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RESEARCH

Applied arguments in Spanish inchoative middle constructions

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Despite displaying identical exponents (a reflexive clitic, imperfective tenses and agreement between the verb and the preverbal definite DP theme), change-of-state predicates in generic/middle contexts (inchoative middles, henceforth), can in fact have two different underlying representations: (i) a generic inchoative and (ii) a generic se-passive, this being the only one projecting a Voice head passivized by the reflexive clitic, which denotes an implicit generic external argument. Spanish allows the insertion of an affected applicative head in inchoative configurations (Cuervo 2003), which introduces an unselected dative argument interpreted either as an unintentional causer of the event if merged above the verbalizing head, or as affectee if merged below it. Crucially, this paper shows that the generic passive configuration disallows the applicative's unintentional causer interpretation, since the position above vP is already filled by Voice; therefore, the only available merging position for the applicative is below vP. However, the unintentional causer interpretation is possible in generic inchoative constructions, which lack a VoiceP. The data and analysis presented here support Wood and Marantz's (2017) proposal of a single argument-introducing head whose category and interpretation vary in terms of the syntactic context it is merged in. Finally, this study stresses the need to establish a more detailed classification of Spanish se-constructions as a whole and middles in particular with respect to their interaction with applied arguments.

Keywords: applicatives; causative alternation; inchoatives; middle-passives; Voice; datives; *se*-constructions

1 Introduction

Middle-passive constructions in Spanish are characterized by the presence of the reflexive clitic *se*, imperfective tenses, and verbal agreement between the verb and the DP theme, whose unmarked position is preverbal. Virtually any transitive verb can occur in these structures and the possibility of introducing an agent by means of a *por*-phrase (by-phrase) is banned.

(1) *What happens?*
   a. Los libros de sintaxis se leen fácilmente (*por Chomsky).
      the papers of syntax REFL read.3PL.PRS easily by Chomsky
      'Syntax books read easily.'
   b. #Se leen los artículos de sintaxis fácilmente.

Middle-passive sentences are generic statements, i.e. they are not episodic, which denote intrinsic properties of the verb's internal argument. In Spanish, as well as in other closely related Romance languages such as Catalan or Asturian,[1] verbs denot-

[1] See Suárez-Palma (2019) for similar data in such languages.

ing a change of state or location can occur in these constructions (2a), and they allow the insertion of an unselected dative argument which can have, at least, three possible interpretations, namely, unintentional causer of the event or, alternatively, affectee of a spontaneous or externally caused change-of-state/location event, as shown in (2b). Note that for the affected reading, the dative DP may be interpreted as the possessor of the theme, although not necessarily.

(2) a. Las camisas de lino se arrugan fácilmente.
the shirts of linen REFL wrinkle.3PL.PRS easily
'Linen shirts wrinkle easily.'
'It is easy to wrinkle linen shirts.'

b. A María$_i$ las/mis/sus$_i$ camisas de lino se le$_i$ arrugan fácilmente.
to María the/my/her shirts of linen REFL 3SG.DAT wrinkle easily
'Linen shirts wrinkle easily on/for María.'
'It is easy to wrinkle María's linen shirts, and she is affected by it.'

Interestingly, middle-passives in Spanish appear to license control into a purpose clause (3a), just like periphrastic (3b) and regular *se*-passives (3c) do; for these last two, this has been traditionally interpreted as evidence for the existence of an implicit external argument in the derivation.

(3) a. *Middle-passive*
Las madera de roble se quema fácilmente para hacer carbón.
the wood of oak REFL burns easily for make coal
'Oak wood burns easily (in order to make coal).'

b. *Periphrastic passive*
La madera de roble fue quemada para hacer carbón.
the wood of oak was burned for make coal
'The oak wood was burned in order to make coal.'

c. Se-*passive*
La madera de roble se quemó para hacer carbón.
the wood of oak REFL burned for make coal
'The oak wood was burned in order to make coal.'

Crucially, when a dative argument co-occurs with a purpose clause in these configurations, the dative's unintentional causer reading, as well as the interpretation where the argument is affected by a spontaneously caused event, become unavailable, as shown in (4). In other words, the presence of the purpose clause forces the interpretation of the dative argument as affected by an externally caused event, exclusively.

(4) A Sandra$_i$, la madera de roble se$_k$ le$_i$ quema fácilmente
to Sandra.DAT the wood of oak REFL 3SG.DAT burns easily
para PRO$_{k/*i}$ hacer carbón.
for make coal
~~'Sandra accidentally/unintentionally makes oak wood burn easily.'~~
~~'Oak wood burns easily and Sandra is affected by it.'~~
'It is easy to burn Sandra's oak wood in order to make coal.'

In this paper, I show that when a change-of-state predicate occurs in these generic contexts, which have been traditionally considered middle-passives as a homogeneous category (Mendikoetxea 1999), we are in fact dealing with two different configurations which hap-

pen to display the same phonetic realization, namely: (i) a generic *se*-passive structure,[2] containing an activity verbalizing head (v_{DO}, in Cuervo's (2003) terms) complement to a Voice head, and passivized by the non-paradigmatic reflexive clitic *se*, which denotes an implicit generic external argument/causer;[3] and (ii) a generic inchoative configuration, whose cause argument is demoted and the reflexive clitic, which can be paradigmatic this time, spells out the head of the change subevent (v_{GO}), and lacks a VoiceP. These two derivations give rise to the two possible interpretations in (2a): on the one hand, a situation where a generic causer participates (*Generally, it is easy to cause linen shirts to wrinkle*) and, on the other, a context where no causer is involved (*Linen shirts wrinkle easily*); in other words, both interpretations are structurally derivable, and this is a case of syntactic ambiguity. I will hereafter use the term *inchoative middles* to refer to generic contexts containing change-of-state verbs in general, i.e. both in a *se*-passive and a generic inchoative configuration, yet I will specify when discussing one or the other.

Additionally, I demonstrate that inchoative middles are able to host an unselected dative argument by means of an affected applicative head (Cuervo 2003), whose spell-out form is the dative clitic pronoun, and whose interpretation ranges from unintentional causer of the event if the applicative head merges above the verbalizing head, to affectee if merged below it. Crucially, this paper shows that the generic passive configuration disallows the applicative's unintentional causer interpretation for the passivized VoiceP already sits atop the verbalizing head (v_{DO}); the only possible interpretation for the dative in such context is that of affectee, for the only available merging position for this argument is below vP_{DO}. However, the unintentional causer interpretation is possible in generic inchoative constructions, which lack a VoiceP, therefore allowing the applicative head to merge on top of the first subevent (v_{GO}). Following Wood and Marantz (2017), I propose that both the applicative and the passivized voice heads are instances of a single argument-introducing head, *i** in their terms, whose category and interpretation vary in terms of the syntactic context it is merged in. Thus, when *i** merges on top of a causative verbalizing head (v_{DO}) it emerges as a Voice head (active or passive); on the contrary, should v_{GO} be the complement of *i**, then the latter is realized as an applicative whose interpretation is that of unintentional/accidental causer.

The article is structured as follows: in Section 2, I provide an overview of the main structural properties traditionally associated with middle-passive constructions crosslinguistically (§2.1); next, I review the different accounts for the grammatical encoding of an implicit external argument in these configurations available in the literature (§2.2), and in §2.3, I summarize the structural properties of middle-passives in Spanish. Section 3 is devoted to the analysis of the data under consideration, starting with a discussion of the structural properties of inchoative structures in Spanish (§3.1), followed by the analysis I propose for inchoative middles which details the two possible configurations that can yield a seemingly identical spell-out form, yet display different syntactic behaviors, namely: a generic *se*-passive, and a generic inchoative (§3.2); later, I discuss how the analysis proposed here supports Wood and Marantz's (2017) proposal for a categorially underspecified argument-introducing head (§3.3); the section ends a with a brief note on the position dative DPs occupy in inchoative middles (§3.4). Finally, Section 4 concludes the paper.

[2] From now on, I will use the terms middle-passive and generic *se*-passives indistinctively to refer to reflexively marked generic *se*-passives with a middle interpretation.

[3] See Schäfer (2008) for an account that derives the semantics of middles from the conceptual interface and the presence of a generic operator [GEN].

2 Middle constructions

2.1 Crosslinguistic properties

The middle reading is a crosslinguistic phenomenon, yet natural languages differ as to the sort of strategy they use in order to encode this construal in their grammar. In fact, middle formation is distant from being a uniform process across languages, or even within the same language; hence some scholars consider the middle as a semantic category, rather than a syntactic one, that can be conveyed via a variety of syntactic constructions in each language (Condoravdi 1989; Lekakou 2005). Ackema & Schoorlemmer (2006) point out that there are languages whose middles contain a reflexive marker, and those which do not; middle constructions can be agentive or non-agentive, personal or impersonal, or be licensed as arguments or adjuncts. This crosslinguistic heterogeneity sparked syntacticians' interest in this phenomenon throughout the years, which translated into numerous analyses of different nature, including syntactic (Keyser & Roeper 1984; Hale & Keyser 1986; Roberts 1987; Stroik 1992; Schäfer 2008), semantic (O'Gready 1980; Dixon 1982; Chierchia 2003) and lexicalist analyses (Fagan 1992; Ackema & Schoorlemmer 1994; 1995), to name a few.

Generally speaking, these are generic non-episodic predicates conveying inherent properties of a notional object, which has been promoted to be the grammatical subject, while the notional subject has been demoted, albeit its presence as an arbitrary external argument appears to remain semantically.

(5) a. This article reads easily (*by syntacticians).
b. Syntax articles read easily (*by Chomsky).

In (5), the verb's internal argument becomes the grammatical subject which shows agreement with the verb; moreover, the possibility of reintroducing the verb's external argument by means of a *by*-phrase is ruled out. Nonetheless, it is interpreted arbitrarily, which contributes to the structure's generic reading. This genericity can denote potentiality, i.e. anyone's capability of exercising a given event on a particular theme: e.g. *Anyone can read this article easily* (cf. (5a)).

Some scholars (Oosten 1977; Condoravdi 1989; Hulk & Cornips 2000; Ackema & Schoorlemmer 2006) point out the fact that the theme appears to entail some degree of agency, in the sense that it is some of the notional object's properties that determine the progress of the event represented in the middle. Thus, Condoravdi (1989) argues that the type of adverbs that can appear in these structures must specify the mapping of those events onto time, or else determine the theme's degree of affectedness by the event over time. In other words, the object measures out the event, and this can be done by calculating how affected the former is by the latter.

Additionally, the generic reading is conveyed by means of imperfective tenses, which can turn an otherwise episodic predicate into a non-episodic one; thus, middle constructions cannot occur in the progressive (6a), or the imperative (6b). Should the verb be conjugated in a perfective tense (6c), the sentence is no longer interpreted as generic, but as episodic, therefore losing the middle reading.

(6) a. *This article is reading easily.
b. *Read easily, article!
c. *Inchoative/*Middle*
The article burned easily.

Ackema & Schoorlemmer (2006) (henceforth, A&S) propose a crosslinguistic classification of middle constructions based on whether such structures in the different languages lack

an identical episodic counterpart (Type I middles) or have one (Type II middles). Thus, middles in languages like English or Dutch would qualify as Type I middles, whereas Spanish middle-passives (7a), which can receive a passive interpretation (7b), would be considered Type II middles, in A&S's terms. In fact, these structures' episodic counterparts can occasionally license *by*-phrases (7c) just like periphrastic passives do (7d), although this possibility is very limited and contingent on specific registers, such as legalese.

(7) a. *Middle-passive (Type II middle)*
Los poemas de Machado se leen fácilmente.
the poems of Machado REFL read.PL easily
'Machado's poems read easily.'

b. *Reflexively-marked passive*
Los poemas de Machado se leyeron durante la ceremonia.
the poems of Machado REFL read.PST.3PL during the ceremony
'Machado's poems were read at the ceremony.'

c. *Reflexively-marked passive with a by-phrase (Gili Gaya 1943: 73)*
Se firmó la paz por los embajadores.
REFL signed the peace by the ambassadors
'The peace agreement was signed by the ambassadors.'

d. *Periphrastic passive*
La paz fue firmada por los embajadores.
the peace was signed by the ambassadros
'The peace agreement was signed by the ambassadors.'

