

Passives without actives: evidence from verbless complement clauses in Spanish¹

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To Fernando Serrano Valverde, who instilled in me the desire to become a linguist

Abstract

This paper proposes a constructionist analysis à la Goldberg (1995, 2003, 2006) of passive verbless configurations in Spanish lacking a felicitous active counterpart, as in (1) below:

(1)	Mr John Spencer	no	era	lo	que
	Mr John Spencer	NEG	be.IMPPRET.3SG	DEF.N.SG	REL
	se	dic-e	un	hombre	intachable
	PASS	say-PRS.3SG	INDF	man	irreproachable

‘Mr John Spencer was not what you may call an irreproachable man’

(CREA Corpus, 1980, Anónimo, Los tripulantes de ovis)

Under the paradigmatic – rather than syntagmatic – view of passives invoked in this paper, configurations of the type in (1) above, attested with a number of *verba cogitandi et dicendi*, are handled as instances of the Impersonal Subjective-Transitive construction, whose general skeletal meaning is **X (NP₁) attributed Y (XPCOMP) by Z (NP₂) in a direct, categorical way**. Moreover, the analysis proposed here also provides a satisfactory account of the distribution of grammatical subjects and the XPCOMPs, while also capturing the commonalities with “regular” passives (i.e.

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those with a felicitous active counterpart). In addition, Spanish passive verbless complement configurations with *se dice* ('is said') are shown to illustrate a three-point continuum consisting of (i) non-grammaticalized configurations with an active counterpart, (ii) non-grammaticalized configurations without an active counterpart, and (iii) grammaticalized configurations without an active counterpart. From a synchronic point of view, the structural and semantico-pragmatic properties exhibited by the lower-level *lo que se dice* XP_{FOCUS} construction, involving a focusing/emphasizer subjunct function (e.g. *verdaderamente* 'really') as well as a reformulatory connective use (e.g. *o sea* 'that is', *en otras palabras* 'in other words') appear to point to an early process of grammaticalization, exhibiting decategorialization as well as generalization of meaning in conjunction with a prominent increase in pragmatic function and subjectification (cf. Traugott 1988, 1995a, 1995b, 2003).

1. Introduction

Active-passive correspondences of the type exemplified in (1a) – (1b) below, irrespective of their status as transformations (Chomsky 1957), canonical/non-canonical structures (Huddleston & Pullum 2002) or transitivity alternations (Levin 1993), have long been assumed to be quite systematic, thus being granted a distinguished place in linguistic theory and grammatical description alike.

- (1a) The cook sliced the mushrooms
 (1b) The mushrooms were sliced by the cook
 Examples taken from Levin (1993: 86)

However, the systematicity of the correspondences in question is beset with serious difficulties, especially in view of a number of intriguing asymmetries involving non-finite

complements of the type in (2a) – (2b) below, as noted by Quirk (1965), Bolinger (1977), Wierzbicka (1988), and Noël (2001), *inter alia*:²

(2a) Mary is rumoured/said to be a Mormon

(2b) *They rumour/say Mary to be a Mormon

Examples and acceptability judgements taken from Wierzbicka (1988: 47)

The point of departure of this paper basically consists in exploring whether asymmetries of the type in (2) above can be duplicated for other complementation strategies, such as e.g. verbless complement clauses. Specifically, the choice of complement clauses of this kind as the object of inquiry in the present paper can be justified at least on a two-fold basis:

First, while asymmetries involving a voice contrast of the type in (2) above have been extensively discussed within the context of English non-finite complements (cf. Postal 1974: 35; Bolinger 1974: 86-87, 1977: 129; Wierzbicka 1988: 46, 52; Duffley 1992: 38, to cite but a few), these should not by any means be regarded as being specific to complement clauses of this type. On the contrary, the fact that asymmetries of a similar kind can be observed with verbless complement clauses (as well as finite complement clauses) in English, as exemplified in (3) below, can be taken to support the working hypothesis that the asymmetries in question are far from being a local phenomenon.

(3a) Also, since all variables **are assumed** universally quantified, there is never any need for an explicit quantifier

(BNC Corpus, FNR 367)³

(3b) #Scientists at Newshire Hospital assume all variables universally quantified⁴

² It must be emphasized, however, that in addition to sentential complements, asymmetries between actives and passives are observable in a relatively wide range of further syntactico-semantic environments. See Quirk et al. (1985: 159-171), *inter alia*, for a detailed discussion of the limitations of the active-passive correspondence.

