REFLEXIVELY MARKED ANTICAUSATIVES ARE NOT SEMANTICALLY REFLEXIVE

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We discuss the recent proposal by Koontz-Garboden (2009) (cf. also Chierchia 2004) that reflexively marked anticausative verbs (in Romance languages and beyond) are semantically reflexive. This proposal predicts that a sentence headed by a lexical causative verb should not entail the sentence headed by the reflexively marked anticausative counterpart. We uncover problems with the main argument for this claim and add further tests which show that a causative sentence does, in fact, entail its anticausative counterpart, whether reflexively marked or not. Our findings support standard semantics of the causative alternation according to which anticausatives, whether reflexively marked or not, denote inchoative one-place predicates. They also reconfirm that the relevant reflexive morphology is syncretic and does not necessarily derive reflexive semantics.

1. Introduction

According to the standard semantic analysis of the causative alternation along the lines of (2a, b), there is an entailment relationship from lexical causative verbs to anticausative verbs so that if (1a) is true, (1b) is also true.

(1) a. Juan aumentó el precio
    Juan increased the price
    “John increased the price”

b. El precio aumentó
    The price increased
    “The price increased”

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The anticausative verb in (1b) has the same morphological form as its causative counterpart. Besides such unmarked anticausatives (UAC), Spanish, as many other Indo-European languages, also has anticausatives that are marked with a reflexive morpheme (3b) (reflexively marked anticausatives, RAC). In fact, most Spanish anticausatives are RACs, while other languages have a bigger set of UACs.

One of the theoretical questions about RACs concerns the role of the reflexive morpheme. In most accounts, RACs have the same semantics as UACs (i.e. (2b)) and the reflexive morpheme in RACs is assumed to reflect, in some sense, the absence of an external argument (e.g. Grimshaw 1981, Reinhart 2002, Reinhart & Siloni 2005, Schäfer 2008, Wood 2012, Alexiadou et al. to appear, though details differ a lot). However, any assumption along these lines does not, by itself, explain why RACs across the Indo-European family involve the very same morphological marker that derives canonically reflexive verbs (CRV) as in the Spanish example in (4).

Arguably, the reflexive morpheme in CRVs is directly responsible for bringing about a reflexive interpretation, i.e. an interpretation of (4) where the subject 'the boy' receives both the agent and the patient role of the verb. Standard accounts to RACs have to assume then that the se-morpheme has fundamentally different effects in RACs and CRVs, i.e. that the reflexive morphology is syncretic (i.e. one form with different functions; though these accounts differ a lot in the particular functions assigned to the morphology in RACs and CRVs; see Reinhart 2002, Reinhart & Siloni 2005 and Schäfer 2008, Alexiadou et al. to appear for two fundamentally different proposals).

Koontz-Garboden (2009) (following Chierchia 2004) argues that the morphological identity of RACs and CRVs is not a case of syncretism, but that the reflexive element acts as a reflexivizer with the semantics in (5) in CRVs as well as in RACs. In both cases, se takes a transitive relation $\mathfrak{R}$ such as (6a) or (7a) as its argument and identifies the two arguments of the
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While the treatment of CRVs in (6) is straightforward (besides the question whether se in CRVs is better analyzed as a reflexivizer or as a locally bound variable), the treatment of RACs in (7b) as denoting a reflexive relation differs fundamentally from the standard semantics of anticausatives in (2b). In particular, the semantics of the causative alternation in (7a, b) contrasts with the standard proposal in (2a, b), in that lexical causatives do not entail their reflexively marked anticausative counterparts. That is, under the standard account the truth of a sentence headed by a causative verb as in (2a) necessarily predicts that a sentence headed by the corresponding anticausative verb as in (2b) is true, too. This is not the case if the reflexive morpheme in anticausatives acts as a reflexivizer as in (7b). Under this proposal, a causative sentence as in (7a) can be true in a situation where the corresponding anticausative as in (7b) is false. We come back to this difference in Section 3 below.