Despite this crucial difference, there are certain properties that remain constant across languages. First of all, it is generally agreed (Levin 1982; Keyser & Roeper 1984; Fellbaum 1985; Condoravdi 1989; Fagan 1992; Ackema & Schoorlemmer 2006) that genericity is at the core of these structures; they portray as genetic an otherwise episodic predicate; the use of imperfective tenses as well as the fact that in many cases the notional object or grammatical subject stands for a type (cf. (5b) above), or as a specific token pertaining to that type, contribute to this type of reading. This is not to say, however, that middle constructions cannot occur with grammatical subjects standing for specific concrete tokens (cf. (5a)); in such cases, the generic reading is preserved, arguably due to the atemporal potentiality these structures convey, i.e. instead of punctual actions, these structures express potential events conditioned by the inherent properties of the grammatical object, as well as the arbitrariness of the implicit external argument in them,[4] which can be rephrased by *one*, or *people in general* (Fagan 1992).

Modification by an adverbial, or in some cases a prepositional phrase, seems to be a common requirement of middle constructions crosslinguistically; in the presence of negation, or a modal auxiliary, this requirement can be waived. The role of this adjuncts, according to Condoravdi (1989), is to presuppose and modify the implicit agent's active and volitional involvement in the event.

Another common trait of middle constructions across the board is the verb's internal argument's promotion to grammatical subject from its complement position. This phenomenon has been considered an instance of A-movement similar to the one found in regular passive sentences (Chomsky 1981; Jaeggli 1986), unaccusative verbs (Burzio 1986) or raising predicates (Chomsky 1981), i.e. the grammatical subject initially merges as an object to the verb and subsequently undergoes movement to subject position, presumably

[4] As I will show, it is not the case that all middle-passives convey the implication of an arbitrary external argument, e.g. generic inchoative configuration of inchoative middles.

to conform with the EPP; in such analyses, middle constructions are considered unaccusative predicates. Others propose that the internal argument merges as an external argument from the very beginning (Roberts 1987; Ackema & Schoorlemmer 1994); in that case, middles would qualify as unergative structures. For my analysis, I assume the former approach, i.e. that the verb's internal argument merges inside the VP, as complement to the verb, both in the generic *se*-passive and in the generic inchoative configurations, and is subsequently probed to preverbal subject position, which I will assume to be SpecTP, if it is available.

Finally, and most importantly for the purpose of this paper, the demotion of the external argument is widespread in middle constructions, which emphasizes the notional object's intrinsic properties that condition the event. Although most analyses of these constructions concur with the fact that this implicit argument is semantically present, there are different opinions as to whether it is syntactically absent or not. In the following section, I review the main proposals regarding this issue.

2.2 Implicit external arguments in middles

Although most analyses of middle constructions concur with the fact that the verb's external argument is semantically implicit, there are different opinions as to whether this argument is syntactically absent or not. Thus, while proposals such as van Oosten (1986), Zribi-Hertz (1993) and Ackema & Schoorlemmer (1995) reject the idea that the syntax projects the verb's external argument in middle constructions, others like Hoekstra & Roberts (1993) propose that Type I middles contain an arbitrary null pronoun (pro^{ARB}) in the specifier of the verbal phrase that stands for the implicit agent, or Stroik (1992; 1995; 1999), who claims the external argument merges as PRO in adjunct position. In this section, I explain how some of the most salient analyses of middle constructions, including syntactic and lexicalist approaches, account for the formal encoding of this argument.

2.2.1 Syntactic analyses

Keyser & Roeper (1984) argue that middle constructions undergo a process of detransitivization in the syntax, whereby the verb's internal argument must raise to subject position to comply with the EPP and to receive nominative case, as in the case of passive constructions. Moreover, based on Belletti's (1982) proposal about Italian reflexive clitic *si* being able to absorb accusative case and receive the agent theta-role, these authors postulate that English has a null reflexive clitic of the same nature as Italian *si*, which is only present in middles, and is therefore interpreted as the notional subject.

Similarly, Hale & Keyser (1986) also propose a detransitivizing process for middle constructions by means of which verbs entering this construal lose the agent role from their theta-grid. Nevertheless, these authors argue that no null pronominal is required to stand for the agent of the event; Hale & Keyser claim that removing the agent in these structures does not involve the complete elimination of agentivity. The authors propose that, in addition to their argument structure, verbs also have a Lexical Conceptual Structure (LCS), which reflects their core meanings and mediates the syntactic projection of the theta roles of the verb. Theta roles, thus, link both levels, i.e. argument structure and the LCS; however, when the detransitivizing rule eliminates the external argument and its agent role, it does not alter the LCS, hence the implicit agent interpretation arises. By postulating these two different levels of representation, Hale & Keyser overcome the stipulative null reflexive pronoun of the previous proposal that is not attested anywhere else in the English language.

Roberts (1987) claims that middle constructions originate by means of a stativization process; stativity excludes agentivity which would explain the syntactic absence of an agent in these structures. However, this linguist relates modification with the presence of

an implicit agent, whose interpretation is possible due to the fact that the agent theta-role is inactive but still associated with the verb, i.e. it has not been projected in the syntax because a lexical rule prevents it and can only be interpreted implicitly. This theta role would be properly governed by the adverb or, in its absence, by negation or the inflectional head, hence their obligatoriness.

Finally, one of the most recent proposals for the analysis of middle constructions was put forth by Schäfer (2008). This scholar suggests that middles, like passives, involve an external argument of some sort, although in the former it seems to be less active than in the latter. Schäfer elaborates a typology of Voice heads, i.e. the functional head proposed by Kratzer (1996) able to introduce external arguments, and proposes that middle constructions project an expletive Voice head which, in combination with a generic operator Gen, can favor the interpretation of an arbitrary agent. However, the author stresses the fact that middles involve such an implicit agent if the encyclopedic knowledge about the verbal root or the compositional meaning of the root and its internal argument implies so.

2.2.2 Lexicalist analyses

Fagan (1992) proposes that middles, like anticausatives, are syntactically transitive and lexically derived; she highlights the generic nature of these sentences as well as the presence of an implicit agent in them, which is interpreted arbitrarily. The author establishes a parallelism between middles and other generic sentences like (8), where the verbs' internal arguments are interpreted generically:

(8) a. Teachers teach.
b. Cooks cook.

Fagan argues that the same way the verbs in (8), which normally subcategorize for a complement, can appear without it by means of a lexical process of generalization, middle verbs can occur without an explicit agent by means of a rule assigning an arbitrary feature to either the internal or external theta role. This process would not alter the number of thematic roles in either construction; instead, it assigns an arbitrary interpretation to one of them which, as a consequence, is not projected syntactically.

Ackema & Schoorlemmer's (1994) analysis of middle constructions also resorts to a pre-syntactic level of representation, i.e. the Lexical Conceptual Structure (LCS) (cf. Hale & Keyser 1986, above), which interacts with the syntactic component of the grammar. Within the LCS, the authors assume two types of information are gathered, i.e. the thematic tier, and the action tier, which specifies the levels of affectedness to which the different arguments of a given predicate are subjected; this information is later on projected onto the D-Structure in the syntax. The authors propose the following hierarchy ordering the syntactic projection of the arguments present in the LCS:

(9) *Ackema & Schoorlemmer (1994: 67):*
Actor – Patient – Agent – Theme – Goal.

Both Actor and Patient belong in the action tier and are more salient than the rest, which pertain to the thematic tier; hence it is the former and not the latter that occupy the first positions in the thematic hierarchy. In order to account for the act that the notional subject in middles does not get projected in the syntax, these authors rely on the notion of recoverability, i.e. they claim that syntactic encoding is not obligatory for arguments represented at the action tier, which can be interpreted arbitrarily. Thus, Ackema & Schoorlemmer propose a rule of middle formation by means of which the Actor argument is assigned an arbitrary interpretation; thus, this argument is not projected in the syntax, yet it is present in the LCS.

The analysis that I present here will not rely on different levels of representation; following Schäfer (2008), I will claim that the interpretation of an implicit external argument in Spanish middle-passives stems from the fact that these structures project a Voice head in their generic passive counterpart, which is passivized by means of the reflexive clitic *se*, hence their ability to license a purpose clause. However, the generic inchoative variant lacks such projection, and therefore no external argument is inferred to participate in the spontaneous development of the event. In the following section, I review the main structural properties of Spanish middle-passives.

2.3 Spanish middle-passives

The constructions under consideration in this paper (cf. (2) above) have been traditionally referred to as *middle-passives* within Hispanic linguistics; however, their status as middle constructions has varied overtime due to the different criteria used by grammarians to define this category. For instance, Mendikoetxea (1999) considers middle constructions to be all those sentences whose subjects are affected by the verbal event and contain a reflexive pronoun; moreover, this syntactician then differentiates between 'middle constructions in the strict sense' (those where the reflexive pronoun invariably occurs in its third person form *se*), and 'middle constructions in the broad sense' (where the reflexive pronoun can occur in all its paradigmatic forms). Thus, according to this classification, Spanish middle-passive sentences, whose reflexive clitic is non-paradigmatic, would be considered a homogeneous category within the middle constructions in the strict sense category.

Sánchez López (2002), on the contrary, claims that middle constructions are sentences whose subject is interpreted as an experiencer or affected theme undergoing the change of state –physical or psychological– or change of location denoted by the event, in which no volitional agent participates; additionally, the reflexive pronoun *se* is in complementary distribution with its other paradigmatic form in these sentences and must show morphological agreement with the subject's phi features, albeit both the grammatical subject and the reflexive pronoun bear the same thematic role, i.e. there is strict coreference between them. Therefore, middle-passives would not fall into this category given that an implicit external argument is inferred and the fact that the reflexive clitic is non-paradigmatic; instead, Sánchez López analyses them as generic instances of *se*-passives.

Crucially, both classifications treat middle-passives as a single homogeneous category; nonetheless, the different interpretations available in (2), repeated below as (10), suggest that, at least with respect to inchoative middles, we are indeed dealing with two different underlying representations: (i) a generic *se*-passive, involving the participation of an implicit external argument, and (ii) a generic inchoative denoting a spontaneous event of change.

(10) a. Las camisas de lino se arrugan fácilmente.
the shirts of linen REFL wrinkle.3PL.PRS easily
'Linen shirts wrinkle easily.'
'It is easy to wrinkle linen shirts.'

b. A María$_i$ las/mis/sus$_i$ camisas de lino se le$_i$ arrugan fácilmente.
to María the/my/her shirts of linen REFL 3SG.DAT wrinkle easily
'Linen shirts wrinkle easily on/for María.'
'It is easy to wrinkle María's linen shirts, and she is affected by it.'

Therefore, one of the goals of this paper is to emphasize the need to break down the category of middle-passives into a more exhaustive classification of these constructions in

Spanish that takes into consideration the possibility of inserting purpose clauses and the different interpretations of non-selected dative arguments in them.

As I noted above, the grammatical subject in middle-passive constructions happens to be the verb's internal argument, which has been promoted to preverbal subject position from its base one as complement to the verb, due to the unaccusative nature of these structures.[5] Interestingly, subjects in middle-passives must necessarily be definite DPs (11a), either singular or plural, and can be animate (11b); in regular *se*-passives, however, these arguments can be bare NPs, although only if occurring in post-verbal position (11a'),[6] and animate patient subjects cannot be definite (11b'); this last constraint is known as the *animacy effect*.[7]

(11) a. *Middle-passive*
*(Las) patatas asturianas se fríen rápidamente.[8]
the potatoes Asturian REFL fry quickly
'Asturian potatoes fry quickly.'

a'. *Regular* se-*passive*
Se fríen (las) patatas asturianas (en estos momentos)
REFL fry the potatoes Asturian at these moments
'(The) Asturian potatoes are being fried (at this moment).'

b. *Middle-passive (Martín Zorraquino 1979: 239)*
Los maridos no se encuentran fácilmente.[9]
the husbands not REFL find.PRS.3PL easily
'Husbands are hard to find.'

b'. *Regular* se-*passive (Sánchez López 2002: 55)*
Se necesitan (*los) cocineros con urgencia.
REFL need the cooks with urgency
'Cooks are urgently needed.'

