

# Unaccusativity, Telicity and Inherent Reciprocals

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to show that, despite appearances, the syntactic structure of syntactically derived reciprocals such as *Se aman* ‘They love each other’ is different from the structure of inherent reciprocal verbs such as *Se casaron* ‘They married’. We propose that reciprocal constructions such as *Se aman* ‘They love each other’ get the reciprocal meaning by adjoining the clitic, and that inherent reciprocal constructions do not get the reciprocal meaning by the adjunction of the clitic. The causative variant *El alcalde casó a Pedro y María* ‘The mayor married Peter and Mary’ is a reciprocal construction, even though there is no a clitic or any other reciprocal marker, because the verb *casar* is irreducibly symmetric. Thus the clitic with inherent reciprocals does not entail reciprocity. On the contrary, we claim that the clitic with inherent reciprocals is a lexical operation marker which alters the argument structure of the verb *casar*, and for this reason the intransitive variant *casarse* allows postverbal bare plural subjects as in *Se casan parejas* ‘Couples get married’, while the causative variant does not, as we see in *\*Casar alcaldes* ‘Mayors marry’<sup>2</sup>. The crucial point is that the causative variant does not even allow the bare plural subject when a modifier is adjoined (Torrego 1989, Benedicto 1997), as we see in *\*En el ayuntamiento casan alcaldes* ‘In the townhall mayors marry’. Therefore, the claim is that only the intransitive variant of inherent reciprocal verbs is unaccusative and telic.

As observed in (1) and (3) below, the transitive variant of inherent reciprocals shows an external cause, *the child* and *the mayor* respectively, while the intransitive variant of inherent reciprocal verbs does not present an external or internal cause, which implies that the syntactic structure is decausative, as observed in (2) and (4).

- (1) El niño mezcló los colores  
The child mix-PAST the color-PLURAL  
‘The child mixed the colors’
- (2) Se mezclaron colores  
SE mix-PAST color-PLURAL  
‘Colors mixed’
- (3) El alcalde casó a la pareja  
The mayor marry-PAST to the couple  
‘The mayor married the couple’
- (4) Se casaron parejas  
SE marry-PAST couple-PLURAL  
‘Couples married’

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<sup>2</sup> We can say *Casan parejas* ‘They marry couples’, but the postverbal plural is not a subject but an object.

On the contrary, the apparent intransitive variant of other reciprocal constructions with no inherent reciprocal verbs, obligatorily presents an external argument, as we can see in (5a) and (6a), and postverbal bare plural subjects are not possible, as observed in (5b) and (6b):

- (5) a. Los amantes se aman el uno al otro  
The lover-PLURAL SE love-PRES the one the other  
b. \*Se aman amantes  
SE love-PRES lover-PLURAL  
'Lovers love each other'
- (6) a. Los amantes se besan el uno al otro  
The lover-PLURAL SE kiss-PRES the one the other  
b. \*Se besan amantes  
SE kiss-PRES lover-PLURAL  
'Lovers kiss each other'

Thus, both *mezclarse* and *casarse* are decausative reciprocals derived from causative *casar* and *mezclar*, as one can infer from a comparison of (1)-(2) and (3)-(4). Notice that only (1) and (3) show an explicit external cause, *the child* and *the mayor*, respectively. Our claim is that the sentences in (2) and (4) are unaccusative because there is no external argument, as the possibility of postverbal bare plural nominals show in (2) and (4). Bearing in mind that reciprocals require a Proto-Agent (Dowty 1991, Quintana Hernández 2010), it must be the case that decausative inherent reciprocals are possible because there is an implicit external cause. We claim this is the reason why we have a clitic which inherits the features of the external argument.

On the contrary, derived reciprocals, as seen in (5) and (6), do not accept postverbal bare plurals, which implies that they are not unaccusative but unergative (Siloni 2008, Quintana Hernández 2012). As expected if only predicates with a Proto-Agent can be reciprocated, the use of *uno P otro* to get derived reciprocals is very productive with transitive predicates like *amar* 'love' and *besar* 'kiss', as we have seen previously, and unergative predicates like *trabajar* 'work' in Spanish, but not with unaccusative predicates like *crecer* 'grow', as you can see below:

- (7) Los muchachos trabajan unos con otros  
The boy-PLURAL work-PRES one-PLURAL with other-PLURAL  
'The boys work with each other'
- (8) \*Las flores crecieron unas a/con/para otras  
The flower-PLURAL grow-PAST one-PLURAL to/with/for other-PLURAL  
'The flowers grew with each other'

In fact, we must say that there is a very limited set of verbs which allow the transitive alternation seen in (1)-(4) in Spanish. The enlightening assertion is that all inherent decausative reciprocal verbs allow this alternation, i.e. all of them are unaccusative.

