. One important set of constructions not completely analyzed in current approaches are MIDDLE INDIRECT CONSTRUCTIONS, i.e. *se*-marked, nonreflexive transitive constructions. The lack of distinction between reflexive and middle constructions in current approaches and the almost exclusive consideration of examples like (1) give the misleading image that this construction type is restricted to cases in which the use of the clitic *se* in Spanish can only impose a COMPLETIVE interpretation (Strozer 1976; Arce 1989; Nishida 1994), which is to be derived in various ways from an indirect reflexive clitic. Completives are constructions in which the *se* marker highlights the maximal exploitation of the object by the clausal subject. Problematic for these accounts is the existence of constructions exemplified in (2) where the reading is not complete:

- (1) *Adrián se leía el periódico de una sentada.*
'Adrian would read the paper in one sitting'.
- (2) *Tongolele se bailó una rumba inolvidable.*
'Tongolele danced an unforgettable rumba'.

Examples like (2) have been analyzed as FULL INVOLVEMENT CONSTRUCTIONS (Maldonado 1992) where *se* marks a maximal degree of subject participation in the execution of the action designated by the verb. That the subject's involvement is

This is an offprint from:

Zygmunt Frajzyngier and Traci S. Curl (eds)
Reflexives.

Forms and functions.

John Benjamins Publishing Company
Amsterdam/Philadelphia
2000

(Published as Vol. 40 of the series

TYPOLOGICAL STUDIES IN LANGUAGE, ISSN 0167-7373)

ISBN 90 272 2939 2 (Eur.) / 1 55619 653 9 (U.S.) (Hb.)

© 2000 – John Benjamins B.V.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form,

by print, photoprint, microfilm or any other means, without written

permission from the publisher.

maximal can be clearly seen from the fact that using adverbials like *sin mayor interés* 'Without much interest' render an ungrammatical output:

- (3) **Tongolele se bailó una rumba sin mayor interés.*
'Tongolele danced a rumba without much interest.'

Not only have REFLEXIVELY MARKED TRANSITIVES been reduced to completives in previous analyses, they also have been seen as exceptional cases to be marked in the lexicon to compose a list of verbs which will be 'inserted in the syntax' to obtain the desired construction (Nishida 1994). While the mechanism itself may produce the correct output, the general view of the phenomenon is too narrow. It fails to explain how full involvement constructions develop, how they relate to completives, how other meanings can be found in reflexively-marked transitive constructions, or what the syntactic/semantic conditions are for so called 'reflexive markers' to interact with transitive constructions. This approach is, in sum, too limited to capture important generalizations regarding the structure of reflexively-marked transitive constructions in general.

While Maldonado's (1992) account of full involvement constructions as evolving from completives may be correct, it is again too limited to show how the whole system is organized. One obvious limitation of the approach is that the use of *se* is not limited to two meanings but in fact, as can be seen in (4), it corresponds to at least four closely-related construction types:

- | | | |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (4) a. | <i>Adrián se puso el sombrero.</i> | Location |
| | 'Adrián put on the hat'. | |
| b. | <i>Adrián se consiguió un empleo maravilloso.</i> | Benefactive |
| | 'Adrián got a marvelous job'. | |
| c. | <i>Adrián se leía el periódico de una sentada.</i> | Completive |
| | 'Adrián used to read the paper in one sitting'. | (Nishida SE _q) |
| d. | <i>Tongolele se bailó una rumba inolvidable.</i> | Full involvement |
| | 'Tongolele danced an unforgettable rumba'. | |

In the case of grooming activities (4a), the clitic *se* highlights the location of the body part that the subject interacts with. Yet the *se* marker may also impose a benefactive as well as a completive and a full involvement interpretation. One of the goals of this paper is to establish the conditions under which these readings are obtained.

A common strategy in current approaches to the multiplicity of functions of reflexively marked constructions is to propose the existence of a variety of *se* markers. While some distinctions may be insightful,² others (SPURIOUS *se*, ILLOGICAL *se*) only reflect the complexity of the problem, while others *se*, (a semipassive,

Campos 1989), *se*_q (a quantified event Nishida 1994), may reflect the internal needs of a specific theory to account for certain facts about a language. The conclusion to be drawn from the multiplication of *se* forms is that there may be a wild polysemy which we should limit ourselves to list as idiosyncratic. This terminological ramification is shared not only by traditional linguists but also by current functional and formal approaches. While polysemy exists, I will defend the claim that all the meanings to be found correspond to the same basic pattern which in turn highlights specific semantic properties of the verb type marked by *se*.

In this paper I will reject the idea that in all the readings found in (4) there are different types of *se* forms. I will in fact claim that there are two basic schemata underlying the behavior of the clitic *se* with transitive constructions: a reflexive and a middle *se*. I will suggest that the latter highlights the core semantic properties of the verb with which it combines to derive a variety of intensified readings.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2 some basic notions of Cognitive Grammar and of the contrast between reflexives and middles are presented. In Section 3, the general claim in which *se* implies a transitivity decrease is rejected with arguments that support an interpretation of transitivity increase. In Section 4, the status of *se* as an aspectual marker is rejected to propose a general schema of *se* as a morpheme that focuses on the pivotal moment of change that thus intensifies the core meaning of the event. Section 5 is devoted to analyze benefactive constructions; Section 6 addresses the issue of completives, Section 7 accounts for full involvement constructions, and Section 7.1 extends the analysis to transitive constructions with affected objects. In the conclusion, I show how the basic pattern sketched in i-iii accounts for all the data and gives a general framework to capture the internal basic configuration of reflexively-marked transitive constructions.

2. Basic Notions

In order to defend a general middle schema of *se* with transitive constructions, some basic notions must be introduced. I will address in two separate sections some basic principles of the framework leading to the analysis and the fundamental distinction between reflexive and middle constructions.

2.1. Cognitive Grammar

Throughout this paper I will make efforts for the analysis to be understood in a theoretically neutral manner. In order to facilitate the reading, however, some aspects of the philosophy-of Cognitive Grammar need to be introduced. The grammar of a language can be characterized as a structured inventory of conventional linguistic

units whose degree of automatization depends on how entrenched they are in the cognitive organization of a specific language. A pivotal claim of cognitive grammar is that "linguistic expressions and grammatical constructions embody CONVENTIONAL IMAGERY, which constitutes an essential aspect of their semantic value. In choosing a particular expression or construction, a speaker construes the conceived situation in a certain way, i.e., He selects a particular image (from a range of alternatives) to structure its conceptual content for expressive purposes" (Langacker 1988:7). Alternative constructions therefore impose contrasting images of the conceived situation. The meaning of an expression includes both the knowledge system it evokes when the expression is activated (the various cognitive domains), as well as the particular CONSTRUCTUAL the conceptualizer imposes on a scene.

One particular dimension of construal concerns the conceptualizer's ability to impose a PROFILE on a BASE, which derives the semantic value of a linguistic expression. The base consists of those facets of cognitive domains that are directly relevant to the expression, hence necessarily accessed when the expression is used. The profile is a subregion within the base. It is that subregion that the expression designates and thus makes prominent within the base. In a specific sentence, the profile imposed on the base is a consequence of the particular way in which the conceptualizer construes the scene, and not an inherent property of the scene. According to the nature of their profile, the entities designated by linguistic expressions provide a semantic characterization as grammatical categories. They are divided into THINGS and RELATIONS. Things "represent a region in some domain" (Langacker 1987a: 189), regions are being defined as a set of interconnected entities. "Relations profile the interconnections between two or more conceived entities" Langacker (1987b: 198). Among the salient participants in a relation is the TRAJECTOR which stands out as the primary figure within the profiled relationship and is construed as the element being located, evaluated, or described. At the clausal level the trajector is often recognized as the subject of the clause. The second most prominent participant in the clause is the LANDMARK and it is commonly equated with the direct object. The indirect object is thus defined as a secondary landmark which occupies a third degree of prominence in the clause.

A prototypical transitive construction is characterized as an action chain where the subject transfers some energy to the object participant inducing some change of state or location in it. In ditransitive constructions, the energy transmission involves relocating, in a concrete or an abstract manner, some object from the DOMINION of the subject participant to that of the receiver. From Langacker (1991) I take the notion of dominion as the virtual area in which some participant has mental or physical access to manipulate, control or have mental contact with a set of objects located within it. In a possessive relationship, for example, the object is possessed as long as it remains within the possessor's concrete or abstract dominion. In most

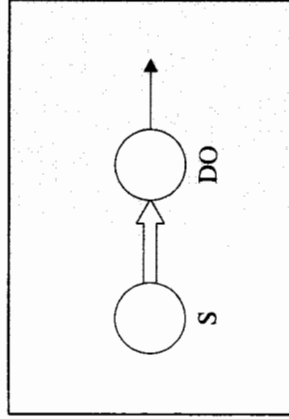


Figure 1. Direct object

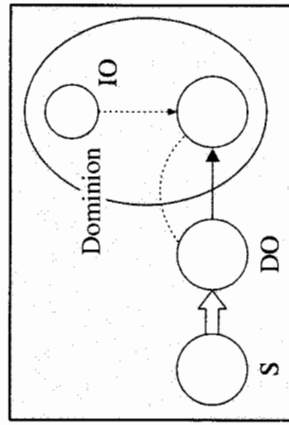


Figure 2. Indirect object

ditransitive constructions the object ends in the indirect object's dominion. The following are mnemonic representations of these constructions. To simplify the diagrams I only display the dominion of non-subject participants (see Figures 1 and 2; Circle=participant; Big oval=participant's dominion; Wide arrow=energy transmission; Narrow arrow=object change of state or location; Dotted arrow=experiencer's mental contact with object; Dotted arc=same participant.