[5] Schäfer (2008: 215) claims that English generic middles, as he calls middle-passives in that language, are in fact transitive. He bases this claim on the fact that in the following examples, both the verbs 'raise' and 'lay' emerge in their transitive form in middle constructions, instead of their intransitive one.

(i) a. John raises his kids very strictly. *Transitive*
b. The sun rises from the East. *Intransitive*
c. Obedient daughters raise/*rise more easily than obedient sons. *Middle*

(ii) This vinyl floor lays/*lies in a few hours. *Middle*

[6] Suñer (1982: 209) proposed the Naked Noun Phrase Constraint to account for the fact that subjects in Spanish cannot be bare NPs. A series of studies continued this trend, including Contreras (1986), Masullo (1992) and Laca (1999):

(i) The Naked Phrase Constraint: "An unmodified common noun in preverbal position cannot be the surface object of a sentence under conditions of normal stress and intonation."

[7] Cf. Sánchez López (2002) and references therein.

[8] An anonymous reviewer points out that the verb *freír* cannot normally occur in an anticausative context, for it normally requires the participation of an agent:

(i) Se frieron las patatas (?por sí solas/?solas).

The reviewer then wonders why these sentences would be able to occur in an anticausative context when this is generic. While I do believe that for some speakers this verb can have an inchoative entry in their lexicon as 'the process of becoming fried,' apparently this is not the case for all of them. Nonetheless, all speakers would consider (10a) grammatical. I will argue that this is because one of the underlying representations for that sentence is a generic passive one, available to all speakers and, optionally, a generic inchoative one for those whose lexicon contain an anticausative entry for *freír*. Moreover, note that *las patatas asturianas se fríen solas* ('Asturian potatoes fry themselves') is a possible utterance if one wants to emphasize the easiness with which these potatoes become fried.

Additionally, the unmarked order for subjects in middle-passives (both in the generic *se*-passive and generic inchoative interpretations) is preverbal (12a), whereas it is the opposite in the case of regular *se*-passives (12b), as seen in out-of-the-blue contexts.

(12) *What happens/happened?*

a. {Los/?Unos/*Ø} pantalones de algodón se planchan fácilmente.[10]
the/some/ Ø pants of cotton REFL iron easily
'Cotton pants iron easily.'

a'. #Se planchan los pantalones de algodón fácilmente.

b. Se plancharon los pantalones.
REFL ironed the pants
'The pants were ironed.'

b'. *Los pantalones se plancharon.[11]

Mendikoetxea (1999) proposes that this argument has a discursive function, i.e. that of topic, which would explain why it appears preverbally. She shows that, in the event that another argument is focalized and fronted, the grammatical subject occurs post-verbally.[12]

(13) *Mendikoetxea (1999: 1659)*

a. Las camisas blancas se lavan fácilmente con lejía, no con
the shirts whites REFL wash easily with bleach not with
amoniaco
ammonia
'White shirts wash well with bleach, not with ammonia.'

b. CON LEJÍA se lavan las camisas blancas fácilmente, no con amoniaco.

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[9] In examples like this one, the human notional object is interpreted generically although it is [+definite], i.e. it conveys a type interpretation.

[10] An anonymous reviewer observes that negative DPs can be preverbal subjects in generic middle contexts:

(i) Ninguna camisa de polyester se arruga fácilmente.
none shirt of polyester REFL wrinkles easily
'No polyester shirt wrinkles easily.'

As I will show later, negation alters the structural requirements of generic middle constructions; for example, it allows the absence of a modifier:

(ii) Las camisas de polyester no se arrugan.
the shirts of polyester not REFL wrinkle
'Polyester shirts don't wrinkle.'

Sánchez López (2002) suggests that in such case the negation cancels the possibility interpretation of the sentence. When the grammatical subject has a type interpretation, this can be accomplished by negating the event as in (ii), and theme occurs in its definite plural form. Another possibility is to negate the theme, as in (i), in which case it no longer needs to be plural to denote a type (iiia); moreover, a negative quantifier alone suffices to license this constructions (iiib):

(iii) a. #Ningunas camisas de polyester se arrugan fácilmente.
none.PL shirts of polyester REFL wrinkle easily

b. Nada se arruga (fácilmente).
nothing REFL wrinkles easily
'Nothing wrinkles (easily).'

[11] Unacceptable without contrastive intonation.

[12] As in the case of Wh-questions, where once the Wh-element is fronted, the verb is argued to raise from T^{o} to C^{o}, leaving the subject behind: *¿Qué$_k$ compraste$_i$ tú h_i h_k ayer?* (What did you buy yesterday?).

Sánchez López (2002) states that the notional object in middle-passives is interpreted as a kind of semi-agent,[13] since it is some of its inherent properties that are conceived as responsible for the event; thus, these arguments are interpreted as affected by it. In fact, Omori (1997) claims that middle-passive *se* can only occur in events that can be instigated by the properties of the affected object; however, Sánchez López argues that there are certain contexts where the event is not able to affect the notional object, and yet it can be triggered by these argument's properties, such as *los dólares se compran bien en el mercado negro de muchos países* ('dollars are easily bought in the black markets of many countries') (2002: 69).

The notional subject in middle passives is syntactically demoted, like in *se*-passives and in inchoatives, and it cannot be reintroduced in the clause by means of a *por*-phrase. However, Mendikoetxea (2000) claims that it is semantically present and is interpreted as a generic or universal agent, never as an experiencer, and it is in fact this implicit agent that differentiates middle-passives from inchoatives/anticausatives, as we will see in the following section. Regular *se*-passives, on the other hand, do allow *por*-phrases in certain registers, as show in (7c) above.

(14) Los pantalones de algodón se planchan fácilmente (*por Josh).
the pants of cotton REFL iron easily by Josh
'Cotton pants iron easily (*by Josh).'

Sánchez López, on the contrary, argues that the notional subject in middle-passives cannot even be interpreted implicitly on the grounds of the following contrast:

(15) *Sánchez López (2002: 69)*
a. Ese libro se vende {fácilmente / en cualquier tienda}.
that book REFL sells easily in any store
'That book sells easily / That book is sold in any store.'
b. Ese libro se escribió para dar a conocer dicha teoría.
that book REFL wrote for give to know said theory
'That book was written to spread that theory.'

This linguist explains that the ambiguity in (15a) between a middle-passive and a passive interpretation, which would be clarified by means of the adjuncts between braces, is inexistent in (15b), which is necessarily interpreted as a passive. I disagree with the author's claim, and I propose that the ambiguity in (15a) actually arises due to the fact that in both *se*-passives and in the generic *se*-passive configuration of middle passives there is an implicit agent. In other words, the ambiguity in (15) arises because of the structural overlap that exists between these two contexts, given that they virtually share the same scaffolding, containing a Voice head passivized by means of the reflexive clitic *se*, which denotes an implicit external argument.

Mendikoetxea (1999) argues that the notional subject in middle-passives must be interpreted as an agent with respect to the event, and this constrains the type of predicates that can appear in these sentences. Thus, she argues that only verbs denoting activities are licit in such contexts, and those subcategorizing for an experiencer would be banned:

(16) *Mendikoetxea (1999: 1656)*
a. *La historia de España se sabe de memoria.
the history of Spain REFL knows of memory
'The history of Spain knows by heart.'

[13] Or *constructional agent*, in Hale & Keyser's (1988) terms.

b. *Las acelgas se detestan en el momento de probarlas por
the chards REFL detest in the moment of trying-3PL.F.ACC for
primera vez.
first time
'Chard detests from the moment you first try it.'[14]

This scholar argues that the ungrammaticality of (16) is due to the fact that these events seem to denote a property of the notional subject, rather than the notional object. Mendikoetxea limits the scope of middle-passives to those contexts where an intrinsic quality of the verb's internal argument is predicated; thus, (17a) would be a regular *se*-passive, whereas (17b) qualifies as a middle passive.

(17) a. Se-*passive*
Las montañas se ven fácilmente.
the mountains REFL see easily
'The mountains are easily visible.'

b. *Middle-passive*
Las luces reflectantes se ven fácilmente.
the lights reflecting REFL see easily
'Reflecting lights are easily visible.'

Kempchinsky (2006), however, criticizes the inconsistency of this proposal and therefore considers both examples in (17) to be instances of middle-passives. The validity of this critique lies in the fact that the grammatical subject in both sentences must be definite and appears preverbally, which is one of the requirements of middle-passives, as discussed above. Similarly, a sentence such as *La torre Eiffel se ve fácilmente* ('The Eiffel tower is easily visible') can be argued to be describing inherent properties of the Eiffel tower, such as its size.

On the contrary, Sánchez López (2002) claims that stative predicates in middle-passive configurations are deprived from agentivity and only have a factual value, which goes against the characteristic interpretation of possibility of these structures. This leads us to discussing the genericity and modality of Spanish middle-passives next.

One of the fundamental constraints of middle-passive constructions across languages is that the main verb must appear conjugated in imperfective tenses (present, imperfect, sometimes future)[15] (18a). On the one hand, the present tense does not describe events but characteristics, and is therefore interpreted generically; the imperfect, on the

[14] There appears to be variation among speakers with regards to the acceptability of these sentences; a considerable number of my informants find the following acceptable, all of which contain experiencers as implicit notional subjects:

(i) a. Las charlas de Chomsky se aborrecen a partir de las dos horas.
the talks by Chomsky REFL detest from the two hours
'Chomsky's talks are detested after the two hours.'

b. Las lenguas se adquieren fácilmente de niño.
the languages REFL acquire easily of kid
'Languages are more easily acquired as a kid.'

c. El tabaco se detesta desde la primera calada.
the tobacco REFL detest from the first drag
'Tobacco is detested from the first drag.'

[15] Sánchez López (2002: 88) distinguishes between middle-passives and passive-middles (*pasivas medias*). The latter do not require a generic temporal context and refer to punctual issues, i.e. they occur in tenses other than imperfective ones. Like middle-passives, they are agentive and they convey either facilitation or difficulty. The author claims they are in-between middle-passives and *se*-passives.

other, conveys a typical, iterative or habitual event, rather than a specific punctual one. By means of these imperfective tenses, a perfective predicate denoting an accomplishment is turned into a stative one, since its temporal properties are suspended, and is therefore allowed into middle-passive constructions, given their non-episodic nature. Thus, perfective (18b) and progressive tenses (18c), as well as imperatives (18d) and small clauses (18e) are excluded from these contexts. *Se*-passives, on the contrary, do not show any aspectual restrictions; in fact. (18b) and (18c) can only be grammatical with a passive reading.

(18) a. Este coche se arregla/arreglaba/arreglará fácilmente.
this car REFL mends/mend.PST.IMPERF/mend.FUT easily
'This car mends easily.'
'This car used to mend easily.'

b. *Perfective*
??Este coche se ha arreglado fácilmente.
this car REFL has mended easily

c. *Progressive*
#El coche se está arreglando.
the car REFL is mending

d. *Imperative*
#¡Arréglate, coche!
mend.IMP.REFL car

e. *Small clause*
#Observo al coche arreglarse fácilmente.
Observe.1SG.PRS to.the car.ACC mend.REFL easily
'I observe the car mend itself easily.'

The non-episodic nature of middle-passives favors the interpretation of the event as denoting properties rather than punctual events, regardless of whether it is ultimately accomplished or not. Therefore, they do not require a specific temporal context, otherwise the middle reading is lost in favor of an passive or inchoative interpretation, and the DP theme is necessarily specific, not generic.

(19) *Passive/Inchoative/*Middle-passive*
Las camisas de lino se arrugan fácilmente hoy.
the shirts of linen REFL wrinkle easily today
'The linen shirts wrinkle easily today.'
'The linen shirts are easy to wrinkle today.'