Koontz-Garboden (2009) presents three conceptual advantages of the reflexivization analysis of anticausatives (RAoAC) in (7a, b). First, the

1 The Neo-Davidsonian formulas in (5-7) are adapted from Koontz-Garboden (2009). υ stands for eventuality, either a state or an event proper.

2 In order to capture that a sentence headed by a (reflexively marked) anticausative can be followed by a sentence headed by the corresponding causative verb, as in (i), Koontz-Garboden (2009:104) proposes that one event can, in principle, have more than one effector. In (i), the vase is the theme of both sentences and it is also the effector of the first sentence, and Juan is introduced as a further effector of the same event in the second sentence. Under the standard semantics of the causative alternation in (2a, b), the compatibility of the two sentences in (i) follows trivially.

(i) Se rompió el vaso. De hecho, Juan lo rompió.
REFL broke the glass in truth Juan it broke
“The glass broke. In fact, Juan broke it.”
proposal simplifies grammar by avoiding a syncretism between an anticausative and a reflexive use (or version) of the se-morpheme; only the reflexive use with the well-defined semantics in (5) remains. However, whether the se-morpheme is syncretic or not is an empirical question and we will, later on, provide semantic evidence for a positive answer.³ Note that there is evidence beyond RACs that se-morphemes are syncretic (see also Horvath & Siloni 2012) as they are involved in a number of further verbal diatheses such as generic middles, reflexive passives and impersonal constructions (see Spanish in (8a-c)); as long as these have not been analyzed as involving semantic reflexivization – an impossible endeavor as we think – this conceptual advantage of the RAoAC remains rather small.

³ Empirical evidence also comes from syntactic considerations. Schäfer (2008) and Pitteroff & Schäfer (2014) show that in German (which lacks the complicating property of clitic movement) the se-morpheme is merged as an internal object argument in CRVs, while it is merged as an external (expletive) subject argument in RACs. This syntactic difference argues against the RAoAC and in favor of two syncretic cases or uses of the se-morpheme.

(8) a. *Estas patatas se cortan fácilmente* (generic middle)
   These potatoes REFLEX cut-3-PL easily
   “These potatoes cut easily”

b. *Se venden pisos* (reflexive passive)
   REFLEX sell-3-PL flats
   “Flats are sold, i.e. flats for sale”

c. *Se vive bien en Madrid* (reflexive impersonal)
   REFLEX live-3-SG well in Madrid
   “One lives well in Madrid”

As a second advantage, the RAoAC does not violate the Monotonicity Hypothesis in (9), a hypothesis about word formation processes formulated in Koontz-Garboden (2007):

(9) **Monotonicity Hypothesis:**
   Word formation operations add, but do not remove, meaning.

Accounts that assume that RACs are derived from their causative counterpart with the help of a lexical reduction operation eliminating the external argument (i.e. accounts that derive the semantics in (2b) from (2a)) violate (9). Note however, that there are syntactic accounts to the causative alternation that do not assume a derivational relation between RACs and their causative counterpart, and, consequently, do not violate the principle in (9) (e.g., Schäfer 2008, Alexiadou et al. to appear).

Finally, Koontz-Garboden (2009) argues that the RAoAC is the only theory available that can derive the Underspecified External Argument Condition (UEAC) on anticausativization in (10) identified in Levin & Rappaport Hovav (1995) and Reinhart (2002) (our formulation):
The UEAC can be illustrated by a comparison of the verbs ‘cut’ vs. ‘break’. The former allows only agents as external argument (11a, see Koontz-Garboden (2009:fn. 9) for the somewhat intricate illustration that Spanish cortar (to cut) indeed does not allow instrument or causer subjects) and does not form an anticausative (11b), while the latter allows agents, causers or instruments as external argument (12a) and forms an anticausative, in Spanish, in fact, a RAC (12b). Koontz-Garboden argues that the ungrammaticality of (11b) follows under the RAoAC simply from a violation of the thematic requirements of the verb involved; the non-human DP el pan (the bread) does not qualify ontologically as an agent and, therefore, cannot be assigned the external θ-role of the verb cortar. (12b) is grammatical because the verb romper assigns the role ‘effector’ to its external argument. This role lacks any agent entailments and, so the claim, can be assigned to any non-human DP, in (11b) to la ventana (the window).

