Spanish middle syntax: A usage-based proposal for grammar teaching

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Abstract

This paper argues that the analysis of the clitic *se* in Spanish as a reflexive pronoun misrepresents the overall functions that the clitic displays. Instead it is proposed that while having a reduced number of reflexive uses the clitic *se* is a middle voice marker. Middle voice is defined as a system of constructions whose main property is to portray events remaining in the subject's dominion. The subject is in most cases an experiencer. It is proposed that the crucial function of the middle voice marker is to highlight the affectedness undergone by the experiencer and this focusing function leads the way for two general subschemas. The first subschema involves self-directed actions and the second subschema depicts the pivotal moment of change-of-state. While the first subschema accounts for grooming actions and self-beneficial events, the second accounts for focal change-of-state events depicting inchoative and spontaneous events as well as emotional changes and changes of location. Further developments of the general focusing strategy are explained in terms of the absolute/energetic contrast (Langacker 1991) as it accounts naturally for the existence of sudden, abrupt and even unexpected construals. Finally, the paper also identifies the most problematic areas for the English speaker learning Spanish and suggests that the middle constitutes a natural, motivated and coherent system which can be exploited in the learning process in a productive and efficient way.

Keywords: reflexive; middle; reflexive vs. middle; middle construction; clitic *se;* grooming action; self-beneficial event; emotional state; internal emotion; mental image; inchoative; motion; experiencer subject; experiential dominion; second language acquisition; *gustar* verbs; emotional reaction; body part; alienable vs. inalienable possession; dominion; focus construction; unexpected event; counter-expectation; participant involvement; speaker involvement; subjectivity; subjectification; grammaticalization; absolute event; energetic event; Spanish; English

1. Introduction

It would be hard to remain blind to the fact that "small rules" in grammar constitute a considerable problem both for linguistic analysis and for grammar instruction. Big rules are elegantly presented by almost any theoretical model in terms of important generalizations that are supposed to represent the most salient organization of a language. Smaller rules tend to be seen as deviations from the cannon or as forms with aberrant behavior that deserve little attention to the extent that they can be obscured in a footnote, listed as exceptions or simply hidden under the carpet. However, leaving aside smaller rules may be an obstacle both for linguistic in-depth research and for grammar teaching. If the student is left with a big rule and a list of exceptions with no motivation or no internal coherence, he is simply left alone with a skeletal representation of a language with no history, no culture and no creativity. In this paper I will argue that the traditional approach to the clitic *se* in Spanish has been particularly inefficient precisely because in most

analyses the clitic is treated as a reflexive marker with a general rule of subject-object coreference. This strategy has left behind a considerable number of so-called "exceptions" with no internal coherence. The clitic is indeed coreferential, *se* marks third person singular and second and third person plural. It represents the whole class of coreferential clitics (*me* 1SG, *te* 2SG, *nos* 1PL, and for Spain *os* 2PL[i]). Traditional analyses (Aid 1973; Alonso and Henríquez Ureña 1953; Gili Gaya1955; Goldin 1968; González 1985; Grimshaw 1982; Sells, Zaenen, and Zec 1986; Butt and Benjamín 2004; and many others) as well as instructional textbooks (Terrell, Andrade, and Egasse 2006; Canteli Dominicis and Reynolds 1994; King and Suñer 1999; Alonso, Castañeda, Martínez, Miguel, Ortega, and Ruiz 2005 to name a few) analyze examples like (1) as a clear reflexive construction while those like (2) are exceptions treated separately from the general coding pattern of the language:

(1) a. *Valeria se vio en el espejo*
    Valeria RFLX.3SG saw in the mirror
    'Valeria saw herself in the mirror'
  b. *Estando en México Valeria se vio actuando en Londres*
    Being in Mexico Valeria RFLX saw 3SG dancing in London
    Being in Mexico Valeria saw herself dancing in London

(2) a. *Don Nico se murió*
    Don Nico MID.3SG died
    'Don Nico died (unexpectedly)'
  b. *Tachita ya se fue*
    Tachita already MID.3SG went
    'Tachita has already left'

Reflexives involve transitive verbs where subject and object are coreferential, as in (1). They allow a split representation of the only participant in the event in such a way that the subject and the coreferential object may be in separate mental spaces, as is Valeria in (1b). Under traditional views, the cases of (2) are "deviant reflexives." Given that in (2) the verbs *morir* 'die' and *ir* 'go' are intransitive there is no point in arguing for a reflexive analysis. One must question whether the reflexive is the general construction from which other uses can be derived. Among the wide variety of "deviant reflexives" only self care "grooming verbs" (*lavarse la cara* 'wash one's face', *peinarse* 'comb one's hair') show a reflexive feature, namely coreferentiality. All other uses share fewer reflexive properties with reflexives and need an alternative analysis. In this paper I suggest that "deviant reflexives" are in fact *middles*, a grammatical category that is well known in classical studies of Greek and other languages. Middles, however, have not received enough attention in current linguistic analyses until recent cognitive studies of syntax (Kemmer 1993, 1994; Maldonado 1988, 1992, 1993, 1999; Manney 2001, Nava and Maldonado 2005) have pointed out its relevance for grammatical analysis. As I will try to show, the middle construction accounts for the set of non-reflexive meanings depicted by the clitic *se*.

    In this paper I will illustrate the kinds of errors commonly made by native English speakers learning Spanish in order to identify the conceptual problems of a variety of non-reflexive *se* constructions. The examples used in this paper are extracted from a database of 1,382 examples of native speakers of English learning Spanish. These are errors I have collected over the years as a Spanish instructor at the University of California at Santa

Barbara. Moreover, I have compared my sample with 176 errors generously provided by three prominent Spanish instructors in three different parts of the world: Martha Jurado (Mexico City), Marta Montemayor (San Antonio, Texas), and Alejandro Castañeda (Granada, Spain). I have selected in the four locations the most representative examples that showed up. Since my only goal in using these examples is to illustrate the kind of errors commonly found in the production of second language learners, I have not done any statistical analysis and I make no claim about the second language acquisition process.

There are important reasons to focus on the non-reflexive uses of *se*. Foreign language learners of Spanish hardly ever produce reflexive errors like **Yo veo en el espejo* 'I see in the mirror' with the meaning of (1a). In contrast under-use and over-use of middle markers show up frequently in everyday use. In cases like (3) a middle marker is missing, while in (4) the use of middle marker *me* is ungrammatical:

(3)   a.-*Quiero informar que a partir de hoy dejo la coordinación*
            'I want to inform (you all) that as of today I am no longer the
            coordinator'
    *   b. -*pero no <u>vas</u>, ¿verdad?* [*pero no* <u>te</u> *vas, ¿verdad?*]
            but not go, truth?   but not MID.2SG go, truth?
            Intended reading: 'but you are not leaving, right?

(4) *   *No <u>me puedo lavar</u> el coche*   [no puedo lavar]
         not MID.1SG can wash the car   cannot wash
         Intended reading: 'I cannot wash my car'

In contrast with previous approaches, in this paper I argue for a grammar instruction strategy that recognizes the middle as a well-organized and coherent system. I propose that middles must be introduced as opposed to reflexives and that using the reflexive as the base form to derive middle constructions is misleading. The middle marker develops meanings totally unrelated to reflexives. Observe again example (2a), the middle *se* marker imposes a reading of unexpectedness and in (2b) it develops an inchoative reading: the trajectory followed along a path characteristic of *go* is reduced to simply signaling the moment in which the subject leaves some place. Notice that the ungrammaticality of (3b) corresponds to the absence of a middle marker depicting the inchoative reading. In (4) the improper use of *se* by a learner of Spanish may be an overgeneralization of self-directed actions as in *Yo me cuido* 'I take care of myself.'

I will attempt to identify the types of situation where middles are most common in Spanish and I will show how they are related to each other in a coherent system. This should provide the language instructor with an organized set of situations that may facilitate the learning process in foreign language learners.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 is devoted to distinguishing reflexive from middle construals and to show the ways in which the two event types tend to be marked in the languages of the world with special reference to Spanish. Section 3 offers a grammar strategy for teaching middle constructions. This section is divided into four subsections showing the behavior of the most problematic middle constructions for the second language learner. More particularly, 3.1 shows the behavior of self-directed action in transitive verbs. Section 3.2 further analyzes middle transitive constructions depicting full exploitation of the object as well as increased participation of the subject. The behavior of middles with verbs of emotional

reactions is dealt with in 3.3. A brief note on the *gustar* 'like' type of verbs is made in 3.4. Verbs of motion are treated in section 3.5. Section 4 offers a basic didactic application for middle constructions while Section 5 contains some concluding remarks on the middle construction and its acquisition, as well as its relevance for pedagogical grammars.