A grammatical construction is a composite structure which specifies how two or more component expressions can be integrated to form a unit of greater complexity. Grammatical marking is seen as determined by cognitive strategies that impose the degree of prominence of different components of the event. Prominence is said to respond to the specific communicative needs of the conceptualizer to communicate specific messages in particular contexts.

2.2. Reflexive and Middle Constructions

There is a basic contrast between reflexive and middle *se*. Reflexives correspond to cases where the subject and the coreferential (in)direct object can be differentiated in the event although they make reference to the same entity in the real world. Cases of split representation of the participant like those involving mental spaces (Lauconnier 1985) are evident reflexive examples. On the other hand, middles involve a low degree of separateness among participants and consequently a low degree of event elaboration (Kemmer 1992; Maldonado 1992). The following examples illustrate the contrast:

- (5) a. *Se imaginó bailando con Tongolele.* Reflexive
 'He imagined himself dancing with Tongolele'.
 b. *Se imagina que Tongolele irá a la fiesta.* Middle
 'He thinks that Tongolele will go to the party'.

In (5a) the participant's self-image in a scene dancing with *Tongolele* takes place in a mental space which differs from the speech event. The subject of *IMAGINE* is distinguished from the subject of *DANCE*. In contrast the clitic *se* in (5b) simply marks some mental image of *Tongolele* in a scene in which the conceptualizer is not present at all; there is thus no split self-representation. As can be seen in (6), the indirect reflexive clitic *se* in (6b) corresponds to the indirect object clitic *le* of (6a) while the middle *se* marker in (6c) has no argumental counterpart:

- (6) a. *Alcira le enviaba cartas a su amor platónico.*
'Alcira used to send letters to her platonic love'.
- b. *Era tal su soledad que Alcira se enviaba cartas a sí misma.*
'Alcira's loneliness was such that she would send letters to herself'.
- c. *Alcira se conoce cada lugar.*
'Alcira knows some (great) places'.

The contrast between indirect, indirect reflexive, and indirect middle constructions is illustrated in Figures 3, 4, and 5 (circle = participant, big oval = participant's dominion, wide arrow = subject's action, narrow arrow = object change of location, dotted arrow = experiencer's mental contact with object, dotted arcs = same participant). In the indirect object construction the subject and the recipient participants are distinct. In the indirect reflexive construction these differentiated participants are equated with the same referent (the dotted arc connecting the subject and the indirect object). In the middle construction only an undifferentiated participant is present.

There is a correlation between the degree of participant differentiation and the degree of event elaboration (Kemmer 1992). Transitive constructions are higher in the scale of elaboration than reflexives, while middles are even lower on that scale. In Figure 3, the energy transfer from subject to object can be conceptually scanned. In Figure 4, the reflexive form is represented by the dotted arc connecting the subject and the indirect object. It designates that the energy transferred involves two

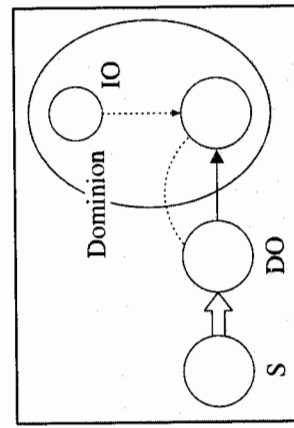


Figure 3. Indirect object

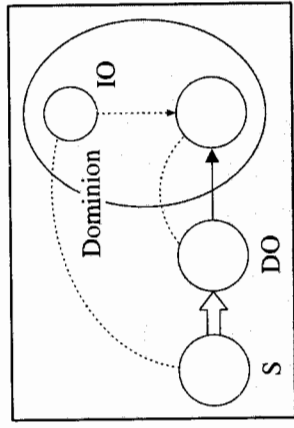


Figure 4. Indirect reflexive

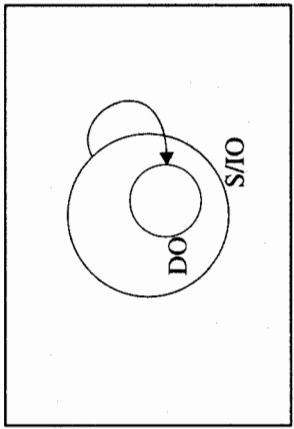


Figure 5. Indirect middle

participants with the same referent. Now in Figure 5, the event is processed in a gestaltic manner, for it needs not be scanned from the action of the agent to the change of state imposed on the recipient. Since in middle constructions there are no differentiated participants, the energy transfer cannot be tracked down. The conceptualization is thus reduced to the observable change of state designated by the verb. As I have claimed elsewhere (Maldonado 1992, 1999), the middle marker's core function is to focus on the event's crucial moment of change.

The notion of focus in Cognitive Grammar corresponds to a cognitive selection process where some portion of the event is chosen to receive a maximal prominence status letting the rest of the information of the event be present in a less prominent manner. In contrast with Foley and Van Valin (1984) and Lambrecht (1994), this definition is not restricted to a selection of the focal participants of a clause, it applies to the whole event so that the most informative part of the designated process can be selected as the main figure. This selection process can highlight not only participants but also some part of the process. I suggest that the middle *se* marker focuses on the core information designated by the verb. With transitive verbs it focuses on the interaction established between subject and object, while in intransitive clauses the focus is established on the most informative part of the process in which the subject participates. This explains why *se* commonly marks inchoative and inceptive aspectual meanings. Verbs of motion constitute transparent examples to observe the focusing effects of the middle clitic *se*. Consider the contrast between *ir* 'go' and *irse* 'leave':³

- (7) a. *Tachún fue a la casa.*
'Tachún went home'.
- b. **Tachún fue.*
'Tachún went'.

- (8) a. *Tachún se fue a la casa.*
 'Tachún left for home'.
 b. *Tachún se fue.*
 'Tachún left'.

The *se* marker focuses on the source of the path allowing for the goal to be implied as contextual information. Yet without *se*, the full trajectory is most prominent and must be overtly expressed, as can be seen from the fact that deleting *a la casa* 'to the house' leads to the ungrammatical output exemplified in (7b). The fact that this example is only acceptable in elliptic constructions where the goal has already been set in discourse shows that the full trajectory must always be considered without the *se* marker.

As previously stated ditransitive constructions involve a relocation of the object from the dominion of the subject to that of the object. I claim that in middle *se*-marked transitive constructions the attention will be focused on the semantic core of the verb where an undifferentiated and yet complex participant with two roles is involved in the designated process. Thus in verbs of transmission where an object is relocated from a source dominion to a target dominion the end point of the path and the role of the receiver will have maximal prominence status. The specific meaning of the middle construction will be determined by the semantic verbal class i.e., by the type of transmission which the *se* clitic marks.

Rather than permitting the number of *se* middle clitics multiply, I will propose a basic middle schema for all transitive verbs which will instantiate specific readings. The schema will respond to the following generalizations:⁴

- (i) There is only one *se* middle marker whose function is to signal a locus not differentiated from the subject and to profile the semantic core of the verb.
 (ii) The meanings of a *se* middle construction are determined by the degree of subject-object conceptual proximity in an event and by the type of interaction designated by the verb.
 (iii) In all cases, middle *se* profiles the core of the interaction designated by the verb. Thus the degree of transitivity of the construction as a whole is higher than in a plain transitive construction.

I assume a Cognitive Grammar approach to transitivity whereby a prototypical transitive event can be characterized as having two entities which are usually conceived of as being asymmetrically related as they are involved in some activity. The interaction between them is unidirectional; because there is movement and effect, contact between the two entities is presumed to take place with the second entity, (the LANDMARK), being directly affected by the contact instigated by the first (the TRAJECTOR). This view of transitivity not only incorporates the multifactorial ap-

proach initiated by Hopper and Thompson (1980) where telicity, aspect, object individuation, subject agency among other factors combine to obtain different degrees of transitive constructions, it also incorporates the way the event is conceptualized by the speaker. The degree to which the object is affected by the subject's action may vary depending on how deliberate the action is carried out, how telic or perfective the verb is, how much of the object is actually contacted by the subject's action or whether the result imposes some benefit on some profiled participant. I will show that as the middle marker *se* focuses on the core of the verb, its original transitive properties will be highlighted and intensified. The specific realm of transitivity will be determined by the semantic properties of the verb.