(11)  
\[ a. \quad El \ panadero \ cortó \ el \ pan \]  
the baker cut the bread  
“The baker cut the bread”  
\[ b. \quad *El \ pan \ se \ cortó \ por \ sí \ solo \]  
the bread refl cut by self only  
“*The bread cut by itself”

(12)  
\[ a. \quad El \ vándalo / la piedra / la tormenta rompió la ventana \]  
The vandal / the rock / the storm broke the window  
“The vandal/the rock/the storm broke the window”  
\[ b. \quad La \ ventana \ se \ rompió \ (por \ sí \ sola) \]  
The window refl broke by refl self  
“The window broke by itself”

This explanation of the UEAC faces two problems. First, it overgenerates, as it treats the lack of agent entailments as a sufficient condition for anticausative formation. It is, however, only a necessary condition since (probably) all languages - including languages with RACs - have causative verbs not restricting their external argument to agents that, nevertheless, do not form anticausatives. As one example out of many, consider the English verb destroy and its cognates in other languages. This causative verb allows

\[ 4 \] The by itself phrase is added in (11b) and (12b) to enforce an anticausative interpretation and to avoid a construal as a reflexive passive.
human agents as well as non-human causers or instruments as its subject ('John/The storm/The torpedo destroyed the ship'). Nevertheless, destroy does not form an anticausative in many languages ('*The ship destroyed') including languages with reflexively marked anticausatives. This is unexpected under the RAoAC because this verb can be reflexivized across languages ('John/The machine destroyed himself/itself'); see Alexiadou et al. (to appear) for further discussion of this type of overgeneration.

Furthermore, although the UEAC holds across languages (as a necessary, though not sufficient condition, as exemplified by the case of destroy) and across morphological classes of anticausatives (i.e. for RACs as well as UACs), the above explanation only covers anticausatives that are derived by reflexivization. But even Koontz-Garboden (2009) assumes that the class of UACs is not derived by reflexivization. His proposal implies then that one universal phenomenon (the UEAC) needs two different explanations for the different types of anticausatives, a conceptually rather suspicious outcome.

To conclude, according to the RAoAC, the RAC in (3b, 12b) means that 'the glass caused its own breaking' (cf. 7b). For UACs as in (1b), on the other hand, it is assumed that they are, in general, not semantically reflexive but indeed have the inchoative semantics along the lines in (2b), just like unquestionable inchoative structures, e.g. 'The water became cold'. In the next section, we will refute the central empirical argument brought forward in favor of the RAoAC concerning truth entailments between (anti-) causative alternates. In particular, we will show that contrary to the prediction made by the RAoAC, (a sentence headed by) a causative verb does entail its anticausative counterpart, whether reflexively marked or not. This finding undermines the semantic proposal in (7b) and confirms the standard approach along the lines in (2b). It follows that RACs and UACs form a semantically uniform class together with other clearly inchoative structures (pure unaccusative verbs, become + adjective constructions). Furthermore, se-morphemes do not always act as reflexivizers or bound variables. However, we will also show that nothing except world knowledge blocks reflexivization of (2a). Therefore, a surface string such as (3b) can, in principle, receive the reading in (7b), but only under very specific circumstances. The RAoAC, on the other hand, wrongly predicts meaning (2b) to be generally unavailable for RACs. For reasons of space, we will deal only

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5 Though Koontz-Garboden (2009) and Beavers & Koontz-Garboden (2012) leave it open that individual UACs could be lexically reflexive (similar to English zero marked reflexive verbs of the type ‘John washed’). This idea is not without problems as (i) English zero marked reflexive verbs express necessarily ‘naturally reflexive’ events (cf. Kemmer 1993) and (ii) languages with SE-reflexives, including Spanish, lack zero-derived reflexive verbs of this English type altogether (see Alexiadou et al., to appear b). For completeness, we mention that Koontz-Garboden leaves it open whether English, which only has morphologically unmarked anticausatives, derives those via reflexivization or not. Our reasoning below suggests that they do not (cf. section 3.1 and 3.2, fn. 6).
with Spanish data, but our evidence can be fully replicated in German, too.