Apart from cause recovering, the clitic *se* is also an aspectual marker which indicates that the event has an endpoint. That is the reason why most reciprocal sentences with inherent reciprocal verbs are telic, as observed in *Se mezclaron en un segundo* 'They mixed in a second', while we do not find telicity effects with all other reciprocal predicates, as we see in *\*Se amaron en un año* '\*They love each other in one year'. Our claim, thus, is that *se* with inherent reciprocal verbs is different from the clitic *se* with all other derived reciprocal predicates.

In sum, the aim of this paper is to show that the syntactic structure of the intransitive variant of inherent reciprocals is unaccusative. These unaccusative structures derive from object-oriented reciprocals such as *casar* ‘marry’, *mezclar* ‘mix’, *unir* ‘unite’, *separar* ‘separate’, etc. First, we will show several unaccusativity tests that prove that intransitive inherent reciprocals are unaccusative: postverbal bare plurals, absolute participles constructions and the impossibility of agent suffixes such as *-dor*, *-dora*, *-nte*, etc. Second, we will test these unaccusative constructions to show that they are indeed telic. This fact supports the claim that correlates unaccusativity and telicity and the claim that aspectual features have to be included in the computation (Guéron 2005). Third, we will review Guéron’s (2005) proposal for aspectual computation. Finally, we will propose the syntax of aspect for decausative inherent reciprocal sentences.

## 2. Unaccusativity diagnostics

In this section we will see that unaccusativity diagnostics demonstrate that, as expected, only inherent reciprocals are unaccusative. Since there are not too many phenomena sensitive to unaccusativity in Spanish we will rely on all the tests traditionally used (Torrego 1989, Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach 2009): the possibility to appear in absolute participle constructions, the ability to appear with bare plurals in postverbal position, and the inability to appear with agentive suffixes such as *-dor*, *-dora*, *-nte*, etc.

### 2.1. Inherent reciprocals and absolute participle constructions

Absolute participle constructions can occur with unaccusative predicates but not with unergative predicates, as evidenced in (9)-(10). As expected if our hypothesis is on the right track, only inherent reciprocals allow absolute participle constructions as evidenced in (11) and (12) below:

- (9) Muerto el perro, se acabó la rabia  
Dead the dog, SE finish-PAST rabies  
‘Once the dog is dead, rabies finished’
- (10) \*Trabajado el estudiante, aprobó el curso  
Worked the student, pass-PAST the course  
‘Once the student has studied, he has passed the course’
- (11) Una vez casados, se fueron de luna de miel  
Once marry-PAST-PLURAL, SE go-PAST on honeymoon  
‘Once they married, they went on honeymoon’
- (12) Una vez separados, rehicieron sus vidas  
Once separate-PAST-PLURAL, remake-PAST their life-PLURAL  
‘Once they divorced, they remade their lives’

On the contrary, derived reciprocal constructions do not allow absolute participle constructions, as observed in (13)-(14).

- (13) \*Una vez besados, hicieron las paces  
Once kiss-PAST-PLURAL, reconcile-PAST  
‘Once kissed, they reconciled’
- (14) \*Una vez queridos, decidieron estar juntos  
Once love-PAST-PLURAL, decide-PAST to be together  
‘Once loved, they decided to be together’

## 2.2. *Inherent reciprocals and bare plurals in postverbal position*

As pointed out by Benedicto (1997), bare plurals can appear postverbally with any kind of predicate in Spanish. However, bare plural subjects in postverbal position can occur with unaccusative predicates but not with unergative predicates, unless a locative modifier is inserted, as observed in (15)-(18). Hence, unergative predicates accept bare plurals in postverbal position if a locative is inserted in preverbal position (Torrego 1989) or postverbal position (Benedicto 1997).

