DYNAMIC CONSTRUALS IN SPANISH

0. THE PROBLEM

The analysis of root intransitive verbs marked with the so-called "reflexive"
clitic se, as illustrated in (1) and (2), constitutes a classical problem in Spanish
and Romance linguistics:

(1) Valeria ya se fue
   "Valeria already left"

(2) La taza se cayó de la mesa
   "The cup fell down from the table"

These examples have been traditionally identified as reflexives. The
impossibility of appealing to coreferentiality in one-argument verbs is only one
of many arguments to not continue that tradition. Following Kenner (1988), I
will instead use the term middle, as referring to events, like (1) and (2), in which
the degree of distinguishability among participants is either low or nil.

Based on this assumption I will show that, instead of involving self-projected actions,
constructions of the type (1) designate a conceptualization of the event as
entailing an instantaneity, sudden or rapid change, while those of type (2)
comprise events running counter-to-normal desires/expectations. The fact that
se is used to mark some type of accidentality has been well pointed out in the
relevant literature (Real Academia Española (1978), Benet (1910), Molina
Redondo (1974), Moliner (1966), García (1975), Maldonado (1988)). Yet the
explanation of why it is se and not some other grammatical form that is used to
mark such a meaning is far from clear.

1. BASIC NOTIONS

Most generative approaches to intransitive reflexives have proposed a
mechanical device to explain the occurrence of se with such verbs. In one Case
Granular versus lexical (Goldin-Meadow 1986), or is inserted in surface structure of different types of reflexive 'to sleep' from deep mirror 'to fall asleep', and other classes of so-called "automatic reflexives", which are simply marked as such in the lexicon: "If a verb is present which requires reflexive pronoun one is inserted" (Goldin-Meadow 1986: 50).

In a similar manner, Lexical Functional Grammar (Sells, Zanen and Zec 1986) attempts to relate transitive reflexives to other kinds of reflexive constructions by directly marking forms in the lexicon with the label [REFL]. This label indicates that the semantic structure of the verb is a closed predicate (R(x), y) which coincides with the final output of the set of lexical forms that undergo reflexivation (R(x,y) → R(x)).

Generative Semantics (Aik 1973) and Relational Grammar (Aikhenvald 1987) deal with reflexive intransitives by claiming that the Surface Subject (Final 1) is derived from an underlying OBJECT (Initial 2). The clitic se is interpreted as a clear indication that a derivation of decausalization (2 to 1 advancement of uncircumcised) has taken place.

These approaches are incapable of explaining the relationship between the plain intransitive and the reflexive intransitive form, nor are they able to give any semantic characterization of these constructions. Furthermore, they do not explain the explanations and differences between several classes of transitive reflexive constructions, as exemplified by deornir 'to fall asleep', creta 'burst out laughing' and llovrir 'to leak (as for the eeling of a house)', or provide an adequate motivation for the existence of their shared characteristics as well as their distinctive properties.

Traditional Hispanic grammars have considered that the use of se in intransitive constructions is either automatic or ritualized to the point that the original expressive meaning of this form is so attenuated that it is almost imperceptible (Lázaro Carreño 1964), or, in particular examples, like La casa se llovo 'The house got rained through', "ellicidical" or "aburd" (Hernández Alonso 1966).

I will reject those characterizations and stress that se does not constitute a case of overgeneralization, flat analogy or meaning loss. I will show instead that, in fact, the value of se is clearly perceivable as a contrastive, given adequate context, and that it corresponds to a well-organized system with predictable behavior. The systematicity of the values to be proposed is determined by the proper characterization of the absolute energetic distinction.

Traditional analyses, particularly those in the generative tradition, have paid special attention to the relationship between a reflexive verb and the transitive construction which is understood to be its derivational source. From this perspective, Se abrió la puerta 'The door opened' is derived from an underlying structure parallel to Juan abrió la puerta 'Juan opened the door'; since puerta in both sentences bears the same relation to the predicate — namely,
finally in the absolute (4d) there is no energy input. Although the agent deletion approach captures some part of the relationship between the sr marked and the transitive constructions, it fails to capture several important points. It does not explain the change of conceptualization from a process developed through time to an event where the change of state is in focus. The agent deletion rule involved in determinatization leads one to think that only the agent is missing. I claim instead that all circumstances accompanying the development of an event – of which the agent is only one of many determining factors – are taken to their minimal representation in middle sr constructions. This, as I will show, will be crucial for the proper understanding of energetic construals. I claim that middles constitute a whole array of constructions bounded by transitive constructions on one extreme and absolute ones on the other. Thus examples (9) and (10) belong to the middle domain. I propose that in its most schematic representation middle sr accomplishes two basic functions:

i) It focuses on the end-point of the scene in which a thematic element undergoes a change of state.

ii) It lets the initiative force be present in schematic terms.

The contrast between transitive, absolute and middle constructions is represented in Figure 1-3.1

Figure 1 transitive

Figure 2 absolute

Figure 3 middle

1. See a participial double arrow energy; see the right-angle arrow inside the circle = change of state. Left to right arrow = implicit energy source, to a patient. TH = thematic direct object.

2. Absolute and Energetic Construals

As explained by Langacker (1991, volume II), in the absolute construal, the event can be quite static or dynamic but no energy is put in profile. This contrast is present in many languages. In French for example, non-reflexively marked verbs that take the auxiliary être 'be' are absolute, as opposed to energetic, verbs that take the auxiliary avoir. Absolute verbs like aller 'go', venir 'come', arriver 'arrive', partir 'leave', etc. make no specification concerning the site or the method of locomotion.2 Even though energy is obviously involved in these processes, no special attention is focused on it. On the other hand, energetic verbs like courir 'run', voler 'fly', sauter 'jump', etc. specify the manner and rate of locomotion, which tend to focus on energy. In similar fashion, Langacker hypothesizes that the three morphological classes of Cupeno, as reported by Hill (1969), are based on the absolute/non-absolute distinction: verbs with the suffix -rae are verbal and active, while those marked with -jar tend to have the opposite properties, like passive. As opposed to these polar suffixes, verbs with zero marking are energy-neutral. As reported by Hill, the zero-class includes meow verbs for states of mind ('be angry', 'be embarrassed', etc), natural bodily processes ('see', 'drink', 'urinate'), behavior of pliants, animals, inanimate objects and the weather ('loud', 'rain', etc.) and activities that Hill called 'good solid Cupeno cultural behavior' ('make a basket', 'shoot arrows', 'hunt', 'skin', etc.). This last group of special interest, for it is obvious that hunting and skinning animals constitute activities which involve considerable energy input, but what determines the unmarked use is the fact that something is conceptualized as a routine event. For example, the contrast between hupe- sae 'to take off' with hupe-jaar 'be unshaven/unshaven' is based on the zero form hupe 'to skin'. The zero form can be characterized as those which constitute the profiled process in an absolute fashion. What seems to be crucial is how as event is viewed subjectively. In Cupeno, zero form refer predominantly to processes
that run according to the normal course of events, as they are conceived either in the physical domain or in the cultural sphere. Since these kinds of events run in the direction of natural expectations they can be seen as non-ergodic. A process counts as energetic only when it rises above this baseline.