2. Reflexive and middle *se*

Reflexives are defined as constructions in which the subject and the object of a transitive verb share the same referent, as in (1). Consequently the reflexive construction normally exhibits intransitive behavior. Still it can be shown that reflexive constructions are not totally intransitive. They exhibit an intermediate degree of transitivity as the subject acts on the self. We can see from the Yucatec Mayan example (taken from Martínez and Maldonado 2006) that although the reflexive construction is intransitive, it preserves the notion of subject control characteristic of a transitive clause. The intransitive verb *lúub* as used in (a) designates the mere act of falling. In contrast the reflexive construction of (5b) depicts an act of falling that the subject controls:

(5)   a.   *(j)-lúub-Ø-Ø*   *le   wakax-o´*
               PERF-fall-COMP-B3SG   DEM   cow-DEM
               'The cow fell down'
        b.   *Waan-e´   t-u-lúub-s-(i)k   u-ba*
               Juan-DEM   DUR-A.3SG-all-CAUS-IMPERF   P3S-RFLX
               'Juan lets himself fall (so as not to fall down from the
               tree)'

Spanish reflexives not only preserve subject control but also involve a complex representation of the event in which there is some concrete or abstract split. Kemmer (1993) suggests that in reflexives there are two distinguishable entities put in correspondence via coreferentiality. In example (6) there is a split representation of *Vale*: one facing the other. It is quite common for split reflexives to show up in separate mental spaces (Fauconnier 1985) as in (7):

(6)   *Vale   se   enfrentó consigo misma*
        Vale   RFLX.3SG   faced   with-she same, i.e., with herself
        'Vale faced herself'
(7)   *Me imaginé bailando con Tongolele*
        RFLX imagined dancing with Tongolele
        `I imagined myself dancing with Tongolele'

This split representation has grammatical consequences. For emphatic or contrastive purposes *se* can be expanded by the prepositional phrase *a mí mismo* 'to myself', *a ti mismo* 'to yourself', *a sí mismo* 'to himself/herself', in exactly the same manner that object pronouns can be expanded by their corresponding prepositional phrases:

OBJECT EXPANSION	REFLEXIVE EXPANSION
lo '3rd' ---> a él 'to him'	se ---> a sí mismo 'to himself
te '2nd'---> a ti 'to you'	te ---> a ti mismo 'to yourself'
me '1st'---> a mí 'to me'	me ---> a mí mismo 'to myself

(8)   *Es cierto, lo respetas a él, pero no te respetas a ti mismo*
       'It is true, you respect him, but you don't respect yourself'

In contrast, middle constructions, as defined below, do not profile the way an agent acts on himself, instead they focus on the change of state undergone by the experiencer. This is reflected by the fact that middles do not have a split representation and cannot be expanded by a *mismo* phrase.

(9)   *Me enfermé al salir de la fiesta*

        'I got sick as I left the party'

(10)   **Me enfermé a mi mísmo al salir de la fiesta*

        Intended reading: I sickened myself as I left the party

At this point I must clarify that the term 'middle' can have two meanings corresponding to two different linguistic schools. In the English grammar tradition it refers to constructions like *This car sells well*, where the properties of the thematic subject *car* are seen as being responsible for the outcome of the event. I will call this the English Middle construction (EMC). The EMC is well attested in a variety of languages and in Spanish it is marked by the clitic *se*. See Maldonado (1992, 1999) and Ruiz de Mendoza (this volume) for two alternative analyses within the cognitive linguistics tradition. In a less restrictive use of the term "middle" which is largely characteristic of typological studies, the EMC is but one of a variety of middle constructions that depict actions, events or changes of state pertaining to the subject's own dominion (Maldonado 1992, 1999). The notion of dominion is defined as a virtual area to which some participant has mental or physical access to manipulate, control or have mental contact with a set of objects located within it (Langacker 1991). Now, the "middle voice shows that the action is performed with special reference to the subject" (Smyth 1956: 390). In Benveniste's (1950: 149) words the subject "is indeed inside the process of which he is the agent." Current crosslinguistic data suggest that more than focusing on the agent, middle constructions depict the change of state undergone by the experiencer in the event (see examples (15)-(18) below). While transitive active constructions correspond to situations where two participants (most commonly agent and patient) interact, middle voice marking corresponds to situation types involving only the subject, typically an experiencer. Middles differ from reflexives in that the possibility of distinguishing two separate images of the same participant is either low or non-existent (Kemmer 1993, 1994). In (11) the experiencer undergoes some change-of-state where she is the only participant. It is not the case that *Ceci* does something to put herself down, she simply undergoes an emotional change. Likewise in (12) the grandfather simply became happy because of the weather conditions:

(11)   *Ceci se   deprimió*
       Ceci MID.3SG depressed
       'Ceci got depressed'
(12)   *Con un día así de bello   el abuelo   se   alegra*
       With such a beautiful day the grandpa MID.3SG glad
       'With such a beautiful day grandpa becomes glad'

The contrast of these middle examples with reflexives is dramatic. The emphatic situation in which Ceci willfully depresses herself would be

encoded by a reflexive construction expanded with the *mismo* 'self' phrase as in (13). The same is true for the grandfather's action in (14):

(13) *De tanto decirse que era insoportable, Ceci acabó deprimiéndose a sí misma*
      'After so much telling herself that she was unbearable, Ceci ended up depressing herself'
(14) *El abuelo se alegra a sí mismo recordando su juventud*
      'Grandpa gladdens himself remembering his youth'

The Spanish contrast between reflexives and middles parallels what is found in *two-form languages* (Kemmer 1994). In these languages (e.g., Hungarian or Russian), middles and reflexives get a different marker and the reflexive is normally longer than the middle. Haiman (1983) has defined this type of contrast as "iconic" in the sense that the degree of complexity of the event is reflected by the degree of elaboration and complexity of the morpho-syntactic marking. Long forms are consistently used to express reflexive construals that involve a volitional act imposed on the self. In contrast, short forms never mark reflexive split-representations of the same participant; instead they mark middles with the same type of meaning attested for the Spanish middle clitic *se*. the short forms construe the event as spontaneous, short, sudden, unplanned or even unexpected. Well-known cases of such a contrast are the Hungarian reflexive pronoun *magat* versus the verbal suffix *-kod-* or *-koz-* and the Russian reflexive pronoun *sebja* versus the verbal suffix *-sja,* which Haiman (1983: 797) gave as examples of an iconic contrast:

Hungarian
(15) *Meg-üt-ött-e   mag-á-t*
      PERF-hit-PAST-3SG SELF-his-ACC
      `He hit himself'
(16) *Bele-üt-koz-ött-   (valami-be)*
      PERF-hit-self-PAST-3SG.INDEF (something-ILLATIVE)
      `He bumped into something'

Russian
(17) *On utixomiril sebja*
      He pacified RFLX
      (His better nature prevailed over his enraged self = he controlled himself)
(18) *On utixomiri+sja*
      He pacified+MID
      (He settled down after sowing his wild oats = he calmed down)

Langacker and Munro (1975) suggest that for Uto-Aztecan languages the reflexive object is distinct from the subject when it is a separate word (the long form), but non-distinct when it is expressed as an affix on the verb. Haiman (1983), on the other hand, claims that the contrast between long and short forms is determined by iconic motivation where the linguistic separateness of an expression is said to correspond to the conceptual independence of the object or the event which it represents. The long forms of Russian and Hungarian depict reflexives like Spanish *se (a sí mismo)*, while the short markers cover the same type of phenomena encountered for the *se* form without a *mismo* phrase. Russian, Hungarian and Spanish are not

exceptional in encoding the reflexive/middle contrast. It is also found in Greek (Manney 2001), Dutch (van der Leek 1991), Turkish (Haiman 1983), Tarascan (Nava and Maldonado 2005), Yucatec Mayan (Martínez and Maldonado 2006), and many other languages reviewed by Kemmer (1993, 1994). In all these languages it is never the case that the short form encodes a reflexive construction. Though Spanish cannot be identified as a two-form language, it follows – just like the other Romance languages – the pattern of two-form languages in allowing the reflexive object to be expanded into an oblique phrase like *sí mismo*. These expansions, normally used for emphatic purposes, cannot apply to middle constructions with a short form.

(19) *Tachita se paró (*a sí misma)*
      'Tachita stood (*herself) up'

The use of *a sí misma* in (19) would derive a reflexive reading where *Tachita* would have to use her arms or other means as if her legs would be injured or paralyzed. To the extent that she acts on herself as she would act on another participant the construal with *a sí misma* in (19) is reflexive not middle.

Of particular interest is the fact that middle constructions tend to appear in about the same type of situations across the languages of the world. As pointed out by Kemmer (1993, 1994), there are situations that lend themselves to be coded in middle terms. One can expect internal emotions and mental images to be coded as middle constructions as they happen within the experiencer subject. This is in fact the case: verbs of emotion and emotional expression generally constitute the prototype, as in Classical Greek *olophyre-sthai* 'lament.' There are other situations involving no other participant than the subject that render themselves to be coded by middle marking. Table 1, taken from Maldonado (in press), contains the group of situations where the middle marker *se* is used. These situations match those identified by Kemmer (1993) in a wide variety of languages:

Table 1. Spanish basic middle voice situations

Interaction limited to body part or inalienable possession ~ grooming or body care	*Lavarse* 'wash', *peinarse* 'comb'
Self-benefit actions ~ benefactive middle	*Conseguirse* 'get', *allegarse* 'obtain'
Non-translational motion ~ change in body posture	*Pararse* 'stand up', *sentarse* 'sit down', *voletarse* 'turn', *estirarse* 'stretch out'
Change in location ~ translational motion	*Irse* 'leave', *subirse* 'get on top of something', *meterse* 'go into'
Internal change (emotional) ~ emotional reaction middle	*Alegrarse* 'gladden', *entristecerse* 'sadden', *enojarse* 'become angry'
Verbal actions manifesting emotions ~ emotive speech actions	*Quejarse* 'complain', *lamentarse* 'lament'
Internal change (mental) ~ cognition middle	*Acordarse* 'remember', *imaginarse* 'imagine'
Changes of state whose energetic source is not identified ~ spontaneous events	*Romperse* 'break', *quebrarse* 'crack', *cerrarse* 'close', *abrirse* 'open', etc.