- (15) Mueren animales todos los días  
 Die-PRES animals every day  
 ‘Animals die every day’
- (16) \*Trabajan secretarias  
 Work-PRES secretary-PLURAL  
 ‘Secretaries work’
- (17) Aquí trabajan secretarias  
 Here work-PRES secretary-PLURAL
- (18) Trabajan secretarias aquí  
 Work-PRES secretary-PLURAL here  
 ‘Secretaries work here’

These facts show that postverbal bare plurals make a distinction between the two types of intransitive predicates. “The intuition is that certain kinds of modification allow a bare plural to appear in the postverbal position of an unergative verb, but that this modification is not necessary for licensing a bare plural subject when the verb is unaccusative” (Armstrong 2011: 7). Only predicates that have an object allow bare plurals postverbally without restrictions. It is not our purpose to explain this phenomenon here, but to use bare plurals as a true unaccusativity diagnostic and demonstrate that decausative inherent reciprocals are unaccusative, and subsequently allow bare plurals in postverbal position, as in (19) and (20):

- (19) Se casaron parejas  
 SE marry-PAST couple-PLURAL  
 ‘Couples married’
- (20) Se mezclaron colores  
 SE mix-PAST color-PLURAL  
 ‘Colors mixed’

As observed in (19)-(20), bare plural subjects in postverbal position can occur with unaccusative inherent reciprocals but not with unergative derived reciprocals, as illustrated in (21) and (22).

- (21) \*Se besan niños  
 SE kiss-PRES child-PLURAL  
 ‘Children kissed’
- (22) \*Se aman parejas  
 SE love-PRES couple-PLURAL  
 ‘Couples love’

### 2.3. Inherent reciprocals and agentive suffixes

As it can be observed in (23) and (24), agentive affixes are not possible with unaccusative predicates but only with unergative. As expected, only derived reciprocals allow agentive affixes<sup>3</sup>, as we can see in (25) and (26) below, while unaccusative inherent reciprocals disallow agentive nominalizations, as in (27)-(31):

- (23) trabajador/trabajadora  
worker (masculine)/ worker (feminine)
- (24) \*moridor/\*moridora  
Dier (masculine)/ dier (feminine)
- (25) amante  
lover
- (26) vidente  
seer
- (27) \*casador/\*casadora/\*casante  
marrier
- (28) \*mezclador/\*mezcladora/\*mezclante  
mixer
- (29) \*unidor/\*unidora/\*unante  
unifyer
- (30) \*divorciadora/\*divorciante  
divorcer
- (31) separador/\*separadora  
separator

As observed, only transitive and unergative predicates allow the agentive nominalization. As expected if inherent reciprocals are unaccusative, the agentive suffixes cannot occur with *casar*, *mezclar*, *unir*, *divorciar*, etc. Nonetheless, we have the possibility to add the agentive suffix *-dor* to the predicate *separar* in (31). We argue that the fact that *separar* cannot occur with the feminine suffix *-dora* shows that *-dor* with *separar* is not an agentive suffix in this case. In fact, *separador* is an object, a sort of folder used to order things.

Having presented diagnostics to test that inherent reciprocals are unaccusative, let us turn to diagnostics to prove that they are telic.

### 3. Telicity diagnostics

As already said, in this section we will see that telicity diagnostics demonstrate that, as previously argued, inherent reciprocals are telic. We will rely on some of the tests traditionally used (see Marín & McNally 2011 and references therein): *en/durante* ‘in/for’ adverbials, infinitival complement of *acabar/terminar* ‘finish’, and compatibility with *una vez* ‘once’ absolutes.

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<sup>3</sup> Not all derived reciprocals allow agentive suffixes, e.g. \*besante, \*criticador, etc.

### 3.1. *En/durante* ‘in/for’ adverbials

Telic predicates are those predicates which have an endpoint and therefore accept *en* ‘in’ adverbials, while atelic predicates do not; they accept *durante* ‘for’ adverbials instead. Let’s observe the behavior of inherent reciprocal predicates in this regard:

- (32) Se mezclaron en un minuto/\*durante un minuto  
SE mix-PAST in a minute/for a minute  
‘They mixed in a minute/\*for a minute’
- (33) Se casaron en un minuto/\*durante un minuto  
SE marry-PAST in a minute/for a minute  
‘They married in a minute/\*for a minute’
- (34) Se unieron en un minuto/\*durante un minuto  
SE unite-PAST in a minute/for a minute  
‘They united in a minute/\*for a minute’
- (35) Se divorciaron en un minuto/\*durante un minuto  
SE divorce-PAST in a minute/for a minute  
‘They divorced in a minute/\*for a minute’