There are several hypotheses to defend in this paper. First, I will defend the idea that the use of *se* with transitive constructions increases the transitivity of the event. Second, against recent proposals in which it has been suggested that the clitic *se* has extended from a reflexive to an aspectual marker, I will suggest that the aspectual properties of *se* emerge from the focusing function of the middle marker which develops from its characteristic low degree of participant differentiation. Third, I will propose that the main function of the *se* marker is to highlight and consequently to intensify the core properties of the verb. Rather than being an aspectual marker, the clitic *se* simply underlines the aspectual properties of the verb. Similarly, the array of meanings to encounter in the four construction types shown in (4) will follow naturally from the focusing function of the middle clitic.

3. Transitivity decrease/increase

Common to most contemporary approaches to reflexives is the idea that *se* reduces the transitivity of the clause. An argument of the verb is either deleted, (Rosen 1989; Manzini 1986; Grimshaw 1982) or absorbed (Wherli 1986). Passives (9b) involve the absorption of the subject while reflexive *se* (10b) absorbs the object.⁵

- (9) a. *Adrián abrió la ventana.*
 'Adrian opened the window'.
 b. *Se abrió la ventana.*
 'The window was opened'.
 (10) a. *Adrián vio a Valeria en la foto.*
 'Adrian saw Valeria in the picture'.
 b. *Adrián se vio en el espejo.*
 'Adrian saw himself in the mirror'.

Argument loss is also claimed by most analyses to account for reflexively-marked

transitive constructions: *se* is claimed to absorb the indirect object, as can be seen from the contrast in (11):

- (11) a. *Adrián le puso el sombrero a Valeria.*
 'Adrian put the hat on Valeria'.
 b. *Adrián se puso el sombrero.*
 'Adrian put the hat on'.

This analysis to reflexively marked transitive constructions has been rejected from a variety of perspectives. Seminal work by García (1975) pointed out that given the low deixis of causatives and the high deixis of datives, the indirect Romance *se* marker—my middle *se* marker⁶—implied a transitivity increase which rendered different types of intensified processes. Arce (1989) called examples like (1) hypertransitives while Maldonado (1992) and Nishida (1994) have given arguments showing that in these constructions there is no argument loss. It can be seen from (12) that no argument has been deleted. While the presence of the *se* marker is obligatory in (12a), it is optional in (12b–d):

- (12) a. **Adrián puso el sombrero.* (from (4a))
 'Adrian put the hat on'.
 b. *Adrián consiguió un empleo maravilloso.* (from (4b))
 'Adrian got a marvelous job'.
 c. *Adrián leía el periódico de una sentada.* (from (4c))
 'Adrian used to read the whole paper in one sitting'.
 d. *Tongolele bailó una rumba inolvidable.* (from (4d))
 'Tongolele danced an unforgettable rumba'.

Moreover, as has been pointed out in several analyses (García 1975; Maldonado 1992; Nishida 1994), there is a contrast between the value of *se* in clear reflexive situations, and what I have called middle *se* marked transitive constructions. It can be seen from (13b) that the clitic *se* is the counterpart of the indirect object clitic *le* and that it designates an indirect reflexive reading. On the other hand in (13c), *se* imposes a completive middle reading whose function does not correspond to the value of *le* in (13a):

- (13) a. *Adrián le leyó una historia a Valeria.*
 'Adrian read a story to Valeria'. Reflexive
 b. *Adrián se leyó una historia a sí mismo.*
 'Adrián read a story to himself'. Completive
 c. *Adrián se leyó una historia.*
 'Adrián read a whole story'.

Exactly the same situation holds for the full involvement reading. While pragmati-

cally odd, the reflexive marker in (14b) corresponds to the indirect object clitic *le*, yet these two are to be distinguished from the *se* marker that highlights an increased degree of subject involvement in (14c):

- (14) a. *Tongolele le bailó una rumba a su amante.*
 'Tongolele danced a rumba for her lover'. Reflexive
 b. *Tongolele se bailó una rumba.*
 'Tongolele danced a rumba for herself'. Full involvement
 c. *Tongolele se bailó una rumba inolvidable.*
 'Tongolele danced an unforgettable rumba'.

A third piece of evidence is that benefactives, completives and full involvement constructions do not correspond to argument loss reflexives in the use of the emphatic phrase *a sí mismo* 'to himself'. Notice that while the indirect reflexive in (15a) can take the emphatic phrase, the middle constructions lead to ungrammatical results.

- (15) a. *Era tal su soledad que Alcira se enviaba cartas a sí misma.*
 'Alcira's loneliness was such that she would send letters to herself'.
 b. **Juan se ha encontrado a sí mismo una buena colocación.*
 'Juan has found himself a good position'.
 c. **Se leyó a sí mismo la novela.*
 'He read himself the novel'.
 d. **Se bailó a sí misma una rumba.*
 'Tongolele danced a rumba'.

In examples (15b–d) the only grammatical reading to be obtained would be an indirect reflexive with a split self representation, which is commonly used for contrastive purposes. The examples in (16) are appropriate for that particular reading:

- (16) a. *Juan se ha encontrado a sí mismo, no a su hermano una buena colocación.*
 'Juan has found for himself not for his brother a good position'.
 b. *Se leyó a sí mismo, no a su hermano, una novela sensacional.*
 'He read a sensational novel to himself, not to his brother'.
 c. *Se bailó a sí misma, no a su amante, una rumba inolvidable.*
 'She danced an unforgettable rumba for herself, not for her lover'.

What these arguments show is that benefactive, completive and full involvement constructions are not reflexives, instead they correspond to middle transitive constructions in which *se* selects some portion of the event to be highlighted and intensified. The focusing effects of middle *se* are best attested in the presence of features

that characterize highly transitive constructions. The high degree of transitivity of middle *se* transitive constructions has already been acknowledged in the current literature (completives, Strozer 1976; hypertransitives, Arce 1989; quantized *se*; Nishida 1994). Yet the analysis has in most cases been restricted to structural facts. Strozer and Arce argue for the requirement for the direct object to be accompanied by a determiner. While the observation is, in general terms, correct, it is insufficient to account for cases of unbounded objects, as evidenced by the following:

- (17) a. *Los alumnos se saben la canción.*
 'The students know the song [by heart]'.
 b. **Los alumnos se saben el español.*
 'The students know Spanish [by heart]'.

Nishida has observed that inherently telic transitive verbs in combination with QUANTIZED direct objects always yield a telic expression. Following Krifka (1989), he further suggests that there must be a correlation between the uniqueness of the quantized object and the aspectual property of the verbal predicate. The uniqueness of the object is thus mapped to the perfectiveness of the event. Only under those conditions can *se* be used. Although he highlights very important properties of the construction Nishida, however, misses a crucial point. In his critique of Arce's analysis, he proposes that in sentences like (18):

- (18) *Juan se conoce bien la poesía española.*
 a. 'John knows well the Spanish poem'.
 b. *'John knows Spanish poetry well'.
 (Nishida)

only the reading referring to some specific poem is correct. The collective reference to the Spanish poetry is ruled out, according to Nishida, because instead of being quantized it makes a CUMULATIVE reference (Quine 1960). Yet it must be stressed that both readings are correct. Example (18b) is as flawless as (19):

- (19) *Borges se sabía al dedillo la literatura fantástica.*
 'Borges knew by heart [like the palm of his hand] fantasy literature'.

The problem is best analyzed in terms of BOUNDEDNESS (Langacker 1987b). A noun was defined as a region in some domain. A bounded noun is a region whose concrete or abstract boundaries are perceptible in a specific event. I propose that both the object and the event must be bounded for *se* to apply. Crucial to the proper interpretation of (18b) and (19) is for the object to be seen as a bounded unit regardless of how vast or abstract the object may be. If one can impose boundaries on the Spanish literature to be treated as a unit, there is no restriction for it to take a middle *se* completive marker. This explains why the *Spanish language*, in (17b), music in general, and other unbounded elements do not meet the requirements of the completive construction.

The same notion explains the incapability for this construction to have sentential objects, as can be seen from (20b):

- (20) a. *Aprendió a leer a los tres años.*
 'He learned to read when he was three years old'.
 b. **Se aprendió a leer a los tres años.*
 'He learned to read when he was three years old'.

Boundedness predicts that only count, not mass nouns, will produce the correct output. Indeed, this can be seen from the following contrast:

- (21) a. *Platero acababa de beberse dos cubos de agua.* (Jiménez: 82)
 'Platero has just drunk two buckets of water'.
 b. **Platero acababa de beberse cubos de agua.*
 'Platero has just drunk buckets of water'.

Likewise, one can expect that the *se* construction will be sensitive to the instance/type contrast. We can see that this is the case not only for concrete but also for abstract objects. The (a)-examples contain instances while the ungrammatical output in (b) are constructed with their corresponding types:

- (22) a. *Gabriela, no te vamos a dar pastel hasta que te comas la carne.*
 'Gabriela, we are not going to give you cake until you eat up [all] your meat'.
 b. **Gabriela, no te vamos a dar pastel hasta que te comas carne.*
 'Gabriela, we are not going to give you cake until you eat up meat'.
 (23) a. *Es un maestro que se capta la voluntad de los alumnos en un instante.* (Moliner)
 'He is a teacher that captures the students' will in an instant'.
 b. **Es un maestro que se capta voluntad de los alumnos.*
 'He is a teacher that captures the students' will in an instant'.