For all the cases in Table 1, there is consistency in the way middles are restricted to depicting events remaining in the subject's dominion (Maldonado 1999, in press). One can expect internal emotions and mental images to be coded as middle constructions since they both designate events happening within the experiencer subject. This is in fact the case, the prototype for the middle are verbs of emotion *alegrarse* 'gladden' and verbal expression of emotions *quejarse* 'complain.' Emotive speech and cognition verbs also take place within the subject's experiential dominion. Middle marking is thus predicted for all these cases.

More problematic are motion and spontaneous events for it is less evident how they correspond to the sole experience of the subject. In previous works (Maldonado 1988, 1993, 1999), I have shown that the main function of the Spanish middle marker is to focus on the pivotal moment of change undergone by the experiencer. Thus, neither the circumstances nor the forces inducing the event are profiled. This property is shared not only by the prototypical cases *algrarese* 'gladden', *enfermarse* 'become sick', *quejarse* 'complain', but also by physical changes like *irse* 'leave', and *pararse* 'stand up.' Since the focus is on the result rather than on the process (as also observed by Ruiz de Mendoza in this volume), inchoative, inceptive and spontaneous events are part of the middle system in languages that have such a system. In other languages they are commonly encoded by aspectual markers or by intransitive verbs. In languages like English they may be expressed by intransitive verbs *sadden, stand up* or by the aspectual verb *get* as in *he got sick, he got happy*. In languages across the world inchoative meanings are commonly encoded by middle markers and Spanish follows that strategy. I suggest that motion and spontaneous middle events develop from the focusing properties of the middle construction as only the experiencer's change-of-state is being focused upon. In the same way that middles focus on the emotional change of the subject, they also focus on the crucial point in which the physical change takes place. The energy used to produce a change is not evident either because it is applied internally (*pararse* 'stand up', *sentarse* 'sit down') or because it is not profiled, as in spontaneous events (*romperse* 'break'). What matters is the change itself. Middles share the property of focusing on the change of state undergone by an experiencer subject. They may focus on a change of position, a change of location or a change of state. Thus, the event will be compressed in different ways according to the meaning of verbs to which the middle marker applies. Verbs of emotion will depict sudden or abrupt changes, verbs of motion and location will reduce the path. I would suggest that a grammar showing such internal coherence pattern should provide the basis for language instruction. In what follows I propose to motivate the acquisition of middles by presenting them in groups where the focus applies to different conceptual categories. I will show that the type of errors most commonly found in foreign language learners evidences the fact that this basic focusing function has not been made clear to them. I will suggest the type of observations the instructor could make to facilitate the acquisition of a cumbersome area that, over the years, has been made even more difficult by assuming an inadequate reflexive baseline.

3. An instructional path for middle constructions

It would be pointless to impose all the previous categories on the second language learner in one shot. It makes sense to introduce different parts of

the system independently to allow learners to build a grammar based on internal coherent groups that have related schemas (see Langacker this volume). I suggest presenting two big groups of middles, which must be subdivided into smaller constructions. The first group corresponds to all the constructions that have some resemblance to the reflexive construction. These involve self-care and self-benefaction events. The second group corresponds to change-of-state focusing, a category quite distant from reflexives. This group involves emotional, physical and locative change. I suggest that instead of having a list of random uses the two groups of constructions may facilitate the acquisition of the whole spectrum of intricate constructions. Although it is true that the learner will have to deal with smaller details, the internal coherence of the two groups should facilitate the learning process. This is a task that has been made particularly difficult due to the lack of transparent mental correspondences among a variety of constructions.

As I introduce each group I will show typical errors made by foreign speakers. Since the variety of phenomena to be found depends a great deal on the native language of the learner and his level of Spanish proficiency, I will focus on advanced English speakers learning Spanish.

3.1. Self-directed actions: Transitive verbs

The behavior of transitive verbs with self-directed actions may constitute the most obvious case where middles and reflexives overlap. Although the theoretical problem of distinguishing middles and reflexives in this area is not an easy job, the instructional task is not so complicated. The clitic *se* corefers with the subject and is consistently the experiencer indirect object. In this construction the direct object is normally an inherent object, an inalienable possession, as in (9a) and (19b), or some (concrete or abstract) meaningful object, as in (19c), that is changed as a result of the experiencer's affectedness. Unquestionable examples of inherent objects are body parts. As analyzed in Maldonado (1992, 1999) the body part constitutes the active zone (AZ) of the event (Langacker 1991) which may be profiled as the direct object. The clitic *se* is thus equated with the indirect object as it refers to the whole body. Less specific verbs like *bañarse* 'bathe' (*Adrián se bañó* 'Adrian bathed') do not have an active zone thus *se* encodes the direct object. With more specific grooming verbs the interaction with body parts is constant. It is part of everyday routines that do not require particular consciousness. As expected the middle construction cannot take the *sí mismo* expansion:

(20) a. *Se   lavó la cara (*a sí mismo)*
          'S/he MID washed his face (*to her/himself)'
      b. *Me   corté las uñas (*a mí mismo)*
          'I MID cut my nails (to myself)'
      c. *Me   despejé la mente (*a mí mismo) con una buena
          caminata*
          'I MID cleared my mind (*to myself) with a good walk'

It is important to observe that since the whole body operates as the dominion where the body part is located, the whole, encoded by *se*, operates as the possessor of the part. Consequently, the *se* construction precludes the use of a possessive marker, which would be redundant (**Le corté sus uñas a Adrián* Lit: 'I cut to Adrian his nails).[ii] Using the possessive wrongly implies that the

face and the nails are independent of the participant. This is particularly problematic for English speakers since they tend to transfer the English possessive construction into Spanish, as in (21a) and (21b), instead of using the middle marker, as in (20a) and (20b):

(21)   a.   *Lavó su cara*
          b.   *Corté mis uñas*

The interaction with body parts requires further specification. The middle marker is used only when we interact with a body part using our hands, otherwise the construction is simply intransitive (Maldonado 1995). Observe the following contrast:

(22)   *Tenía tanto sueño que no podía abrir (*se) los ojos*
        'He was so sleepy that he couldn't open his eyes'
(23)   *Amaneció con una infección en los ojos y se (*Ø) los tuvo que abrir con los dedos*
        'He woke up with an infection in his eyes and he had to open them with his fingers'

This pattern is highly productive. We move our eyebrows, our eyes or our shoulders without *se* as our energy comes from within. The clitic would only be used if we were to use our hands as an external instrument:

(24)   *Se levantó la pierna porque la tenía dormida*
        'He lifted his leg because it was numb'

Clothing items behave like inalienable objects in a whole-part relationship. They operate as the active zone being profiled and the middle marker represents the whole. Anything happening to the part affects the whole in a positive or negative way. In the following example the affectedness is negative:

(25)   *Me   manché la camisa*
        'I MID stained my shirt'
(26)   *Te   rasgaste el pantalón*
        'You MID ripped your pants off'

From the basic middle construal with inalienable objects the pattern extends to interactions with alienable objects. Since these objects are not already part of the subject, the clitic *se* encodes that such object is brought into the subject's dominion as in (28). Without *se* the action is done for someone other than the subject as in (27):

(27)   a.   *Sirvió una copa*
              'He served a drink'
        b.   *Preparó un café*
              'He prepared a coffee'
        c.   *Compró un pantalón*
              'He bought some pants'
(28)   a.   *Se   sirvió una copa*
              RFLX.3SG serve-PST a glass
              'He served a drink for himself
              [Lit: 'He served himself a drink']

b. *Te   preparaste un café*
    RFLX.2SG prepared   a coffee
    'You made (a cup) of coffee for yourself'
    [Lit: 'You made yourself a cup of coffee']

From the use of the benefactive marker *for* in the English gloss it can be seen that bringing the object into the subject's dominion implies that the subject benefits from such an action. Now, if the object ends up being outside the subject's dominion he will be affected in a negative way. Although there are dialectal differences on which specific verbs can enter the construction[iii], a transitive construction with negative implications takes the middle clitic *se* to emphasize affectedness. In what follows I will simplify the gloss by only marking the presence of a middle marker in the clause with the abbreviation MID:

(29) *Me   dejé la bolsa en la tienda* [Example from Spain]
      I MID left/forgot the bag at the store'
(30) *Me   olvidé las llaves* [Example from Argentina]
      'I MID forgot the keys'
(31) *Te   perdiste el discurso del director* [Example from Mexico]
      'You MID missed the director's speech'