As observed in (32)-(35) inherent reciprocals pattern with telic predicates which means that all of them are punctual predicates. Interestingly, all of these predicates allow the progressive form as observed below:

- (36) Los colores están mezclándose ahora mismo  
The color-PLURAL are mix-PROGRESSIVE. SE right now  
‘Colors are mixing right now’
- (37) Se están casando ahora mismo  
SE are marry-PROGRESSIVE right now  
‘They are marrying right now’
- (38) Se están uniendo  
SE are unite-PROGRESSIVE  
‘They are uniting’
- (39) Se están divorciando  
SE are divorce-PROGRESSIVE  
‘They are divorcing’

We claim that the possibility of the progressive shows that decausative inherent reciprocals are change of state predicates which therefore also refer to circumstances before the event is accomplished. The possibility of using the progressive with inherent reciprocals also shows that apart from being telic predicates they are also dynamic which means that they have some duration as the possibility of using *durante* ‘for’ adverbials in the following example shows:

- (40) Los colores estuvieron mezclándose durante horas  
The color-PLURAL were mix-PROGRESSIVE for hour-PLURAL  
‘Colors were mixing for hours’

- (41) Se casaron durante el verano<sup>4</sup>  
 SE marry-PAST for the summer  
 ‘They married for the summer’

Subsequently, it is no surprise that we find some inherent reciprocals which accept both *en* ‘in’ adverbials and *durante* ‘for’ adverbials, as observed below:

- (42) Se separaron en un minuto/durante un minuto  
 SE separate-PAST in a minute/for a minute  
 ‘They separated in a minute/for a minute’  
 (43) Se juntaron en un minuto/durante un minuto  
 SE join-PAST in a minute/for a minute  
 ‘They joined in a minute/for a minute’

### 3.2. Infinitival complement of *acabar/terminar* ‘finish’

Since telic predicates have an endpoint they are compatible with the meaning of *acabar* and *terminar* ‘finish’, and therefore they can appear as infinitival complements to these verbs, while atelic predicates cannot. Let us observe the behavior of inherent reciprocal predicates in this regard:

- (44) Acaban de mezclarse/ casarse/ divorciarse/ separarse/ unirse/ juntarse  
 Finish-PRES mixSE/ marrySE/ divorceSE/ separateSE/ uniteSE/ joinSE  
 ‘They finish mixing/ marrying/ divorcing/ separating/ uniting/ joining’

As observed in (44), inherent reciprocals are compatible with *acabar*. An anonymous reviewer suggests these examples are ambiguous. They can mean ‘They just got mixed/married’ and also ‘They finished mixing/marrying’. However different they might look like, both interpretations imply change of state and focus on the beginning of a new state, and therefore, both meanings imply that *They are mixed/married*.

Even though inherent reciprocals are compatible with *acabar*, they are not compatible with *terminar*, as seen below:

- (45) \*Terminan de unirse/ juntarse/ divorciarse  
 Finish-PRES uniteSE/ joinSE/ divorceSE  
 ‘They finish uniting/ joining/ divorcing’

We do not have an explanation for these cases, but intuitively we claim that it has to do with the aspectual specifications of the verb *terminar* which we will not go into now. Interestingly, according to the same anonymous reviewer, for some speakers some examples are grammatical if the preterite is used, as seen in *Terminaron de separarse/mezclarse* ‘they finish separating/mixing’, which, from my perspective, suggests that it has to do with the computation of aspect (lexical aspect and grammatical aspect).

### 3.3. Compatibility with *una vez* ‘once’ absolutes

Since telic predicates have an endpoint they are compatible with *una vez* ‘once’ absolutes, while atelic predicates are not, as observed below:

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<sup>4</sup> Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this example.

- (46) Una vez mezclados, úsalos cada dos días  
Once mix-PAST-PLURAL, use-IMPERATIVE every two day-PLURAL  
'Once they are mixed, use them every other day'
- (47) Una vez casados, se fueron de luna de miel  
Once marry-PAST-PLURAL, SE go-PAST on honeymoon  
'Once they were married, they went on honeymoon'
- (48) Una vez divorciados, rehicieron sus vidas  
Once divorce-PAST-PLURAL, remake-PAST their life-PLURAL  
'Once they were divorced, they remade their lives'
- (49) Una vez unidos, nada los separará  
Once unite-PAST-PLURAL, nothing them separate-FUTURE  
'Once they are united, nothing will separate them'
- (50) Una vez separados, será imposible volver a unirlos  
Once separate-PAST-PLURAL, be-FUTURE impossible to reunite them  
'Once they are separated, it will be impossible to reunite them'
- (51) Una vez juntados, será imposible separarlos  
Once join-PAST-PLURAL, be-FUTURE impossible to separate them  
'Once they are joined, it will be impossible to separate them'

As observed in (46)-(51), this diagnostic works for all inherent reciprocals. This fact, together with those examined previously, strongly suggest that inherent reciprocals are telic and dynamic and that therefore, aspectual features should be taken into account in the syntactic component, as we will see in the next section.