Mendikoetxea (1999: 1656) points out that when *se*-passives occur in imperfective tenses and no reference is made to the temporal context in which the event took place, ambiguity arises between a passive and a middle interpretation; in such cases, some disambiguating element is needed.

(i) a. Ya verás cómo el libro se escribirá solo.
already see.2SG.FUT how the book REFL write.3SG.FUT alone
'You'll see how the book will write itself.' Intended: *It'll be easy to write that book.*

b. La valla se pintó sola.
the fence REFL painted alone
'The fence painted itself.' Intended: *It was so easy to paint this fence.*

(20) *Mendikoetxea (1999: 1656)*

a. *Passive*
Estos libros no se venden… porque son ejemplares gratuitos.
these books not REFL sell because are copies free
'These books are not to be sold because they are free copies.'

b. *Middle*
Estos libros no se venden… porque no están a la vista.
these books not REFL sell because not are to the sight
'These books don't sell because they're not on sight.'

Imperfective tenses, together with their denotation as properties, are usually linked to middle passive's modal nature, i.e. these structures convey possibility and potentiality, which has been adduced to the presence of an operator of possibility in their eventive structure. Doron and Rappaport (1991), for instance, analyze possibility in middle constructions as follows:

(21) *Doron & Rappaport (1991: 87)*
This door opens easily
MAY (STANDARD-CIRCUMSTANCES (e), CAUSE (e, open(y)))

Furthermore, Sánchez López (2002) points out that the CAUSE argument in middle-passives is not present in the argumental structure; instead, it is quantified by the possibility operator, as suggested by Condoravdi (1988).

The last of the major traits of middle-passive constructions is modification. These structures commonly require the presence of an adverbial or prepositional phrase, which also contributes to their modal interpretation of possibility.

(22) Los pantalones de algodón se planchan *#(fácilmente/con facilidad).
the pants of cotton REFL iron easily with ease
'Cotton pants iron easily.'

Sánchez López (2002) remarks that a modifying adjunct of this kind can be omitted in contexts were the event refers to a property that defines the notional object as a particular type (23a); however, these contexts may require the modifier in order to establish a differentiation between the type and a specific token (23b):

(23) *Sánchez López (2002: 65)*

a. Esta silla se pliega.
this chair REFL folds
'This chair folds.' (Referred to a foldable chair)

b. Esta silla se pliega fácilmente.
this chair REFL folds easily
'This chair folds easily.' (A specific foldable chair in opposition to others)

Finally, another context where modification can be done away with is negation since, according to Sánchez López, this element is also able to trigger genericity in middle-passive configurations, possibly due to the fact that it negates the possibility operator, therefore denoting the absence of a given property:

(24) Esta silla no se pliega.
this chair not REFL folds
'This chair does not fold.'
'This is not a foldable chair.'

In the following section, I propose an analysis for inchoative middles, i.e. middle-passive sentences containing a change-of-state predicate, that accounts for the possibility of inserting a non-selected dative argument in them, as well as the three possible interpretations that this argument may have.

3 Inchoative middles: an analysis

This section is devoted to the analysis of inchoative middles, the structures under consideration in this paper. I start by describing the syntactic properties of Spanish inchoative configurations, also commonly referred to as anticausative structures. Next, I provide an analysis for inchoative middles, explaining that the two possible meanings of these configurations, i.e. generic passive and inchoative, rely on the presence or absence of a Voice projection, respectively. Moreover, when a non-selected dative argument occurs in these constructions, its three different interpretations of the dative can be accounted for structurally if we assume that an affected applicative head (Cuervo 2003) introduces this argument in the derivation. Additionally, I propose that the dative's unintentional causer reading is unavailable in a generic *se*-passive configuration due to the presence of a VoiceP in the structure. Later on, I relate the implications of my analysis to Wood and Marantz's (2017) proposal for an underspecified argument-introducing head that is sensitive to its surrounding syntactic environment (*i**). Finally, this section concludes with a note on the position full dative DPs occupy in inchoative middles.

3.1 Inchoative structures in Spanish

Inchoative constructions denote changes of state, either physical (25a') or psychological (25b'), undergone by their grammatical subject. These events are predicated primarily by verbs that are subject to the causative alternation (Schäfer 2009, *inter alia*); when a causative predicate occurs in its reflexive form,[16] it becomes unaccusative and is referred to as 'anticausative.' The reflexive clitic's phi features in these sentences must necessarily agree with those of the grammatical subject; furthermore, the latter is not interpreted as a volitional agent, but as affected by the event, and so is the reflexive clitic, i.e. there is coreference between them. Moreover, the presence of an implicit agent is completely absent in the anticausative construction, and this can be seen in the unacceptability of the insertion of a volitional adverb or prepositional phrase (e.g. *adrede*; 'deliberately'); alternatively, these structures license *by itself* PPs, which is a sign of their lack of agentivity.

(25) a. *Causative*
Manuel quemó las patatas.
Manuel burned the potatoes
'Manuel burned the potatoes.'

a'. *Anticausative*
Se quemaron las patatas (*adrede) (por sí solas).
REFL.3 burned the potatoes deliberately by REFL.3 alone.F.PL
'The potatoes burned (*deliberately) (by themselves).'

b. *Causative*
El sacerdote aburrió incluso al perro.
the priest bored.PST.3SG even to-the dog.ACC
'The priest even bored the dog.'

[16] See Koontz-Garboden (2009), based on Chierchia (2004), for a thorough analysis on anticausativization as reflexivization.

b'. *Anticausative*
Se aburrió el perro (?adrede) (por sí solo).
REFL.3 bored.PST.3SG the dog deliberately by REFL.3 alone.M.SG
'The dog got bored (?deliberately) (by itself).'

Similarly, other predicates expressing changes of location (26a), and inherently reflexive verbs (26b) can also appear in inchoative constructions, although they lack a causative counterpart.[17] As in (25), the grammatical subject in these sentences is also interpreted as affected by the event and agrees in person and number with the reflexive clitic.

(26) a. *Causative*
*Lo caí el cuadro.
3SG.ACC fell.1SG the picture
Intended: 'I made the picture fall.'

a'. *Inchoative*
Se cayó el cuadro (*adrede) (por sí solo).
REFL.3SG fell.3SG the picture deliberately by REFL.3 alone.M.SG
'The picture fell (*deliberately) (by itself).'

b. *Causative*
*?Ensimismé a los alumnos.[18]
became-engrossed.PST.1SG to the students.ACC
Intended: 'I made the students become engrossed.'

d. *Inchoative*
Se ensimismaron los alumnos (?adrede) (por
REFL.3PL became-engrossed.PST.3PL the students deliberately by
sí solos).
REFL.3 alone.M.PL
'The students became engrossed (?deliberately) (by themselves).'

Thus, throughout this article I use the term 'anticausative' to refer to unaccusative structures containing verbs participating in the causative alternation, as in (25), and 'inchoative' as a more general category encompassing both anticausatives and constructions like the ones in (26).

Interestingly, these predicates, although not necessarily, optionally allow for their grammatical subject to be agentive when it is [+animate] and [+human] or at least able to act willfully;[19] in such contexts they are able to license an agentive AdvP or PP.

(27) a. Natalia se quemó al sol adrede.
Natalia REFL burned to-the sun deliberately
'Natalia got sunburnt on purpose.'

[17] Mendikoetxea (1999) claims that only causative verbs can occur in inchoative contexts.
[18] There may be dialectal variation with regard to the acceptability of a causative version of this pronominal verb.
[19] When the grammatical subject is a 1st or 2nd person, either singular or plural, it is necessarily assumed to be [+animate] and [+human] and can therefore license agentive adjuncts:

(i) a. Me quemé al sol adrede.
1SG burned to-the sun deliberately
'I got sunburned deliberately.'

b. Os quemasteis al sol adrede.
2PL burned to-the sun deliberately
'You got sunburned deliberately.'

b. Los alumnos se aburrieron adrede.
the students REFL bored deliberately
'The students got bored deliberately.'[20]

c. El niño se cayó adrede.
the kid REFL fell deliberately
'The kid fell on purpose.'

d. Los políticos se arrepintieron de su decisión adrede.
the politicians REFL regret of their decision deliberately
'The politicians deliberately regretted their decision.'[21]

As I mentioned above, inchoatives, like *se*-passives, do not project an external argument in the syntax and it is the internal argument that is promoted to grammatical subject; however, in the latter, but not in the former, an implicit agent is interpreted. Another common feature that inchoatives share with *se*-passives is that in most cases, the unmarked word order seems to be that where the grammatical subject appears post-verbally, as shown in an out-of-the-blue context such as (28):

(28) *What happened?*
a. Se quemaron las patatas.
REFL burned the potatoes.
'The potatoes burned.'

b. ??Las patatas se quemaron.

Nonetheless, unlike reflexive marked passives, the grammatical subject in anticausatives must necessarily be a full DP, not a bare NP; should that be the case, the interpretation automatically switches to passive, as shown by the impossibility of licensing a *by itself* PP in (29b).

(29) a. *Passive/Anticausative*
Se quemaron las patatas.

b. *Passive/*Anticausative*
Se quemaron patatas *(por sí solas).

Sánchez López (2002) explains that the events predicated in these constructions initiate spontaneously triggered by some of the intrinsic properties of the affected object, with or without an intervening external cause(r).[22] This is due to the fact that these predicates lose the CAUSE argument that they take as a subject in their transitive counterpart. Inchoativity, therefore, is syntactically determined, not semantically.

As for their aspectual properties, Mendikoetxea (1999) argues that these sentences are episodic and not stative, i.e. they denote processes or accomplishments, and are therefore

[20] If we think of a context where the students stubbornly refuse to attend social events or participate in them.
[21] The semantics of some inherently reflexive verbs like *ensimismarse* make it pragmatically odd to license a volitional AdvP or PP; others like *arrepentirse* not so much, if we think of a context were politicians pretend regret for having made some decision or have some sort of ulterior motive which leads them to willfully regret having made it.
[22] Thus, activity verbs requiring the full participation of an agent are banned from these configurations, e.g. *constuir* 'to build', *comprar* 'to buy', *lavar* 'to wash', *bailar* 'to dance', etc.

(i) *Passive/Impersonal/*Inchoative*
Se lavó el coche.
REFL washed the car
'The car was washed.'

eventive, unlike middle-passives, but they are not effected by an agent, like passives. Therefore, both perfective (30a) and progressive (30b) aspects are possible in inchoative contexts, as well as imperative (30c)[23] and habitual present (30d):

(30) *Mendikoetxea (1999: 1666)*

a. El pobre gato se ahogó (ayer a las tres).
the poor cat REFL drowned yesterday to the three
'The poor cat drowned yesterday at three.'

b. Las tejas se están agrietando.
the slates REFL are cracking
'The slates are cracking.'

c. ¡Acércate, niño!
approach.IMP-REFL.2SG kid
'Kid, come closer!'

d. Todas las noches a las doce se despierta el niño.
all the nights to the twelve REFL wakes the kid
'The kid wakes up at twelve every night.'

When transitive change-of-state verbs participate in the causative alternation, they are analyzed as containing two subevents: one introducing the external argument, i.e. the causing event, and another introducing the affected internal argument, i.e. the resulting state event. Sánchez López (2002: 81), based on Levin & Rappaport Hovav (1995), proposes the following lexical semantic template for a verb like *secar* 'to dry', in Spanish, which can have a causative representation on the one hand (31a), meaning that this is an event in which *x* participates and which causes *y* to become dry; if, on the other hand, *secar* occurs in an anticausative context, its formal representation would be (31b):

(31) a. Tomás secó la camisa de lino. *x* = Tomás; *y* = la camisa
Tomás dried the shirt of linen
'Tomás dried the linen shirt.'
To dry: [[*x*-ACT] CAUSE [*y* BECOME *DRY*]]

b. Se secó la camisa de lino *x* = Ø *y* = la camisa
REFL.CL dried the shirt of linen
'The linen shirt dried.'
To dry: [CAUSE [*y* BECOME *DRY*]]

Thus, causative constructions would have both *x* and *y* slots filled with an argument, i.e. the event is caused by an external argument; on the other hand, anticausative configurations lack an external causer, which has been morphosyntactically or lexically suppressed. In the case of Spanish and other Romance languages, such as Catalan or Italian, this unaccusativity is encoded by means of the reflexive clitic *se*, as mentioned above, that blocks the insertion of an external argument in *se*-passives (32a), inchoatives (32b) and middle-passives (32c).[24]

[23] Note that for this example volition seems to be required, and therefore agentivity, which seems counterintuitive.