The first set of arguments show that the *se* marker in reflexively marked transitive constructions does not correspond to an argument of the verb and thus is not a reflexive marker. Not only its behavior but its meanings correspond to the function of a middle marker. Clearly, the *se* marker use with count, instantiated and bounded nouns and its rejection of mass, type, unbounded and sentential objects suggest a construction with the highest degree of transitivity. The term hypertransitive, suggested by Arce, to identify this construction type is undoubtedly adequate.

4. Linguistic proximity and the status of *se*

The question regarding the status of the *se* marker is at issue now. There seems to be agreement in previous analyses in considering *se* as a marker of completive ac-

tions. Arce suggests that by enhancing the patient quality of the direct object and making it a "complete bearer of the verbal action" (1989: 295), the *se* marker shifts to an aspectual marker for completive actions. Nishida (1994) considers that *se_q* is also an aspectual marker that applies mainly to accomplishments. *Se_q* marks the verb in the lexicon and the verb so marked is inserted into the tree structure as a new unit [*se*+verb]. Common to both analyses is the fact that the group of verbs that enter the construction is a restricted set that most typically corresponds to verbs of consumption. Interestingly enough, Arce observes that the class of hypertransitive verbs has extended to some verbs of motion, yet no account is offered for that group. Nishida admits that in his data there are not only accomplishments—which fully correspond to his telic verbs—but also some achievements. Yet, since accomplishments are predominant, other verb types are simply left aside. Nishida's classification of verbs is problematic for it includes *se* constructions that have no relationship whatsoever with the expected completive reading.⁷ Moreover, a closer look at the verb classes that can take *se* reveals that they pertain to a class that the Nishida calls "creating an abstract performance object": EXPERIENCER PERFORMANCE: *aguantarse una ópera* 'put up listening an opera', *escucharse una sinfonía* 'listen to a [whole] symphony' AGENT PERFORMANCE: *bailarse un tango* 'dance a tango', *cantarse una canción*, 'sing a song' Allegedly, the acceptance rate was rather low in all dialects so Nishida did not feel the need to account for them. NOW EXPERIENCER PERFORMANCE had a rate of 60–80 per cent while AGENT PERFORMANCE rated between 40–60 per cent. What these numbers show is that there is a significant amount of speakers whose use of *se* is not accounted for by that analysis. The frequency of use is too high to accept the possibility of disqualifying them as mere errors or performance deviations. I should stress that in Mexican Spanish these examples are not problematic, and that speakers of other dialects either take them as correct or see them as novel but not ungrammatical. These reactions, I believe, coincide with Nishida's results. But even if they were marginal, the question remains as to what type of formulation we would need to account for novel uses like these in the language. The question, I believe, is on what grounds are speakers allowing themselves to bring new expressions into an old construction? In other words, if Arce is right in identifying an extended use of *se* to motion verbs, we still need to explain the cognitive connections that allow such a derived pattern.

Two facts must be stressed about previous approaches. First, the presence of verbs of motion or "agent performance" in the construction is acknowledged but not accounted for. Second, while full involvement constructions are left aside, the benefactive use of *se* is simply not addressed, most probably because it has traditionally been thought of as belonging to a different arena. The need for an alternative approach that gives a unified account of intensified benefactives, completives and full involvement construction is unquestionable.

I suggest that the focusing function of *se* accounts for all the data. In previous work (Maldonado 1992, 1999), I have suggested that there is a basic schema of the middle clitic *se* on which attention is being focused regarding the pivotal moment of change. It is not surprising then that in the clitic *se*, different aspectual perfective properties can be recognized. The focusing properties of *se* account for a wide variety of constructions. So-called "reflexive passives": *se resolvió el problema* 'the problem got solved', spontaneous events: *se reventó el globo* 'the balloon popped', dynamic situations: *se subió a la mesa* 'He got/jumped on the table', unexpected events: *se cayó* 'he fell down' and so forth, correspond to that basic construction. Reflexively marked transitive constructions only differ from other middle constructions in one respect: in non-transitive middles a participant or some facet of the event may be downplayed to allow the terminal part of the event to be most prominent; while in reflexively-marked transitive constructions the focalizing function of the clitic *se* simply profiles the nuclear meaning of the verb without "branching" other components of the event. Thus, if the verb portrays some type of benefaction, the clitic *se* will give it maximal prominence. The same will be true for consumption, execution or subject involvement. In all cases the core property of the verb will be highlighted in a considerable manner. In what follows, I will give specific details of how the focusing function applies to different classes of transitive verbs.

As a first step, I will reintroduce, with a broader interpretation, Arce's observation by which verbs that participate in reflexively marked transitive constructions "have an incorporative sense". A closer look at the three main meanings at task, (benefactive, completive and full involvement constructions), will show they all have the property of bringing the direct object into the subject's dominion or keeping it within its boundaries for interaction. All the verbs in question are seen as having an incorporative sense. This property will set the basic conditions for *se* to apply as a focalizer of some portion of an event. The meanings to be obtained thereof will be determined by the semantic properties of each verb class. I will address each group in a separate manner.

5. Focalized Benefactives

The verbs in this class undoubtedly share an incorporative meaning (*atraer* 'attract', *capturar* 'capture', *ahorrar* 'save', *reservar* 'reserve', *ganar la lotería* 'win the lottery') either bringing in the object or impeding it from leaving the subject's dominion. Notice from the following examples that the student's will and the job are brought into the dominion for the subject's interests. The relocation of the object shows the invited inference that the event is beneficial for the subject. The use of the

clitic *se* in the b-examples does nothing more than focalize the beneficial inference implied by the verb:

- (24) a. *La maestra captó la voluntad de los alumnos.*
 'The teacher captured the student's good will'.
 b. *Es un maestro que se capta la voluntad de los alumnos.* (Moliner)
 'He is a teacher that captures [for himself] the student's good will'.

- (25) a. *Consiguió un empleo en un banco.*
 'He got a job in a bank'.
 b. *Se consiguió un empleo a sólo dos cuadras de su casa.*⁸
 'He got himself a job only two blocks away from home'.

For events that presuppose an intense experience, the use of *se* is the default. Although its absence is pragmatically awkward, it is not ungrammatical, as can be seen from the contrast in (26):

- (26) a. *Valeria se ganó la lotería.*
 'Valeria won the lottery'.
 b. *??Valeria ganó la lotería.*
 'Valeria won the lottery'.

Needless to say, if the event runs against the subject's interest, the clitic *se* will profile its negative effects:

- (27) *Con esa conducta se ganó una buena paliza.*
 'With such behavior, he got a good spanking'.

Crucial to this schema is the fact that the focalized benefactive effects are determined by the degree of proximity established between subject and object. The more inherent the relationship between them is the more the *se* marker is required. The precise details of this phenomenon are beyond the limits of this paper, however I can still hint at some obvious points. The lack of a *se* marker in (28a) correlates with the fact that the folk conceptualization of time has everything but a permanent presence. The benefaction of not wasting time can in fact be profiled by *se* as in (28b), but the crucial fact is that the marginality of (28d) is determined by the absence of the *se* marker in a construction where subject and object have an inherent possessive relationship:

- (28) a. *Como le habló por teléfono en lugar de ir a verlo, ahorró mucho tiempo.*
 'Since he called him over the phone, he saved a lot of time'.
 b. *Como le habló por teléfono en lugar de ir a verlo, se ahorró mucho tiempo.*
 'Since he called him over the phone, he saved himself a lot of time'.

- c. *Ahórrase el esfuerzo de ir a pagar a la oficina; mande su pago por correo.*
 'Save yourself the effort of going to pay to the office; mail your payment'.
 d. *??Ahorre el esfuerzo de ir a pagar a la oficina; mande su pago por correo.*
 'Save yourself the effort of going to pay to the office; mail your payment'.

Even more striking are verbs that not only have the object within the subject's dominion but also exclude the interaction of other potential participants. For this verb class, the use of the clitic *se* is mandatory, as can be seen from the contrastive examples in (29). In Spanish one can reserve a table without *se*, but reserving one's rights draws a strong subject-object link that must be underlined by the clitic *se*:

- (29) a. *Reservé mesa para cuatro personas.*
 'I reserved a table for four'.
 b. *Nos reservamos el derecho de admisión.*
 'We reserve ourselves the right of admission'.
 c. **Reservamos el derecho de admisión.*
 'We reserve ourselves the right of admission'.

The bene-/male-factive reading imposed by the predicate in all these cases is stressed by the clitic *se* as it focalizes on the semantic core of the verb. A parallel phenomenon will be seen as we analyze verbs of consumption.