Be that as it may, it seems that inherent reciprocals should not be considered achievements, but accomplishments, meaning that they are not spontaneous eventualities, as the use of the progressive shows, but somehow telic predicates which have duration and focus on the onset of the event. Thus, there is an important difference between *casarse* 'marry' and *estar casado* 'to be married', *separarse* 'separate' and *estar separado* 'to be separated', only the meaning of *casarse* and *separarse* includes both reference to the previous circumstance and the beginning of a new state, as said before. Therefore, we propose that inherent reciprocals such as *casarse* are inchoative and that the clitic is an aspectual element (Kempchinsky 2004, Armstrong 2011).

Given the relevance of aspectual features differentiating reciprocal verbs from other verbs, let us assume that those features, together with the [symmetry] feature, are inserted in the syntactic computation.

#### 4. The syntax of aspect

According to Guéron (2005), predicates have a formal feature which translates lexical content in terms of extension in space and time. This formal feature is an abstract number feature [+/- plural] construed as an Aktionsart feature [+/- EXT(ended)] which differentiates telic predicates from atelic predicates. Thus, predicates which are extended in space and time like *swim for hours*, are atelic, while those ones not extended in space or time like *arrive at ten o'clock* are telic. Furthermore, and in her own words, "the lexical material in vP and TP is organized and placed in space and time by an external argument located at the periphery of each syntactic phase" (Guéron 2005: 92). A VP with a [+EXT] Aktionsart F selects a subject in [Spec vP], while a VP with a [-EXT] Aktionsart F does not. Thus, for example, a predicate such as *have* will be interpreted spatially or temporally depending on the syntactic position it is merged, as we see below:

- (52) John has the book in his hand

(53) John has broken the teapot (from Guéron 2005: 90)

As observed in (52), the predicate *have* is merged in VP and its interpretation is spatial, while in (53) it is merged in TP and, consequently, it is interpreted temporally. Following her proposal, the predicate *have* is [-pl][-EXT] in (52), and subsequently does not select an external argument in [Spec vP], while the predicate *break* is a [+pl] [+EXT] and it does select an external argument in vP which functions as Manipulator, one of the several event functions Guéron proposes to substitute theta roles.

External arguments situated in [Spec vP] function as Manipulator and Instrument, while external arguments situated in [Spec TP] function as Trigger and T-Controller through the temporal feature in nominals, i. e. the person feature. This way, Guéron eliminates holistic theta-role features assigned to a predicate in the lexicon and favours fragmentary event functions or roles which select an external argument in one or more syntactic phases. Thus, the calculation of aspect takes place throughout the whole computation, as expected if aspect is more than just an Aktionsart feature (Akt F).

Following Vendler's typology, Guéron claims that activities like *swim* are [+pl][+EXT], accomplishments like *read* are also [+pl][+EXT], while achievements like *hit* and *arrive*, transitive and unaccusative respectively, are [-pl][-EXT]. States are also [-pl][-EXT]. However, we claim that even though accomplishments are initially [+pl][+EXT], they become telic because of the presence of an internal argument which delimits the event (Tenny 1994). We assume that the feature specification of accomplishments becomes [+pl][-EXT] whenever the internal argument is a definite NP.

All in all, Guéron puts the stress upon the interface of syntax and semantics by claiming that "the situation the sentence describes is placed in the space and time intervals associated with the discourse world" (Guéron 2005: 89). She proposes that the "Interface constraint determines the valence of a verb, and how spatial construal in vP interacts with temporal construal in TP" (Guéron 2005: 96).

(54) Interface constraint

vP must define a spatial Figure-Ground configuration (Guéron 2005: 96).

Thus, for example,

swimming implies gestures effected by the arms, legs and torso of a swimmer, which constitute the Figure of a spatial configuration. As swim implies the water which functions as GROUND, its FIGURE-GROUND configuration is complete without a direct object in VP (Guéron 2005: 96).

