0. Introduction

Brazilian Portuguese:

(1)   sem: hurt(arg_1, arg_2)   (say, John hurt Louis with a knife)

        pb: João machucou Luis.

             John   hurt   Louis

(2)   sem: hurt(arg_1, arg_2)   (say, Louis fell from the roof of his house)

        pb: Luis machucou.

             Louis   hurt

(3)   sem: hurt(arg_1, arg_2)   (say, Louis hurt himself preparing sushi)

        pb: Luis se machucou.

             Louis himself hurt

(4)   sem: save(arg_1, arg_2)   (say, Louis has saved the file)

        pb: Luis salvou o arquivo.

             Louis saved the file

(5)   sem: save(arg_1, arg_2)   (say, somebody and I don't care who has saved the file)

        pb: O arquivo salvou rápido.

             The file   saved quickly

Linking: *se* is triggered by 'responsibility'

(6)   a. A queda machucou Luis ('The tumble hurt Louis')

        b. Luis machucou por causa da queda (lit. 'Louis hurt because of the tumble')

(7)   a. João machucou Luis sem querer ('John hurt Louis without intention')

        b. Luis se machucou por causa de uma imprudência preparando sushi (lit. 'Louis hurt himself because of carelessness preparing sushi')

(8)   a. A tecla Control+S salvou o arquivo ('Key Control+S saved the file')

        b. O arquivo salvou com a tecla Control+S (lit. 'The file saved with key Control+S')

1. The (anti-)causative alternation

Internal versus external causation:

Citation 1:

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

Citation 2:

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

Unaccusativity is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for causative alternation:

(9)   a. I prezzi (*si) sono aumentati ('The prizes increased')

        b. Gianni ha aumentato i prezzi ('John increased the prizes') (Folli 2002: 117s)

        c. Die Preise sind gestiegen

        d. *Hans hat die Preise gestiegen

(10)   a. Die Kartoffen haben (*sich) gekocht ('The potatoes cooked')

       b. Hans hat die Kartoffeln gekocht ('John cooked the potatoes')

Clear correspondence between pronominal marking and external causation?

(11)   a. Se hundió el barco ('The ship sank') (Menikoechea 1999: 1587)

       b. La barca è affondata (Folli 2002: 73)

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

2. Verb classification

Brazilian Portuguese: tendency towards bare intransitives

Labelle (1992) for French: Verbs entering only the pronominal construction (class-A-verbs):

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

Verbs entering only or mainly the bare intransitive construction (class-B-verbs):

(14)   cuire ('cook'), durcir ('harden'), éclater ('burst'), fonder ('melt'), grandir ('grow'), grosser ('grow bigger'), maigrir ('slim'), moisir ('mould'), pourrir ('rot'), sécher ('dry'), vieillir ('age')

Verbs entering both constructions (class-C-verbs):

(15)   caraméliser ('caramelise'), élargir ('widen'), enfler ('swell'), épaissir ('thicken'), gonfler ('inflate'), noircir ('blacken'), ramollir ('soften'), refroidir ('cool'), rétrécir ('get narrower'), rougir ('become red')

Corresponding Italian data (Folli 2002):

(16)   alterare ('alter'), aprire ('open'), arrotolare ('roll up'), bagnare ('wet'), capovolgere ('turn upside down'), chiudere ('close'), dividere ('divide'), estendere ('extend'), restringere ('shrink'), rompere ('break'), rovesciare ('overturn'), sbriciolare ('crumble'), sfilacciare ('fray'), svegliare ('wake up')

(17)   affondare ('sink'), allungare ('lengthen'), aumentare ('increase'), bollire ('boil'), cambiare ('change'), diminuire ('decrease'), guarire ('heal'), invecchiare ('age'), maturare ('mature'), migliorare ('improve')

(18)   asciugare ('dry'), bruciare ('burn'), congelare ('freeze'), cuocere ('cook'), fondere ('melt'), gelare ('freeze'), ingrandire ('enlarge'), raffreddare ('cool'), riscaldare ('heat'), sgonfiare ('deflate')

Spanish: Tendency towards pronominalization (class-A)

Class-C-verbs in Spanish (DRAE, CREA, Corpus del Español, my informants):

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

3. Semantic contrasts between the two anticausative constructions

3.1. Participant orientated differences

Stylistic variation in BP according to my informants: standard ~ non standard

(20)   A mesa (se) quebrou / a comida (se) estragou ('The table broke' / 'the food rot')

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

Evidence: Intentional indirect causation

(22)   a. Les baigneurs brunissent ('The bathers got a tan')

      b. Les baigneurs se brunissent au soleil (Rothemberg 1974: 160)

      c. Le poulet brunit ('The chicken browned')

      d. *Le poulet se brunit

(23)   a. Paul s'est bruni pour paraître plus séduisant ('Paul got a tan to look more attractive')

      b. ??Paul a bruni pour paraître plus séduisant

Unintentional causation + responsibility (~ BP: *machucar*):

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

(25)   a. ??Juan empobreció por su propia culpa ('John impoverished by his own fault')

      b. Juan se empobreció por su propia culpa

3.2. Aspectual differences

Marked anticausatives: cumulative character + resulting state?

