DERIVING ABLATIVE, PRIVATIVE, AND REVERSATIVE MEANINGS IN CATALAN AND SPANISH[*]

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ABSTRACT. The most productive way to encode ablative, privative, and reversative meanings in current Catalan and Spanish is by means of *des-* prefixation. This paper investigates how these related values are obtained both from a structural and from a conceptual perspective. To analyze the structural behaviour of these predicates, a new neo-constructionist model is adopted: Nanosyntax, according to which lexical items are syntactic constructs. As for the conceptual content associated to these verbs, it is accounted for by means of a non-canonical approach to the Generative Lexicon Theory developed by Pustejovsky (1995 ff.). The core proposal is that *des-* prefixed verbs with an ablative, a privative, or a reversative value share the same syntactic structure, and that the different interpretations emerge as a consequence of the interactions generated, at a conceptual level, between the *Qualia* Structure of the verbal root and that of the internal argument of the verb.

Keywords. Ablative, privative, and reversative verbs; prefix *des-*; structural meaning; conceptual content; Nanosyntax; *Qualia* Structure.

RESUMEN. La forma más productiva de codificar significados ablativos, privativos y reversativos en catalán y español moderno es mediante prefijación con *des-*. Este artículo investiga cómo se obtienen estos valores desde una perspectiva tanto estructural como conceptual. Para analizar el comportamiento estructural de estos predicados, se adopta un nuevo modelo Neo-Construccionista, la nanosintaxis, que concibe las piezas léxicas como constructos sintácticos. En cuanto al contenido conceptual asociado a estos verbos, se da cuenta de él mediante una interpretación no canónica de la teoría del Lexicón Generativo de Pustejovsky (1995 y siguientes). La propuesta central es que los verbos prefijados con *des-* con estos tres significados comparten la misma estructura sintáctica, pero las distintas interpretaciones surgen como consecuencia de las interacciones que se generan, en un nivel conceptual entre la estructura de *Qualia* de la raíz verbal y del argumento interno del verbo.

Palabras clave. verbos ablativos, privativos y reversativos; el prefijo *des-*; significado estructural; contenido conceptual; nanosintaxis; estructura de *Qualia*.

1. Introduction

Ablative, privative, and reversative verbs hold related meanings (Marchand 1972) in which the Source-oriented idea of separation or egression is always present: ablative verbs encode departure from a place (*deplane*), privative verbs express the removal of

an inalienable possession (*bone*), and reversative verbs involve the reversion of a (resulting) state (*undo*). In Catalan and Spanish, the most productive way to obtain these verb classes is by means of the prefix *des-*:[1]

(1)   a. Ablative: *desterrar* 'to exile' (Cat/Sp), *descarrilar* 'to derail' (Cat/Sp)
        b. Privative: *desossar* 'to bone' (Cat), *descorchar* 'to uncork' (Sp)
        c. Reversative: *descosir* 'to unstitch' (Cat), *desatar* 'to untie' (Sp)

As noticed by many (Marchand 1972; Brea 1994; Grossmann 1994; Rodríguez Rosique 2011; Gibert-Sotelo 2017a), what these three meanings have in common is that all of them involve the exit from a previous state. In fact, and as will be shown throughout this paper, Catalan and Spanish *des-* prefixed verbs with an ablative, a privative, or a reversative semantics share the same structural (grammatically-relevant) behaviour, the only difference among them depending on whether the state that is abandoned is a locative relation (ablative reading; 1a), a possessive relation (privative reading; 1b), or a state that seems to be the result of a previous process (reversative reading; 1c).

To provide a detailed account of how these meanings are obtained in Catalan and Spanish, I will combine the principles of a neo-constructionist approach, Nanosyntax (Svenonius *et al.* 2009; Baunaz *et al.* 2018), with Pustejovsky's (1995, 1998) *Qualia* Structure (QS) formalization. In particular, I will maintain that the three semantic verb classes lexicalize the same syntactic structure, which accounts for their structural regularities. Besides, it will be shown that their particular interpretation as ablative, privative, or reversative predicates depends on the connections established, at a conceptual (not grammatically relevant) level, between the QS of the verbal root and the QS of the DP internal argument they combine with.

The paper starts with a brief introduction to the distinguishing properties of each semantic type (section 2). Then, a series of regularities I observe among the argument and event structure of these verbs are pointed out (section 3). I next summarize the main theoretical assumptions underlying the study, to wit, that structural meaning is syntactically generated and that the (ir)regularities of conceptual semantics can be captured if the QS associated to lexical items is taken into account (section 4). After that, I provide an analysis for ablative, privative, and reversative verbs that accounts for both their structural regularities and their conceptual differences (section 5). Finally, I conclude the paper summarizing the most relevant contributions of the study (section 6).

2. Basic characterization

This sections briefly characterizes ablative (§2.1), privative (§2.2), and reversative (§2.3) predicates from a purely descriptive (theory-neutral) perspective. The description, based on Catalan and Spanish *des-* prefixed verbs, focuses on the semantic differences existing among these three related verb classes.

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[1] In Catalan, privative verbs usually show the prefix *es-* (*escuar* 'to cut the tail off', *esfullar* 'to strip the leaves off'), but the tendency in current Catalan is to use *des-* in the creation of new verbs (see Grossmann 1994). In Old Spanish, the prefix *es-* was also attested in some privative verbs, although the genuine prefix to derive this meaning throughout the history of this language has always been *des-* (Neira 1969; Pharies 2012; Pharies & Pujol 2015).

2.1. Des- *prefixed ablative verbs*

Ablative verbs incorporate a location that is taken as the starting point (the Source) of a motion event, and combine with an internal argument that corresponds to the Figure that moves away from such a location:

(2)   a. *El rei va des-terr-ar el duc.*   (Catalan)
         the king AUX DES-land-INF the duke
         'The king exiled the duke'.
    b. *El tren des-carril-ó.*   (Spanish)
         the train DES-rail-PST.3SG
         'The train derailed'.

These verbs are an instance of Clark & Clark's (1979) *location verbs*. They are usually labelled *ablative verbs* on the idea that the prefix and the incorporated location are equivalent to an ablative-marked PP (cf. Vañó-Cerdá 1990: 14):

(3)   *(des) de la terra*   →   *des-terr-ar*   (Catalan)
        from   the land   from-land-INF
        'from the land'   'to move someone away from his/her land'

In fact, *des-* prefixed verbs with an ablative reading usually feature a PP complement that further specifies the values conveyed by the prefix and the incorporated location. This is illustrated in (4), where the PP *del regne* 'from the kingdom' contains a preposition, *de*, that insists on the idea of Source expressed by the prefix, and a DP, *el regne* 'the kingdom', that is a hyponym of the location *terra* 'land'.

(4)   *El rei va des-terr-ar el duc del regne.*   (Catalan)
        the king AUX DES-land-INF the duke from.the kingdom
        'The king exiled the duke from the kingdom'.

Given that the incorporated location of these verbs can always be independently realized as a noun, Catalan and Spanish ablative verbs are usually considered to be instances of the so-called denominal parasynthetic verbs, that is, verbs created by the simultaneous addition of a prefix and a suffix to a nominal base (Brea 1976, 1994; Vañó-Cerdá 1990; Serrano-Dolader 1995; Martín García 2007; Gibert-Sotelo 2015). Under this view, an ablative verb like Catalan *desterrar* 'to exile', the root of which can independently emerge as the noun *terra* 'land', would be the result of simultaneously adding the prefix *des-* and the verbalizing suffix to the nominal base *terr(a)* 'land'. In the analysis I propose, though, the idea that ablative verbs incorporate a noun will be revised, arguing instead that *des-* is added to acategorial roots (see section 5.2).