3. Probing the semantics of RACs via negation

As mentioned, the RAoAC predicts that (a sentence headed by) a causative verb should not entail its RAC counterpart. In other words, if someone breaks a glass, this does not entail that this glass also breaks itself, just as if someone washes a boy, this does not entail that this boy also washes himself. Koontz-Garboden (2009) sees this confirmed in examples such as (13), where a RAC is negated and its causative counterpart is asserted:

(13) *El vaso no se rompió, lo rompiste tú*
    The glass no refl broke, it broke you
    “The vase didn’t break, you broke it”

For this argument to go through it has to be shown that (13) does not involve so-called "metalinguistic negation" (Horn 1985). The RAoAC predicts (13) to involve the standard use of negation, while the standard semantics of the causative alternation in (2a, b) predicts it to involve only metalinguistic negation, as the standard use of negation would lead to a contradiction.6

To prove that (13) does not involve metalinguistic negation, Koontz-Garboden makes reference to the well-known fact that only the standard use of negation licenses negative polarity items (NPI; Horn 1985), as shown in (14a, b) for English. (14a) is a classical case of metalinguistic negation, and (14b) shows that the NPI any cannot appear in this context. Since the quantifier ningún in the Spanish translation of (14b) in (15b) also leads to ungrammaticality, Koontz-Garboden concludes that ningún is an NPI.

(14) a. John didn’t manage to solve SOME of the problems, he solved them all.
    b. *John didn’t manage to solve ANY of the problems, he solved them all.

(15) a. ¡No consiguió resolver ALGÚN problema,
    No managed to.solve some problem, consiguió resolverlos todos!
    managed to.solve.them all
    “(S)he didn’t manage to solve some problem,
    (s)he managed to solve them all!”

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6 We use here and below the terminology as well as the characterization of metalinguistic negation involving scalar predicates as presented in Horn (1985). We assume that there are two uses of natural language negation (standard and metalinguistic use) and we refer to these uses as diagnostics without any commitment to a particular theoretical analysis.
b. *No consiguió resolver NINGÚN problema,
   No managed to.solve any problem,
   consiguió resolverlos todos!
   managed to.solve.them all
   “*(S)he didn’t manage to solve any problem,
   (s)he managed to solve them all!”

His test case then consists in inserting ningún into examples such as (13) above. Since the result in (16) is well formed, Koontz-Garboden (2009) sees confirmed his claim that (16) as well as (13) involve the standard use of negation. And this is only possible/non-contradictory if the (clause involving the) causative verb does not entail its reflexively marked anticausative counterpart, exactly as predicted by the RAoAC.

(16) No se rompió NINGÚN vaso, los rompiste todos tú
    No REF. broke any glass, them broke all you
    “There didn’t break any glass, you broke them all”

A closer look at the above argumentation shows that it suffers from a serious flaw. We will show that ningún is not an NPI and that Spanish (15b) is ungrammatical for a different reason than English (14b) involving the unquestionable NPI any. Hence, the grammaticality of (16) does not exclude metalinguistic negation and, in turn, does not support the RAoAC.