Even though Guéron only focuses on the external argument and does not pay attention to the contribution of the internal argument, we will take her proposal for the syntax of aspect because it takes into account all sorts of aspect, not only Aktionsart, but grammatical aspect through person feature checking, and discourse aspect beyond TP. Since we are dealing with decausative reciprocals we will try to focus on verbal quantification and the contribution of the internal argument to aspect computation.

## 5. The syntax of aspect in inherent decausative reciprocals

Since the complexity of thematic roles with inherent reciprocals is about irreducible symmetry, we argue that these verbs enter the derivation with the feature [symmetry] which entails that when the FinP/TP phase gets the C-I component, it gets the intended interpretation. A predicate with the [symmetry] feature entails that the components of the plural nominal play different aspectual functions. As already said, decausative inherent reciprocals are also telic, specifically they are accomplishments. All in all, the fact that, as accomplishments, inherent reciprocals are marked with plural abstract

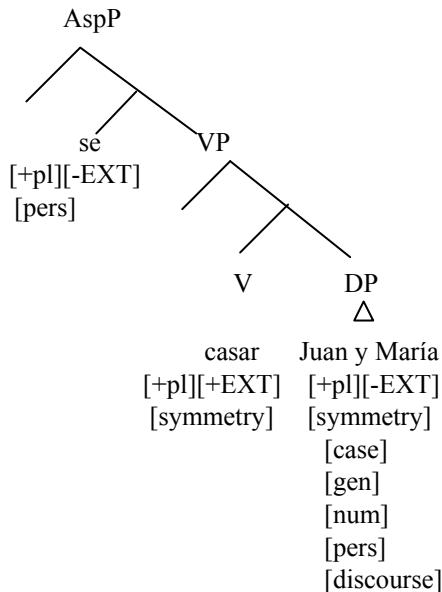
number [+pl] in terms of Guéron (2005) is supported by the fact that inherent reciprocals are obligatorily lexical plural predicates (Kratzer 2008).

Even though inherent reciprocals do not require any pluralizing reciprocal expression, the clitic *se* is obligatory with decausative reciprocals. We assume that the clitic is an inner aspectual marker, i.e. a lexical pluriactional operator (Laca 2006) comparable to *diez* (ten) in *diezmar* (kill ten), which must be merged as the head of inner AspP. That means that inner aspect is a number feature on verbs (not morphological agreement), specifically what Guéron calls the abstract feature [+/-pl] construed as an Aktionsart feature [+/-EXT], which translates lexical content in terms of extension in space and time. If our assumption is right and decausative reciprocals are unaccusative and telic, specifically accomplishments, the number feature will be [+pl][+EXT]. The addition of a definite internal argument will give us a derived Akt F [+pl][-EXT].

Additionally, we claim that the clitic promotes decausativization and that decausativization is a lexical operation which alters the argument structure: V loses the accusative case and the external argument (Burzio's generalization) (Cinque 1988, Grimshaw 1990, among others), and the clitic inherits the person feature of the external argument (Kempchinsky 2004). Apart from the pluralizing effect of *se*, we argue that whenever the clitic promotes this lexical operation, vP is substituted by AspP and there is no external argument to merge. Thus, AspP only appears when there is an aspectual marker such as *se*. Furthermore, we assume that T loses  $\phi$  features (Raposo and Uriagereka 1996) and that, subsequently, the internal argument needs to get rid of  $\phi$  features and case somewhere above TP, supposedly FinP (López 2007, 2009). In other words, we claim that AspP is defective vP, which entails that extraction out of it is possible with no phase constraints violation (Chomsky 2004). Hence, this analysis finds further support to believe that unaccusative vP is not a phase.

We now examine the syntactic derivation of the AspP (inner aspect) of a decausative inherent reciprocal predicate:

(55) Juan y María se casaron.



As observed, the accomplishment *casar* ‘marry’ is merged with its abstract number feature [+pl], which in Guéron’s (2005) proposal means that *casar* consists of a plurality of acts which constitute the FIGURE of a spatial configuration. The GROUND of the marrying activity is, inherently, a couple, i.e.

the internal argument *Juan y María*. Because there is a definite internal argument, the predicate Akt F becomes [-EXT], which means that we do not need an external argument which delimits the spatial configuration and function as its Manipulator (one of the aspectual functions attributed to Agents in Gueron's proposal), but a T-controller in [Spec TP] or [Spec FinP], i.e. a discourse related function that it is introduced in the computation by an interpretable discourse feature, as proposed by López for dislocated subjects that initiate a new discourse.