[24] In certain Spanish dialects, an impersonal *se* sentence is also possible with a [–animate] theme (ia), although it is becoming rather archaic and rare in favor of a *se*-passive structure (32a). It is generally agreed that these impersonal sentences contain a null external argument (*pro*) and their theme is in fact a direct object since it shows accusative marking when it is [+animate] (ib); impersonal *se*-sentences are more common when this is the case:

(32) a. Se-*Passive*
*(Tomás) se arrugaron camisas de lino.

b. *Anticausative*
*(Tomás) se arrugó la camisa de lino.[25]

c. *Middle-passive*
*(Tomás) las camisas de lino se arrugan fácilmente.

The lack of an external argument in subject position in unaccusative *se* constructions triggers verbal agreement between the verb and its internal argument, which becomes the grammatical subject and bears nominative case. Next, I provide an analysis for inchoative middles.

3.2 The analysis

At this point, it is now time to propose an analysis for inchoative middles. As shown in (33), change-of-state predicates such as *quemar* ('to burn') may occur in what appears to be a middle-passive configuration. Crucially, in addition to the generic *se*-passive reading associated to these structures (e.g. *Anyone can wrinkle linen shirts easily*), these contexts display an additional interpretation, i.e. that of a generic spontaneous agentless event of change (e.g. *linen shirts have the property of wrinkling easily*).

(33) Las camisas de lino se arrugan fácilmente.
the shirts of linen REFL wrinkle.3PL.PRS easily
'Linen shirts wrinkle easily.'
'It is easy to wrinkle linen shirts.'

What I propose here is that these two possible interpretations are the consequence of two different underlying representations which happen to have the same realizations at Spell-out, namely, a generic *se*-passive, on the one hand, and a generic inchoative, on the other. Both configurations, however, predicate intrinsic properties of their notional object, which is one of the criteria used by numerous analyses to determine what middle sentences are. Therefore, I consider these two structures middle constructions, associated under the term *inchoative middles*.

Cuervo (2003) establishes a distinction between three types of event introducers (v_{DO}, v_{GO}, v_{BE}) which correspond to each of the three simple eventive structures: (i) activities (e.g. *to sing*); (ii) verbs of change/happening (e.g. *to happen*), and (iii) states/existentials (e.g. *to be happy*). Additionally, these introducers can combine with each other, thus creating bi-eventive structures: causatives, which would be the result of an activity event introducer and a state one (v_{DO} + v_{BE}), or anticausatives, which arise from pairing an event introducer of change with a stative one (v_{GO} + v_{BE}).[26] Crucially, according to this proposal, activity events (v_{DO}) merge as complements to a Voice head introducing an external argument (cf. Marantz 1984; Kratzer 1996), whereas events of change (v_{GO}) cannot. In light of this classification, I assume that the generic passive reading in (33) is the result of a

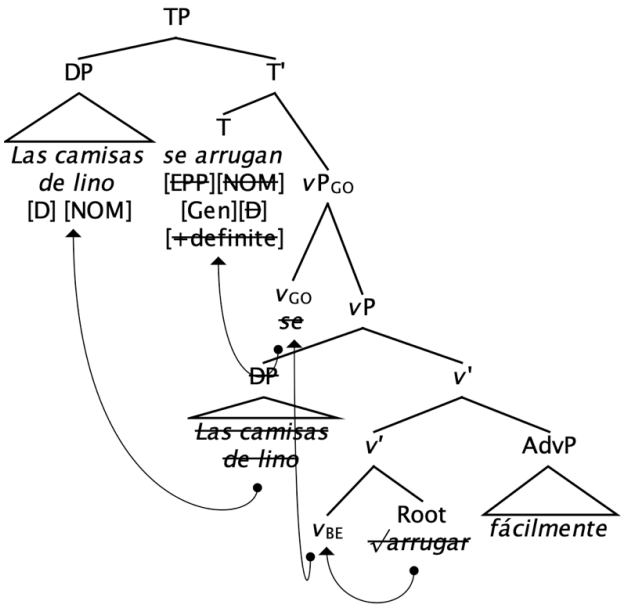
(i) a. Se arrugó camisas de lino.
b. Se arrestó a los sospechosos.
REFL arrested.PST.3SG to the suspects.ACC
'The suspects were arrested.'

[25] Excluding the interpretation where Tomas wrinkled his own linen shirt, in which case we would be dealing with a reflexive causative configuration.

[26] See Mendikoetxea (2000) for an alternative analysis of structures containing predicates of internal and external change of state based on notions of internal control.

causative combination of verbalizing heads, whereas the generic inchoative interpretation emerges from an anticausative cluster, whose derivation can be seen below.

(34) *Generic inchoative (Spontaneous interpretation): 'Linen shirts wrinkle easily.'*



In (34), we see a cluster of two event introducers, v_{GO} and v_{BE}, creating an anticausative structure; the clitic *se* spells out the head of change (v_{GO}), which shares the same phi features as the grammatical subject,[27] and renders the sentence unaccusative, therefore without a Voice projection introducing an external argument.[28] The complement to the stative v_{BE} is the verbal root *arrugar*, and its subject the internal argument (*las camisas de lino*). The root undergoes local head movement acquiring the flavors of each *v* (Folli and Harley 2005) and incorporating the reflexive clitic pronoun as it finds its way to T°, assuming clitics are defective heads *à la* Roberts (2010).[29] Finally, the only DP available, i.e. the internal argument, is the one in charge of satisfying the EPP features in T° and licensing its interpretable nominative features.

One thing that is still to be explained is the fact that the internal arguments in inchoative and middle-passive contexts cannot be bare NPs, as shown above. I assume that this is due to the presence of a [D] and a [+definite] features in T° in these structures, which must be checked by a DP sitting in its specifier; thus, a bare NP would not be able to do so. Moreover, I argue that these constituents only raise to preverbal subject position in generic contexts,[30] and not in regular inchoative sentences, due to the combination of

[27] Should the internal argument of the root be in the first (ia) or second person (ib), the reflexive clitic would show agreement with it:

(i) a. Yo me arrugo fácilmente.
I REFL.1SG wrinkle easily

b. Tú te arrugas fácilmente.
you REFL.2SG wrinkle easily

[28] Schäfer (2009) claims that there is not an implicit causer in anticausatives but an actual causative event. See Kallulli (2006) for a different feature-based approach on Albanian and English causatives.

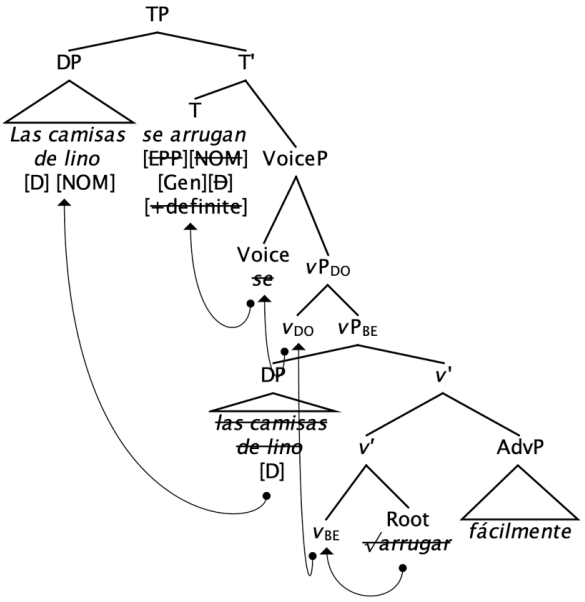
[29] Roberts (2010) elaborates an analysis of clitic movement/climbing in Romance as head movement triggered by the fact that certain clitics are defective goals which are probed via Agree by their hosts in order to acquire the latter's formal features through incorporation.

[30] The position of preverbal subjects in Spanish is one of the most debated issues within Spanish morphosyntax; these arguments have been assumed to be either in the specifier of TP or left-dislocated in the left periphery of the sentence. Since this issue is beyond the scope of this paper, and for the sake of simplification, from now on I will assume that subjects in Spanish optionally raise to SpecTP. However, I

such features with a generic sentence operator (Gen), also in T°. The fact that the internal argument in regular inchoatives does not raise to preverbal subject position would be due to the absence of Gen in those contexts.[31]

As for the generic *se*-passive counterpart of (33), note that the participation of an implicit generic external argument, interpreted as agent or causer, is necessary in this context. Following Schäfer (2008), I propose that the generic *se*-passive counterpart of inchoative middles, just like generic passives in Greek, projects a Voice head, spelled-out as the non-paradigmatic third person reflexive pronoun *se*, which passivizes it and denotes an implicit generic notional subject.[32] This implies that the reflexive pronoun in this case has a different nature than the one in the generic inchoative configuration, hence the different behavior in terms of agreement with the grammatical subject.[33] Moreover, instead of a first subevent of change (v_{GO}), which is unable to merge with a Voice head, this configuration has an activity/causative[34] event introducer, i.e. v_{DO}. This combination would generate the derivation in (35).

(35) *Generic* se*-passive: 'It is easy to wrinkle linen shirts.'*



refer the reader to some alternative approaches such as Contreras (1976), Rivero (1980), Olarrea (1996), or Ordóñez & Treviño (1999), to name a few.

[31] Schäfer (2008) proposes that the [D] feature is in the Voice head, since he claims that reflexive marked anticausatives also project an expletive one. Since I am following Cuervo's analysis here, and her account does not include a VoiceP in inchoative structures, I will assume this feature is hosted by T°.

[32] In order to develop a homogeneous crosslinguistic analysis of generic middles, Schäfer (2008) proposes that *si* in Italian generic passives could either be the spell-out form of Voice head or merge in SpecVoice, like pronominal *sich* in German, since there are no counterarguments to this claim. In this paper, however I am assuming that clitic pronouns are the spell-out form of functional heads.

[33] Alternatively, MacDonald (2017) argues for the presence of an empty pronominal (*pro*) in SpecVoice in Spanish *se*-passives based on the fact that these constructions are able to license an inalienably possessed body part noun (pro *se levantó la mano*; 'the hand was raised'). This pronoun is interpreted arbitrarily as a third person, hence the emergence of the reflexive clitic in its third person form too. While this may well be a plausible hypothesis, I will not incorporate it into my analysis, for such an empty pronominal could bring about intervention effects when T° tries to probe a DP to its specifier position, i.e. the empty pronominal would be expected to raise instead of the verb's internal argument, as desired. See also Saab (2014) for an alternative analysis of implicit arguments in Spanish as the absence of Merge.

[34] Cuervo (2003) argues that the question of whether there is a specialized CAUSE head, as opposed to v_{DO}, is irrelevant for her purposes and explains that the causative meaning is derived from the combination of v_{DO}, an act with no manner specification, and a predication structure, i.e. a stative *v*P: (DO [*y* BE <state>]). See also Harley (1995) for an exhaustive proposal on the structural properties of external arguments along these lines.

In (35), the verbal root is generated as the complement to the head of the state event (v_{BE}), which, at the same time, is the activity event's (v_{DO}) complement, and in whose specifier sits the internal argument (*la camisa de lino*). A Voice projection, which in an active construction would assign accusative case to the internal argument and introduce the external argument, is passivized by means of the reflexive clitic *se*. Thus, the internal argument, being the only available DP in the derivation, raises to preverbal subject position, checks the EPP, [D] and [+definite] features in T^{o} and checks nominative case; as in (34), the root undergoes head movement to T^{o} incorporating the reflexive clitic on its way.