In the case of Spanish, the non-intransitive verb designates a dynamic event which may be in contrast with a different type of dynamic event, the energetic one. While in the absolute (the plus in form) the event of falling is being portrayed with no special reference to speed, manner, or conflict of forces and expectations, in the marked construction what is crucial is the consideration of such forces:

(5) a. Cuando la llovía, el león besó a la pantera
b. En el estómago las hojas caen de los árboles

(6) a. Cuando la llovía y el león besó a la pantera
b. La lámpara se cayó de la mesa

In (6a-b) a cold description of the downward motion is given, while in (6a-b) the conceptualizer’s viewpoint is incorporated such that the event is seen as both sudden and out of the ordinary. The productivity of this pattern will be examined later in this paper. It may be sufficient to point out for the moment that it allows for the inclusion of same (abstract) force which is not present in the absolute construction. The inclusion of expectations in the event’s structural constitutes a pattern extended from more basic functions of st in which a dynamic reading is designated. I address those issues in the following section.

3. Dynamic Readings

A process defined as a series of relational configurations that necessarily extend through conceived time..." (Langacker 1987: 75) and are mentally accessed through sequentialization. The class expresses the conceptualization of the process being profiled. One of its fundamental semantic imports is to eliminate the circumstances that accompany the normal development of an event in such a way that only the change of state is profiled. In the absolute construal the event’s scanned from beginning to end, while in the energetic unmarked construction only the pivotal moment of change is prominent. The lack of information about the development of the event imposes speed, suddenness or the speaker’s expectations on the event’s profile. The obvious contrast with the intranactive energetic construal can be seen in the following examples:

(7) a. No quiero dormir ahora, prefiero esperar a que Valeria se despierte
b. Me (*NP) despertó a media noche y ya no me (*3S) pude dormir

(8) a. No (*ne) pude dormir durante una semana
b. ‘I woke up in the middle of the night and I couldn’t go back to sleep’

The middle form can only be used when what is profiled is not the whole process developed through the period of time delimited by the scope of predication, but only the actual change from vigil to sleep. The unmarked use of dormir in (7b) would lead to the reading by which the participant sleeps restlessly.

(9) ‘No pude dormir toda la noche, me quedé sin depósito de dor vuelve’

‘I couldn’t sleep the whole night, my head kept going in circles’

In the same manner, in (8) the use of the middle marked would impose the rather comical reading by which the subject stubbornly and un-successfully kept trying to fall asleep for a whole week (I will account for this reading in the force dynamic section). The root intransitive use is ambiguous. It may indicate that there was restless sleep for an extended period of time, as in (9), or that during a whole week the process of sleeping did not come about. Notice that in either case the non-middle marked use designates sleeping as a process being developed through time. In contrast, the middle construction dormirse focuses on the change of state undergone by the subject.

A natural extension of the focussing strategy observed above takes place in the spatial domain. We know that concentrating our attention on the change of state itself compresses the profile of the process to the point of critical transition. This allows us to explain a class of verbs of motion that have previously resisted a clear explanation: verbs like ir ‘go/leave’, regresar, volver ‘return’, regresar, volver ‘take off in order to come back’, salir ‘go out’, bajar ‘down’, marcharse ‘leave’, acabar ‘go down’, bajarse ‘get off’, etc. are best representatives of this class. The extension to verbs of motion is particularly important, as it constitutes the base for further extensions. The contrast between the intranactive and the middle marked verb
Ricardo Maldonado

is quite productive in Spanish. The distinction between ir ‘go’ and true ‘leave’ is representative of this phenomenon.

(10) a. Juan (*yo) va a al cine todos los días.
    ‘John goes to the movies every day.’

b. No pude ver a Juan porque ya se fue.
    ‘I couldn’t see Juan because he had already left when I arrived.’

In (10a) a whole path through space and time is followed until the endpoint is reached. The same is not true for (10b), in which the contraction of profile also reduces the spatial domain in such a way that only the source and the removal of the participant from this location is focused within the scope of predication. As for the final goal, it remains in the base but is not in profile. In the case of ir ‘go’ a participant moves along a locative path from source to goal. In true ‘leave’ things happen in one shot. In one moment the participant is in the source location, in the next he is not there anymore. True represents a typical case in which an energetic construal is in contrast with an absolute counterpart. By the term absolute I don’t mean that in ir there is no energy input but only that the energy exertion is not particularly prominent. While in the energetic construction it is quite salient; this determines the way the event is conceptualized. There is an instantaneous sense in true that cannot be found in ir. The term energetic applies to events that differ in some way from the canonical conceptualization of ordinary affairs. The contrast between the absolute ir and the energetic true is schematically represented in the following figures:

![Figure 4: Contrast between ir and true](image)

Figure 4: circle = participant, dotted circle = implied state of participant, open line = continuation space, small triangle = direction of movement, space = profile space, small square = absolute energy input, solid triangle = potential energy input.