We start by recalling that (14a) and (15a) are instances of metalinguistic negation. Importantly, the negated sentences involve a scalar operator (some, algún). According to Horn (1985), metalinguistic negation in such examples negates the assertability of an utterance by means of removing the upper bounding conversational implicature associated with the scalar operator. Such scalar implicatures are driven by the Gricean maxim of Quantity (be as informative as required). In (14a), the use of the quantifier some would normally trigger the implicature that at least some problems remained unsolved. The metalinguistic negation in the first clause removes this implicature so that the speaker can assert in the second clause that actually all problems were solved. (17a, b) provides two further examples of metalinguistic negation, which, instead of a scalar quantifier, involve a scalar verb and a scalar adjective. Again, the conversationally implied upper bounds of these scalar elements are negated in the first clause and they are extended in the second clause.

(17) a. Luisa no odia a los niños, los aborrece
    Luisa no hates to-ACC the children, them loathe
    “Luisa doesn’t hate children, she loathes them”

b. El agua no está templada, está caliente
    The water no is warm, is hot
    “The water isn’t warm, it is hot”
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Turning back to Spanish ningún, the hypothesis based on the ungrammaticality of (15b) that this element is an NPI is problematic as it is licensed in clear cases of metalinguistic negation such as (18), which is a variant of (17a) involving a scalar verb pair.

(18) Luisa no odia a ningún niño, los aborrece a todos
    Luisa no hates to-ACC any child, them loathes to-ACC all
    “Luisa doesn’t hate any child, she loathes them all”

The grammaticality of (18) as well as the ungrammaticality of (15b) follow if ningún is not an NPI but a negative quantifier, which also triggers negative concord (e.g. Bosque 1980, de Swart 2010). (That is, the negation does not license the presence of ningún, but the presence of ningún triggers the presence of the negation.) A negative quantifier differs from an existential one in that it does not trigger any scalar implicature that could be metalinguistically negated. This is illustrated in (19) where the English negative quantifier no combines with the verb solve which is also not scalar. In the lack of any scalar expression, the negation in (19a) must be interpreted as standard negation and the example is contradictory. Since the existential quantifier in (19b) is a scalar operator (i.e. an element on a Horn scale), metalinguistic negation becomes possible.

(19) a. For no problem, it is the case that John managed to
    solve it. #John actually managed to solve all of them.

b. It is not the case that for some problems, John
    managed to solve them. John actually managed to
    solve all of them.

Crucially, negative quantifiers enter sentences with metalinguistic negation, if a scalar element is present; in (20), the first verb is scalar and the second verb extends an upper bounding implicature (only hate vs. even loathe).

(20) For no child, it is the case that John hates it.
    John actually loathes all of them.

This allows explaining the grammaticality of (16). Under the semantics in (2a, b), anticausative and causative verb pairs are ordered on a Horn scale. The anticausative is semantically inchoative and the maxim of quantity triggers the conventional implicature that the corresponding causative involving an external argument is too strong. Metalinguistic negation removes this upper bound in the first clause so that the stronger causative event can be asserted in the second clause.

Below we provide three further arguments that examples such as (13) involve metalinguistic negation, i.e. that RACs behave semantically like UACs, not like CVRs, and that, in turn, the RAoAC cannot be upheld.
3.1 Solo (‘just’)

Only metalinguistic but not standard negation combines with adverbs like English *just* or its Spanish counterpart *solo* (Horn 1985). Turning to *se*-marked verbs, we see that the negation in examples involving RACs such as (15) qualifies as metalinguistic (21a) while the negation in a corresponding example involving a CRV qualifies as standard negation (21b). It follows that only CRVs but not RACs are semantically reflexive.

(21) a. *El vaso no solo se rompió, tú lo rompiste*  
   ‘The glass didn’t just break, you broke it.’

b. *El niño no (#solo) se lavó, tú lo lavaste*  
   ‘The child didn’t (#just) wash, you washed him.’

3.2 Pero vs. sino (que) (concessive vs. corrective ‘but’)

Conjunctions like English *but* also diagnose metalinguistic negation (Horn 1985, Koenig & Benndorf 1998). Spanish has two overtly distinguished conjunctions (*pero* vs. *sino que*), one with a concessive use (*pero*) and one with a corrective use (*sino que*) (see also German *aber* vs. *sondern*). While the standard use of negation allows *pero* and *sino que* (22), metalinguistic negation only licenses *sino que* (23).\(^7\) Note that in (23b) *ningún* is licensed while *pero* is not. This reinforces our conclusion that *ningún* is not an NPI but a negative quantifier and, therefore, compatible with metalinguistic negation.