As already assumed, the clitic *se* is merged as the head of AspP to ensure pluriactionality<sup>5</sup>, which means that the clitic entails the plurality of subevents that make up the macroevent of marrying. Given that lexical cumulativity allows the sum of the marrying parts, i.e. John married Mary and Mary married John, no further pluriactional operator such as *uno P otro* 'each other' is needed to get the reciprocal interpretation, i.e. the pluriactional operator *uno P otro* is optional with inherent reciprocals. As expected, this particular event of marrying is delimited by its internal argument. Only when the internal argument is a definite NP does the inherent reciprocal become an accomplishment; otherwise, it would be an activity as observed in *Aquel día se casaron parejas durante horas* 'That day couples married for hours'.

Now that lexical items are merged, unvalued features need to be valued through Agree for the derivation to get rid of them before spell-out takes place. Recall that V has lost its ability to assign accusative and consequently the internal argument has to raise somewhere to delete its valued case, i.e. it needs to look for a probe to establish a dependency with. As already said, we argue that the unaccusative structure under AspP is not a phase (Chomsky 2004, Gallego 2010), and subsequently, Agree between a probe in FinP/TP and a goal in AspP/VP is allowed (see Legate for an alternative view). We might argue that the internal argument moves to [Spec TP] to delete its case. However, in accordance with Raposo and Uriagereka's (1996) proposal for indefinite *se*, we argue that the internal argument of decausative reciprocals moves beyond [Spec TP] because subjects in that position can never be bare NPs, and bare NPs can be subjects of inherent reciprocals, as we have seen before in *Se casaron parejas*. Instead, we assume that the internal argument further moves to [Spec FinP] to value  $\phi$  features and an interpretable discourse feature which López (2009) proposes for hanging topics, while the person feature is valued in situ<sup>6</sup>.

There are good reasons to think that dislocated subjects with inherent reciprocal verbs are left dislocated hanging topics. Under the assumption that left dislocated hanging topics are insensitive to islands (López 2009:130), we can construct some examples that show that pre-verbal subjects of decausative inherent reciprocals are hanging topics, as seen below:

(56) Los colores, me dijo Ana que se mezclaron

The color-PLURAL, me say-PAST-SINGULAR Ana that SE mix-PAST-PLURAL  
'The colors, Ana told me that they were mixed'

*Los colores* 'the colors' is interpreted as the subject of the subordinate sentence introduced by *que* 'that', thus it must be a hanging topic that is not sensitive to islands constraints. In contrast, the pre-verbal subject of derived reciprocals is sensitive to islands and does not allow such constructions, as seen below:

<sup>5</sup> Alternatively, it might be argued that a defective null pronominal is merged in [Spec AspP] (see López 2007 and Mendikoetxea 2008 for an analysis along these lines) so that we have a defective external argument which functions as a defective Manipulator, supposedly someone else, as it is implicit if we say *Juan y María se casaron* (John and Mary married). That utterance is only true if someone else (a priest or a mayor, for example) married the couple. However, we will not pursue that view since a [-EXT] predicate does not need an external argument in that position but a T-controller, as already argued.

<sup>6</sup> We assume that the null pronominal pro moves to [Spec FinP] when there is no internal argument.

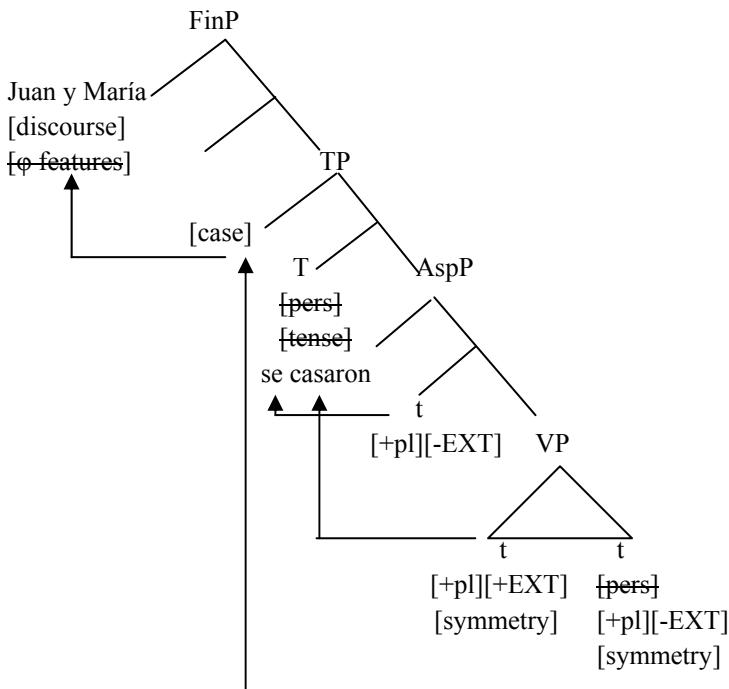
- (57) \*Juan y María, me dijo Ana que se quieren  
 John and Mary me say-PAST-SINGULAR that SE love-PAST-PLURAL  
 ‘John and Mary, Ana told me that they love each other’