Having established with the structural scaffolding of the two possible realizations of inchoative middles, it is now necessary to account for the fact that these predicates allow the insertion of a non-subcategorized dative argument in them, which can convey three different interpretations, namely: (i) affected by a spontaneous event; (ii) affected by an externally caused event; and (iii) unintentional/accidental causer, as shown in (36) below.

(36) A María$_i$ las/mis/sus$_i$ camisas de lino se le$_i$ arrugan fácilmente.
to María the/my/her shirts of linen REFL 3SG.DAT wrinkle quickly
'Linen shirts wrinkle easily on/for María.'
'It is easy to wrinkle María's linen shirts, and she is affected by it.'

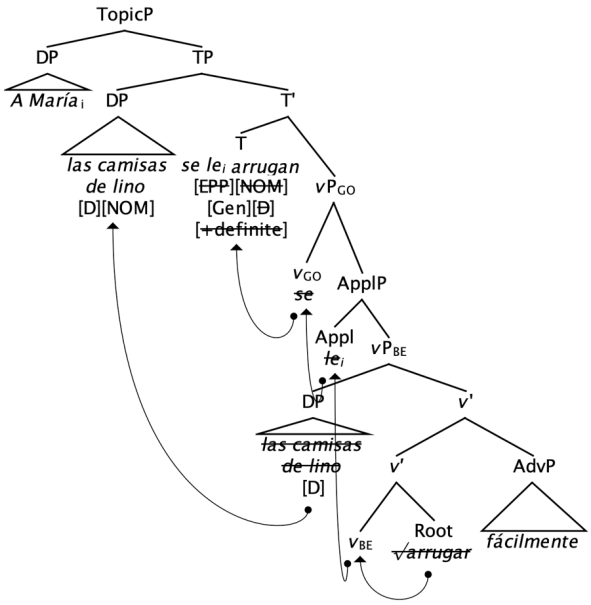
Several studies (Fernández Soriano (1999b); Cuervo (2003); Fernández Soriano & Mendikoetxea (2013)) have analyzed these non-subcategorized phrases as applied arguments i.e. phrases introduced by a specialized applicative head (Appl^{o}) which relates them to other arguments or to specific events.[35] In her theory of dative arguments in Spanish, Cuervo (2003), based on Pylkkänen (2002), analyzes dative arguments in causative and anticausative constructions as affected applicatives which merged sandwiched between the two subevents ($v_{DO/GO}$ + v_{BE}).[36] The author argues that the dative DP is applied to the end state of the DP-theme, however it is not directly related to it; therefore, it is not possession of the object that is entailed, but possession of its resulting state. Thus, the applicative head relates its specifier, i.e. the dative DP, with its complement, i.e. the stative event (v_{BE}), which favors the former's interpretation as an entity affected by the internal argument's end state. However, because ApplP has no scope over the first subevent ($v_{DO/GO}$) for it merges as its complement, the dative DP cannot be interpreted as having anything to do with the triggering event, either externally or spontaneously caused. Therefore, the notion of affected applicatives can be applied to inchoative middles, obtaining the following derivations for the generic inchoative (37) and the generic passive (38) counterparts.

[35] Given the similarities among such analyses, for the purposes of this paper, I will base my proposal on Cuervo's (2003). I refer the reader to Fernández Soriano (1999b) and Fernández Soriano & Mendikoetxea (2013) for their interesting examples and insightful reflections.

[36] Based on Pylkkänen's (2002) analysis, Cuervo (2003: 125) proposes the following semantics for the affected applicative head:

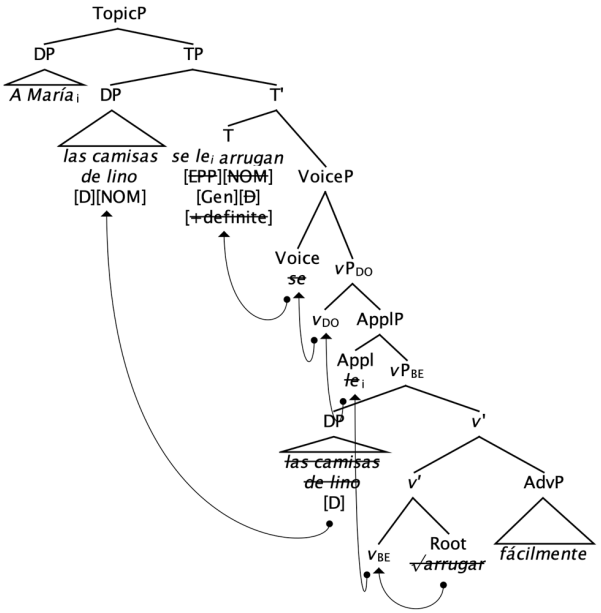
(i) **Affected Applicative**: $\lambda x.\lambda e_s.$Affected (e_s,x)

(37) *Generic inchoative and dative argument (affected by the spontaneous change of state):*



In (37), we see an inchoative structure comprising a subevent of change (v_{GO}) and a stative one (v_{BE}), between which the applicative head introducing an additional argument merges. The applicative head is spelled out as the dative clitic *le*, which bears an identity relationship with a full dative DP (*a María*) that appears left-dislocated in the structure. As in (34), the verbal root undergoes head movement to T°, incorporating all the clitics it finds on its way; moreover, since no Voice projection introduces an external argument, T° probes the first DP it finds in the derivation, i.e. the theme *las camisas de lino*, to its specifier. The applicative argument is applied to the theme's resulting state, favoring the interpretation of being affected by it. Notice the dative argument could be interpreted as possessor of the theme, but not necessarily; in fact, Cuervo (2003) argues that 'to assume possession is a way of (pragmatically) accounting for the affectedness of the dative as a result of the change of state of the theme object' (2003: 126). In (38) below, I show the generic passive configuration containing an affected applicative.

(38) *Generic passive and dative argument (affected by an externally caused change of state):*

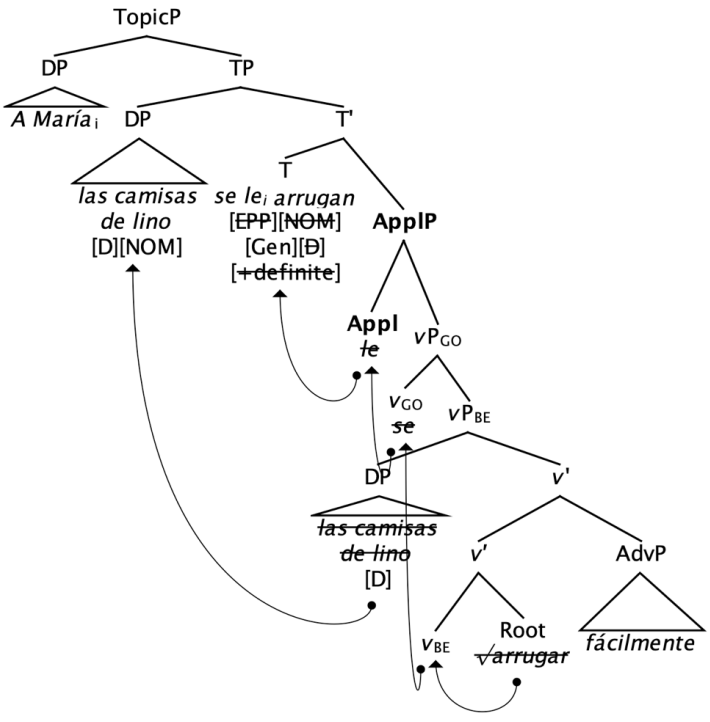


The derivation in (38) differs from (37) in that the first subevent is an activity one (v_{DO}), which is complement to a Voice projection. Voice is passivized and spelled out by the reflexive clitic *se*, which denotes the participation of an implicit external argument, compositionally interpreted as generic, given the presence of the generic operator Gen. The applicative head, as in (37), merges between the two subevents, therefore still being interpreted as affected by the theme's resulting state, yet this time, the change of state is externally caused, not spontaneously.

Notice that both in (37) and (38), the dative argument could be interpreted as possessor of the theme, but not necessarily; in fact, Cuervo (2003) argues that 'to assume possession is a way of (pragmatically) accounting for the affectedness of the dative as a result of the change of state of the theme object' (2003: 126).

Once two of the possible interpretations of the dative argument in (36) have been accounted for, the unintentional/accidental causer reading is yet to be determined. Cuervo (2003) proposes that the affected applicative head can also merge on top of the change subevent (v_{GO}). By doing so, the dative argument introduced by this functional projection is applied to the whole change-of-state process, not just to the resulting state; therefore, the dative is interpreted as being unintentionally responsible for triggering the event. The derivation for such context is shown below.

(39) *Generic inchoative and dative argument (accidental causer of the spontaneous change of state):*



A sensible question to pose now would be if the dative's unintentional causer interpretation is exclusive of the generic inchoative configuration or whether it is somehow possible in the generic *se*-passive counterpart in inchoative middles. In order to answer it, let us consider the following passive examples:

(40) a. Se quemó madera de roble para hacer carbón.
REFL burned wood of oak for make coal
'Oak wood was burned in order to make coal.'

b. La madera de roble fue quemada para hacer carbón (por los
the wood of oak was burned for make coal by the
leñadores).
woodcutters
'The oak wood was burned in order to make coal (by the woodcutters).'

One of the structural properties of passive constructions, both reflexive (40a) and periphrastic (40b), is the fact that they allow control into purpose clauses; this phenomenon has been used as an argument for the existence of an implicit notional subject in these configurations (cf. Bhatt & Pancheva (2006), *inter alia*). Although hardly mentioned in the literature, purpose clauses can also be licensed in middle-passive contexts, as in (41),[37] which supports the idea that in these sentences the participation of a generic/universal implicit agent is denoted:

(41) La madera de roble se quema fácilmente para hacer carbón.[38]
the wood of oak REFL burns easily for make coal
'Oak wood burns easily (in order to make coal).'

The relevance of (41) stems from its interaction with an applied dative argument as in (42) below:

(42) a. A Sandra$_i$ la madera de roble se le$_i$ quema fácilmente.
to Sandra the wood of oak REFL 3SG.DAT burns easily
'Sandra accidentally/unintentionally makes oak wood burn easily.'
'Oak wood burns easily and Sandra is affected by it.'
'It is easy to burn Sandra's oak wood.'

b. A Sandra$_i$ la madera de roble se$_k$ le$_i$ quema fácilmente
to Sandra the wood of oak REFL 3SG.DAT burns easily
para PRO$_{k/*i}$ hacer carbón.
for make coal
~~'Sandra accidentally/unintentionally makes oak wood burn easily.'~~
~~'Oak wood burns easily and Sandra is affected by it.'~~
'It is easy to burn Sandra's oak wood in order to make coal.'

While in (42a), which lacks a purpose clause, the dative argument conveys the three expected readings pointed out above, i.e. on the one hand, unintentional causer or affected by an anticausative event, both derived from the generic anticausative configuration, and affected by a causative event, from the generic passive derivation, on the other, when the

[37] All my informants, whose dialect is European Peninsular Spanish, consider this example grammatical and not too far-fetched. However, this is not to say that there cannot be dialectal variation.