(22) *Pepe no es rico, {pero / sino que} es inteligente*  
   ‘Pepe is not rich but1/but2 he is intelligent’

(23) a. *El agua no está templada,*  
   ‘The water is not warm’

\(\{#pero / sino que\} está caliente\)  
   ‘It is actually hot’

‘The water is not warm, it is hot’

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\(^7\) This test can be applied to other languages, e.g. English, French or Norwegian (p.c. Fabienne Martin and Gillian Ramchand; cf. also Horn 1985). For example, English *but* has a concessive use as in (ia) and (ib) but lacks a corrective use (ic). Its distribution shows that English anticausatives are not semantically reflexive (id).

(i) a. He is not rich, but he is intelligent.
   b. The girl did not wash (herself) (but) the mother washed her.
   c. It is not warm in here (but) it is actually hot.
   d. The vase did not break (but) you broke it.
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b. Luisa no odia a ningún niño,
   Luisa not hates to-ACC no/any child,
   {#pero / sino que} los aborrece a todos
   but₁ / but₂ that them loathes to-ACC all
   “It is not the case that Luisa hates no child, she loathes them all”

This test shows that RACs (24a) behave like other inchoative predicates, UACs in (24b), pure unaccusatives in (24c) and combinations of a copula with an adjective in (24d);⁸ they involve metalinguistic negation and reject standard negation. Crucially, they do not behave like CRVs in (25):

(24) a. El vaso no se rompió,
   The glass not REFLEX broke
   {#pero / sino que} tú lo rompiste
   but₁ / but₂ that you it broke
   “The glass did not break, you broke it”

b. Los precios no aumentaron,
   The prices not increased
   {#pero / sino que} tú los aumentaste
   but₁ / but₂ that you them increased
   “The prices did not increase, you increased them”

c. El rosal no floreció,
   The rosebush not blossomed
   {#pero / sino que} el jardinero lo hizo florecer
   but₁ / but₂ that the gardener it made blossom
   “The rosebush did not blossom, the gardener made it blossom”

d. El niño no se puso enfermo,
   The kid not REFLEX get sick
   {#pero / sino que} tú lo infectaste
   but₁ / but₂ that you him infected
   “The child did not get sick, you infected him”

(25) El niño no se lavó,
   The kid no REFLEX washed
   {pero / sino que} lo lavó la niñera
   but₁ / but₂ that him washed the nanny
   “The child did not wash, (but) the nanny washed him”

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⁸ The Spanish counterparts of English ‘become’ take se (ponerse, volverse), which makes them tricky for our argument. German examples as in (i) make the point in a clearer way.

(i) Das Kind wurde nicht krank, {#aber/sondern} du hast es angesteckt
   The child became not sick, but₁ / but₂ you have it infected
   “The child did not get sick, you infected her”
3.3 Real NPIs: *siquiera* (‘not even’)

We argued that examples such as (13) and (16) involve the metalinguistic use of negation and that (16) allows *ningún* because it is not an NPI. We predict then, correctly as we will see, that these examples should exclude real NPIs. A clear example of metalinguistic negation rejecting our test NPI *siquiera* (‘not even’) is given in (26).

(26) #Luisa no odia *siquiera* a los niños, los aborrece
Luisa not hates *not.even to-ACC* the children them loathes
“Luisa doesn’t (even) hate children (at all), she loathes them”

This test gives exactly the same results as the previous one. The RAC in (27a) cannot combine with the NPI, thereby behaving like other inchoative predicates such as UACs in (27b), pure unaccusatives in (27c) or combinations of an eventive copula with an adjective in (27d). CRVs, on the other hand, are compatible with the NPI (28) as predicted by the semantics in (6a, b) which force the negation to be interpreted as standard negation.