In the absolute construal, ir, the participant is scanned through an extended path. The small circles along the tilted line represent the same participant in different locations at different times. In the energetic construal, true, the internal box represents the focus of attention in a particular time and space. At time 1 (a) the participant is in the setting, at (b) he is not. With respect to this contrast, Rivano (1991) proposes that the root intransitive ir constitutes a punctual, precise act, while de middle true expresses a holistic event. With respect to the following examples:

(11) a. Manuel se fue a su casa.
    ‘Manuel left for home’ [The translation is mine]

b. Manuel se fue a casa.
    ‘Manuel went home’

Rivano considers that (11a) expresses a holistic event: the emphasis is on ‘being home’ (1991: 35) so it designates a total event. In contrast, (11b) is punctual and ‘expresses a partial well-defined event’ that would provide a proper answer to ‘Dónde fue Manuel?’ ‘Where did Manuel go?’ The holistic/punctual analysis is inadequate in one crucial aspect. In se he the emphasis is not on being home but in the fact that some place is left behind by a participant heading home. Examples of the true type can be given in which the participant has not reached his destination or where the goal is simply irrelevant:

(12) a. Manuel se fue a su casa hace dos horas pero todavía no ha llegado.
    ‘Manuel left for home two hours ago but has not arrived there yet.’

b. Yo no lo podemos entender porque la expresó ya se fue.
    ‘We cannot serve you anymore because the cashier has already left.’

Since an instantaneous change is being emphasized, the holistic interpretation is misleading. The punctual classification of ir also misses the point since the emphasis in not a specific point of the process but actually on the whole path being followed by a moving participant. Rivano (1991) has also pointed out that the middle construction would typically involve a volitional act from the subject, while the root intransitive does not imply subject volition. Although the proposed contrast is quite suggestive, it must be taken with a grain of salt, for in both the root intransitive and the reflexively marked construction, the act is volitionally controlled by the subject. Yet in the energetic construction the participant’s volition is more prominent:

![Figure 5: Volitional control](image)
The middle subjunctive coincides with that of *true* in that some part of the event is presupposed. Depending on the semantics of the verb either the source or the goal is not elaborated in the process.

There are some implications of this notion that are less trivial than it may seem at first glance. The fact that in the middle construction only part of the event is linguistically manifested allows for a dynamic interpretation of the event. By dynamic I understand that the event is conceptualized as happening in eipical, abrupt or sudden manner. I propose that the focussing effect is imposed by or preserved the basic semantic properties of the verb if only in a schematic manner. This implies that the amount of dynamicity involved in the meaning of the verb in the unmarked form will also characterize its behavior in middle constructions. The prediction is that the level of dynamicity of the middle construal will depend on the level of subject energy input designated by the semantics of the verb. Motion verbs have active subject and tend to be high in energy input, therefore a strong tendency to pick up dynamic properties in middle constructions is expected. While examples like (15a) are quite natural those like (15b) require a very elaborate context like the one in (15c):

(15) a. *Se fue de prisa, volando, corriendo, etc.*
   'He left in a hurry, flying, running etc.'

b. *Se fue lentamente*
   'He left slowly'

c. *Estaba triste y sin ánimo. Se fue lentamente, sin ruido y sin destino.*
   'He was sad and without energy. He left slowly, without direction or destination.'

A natural question from this type of analysis is that the more the verb elaborates in detail the path or the orientation of the motion, the more its middle use will determine a dynamic interpretation. While is simply implies a path between two points in space, abajo and hacia also involve upward or downward orientation of movement. Thus the implicit presupposition of the internal energy input necessary to go up or down is stronger in the simpler act of going. What is crucial is that in the middle construal of verbs of motion the dynamic component is notoriously stronger for the oriented aviation verbs. This is attested by the use of the prepositional phrase de un salto 'in one jump' which highlights the occurrence of an event in a condensed amount of time, as opposed to allowing for its development through extended time.

(16) a. *Ximena se subió a la mesa de un salto*
   'Ximena got up on the table in one jump'

b. *Ximena se subió a la escalera de un salto*
   'Ximena got up the ladder in one jump'
Ricardo Mathias

Notice that only the middle subir can occur in narrow focus, while the absolute subir requires a longer procursus elaboration. As can be expected, reversing the conditions of the event will determine the opposite result:

(17) a. Los alpinistas subieron al Popocatépetl en ocho horas
   'The climbers went up Popocatépetl in eight hours'

b. **Los alpinistas se subieron al Popocatépetl en ocho horas**
   'The climbers got on Popocatépetl in eight hours'

Because the time span of the event imposes full scanning from initiation to conclusion along an extended path, the narrow focus of se renders (17b) ungrammatical.

Furthermore, in contrast with previous cases, in events where the energy is not voluntarily driven, the middle constructions can be used in non-compressed situations and the focussing function of se does not stringently require the change of state to be abrupt, sudden or rapid, as can be seen from the following examples:

(18) Tachita se dormió lentamente como si siguiera el ritmo lento de la música
   'Tachita fell asleep slowly as if she were following the lethargic rhythm of the music'

The pattern to be observed is that while so-marked verbs that do not involve volitional energy exertion, like despertarse (15), can be used in non-compressed situations, verbs involving volitional energy transfer, like subirse in (17b), are largely restricted to occurring in that type of context.

More subtle issues can be explained by the narrow focus hypothesis: *true* 'leave', dirigirse 'move towards a goal' and regresarirse 'leave to return' etc. have more flexibility to be used in non-compressed situations while verbs like subirse 'get on', bajarse 'get off', treparse 'climb up' can almost only be used in compressed ones:

(19) a. Se dirigió lentamente a su coche
   'He started off slowly towards his car'

b. **Había perdido toda esperanza, se regreó lentamente a su oficina**
   'He had lost all hope, he went back slowly to his office'

(20) a. **Se subió lentamente al barco**
   'He got slowly on the table'

b. **Se trepó lentamente al árbol**
   'He got up in the tree slowly'

* Dynamic Construals in Spanish

Many middle construals have the natural tendency to be interpreted in a dynamic manner, a fact predicted by the proposal that base properties of the verb are preserved in different constructions. The dynamicity hierarchy to be found in middle construals depends on the level of energy and control designated by the meaning of the verb. The more energy the verb involves, the more it will impose a dynamic reading in its constructions. This is clearly manifested in the hierarchy dormir > trepar > subirse, which responds to a gradual organization of energy input:

scale 1

*no energy control > energy control > directed energy control*

So far I have restricted the discussion to one aspect of the many that can be involved in the manner an event can occur true, namely speed. The extension from speed to abruptness is a pattern that can be expected. Notice that abruptness is a phenomenon that involves both maximal speed and lack of information with respect to the origin trajectory followed by an object in motion. The construal imposed by energetic se precisely accomplishes those two functions: it restricts the scope in which energy is exerted and eliminates from the scene considerations about the set of circumstances involved in the evolution of an occurring event. Energy compression makes the event seem so rapid; the elimination of contextual information makes it appear abrupt.