6. Compleatives

There is a class of telic verbs (*beber* 'drink', *comer* 'eat', *fumar* 'smoke', etc.) that designates consumption or exploitation of the object. Notice first that all the verbs in this class share with the previous class the requirement that the object must be brought into or be located within the subject's dominion. Only under those conditions can the object be consumed. Moreover, if object exploitation constitutes the core of the verb, it should be expected for the middle *se* marker to signal that the object is fully exploited. Full exploitation depends on boundedness, as shown in Section 3. I have already suggested that in compleative constructions both event and object must be bounded. That the whole event must be bounded can be seen from Nishida's (1994) argument by which no gradual adverb is compatible with this construction. In contrast with (30a), in (30b) *un poquito* 'a little' produces a semantic clash with the compleative import of the clitic *se*:

- (30) a. *Anoche Valeria tomó un poquito más de leche.*
 'Valeria drank some more milk last night'.
 b. **Anoche Valeria se tomó la leche un poquito más.*
 'Valeria drank the milk a little more last night'.

That the object must be consumed to exhaustion can best be seen in the following dialog:

- (31) -*Valeria. ¡Tómate la leche!* 'Valeria, drink your milk'.
 -*Ya me (*Ø) la tomé.* 'I already did'.
 -*No es cierto, todavía te falta medio vaso.*
 'That's not true, you still have half a glass to go'.

It is not under discussion whether Valeria has drunk milk but whether the whole glass of milk has been consumed. This of course does not preclude the possibility of marking bounded partial units that as such can also be fully exploited. In her defense Valeria could have made the following utterance:

- (32) *Pero ya me tomé la mitad.*
 'But I have drunk half of it'.

This of course allows that the construction be used to report on work in progress. The only condition to be met is that the affected portion be constituted as a bounded unit:

- (33) a. *Se leyó medio reporte en diez minutos.*
 'He read half the report in ten minutes'.
 b. *Se fuma tres cuartos de cajetilla al día.*
 'He smokes three quarters of a pack a day'.

Figures 6–9 illustrate the input of *se* with respect to focalized benefactives and completives. Figure 6 shows that the subject brings the object within his dominion. Figure 7 shows that the inherent benefaction of the verbal meaning i.e., bringing an object, is only profiled by the *se* marker. Figure 8 shows the relocation of the object into the subject's dominion and that such object is partially affected by the action. In contrast, Figure 9 highlights not only that the object is totally affected by the action (the black circle), but also that its completion benefits subject (circle = participant; big dotted oval = subject's dominion; wide arrow = subject's action; simple arrow = object's relocation; squiggly arrow = object change of state; black circle = fully affected object). These diagrams also show that the benefaction implied by relocating the object within the subject's dominion is the shared feature of these constructions and that completion only derives from focusing on the subject-object interaction designated by the verb. Completive constructions thus do not constitute

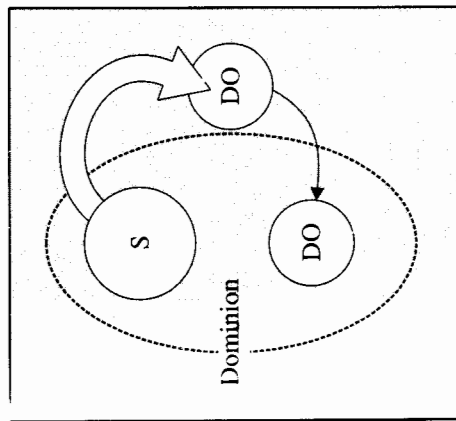


Figure 6. Consequir

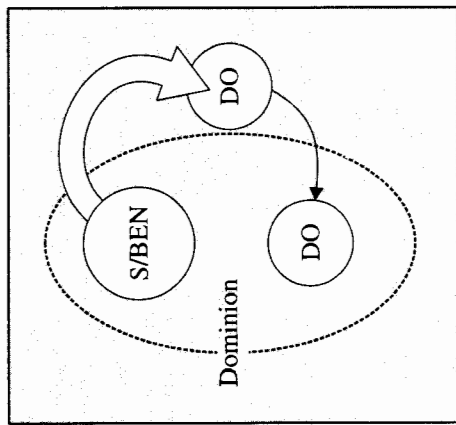


Figure 7. Consequirse

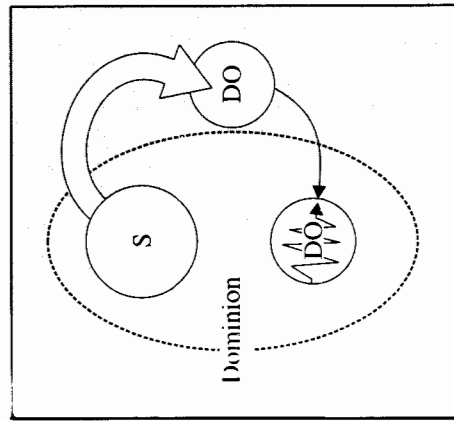


Figure 8. Comer

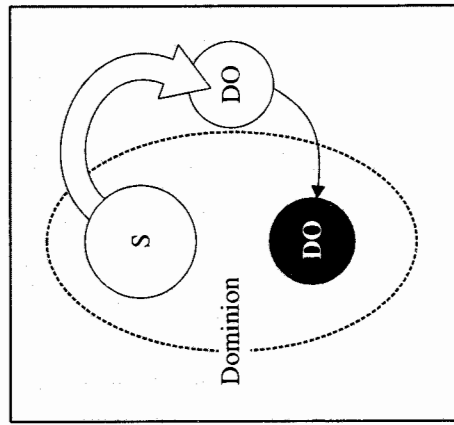


Figure 9. Comerse

an isolated idiosyncratic construction but one naturally related to other middle transitive constructions.

We are now in a position to account for abstract situations. Strozer (1976) made the incorrect claim that the object of completive constructions had to be referential. Nalanda has adequately rejected that proposal based on negation: *Juan no se leyó*

ningún libro 'Juan didn't read any book' and wh-questions: *¿Qué libro te leíste?* 'What book did you read?'. As for abstract objects, he observes, based on Krifka (1989), that complete constructions are HOMOMORPHIC since they obey a condition of graduality: 'every part of the event corresponds to some part of the object'. In *beberse un vaso de vino* 'drink up a glass of wine', for example, 'every part of the object denoted by a glass of wine maps onto a part of the drinking event' (1994:336). The proposal is enlightening for all concrete situations and even for some abstract ones. With objects that have a clear beginning and end the event is accomplished mirroring consumption verbs. The object becomes smaller as the event advances. Reading a story through constitutes a pristine example:

- (34) *Adrián se leía el periódico de una sentada.*
'Adrian would read the paper in one sitting'.

Now non-dynamic situations are problematic. It is not evident how they can obey the graduality condition. Here Nishida makes a great effort to extend the analysis to areas that are difficult to defend. In *saberse la lección* 'to know a whole lesson', he suggests that a lesson can be partitioned into qualitatively different parts and analogously the state of knowing the lesson can be partitioned into different parts of knowledge. Although the parallelism is nicely drawn and may be relevant in a variety of situations, it forces that an inference be taken as a restrictive rule. While the proposal accounts for verbs like *leer* 'read', *aprender* 'learn', *memorizar* 'memorize', it fails to capture verbs like *saber* 'know' and *conocer* 'be familiar with/know' which have a gestalt-like behavior. Consider the following examples:

- (35) a. *El maestro se aprendió mi nombre el primer día de clases.*
'The teacher learned my name the first day of school'.
b. *Tengo allí un primo que se conoce un bar increíble. . . se sabe cada sitio!*
'I have a cousin who knows of an incredible bar . . . he knows such places!'

One need not go to the extreme of breaking down a name into letters or syllables to meet the graduality condition. Likewise, the idea of having to decompose a bar into its compositional pieces of furniture seems less adequate. What these verbs highlight is the MENTAL SCOPE that the subject has over the object. By scope I mean the area within the object that the subject's mind can cover. I suggest that the clitic *se* imposes a FULL SCOPE interpretation. Without the middle marker these verbs are normally classified as states yet with the clitic *se* they acquire some properties of accomplishment. Notice first that the change in meaning always goes from simple mental familiarity to complete knowledge:

- (36) a. *Sé la respuesta, pero no completa.*
'I know the answer but not completely'.
b. *Me sé la respuesta (*pero no completa).*
'I know the answer by heart (*but not completely)'.

For verbs that only imply mental contact, the use of *se* is marginal. An illustrating case in point is *conocer* 'be familiar with/know' which can either mean some kind of mental contact or take the reading of a deeper knowledge. Only with the latter can *conocer* be used with the *se* marker as in (37b). The questionable example in (38b) corresponds to the mental contact reading:

- (37) a. *Conozco muy bien a Valeria.*
'I know Valeria very well'.
b. *Me la conozco como la palma de mi mano.*
'I know Valeria like the palm of my hand'.
(38) a. *Conozco la propuesta.*
'I am familiar with the proposal'.
b. *??Me conozco la propuesta.*
'I am familiar with the proposal by heart'.