Contrast of telicity: Folli (2002) + / Schäfer (2008) –

(26)   a. La sedia si è rota in un secondo ('The chair broke in a second') (Folli 2002: 97)

      b. ?La sedia si è rotta, ma non è rotta ('The chair broke, but it is not broken') (ibd.: 98)

(27)   a. La temperatura è diminuita per un'ora ('The temperature decreased fora n hour') (ibd. 118)

      b. La temperatura è diminuita, ma non è diminuita completamente ('The temperature decreased, but it has not totally decreased') (ibd. 120)

(28) a. La caffettiera è scoppiata in un secondo ('The coffee machine exploded in a second')

b. ??La caffettiera è scoppiata, ma non è scoppiata completamente ('The coffee machine exploded, but it is not completely exploded') (Schäfer 2008: 17s)

Citation 3:

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

Citation 4:

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

My informants clearly prefer the marked construction of class-C-verbs in telic contexts:

(29) a. Con el gobierno peronista la clase media se ha empobrecido en pocos años ('With the peronist government the middle class impoverished in a few years')

b. ?Con el gobierno peronista la clase media ha empobrecido en pocos años

c. La clase media ha empobrecido pero todavía no es pobre

d. ?La clase media se ha empobrecido pero todavía no es pobre ('The middle class has impoverished, but is not yet poor')

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

3.3. Interim Conclusion

Real reflexives with intentional direct causer (*Jesus se empobreció por amor a vosotros*('Jesus made himself poor out of love for you')) > Marked anticausatives with intentional indirect causer (*Paul s'est bruni pour paraître plus séduisant* ('Paul got a tan to look more attractive')) > Marked anticausatives with unintentional responsible causer (*Luis se machucou por causa de uma imprudência preparando sushi* (lit. 'Louis hurt himself because of carelessness preparing sushi') / *Juan se empobreció por su propia culpa* ('John impoverished by his own fault')) > Internal causation (*Luis machucou por causa da queda* (lit. 'Louis hurt because of the tumble') / *La voiture ralentit* ('the car slowed down') (Rothemberg 1974:192) > Generic external causation (*La production se ralentit* ('the production slowed down') (ibd.)) > Reflexive passives (*se firmaron los convenios* ('the treaties were signed')).

4. The Theta-System revisited

Feature-calculus (Kailuweit 2005): [c] is a strong proto-agent feature, [m] is a weak proto-agent feature and [r] is a strong proto-patient feature.

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

Fig.1: Theta-features and values

Causative alternation in Reinhart (2002):

(31) a. open$_{acc}$ ([+c], [-c-m] ---> R$_e$(open)[-c-m]

b. worry$_{acc}$ ([+c], [-c+m] ---> R$_e$(worry)[-c+m]   (Reinhart 2002)

Real reflexive constructions:

(32) a. shave$_{acc}$([+c+m]$_1$,[-c-m]$_2$: *Lucie shaved him*

b. R$_s$(shave)([+c+m]$_1$): *Max shaved* (Reinhart 2002)

(33) a. machucar$_{acc}$ ([+c+m-r]$_1$,[-c-m+r]$_2$): *João machucou Luis*

b. machucar ([+c+m-r]$_1$): *Luis se machucou intencionalmente*

Indirect intentional causation:

(34) a. brunir$_{acc}$ ([+c+m-r]$_1$,[-c-m+r]$_2$): *Le soleil a bruni Paul*

b. brunir ([±c+m±r]$_1$): *Paul s'est bruni pour paraître plus séduisant*

Unintentional causation + responsibility:

(35) a. machucar$_{acc}$ ([+c+m-r]$_1$,[-c-m+r]$_2$): *João machucou Luis*

b. machucar ([±c±m±r]$_1$): *Luis se machucou por causa de uma inadvertência preparando sushi*

Internal Causation:

(36) a. machucar$_{acc}$ ([+c+m-r]$_1$,[-c-m+r]$_2$): *João machucou Luis*

b. machucar ([±c-m±r]$_1$): *Luis machucou por causa da queda*

External causation:

(37) a. ralentir$_{acc}$ ([+c+m-r]$_1$,[-c-m+r]$_2$): *La crise économique ralentit la production*

b. ralentir ([-c-m±r]$_1$): *La production se ralentit*

Reflexive passives:

(38)   a. firmar$_{acc}$ ([+c+m-r]$_1$,[-c-m+r]$_2$): *Los ministros firmaron los convenios*

       b. firmar ([-c-m-r]$_1$): *Los convenios se firmaron*

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

Fig. 2: Anticausative constructions in the centre of an activity hierarchy
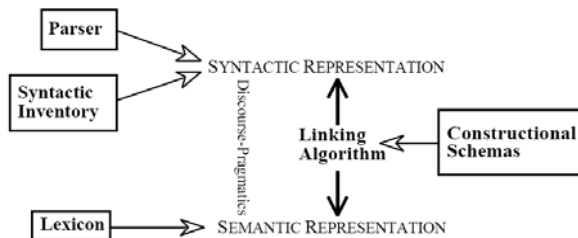
5. A constructionist RRG approach

Fig. 3: Organisation of RRG (Van Valin 2005: 134)

(39)   General characterization of basic voice constructions

       a. Privileged Syntactic Argument [PSA] modulation voice: permits an argument other than the default argument […] to function as PSA.

       b. Argument modulation voice: gives non-canonical realization to a macrorole argument.

       (cf. Van Valin 2005: 4.41)

(40)   a. Syntactic template selection principle:

       The number of syntactic slots for arguments and argument-adjuncts within the core is equal to the number of distinct specified argument positions in the semantic representation of the core.

       b. Language-specific qualifications of the principle in (a):

       1. All cores in the language have a minimum syntactic valence of 1.

       2. Argument-modulation voice constructions reduce the number of core slots by 1. […]

       (Van Valin 2005: 5.2)

Constructional schemas for Spanish, French and BP:

(41)   CONSTRUCTION: Spanish marked anticausatives

       SEMANTICS:

          Actor: deleted; Undergoer [-c-m+r]: promoted => {[-c-m±r] v [±c-m±r] v [±c±m±r] v [±c+m±r]}; telecity: (+)

       SYNTAX:

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

       MORPHOLOGY:

          Marking: reflexive

       PRAGMATICS:

          …

(42)   CONSTRUCTION: Spanish unmarked anticausatives

       SEMANTICS:

          Actor: deleted; Undergoer [-c-m+r]: promoted => [±c-m±r]; telecity: (-)

       SYNTAX:

          PSA: Undergoer; Intransitivity: unaccusative; Dative causer: (+)

       MORPHOLOGY:

          Marking: -

       PRAGMATICS:

          …

(43)   CONSTRUCTION: French marked anticausatives

       SEMANTICS:

          Actor: deleted; Undergoer [-c-m+r]: promoted => {[-c-m±r] v [±c±m±r] v [±c+m±r]}; telecity: (+)

       SYNTAX:

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

       MORPHOLOGY:

          Marking: reflexive

       PRAGMATICS:

          …

(44)   CONSTRUCTION: French unmarked anticausatives

       SEMANTICS:

          Actor: deleted; Undergoer [-c-m+r]: promoted => [±c-m±r]; telecity: (-)

       SYNTAX:

          PSA: Undergoer; Intransitivity: unergative; Dative causer: -

       MORPHOLOGY:

          Marking: -

       PRAGMATICS:

          …

(45)   CONSTRUCTION: BP marked anticausatives

SEMANTICS:

Actor: deleted; Undergoer [-c-m+r]: promoted => {[-c-m±r] v [±c±m±r] v [±c+m±r]}; telecity: (+)

SYNTAX:

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

MORPHOLOGY:

Marking: reflexive

PRAGMATICS:

…

(46)   CONSTRUCTION: BP unmarked anticausatives

SEMANTICS:

Actor: deleted; Undergoer [-c-m+r]: promoted => {[-c-m±r] v [±c-m±r]}; telecity: (-)

SYNTAX:

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

MORPHOLOGY:

Marking: -

PRAGMATICS:

…

6. Conclusion

- (Anti-)causative variation is quite more complex as the well-known distinction of internal versus external causation suggests.

- Anticausatives differ from passives by the fact that their argument is semantically promoted in comparison with the object argument of the transitive construction.

- The argument denotes neither a prototypical patient nor a prototypical causer.

- In many languages anticausatives split into three classes (marked, unmarked or both)

- The semantics of anti-causativity are an effect of the constructions that an individual verb can enter.

- Marked and unmarked constructions vary according to the language in the degree of causativity-promotion they convey to the undergoer-argument of the transitive construction.

7. References

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