While in (31) *te* is already lexicalized in the verb, in (29) and (30) *me* can be omitted. It is introduced to highlight not only affectedness but also the fact that the action is not intentional (see Section 3.5 for an account of unexpectedness). The middle with alienable objects portrays positive or negative affectedness on the subject as the object either enters or leaves his dominion. This crucial property is not evident for non-native speakers of Spanish. A common error made by foreign learners is using the middle marker with plain transitive change-of-state verbs like *lavar* 'wash', *cerrar* 'close', and the like, which do not portray the object's entering or leaving the subject's dominion. Example (4), repeated here for convenience as (32), is only one of many instances of this phenomenon, as evidenced by (33) and (34):

(32) * *No me puedo lavar el coche*   [no puedo lavar]
      Intended reading: 'I cannot wash my car'
(33) * *Me cerré la puerta*   [cerré]
      Intended reading: 'I closed the door on me'

(34)   * *A él le gusta que ella se cambie su personalidad*   [cambie]
      Intended reading: 'He likes that she changes her personality'

Obviously, learners realize that *se* is used to highlight self-affectedness and attempt to exploit this strategy as much as they can. However, they are not usually aware that with transitive verbs there is a clear conceptual restriction: middles and reflexives designating positive or negative affectedness only apply to changes imposed on objects located in the subject's dominion. One such possible change is for the object to leave such dominion. It is this restriction that has to be made clear to learners.

   A subtle but crucial contrast can finally be observed between alienable and inalienable objects. The interaction with inalienable objects is part of everyday routines; it requires a lower degree of control and volition; and the notion of affectedness is not particularly prominent. This is the expected reading for a typical middle construal where things happen within the

subject. In contrast, bringing objects into the subject's dominion, as is the case for alienable nouns, requires a higher degree of volition and control. Consequently, the notion of positive or negative affectedness is more prominent and the construal falls into the category of reflexive constructions. Surely, the difference is relative rather than absolute. Still, the two polar ends can be easily distinguished. The two schemas can be represented in the following diagrams where the subject/indirect object (S/IO) interacts with the direct object (DO) which, in the case of inalienable object may be a profiled active zone (AZ):
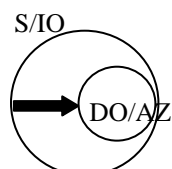
Figure 1. Middle with inalienable object
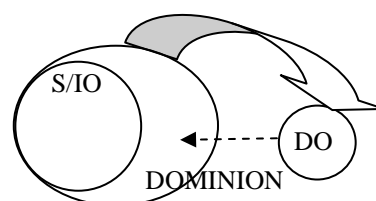
Figure 2. Reflexive with alienable object

If the clitic *se* is imposed on verbs that already designate the content of the schema represented in Figure 2, the beneficial implications already present in the base of the verb will be emphasized. This is the case of *conseguir* 'obtain' and *comprar* 'buy,' which imply – without any further specification – that what is obtained is for the subject. In (35a) getting a job may have good implications, in (35b) and (36) the use of *se* profiles those beneficial implications, which may be elaborated by adverbs *like maravilloso* 'marvelous' and *precioso* 'precious':

(35)   a.   *Adrián consiguió un empleo*
             'Adrian got himself a job'
       b.   *Adrián se consiguió un empleo (maravilloso)*[iv]
             'Adrian got himself a marvelous job'
(36)   *Me   compré un pantalon (precioso)*
       RFLX.1SG buy one pant (beautiful)
       'I bought me a pair of (beautiful) pants' [i.e. 'I bought a pair of (beautiful) pants for myself]

3.2. More on transitive middles

The schema represented in Figure 2 extends to verbs of concrete or abstract consumption to derive a more specific construal: the *full exploitation middle*, a construction where the subject maximally exploits the object (Maldonado 2000). In verbs of consumption *comer* 'eat', *fumar* 'smoke', *beber* 'drink', *tragar* 'swallow,' etc. and its abstract manifestations *saber* 'know', *aprender* 'learn' the subject not only brings the object into her/his dominion but also exploits it in different ways. Crucially, the use of the clitic *se* highlights the fact that the whole object is consumed. I call this the maximal exploitation middle. Thus, in the (38b) and (39b) examples below, the respective utterances entail that *Victor* ate the whole portion of meat and that *Adrian* has read the whole paper. It is also implied that they both accomplished it in a short span of time. The transitive construction without *se* remains neutral about both the total affectedness of the object and the time efficiency of the middle construction:

(37) a. *Victor sólo comió un poco de carne*
         'Victor only ate some meat'

     b. *Victor se comió la carne (en tres minutos)*
         FULL EXPLOITATION
         'Victor ate the (whole) meat (in three minutes)'

     c. **Victor se comió la carne y quedó un poquito*
         Intended reading: "Victor ate up the meat and there is
         some of it left'

(38) a. *Adrián leyó el periódico con cuidado*
         'Adrian read the paper with care'

     b. *Adrián se leía el periódico de una hora*
         FULL EXPLOITATION
         'Adrian would read the (whole) paper in one hour'

The contrast is parallel to the lexical difference in English between *drink* and *drink up*, where the particle entails *full exploitation*. One could claim that the clitic *se* is nothing but an aspectual marker that changes activities into accomplishments. This conclusion would be wrong, however, since the meaning imposed by *se* is quite more specific. Notice that the clitic itself is not responsible for the aspectual change. From the examples in (39) it can be seen that there are accomplishments without *se*:

(39) a. *Sacó de la bolsa la última torta y la comió despacio*
         'He got the last cake from his bag and ate it slowly'

     b. *El viejo bebió un trago a pico de botella y le nacieron unas*
         llamitas en las pupilas
         'The old man drank a sip from the bottle and little flames
         came out of his pupils'

Full exploitation middles apply only to accomplishments; thus most of the properties of accomplishments must be met in the full exploitation construction. While the restrictions on the object noun are stringent, aspect is more flexible. The event tends to be perfective as in (37b) or (38b) but imperfective events are also possible, as in (40):

(40) a. *Se estaba comiendo la carne cuando oyó un disparo*
         'He was eating his meat when he heard a shot'

     b. *Don Nico se bebía su tequila antes de comer*
         'Don Nico would drink his tequila before supper'

As for the object it must meet every property expected for accomplishments. For a whole thing to be totally affected it must be clearly identified, isolatable and easy to manipulate. The object must be bounded and individuated although it needs not be specific, thus mass nouns and generics are out (* *Se tomó café* 'He drank up coffee', *Se comió tortillas* 'He ate up tortillas'). This distinction is again not evident for learners of Spanish. They tend to make generic construals with *se* leaving out the object as in (41), using generic objects (types) as *carne* in (42) or generic plural nouns as *periódicos* 'newspapers' in (43) which are incompatible with what the transitive *full exploitation se middle* construction encodes:[v]

(41) * *En el norte la gente <u>se come mucho</u>*   [come mucho]
         Intended reading: In the north people eat a lot
(42) * *Tachita no <u>se come carne</u>*   [come carne]

Intended reading: 'Tachita does not eat meat'
(43) * *José Angel <u>se leyó periódicos</u>*   [leyó periódicos]
    Intended reading: 'José Angel read newspapers'

An important property of the construction is that full exploitation also entails full subject involvement. In some dialects of Latin American Spanish full involvement has extended to verbs of action:

(44)   a.   *Se echó una cena deliciosa*
        'He made a delicious dinner'
    b.   *Tongolele se bailó una rumba inolvidable*
        'Tongolele danced an unforgettable rumba (with all her might)'

The middle marker not only indicates that the object is of good quality but also that the subject is highly involved as in (44a) and highly expressive as in (44b).

The increase in involvement is clearly attested in the Spanish middle system not only for transitive verbs of consumption but for motion and emotion (see Sections 3.3 and 3.4). The clitic *se* consistently designates a higher degree of subject involvement as in (45b). Without *se* the feeling is neutral as in (45a). Notice that adverbial phrases reducing the subject's involvement would be incompatible with the use of the middle marker, as in (45c):

(45) a.   *Juan compadeció a los muchachos*
          'Juan felt pity for the young men'
    b.   *Juan se compadeció de los muchachos*
          'Juan felt pity for the young men'
    c. ??   *Juan se compadeció de los muchachos sin mayor compromiso*
          'Juan felt pity for the young men without major compromise'

In contrast, the use of *deliberadamente* 'deliberately', which underlines volitional subject control, is acceptable with the *se* middle construction in (46a) but is questionable in the plain transitive form (46b):

(46) a.   *Juan se   aprovechó de tu experiencia deliberadamente*
          'Juan took advantage of your experience deliberately'
    b. ?? *Juan aprovechó tu experiencia deliberadamente*
          'Juan took advantage of your experience deliberately'

Thus, *aprovechar* and *aprovecharse* differ in that the middle marker emphasizes the increase of participation of the subject in bringing the object into his or her sphere of action (and this to the detriment of some other participant). The following example shows that this is a contrast not commonly acquired by foreign learners of Spanish:

(47) * *Me dijeron que un señor <u>aprovechó la niña</u>*
    [se aprovechó de]
    Intended reading: 'I was told that a man took advantage of the girl (he abused her)'

The increase in affectedness and involvement is a defining property of middles. This is also found in emotion and motion middles (see Sections. 3.3 and 3.4). I have proposed elsewhere (see Maldonado 1992, 1999) that since all the event energy is "compacted" into one participant the event becomes more ENERGETIC (see also Section 3.5). The higher degree of involvement of the experiencer is one manifestation of this phenomenon; speed and abruptness of the action are two others. Let us first observe the behavior of middle *se* in verbs of emotion.