The requirement for the clitic *se* to take verbs of a high degree of mental scope explains why *aprender* 'learn', a verb whose scope radiates at the lower end of the scale, without the *se* marker normally takes sentential and unbounded objects as in (39a), while with the middle *se* marker the object must be bounded, as in (40b). With the wide scope reading *aprender+se* means 'to memorize'. Moreover the increase of scope imposed by *se* explains why with verbs of high degree of control, like *memorizar* 'to memorize', the clitic *se* is redundant, as (41b) shows:

- (39) a. *Aprendí francés/la bailar a los 15 años.*
'I learned French/to dance when I was 15 years old'.
b. **Me aprendí francés/la bailar a los 15 años.*
'I learned French / to dance when I was 15 years old'.
(40) a. *??Aprendí la canción.*
'I learned the song'.
b. *Me aprendí la canción.*
'I learned the song by heart'.
(41) a. *Memoricé la canción.*
'I memorized the song'.
b. *??Me memoricé la canción.*
'I memorized the song'.

Based on these data, a generalization of focusing *se* is thus at hand:

Maximal Exploitation Condition

- (42) a. The focusing *se* marker transforms incorporative transitive verbs of high mental scope into verbs of full scope.
 b. Incorporative transitive verbs take well-bounded objects located in the subject's dominion to impose a maximal degree of exploitation.

While in agreement with Nishida's graduality condition, this proposal accounts for gestaltic events that do not allow a homomorphic analysis. What telic and non-telic verbs share is that a well-bounded concrete or abstract object is located within the subject's dominion to allow maximal exploitation. *Saber* 'know' and *conocer* 'be familiar with' have been problematic due to their imperfective "Aktionsart". That they cannot be used in perfective situations can be seen from the fact that in (43) *se conoció* is ungrammatical, while *se supo* takes a performance reading. As in English, 'to know' in a perfective context not only means to have some knowledge but also to express it overtly as in (44):

(43) **Valeria se conoció la ciudad*.

'Valeria knew the city'.

(44) *Valeria se supo la respuesta y se ganó el premio*.

'Valeria knew the answer and won the prize'.

To sum up, imperfective verbs like *saber* and *conocer* can only be used with *se* in perfective situations if they take an accomplishment reading. In imperfective situations they can take the focusing *se* marker since they satisfy the maximal exploitation condition. These facts have been attested by the grammaticality of (35), (36b) and (37b).

As for perfective verbs, finer details can be highlighted. Full mental scope presupposes some point in time or space in which the event of covering the whole object is completed. It is thus predicted by the focusing function of *se* that the event will, by default, take place in restricted space/time contexts. The crucial examples showing that the event is compressed are (45b) and (45d). The former would be fine to designate a special or meaningful accomplishment, not to express a predictably routine act. The latter is ruled out since the use of the adverbial phrase *en una sentada* 'in one sitting' requires the event to be compressed by the middle *se* marker:

(45) a. *Leí la última novela de García Márquez*.

'I read García Márquez's most recent novel'.

b. *??Me leí la última novela de García Márquez*.

'I read García Márquez's most recent novel'.

c. *Me leí la última novela de García Márquez en una sentada*.

'I read García Márquez's most recent novel in one sitting'.

- d. *??*Leí la última novela de García Márquez en una sentada*.
 'I read García Márquez's most recent novel in one sitting'.

A further feature of the construction is that the object to be "incorporated" must be of considerable significance for the event. The transitive use of *correr* 'to run', *apostar* 'to bet' or *jugar* 'to risk' illustrates this point:

(46) *Antonio se (*Ø) jugó el pellejolla chamballa vida por ayudar a su hermano*.
 'Antonio put his skin/job/life on the line to help his brother'.

Object meaningfulness is commonly relative to time and space restrictions. This is particularly the case with verbs of motion:

(47) a. *Se corrió el maratón de la Ciudad de México*.

'He ran the [whole] Mexico City Marathon'.

b. *Se corrió los cien metros en diez segundos*.

'He ran the 100 meters in ten seconds'.

c. *Se subió/escaló el Himalaya en dos días*.

'He went up/climbed up the Himalayas in two days'.

The previous examples are grammatical without *se*. They would however be pragmatically odd since those special acts would be expressed as if they were routine. With verbs that imply full subject involvement, the focusing *se* marker is obligatory and the object must be meaningful:

(48) a. *Rigoberto apostó diez pesos en la séptima carrera*.

'Rigoberto bet ten pesos in the seventh race'.

b. *Rigoberto se apostó el sueldolla casa en la séptima carrera*.

'Rigoberto bet [all] his salary/his house in the seventh race'.

c. **??Rigoberto se apostó un peso en la séptima carrera*.

'Rigoberto bet one peso in the seventh race'.

I have claimed so far that common to focalized benefactives and completives is the fact that a bounded object must be either brought into or located within the subject's dominion for the focusing *se* marker to profile the core meaning of the verb. I have also pointed out that completive constructions by default involve a restricted setting. Moreover, I have illustrated that the object must always be highly significant for the event. The analysis is now set to account for full involvement constructions.

7. Full Involvement

I have already pointed out that examples like (2), repeated here for convenience, have been left aside in previous analyses. In full involvement constructions what is

being focused on is the degree of participation of the subject in the event. His/her involvement is maximal. In (49) the unique dancer *Tongolele* not only danced a rumba, but she performed it with maximal expressiveness:

- (49) *Tongolele se bailó una rumba inolvidable.*
 'Tongolele danced an unforgettable rumba'.

Two obvious facts attest the subject's full involvement in the event: the impossibility of having adverbials that imply lack of commitment (50a), and the less stringent requirement for the object to be qualified as out of the ordinary. The example in (50b) is marginal since there is no adjective adding extra attributes to the noun *rumba*:

- (50) a. **Tongolele se bailó una rumba inolvidable sin interés.*
 'Tongolele danced an unforgettable rumba without any interest'.
 b. ??*Tongolele se bailó una rumba.*
 'Tongolele danced a rumba'.

Moreover, these examples clearly illustrate that the degree of participation of the subject is crucial. Verbs that are high in subject involvement contrast with those at the lower end of the scale in the same manner that *saber* 'know' contrasts with *conocer* 'be familiar with' (see previous section). Verbs with low degree of participation like *probar* 'taste' (51a) cannot take the *se* focusing marker as can be seen in (51b). Those whose default degree of involvement is higher, like *saborear* 'savor', can be marked by *se* to have maximal involvement as in (52b). It is predictable that the adverbial phrase 'without much interest' introduces a semantic clash between its diminishing meaning and the full involvement reading of *saborearse* 'enjoy tasting' as in (52c):

- (51) a. *Probó la sopa sin mayor interés.*
 'He tasted the soup without much interest'.
 b. **Se probó la sopa (sin mayor interés).*
 'He tasted the soup (without much interest)'.
 (52) a. *Saboreó la sopa con enorme placer.*
 'He enjoyed the soup with enormous pleasure'.
 b. *Se saboreó la sopa con enorme placer.*
 'He enjoyed the soup with enormous pleasure'.
 c. **Se saboreó la sopa sin mayor interés.*
 'He enjoyed the soup without much interest'.

The predicates to be found in this construction type are all performing action verbs with cognate objects. The following examples show the semantic realms in which the construction is productive:

- (53) a. *Lola Beltrán se cantó un bolero con toda el alma.*
 'Lola Beltrán sang a bolero with all her soul (might)'.
 b. *Tomás Segovia se recitó a Rilke con una profundidad excepcional.*
 'Tomas Segovia recited Rilke's poetry with exceptional depth'.

That the construction shares core properties with focalized benefactives and compleatives is clearly evidenced because of the requirement of full involvement constructions to have bounded events and objects. The ungrammaticality of (54a) corresponds to the presence of a mass noun:

- (54) a. **Ella se cantaba boleros.*
 'She used to sing boleros'.
 b. *Anoche Daniel Santos se (%Ø) cantó un bolero que nos sacó las lágrimas.*
 'Last night Daniel Santos sang a song that made us cry'.

As for the aspectual requirement for the event to be bounded, the imperfect *cantaba* is ruled out with the imperfect habitual reading; however, it is grammatical when it involves iterative delimited actions as in (55a). The use of *se* with a plain present tense (i.e. not historical, nor habitual present which are bounded situations) is ruled out, as (55b) shows:

- (55) a. *Ella se cantaba un bolero increíble que no hemos podido olvidar.*
 'She used to sing an incredible bolero that we have not been able to forget'.
 b. **Ella se canta un bolero increíble.*
 'She sings an incredible bolero'.

Whether the object is brought within the subject's dominion or whether it is simply located within its boundaries is irrelevant for the construction. The condition is that the object be activated by the subject's performance within the dominion. In performing verbs the condition is that the object be available for the subject's disposition. Now, in an abstract manner it is also the case that the object is maximally exploited. Although the piece to be played/interpreted keeps its basic properties, for the purpose of its event representation, it takes a specific shape manifested in the subject's expressiveness. The agent's involvement is highlighted by the focusing function of the clitic *se*.