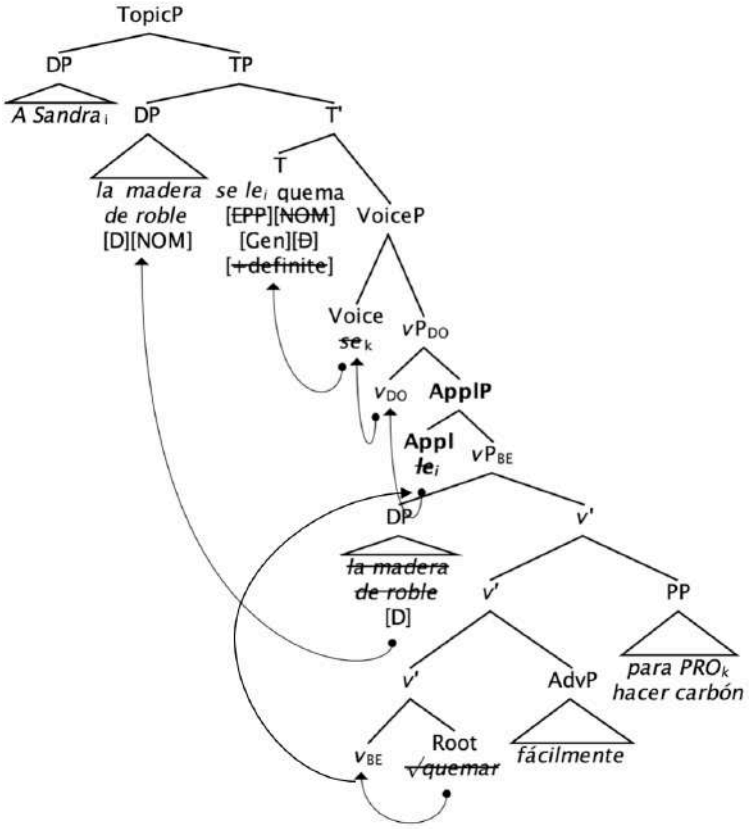
[38] An anonymous reviewer raises the question of whether this might be an example similar to Williams' (1974) *Grass is green to promote photosynthesis*, where there cannot be an implicit agent but it is the situation that acts as the controller for the purpose clause. While the sentence in (46) could have a non-agentive reading, i.e. it is in the nature of oak wood to combust easily, as it is in the nature of grass to be green, the same could not be said of the following example, where a volitional agent must participate in order for the sentence to be comprehensible:

(i) Los coches con dirección asistida se conducen fácilmente para evitar accidentes.
the cars with direction assisted REFL drive easily for avoid accidents
Intended: 'Power steering cars drive easily in order to avoid accidents.'

The same reviewer also wonders whether (46) is an instance of a habitual *se*-passive, rather than a generic one. Both (41) and (i) above predicate intrinsic properties of their notional objects, which is the criterion I am using here to determine what a middle-passive is, following the works by other scholars (A&S 2006; Mendikoetxea 1999, etc.); therefore, I will continue to assume that these are in fact middle-passives containing an implicit notional subject.

purpose clause is inserted (42b), the only possible interpretation that is available is the third one, i.e. María is interpreted as the possessor of the wood and therefore affected by someone else's burning it. This suggests that the unintentional/accidental causer interpretation is only possible in generic inchoative contexts; in the presence of an agent of some sort, implicit in this case, the dative argument cannot be interpreted as triggering the event of change. In other words, there seems to be a competition between the implicit notional subject and the dative argument to be responsible for the event or, in structural terms, a competition for the position right on top of the first subevent; nonetheless, an agent, be it implicit or explicit, will always take over, relegating the applicative head to a lower position.[39] Below is the derivation for (42b):

(43) *Generic passive interpretation and purpose clause + affected dative argument:*
'It is easy to burn Sandra's oak wood in order to make coal.'



As shown above, *quemar* is a verb that participates in the causative alternation, i.e. it can occur in both causative (*Sandra quemó la madera*; 'Sandra burned the wood') and anticausative contexts. Spanish also has a similar verb which lacks a transitive version, and therefore can only occur in inchoative contexts: *arder*. Thus, when this verb occurs in a generic context, it is expected to enter the generic inchoative configuration exclusively, not the generic passive one; if this is so, control into a purpose clause should be impossible; this expectation is met:

(44) a. La madera de roble arde fácilmente (*para hacer carbón).
the wood of oak burns easily for make coal
'Oak wood burns easily.'

[39] This is in line with what Fernández Soriano (1999a) proposes for locative and dative impersonal sentences in Spanish.

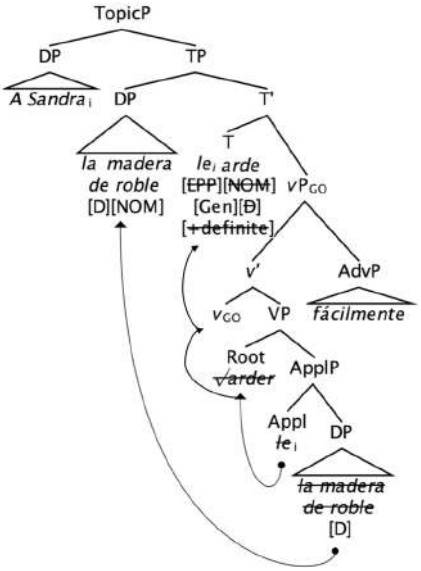
b. A Sandra la madera de roble le arde fácilmente.
to Sandra the wood of oak 3SG.DAT burns easily
'Sandra (unintentionally) makes (her) oak wood burn easily.'
'(Sandra's) Oak wood burns easily and Sandra is affected by it.'
~~'It is easy to make Sandra's oak wood burn.'~~

As we can see in (44a), control into a purpose clause is disallowed with this predicate. Moreover, when an unselected dative DP is inserted in this construction, its only two possible interpretations are (i) unintentional causer[40] and (ii) affected by the inchoative event, but not (iii) affected by an externally caused event. This is more evidence showing the lack of an implicit agent in this configuration, as expected; the affected applicative head is therefore free to merge on top of the change subevent and entail a slight degree of agency, i.e. be interpreted as the unintentional causer. Crucially, if this is the case, one might wonder whether the dative argument can therefore control into a purpose clause in the absence of an implicit agent, just like this argument would do; this is in fact the case for some speakers, who claim to have the reading in (45).[41]

(45) A Sandra$_i$ la madera de roble le$_i$ arde fácilmente para PRO$_i$
to Sandra.DAT the wood of oak 3SG.DAT burns easily for
hacer carbón.
make coal
'Sandra (unintentionally) makes (her) oak wood burn easily, when making coal.'
'(Sandra's) Oak wood burns easily and Sandra is affected by it, when she makes coal.'

The derivation of (44b), with the affected reading, is shown in (46) below, and the unintentional causer configuration is given in (47), with the applicative head merged on top of the change subevent:

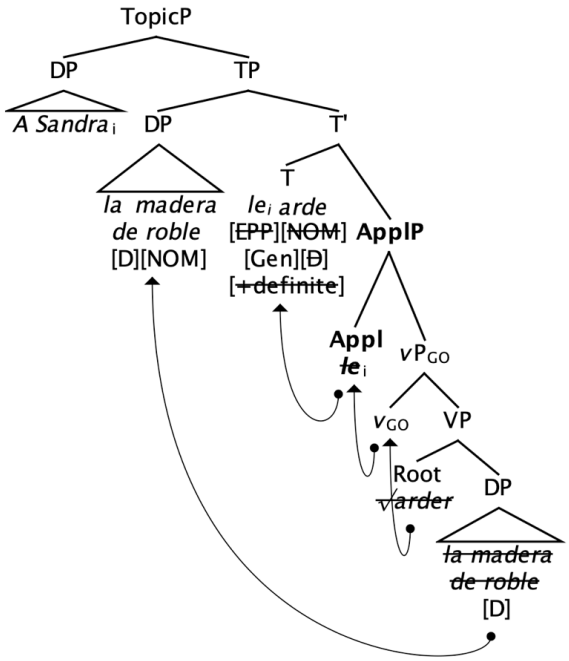
(46) *Affected reading: 'A Sandra la madera de roble le arde fácilmente'*



[40] In such case Sandra is interpreted as having favored the ignition process somehow, e.g. in a context where she is making a bonfire, or is about to barbecue some meat, and the oak wood she uses burns easily, i.e. the initiator of the event.

[41] While judgments on this example were not as unanimous as the ones for (46), a considerable number of my informants understood *María* to be the controller of the purpose clause, and not *la madera de roble*, which would make it ungrammatical. Despite the lack of agreement among speakers with regards to the grammaticality of this example, the fact that this interpretation is available for some should be taken as indicative that in the absence of an implicit agent and a volitional grammatical subject, an applied dative argument can be another candidate to exert control into a purpose clause in inchoative configurations.

(47) *Accidental causer reading: 'A Sandra la madera de roble le arde fácilmente'*



The head of the subevent of change in (46) and (47) is not spelled out as the paradigmatic reflexive clitic pronoun, for the verb *arder* is a simple unaccusative predicate denoting an internally caused process and is not part of the causative alternation; in other words, because this is a simple unaccusative verb, it does not involve a bieventive structure, but a monoeventive one, i.e. it simply involves one event introducer (v_{GO}). Nonetheless, the root still acquires its flavor of change when it lands in it as it undergoes local head movement on its way to T^{o}.

In this section I have provided an analysis for the two possible configurations underlying inchoative predicates in generic contexts, i.e. a generic inchoative and a generic reflexively marked passive, which happen to have the same phonological realization. Moreover, I have shown that while both derivations allow the insertion of a non-subcategorized dative argument, only the generic inchoative one favors the interpretation of this argument as an unintentional causer, for it can merge in the available position right above the subevent of change (v_{GO}). In the generic passive, this position is already filled with a passivized Voice head favoring the interpretation of an implicit generic agent; therefore, the applied dative argument can only merge below v_{GO}, being then interpreted as affected by the event.

3.3 A note on Wood & Marantz (2017)

Before moving on to briefly discussing the position preverbal DPs occupy in inchoative middles, let us delve into the question that there appears to be a competition between the implicit notional subject and the dative argument to be responsible for the event in inchoative middles, yet the agent, be it explicit or implicit, seems to always prevail. As I mentioned earlier, in structural terms one could argue that the applicative head and the passivized Voice head both qualify to occupy the position on top of the verbalizing head (v); however, the applicative can only merge there when there is no (active/passive) Voice, i.e. only in the context of v_{GO}.

Wood & Marantz (2017) propose that argument-introducing functional heads (*v*, Voice, *p* and Appl) can all be reduced to one single categorially underspecified functional head *i** selecting for a syntactic constituent of category D; this head acquires its specific meaning in function of its surrounding syntactic environment. Thus, an additional argument introduced by *i** on top of an inchoative event (v_{GO}) will necessarily be interpreted as a high applicative, i.e. a non-core argument. If, on the contrary, *i** merges on top of a transitive structure (v_{DO}), the argument it introduces will denote an external argument.

What I claim here is that this is in fact what happens in inchoative middles. These sentences have two possible derivations: a generic inchoative (i.e. inchoative) configuration and a generic *se*-passive one. Both structures differ in the absence vs. presence of a Voice head passivized by the reflexive clitic *se* which denotes a notional subject, respectively, yet both allow the insertion of an unselected non-core dative argument. The data in the previous section show that the unintentional causer interpretation of the dative argument is only available in the generic inchoative context, which is indicative of the fact that the position above the verbalizing head is available for *i** to merge, i.e. it is not filled by a Voice head, and because this is a spontaneous event of change (v_{GO}), the underspecified argument-introducing head *i** is realized as a high applicative. The fact that the affected reading is only possible in the context of an active or passive causative event suggests that the position atop v_{DO} is already filled by Voice, forcing *i** to merge below it and be realized as an affected applicative. Notice that both applied argument merge in different positions, yet when the derivation becomes linearized they get pronounced in the same position, which gives rise to the syntactic ambiguity discussed here.

If this proposal is on the right track, one would expect to never find an unintentional causer interpretation of a dative when there is an active or passive Voice head; the following data shows that this is in fact the case.

(48) a. *Active (Active Voice)*
A María$_i$, Juan$_k$ le$_i$ rompió el coche sin PRO$_{*i/k}$ querer.
to María Juan 3SG.DAT broke the car without want
'John accidentally broke María's car.'

b. *Periphrastic passive (Passivized Voice)*
A María$_i$, le$_i$ fue roto el coche sin PRO$_{*i/k}$ querer.
to María 3SG.DAT was broken the car without want
'Mary's car was broken unintentionally.'

c. *Se-passive (Passivized Voice)*
A María$_i$, se$_k$ le$_i$ rompió el coche sin PRO$_{*i/k}$ querer.
to María REFL 3SG.DAT broke the car without want
'Mary's car was broken unintentionally, and she's affected by it.'

d. *Inchoative/Anticausative*
A María$_i$, se$_ø$ le$_i$ rompió el coche sin PRO$_i$ querer.
to María REFL 3SG.DAT broke the car without want
'Mary unintentionally broke the car.'