(21) a. **Don Facundo trepó con calma a su caballo, miró hacia el monte y partió**
   'Don Facundo got slowly (lit. calmly) on his horse, looked at the mountain and left'

b. **Exhibió a punto de atraparlo, pero se trepó a un coche y huyó**
   'They were about to trap him, but he got in a car and fled'

(22) a. **El presidente volvió para saludarlos a los miembros del senado**
   'The president turned around to greet the senators'

b. **El presidente se volvió para que hayan de escuchar en la casa**
   'The president turned so that the stones would not hit him in the face'

This participant's movement in the energetic (21b) and (22b) is done in an abrupt and rapid manner. This implication is not present at all in its absolute counterpart. The absolute energetic construals are by far more productive in Spanish.
It allows one to establish subtle differences with respect to how an event is conceptualized. While the absolute causal is long and elaborated, the energetic one is short and highly restricted. Rapidly and abruptly processes are natural/interferences drawn from the fact that the evolutionary steps of an event are eliminated from the scene while attention is being focused on the critical point of charge.

With the analysis proposed so far we can now attempt to explain why the notion of accidentality is commonly found in re-constitutions. This task is to be pursued in the following sections.

4. On Force Dynamic Contrasts

The conception/ation’s expectations play a crucial role in both other contrasts and in fact constitute an abstract resisting force which overruns by the happening of the event. I will show that the internal configuration of this type of combination involves a Force-Dynamic situation (Talmy 1985). Let us then consider the data. Obvious examples of accidentally are:

(23) a. Se le cayó la sartén

'She dropped the pan' [Lit: she martens popped out]
b. La pelota se cayó de la mesa

'The ball fell down from the table'

Nobody would doubt that (23a) constitutes an event running counter to normal expectations. Yet the accidentality of (23b) is less evident: it can be seen in contrast with an absolute counterpart. In cases where the falling of the ball is connected to a natural course that is in agreement with the normal course of events, such as in a basketball game, the use of the energetic construction would be ruled out:

(24) Katellan dos seguidos para acarbar el partido, el Chiquito Grajeda tiró de la media luna, la pelota (*no) cayó de la mesa con absoluta limpieza, el equipo contrario ganó el partido.

'There were two seconds in the game, Chiquito Grajeda shot from the half moon, the ball fall from [through] the basket absolutely cleanly, the City team won the game...'

While the ball is expected to fly in the air and fall through the basket in a game, in sentence (23b) it is expected to remain on the table. Its falling constitutes an unexpected action, an event that contradicts a normal expectation.

In a similar manner, natural events don’t take the pronoun so, as the following examples show:

(25) a. La lluvia (*no) cayó

'Rain fell'
b. En el año, las hojas (*no) cayeron de los árboles

'In autumn, the leaves fall from the trees'

It is natural to rain to fall. In the same manner, leaves normally fall from the trees in autumn. If leaves started falling from trees in the spring, the middle season could be used to impose the reading in which the action is perceived as counter-to-expectation. Crucially, the marked form of *no would be ruled out:

(26) En el verano, las hojas se cayeron de los árboles

'In spring, the leaves left from the trees'

In order to motivate the abstract encounter of forces at the level of expectations, I will appeal first to a physical force-dynamic explanation. The accidentality manifested in the previous examples depends on the following basic notion:

- The contrast of unexpected changes depends on the canonical conception of the elements involved in the event.

This assumption interacts with Langacker’s hedgeball model (1991), by which we tend to conceive the world as being populated with discrete objects located in space. Some of these objects are capable of moving around and also of inducing movement of other, non energetic elements in space, mainly through physical contact. We have been dealing with two different kinds of elements: things (leaves and balls) conceived as elements incapable of changing location by means of their own resources and binary forces conceived as energy sources that act constantly on any element in space. Interactions between such entities are encoded in language by means of different symbolic structures.

In order for changes to happen some kind of energy must act upon an element. Before the action takes place, there may be some resistance, controlling the state of the element to be affected. This creates a situation of Force Dynamics, as proposed by Talmy (1985), in which an energetic element (the antagonist) imposes a change on another element (the agonist) by blocking or overwhelming the force with which the determinant was maintained in a particular fashion before that energy acted on it. In Talmy’s canonical illustrative example: The ball kept rolling against the stiff grass, the grass is the antagonistic force resisting the trajectory of the ball as it is being moved by some unspecified force.
In this type of energetic construction a force-dynamic encounter of abstract forces can also be found. Generally speaking, natural expectations of world events constitute the resisting force being overcome. In the most transparent examples, the encounter of physical forces is also part of the conceptualization of an event that runs counter to expectations. To take the simplest case, in (24) the strength of gravity makes the ball fall down. The ball, not being self-energetic, cannot offer resistance to the influence of gravity. Consequently, since there is no conflict between competing forces, the middle form cannot be used. In the energetic sentence (23b), the table is a resisting force that neutralizes the influence of gravity. This interaction constructs the initial state of affairs. For a change to happen some other unspecified force must act upon the ball, moving it beyond the table’s edge, in such a way that the neutralizing effects of the table have been suspended. The different perceptions of leaves falling can be accounted for in the same way, as the tree constitutes the resisting force against gravity. In the energetic construction an unspecified force (a storm, a plague, etc.) must act on the tree in order to cancel the tree’s controlling effects over the leaves in such a way that they are left to the mercy of gravity. In this canceling effect that imposes the “unexpected” reading of sentence (26). As predicted, only the middle construction is used in this case.