2.2. Des- *prefixed privative verbs*

Privative verbs also encode motion from a Source, but in this case the displaced object is incorporated into the verb and the location from which this object is removed corresponds to the internal argument:

(5)   a. *En Joan des-oss-a el pollastre abans de coure'l.*   (Catalan)
         the Joan DES-bone-3SG the chicken before of cook.INF=it
         'Joan bones the chicken before cooking it'.

    b. *María des-corch-ó   la botella de cava.*   (Spanish)
      María DES-cork-PST.3SG the bottle of cava
      'María uncorked the bottle of cava'.

As in the case of ablative verbs, privative verbs can be seen as the result of affixing the prefix *des-* and the verbalizing morpheme to a nominal base, given that the incorporated object can be independently realized as a noun: *os* 'bone' in the Catalan *desossar* 'to bone', and *corcho* 'cork' in the Spanish *descorchar* 'to uncork'.[2] In section 5.2., though, I will argue that the incorporated object does not correspond to a categorized nominal base, corresponding instead to an acategorial root.

What distinguishes privative verbs from ablative ones is that the conceptual roles played by the incorporated root and the internal argument are the opposite, since in privative verbs the root denotes the entity changing its position (the *locatum*) and the internal argument expresses the initial location of this entity. In fact, privative verbs are a subtype of the so-called *locatum verbs* (Clark & Clark 1979) and, unlike ablative (or location) verbs, they involve a relationship of possession between the entity expressed by the root (the *possessum*) and the internal argument of the predicate (the possessor) (see Brea 1994, Labelle 2000, Mateu 2001, Martín García 2007, Rodríguez Rosique 2011, and Gibert-Sotelo 2017b, among others). Hence, what is encoded in (5a) is an event by means of which the chicken is deprived of its bones (the privative reading), which can also be conceptualized as the removal of the bones from the chicken.

2.3. Des- *prefixed reversative verbs*

Reversion is considered to be a kind of opposition that relates two verbs encoding the same sort of event but oriented toward opposite directions (Marchand 1972; Lyons 1977; Cruse 1986; Funk 1988). In Catalan and Spanish, the only productive way to express reversion is by adding the prefix *des-* to a base that seems to correspond to a verb:

(6)   a. *En Manel va cosir   la bufanda.*   (Catalan)
        the Manel AUX sew.INF the scarf
        'Manel sewed the scarf'
     b. *En Manel va   des-cosir   la bufanda.*
        the Manel AUX DES-sew.INF the scarf
        'Manel unstitched the scarf'.
(7)   a. *Marta vistió   a su hijo.*   (Spanish)
        Marta dressed at her son
        'Marta dressed her son'.
     b. *Marta des-vistió   a su hijo.*
        Marta DES-dressed at her son
        'Marta undressed her son'.

The prefixed verbs exemplified in (6b) and (7b) give rise to the opposite result state of their non-prefixed counterparts (6a and 7a). From a localistic point of view, the transition involved in reversative verbs can be linked to the idea of motion from a

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[2] Some *des-*prefixed verbs with a privative value incorporate a property that can be independently realized as an adjective (i.e., they are cases of the so-called deadjectival parasynthetic verbs): *desbastar* 'to remove the rudeness' (cf. *basto* 'rough/rude'), *desbravar(se)* 'to (make) loose the ferocity or strength' (cf. *bravo* 'fierce/brave'). For a unified analysis of *des-* prefixed "deadjectival", "denominal", and "deverbal" change of state verbs, see Gibert-Sotelo 2017b, on which the present analysis is based.

Source: they express an event of change that starts in the outcome of the non-reversative event (*cosida* 'stitched' and *vestido* 'dressed', respectively) and finishes in the initial situation (*no cosida* 'not stitched', *no vestido* 'not dressed').

It has been argued that the fundamental characteristic of reversative verbs is that they invert a previous process, denoting the undoing of what has been previously done (Brea 1976; Vañó-Cerdá 1990; Serrano-Dolader 1995). Accordingly, reversative verbs are usually distinguished from ablative and privative ones by the fact that the former (presumably derived from verbal bases) entail a previous event whereas the latter (presumably derived from nominal bases) do not. Hence, a reversative verb like Spanish *descargar* 'to unload' seems to involve a previous process of *cargar* 'to load'. By contrast, the Spanish ablative verb *desterrar* 'to exile someone from his/her land' or the privative one *descabezar* 'to behead' do not seem to entail a previous process of 'putting someone on the land' or 'supplying something/someone with a head', respectively.

However, reversative verbs must not necessarily involve a previous process, as noticed in several works devoted to the issue (Cruse 1979; Brea 1994; Kastovsky 1996, 2002; Varela & Martín García 1999; Costa 2008; *NGLE* 2009; Rodríguez Rosique 2011, 2013). This is evidenced in the Catalan/Spanish verb *desenterrar* 'to unearth', typically classified as reversative: one might unearth something that has been previously buried, but also something that is naturally placed under the earth (e.g., the root of a plant; see Brea 1994 and Rodríguez-Rosique 2011). Moreover, it is not always the case that ablative or privative verbs disallow a reading in which a previous action is entailed (Kastovsky 1996, 2002): an ablative verb like Spanish *deshornar* 'to remove from the oven' conceptually involves a previous process of putting in the oven (8a); and a privative verb like Catalan *desbrossar* 'to clear of scrub' may involve a previous process of covering with scrub (8b):

(8)　　a. *Puso　　　el pastel en el　horno y　luego lo des-horn-ó.*　　(Spanish)
　　　　　put.PST.3SG the cake　in　the oven and then　it DES-oven-PST.3SG
　　　　　'He/she put the cake in the oven and then removed it from there'.
　　　　b. *Han　des-bross-at　　el　camí de tots　els entrabancs que*
　　　　　have　DES-scrub.PTCP the　path　of all　the obstacles　that
　　　　　hi　　havien posat.　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Catalan)
　　　　　there had　　put
　　　　　'They have cleared the path of all the obstacles that had been put there'.

Presupposing a previous process does not seem to be an indispensable condition for obtaining a reversative meaning: it is usually context which helps sorting out if reversion undoes a previous process or just goes back to a previous state. In the literature, it has been usually maintained that reversative verbs do not focalize on the process associated to the base verb, but on its resulting state (Marchand 1973; Brea 1976; Horn 1988, 2002; Rodríguez Rosique 2011, 2013). Following this line of reasoning, I will argue that reversative verbs do not express the inversion of a previous process, arguing instead that they encode the exit from a previous state. This, together with the regularities examined below, will lead me to conclude that in these predicates the prefix is added to an acategorial root and not to a categorized verb (see section 5.2 for more details).

3. Regularities

The previous section has described the (non-structural) semantic differences existing among Catalan and Spanish *des-* prefixed verbs with an ablative, a privative, or a reversative sense. This section, by contrast, focuses on the structural regularities observed in these three semantic types concerning their argument (§3.1) and event structure (§3.2).