³ For further reference on the source of the example taken from the original edition of the British National Corpus (BNC henceforth), the reader is referred to Burnard (1995).

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In addition, within the Construction Grammar (CxG henceforth) framework and the Goldbergian strand in particular, where the semantico-pragmatic motivation of grammar is taken to be of paramount importance (Goldberg 1995: 223-224, 2003: 219, 2006: 38),⁵ verbless complement clauses are particularly interesting, because they exhibit a delicate interplay of tight semantico-pragmatic (including discourse-functional) restrictions on virtually any of the integrating elements in contrast to the less constrained behaviour of their non-finite counterparts (see Borkin 1984 and especially González-García 2003). For current purposes, and due to space limitations, suffice it to note here the perfectly acceptable result yielded by the corresponding non-finite version of (3a) and (3b) in both the active and passive voice.

Second, and more crucially for the present paper, asymmetrical verbless configurations occur in Spanish after a considerable number of *verba cogitandi et dicendi*, with specific combinations after e.g. *decir* ('say') of the type in (4) below showing a considerable degree of frequency and entrenchment. Therefore, asymmetrical verbless complement clauses in Spanish as in (4) below can be taken to lend further credence to the theoretical and descriptive appropriateness of viewing passives of this kind as constituting a paradigm of their own rather than in relation to their putative active counterparts.⁶

⁴ In keeping with the standard practice in the Goldbergian strand of CxG (Goldberg 1995, 2006), the # sign is taken here to mean that the sentence is marginally acceptable (i.e. not altogether acceptable, but possibly OK in an adequate supporting context). See further section 2.

⁵ See also Butler & González-García (2005) and González-García & Butler (2006) for an outline of the relevance of this parameter for some representative functionalist, cognitivist and/or constructionist models.

⁶ From now on, interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses will be supplied for the Spanish examples following the Leipzig Glossing Rules (see <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/LGR04.09.21.pdf>). The following three additional abbreviations will be used in this paper: IMPERS (impersonal), PRONOMCLITIC (pronominal clitic), and CONDITIONAL (conditional or potential verb tense).

- (4) Mr John Spencer no era **lo** **que** **se**
 Mr John Spencer NEG be.IMPPRET.3SG DEF.N.SG REL PASS
- dic-e** un hombre intachable
 say-PRS.3SG INDF man irreproachable

‘Mr John Spencer was not what you may call an irreproachable man’
 (CREA Corpus, 1980, Anónimo, Los tripulantes de ovis)

With these observations in mind, this paper aims to show how a Goldbergian constructionist account (Goldberg 1995, 2001, 2003, 2006; Goldberg & Casenhiser to appear, *inter alia*) can bring together the commonalities and putative idiosyncratic features of asymmetrical passive verbless clauses in Spanish in relation to “regular” passives (i.e. those with productive, unconstrained active counterparts), paying special attention to the theoretical and descriptive implications of taking passives to be paradigmatically, rather than syntagmatically, motivated.

This paper is structured as follows: section 2 outlines some preliminaries regarding the notion of verbless complement clause, especially in relation to the concept of secondary predication and relevant alternative terminology in the literature. Section 3 singles out a number of methodological considerations having a direct bearing on the Spanish data compiled, selected and finally presented here. Section 4 provides incontrovertible empirical evidence for the existence and distribution of asymmetrical passive verbless configurations in Spanish. Section 5 offers a selected review of grammaticalization and then addresses the main motivations in favour of a paradigmatic view of passives, with special focus on impersonalization and relativization, as applied to passive verbless configurations. Section 6 explores the interaction between passivizability and grammaticalization in relation to passive verbless configurations introduced by *se dice* (‘is said’). Specifically, section 7 presents syntactic and semantico-pragmatic evidence that *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* configurations (cf. (4) above) can be aptly regarded as a lower-level construction within the *Impersonal Subjective-Transitive* construction in Spanish (*El debate de Constructions* SV1-5/2006 (www.constructions-online.de, urn:nbn:de:0009-4-6799, ISSN 1860-2010)

hoy se adivina tenso ‘One guesses today’s debate to be tense’). It then goes on to show that this lower-level configuration exhibits some properties of an early grammaticalization process. Finally, section 8 briefly summarizes the main conclusions substantiated in this paper.