López (2009) proposes that pre-verbal subjects move to [Spec Fin] to value a discourse feature that means ‘initiate a discourse’ and the contrast in (56)-(57) shows that only inherent reciprocal subjects are topics indeed. Therefore, only pre-verbal subjects of decausative inherent reciprocals move first to [Spec TP] to value case and afterwards to [Spec Fin] to value the interpretable discourse feature.

Furthermore, the feature [pers] of the clitic and the internal argument is valued through Multiple Agree established between the head of TP as a probe and *se* and the internal argument as two goals with the same unvalued feature. This way, we get the complex dependency attested between the clitic and the internal argument.

Let’s see the tree diagram for the whole structure.

- (58) Juan y María se casaron.



As observed in (58), there is a person feature which draws together several items that have been copied in T: the internal argument and Asp. The movement of the clitic to the head of T because of the person feature might be related to requirements of the A-P component, which we will not go into in this work. The person feature of the internal argument gets valued in its position by the probe in T, as already assumed.

Following Guéron’s proposal (2005), apart from needing a T-controller in [Spec TP], unaccusatives require an extra aspectual function, a CP T-controller which she names Speaker. Our proposal departs from hers in that what she names T-controller, i.e. the external argument in [Spec TP], sits in [Spec FinP]. The displaced internal argument in [Spec FinP] as T-controller is the only aspectual function which an unaccusative predicate needs to satisfy. Intuitively, the T-controller introduces the point of view of the speaker who utters such a sentence, i.e. it introduces a related discourse function that

initiates a new discourse (López 2009). Further research on the left periphery of unaccusative reciprocals will reveal whether there is another aspectual function which the displaced internal argument needs to satisfy. Additionally, the fact that this internal argument is a definite DP together with the Akt [+pl][-EXT] feature ensures telicity, while the symmetry feature ensures that the individuals included in the plural internal argument exchange roles in the multiple actions. How the C-I component gets the intended interpretation is something which also remains to be done in future research.

## 6. Concluding remarks

We have shown that inherent reciprocals such as *casarse*, *mezclarse*, etc. are unaccusative and telic, and more specifically, are accomplishments. We have also shown that this particular behavior is motivated by a lexical decausativization operation which inserts an inner aspect clitic that inherits the person feature of the external argument. Thus, inherent decausative reciprocal predicates do not become symmetrical because of the clitic, as it happens for all other reciprocal constructions such as *Se aman* ‘They love each other’. Rather, they are inherently irreducible symmetric predicates that are inserted with interpretable plural abstract number features ([+pl] [+EXT]) and symmetric features, which, together with the event function of T-controller in [Spec FinP] introduced by the discourse feature, account for the reciprocal meaning without using thematic roles. The [+pl] feature is the inner aspect feature which lexically pluralizes the predicate. The [symmetry] feature ensures that the C-I component interpretation allows that the participants in the event of marrying are equally involved. Furthermore, having a definite internal argument ensures that the event is telic. As already said, how the C-I component reads the phrase structure and the interpretable features to get the intended meaning remains to be done.

This analysis is specific to Spanish reciprocal verbs, and the predictions are that all decausative inherent reciprocal verbs are unaccusative and telic, and subsequently their subjects have different syntactic and semantic properties from other reciprocal constructions. Future research on reciprocal data will show whether these predictions are borne out not only for decausative reciprocals in Spanish but for other inchoative *se* constructions in Spanish and other romance languages that also have inchoative/ergative *se*.

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