3.3   Emotion middles

Dynamic emotion middles are easily acquired if we distinguish verbs of emotion such as *odiar* 'to hate' and *amar* 'love', *querer* 'want/love' from verbs of emotional reaction such as *demprimirse* 'get depressed.' Notice that the use of *se* with verbs of emotion leads to reflexive construals:

(48)   <u>*Me   odio*</u>   *cuando me   pongo deprimido*
         RFLX1SG hate-1SG when   MID.1SG put-1SG depressed
         'I hate myself when I get depressed'
(49)   *Pobre hombre, nunca llegó   a <u>quererse</u>*
         poor   man,   never arrived to love-RFLX.3SG
         'Poor man, he never got to love himself'

Interestingly enough, verbs of emotion behave like verbs of cognition. With the exception of the two verbs *recordar* 'remember' and *olvidar* 'forget', which denote an involuntary cognitive process, all other verbs of cognition and perception denote a conscious state or a voluntary act and can take a reflexive reading (Maldonado 1999):

(50)   *Yo me   entiendo / comprendo / observo*
         I RFLX.1SG understand /comprehend / observe
         'I understand /comprehend / observe myself'

   The Spanish verbs of emotional reaction include *alegrarse* 'get happy', *enojarse* 'get mad', *divertirse* 'become amused/enjoy', *frustrarse* 'get frustrated', *encabritarse* ´get furious', *perderse* 'get lost', *irritarse* 'get irritated', *alarmarse* 'be alarmed', *asustarse* 'get scared', *emocionarse* 'be moved', etc. Middle *se* is used with these verbs to stress the experiencer's emotional involvement. In fact, it has been claimed (Maldonado 1999) that such a construction contrasts with a dative experiencer construction precisely in that middle *se* makes the experiencer responsible for his feelings. Example (51) encodes *Gabriela's* tendency to be bothered by children whereas in (52) *Gabriela* actively hates children:

(51)   *A Gabriela los niños   le   enojan*
         to Gabriela the children DAT.3SG annoy-3PL
         'Children annoy Gabriela'

(52)   *Gabriela se   enoja   con los niños*
         Gabriela MID.3SG annoy-3SG with the children
         'Gabriela gets mad with children'

Yet one of the most common errors of Spanish learners is to leave out the obligatory marker *se* with verbs of emotional reaction as in (53):

(53)   * *No tienes que <u>preocupar</u> por tu dinero*   [preocuparte]
          not have that worry   for your money   worry-MID
          Intended reading: 'You don't have to worry about your money'

The pattern where the experiencer's involvement increases is so productive that it extends to a whole set of deponent verbs (i.e., verbs that are passive in form, but active in meaning) that also involve a high degree of participation/expression. Languages with a middle system tend to have a class of deponent verbs without a transitive or intransitive counterpart. Latin (*oblivisco-**r*** 'forget', *vereo-**r*** 'tear') and Turkish (*hastal-**án*** 'get sick') are only a couple of many languages having deponents (Kemmer 1993). Spanish also has a group of deponent middles that cannot be used in any other voice form (**fue arrepentido* 'was repented', **fue jactado,* 'was bragged') but which students can easily remember if they keep in mind that these verbs involve the subject's higher participation. Notice in (54a), (54b) and (54c) that the subject actively participates in the emotional act:

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

These verbs were all intransitive in early Spanish until the 17th century, when the once optional use of *se* became obligatory and the high degree of the subject's involvement became grammaticalized or lexicalized as a middle verb.[vi] Since these verbs come from intransitives, no reflexive derivation applies here. Spanish deponent forms are synchronically construed as basic middles.[vii] The non-derivative interpretation of middle constructions has already been put forward in current cognitive analyses (Manney 2001 for Modern Greek, Messineo 2002 for Toba, Palancar 2004 for Otomí, Nava and Maldonado 2005 for Tarascan). As for Spanish, deponent verbs designate what I will call energetic readings (see Section 3.5).

Emotion middles (*preocuparse* 'to worry') are easily distinguished from emotion verbs (*odiar* 'to hate') used as reflexives (*odiarse* 'hate oneself). Emotion verbs have active subjects, just like verbs of cognition and perception. In contrast, emotion middles always involve verbs of emotional reaction and the clitic *se* is consistently used to increase the degree of participation of the experiencer in the event, regardless of whether the middle has a transitive or an intransitive counterpart. For grammar teaching, focusing on the higher degree of participation of the experiencer may be more useful than deriving the middle construction from an alleged verbal (in)transitive root and it is certainly better than making the student memorize these verbs as exceptions.

3.4.   A note on GUSTAR

One phenomenon that is particularly problematic for second language learners is benefaction. Learners tend to overemphasize the experiencer's involvement in so-called "inverse" verbs (Delbecque and Lamiroy 1996,

Vázquez 1995), such as *gustar* 'like' in (55). Here the human experiencer is not the subject. These verbs are particularly problematic for English speakers for several reasons. First, unlike English, the experiencer is a dative indirect object and the stimulus or impulse triggering the human reaction is the nominative subject. Second, these verbs are emotional states – not emotional changes-of-state – and depict human dispositions towards things. The participant's involvement is already lexicalized in this verb class. Thus, no involvement needs to be emphasized via the clitic *se*. The most common error is to use both the dative clitic *le* and the middle marker *se*, as in (55b), instead of only employing the dative clitic as in (55a):

(55) a. *A él le   gustan las ciudades grandes*
           to him DAT3SG like the cities   big
           'He likes big cities' Lit. Big cities appeal to him'
     b. **A él se   gustan las ciudades grandes*
           to him MID.3SG like   the cities   big

The other common error is to use the middle marker instead of the dative as in the following examples:

(56) * *Nos gustamos bailar*   [Nos gusta]
       MID.1PL like1.PL. dance-INF   DAT.3PL like.3rd
       Intended reading: 'We like dancing'
(57) * *Se encantan con la música*   [Les encanta]
       MID.3SG enchant.3.PL with the music   DAT.3.PL ENCHANT.3.SG
       Intended reading: 'They love music'
(58) * *A Teresa se fascina con las cámaras*
         digitales   [A Teresa le fascinan]
       to Teresa MID.3SG fascinates with the
       cameras digital   DAT.3.SG fascinates3.SG
       Intended reading: 'Teresa is fascinated by digital cameras'

The non-native speaker of Spanish needs to learn that this class of verbs has two properties: (i) these verbs denote emotional states, not changes of state; thus no change-of-state can be focused by *se*; (ii) The experiencer of these verbs being marked for dative[viii] is already active and does not need to be activated by the middle marker. Thus, the experiencer participant of *gustar* 'like,' *encantar* 'enchant,' *fascinar* 'fascinate' is incompatible with the middle marker.

As we move away from cases that somehow still resemble reflexive constructions to emotional changes, the typically focusing properties of middles gain prominence. In cases involving motion, these properties are even more salient and determine several construals where the event is compressed to highlight the critical moment of change. These will be introduced as the second cluster of middle construals in the following sections.

3.5. Motion middles

Particularly problematic for the learner of Spanish are events of physical motion. There is a general tendency amongst learners to leave out the middle marker in changes of position, e.g., *levantarse* 'stand up', changes of location, e.g., *subirse* 'get on' and translational motion, e.g., *irse* 'leave.' The following errors by second language learners illustrate this problem:

CHANGE OF BODY POSTURE

(59) * *Yo no <u>acuesto</u> temprano como mi madre*   [me acuesto]
      I NEG lay down early as my mother
      Intended reading: 'I don't go to bed early like my mother'
(60) * *esa noche <u>levanté</u> asustado*   [me levanté]
      that night raised scared
      Intended reading: 'That night I woke up all scared'

TRANSLATIONAL MOTION

(61) * *pero no <u>vas</u>, ¿verdad?*   [te vas]
      but not go, right
      Intended reading: 'But you are not leaving, right?'
(62) * *El camión no paró y yo <u>bajé</u> el camión saltando*   [me bajé del]
      the bus not stopped and I went off the bus jumping
      Intended reading: 'The bus didn't stop and I jumped off the bus

As I have already suggested, the main function of the Spanish middle marker is to focus on the core of the event. This schematic representation emerges naturally from the prototype where the change-of-state is focused. To the extent that the event remains in the subject's dominion, attention is centered on the change-of-state undergone by the subject. The forces driving the event are of secondary importance. When the middle applies to a transitive construction, the attention is focused on the change-of-state such that the initiating force is downplayed. This quite productive pattern leads to spontaneous constructions of the middle in (63b) and (64b) (also called pseudopassives, reflexive passives, inchoatives and so on) corresponding to the transitive examples in (63a) and (64a) respectively. The reduction of the degree of transitivity in (63b) and (64b) is evident:

(63) a. *El niño rompió la taza*
        'The boy broke the cup'
    b. *La taza se rompió*
        'The cup broke'
(64) a. *El niño perdió la pluma*
        'The boy lost the pen'
    b. *La pluma se perdió*
        'The pen got lost'

These examples have been analyzed, in formal traditional approaches, as the result of a subject deletion rule (Aid 1973; Aissen 1987; Goldin 1968; González 1985; Grimshaw 1982; Sells, Zaenen and Zec 1986; and many others). Indeed, *se* focuses on the pivotal moment of change as the agent is eliminated. An obvious consequence is that agent responsibility is eliminated, too. While this holds for cases deriving from transitive verbs, the phenomenon covers a much wider area. What is interesting is the fact that the middle also derives into energetic events from intransitive verbs to focus on the crucial moment of change. Langacker (1991: 389–393) has proposed a basic contrast between ABSOLUTE events such as *She was sleeping* and *She went home* depicting processes that do not profile any sort of energy and ENERGETIC ones such as *She woke up* and *She dashed home*, where some

type of energy is profiled. An energetic view of middles may facilitate the student's attempt to find a common denominator in a variety of unexplained uses. Events being focused are energetic in that they only show the pivotal moment of change (Maldonado 1988, 1992). Instead of doing the long scanning of the event as going along a path to some place or picking up something from one place and putting it in another location, only the crucial moment of change is profiled. Thus, change-of-position (*pararse* 'stand up and *sentarse* 'sit down') are typical middle uses in the motion domain. This is in fact the kind of meaning the second language learner should have access to without having to refer to any kind of reflexive construal. A schematic representation may be helpful at this point. Figure 3 represents the unmarked long scanning construction as indicated by the arrow; Figure 4 is the representation of the basic import of *se* focalizing (the small rectangle) the pivotal moment of change:
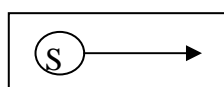
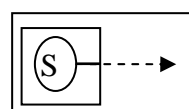*Figure 3*. Absolute   *Figure 4*. Energetic Middle

A parallel representation in the abstract domain pertains to verbs of emotional reaction (*enojarse* 'get mad', *asustarse* 'get frightened'). The energetic middle construal in Figure 4 has further extensions; abruptness and unexpectedness are the most notable ones. Let us look at abruptness first. Since in the middle event we focus on the result we lack information about evolutionary development of the action. Thus, middle energetic construals tend to be conceptualized as rapid or abrupt, as the following contrastive examples illustrate:

(65) a. *Valeria se/Ø despierta diario a las seis de la mañana*
          'Valeria MID.3SG/Ø wakes up everyday at six in the morning'
      b. *Valeria se (*Ø) despertó por un segundo pero se (*Ø) volvió a dormir*
          'Valeria MID.3SG woke up for a second and she went MID.3SG back to sleep'
      c. *Juan Carlos se (*Ø) despertó abruptamente gritando de terror*
          Juan Carlos MID.3SG woke up suddenly shouting in terror'

In (65a) we see that both forms alternate: either the moment of waking up or its resulting state of being up is focused here. But the examples in (65b) and (65c) show that *se* chooses the pivotal moment of change of state. Now, also sleeping must somehow have had a transition from not sleeping to sleeping – a distinction that can corroborate the absolute/energetic contrast. Whereas (66a) encodes the long-lasting event, (66b) depicts the crucial moment when Daniel falls asleep.[ix] If Daniel slept through the whole night the clitic *se* could not be used. This contrast is valid through the whole second subschema which comprises a variety of change-of-state focus constructions:

(66) a. *Daniel durmió toda la noche*
          'Daniel slept all through the night'
      b. *Daniel se durmió en clase*
          'Daniel fell asleep in class'

The cases of *ir* 'go' (67a) and *subir* 'go up' (68b) illustrate the same kind of contrast albeit in the domain of translational motion. Without *se* they constitute continuous, on-going, absolute actions with a long traceable trajectory. On the other hand, the use of *se* removes the image of ongoingness and portrays a punctual event *irse* 'leave' as in (67b) or depicts a sudden and abrupt change *subirse* as in (68b), both of which are energetic:

(67)   a. *Valeria fue al bar*   b. *Valeria ya se fue (al bar)*
         'Valeria went to the bar'   'Valeria left (for the bar)'

(68)   a. *Juan subió el Popocatepetl*   b. *Juan se subió a la silla*
         'Juan went up the P. mountain'   'Juan got on the chair (jumping)'

The aspectual contrast is attested by the fact that s*ubir* can be qualified by adverbs like *poco a poco* 'bit by bit' (69a); in contrast, in the *se* middle construction the event takes place in one shot as in (69b):

(69) a. *(*Se) subió la montaña poco a poco*   [not benefactive[x]]
     'He went up the mountain bit by bit'
   b. *Apareció un ratón y Valeria se subió a la silla de un salto*
     'There appeared a mouse and Valeria got on the chair in one jump'

One should not be surprised to find that this pattern also has metaphorical abstract representations as in the following example:

(70)   *La caída de la bolsa hizo que el gobierno se desviara de la política económica actual*
     'The stocks drop made the government depart from (i.e., make a sudden change from) the current economic program'

We can see now that the middle dynamic construal accounts naturally for the energetic behavior of the *se* construction. From (68) to (70) we showed a variety of dynamic examples depicting either punctual energetic actions or abrupt and sudden changes. Figures 5 and 6 represent the absolute/energetic contrast in the domain of translational motion. They represent the specific case of *subir/subirse*:
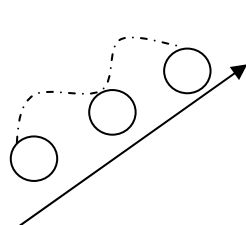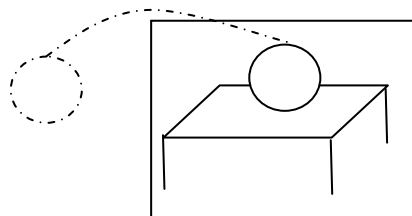

Figure 5. Subir Absolute   *Figure 6. Subirse* Energetic

A further extension of this pattern pertains to events that are seen not only as rapid or abrupt but even unexpected. The absolute/energetic contrast is clearly manifested in (71) where a falling event can be seen in an absolute construal, as is the case of the rain simply falling in a neutral manner, versus the energetic view with *Adrian* falling suddenly, accidentally and unexpectedly:

(71) a. *La lluvia (*se) cae*   b.   *Adrián se cayó*
         'The rain is falling'   'Adrian fell down'

Notice that the use of *se* in the absolute construal (71a) is ungrammatical. It is important to realize that unexpectedness has an extra layer of energy. In this type of construal the speaker's expectations are put forth. Since the falling event is not seen as common or neutral, Adrian's fall runs against the speaker's expectations as the default representation for humans is in the vertical position. We have a force dynamic construal of the event via subjectification. The event is energetic not only in that it happens suddenly but the force-dynamic construal (Talmy 1985) makes it even more dynamic. The encounter of forces has a physical base. For instance in *caerse* we may fall without resisting gravity (without *se*) or we may fall despite our resistance to gravity, as encoded by *se*. In the latter case the result takes place against our expectations. From that base, more abstract encounters take place. The unexpectedness of falling down with *se* is corroborated by example (72), where the diver falls in the water volitionally and the clitic *se* cannot be used:

(72)   *El clavadista (*se) cayó al agua con toda elegancia*
         'The diver fell in the water elegantly'

Counter-expectation explains the case of *morir* 'die', which can be seen either as a natural biological event – an absolute construal without *se* (73) – or as a happening that runs against our expectations, in which case we obtain a force-dynamic energetic event, marked by *se*, as in (74):

(73).   a. *Don Nico murió suavemente, se quedó dormido y ya no*
            despertó
            'Don Nico died softly, he fell asleep and he didn't wake up'
        b. *Cuando don Nico murió, su hijo ya tenía treinta años*
            'When Don Nico died, his son was already 30 years old'
(74)   a. *Don Nico se murió sin que su hijo pudiera hablar con él*
            'Don Nico died before his son could talk to him'
        b. *A Juan se le (*Ø) murió su papá*
            'As for Juan his father died on him'

What these examples show is that unexpectedness comes from the way the event is observed. This contrasts with (75), a sentence which does not take *se* because it is a news report of an accident and thus supposed to be objective, distant and free of the speaker's expectations:

(75)   *Un autobús choca en la carretera de Toluca. Mueren 28 personas*
         'A bus crashes on the Toluca highway. 28 people die'

There is nothing exceptional about this contrast. The clitic *se* marks two things: (i) focusing on the pivotal moment of change, and (ii) seeing the event as contradicting the speaker's expectations. The change from coding an event in the world to marking a situation in the speaker's belief is one of the grammaticalization paths identified by Traugott (1982, 1986, 1988) and Spanish energetic *se* follows precisely that process of historical change. The pattern is quite productive as can be seen from further cases of force-dynamic events:

(76)   *En el parto, la cabeza del bebé fue lo primero que (*se) apareció*

'In the childbirth the head of the baby was the first thing that
appeared'
(77)   *Juan se (*Ø) apareció en la fiesta sin haber sido invitado*
'Juan showed up at the party without having been invited'

Since we expect the baby's head to show up first in the delivery, the use of *se* in (76) is ruled out. Now for Juan to appear at a party where he has not been invited as in (77) is an unexpected and, most probably, an unpleasant event.