What (48) shows is that whenever a Voice head is present, be it active (48a) or passive, independently of whether it is in a periphrastic (48b) or reflexively marked passive (48c) construction, it will always be the explicit or implicit agent that can be interpreted as the unintentional causer, while the dative argument is merely affected by the theme's resulting state. However, in an inchoative context (48d), the dative DP can be understood as

Table 1: Different realizations of i* in inchoative middles.

Numeration	Combination	Outcome
{(se), v_{DO}, v_{BE}, *i**, *i**}	*i** + v_{DO} + *i** + v_{BE}	$Voice_{ACT/(PASS)}$ + v_{DO} + $Appl_{Affected}$ + v_{BE}
{v_{GO}, (v_{BE}) *i**}	(*i**) + v_{GO} + (*i**) + (v_{BE})	(Appl) + v_{GO} + (Appl) + (v_{BE})

the accidental causer of the change of state, for there is no other eligible argument in the structure, i.e. there is no Voice head introducing a notional subject, that can bear this role. In sum, the analysis provided here supports Wood & Marantz's (2017) proposal; Table 1 captures this generalization by showing the elements in the Numeration of each derivation, how they combine, and how they are realized.

In the next section, I conclude the analysis of inchoative middles by proposing that dative DPs in inchoative middles can merge in two different positions: either in the specifier of ApplP, therefore being the outermost DP and being the optimal candidate to be probed by T^o to its specifier, or left-dislocated as a topic outside the sentence domain.

3.4 On the position of the dative DP in inchoative middles

Several studies (Fernández Soriano 1999b; Fernández Soriano & Mendikoetxea 2013) claim that datives in anticausative constructions behave as subjects, share properties with Icelandic quirky subjects, and their position in the derivation prevents the DP theme from exiting the VP. In this section, I suggest two possible positions for preverbal dative DPs when they double the dative clitic pronoun in inchoative middles; I propose that these phrases can either merge as left-dislocated elements outside the sentential domain, or they can occupy the position traditionally associated with Spanish preverbal subjects, in which case I assume they raise from the specifier of ApplP. I base this claim on the behavior inchoative middles show when a subjecthood test proposed by Masullo (1992) is applied to our data, explained below.[42]

Masullo (1992) elaborates an analysis of dative experiencers and shows that these projections have subject-like properties and occupy the specifier of TP. Among the subjecthood tests that this author provides, one crucially triggers interesting effects with regards to the data under analysis here. Masullo (1992) argues that the fact that the preverbal quantifier DP *a nadie* ('to nobody') is only grammatical if non-dislocated proves that this constituent is sitting in an argumental position.

(49) *Masullo (1992: 90)*

a. A nadie le gusta la música pop en esta casa.
to nobody 3SG.DAT likes the music pop in this house
'No one likes pop music in this house.'

b. *A nadie, le gusta la música pop en esta casa.
'Nadie likes pop music in this house.'

c. A nadie el comité otorgará una beca.
to nobody the committee will grant a scholarship
'No one will be granted a scholarship.'

[42] I refer the reader to Suárez-Palma (2019) for a more exhaustive discussion on the position of dative DPs in inchoative middles based on the effects a series of subjecthood tests proposed by Fernández Soriano (1999a) and some others by Masullo (1992) trigger when applied to inchoative middles.

d. *A nadie, el comité otorgará una beca.
'Nadie, will be granted a scholarship by the committee.'

The relevance of the contrasts in (49) comes from the effects they trigger with respect to inchoative middles, which can be observed below:

(50) a. ?# A nadie las patatas asturianas se le queman
to nobody the potatoes Asturian REFL 3SG.DAT burn
rápidamente.
quickly

b. A nadie se le queman las patatas asturianas rápidamente.
'Asturian potatoes burn quickly for nobody.'

c. *A nadie, las patatas asturianas se le queman rápidamente.
'Nadie is able to burn Asturian potatoes quickly.'

The unacceptability of (50a) shows that both the negative dative quantifier and the nominative DP theme are competing for the same position in the derivation, i.e. the subject position, which, again, I assume to be SpecTP. However, when the DP theme remains inside the VP, the sentence is fully grammatical and conveys the desired meaning: *Asturian potatoes don't burn quickly for anybody*. Should the negative quantifier be left-dislocated, the interpretation the speaker obtains is that there is an entity called *Nadie* who causes Asturian potatoes to fry fast. In other words, the unacceptability stems from the negative quantifier losing its scope for being left-dislocated, but this is not to say that that position, i.e. SpecTopicP, cannot be occupied by a left-dislocated non-quantified dative DP, as I have been showing in the trees above (cf. §3.2). Crucially, these data prove that there exists a competition between the dative DP and the DP theme for the subject position in these structures, albeit the theme seems to be at a disadvantage for merging lower in the derivation. Nonetheless, should the theme raise to SpecTP, the dative DP will emerge as a topicalized element.[43] On the contrary, if only the dative DP occurs preverbally, I assume it is because it generates in the specifier of the ApplP, inside the sentence, and is probed by T^{o} to satisfy the EPP; however, since the dative DP bears inherent case, T^{o} will look for the next caseless DP to check its nominative case feature, i.e. the theme, which remains *in situ* within the VP-domain.[44] The derivation can be seen below:[45]

[43] María Cristina Cuervo (p.c.) points out that it may be the case that both the dative DP and the DP theme merge outside TP, within the left-periphery, in what I call the 'topicalized/left-dislocated configuration'; thus, the derivation would require empty pronominals inside the thematic layer to co-refer with these dislocated constituents. This should pose no difficulties to the analysis I present here for, after all, what I am arguing is that when both the dative DP and the DP theme occur preverbally, it is the latter that occupies the subject position in Spanish, be it SpecTP, or a different position higher than TP (cf. fn. 30).

[44] Alternatively, both the dative DP and the DP theme could occur post-verbally:

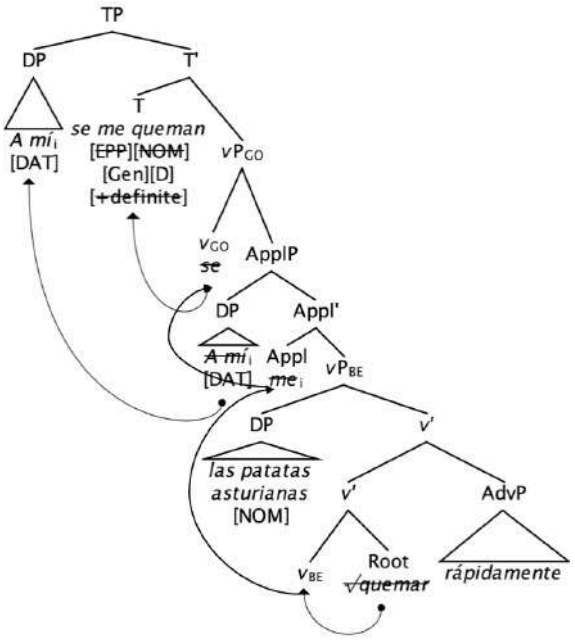
(i) a. Las patatas asturianas se le queman fácilmente **a Juan**.
b. A Juan se le queman fácilmente **las patatas asturianas**.

In such cases, I assume that the sentence-final DP is an instance of a clitic right dislocation (CLRD), i.e. a topicalized construction where a phrase in the right periphery of the sentence corefers with a clitic or morphological agreement inside the sentence; the dative clitic for the dative DP, and the subject-verb agreement for the DP theme, respectively. These right-dislocated arguments are generally interpreted as sentential afterthoughts and are therefore subject to particular information structure conditions (cf. Fernández Sánchez 2017; López 2009; Olarrea 2012; Samek-Lodovici 2015; Villalba 2010).

[45] For the sake of simplification, I only provide the derivation of the dative DP's affected interpretation, i.e. the one in which ApplP merges sandwiched between the two event introducers.

(51) a. A mí se me queman las patatas asturianas fácilmente.

b.



In this section, I have provided evidence supporting the idea that dative arguments in inchoative middles, be it the generic *se*-passive or the generic inchoative configuration, as in traditional inchoative structures, are introduced by an applicative head which relates a dative argument to a spontaneous event of change (v_{GO}), and is therefore interpreted as an unintentional causer, or to the internal argument's resulting state (v_{BE}) in an inchoative or passivized causative context; in the latter cases an affected reading is then obtained. This dative argument, which is spelled out as a dative clitic, can optionally occur reduplicated by a full preverbal dative DP. I argued that two possible configurations can yield these structures: one in which the dative DP is left-dislocated outside TP, thus favoring the DP theme's reaching its characteristic preverbal position (presumably SpecTP), and another where it is the dative DP that merges in subject position after being probed from the specifier of ApplP by T°. In such case, the sentence's internal argument must remain in its base position inside the VP.

4 Conclusions

In this paper, I explained that Spanish middle constructions containing an inchoative predicate, which I called *inchoative middles*, can have two possible underlying representations: on the one hand, a generic inchoative derivation, and on the other a generic *se*-passive one. Both configurations can have an identical spell-out (a reflexive clitic, imperfective tenses, a preverbal DP theme, and an adverbial or prepositional modifier), yet they show different structural properties which stem from the fact that the latter, but not the former, projects a passivized Voice head spelled out as the non-paradigmatic third person reflexive clitic *se*, and interpreted as an implicit generic notional subject.

As in the case of regular anticausatives, inchoative middles can also host a non-subcategorized dative argument which can be interpreted either as an unintentional causer, or as affected by the internal argument's resulting state; this phenomenon can be captured structurally by means of an applicative head, spelled out as a dative clitic pronoun, merged either above the verbalizing head (v_{GO}), or sandwiched between v_{GO}/v_{DO} and v_{BE}, respectively. I argued that the first option is only available in the generic inchoative

configuration, for in the generic passive that position is filled by the VoiceP; in other words, there exists a mutual incompatibility between agents and accidental causers. Following Wood and Marantz (2017), I claimed that this position is available to an underspecified argument-introducing functional head (*i**), which will be realized as Voice and if its complement is a causative subevent (v_{DO}), as an applicative head if its complement is a change subevent (v_{GO}), denoting an unintentional causer. Only if this position is filled by an active or passive Voice, will the applied argument be understood as an affectee, for its only available merging option is as complement to the outermost verbalizing head (v_{DO}).

Of course, at this point one might wonder why is it that not all languages display the same number/types of dative arguments. Cuervo (2003) argues that languages differ in terms of the applicative heads their grammars select to introduce additional arguments; we could adapt her story and speculate that perhaps what differentiates languages are the positions their grammars make available for *i** to merge in, which give rise to its different 'flavors'.

Moreover, I showed that the dative clitic can be optionally doubled by a preverbal dative DP, which competes for the sentence's preverbal subject position with the other DP in the sentence, namely the theme. Crucially, I demonstrated that two possible configurations can yield these structures: (i) one in which the dative DP is generated in SpecApplP and is later probed by T°, being this the least embedded and therefore structurally closer DP, it finds, to license its EPP and nominative case features; the DP theme has no chance to exit the VP then. And (ii) another where the dative DP is left-dislocated and doubled by a resumptive dative clitic pronoun in Appl°. In this case, the DP theme is the only argument inside the sentence that is able to check the EPP and nominative case in T°, which translates into its promotion to subject position.

Finally, I highlighted the need to establish a more detailed classification of Spanish middle-passive constructions with respect to their interaction with dative arguments, a phenomenon which appears to have been overlooked in the literature thus far.

Abbreviations

ACC = accusative, CL = clitic, DAT = dative, F = feminine, FUT = future, Gen = Generic, IMP = imperative, M = masculine, NOM = nominative, PL = plural, PRS = present, PST = past, REFL = reflexive, SG = singular, 1/2/3 = first/second/third persons

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Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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