3.1. Argument Structure

Ablative, privative, and reversative verbs share certain regularities with regard to their argument structure configurations. To start with, all of them require the presence of an internal argument the referent of which is the entity affected by the event denoted by the verb. The internal argument usually corresponds to a direct object (9a, 10a, 11a), although these verbs frequently enter the causative alternation. In this case, the internal argument can emerge either as a direct object (the transitive alternant) or as the formal subject (the unaccusative alternant, which in Catalan and Spanish involves the addition of the reflexive clitic *se*), as illustrated in (9b, b'), (10b, b') and (11b, b'). Finally, some of these verbs are unaccusative and feature an internal argument that always corresponds to the formal subject of the construction (9b, 11b):

(9)   Ablative   (Catalan)
      a. *El príncep ha des-tron-at   el rei.*
         the prince has DES-throne-PTCP the king
         'The prince has dethroned the king'.
      b. *En Marcel ha des-vi-at   la pilota.*
         the Marcel has DES-path-PTCP the ball
         'Marcel has deflected the ball'.
      b'. *La pilota s'ha   des-vi-at.*
         the ball   REFL=has DES-path-PTCP
         'The ball has changed its course'.
      c. *El tren ha des-carril-at.*
         the train has DES-rail-PTCP
         'The train has derailed'.

(10)   Privative   (Spanish)
      a. *El cazador des-plum-a   las aves.*
         the hunter   DES-feather-3SG the birds
         'The hunter plucks the birds'.
      b. *Judith des-hoj-a   la margarita.*
         Judith DES-leaf-3SG the daisy
         'Judith pulls the petals off the daisy'.
      b'. *La margarita se   des-hoj-a.*
         the daisy   REFL DES-leaf-3SG
         'The daisy loses its petals'.

(11)   Reversative   (Catalan)
      a. *Els pirates han des-enterrat el tresor.*
         the pirates have DES-buried the treasure
         'The pirates have unearthed the treasure'.
      b. *La Nuri ha des-congelat el pastís.*
         the Nuri has DES-frozen   the cake
         'Nuri has defrosted the cake'.

   b'. *El   pastís s'ha   des-congelat.*
       the cake   REFL=has DES-frozen
       'The cake has defrosted'.
   c. *El   pastís ha des-aparegut.*
       the cake   has DES-appeared
       'The cake has disappeared'.

The need of ablative, privative, and reversative verbs to be involved in structures featuring an internal argument (i.e., transitive or unaccusative structures but not unergative ones) is evidenced when addressing the class of reversative verbs. Reversative verbs are usually considered cases of affixation of *des-* to an already existing verb because their root can be independently realized as a verb (see section 3.3). Crucially, whereas the non-prefixed counterparts of certain reversative verbs are unergative, the addition of *des-* to the same root results in a transitive structure. Hence, the piece that requires the presence of the internal argument is the prefix. Consider the case of Catalan/Spanish *mentir* 'to lie', an unergative verb that turns into the transitive *desmentir* 'to deny, to refute' when prefixed with *des-*:

(12)   a. *L'acusat   va   mentir durant l'interrogatori.*   (Catalan)
           the=accused AUX lie.INF during the=interrogation
           'The accused lied during the interrogation'.
       a'. **L'acusat   va   des-mentir durant l'interrogatori.*
            the=accused AUX DES-lied   during the=interrogation
       b. *L'acusat   va   des-mentir totes les acusacions.*
           the=accused AUX DES-lied   all   the accusations
           'The accused denied all the accusations'.

Besides, certain verbs that allow transitive uses but also intransitive (unergative) ones, like Spanish *andar* 'to walk' or Spanish *correr*/Catalan *córrer* 'to run', when headed by *des-* are necessarily transitive, as exemplified below:

(13)   a. *Valentina anduvo toda la   tarde.*   (Spanish)
           Valentina walked all   the evening
           'Valentina walked all evening'.
       a'. **Valentina des-anduvo toda la   tarde.*
            Valentina DES-walked all   the evening
       b. *Valentina anduvo todo el camino.*
           Valentina walked all   the path
           'Valentina walked the entire path'.
       b'. *Valentina des-anduvo todo el   camino.*
            Valentina DES-walked all   the path
            'Valentina retraced the entire path'.
(14)   a. *La Júlia corre de pressa.*   (Catalan)
           the Júlia runs   fast
           'Júlia runs fast'.
       a'. **La Júlia des-corre de pressa.*
            the Júlia DES-runs   fast
       b. *La Júlia corre les   cortines per evitar que entri   el sol.*
           the Júlia runs   the curtains to   avoid that enter.SBJV.3SG the sun
           'Júlia draws the curtains to avoid the sun'.

b'. *La Júlia des-corre les cortines per deixar que entri   el sol.*
  the Júlia DES-runs the curtains to allow that enter.SBJV.3SG the sun
  'Júlia draws the curtains back to let the sun in'.

Another regularity observed among these three semantic types of verbs is that in all of them a Figure-Ground relationship is established between the internal argument of the verb and the verbal root.[3] In ablative and privative verbs, this Figure-Ground articulation is clear. Ablative verbs, like Spanish *desmoldar* 'to remove from its mould' (cf. 15), express the detachment of the entity referred to by the internal argument (conceived of as a Figure) from the entity referred to by the root (conceived of as a Source Ground). In privative verbs, this Figure-Ground relationship is conceptually inverted: they encode the removal of the entity referred to by the root (conceived of as a Figure) from the entity referred to by the internal argument (conceived of as a Source Ground), as exemplified in (16) with the Catalan verb *desossar* 'to bone' (cf. 16):

(15) *Lola ha des-mold-ado   la tarta.*   (Spanish)
      Lola has DES-mould-PTCP the cake
      'Lola has removed the cake from its mould'.

(16) *La Lola ha des-oss-at   el pollastre.*   (Catalan)
      the Lola has DES-bone-PTCP the chicken
      'Lola has deboned the chicken'.

As previously pointed out, ablative and privative verbs are the Source-oriented counterparts of the so-called *location* and *locatum* verbs (Clark & Clark 1979), respectively, two closely related types of verbs that have attracted the attention of many linguists (cf. Pinker 1989; Jackendoff 1990; Labelle 2000; Hale & Keyser 1998; Mateu 2001, 2002; Harley 2005; Acedo-Matellán & Real-Puigdollers 2015). The main controversy with this type of verbs has to do with the semantic interpretation of their internal argument: in ablative/location verbs, it is conceived of as a Figure or Theme ("the object in motion or being located"; cf. Jackendoff 1990: 46), whereas in privative/locatum verbs it is identified with a Ground or Reference Object — particularly, a Source ("the object from which motion proceeds"; cf. Jackendoff 1990: 46) in privative verbs and a Goal ("the object to which motion proceeds"; cf. Jackendoff 1990: 47) in locatum ones. In both cases, though, the internal argument corresponds to the entity affected by the verbal action (i.e., a Patient or Undergoer). To solve this puzzle, Jackendoff (1990: 125- 130) posits that syntactic arguments may play more than one semantic role: one in the *thematic tier* (concerned with spatial relations) and another in the *action tier* (concerned with affectedness relations). For ablative/location verbs like *desmoldar* 'to remove from the mould' in (15), this means that the internal argument, the DP *la tarta* 'the cake', would be taken as a Patient affected by the verbal action but also as a Theme (or Figure) changing its location. Alternatively, the internal argument of the privative/locatum verb *desossar* 'to bone' in (16), which is the DP *el pollastre* 'the chicken', would correspond both with a Patient undergoing change of state (from having to not having bones) and with the Source Ground from which the bones are removed.