The contrast between the absolutes and the energetic formations does not depend on whether the participant is animate or not. The same contrast can be found in the processes with animate participants:

(27a) a. Juan (ST') cayó en el agua con toda elegancia
‘Juan fell into the water with elegance’

b. Juan (ST') cayó en el agua vestido
‘Juan fell into the water dressed’

A force-dynamic interpretation of this construction is a natural one. In (27a), Juan does not offer any resistance to the natural strength of gravity. The lack of force conflict rules out the possibility of using a reflexive form. In (27b) the situation is reversed. A person in a standing position neutralizes the influence of gravity, unless some kind of obstacle cancels this resisting force. In such a case, the change of location is not voluntarist and it constitutes a contradiction of natural expectations. Only under those conditions is the middle formation allowed.

We may now account for cases in which, even though the notion of accessibility is present, the middle forms is ruled out:

(28) Después de que le disparasen el retrato (ST') quedó muerto
‘After they shot him the thief fell dead’

The context imposes a different conception of the subject of cayó. Notice that the act of shooting takes place before the thief falls. Consequently, the act of falling takes place when the thief is not conceived as capable of resisting the influence of gravity. Since no particular conflict of forces is being professed the use of ST' is inappropriate. In a similar manner, a direct request for aactor fall on a film would require a declarative clause without a middle marker: ‘Déjate caer’ ‘Let yourself fall’ in place of ‘Cayó’ ‘Fall down’. The middle marker would impose an inappropriate conflict of forces.

The contrast between the intermediate unmarked sentences and the reflexive formations of this verb is based on the pattern shown in the following schema:
It is of interest that the energetic construction is much more common than the unmarked form of the verb. The absolute construction occurs in cases where the act of laughing is objectively described, as (31) shows. There are good reasons for the middle-energetic reír to cover a much bigger area than its absolute counterpart. This middle verb also has the reading of "about change" characteristic of energetic constructions (see previous section).

(32) Antes de que terminara de contar el chiste su tío se había reído. "Before he finished telling his joke, everybody had already laughed. Polo is so funny..."

Whereas smiling, as in (29a) and (30a), does not normally imply a sudden change, laughing does. This explains the stronger tendency for reír to be commonly used with the middle marker. In contexts where expectation situations both reír and someteirse commonly imply a sudden change and of course both require the use of the middle marker.

Expectations are based on our knowledge about the canonical structure of world events, behavioral patterns of society and other kinds of norms. Events contradicting our world view are thus prompt to have negative connotations.

(33) No te rías, eso no es graciosito.

"Don't laugh (at it), that is not nice!"

(34) Patricia dijo otra sonrisa. "Maura simplemente se sonrió.

"Patricia said another foolish thing. Maura simply smiled (at her)"

The middle construction involves a balance-of-forces situation. The person is expected to hold back any emotional manifestation. This expectation invokes a neutralizing force that prevents a reaction from emerging. When the impulse is stronger than the inhibition the change of state takes place. The resulting act contradicts the natural course of events and is grammatically encoded in Spanish by the middle formation.

A construal in which the resisting force that creates the environment for a reflexive formation can only be equated with desires and expectations is of course found in the language. Take, for example, the verb escurrirse 'to shrink' and notice the contrast between the reflexively marked and the unmarked forms:

(35) a. La lana (ser) escurrida

"Wool shrinks"

b. Los pantalones de poliéster no (ser) escurridos

"Polyester trousers don't shrink"
Ricardo Maldonado

(36a. a. A pesar de que este pantalón es nuevo, me encogí en el suelo.
"Even though these trousers are new, they shrunk unexpectedly"

b. La etiqueta lo informa, pero yo no hice caso al aviso en el suéter.
"The label warned me, but I ignored it and the sweater shrunk."

c. El suéter se encogió en el suéter.
"The sweater shrunk on me."

Common to the first six examples is the fact that they describe the tenses of different materials to undergo a change in different situations. There are no special expectations imposed on the event by the speaker. The speaker is generally expected to know the event by the weight of the water overwhelms this resistance. Besides this information and abstraction of forces situation is present: ceilings are commonly expected to protect the space they cover from the falling of any object, and the dripping of water runs counter to normal expectations. The same explanation holds for example (33) and (40). As in previous cases, the change of state constitutes an unexpected event, as the nature of the initiative force causing the process remains unspecified. What is common to these examples is the fact that the overwhelming agnostic force is an expectation imposed on an inanimate participant not capable of undergoing a change based on its own resources. Crucially, the initiative force is always unspecified. Moreover, not only must the subject be non-human but also the agent (the initiative force of the action) must be non-human (Molina Redondo 1974). The properties observed by Molina correspond to the fact that force-dynamic construals involve an unexpected subject choice. Obvious examples of this fact are the literal translations provided for (38) and (40). It shouldn't be surprising to find that traditional grammars show an obvious confusion in the characterization of this kind of construal. Whereas diverse and similar are considered deviations from reconstructive constructions, the following examples are considered as departures from passives; the so-called "pseudo-passives":

(37a. a. La pluma (yo) corre más una vez sobre el papel.
"The pen runs smoothly on the paper."

c. Por usar la vieja pluma fuerte, la tinta se corrió sobre el papel y ahora hay manera de hacerla.
"Because of using the old fountain pen, the ink ran over the paper and now there is no way to erase it."

In (37a) the pen is accomplishing its normal function, the construal is absolute. In (37b) the ink produces an undesired stain on the paper. The only resisting force is the desire of the pen to have a clean base. When such a desire is contradicted the event runs counter to expectations and the energetic-reflexive formation is employed. We are now in a position to explain what in traditional grammar has been considered an anomalous or even absurd case of reflexive constructions (Hernández 1966). The examples always given for the so-called "reflexiva animales" (Yoshida 1986) are the following:

(38) El techo se (yo) lluvia.
"The ceiling got rain through." [Lit: The ceiling rained].

(39) La burbuja se (yo) salió.
"Water dripped out of the bulb." [Lit: The bulb went out].

(40) El baño se estira.
"The toilet is dripping." [Lit: The toilet is falling].