The variety of *se* focusing constructions examined so far suggests the existence of a general schema, represented in Figure 4, from which more specific subschemas emerge. This subsystem corresponds to the gradual organization of focusing functions represented in (78):

(78)   PIVOTAL MOMENT OF CHANGE-OF-STATE
Spontaneous change (*romperse* 'break') > punctual change (*curarse* 'recover,' *dormirse* 'fall asleep,' *entirstecerse* 'sadden') > sudden or abrupt change (*subirse* 'get on') > unexpected change (*morirse* 'die')

The general concept corresponds to focusing on the pivotal moment of change but more specific meanings obtain in the various constructions that have been discussed so far. With transitive verbs we may have spontaneous events where only the change-of-state is in focus: *romperse* 'break, *quebrarse* 'crack' and so on. As for intransitive constructions we also have spontaneous energetic events depicting punctual changes: *enfermarse* 'become ill', *curarse* 'recover from illness.' We may also have punctual physical or emotional changes-of-state: *dormirse* 'fall asleep', *despertarse* 'wake up', *cansarse* 'become tired', *aburrirse* 'become bored', *sorprenderse* 'be surprised.' There may also be sudden changes of location: *salirse* 'go out', *meterse* 'go in', *subirse* 'go up', *bajarse* 'go down', *desviarse* 'deviate', *soltarse* 'let go', *irse* 'leave', *regresarse* 'return', etc. Most of these verbs have an absolute intransitive counterpart. The most "aberrant" case is the one involving unexpectedness as in *caerse* 'fall down', *morirse* 'die', *aparecerse* 'show up', etc. Particularly interesting is that these last examples match spontaneous constructions where agent responsibility is eliminated via subject deletion (*romperse* 'break' and *quebrarse* 'crack') and which also have a counter-to-expectation reading. This happens as all the inductive forces driving the event are downplayed to simply focus on the change itself. It follows from all this that the second language learner will have to acquire a simple **focusing** rule that extends to **energetic** construals of the event in the form of suddenness, speed, energy input and unexpectedness. In fact, these are precisely the kinds of inferences that develop from seeing the change-of-state in one shot without having the relevant information as to how this change-of-state came about.

4.   A didactic application

While this chapter does not systematically elaborate on methodological issues, a minor suggestion may help find a way to teach these most "aberrant" energetic cases. One may think of a variety of exercises for the learner to attain a good grasp of the absolute/energetic contrast. In all of them the learner must choose between employing the clitic and leaving it out. This can be done in a gap-fill way, using either isolated contrastive sentences or short stories providing naturalistic contexts. I have created a story that offers a variety of contexts where the contrast should be evident:

La final de Wimbledon. Introduzca en la líneas en blanco la forma correcta del verbo poniendo especial atención a la necesidad de emplear o no el clítico *se*.

Era la final que todo mundo esperaba. León prometía destruir a Daniel e impedir que éste volviera a ganar la copa. Después dos sets ambos jugadores todavía (correr) _____ de un lado al otro de la cancha con total energía. Empezaron el tercer set bastante angustiados. León sacó con toda velocidad. La pelota (ir) _____ hasta la pared. En un esfuerzo inigualable, Daniel (ir) _____ tras ella. Al verlo venir, uno de los jueces abruptamente (subió) _____ a la silla para que el atleta no lo golpeara con la raqueta. Cuando Daniel estaba a punto de contestar, (estrellar) _____ contra el muro, (tropezar) _____ con la silla del juez de línea y (caer) _____ estrepitosamente sin siquiera meter las manos. La sangre le (correr) _____ por toda la cara y la temperatura del cuerpo poco a poco le (subir) _____. Inesperadamente, la madre de Daniel (meter) _____ a la cancha. León (asustar) _____ y cobardemente prefirió (ir) _____ de ahí antes de que la madre de Daniel (morir) _____ de un ataque cardiaco. La madre corrió hacia su hijo, lo abrazó y llorando le gritaba: "No (morir) _____ hijito de mis amores", pero el hijito (dormir) _____ plácidamente. Todo parecía indicar que ya no había esperanza de que regresara pero de pronto Daniel (despertar) _____. Su madre (sorprender) _____ tanto que de pronto (paralizar) _____ y, de manera totalmente inesperada, (desmayar) _____. Daniel estaba nerviosísimo. Le dieron una copa de brandy para que se recuperara del susto y él (tomarla) _____ de un trago … Su madre llevaba acostada ya cinco minutos. Daniel empezó a sospechar que quizá su madre estuviera fingiendo un desmayo como lo había hecho tantas veces. Daniel (aprender) _____ de memoria la receta que una vez le dio el doctor para curarla: había que gritar en voz alta que le iban a poner una inyección. Tan pronto como Daniel empezó a decir las palabras mágicas su madre inesperadamente (despertar)_____.

Wimbledon final. Fill in the blank with the correct form of the verb. Make sure to use the clitic *se* where needed.

It was the final everyone had been expecting to see. Leon promises to destroy Daniel and stop him from winning the cup again. After two sets the two players were still running (corrían) from one side of the court to the other full of energy. They started the third set anxiously. Leon served. The ball went (fue) all the way to the wall. Daniel ran (corrió) after it. As the referee saw him coming he got on (se subió) the chair so that Daniel would not hit him with his racquet. When Daniel was about to hit the ball back he crashed (se estrelló) against the wall, he stumbled (se tropezó) against the referee's chair and he fell down (se cayó) loudly without even using his hands. Blood was running (corría) all over his face and his body temperature was going up (subía) bit by bit. Unexpectedly, Daniel's mother entered (se metió) the court. Leon got scared (se asustó) and in a cowardly manner he chose to leave (irse) before Daniel's mother would die (muriera) of a heart attack. However, Daniel's mother spotted her son, ran up to him, and embraced him crying as she shouted "don't die (no te mueras), my dear son." But her son had fainted (se había desmayado), hardly breathed and seemed to be sleeping (parecía dormir) placidly. It all indicated that there was no hope of regaining consciousness, but all of a sudden Daniel woke up (se despertó). His mother
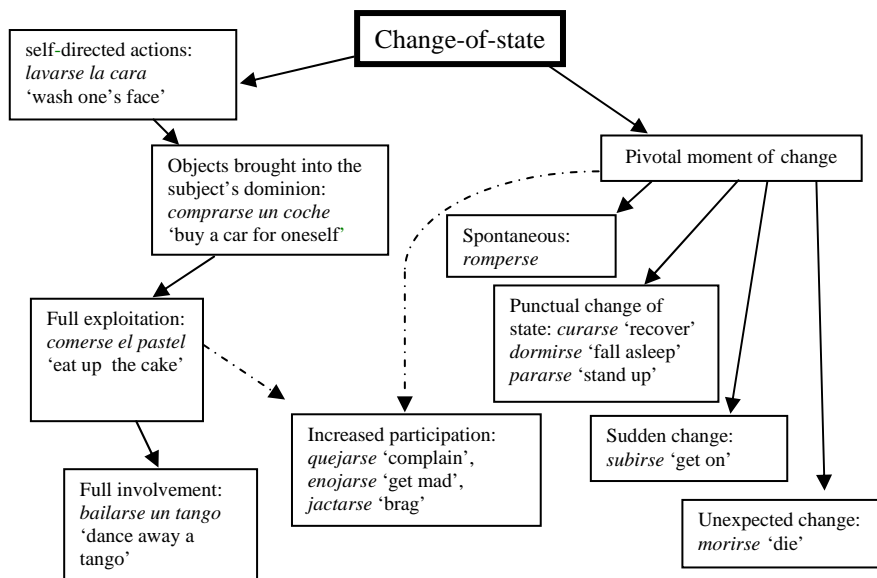
was so <u>utterly surprised</u> (se sorprendio) that she <u>became paralyzed</u> (se paralizó) and in a totally unexpected manner <u>passed out</u> (se desmayó). Daniel was hypernervous. They gave him a glass of brandy to recover from the impact and he <u>drank it up</u> (se bebió) in one shot … His mother had been on the floor for about five minutes and Daniel started to suspect that maybe she was pretending to have passed out as she had done so many times before. Daniel had <u>learned by heart</u> (se aprendió) the prescription the doctor had given him once. He yelled in a loud voice that he was going to give her a shot. As soon as he started saying the magical words his mother <u>woke up</u> (se despertó).

This exercise provides enough cases to help learners distinguish between (i) long scanned events and short punctual ones, and (ii) acceptable, though somewhat extreme, events and those that contradict our expectations. All of these instances together represent an area of Spanish language use for which no internal coherence has yet been provided in either current analyses or in instructional grammars. It is hoped that a twin strategy of teaching general conceptual principles and intensive practice in specific construals embedded in a narrative context may help learners to discover and exploit that coherence for themselves.