As noticed by Labelle (2000), it does not make sense, in a localist theory as the one pursued by Jackendoff (1990: 25-27), to consider that the Patient argument is different

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[3] *Figure* and *Ground* are terms borrowed from Talmy (2000): Figure refers to the object in motion or being located, and Ground corresponds to the reference location that allows determining the position of the Figure.

from the Theme one in locatum (and privative) verbs, given that in these predicates the internal argument undergoes a change of state and, accordingly, it can be understood as a Theme (or Figure) moving from one state to another one. Moreover, it is not always clear whether certain verbs entail an ablative or a privative meaning, as is the case of, for instance, Catalan/Spanish *despistar* 'to distract', which may be understood either as 'to detach from the *pista* ['trail/clue']' (the ablative reading) or as 'to make lose the *pista* ['trail/clure']' (the privative reading). Accordingly, I assume that the lexical roots of the different semantic subclasses of *des*-parasynthetic verbs must be understood as predicates and, more precisely, as states (see Labelle 2000; Mateu 2001, 2002; Acedo-Matellán 2006; Gibert Sotelo & Pujol Payet 2015; and Gibert-Sotelo 2017b). In particular, I argue that both ablative and privative verbs take an internal argument that corresponds to a Figure (or Theme) that departs from the state associated to the root. In (15), for instance, the internal argument *la tarta* 'the cake' departs from its prior state of being in the mould; and in (16), the internal argument *el pollastre* 'the chicken' undergoes a change of state by means of which it stops having bones.[4]

The examples in (17) and (18) provide evidence in favour of the claim that both ablative (17) and privative (18) verbs contain a root structurally identified with a Source Ground, given that in both cases, when the root is duplicated by a cognate DP, this DP is always the complement of the Source-oriented preposition *de*:

(17) *El rei va des-terr-ar el duc del   regne.*   (Catalan: ablative)
      the king AUX DES-land-INF the duke from.the kingdom
      'The king exiled the duke from the kingdom'.

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[4] In this respect, it is interesting to see the reasoning put forward by Moreno Cabrera (2003: 248) with regard to the following Spanish sentence:

(i)   *Han limpiado la cocina de   hormigas.*
         have cleaned the kitchen from ants
         'They have cleaned the kitchen of ants'.

According to Moreno Cabrera, the interpretation of this sentence as a change of location event in which the ants are a moving entity and the kitchen is the Source location is a conceptual (extra linguistic) one. From a linguistic (or grammatical) point of view, the kitchen is the entity undergoing change (or motion): it moves from the state of containing ants to the state of not containing ants anymore. In fact, the verb *limpiar* 'to clean' enters the locative alternation, as exemplified below:

(ii)   a. *Han limpiado las hormigas de   la cocina.*
            have cleaned   the ants   from the kitchen
            'They have cleaned the ants off the kitchen'.
         b. *Han limpiado la cocina de   hormigas.*
            have cleaned the kitchen from ants
            'They have cleaned the kitchen of ants'.

As noticed in the works devoted to analyze the locative alternation (Rappaport & Levin 1988; Pinker 1989; Mulder 1992; Mateu 2002; among others) in spite of the fact that both variants seem to express the same sort of change of location event (in both cases the ants end up outside the kitchen), linguistically speaking (iia) encodes change of location and (iib) encodes change of state. This is so because the internal argument always corresponds to an affected entity: in the change of location variant (iia), the internal argument (*las hormigas* 'the ants') undergoes a change of location (from being to not being in the kitchen); and in the change of state variant (iib), the internal argument (*la cocina* 'the kitchen') undergoes a change of state (from having to not having ants).

(18)   *El académico ha des-pioj-ado el texto de parásitos.*   (Spanish: privative)
       the scholar has from-louse-PTCP the text from parasites
       'The scholar has deloused the text from parasites'.
       [*CREA*: 2004. PRENSA. *La Razón digital*, 22/04/2004]

As for reversative verbs, the locative semantics of which is less salient, they also encode the exit from a state and impose a Figure-Ground schema between the internal argument and the verbal root. Consider the following sequence of events:

(19)   Catalan (based on Grossmann 1994: 8-9)
       a. *La bufanda **està cosida**.*   (situation A)
          the scarf   is   sewed
       b. *En Jaume **des-cús**   la bufanda.* (change from situation A to situation B)
          the Jaume un-stitches the scarf
       c. *La bufanda **està des-cosida**.*   (situation B)
          the scarf   is   unstitched

The reversative predicate in (19b) expresses a Source-oriented change of state in which the internal argument, *la bufanda* 'the scarf', departs from its prior state of being *cosida* 'sewed' (situation A), which results in *la bufanda* 'the scarf' being *descosida* 'unstitched' (situation B).

In sum, ablative, privative, and reversative verbs encode Source-oriented change of state events in which a given Figure (the internal argument) departs from a given state (a state that is inferred from the meaning of the verb root).

3.2. Event Structure

Des- prefixed verbs with ablative, privative, or reversative meanings always behave as telic change of state events. The telicity of these verbs surfaces when they are submitted to the standard telicity tests. As illustrated in the following examples, the three types of verb admit temporal modifiers introduced by *in* adverbials, which shows that they do not encode unbounded processes but delimited transitions:

(20)   Ablative
       a. *Bego des-horn-ó   la tarta en un minuto.*   (Spanish)
          Bego DES-oven-PST.3SG the cake in a minute
          'Bego removed the cake from the oven in a minute'.
       b. *El porter   va des-vi-ar   la pilota en un segon.*   (Catalan)
          the goalkeeper AUX DES-path-INF the ball   in a   second
          'The goalkeeper deflected the ball in a second'.
(21)   Privative
       a. *Teresa des-corch-ó   la botella en pocos segundos.*   (Spanish)
          Teresa DES-cork-PST.3SG the bottle   in few   seconds
          'Teresa uncorked the bottle in a few seconds'.
       b. *La cuinera va des-oss-ar   el pollastre en cinc minuts.*   (Catalan)
          the cook   AUX DES-bone-INF the chicken   in five minutes
          'The cook boned the chicken in five minutes'.
(22)   Reversative
       a. *Des-viste   la muñeca en dos minutos.*   (Spanish)
          DES-dress.3SG the doll   in two minutes
          'He/she undresses the doll in two minutes'.

    b. *He   des-cosit   el vestit en mitja hora.*   (Catalan)
       have.1SG DES-sew.PTCP the dress in half   hour
       'I have unstitched the dress in half an hour'.

In addition, the very same verbs give rise to the imperfective paradox (Dowty 1979): when used in the progressive, the realization of the event is not entailed. For example, (23a) does not entail (23b), given that if the event of *deshornar* 'to remove from the oven' is interrupted during the course of its realization, one cannot assert that it has taken place. And the same holds for the other examples: (24a) does not entail (24b), and (25a) does not entail (25b) either.

(23)   Ablative   (Spanish)
        a. *Bego estaba des-horn-ando   la   tarta.*
        Bego was   DES-oven-GER   the cake
        'Bego was removing the cake from the oven'
        b. *Bego des-horn-ó   la   tarta.*
        Bego DES-oven-PST.3SG   the cake
        'Bego removed the cake from the oven'.

(24)   Privative   (Catalan)
        a. *La cuinera estava des-oss-ant   el pollastre.*
        the cook   was   DES-bone-GER the chicken
        'The cook was boning the chicken'
        b. *La cuinera va   des-ossar   el pollastre.*
        the cook   AUX DES-bone-INF the chicken
        'The cook boned the chicken'.

(25)   Reversative   (Spanish)
        a. *Está des-vistiendo   la muñeca.*
        is   DES-dress.PROG the doll
        'He/she is undressing the doll'
        b. *Ha des-vestido   la muñeca.*
        has DES-dress.PTCP the doll
        'He/she has undressed the doll'.

Importantly, the non-prefixed counterparts of certain reversative verbs allow for atelic uses. This is the case of Spanish *andar* 'to walk' or Catalan/Spanish *mentir* 'to lie' in (26), the atelicity of which is evidenced by the possibility of combining them with *for*-adverbials but not with *in*-adverbials. The reversative verbs *desandar* 'to retrace' and *des-mentir* 'to deny something, to refute something', though, disallow atelic readings (27), behaving always as telic predicates (28).