Traditional grammar has been unable to explain this kind of sentences since their basic hypothesis is to see them as a departure from a subject/object-identification reflexive sentence. In (38) it is clear that the ceiling does not activate the change of water falling onto the floor. On the contrary, it offers resistance up to the point where the energy exerted by the weight of the water overwhelms this resistance. Besides this physical explanation an abstract balance-of-forces situation is present: ceilings are commonly expected to protect the space they cover from the falling of any object, and the dripping of water runs counter to normal expectations. The same explanation holds for example (39) and (40). As in previous cases, the change of state constitutes an unexpected event, as the nature of the initiative force causing the process remains unspecified. What is common to these examples is the fact that the overwhelming agnostic force is an expectation imposed on an inanimate participant not capable of undergoing a change based on its own resources. Crucially, the initiative force is always unspecified. Moreover, not only must the subject be non-human but also the agent (the initiative force of the action) must be non-human (Molina Redondo 1974). The properties observed by Molina correspond to the fact that force-dynamic construals involve an unexpected subject choice. Obvious examples of this fact are the literal translations provided for (38) and (40). It shouldn't be surprising to find that traditional grammars show an obvious confusion in the characterization of this kind of construal. Whereas diverse and similar are considered deviations from reconstructive constructions, the following examples are considered as departures from passives; the so-called "pseudo-passives":

(41) Se (yo) torció el árbol.
"The tree got twisted".

(42) Se (yo) secó el árbol.
"The tree dried out".

From our perspective, such a division is inadequate. Suffice it to say that these examples are also construed in an energetic fashion; the agnostic force is
always a natural expectation and the antagonistic force is the undesired event.
If the force-dynamic interpretation is correct, we may be in a position to explain an old issue in Spanish linguistics:

(43) a. El papá de Juan murió
   ‘Juan’s father died’

b. El papá de Juan se murió
   ‘Juan’s father died’

García has analyzed sentence (43) as a case in which the subject is
doubly mentioned in such a way that the verb ending and the clitic
are a reference to the same participant (subject and object of the action). The
effect of double mention is that the only participant ever involved in the event
is the available ‘functions’ as both logical subject and logical object of the verb.
In other words, what *se* does is to exclude the possibility of having an ‘external’
agent. So, a kidnapper asking for ransom night threaten a father as follows:

(44) Me das $ 1,000 o tu hijo muere
   ‘Give me $ 1,000 or your son will die’

According to García, the absence of *se* would allow the inference that other
forces may be operational. This proposal is extended by García to describe all
instances of intransitive reflexive verbs. Even though her analysis is highly
suggective, it proves inadequate not only for *morrir* but also for the set of
energetic constructions given previously. Inasmuch a elements cannot act in their
own accord to produce a change perversely. They do not qualify as being
simultaneously logical agents and patients. Therefore the event must be induced
by external forces. The difference in the approach, though subtle, is fundamental.
García claims that *se* rules out the possibility of having external forces
operating in the background. I claim that the event can only take place if there
are externally-acting forces. I also propose that allows such forces to act but
at the same time it blocks the possibility of making a specific participant
responsible for their action.

The absolute/energetic contrast is offered as an alternative explanation to
García’s analysis of *morrir*. In the absolute *morrir*, the act of dying is seen
objectively as a biological change of state, thus no particular expectations are
attached to it. The following examples prove García wrong, since they show that
the absolute construal is neutral to the presence of energetic forces:

(45) a. El abuelo murió suavemente, se quedó dormido y ya no despertó
   ‘The grandfather died smoothly, he fell asleep and he didn’t wake up’

b. Juan murió del balazo que le dispararon su jeque enemigo
   ‘I died of a shot from his worst enemy shot at him’

c. Les heridos murieron al amanecer (García 1975)
   ‘The hostages died at dawn.’

Things are quite different in the middle construction. It is well acknowledged
in the literature that *morrir* implies a high level of accidentality. This is to say
that the event is not seen as absolute terms and that speaker’s expectations play
an important role in it: they constitute the energetic forces overcome by the
undesirable happening.

García’s explanation cannot account for examples like the following, in
which an ironic reading is insisted:

(46) Me das $ 1,000 o tu hijo se muere en mis manos (García 1975)
   ‘Give me $ 1,000 or your son will die in my hands’

Against García’s prediction, there is some force inducing the son’s death
and yet the reflexive construction is permissible. As I have proposed, there
must be an initiative force driving the event in such a way that it overwhems
a resisting expectation. However, the stronger initiative force cannot be identified
with a specific participant; it always remains unspecified and can only be represented
in highly schematic terms. We know that somebody (the speaker
in this case) drives the event, and yet the use of *se* portrays the identity of the
participant as being unknown. Based on this approach the opposition between
absolute and energetic should be clear. The former is used in order to highlight
an event that is seen objectively, i.e. nothing until possible subjective participation
by the receiver; while the latter portrays an event that goes against an
expectation and is driven by a highly schematic antagonist force:

(47) a. Cuando don Nico murió, se hizo su testamento
   ‘When don Nico died, he had his will made’

b. Cuando el sr. de *morrir* sin que se haga nada
   ‘His death (unexpectedly) without his son being able to talk
   to him’

(47a) shows that the act of dying is seen as a biological phenomenon. It
describes two independent states: the age of Juan and the death of his father.
In this verb the only thing that happens is that life ceases. If anything, *morrir* is an
El producto de su patrón es significativo. Los ejemplos que han sido tratados como ilógicos o absurdos por previos análisis no son analizados. La posibilidad de hacer un construccionismo "absoluto" en el discurso es considerable. Al menos en el español Mexicano, informal con los ejemplos de las siguientes formas comunes:

(51) "Luis Javier, no dejes ta toallas aquí porque te sale un paño" "Luis Javier, no dejes la toalla en el suelo porque este sucio"

He sugerido que hay un claro enlace entre accidentalidad y eventos que van contra las expectativas. Uno podría observar que a menudo accidentalidades, verbos que más que accidentalidad como aspecto de sus contenidos, no tomaría el verbo para introducir lo que está en un sentido de accidentalidad. Esto es en función de que el cambio de accidentalidad en español:

(52) a. El coche (se) pinchó con el coche en la carretera "El coche pinchó con el coche en la carretera" b. El coche (se) pinchó "The car pinched" c. El coche (se) pinchó con el coche en la carretera "The car pinched with his car in the highway" d. El coche (se) pinchó en la carretera "The car pinched on the highway"

e. La rueda pinchó "The tire went flat"

No se pueden usar estos ejemplos sin la forma reflexiva en el español Mexicano. Este hecho sugiere una mayor tendencia en el español Mexicano para incorporar accidentalidades inerentes en el evento. Esto es como:

(53) El coche (se) pinchó "The car skidded"

La accidentalidad está en el verbo. El uso de se pone especial énfasis en la accidentalidad de eventos.