Figure 10 represents the nuclear properties of the construction. The dotted lines correspond to 'bringing the object into the dominion' indicate its secondary role in the construction. In contrast, the crucial parts of the event are in continuous lines. The fact that the object is somehow affected is indicated by the squiggly arrow and the subject's performance, even more prominent than the object exploitation, is

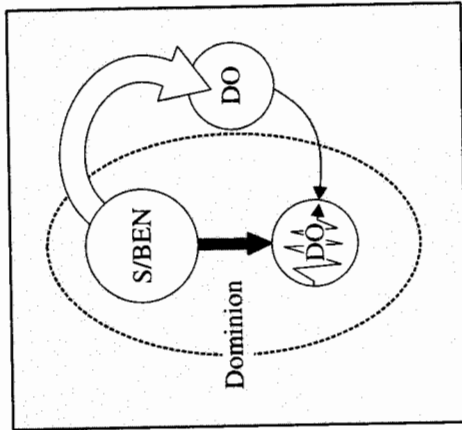


Figure 10. Bailarse

marked with the black arrow (circle= participant; big oval= subject's dominion; wide arrow= subject's action; squiggly arrow= object change of state).

7.1. *Effected Objects and the Full Involvement Construction*

Once the path of the subject's performance is activated, the possibility of having effected objects is now available. We can see this as a pattern licensed by the full involvement construction: dancing or singing music is a way of bringing some artistic product into existence. No mention of this construction type is found in current literature. In fact, the narrow version of incorporative verbs will exclude effected objects since they cannot be manipulated or exploited the way independent bounded objects can. However, effected objects presuppose a high degree of subject involvement in the event. This feature relates this construction type to full involvement constructions.

The degree of subject involvement can be tested from the fact that in this construction type the *se* middle marker is obligatory, as can be seen from the ungrammaticality of examples (56c) and (57b):

- (56) *Se echó una cena exquisita.*
 a. 'He made an exquisite dinner'
 b. 'He gobbled up an exquisite dinner'.⁹
 c. **Echó una cena exquisita* (with the focalized reading).¹⁰
 'He made an exquisite dinner'

- (57) a. *Te aventaste una fiesta sensacional/un buen puntacho.*
 'You threw a great party/ told a great joke'.
 b. **Aventaste una fiesta sensacional/un buen puntacho.*
 'You threw a great party/told a great joke'. (with the focalized reading)

Another crucial feature of the construction is the requirement for the object to be of special significance in the event. While this requirement seems to be not stringent in the complete construction, in the full involvement construction with effected objects, it is compulsory. In (58b) the lack of an exalting adjective makes the output misformed:

- (58) a. *Pancho Segovia se escribió una novela impresionante.*
 'Pancho Segovia wrote an impressive novel'.
 b. **Pancho se escribió/acabó la novela.*
 'Pancho wrote up/finished the novel'.

As opposed to the plain full involvement construction where the subject's performance is more prominent than the exploitation of the object, in the full involvement construction with effected object the final properties of the object are as crucial as the subject's action.

In Figure 11, both the arrow and the direct object circle are dark to highlight them as main figures in the event. Notice also that since the object is created in the event, the idea of incorporating an external object does not apply (circle=participant; big oval=subject's dominion, wide arrow=subject's action; squiggly arrow=object change of state).

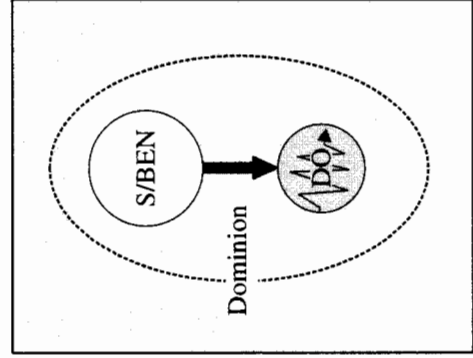


Figure 11. Echarse una cena exquisita

As in previous constructions, the function of the middle clitic *se* is to highlight or intensify by focalization the core properties of the verb. Being that the object of these transitive verbs is created by the subject's accomplishment, it is expected that the focusing function of the clitic will be to highlight the verb's core properties. Thus not only is the subject fully involved in the event but the output of his/her act must correspond to the high standards of his/her performance. The grammaticality of examples (56) to (58) attest to the validity of this analysis.

8. Conclusions

In this paper I have made the claim that the meanings to be found in nonreflexive *se* marked transitive constructions all correspond to the basic schema of the middle clitic *se*. As is the case for other middle constructions, the *se* marker has the basic function of focusing on the pivotal moment of change. In most cases the inductive forces that drive the event are downplayed to let the change itself be the most prominent figure in the event. Middle *se* marked transitive constructions differ from other reflexively marked cases in that the focusing function of the middle marker takes place without diminishing the prominence of other members in the construction. Since the *se* marker does not occupy an argument position, it does not reduce the transitivity of the event. On the contrary, the focusing function of the clitic compresses the event selecting its nuclear properties to give them special prominence. Consequently, the transitivity degree of the clause will be increased and the core meaning of the verb will be focalized. The high degree of transitivity is attested by the requirement of all middle transitive constructions to have bounded objects combined with verbs of high degree of subject involvement, telic verbs being the prototype.

Instead of having unrestricted polysemy attributed to the *se* marker, as has been the case for many current approaches, I have claimed that the four meanings share the same basic focusing schema. The claim is thus extremely simple: if the verbs profile a benefactive reading by bringing the object into the subject's dominion, the middle clitic *se* will make the construction a focalized benefactive one, of the type represented in Figure (12). If the verb not only brings in an object but also profiles some type of concrete or abstract consumption, then the *se* marker will allow for the exploitation to be maximal. This is shown in the darkened circle representing the totally affected object in Figure (13). If the verb profiles the subject's performance of an action related to some cognate object, then such performance will be focally intensified to have a maximal degree of subject involvement, as is represented by the blackened arrow in Figure (14). Finally, if the verb designates the creation of an object, then the subject's performance and the object itself will be most prominent

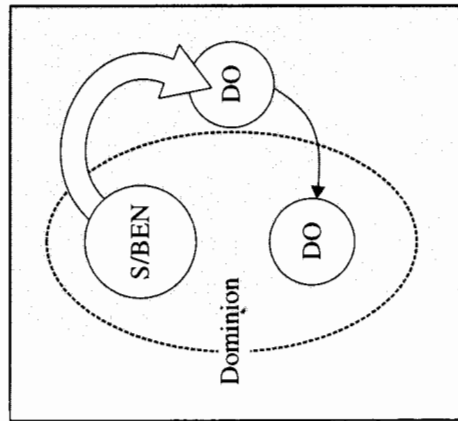


Figure 12. Conseguirse un trabajo

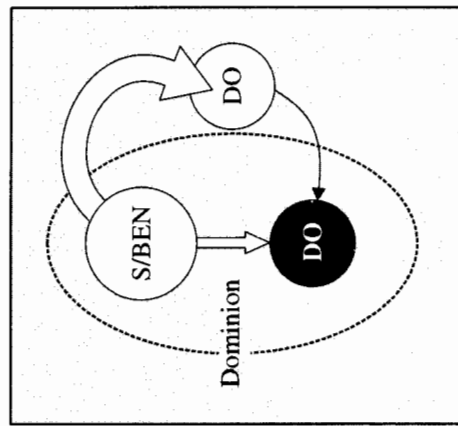


Figure 13. Leerse una novela

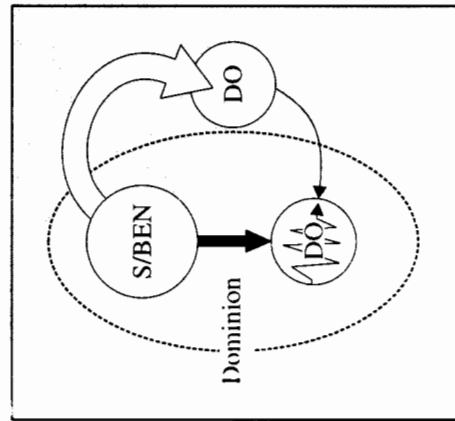


Figure 14. Bailarse un tango

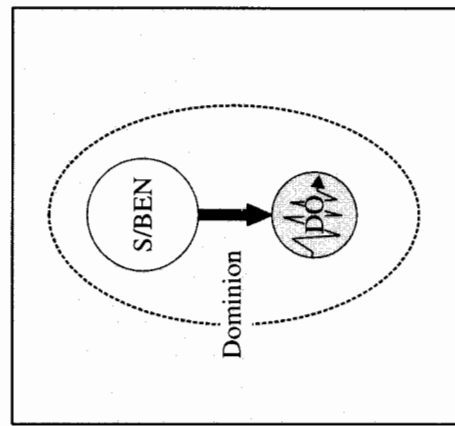


Figure 15. Echarse una cena exquisita

in the event via *vr* marking. Thus in Figure 15, both the arrow and the object are represented in boldface.

I have also claimed that Arce's notion of incorporative verbs should be reanalyzed with a wider meaning. It is a requirement of the construction that the object be located in the subject's dominion. The ways in which the object is located in that

the behavior of reflexive markers in general. From that perspective Locative *se*, Benefactive Emphatic *se*, Full Involvement *se*, Effected Object *se*, Completive *se* should be incorporated to a list already too long of *se* markers. That there is polysemy in reflexively marked constructions is clear, yet the meanings to be found across the languages of the world for middle markers consistently occupy the same semantic areas: routine actions, spontaneous events, inceptive changes, dynamic or abrupt motion changes, unplanned occurrences, focalized benefaction and completeness are the most common ones. Since these meanings are found over and over in a variety of unrelated languages, as can be attested in the major typological reflexive/middle studies in current literature (Faltz 1985; Klaiman 1991, among others), we must infer the presence of one (or very few) schematic representations that license the formation of a variety of related constructions. In this paper I have suggested that the focusing function of *se* constitutes a major schema for middle constructions which, applied to different domains, designates different and yet related readings. The network thus developed gives a coherent pattern that speakers exploit to handle the variety of contexts that would otherwise be overwhelming in everyday communication.