(26)   a. *Han   andado por el camino (durante una hora/*en una hora).* (Spanish)
        have.3PL walked along the path   for   one hour in one hour
        'They have walked through the path (for one hour/*in one hour).
        b. *Ha mentit (durant cinc minuts/*en cinc minuts).*   (Catalan)
        has lied   for   five minutes in five minutes
        'He/she has lied (for five minutes/*in five minutes)'.

(27)   a. **Han   des-andado por   el camino durante una hora.*   (Spanish)
        have.3PL DES-walked along the path   for   one hour
        b. **Ha   des-mentit durant cinc minuts.*   (Catalan)
        have.3PL DES-lied   for   five minutes

(28) a. *Han   des-andado el camino en una hora*.   (Spanish)
         have.3PL DES-walked the path   in one hour
         'They have retraced the path in one hour'.
      b. *Ha des-mentit les acusacions en cinc minuts*.   (Catalan)
         has DES-lied   the accusations in five minutes
         'Has refuted the accusations in five minutes'.

It seems, thus, that in Catalan and Spanish *des-* prefixed verbs with an ablative, a privative, or a reversative meaning, the prefix imposes a telic reading to the resulting predicate.

4. Theoretical assumptions

Following a neo-constructionist approach to the syntax-lexicon interface, I assume that structural semantics emerges from the syntactic configuration. Conceptual (not grammatically relevant) content, in turn, corresponds to the encyclopedic information related to stored lexical items. In the following, I briefly introduce the main theoretical assumptions underlying this study in the account of the structural (§4.1) and conceptual semantics (§4.2) of ablative, privative, and reversative verbs.
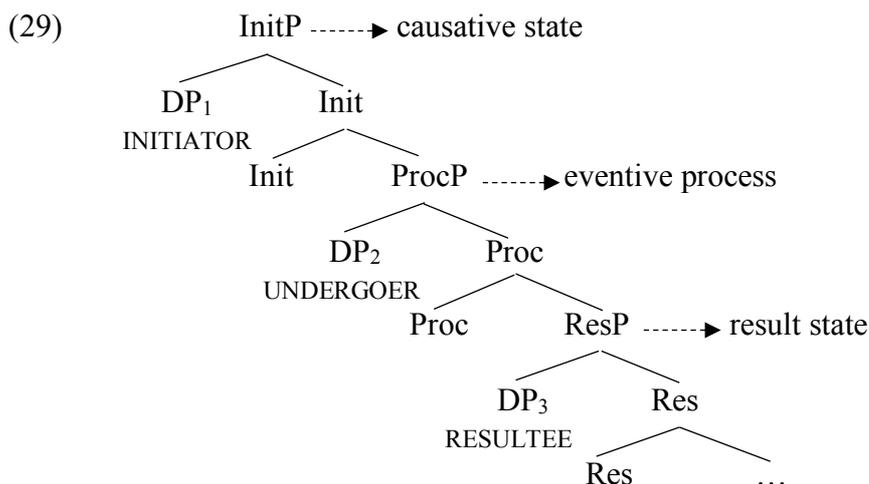
4.1. Structural semantics

With regard to structural meaning, I basically adopt the Nanosyntax model (see Starke 2009, 2014; Caha 2009; Fábregas 2007, 2016; Pantcheva 2011; among others). Like other neo-constructionist theories, Nanosyntax posits that syntactic structures are not lexically predetermined, assuming instead that syntax is prior to lexical insertion. From this perspective, syntax is the only generative engine within grammar, the function of the lexicon being that of providing lexical material to spell out the structures created in syntax.

Unlike other neo-constructionist approaches (e.g., Distributed Morphology), Nanosyntax does not acknowledge the existence of an intermediate morphological level between syntax and lexical insertion: lexical exponents are directly inserted into the syntactic configuration in order to replace it. Therefore, syntax is not envisaged as a system that combines morphemes (or lexical exponents), but as a system that builds morphemes (Starke 2009: 6). Upon this view, lexical exponents must not necessarily be merged into terminal nodes, but also (and mainly) into phrasal nodes so as to spell out chunks of syntactic trees containing multiple syntactic features (Phrasal Spell-Out).

This approach to grammar derives the regular behaviour of lexical items from the syntactic structure they lexicalize. In the case of verbal predicates, Ramchand (2008) has proposed that the distinct aspectual classes traditionally distinguished in the literature can be accounted for depending on their being specified, or not, for certain syntactic features. In particular, this author states that verbal predicates can be maximally decomposed into a hierarchy of three subeventive projections: a stative Initiation Phrase (InitP) that introduces causation, a dynamic Process Phrase (ProcP) that carries eventivity, and a stative Result Phrase (ResP) that is only present when the predicate lexically specifies a result state.[5] Each subevent, in turn, licenses an argument at its specifier: the external argument or Initiator (InitP), the Undergoer of the process (ProcP), and the holder of the result state (ResP):

---

[5] InitP and ResP are both states, and their causative or resultative interpretation depends on their structural position. When a state takes a ProcP by complement, it is interpreted as the cause of the process (an InitP). When a state is the complement of a ProcP, it is conceived of as the result of the process (a ResP). See Ramchand (2008: 44).

(29)

```
                    InitP ------▶ causative state
                   /    \
            DP₁          Init
         INITIATOR      /    \
                    Init      ProcP ------▶ eventive process
                             /    \
                        DP₂         Proc
                     UNDERGOER     /    \
                               Proc      ResP ------▶ result state
                                        /    \
                                   DP₃         Res
                                 RESULTEE     /    \
                                          Res       …
```

Within Ramchand's system, in addition to the basic subeventive components just examined, verbal predicates can involve RHEMES. RHEMES are DPs, APs, or PPs (and also roots in Berro's 2015 proposal) at the complement of a subeventive projection that contribute to the description of the subevent or that measure it up. When a subevent takes another subevent as complement, the former is understood to causally implicate the latter (Hale & Keyser 1993; Ramchand 2008; Berro 2015). By contrast, when a subevent combines with a RHEME, a relation of homomorphism emerges and the RHEME maps its topological properties to the subevent (Ramchand 2008). For example, the combination of a Proc subevent with a RHEME providing an unbounded path structure gives rise to atelic predicates, whereas the combination of a Proc head with a bounded rhematic complement results in a telic predicate. This way, the stative, dynamic, telic, or atelic behaviour of a predicate can be predicted from the subeventive projections and the rhematic material that it lexicalizes.

As will be analyzed in section 5.2, the telicity of ablative, privative, and reversative verbs in Catalan and Spanish lies in the presence of a bounded path structure spelled out by the prefix *des-*.

4.2. Conceptual content

In order to account for the conceptual meaning associated to lexical items, I adopt a non-canonical approach to the Generative Lexicon Theory (Pustejovsky 1995 ff.). According to this framework lexical items are semantically underspecified, which allows them to acquire more precise meanings when combined in syntax. In particular, Pustejovsky proposes that the semantic information included in a lexical item's entry is distributed in four levels of representation: (1) the *Argument Structure* level, which specifies the number and type of logical arguments; (2) the *Event Structure* level, which identifies the event type of a predicate and its internal composition; (3) the *Qualia Structure* level, which organizes the conceptual information related to a lexical item; and (4) the *Lexical Inheritance Structure*, which defines how lexical structures relate to each other in the mental lexicon.