(27) a. #El vaso no se rompió *siquiera*, tú lo rompiste
    The glass no REFLEX broked *not.even* you it broke
    “The glass didn’t (even) break (at all), you broke it”

b. #Los precios no aumentaron *siquiera*,
    The prices not increased *not.even*,
    tú los aumentaste
    you them increased
    “The prices didn’t (even) increase (at all),
    you increased them”

c. #El rosal no floreció *siquiera*,
    The rosebush not blossomed not.even,
    el jardinero lo hizo florecer
    the gardener it made blossom
    “The rosebush didn’t (even) blossom (at all),
    the gardener made it blossom”

d. #El niño no se puso enfermo *siquiera*,
    The child no REFLEX get sick *not.even*,
    tú lo infectaste
    you him infected
    “The child didn’t (even) get sick (at all),
    you infected him”

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9 Horvath & Siloni (2011) argue that the Spanish NPI *en absoluto* (‘at all’) cannot appear in examples like (13). However, Beavers & Koontz-Garboden (2013) report judgments that suggest that *en absoluto* can escape standard conditions on NPI licensing (cf. e.g. Giannakidou 2006). *Siquiera* does not face such problems.
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(28)  *El niño no se lavó siquiera, lo lavó la niñera*
    The kid not refl washed not.even him washed the nanny
    “The kid didn’t (even) wash (at all), the nanny washed him”

3.4 *Ningún* and UACs: a potential counter-argument

As mentioned, Koontz-Garboden (2009) suggests that the semantics of UACs (2b) differ fundamentally from those of RACs (7b). Koontz-Garboden supports this view with the claim that the two types of predicates differ in their compatibility with Spanish *ningún*: while this element is compatible with RACs, as we have seen in (15), he reports the following example involving an UAC combining with *ningún* as ungrammatical. This follows under his view that *ningún* is an NPI because, according to the semantics of (2a, b), UACs are entailed by their causative counterpart; as a consequence, (29) can only involve metalinguistic negation and the NPI is not licensed.

(29)  #No empeoró ningún paciente,
    No worsened any/no patient,
    los empeoró a todos el tratamiento
    them worsened to all the treatment
    “No patient worsened, the treatment worsened them all”

While we have already shown that *ningún* is not an NPI, the judgment in (29) conflicts with our above finding that RACs and UACs share the semantics in (2b). However, we find the judgment in (29) wrong. For us, both RACs and UACs license *ningún* without any problems. Our judgment is confirmed by the following example, a variant of (29), which was accepted by 21 out of 22 informants. We conclude that RACs and UACs share the semantics in (2b).11

10 However, only 13 out of our 21 consultants agreed with our judgment in (i) below. Note however, that the class of UACs is extremely small in Spanish and that most unmarked unaccusatives lack a causative variant. We think that speakers who reject examples such as (29/30) or (i) below lack a transitive, causative version of the verbs under consideration.

(i)  a.  [In the butcher’s shop] Lady: Oh! How expensive the meat is!
    b.  Butcher: Last week, some prices increased.
    c.  Lady: ¡No aumentó ningún precio,
        Not increased no price
        (sino que) los aumentó todos usted, so ladrón!
        (but that) them increased all you, such thief
        “No price increased, you increased them all, you thief!”

11 As a reviewer points out, this conclusion can be strengthened by applying our tests to pairs of reflexively marked and unmarked anticausatives in different languages. For example, while Spanish ‘romper (to break) forms a reflexively marked anticausative, its German counterpart ‘zerbrechen’ forms an unmarked anticausative. Nevertheless, the two show exactly the same behavior with respect to our tests. In particular, German ‘zerbrechen’
(30) a. [In a trial on medical negligence] Judge: Dr. García said that the patients in quarantine worsened suddenly by themselves, do you agree with this claim?
b. Witness: No empeoró ningún paciente (por sí solo), Not worsened no patient (by REFL self), (sino que) los empeoró a todos el tratamiento (but1 that) them worsened to all the treatment experimental proporcionado por el doctor García experimental provided by the doctor García “No patient worsened (by himself), Dr. García’s experimental treatment worsened them all”