La selección de verbos que se incorporan en el esquema de accidentalidades variará de acuerdo a los dialectos. Para algunos dialectos, la accidentalidad del verbo puede ser suficiente para expresar el evento accidental, y no se necesitan otros aspectos. Para otros, las características del verbo pueden ser.
insufficient to stress an energetic view of the event, such that the use of *se* will be required. For example, while in Mexican *exploirse* inherently portrays a dynamic/expected reading and can only be used without the middle marker, in Spanish both the middle marked and the plain verb can be used, such that the construction brings a more objective view of an expected and a counter-to-expectation conceptualization of the event can be established. (54a) a. Las bombas (*se* explotaron automáticamente) 'The bombs explode automatically' b. Las bombas (*se* explotaron en las manos caídas "bombeo"
automáticamente) 'The bombs exploded in his hands when he was disconnecting it'
I have shown the existence of the force-dynamic construal in the Spanish middle system. In the following section I will address the more specific question of how energetic construals are motivated from absolute ones.

5. PRAGMATIC ALIGNMENT

It is common knowledge that the use of *se* represents a transitivity decrease with respect to transitive verbs, however with respect to intrasitive absolute construals it represents a transitivity increase. From an objective representation of a scene with no energy profile (domini, coeren) an event becomes energetic by virtue of gaining dynamism through *se*'s focussing function (dominio, subere). A further development of these dynamitic effects make the scene an unexpected one. The conceptualizer's viewpoint is incorporated in the scene and becomes a crucial part of the grammatical construction. This transitivity increase pattern can be represented in the following diagram:

![Diagram of transitivity increase pattern]

This pattern is valid not only as a synchronic cognitive organization of this area of the middle system but also corresponds to the historical evolution of the emergence of energetic construals. In Maldonado (1989), I have shown that the evolution from the XII to the XVIII century followed the pattern shown in Figure 8.

This pattern raises a natural question: why was the reflexive marker chosen in the language to accomplish this set of functions and not some other marker? I suggest that the schematic structure of the reflexive marker has specific properties that make it the best candidate to render the set of middle functions presented in this paper. Instead of energy transfer from one participant to another expressed in transitive clauses, reflexive markers have the function of limiting the energy transfer to the same participant.

Consequently mental scanning is also limited. We do not move mentally from one participant to another, we see the whole action initiated and terminated in the same participant. This is the case of clear reflexive constructions such as Tachita se pegó en la pierna con un martillo 'Tachita hit herself in the leg with a hammer'. Scanning can be reduced to even a greater extent. This is the case where instead of observing someone imposing energy on some part of his/her body, only the terminal part of the action can be observed. Change-of-body-pose verbs like sentarse 'sit down', ponerse 'stand up', etc., in which no energy transfer is apparent and only the change of position can be observed, are good illustrations of this construal. The proposal is that focus can be restricted to a greater extent in such a way that the force inducing the event is left highly schematic.

I claim that the reflexive marker accomplishes the basic function of reducing the scope of predication and that this property of *se* is mapped onto different classes of verbs. In grooming verbs attention is focused on the fact that energy is applied on the same participant. In change of body posture verbs the new position of the body is in focus. Its extension to verbs of translational motion imposes a narrow focus which restricts the temporal profile of the event. The result of this extension process has been the focussing function of *se* where *se* 'leave' is now in contrast with *a* 'go'. The extreme case of *se*'s focussing function consists of concentrating on the change of state undergone by the subject downplaying the initiating force. The cognitive path just exposed can be schematized in the following scale:

*grooming* > *change of body posture* > translational motion > *change of state*

This cognitive path can be represented in the following diagram:
grammaticalization is inadequate to refer to the force-dynamic construal since \textit{se} is, and has always been, a grammatical marker. In fact I suggest that grammaticalization is a phenomenon which corresponds to Traugott’s last step of the grammaticalization process, for the incorporation of the speaker’s beliefs in grammatical marker occurs to elements well advanced in the grammaticalization process, such that the original lexical semantics of a grammatical form has already become almost imperceptible.

There has been the assumption in linguistics (Mellett 1912 \textit{quid} in Traugott 1986, Heine and Reh 1984) that grammaticalization consists of a desemanticization process (know as bleaching or semantic weakening). Llanazo Carreter’s proposal by which \textit{se} has become meaningless is part of that tradition. Traugott has pointed out that bleaching is restricted to the later stages of grammaticalization (for example: from the verb \textit{do} to the dummy auxiliary in Standard English). However it is clear that strengthening, most especially strengthening of speaker involvement, is also a common phenomenon of grammaticalization. The use of \textit{se} to mark the conceptualization of the event as counter-to-normal-expectations is an obvious case. Perhaps the best argument proving the conceptualizer’s level of involvement in counter-to-expectation constructions is the fact that the dative \textit{le} makes the use of \textit{se} obligatory. As I already pointed out, a fundamental function of the dative marker is to increase the level of affectedness of an event with respect to an experiencer participant.

While a newspaper report about an airplane crash tends to be expressed in objective neutral terms via the absolute construal, my report of an accident in which an injured passenger was related to me would tend to be expressed with the middle form

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{a.} Cardó un avió. Martorens trenta persones (Newspaper report) ‘A plane fell. Thirty people died’
\item \textbf{b.} En esa accidente abocà se (*O) me marí i mi tío (Personal report) ‘In that aircraft accident, my uncle died on me’
\end{itemize}

It is of interest to observe that once the pragmatising process is completed with respect to intransitive verbs the force dynamic construal can easily extend to transitive verbs. The lack of information with respect to the (volitional) force inducing the event allows dynamic construals of rapidity, abruptness or counter-expectations. Exactly the same phenomena are produced when the middle \textit{se} applies to transitive verbs. I will show only a few examples of this very productive pattern:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{a.} El nàufraga al veiç INT: ‘The thief drowned the old man’
\end{itemize}
b. *El sacerdote se (*de) ahogó\n‘The old man drowned’

The transitive sentence is construed following the prototypical pattern of an action chain in agreement with a force-dynamic situation: in the initial state of affairs the object resists the influence of gravity to keep afloat. Then the subject impinges on the object, resisting the force and the change of state takes place. In the middle-constituted initial state of affairs the object is the same as in ahogar; but now the internal resisting energy of the patient is canceled either by an internal force, such as fatigue, or by some external unspecified stronger energy. Whereas the causator of the action is the agent in the transitive sentence, in the middle ahogarse the causator is not specified.