From a neo-constructionist approach as the one adopted in this paper, argument and event structure are syntactically driven, which means that they cannot be predetermined by the semantic information stored (and crucially not generated) in lexical entries. However, the idea that lexical items acquire their final meaning when syntactically combined is perfectly compatible with the neo-constructionist tenet. Hence, following the line of reasoning started in Gibert-Sotelo (2017b), I assume that lexical items contain a basic Qualia Structure (QS) in their lexical entry that accounts for the different

meanings that they can adopt in context. As for the configuration of this QS, it basically corresponds to that proposed by Pustejovsky (1995: 85-86), organized in four *qualia* or modes of predication:

(i)   CONSTITUTIVE: the relation between *x* and its constitutive parts;
(ii)   FORMAL: the distinguishing properties of *x* within a larger domain;
(iii)   TELIC: the function or purpose of *x*;
(iv)   AGENTIVE: the factors involved in the origin or creation of *x*.

In the next section it will be shown that the ablative, privative, or reversative interpretation of Catalan and Spanish change of state verbs prefixed with *des-* is a matter of conceptual semantics. In particular, I will posit that it depends on the QS of the verbal root and the connections it establishes with the QS of the DP internal argument.

5. Analysis

In order to account for the regularities of *des-* prefixed verbs encoding an ablative, a privative, or a reversative value I propose a unified analysis of these three semantic classes. The basic assumption of the proposal is that the prefix *des-* imposes its structural requirements to the resulting prefixed predicate. Accordingly, I first look into the internal syntax of the prefix (§5.1) and, after that, I show that the three semantic types of *des-* prefixed verbs examined in the paper lexicalize the same syntactic configuration (§5.2). Finally, I derive the semantic differences of each class from the conceptual information encapsulated in the root of these verbs, which I assume to be organized in a basic and underspecified QS that interacts with the QS of the DP internal argument (§5.3).

5.1. Nanosyntax of the prefix des-

It has been shown that Catalan and Spanish ablative, privative, and reversative verbs involve the presence of the prefix *des-*, which seems to be the responsible for these meanings. A possible way to account for the different values that *des-* prefixed verbs can encode is by establishing the existence of more than one prefix *des-*. This is the solution adopted by Varela & Martín García (1999: 5000-5001), who propose the existence of two different prefixes *des-*: a prepositional *des-* that encodes spatial separation and combines with nouns so as to produce ablative or privative verbs, and an adverbial *des-* with negative opposition meaning that combines with verbal bases.
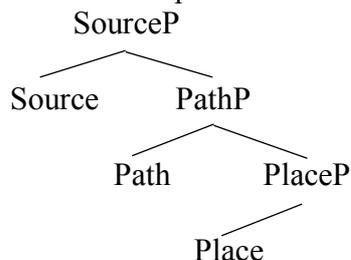
Seemingly, Di Sciullo (1997: 53-54) analyses *dé-* prefixation in French and concludes that this prefix can behave in two different ways: as an internal prefix with prepositional properties or as an external prefix with adverbial properties. According to Di Sciullo, *dé-* is an internal prefix when it has a spatial meaning, as in the case of denominal (i.e., ablative and privative) verbs. In these cases, the prefix is part of the verb domain and may affect the argument structure of the verb as well as its event structure. By contrast, when *dé-* holds an inverse value and not a spatial one, as in reversative verbs, it is analyzed as an external prefix. In this last case, according to Di Sciullo (1997: 59-61), the prefix is adjoined outside the maximal projection of the verb, and accordingly it does not affect the argument or event structure of the predicate.

In section 3, though, it has been shown that the prefix *des-* affects the argument and the event structure of reversative verbs, which suggests that it behaves as an internal

prefix also in these cases.[6] Besides, I have argued that the three semantic types examined in this paper share the same structural meaning, which is that of departure from a state, and that the ablative, privative, and reversative readings are an inference thereof.

Taking into account all these facts, I propose that only one type of *des-* is available in Catalan and Spanish, the internal syntax of which corresponds to that of a Source path, hence the meaning of departure from a Source present in all the predicates headed by this prefix (Gibert-Sotelo 2017b):

(30)   Syntactic decomposition of the prefix *des-*

```
              SourceP
             /      \
        Source      PathP
                   /     \
                Path      PlaceP
                            \
                           Place
```

With regard to the syntactic structure of Source paths, I basically adopt the analysis proposed by Pantcheva (2011), for whom Source paths are obtained by merging a reversal operator (the Source head) on top of the Path head (called *Goal* in Pantcheva's system) so as to reverse its directionality, Goal-oriented by default.[7] Hence, a Source path consists on a PlaceP that defines a region of space and attributes to the element at its complement the interpretation of Ground; a PathP that encodes transition and forces the Ground at the complement of Place to be understood as the end-point of the transition; and a SourceP that takes the PathP as its complement and reverses its Goal-oriented directionality, which results in the Ground element being understood as the starting point of the (now Source-oriented) transition.

Importantly, *des-* does not lexicalize any element at the Ground position (i.e., at the complement of Place), which accounts for the need of this prefix to co-appear with an element satisfying this position: a bare root.[8]

5.2. Decomposing ablative, privative, and reversative des-*prefixed verbs*

In Catalan and Spanish, the verb classes examined involve the presence of the prefix *des-*. In the preceding sections it has been shown that this prefix imposes its own structural requirements to the resulting verb, giving rise to telic Source-oriented change of state events that establish a Figure-Ground articulation between the DP internal argument (identified with a Figure moving from one state to another one) and the verbal root (interpreted as the initial state of the transition). Accordingly, I have abandoned the old idea that this prefix is added to nouns (ablative and privative verbs) or verbs (reversative verbs), arguing instead that *des-* is added to acategorial roots. In fact, if *des-* predetermines the argument and event structure of these verbs, it must occupy a

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[6] See Gibert-Sotelo (2017b) for an analysis of Spanish *des-* as an internal prefix that takes into account the use of this prefix in telic change of state predicates but also in stative ones (that is, in stative verbs, adjectives, and nouns).

[7] See Pantcheva (2010, 2011) for evidence on the existence of a Source head independent of the Path (or Goal) head.

[8] On the impossibility of the prefix *des-* to take full DPs as complements, see Gibert-Sotelo (2017a), (2017b), and (in press).

low position within the syntactic configuration, below the subeventive projections and close to the root of the predicate.

The assumption that *des-* is added to an acategorial root solves the old puzzle of deciding if those verbs that admit a double morphological segmentation as denominal or as deverbal are to be analyzed as ablative/privative or as reversative. Consider, for instance, the Spanish/Catalan verb *desarmar* 'to disarm'. It could be classified as a denominal verb created upon the noun *arma* 'arm', which would involve the privative meaning 'to remove the arms from'. Alternatively, it could be analyzed as a deverbal verb incorporating the verb *armar* 'to provide someone with arms', in which case it would encode the undoing of the previous process of providing with arms (the reversative meaning). However, establishing if the verb *desarmar* entails or not a previous action is a pragmatic issue that cannot be inferred from the syntactic structure of the predicate (see Kastovsky 2002: 106 for the same view concerning the English privative/reversative verb *disarm*). Assuming, as I do, that this verb does not incorporate a noun or a verb but an acategorial root avoids this discussion to emerge.

In accordance with all these observations, I propose that *des*-prefixed ablative (31a), privative (31b), and reversative (31c) verbs involve the same syntactic configuration, which is the one depicted in (32):

(31) a. *El príncep va des-tron-ar el rei.*   (Catalan: ablative)
        the prince   AUX DES-throne-INF the king
        'The prince dethroned the king'.

      b. *La cocinera des-plum-a la perdiz.*   (Spanish: privative)
        the cook   DES-feather-3SG the partridge
        'The cook plucks the partridge'.

      c. *En Manel va des-cosir la bufanda.*   (Catalan: reversative)
        the Manel AUX DES-sew.INF the scarf
        'Manel unstitched the scarf'.