4. Is the reflexive reading totally impossible for RACs?

We showed that RACs do not have the reflexive semantics in (7b) but share with UACs the inchoative semantics in (2b). However we should ask whether strings such as (3b) can, at least optionally, have a semantically reflexive construal derived from (2a) via a reflexivizer (or a bound variable)? We think that this option cannot be blocked by formal grammar because reflexivization is a productive process, formally available for all transitive verbs. Instead, we think that it is blocked by conceptual considerations: such a construal is as nonsensical as the English 'The glass broke itself' (see e.g. Stephens (2006) for illustration that the English SELF-reflexive has no human restriction). But in specific contexts, if the nonsensical construal is negated and/or enforced by an intensifier (e.g. Spanish sí mismo ‘itself’), it becomes available as the licensing of but1 and but2 in (31) shows. Crucially, (31a) has nothing to do with anticausativization, since UACs as in (1b) enter the reflexive construal under such conditions, too, as (31b) shows.

(31) a. El vaso no se rompió a sí mismo, lógicamente, The glass no REFL broke to REFL self logically {pero / sino que} tú lo rompiste but1 / but2 that you it broke “The glass didn’t break itself of course, (but) you broke it”

licenses only the corrective but in examples such as (24a) and it does not license NPIs (e.g. (‘überhaupt’ (at all), ‘jemals’ (ever)) in examples such as (27a). The opposite constellation can be found, too. While Spanish ‘empeorar (to worsen) forms an unmarked anticausative (29), its German cognate ‘verschlechtern’ forms a reflexively marked anticausative. Again, the German verb behaves like its Spanish counterpart with respect to our tests.
b. Los precios no se aumentaron a sí mismos,
The prices no REFLE increased to REFLE selves
lógicamente, pero/sino que Ana los aumentó
logically but1/but2 that Ana them increased
“The prices didn’t increase themselves of course,
(but) Ana increased them”

6. Conclusions

We showed that the central prediction of the RAoAC is wrong, namely that the truth of (a clause involving) a causative verb does not entail the truth of its RAC counterpart. RACs do not pattern together with CRVs as expected if both had the reflexive semantics in (7b) but RACs have the inchoative semantics in (2b). Consequently, the truth of the causative entails the truth of its RAC counterpart and the latter can be negated while the former is asserted only if the negation involved is used metalinguistically. Furthermore, all our tests showed that RACs form a semantically uniform class together with UACs and other inchoative constructions. We conclude that the morphological identity between RACs and CRVs does not reflect semantic identity. Therefore, the se-morpheme does not always act as a reflexivizer or locally bound variable and we face a syncretism. Although our results have been derived within Spanish, we think that they hold true across the Indo-European family. We left untouched many questions concerning the role of the se–morpheme in RACs, the reason underlying this syncretism or the reasons driving the split between UACs and RACs. For different proposals and further references, see for example Grimshaw (1981), Reinhart (2002), Reinhart & Siloni (2005), Schäfer (2008), Wood (2012) or Alexiadou et al. (to appear a).

References


Beavers, John and Andrew Koontz-Garboden. 2013. In defense of the

12 Alexiadou et al. (to appear a) discuss further problems for the RAoAC such as over-generation concerning the availability of reflexive morphology (every UAC is predicted to also have a RAC version, because reflexivization cannot be blocked) and a number of wrong empirical predictions concerning intensifiers, ‘by itself’ phrases, oblique causers and causer PPs. Some of the latter observations have also been made in Horvath & Siloni (2011, 2013), and see already Schäfer (2008) for the illustration that UACs and RACs do not differ empirically with respect to these tests.
reflexivization analysis of anticausativization. *Lingua* 131, 199-216.