Up to this point the explanation does not differ from the de-agenticization approach. If anything, it only differs in showing with greater detail the phenomena involved in the focussing function of se. But this function alone does not explain the accidentality commonly found in de-agenticized verbs. The inclusion of the abstract force of normal expectations completes the analysis. Self-energetic elements are supposed to have control over their actions. An event in which they lose self-control contradicts this basic expectation. Depending on the role of expectations we may have three ways of departing from transitive action-chain construals:

(57) a. Juan estrelló el coche en la carretera\n‘Juan crashed the car on the highway’

b. Después de varios intentos suicidas, Juan finalmente se estrelló en la carretera\n‘After several failed attempts, Juan finally crashed on the highway’

c. El coche se estrelló en la carretera\n‘The car was crashed on the highway’

d. Juan se quedó dormido y se estrelló en la carretera\n‘Juan fell asleep and crashed on the highway’

Sentences (57a-d) constitute departures from the ransitive volitional action of an agent imposing a change on a patient, as in (52a), whereas (57b) is self-induced action volitionally controlled by the subject, (57c) is the narrow focus construal with an unspecified initiator. Finally (57d) is the case where there is narrow focus and the action takes place without the subject’s control. It is under these circumstances that the natural expectations imposed on human beings are counteracted and a force-dynamic construal is present. The pattern being observed is the extension from a self-induced action to the schematicizing of the initiating force, to the inclusion of normal expectations. The latter is a target extension from the focussing function of se in which the initiator and other basic circumstances are downplayed. In order to have a force-dynamic construal, it is only necessary to eliminate a basic attribute of the participant involved in the process. This is the case of (57d). The same would be true for pegarse ‘hit oneself by accident’, contarse ‘cut oneself by accident’ and so on, where the canonical conceptualization of humans as normally being in control of their actions is counteracted.

With respect to thematic inanimate elements the conceptualizer’s expectations need to be imposed on the event as a whole and the construal is based on the implications normally attributed to the meaning of the verb. Se’s focussing function will let the initiating force be present in schematic terms such that the change of state will tend to constitute as unexpected event. Whether there will be a negative reading will depend on the verbal semantics:

(58) a. El problema se solucionó\n‘The problem got solved’

b. La tiza se rompió\n‘The cup broke’

In the case of (58a), the event may be unexpected and yet it is less prompt to obtain a negative reading than (58b) is; while (58a) does not constitute an undesirable fact, (58b) does. The negative connotations found in a wide variety of middle construals is to be explained in the same terms. Spanish verbs like desanimarse ‘deflate’, descomponerse ‘go out of order’, desgastarse ‘wear out’, romperse ‘break’, and deshacerse ‘hang down’ can be used in narrow focus construals simply invoking a change of state, and yes their inherent negative connotations strongly determine a natural connection with the force-dynamic construal.

The counter-to-expectation construal is strongly connected to other constructions whose detailed explanations would take us far afield, I will point out in passing the type of contrast in which this construal is active. The contrast between creeer ‘believe’, and creerse ‘believe in one’ will illustrate this point.

(59) a. Santiago creyó que le dijeron\n‘Santiago believed they told him’

b. Santiago se creyó lo que le dijeron\n‘Santiago (wrongly) believed what they told him’

c. Santiago s’ (*)creyó la mentira al igual que todos los de su grupo\n‘Santiago believed the lie as did all the others in his group’
García (1975) has proposed that via double mention all other possible participants are excluded from believing something. While that approach can account for (59b), it fails short with respect to (59c), since other participants can be incorporated in the same type of action. As it may be obvious, my analysis will offer a force-dynamic interpretation. Aside from issues related to object level of exploitation, the construal involves the implication that one is supposed to tease apart true from false; not doing so contradicts a basic expectation with respect to human behavior.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have shown that the focussing function of te develops from self-induced change-of-state construals for which only the results of the action are observable. I have also shown that the dynamic effects of rapidity, suddenness and abruptness are the expected extensions from the focussing strategy. Finally, I have shown that the incorporation of expectations, desires and canonicalization of the world into the grammatical value of the middle construction leads to a force-dynamic situation. These patterns of extension are best analyzed as the consequence of pragmalinguistic. The view proposed here explains and motivates in a natural manner a wide variety of examples that up to now had been treated in other analyses as exceptional or deviant. The use of te with verbs like cause ‘fall down’, menace ‘die’, dominate ‘fall asleep’ and true ‘leave’ is far from being meaningless. I have also shown that there is nothing absurd or illogical about the use of te in lloverse el tech ‘the ceiling getting rained through’. Meaning is equated with conceptualization. Traditional views of grammar have left the conceptualizer’s viewpoint out of their theoretical considerations. Taking into account the conceptualizer’s viewpoint not only allows an adequate treatment of constructions that are not totally transparent, but also helps us have a more enriched perception of language.

FOOTNOTES
1. The term middle refers to exist in which there is a low degree of distinguishability among participants. I reserve the term reflexive in which there is a participant split-self-representation of the type shown in (1):

(1) a. Riccardo è in viaggio con me e nella sua casa. [Riccardo is on the move with me and in his house; I reserve the term reflexive in which there is a participant split-self-representation of the type shown in (1):]

(2) b. Riccardo è in viaggio con me e nella sua casa. [Riccardo is on the move with me and in his house; I reserve the term reflexive in which there is a participant split-self-representation of the type shown in (1):]

(3) c. Riccardo è in viaggio con me e nella sua casa. [Riccardo is on the move with me and in his house; I reserve the term reflexive in which there is a participant split-self-representation of the type shown in (1):]

As proposed by Zimmerman (1988) and further elaborated by Makino (1992), the low degree of distinguishability constitutes the base for a whole array of constructions with a variety of meanings.