(32) Syntax of ablative (31a), privative (31b), and reversative (31c) verbs

```
        InitP  ⇒ verbalizer
         /\
  El príncep    Init
  La cocinera    /\
  En Manel   Init   ProcP
                    /\
               el rei    Proc
               la perdiz   /\
               la bufanda Proc   SourceP ⇒ des-
                                 /\
                            el rei    Source
                            la perdiz   /\
                            la bufanda Source  PathP
                                             /\
                                        el rei    Path
                                        la perdiz   /\
                                        la bufanda Path   PlaceP
                                                        /\
                                                   el rei    Place
                                                   la perdiz   /\
                                                   la bufanda Place  √TRON ⇒ tron-
                                                          Figure      √PLUM⇒plum-
                                                                      √COS ⇒ cos-
                                                                      Ground
```

According to the analysis in (32), ablative, privative, and reversative verbs encode the initiation (Init) of a process (Proc) that extends along a delimited Source path (Source, Path, Place) the starting point of which is the state denoted by the root ($\sqrt{}$).

The lowest position of the configuration is occupied by the acategorial root ($\sqrt{}$), a non-projecting element that cannot take any complement and, therefore, must always be placed at the complement position generated at first merge (Borer 2005; Real Puigdollers 2013; Acedo-Matellán & Mateu 2014; Acedo-Matellán 2016; Fábregas 2016). Given that the root is at the complement of the Place head, it is structurally defined as a Ground. The Place head merges then with a Path projection that encodes transition and which, being Goal-oriented by default, imposes to the root the interpretation of a Goal Ground (i.e., the final point of that transition). The addition of the Source head on top of Path, though, reverses the Goal-orientation of the transition, which results in the root being interpreted as a Source Ground (i.e., the initial point of the transition). The sequence of heads [Source [Path [Place]]] is structurally placed at the complement of the Proc subevent, and accordingly it corresponds to a RHEME that unifies its topological properties with those of the subevent (see Ramchand 2008: 47 and section 4.1 in the present study). Given that Source paths are (lower) bounded entities, when combined with a Proc subevent they trigger a bounded interpretation of the process, giving rise to telic Source-oriented change of state events. Finally, the Init subevent is merged with the Proc subevent so as to provide the causative interpretation of these predicates and license the external argument.

The present analysis rightly predicts that *des-* predetermines the inner aspect and the argument structure of the predicate. As shown in (32), the prefix is the spell-out of a Source path that, placed at the complement of Proc, is responsible for the telic interpretation of these constructions.[9] Besides, the internal argument is first introduced at the specifier of the Place head lexicalized by the prefix, and from that position it moves to the specifier of Path and then to the specifier of Source, being configurationally identified with a Figure covering the Source path that these projections structurally draw. Then, it further moves to the specifier of Proc, where it is interpreted as the Undergoer of the Source-oriented change of state. In consequence, the internal argument that these verbs always feature is understood to undergo a Source-oriented change of state by means of which it departs from the state encoded by the root, ending up in the opposite state —outside the throne (31a), without feathers (31b), and unstitched (31c).[10]

5.3. Deriving ablative, privative, and reversative values

If, as proposed in this study, ablative, privative, and reversative verbs involve the same syntactic structure, then the question that arises is how the different interpretation of each semantic class is obtained. Following insights in Batiukova (2008, 2016), Pujol Payet (2014), Gibert Sotelo & Pujol Payet (2015), and Gibert-Sotelo (2017b), the view that I adopt here is that the particular interpretation of each verb class results from the interplay between the QS of the root and the QS of the DP internal argument with which it combines, an interplay that I assume to take place at a conceptual level, once spell-out has occurred and the syntactic structure has been replaced by lexical material.

5.3.1. Ablative meaning

Ablative verbs are understood to express the departure of the referent of DP internal argument from the location denoted by the root of the verb:

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[9] Within Ramchand's (2008) system, telicity can be obtained by two means. On the one hand, it can arise from the structural presence of a Res subevent at the complement of Proc that ensures the fulfillment of a result state. On the other hand, it can be defined by a quantized Path structure at the complement of Proc, since Proc-RHEME homomorphism forces the change expressed by Proc to be interpreted as a delimited one. The verbs examined in this paper are always telic, although they do not syntactically lexicalize a result state. Therefore, they must involve a bounded Path structure at the complement of Proc. As far as the non-prefixed counterparts of certain *des-* prefixed verbs allow for atelic readings, it follows that the piece that introduces this bounded Path is the prefix. I thank Antonio Fábregas for pointing me out that this logical sequence follows from the analysis here proposed.

[10] As noticed by an anonymous reviewer, the proposed analysis can seem counterintuitive, given that the internal argument (or Undergoer) of ablative (cf. *el rey* 'the king' in 31a) and privative (cf. *la perdiz* 'the partridge' in 31b) verbs occupy the same structural position in spite of the fact that the former is always interpreted as a moving Figure that leaves its place whereas the latter corresponds to the "Ground" from which an inalienable possession is removed. However, and as argued in section 3.1, the internal argument is understood to undergo change both in ablative and privative verbs: in (31a) *el rey* 'the king' leaves the throne, and in (31b) *la perdiz* 'the partridge' is deprived of its feathers. As far as from a localistic point of view a changing element is equivalent to a moving Figure going from one state to another state, it follows that in both cases the internal argument corresponds to a changing Figure and the verbal root identifies the Ground with regard to which the change of the Figure is determined. In fact, we infer that in (31a) *el rey* 'the king' undergoes a change of location because we conceptualize the root *tron-* 'throne' as a location; and we know that in (31b) *la perdiz* 'the partridge' suffers the loss of one of its inalienable possessions because the root *plum-* 'feather' corresponds to an inalienable possession of partridges. The semantic differences between these two classes of verbs, thus, are not relevant at a structural level, since they arise from the encyclopedic content associated to the root and the DP internal argument. See the following section for a more detailed account of how the ablative (change on a locative relation) and privative (change on a possessive relation) interpretations are obtained in terms of Pustejovsky's (1995) *Qualia* Structure (QS).

(33) *El príncep va des-tron-ar el rei.* (Catalan)
      the prince AUX DES-throne-INF the king
      'The prince dethroned the king'

If we take the example in (33), we observe that a relation of location is established between the root *tron-* 'throne' and the DP internal argument *el rei* 'the king'. As represented in (34a), the root *tron-* is associated to a QS that specifies that it is conceptualized as a location x (FORMAL quale) that typically contains a person of the type of y (CONSTITUTIVE quale). The DP internal argument *el rei* 'the king', in turn, is conceptually understood as a person y (FORMAL quale) typically occupying the location x (CONSTITUTIVE quale) (34b). When the QS of the root is combined with the QS of the internal argument, a relation of location emerges by means of selective binding (Pustejovsky 1995; see also Batiukova 2008, 2016), a conceptual mechanism that allows the root *tron-* 'throne' to select the information contained in the CONSTITUTIVE quale of the internal argument *el rei* 'the king'.[11]

(34) Ablative verbs (root = location); e.g., *destronar* 'to dethrone'

   a) QS of the root *tron-* 'throne' (x)

$$QS = \begin{bmatrix} \text{FORMAL: [Location] } x \\ \text{CONSTITUTIVE: [contain] } y \end{bmatrix}$$

                                     ➔ Relation of **location**

   b) QS of the internal argument *el rei* 'the king' (y)

$$QS = \begin{bmatrix} \text{FORMAL: [Person] } y \\ \text{CONSTITUTIVE: } \mathbf{[be\_in]}\ \boldsymbol{x} \end{bmatrix}$$

The conceptual relation of location existing between the referent of the root and that of the DP internal argument triggers the ablative interpretation. In the particular case of *destronar* 'to dethrone', the root *tron-* is interpreted according to the value it selects from the QS of the internal argument, which is "be in x" (CONSTITUTIVE quale), where x corresponds to 'throne' (34b). The precise meaning of the verb *destronar*, therefore, is the initiation of a process by means of which the referent of the internal argument (*el rei* 'the king') goes out of the state denoted by the root *tron-* (structural meaning; cf. 32), which is the state of "being in the throne" (conceptual interpretation; cf. 34).