Acknowledgements

This work has greatly been improved by very thoughtful comments on the conference by Ekkehard König, Traci Curl, and Suzanne Kemmer and by invaluable comments on the manuscript by Zygmunt Frajzyngier, Jeff Turley and Margaret Lubbers. I unfortunately cannot blame them for any possible inconsistencies that this paper may have.

Notes

1. Clitic-pronominal pronouns inflect for person and number. The same set of pronouns is used for direct or indirect coreferential objects. As can be seen below, the *se* marker covers most slots in the paradigm:

<i>me</i>	first person singular	<i>nos</i>	first person plural
<i>te</i>	second person singular	<i>os</i>	second person plural (Spain)
		<i>se</i>	all other
2. It should be well known contrasts between REFLEXIVE (*Se miró en el espejo* 'He looked at himself in the mirror'), BENEFACTIVE PASSIVE (*Se rompió la ventana* 'The window broke') and IMPERSONAL *se* constructions (*Se resolvió el problema con mucho cuidado* 'The problem was solved very carefully'), the distinction between REFLEXIVE and MIDDLE *se* is crucial for the proper understanding of a variety of meanings involving the use of the *se* marker.
3. A fully developed analysis of intransitives and other dynamic situations can be found in Maldonado (1991, 1994, 1999).

dominion vary. In some cases it is already there although it is not always in an active manner (*saberse, conocerse*); in others it is created by the subject's action. Yet the prototype corresponds to cases in which the object is brought from a location outside the subject's dominion. In this sense, the use of some primitive semantic feature like [GET] would represent adequately what these constructions have in common. Notice however that the specific meaning to be obtained does not come from the incorporative meaning of [GET] but from the focusing function of *se* applied to the core properties of each verb group. What we have is a conceptual network with an incorporative requirement for the *se* marker to exploit by focalization the core properties of the verb.

From the network, further common properties of these constructions can be underlined. The fact that the object is in the subject's dominion drives the presupposition that subject benefaction is central to this group of constructions. This is most obvious for emphatic benefactives, but it is also present in the subsequent constructions: an act of consumption developed to completion is also carried out for the benefit of the subject. In a similar manner, we prize ourselves for performing an action with great efficiency, in the full involvement construction (*bailarse un tango*); and in the full involvement construction with effected objects (*echarse una cena exquisita*), benefaction is a crucial invited inference. Another common property of middle marked transitive constructions can be underlined from the previous network: given a wider interpretation, object exploitation is also present in all constructions. Not only eating up a cake but also singing a song and even creating an object with excellence involve maximal exploitation of the object. Whether created or brought into the subject's dominion, the interaction with the object is taken to its upper limits. What we have is a schema of events with a high degree of interaction which becomes maximal with the focusing properties of the *se* marker.

I have rejected the view that the *se* clitic is a reflexive morpheme that 'extends' to an aspectual marker, since completive is only one of the meanings to be obtained by a broader focusing function of middle markers in general. Completiveness derives from the internal properties of the verb as they are profiled by the clitic, but the clitic itself preserves its basic structure. In this sense it is more adequate to talk about construction meaning as suggested by Goldberg (1995) than accepting a variety of meanings of the clitic *se* as mere semantic extensions of a reflexive morpheme.

Evident though it is that we obtain an aspectual reading of completiveness with verbs of consumption, it is not the case that *se* becomes an aspectual marker as such. The clitic *se* covers its schematic focusing function while the other features of the construction (consumption telic verb, bounded instantiated object, perfective aspect), determine the aspectual completive reading. The danger of accepting an aspectual *se* marker as an extended category derived from the true reflexive marker only leads to the mistaken idea that there is a wild and chaotic polysemy governing

4. This schema is in fact coherent with a more abstract representation of the *se* middle schema proposed in Maldonado (1992) for a wider variety of related constructions.
5. The distinction between passives and impersonals requires further study. For a cognitive analysis of so-called passives and impersonals see Maldonado (1992, 1996, 1999)
6. García used the term Romance *se* to identify all the nonreflexive uses of that clitic. My analysis grows from her seminal proposal. The very little I can add to her account comes from finding the internal coherence of a middle system which in fact coincides with the general properties of middle systems of the languages of the world that have one.
7. For example, his class V includes other types of middle *se*, like *dejarse las llaves* 'to leave the keys [by accident]' and *esconderte el anillo* 'to hide the ring beneath him/herself' where the use of *se* corresponds to some pragmatic information related to the speaker's interests. For further details on this constructions see Maldonado (1992, 1999, particularly chapters III and IV).
8. This example could be inadequately interpreted as indirect reflexive since *se* could commute with *le*: *Le consiguió un empleo a sólo dos cuadras de su casa* 'He got her a job only two blocks away from home'. Notice however that *conseguir* already implies self-benefaction, i.e. the subject is the recipient of his action and no extra benefactive participant is required. The clitic *se* does not have the reflexive function of signaling the subject instead of an alternative participant; it simply stresses the benefaction already implied by the verb.
9. The two readings obtained here correspond to the fact that *echar* 'throw' is now a schematic verb with two potential directional patterns. In the subject's direction it means 'to consume' while away from the subject it keeps its original meaning with all the predictable extensions: give and produce.
10. The nonreflexive grammatical meaning would be 'to throw a dinner (in the garbage/on the floor, etc.)'

References

- Arce, Manuel. 1989. Semantic structure and syntactic function: The case of Spanish *se*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Colorado.
- Borer, Hagit. 1986. *The Syntax of Pronominal Clitics* [Syntax and Semantics 19]. New York: Academic Press.
- Campos, Hector. 1989. "Impersonal passive *se* in Spanish". *Linguistic Investigations* 13(1): 1–21.
- Faltz, Leonard M. 1985. *Reflexivization: A study in universal syntax*, New York: Garland.
- Fauconnier, Gilles. 1985. *Mental Spaces: Aspects of meaning construction in natural language*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Foley, William, and Robert Van Valin. 1984. *Functional Syntax and Universal Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- García, Erica. 1975. *The Role of Theory in Linguistic Analysis*. Amsterdam and Oxford: North Holland.
- Golberg, Adele. 1995. *Constructions: A Construction Grammar approach to argument structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Grimshaw, Jane. 1982. "On the lexical representation of Romance reflexive clitics". In J. Bresnan (ed.), *The Mental Representations of Grammatical Relations*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 87–148.
- Hopper, Paul, and Sandra A. Thompson. 1980. "Transitivity in grammar and discourse". *Language* 56: 251–99.
- Kemmer, Suzanne. 1992. *The Middle Voice* [Typological Studies in Language 23]. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Klaiman, M. H. 1991. *Grammatical Voice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krifka, Manfred. 1989. "Nominal reference, temporal construction and quantification in Event Semantics". In R. Bartsch, J. van Benthem, and P. van Amde Boas (eds.), *Semantics and Contextual Expressions*. Dordrecht: Foris, 75–115.
- Lambrecht, Knud. 1994. *Information Structure and Sentence Form. Topic, focus, and the mental representations of discourse referents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 1987a. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, vol. i. *Theoretical Preliminaries*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- 1987b. "Nouns and verbs", *Language* 63: 53–94.
- 1988. "An overview of Cognitive Grammar". In Brygida Rudzka-Ostyn (ed.) *Topics in Cognitive Linguistics*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 3–48.
- 1991. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, vol. ii (Descriptive Application). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Maldonado, Ricardo. 1992. Middle voice: The case of Spanish *se*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, San Diego.
- 1993. "Dynamic construals in Spanish". *Studi Italiani di Linguistica Teorica e Applicata* 22(3): 532–66.
- 1996. "Concordancia y elección de sujeto en construcciones con *se*". *Memorias del IV Encuentro de Lingüística del Noroeste*. Hermosillo: Universidad Autónoma de Sonora. 121–46.
- 1999. *A Media Voz: problemas conceptuales del clítico se*. Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Manzini, Rita. 1986. "On Italian *si*". In H. Borer (ed.), 241–62.
- Nishida, Chiyo. 1994. "The Spanish reflexive clitic *se* as an aspectual class marker". *Linguistics* 32: 425–58.
- Quine, Willard. 1960. *Word and Object*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.
- Rosen, Carol. 1988. *The Relational Structure of Reflexive Clauses: Evidence from Italian*. New York: Garland.
- Sitrozer, Judith. 1976. Clitics in Spanish. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Los Angeles: University of California.
- Wehrli, Eric. 1986. "On some properties of French clitic *se*". In Hagit Borer (ed.), 263–83.