5. Conclusions

The traditional grammatical account of the clitic *se* is based solely on a reflexive interpretation. In this paper I have tried to show that this approach may not be the best way for second language learners to capture the wide variety of uses that the clitic *se* covers. I have proposed an alternative view in which the internal coherence of the middle system may help the teacher to get a clearer picture of a cumbersome area in Spanish grammar. This new picture may facilitate ways to introduce different parts of the middle system such that the learner may comprehend the nuclear conceptualization of "focus on the change-of-state, characteristic of simplified events remaining in the subject's dominion." The learner of Spanish will also be able to see that this basic pattern spreads in very specific directions and that it does so in a motivated manner. I have proposed the existence of two main subschemas that subsume the entire range of constructions analyzed in this paper: (i) self-directed actions, which include events where the object is brought into the subject's dominion, and (ii) change-of-state focus. All constructions grow from one of these schemas. The following semantic network shows the basic organization of the middle system in Spanish:

Change-of-state

self-directed actions:
lavarse la cara
'wash one's face'

Objects brought into the
subject's dominion:
comprarse un coche
'buy a car for oneself'

Pivotal moment of change

Spontaneous:
romperse

Full exploitation:
comerse el pastel
'eat up the cake'

Punctual change of
state: *curarse* 'recover'
dormirse 'fall asleep'
pararse 'stand up'

Increased participation:
quejarse 'complain',
enojarse 'get mad',
jactarse 'brag'

Sudden change:
subirse 'get on'

Full involvement:
bailarse un tango
'dance away a
tango'

Unexpected change:
morirse 'die'

The first subschema evolves from self-interactions with the subject's body parts and other inalienable objects to depict routine actions such as washing and combing one's hair. As we deal with alienable objects, some beneficial implications are drawn from the fact that the object is brought into the subject's dominion (*comprarse una camisa* 'buy a shirt for oneself'). This kind of interaction leads to a construction with a high degree of transitivity in which the subject maximally exploits the object for his or her own benefit (*fumarse un cigarro* 'smoke a cigar'). This kind of action also implies a high degree of subject participation, which sets the basis for constructions of full involvement (*bailarse un tango* 'dance away a tango'). One of the most prominent properties of middle constructions is the high degree of subject involvement in the event as internal emotions and emotional reactions become manifested. We may obtain this kind of construal from full exploitation events but the most common source for increased participation comes from the fact that the whole event is condensed into the subject and that his or her feelings, needs and thoughts are brought into the open from within. Here we go back to the central properties of the middle construction where the change-of-state is put into focus. This is the most productive pattern and it is instantiated in a variety of realms.

The change-of-state focus accounts for an unrestricted number of transitive verbs where the agent is deleted to produce a spontaneous event. It also accounts for all the intransitive verbs of motion that have been listed as exceptional in traditional analyses: change of body posture as well as dynamic and abrupt change of location. Together with events running counter to normal expectations, all of these focus, however, on the actual moment of change and contrast with plain intransitive counterparts that scan the process along a temporal or a physical full-fledged path. I have stressed the fact that via the middle marker the event becomes energetic. Thus, the event is not only abrupt or rapid but also requires a higher level of the subject's involvement in the event. When that notion is applied to verbs of emotional reaction, the predicted effect takes place. The subject experiencer actively participates in the emotional change. While the reflexive cases are not particularly problematic for the second language learners, the main middle constructions have remained, until now, obscured by the inadequate imposition of a reflexive view that is unable to motivate the existence of a wide variety of uses that are everything but exceptional. I have tried to offer sufficient explanations for the kind of notions a language teacher could use to

make the complexities of the middle system a coherent and digestible group of related notions. Once this learning objective has been attained, the possibility of addressing further issues such as reflexive passives and impersonal constructions may be addressed.

The assumption that bigger rules at a relatively high schematic level represent the structure of a language has been overprized. Constructional views of language (Croft 2001; Goldberg 1995; Langacker 1987, 1991) have emphasized the fact that language is a structured inventory of constructions which the speaker masters according to specific contexts. General rules are both schematizations and abstractions of smaller rules that group together around related notions. I have offered a general schema that crystallizes first into two groups and then into different specific but interrelated construals that motivate each other. While the schema is preserved for all constructions, the lower-level internal coherence among different uses is such that one construction motivates the acquisition of another. It is this phenomenon that seems to determine the formation or schemas of intermediate generality. This view has been tested in abundant studies in language acquisition by Tomasello and collaborators (1992, 2000, 2003) and in many other publications, where a "piece meal" process of acquisition determines the emergence of more general schemas. Goldberg's (2006) experimental studies on the acquisition of dative, caused motion and resultative constructions make the same basic point. It all amounts to top-down learning vs. bottom-up learning. I have highlighted that top-down learning using a general subject-object coreference reflexive rule and a list of unrelated exceptional uses is far too distant from mirroring the acquisition process of the clitic *se*. Learning lists of exceptions does not activate dynamic memory. In contrast, relating smaller schemas not only activates dynamism in memory but it also brings in the possibility of relating those schemas to cultural patterns. Once rules are put into proper contexts in accordance with cultural associations, the learner will be able to integrate language patterns into coherent groups (Tomasello 2003). Admittedly, this paper has not attempted to give any clues as to the ways in which smaller rules may be linked to cultural patterns. I have only provided the appropriate grammar notions for the teacher to take the crucial step of motivating and linking constructional sets. I assume that teaching in context is the best way to facilitate the learning experience. In a usage-based model of grammar, everything comes in context (Langacker 1987, 1991). I have not offered an elaborated suggestion as to the methodological ways to introduce these notions in the classroom. The small exercise that I provided only attempts to offer a sample of the linguistic contexts where energetic construals would contrast with absolute ones. I should hope, however, that this kind of approach will shed some light on a particularly difficult area in the second language acquisition of Spanish grammar.

Notes

1. In this paper the following abbreviations will be used CAUS 'causative', COMP 'completive', PST 'past', DEM 'demonstrative', DUR 'durative', MID 'middle', IMPERF 'imperfect', RFLX 'reflexive', SG 'singular', PL 'plural', 1 'first person', 2 'second person', 3 'third person', POSS 'possessive', PERF 'perfective.'
2. In informal and Mexican Spanish middles and possessives may co-occur for emphatic purposes – see Maldonado (2002) for further analysis.
3. While *dejar* 'leave' and *olvidar* 'forget' cannot be used with that construction in Mexico, they are perfectly normal in Spain and Argentina.

4. In Spain the verb *hacer* 'make' is used instead of *conseguir* but the construal is the same: *Adrián se hizo con un empleo maravilloso* Lit: 'Adrian made himself with a great job.'

5. See Maldonado (2000) for further specifications of the object.

6. Other intransitive verbs show the same behavior. This is the case of *enfermarse* 'get sick.' The verb can still be used intransitively as an inchoative verb as in (1) below. In (2) it is used as a transitive causative verb with the cause in subject position and the passive experiencer in direct object position. However, the middle in (3) is now the norm. By using the middle marker, the passive object *me* 'me' of (2) now becomes an active experiencer in the middle construction of (3), which is now coreferential with the subject *yo* 'I':

   i. *Fue en ese invierno que mi padre enfermó*
      'It was in that winter that my father got sick'
   ii. *El exceso de trabajo me enferma*
      'The excess of work makes me sick'
   iii. *(Yo) me enfermé con el exceso de trabajo*
      'I MID got sick with the excess of work'

7. Several constructions having a *se* clitic and an oblique phrase have been analyzed as antipassives by Constenla (1997) and Bogard (1999). In Maldonado (2005) I have argued against that approach. The most outstanding features of antipassives have to do with referentiality, control and aspect as found in ergative languages but all these have exactly the opposite properties in middles.

8. Langacker (1991) defines the dative experiencer as an active participant in the target domain. As opposed to other objects, datives are consistently more active that accusatives, instrumentals and locatives. Now, until the 17th century the subject of these verbs was nominative. There are some traces of the old form in constructions like *Antonio gusta de visitar a sus padres* 'Antonio likes visiting his parents.' Then the construction aligned with other experiencer dative constructions. And there is still a lot of variation in popular dialects *Yo gusto de María* Lit: 'I like of Mary' or *María no se gusta de mí* Lit: 'Mary does not like of me.' Given so much variation the need for a clear rule for the second language learner is vital.

9. Ruiz de Mendoza (this volume) suggests seeing parallel phenomena as a contrast between process and result. Although the proposal is in the right direction, the notion of result is not precise enough as it fails to distinguish the pivotal moment of change from the result of an action. The crucial point is that Spanish has independent constructions to depict results, namely the resultative construction with *estar* 'be' or *quedar* 'remain': *Está dormido* 'He is asleep' and *Se quedó dormido* 'He fell and remained asleep.'

10. For some dialects it is possible to say *Se subió la montaña* 'He made it all the way to the top of the mountain' to mean that such an act is a big achievement. This construal belongs to the transitive use of the clitic *se* as a full exploitation construal. I will give the basic properties of the construal in this paper. For further properties of the construction, see Maldonado (2000).

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