5.3.2. Privative meaning
    Verbs displaying a privative meaning denote an event by means of which the referent of the DP internal argument is deprived of the referent of the root.

(35) *La cocinera des-plum-a la perdiz.* (Spanish)
      the cook DES-feather-3SG the partridge
      'The cook plucks the partridge'.

In (35), the privative verb *desplumar* 'to pluck' incorporates a root *plum-* 'feather' with a QS as the one in (36a). This QS specifies that this root refers to a physical object x (FORMAL quale) that is part of another entity y (CONSTITUTIVE quale). The internal

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[11] Selective binding (also known as *exploitation* in the most recent developments of the theory; cf. Pustejovsky 2006) occurs when a predicate selects (or exploits) one of the values contained in the QS of the argument it combines with.

argument of the predicate, *la perdiz* 'the partridge', refers to an entity *y* (FORMAL quale) that contains the entity *x* (CONSTITUTIVE quale) (36b). By selective binding, the root selects the information contained in the CONSTITUTIVE quale of the internal argument (that is, "contain *x*", where *x* refers to 'feather'), and is therefore interpreted as the possessive state of containing feathers.

(36)   Privative verbs (root = *locatum*); e.g., *desplumar* 'to pluck'

   a) QS of the root *plum-* 'feather' (*x*)

       QS = $\begin{bmatrix} \text{FORMAL: [Physical object] } x \\ \text{CONSTITUTIVE: [part of] } y \end{bmatrix}$

                                                    ➜ Relation of **possession**

   b) QS of the internal argument *la perdiz* 'the partridge' (*y*)

       QS = $\begin{bmatrix} \text{FORMAL: [animal] } y \\ \text{CONSTITUTIVE: } \textbf{[contain] } \textit{x} \end{bmatrix}$

In privative verbs, thus, the internal argument and the verbal root establish a relation of possession, which conceptually inverts the roles played by the internal argument (interpreted as the location from which the possessed item is removed) and the verbal root (interpreted as the removed item). From a structural perspective, though, it has been shown that a privative verb like *desplumar* 'to pluk' expresses the initiation of a process by means of which the internal argument departs from the state denoted by the root *plum-* (cf. 32). The precise interpretation of the root as the state of "containing feathers" is defined at a conceptual level, when this information, available in the CONSTITUTIVE quale of the internal argument *la perdiz* 'the partridge', is selectively bound by the root (cf. 36).

5.3.3. Reversative meaning

Reversative verbs encode the undoing of a given state, and they are usually understood to involve a previous process. In (37), for instance, the reversative event *descosir la bufanda* 'to unstitch the scarf' conceptually entails a previous process of sewing the scarf:

(37)   *En Manel va des-cosir   la bufanda.*   (Catalan)
        the Manel AUX DES-sew.INF the scarf
        'Manel unstitched the scarf'

Along this paper it has been argued that reversative verbs do not grammatically involve a previous process, and that they share the same syntactic configuration as ablative and privative verbs, which corresponds to the initiation of a process by means of which the internal argument leaves the state encoded in the verbal root (cf. 32). In (37), for example, *la bufanda* 'the scarf' is understood to depart from its prior state of being *cosida* 'sewed/stitched'. However, one cannot deny that a prototypical reversative verb such as Catalan *descosir* 'to unstitch' is always conceptually linked to a previous *cosir* 'sew/stitch' process, given that one can only *descosir* 'unstitch' what has been previously *cosit* 'sewed/sticthed'.

My proposal is that what distinguishes prototypical reversative verbs from ablative or reversative ones is, on the one hand, that they incorporate a root of type [event] that conceptually involves a process, and, on the other hand, that they combine with DP

internal arguments the referents of which are objects typically created by means of the event denoted by the verbal root. In (37), for instance, the internal argument *la bufanda* 'the scarf' denotes a piece of clothing created as the result of a sewing event, information contained in the AGENTIVE quale of its QS:

(38)   QS of the internal argument *la bufanda* 'the scarf' (*x*)

QS = ⎡ FORMAL: [piece of clothing] ⎤
⎢ CONSTITUTIVE: [wool] ⎥
⎢ TELIC : [keep warm] ⎥
⎣ AGENTIVE: **[sew]** ⎦

When the root *cos-* 'sew' and the DP *la bufanda* 'the scarf' are combined in syntax, their QSs interact, in a way so that the information contained in the AGENTIVE quale of the DP *la bufanda* is focalized.

Other (non-prototypical) reversative verbs do not take a root of type [event]. This is the case of the Spanish verbs *desembarcar* 'to disembark' and *desensillar* 'to unsaddle', in which *des-* is added to an already prefixed root of type [location] or [object], respectively: *em-barc* 'in-ship' and *en-sill* 'in-saddle'. In these cases, an ablative (*desembarcar* 'to remove or to go out from the ship') or privative meaning (*desensillar* 'to deprive of saddle') emerges, although the idea of reversion is also entailed: *desembarcar* 'to disembark' and *desensillar* 'to unsaddle' encode the opposite event of the Goal-oriented *embarcar* 'to embark' and *ensillar* 'to saddle', respectively. All in all, the distinction between ablative, privative, and reversative meanings is a subtle one, and these concepts usually overlap, which is expected taking into account that all these values emerge from the same syntactic structure.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have dealt with Catalan and Spanish ablative, privative, and reversative verbs so as to analyze their structural meaning and account for their different conceptual interpretation. By doing so, I have tried to show the advantages of combining a neo-constructionist approach like Nanosyntax with Pustejovsky's (1995) formalization of conceptual semantics in terms of *Qualia* Structure (QS).

Concerning their structural meaning, I have shown that these verbs, which in Catalan and Spanish regularly involve the presence of the Source-oriented prefix *des-*, share the same argument and event structure: they must necessarily take a DP internal argument, they establish a Figure-Ground articulation between the internal argument (a changing Figure) and the verbal root (a Source Ground, specifically, the initial state of the transition event), and they always encode telic change of state events. These structural regularities have led me to conclude that the three semantic types examined can be reduced to a unique syntactic configuration, a configuration defined by the presence of a Source path lexicalized by the prefix *des-* that, merged at the complement of the Proc subevent and immediately dominating the verbal root, maps its (lower) bounded nature to the Proc subevent, forcing it to be interpreted as a telic Source-oriented change of state.

As for the different interpretations of each semantic class, they have been attributed to the conceptual information contributed by the verbal root, organized in a basic and underspecified QS, and its interaction with the QS associated to the DP internal argument. In particular, it has been shown that the verbal roots of these verbs select the contents of the QS of the internal argument that agree with the values contained in their own QS. The links established between both QSs ultimately determine if the Source-

oriented change of state expressed by these verbs is to be understood as departure from a location (ablative meaning), as deprivation of a given possession (privative meaning), or as state reversion (reversative meaning). Hence, an important achievement of this study is that it proposes a unified (nano)syntax of ablative, privative, and reversative verbs by taking into account the QSs associated to roots and to the DP arguments they combine with, thus showing the convenience of exploring the conceptual content associated to lexical items in order to simplify the syntactic analysis.

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