2. Some preliminaries regarding verbless complement clauses in Spanish

The term “verbless complement clause” is used throughout this paper as a theory-neutral label to refer to instances of secondary predication (cf. Aarts 1995; Demonte & Masullo 1999, *inter alia*) involving an NP (i.e. *la propuesta* ‘the proposal’) in conjunction with a predicative complement such as the bold phrase illustrated for Spanish in (5), (6a) and (6b) below:

(5) La audiencia consider-ó la propuesta **interesante**
 DEF audience consider-INDEFPRET.3SG DEF proposal interesting

‘The audience considered the proposal (to be) interesting’

(6a) La propuesta se consider-ó **muy** **interesante**
 DEF proposal PASS consider-INDEFPRET.3SG very interesting

(#por la audiencia)
 by DEF audience

‘The proposal was considered (by the audience) (to be) very interesting’

(6b) La propuesta fue considerad-a **muy** **interesante**
 DEF proposal AUX.INDEFPRET.3SG consider-PTCP very interesting

(por la audiencia)
 (by DEF audience)

‘The proposal was considered (by the audience) (to be) very interesting’

Specifically, the bold adjectival phrase (AP henceforth) in (5) above qualifies as an instance of what Aarts (1995), *inter alia*, refers to as *object-related depictive secondary predicates*. In other words, the AP in question designates a current temporary or permanent property of the entity/person encoded in the direct object.

Two further facets should be mentioned. First, the bold AP in (5) – (6) above is obligatory (or “lexically-selected”, to borrow Demonte & Masullo’s (1999: 2471) terminology) on both syntactic and semantic grounds, as shown among other things by the fact that its omission invariably yields a dramatic meaning change from an evaluative sense (i.e. *to think someone/something (to be) X*) to a pure cognition process without any evaluation component (i.e. *to take someone/something into account*). Thus, consider (7a) – (7b) below:

(7a) La audiencia consider-ó la propuesta
 DEF audience consider-INDEFPRET.3SG DEF proposal

‘The audience considered the proposal’

(7b) La propuesta se consider-ó
 DEF proposal PASS consider-INDEFPRET.3SG

‘The proposal was considered’

Second, it has been noted that the majority of verbs taking a verbless complement clause in Spanish can be classified into two general groups, viz. (i) epistemic verbs (e.g. *considerar* ‘consider’), volitive verbs (e.g. *querer* ‘want’) and prospective orientation verbs (e.g. *imaginar* ‘imagine’); and (ii) causative predicates (e.g. *hacer* ‘make’) (cf. Demonte & Masullo 1999: 2471). As shown in the remainder of this paper, virtually only a proper subset of the first group, namely, *verba cogitandi* and some *verba dicendi* which can be construed as *consider*-type verbs (e.g. *decir* ‘say’), are eligible for occurrence in asymmetrical passive verbless configurations in Spanish. The relevance of this fact, which can hardly be taken to be coincidental, will be addressed in some detail at a later stage in this paper.

3. Some methodological considerations

In line with the stance taken in the Goldbergian strand of CxG, the methodological focus here is on the use of authentic data extracted from corpora routinely supplemented with data gained from

introspection by native speakers (cf. Fillmore & Kay 1995: 13; Goldberg 1996: 69; Croft 2000: 26; Bybee & Hopper 2001, especially Thompson & Hopper 2001; Thompson 2002; Boas 2003; Bybee 2005, *inter alia*). Specifically, within the corpus-driven approach invoked in this paper, the list of Spanish matrix verbs selecting verbless complement clauses outlined in Garrudo (1991, 1996), has been balanced against the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA Corpus henceforth, see the *Real Academia Española* website in the bibliographical section) in order to identify those matrix verbs occurring *exclusively* in the passive verbless complement clause environment in Spanish, including those lacking a fully productive, unconstrained active counterpart.⁷

The CREA Corpus material was filtered manually out of searches of instances of (i) *se*-passive in the singular (e.g. *Se alquila casa* ‘A house is for rent’) and the plural (e.g. *Se alquilan casas* ‘Houses are for rent’) as well as (ii) instances of periphrastic passive in both the singular and the plural (e.g. *El ladrón fue detenido por el policía* ‘The thief was caught by the policeman’; *Los ladrones fueron detenidos por el policía* ‘The thieves were caught by the policeman’, respectively).⁸ Furthermore, in order to ensure a broader range of representativeness concerning the data utilized in this paper, the searches were conducted in all text categories of both Castilian and South American Spanish. However, for practical reasons, the searches were restricted to instances of the configurations in question in the present tense only. Crucially, the data on which

⁷ The inventory of matrix verbs occurring exclusively in the verbless passive environment includes a number of predicates which cannot occur freely with any type of lexical NP as direct object, such as those exhibiting coercion via reflexive pronouns, as in (i) below:

(i)	Te	sab-es	mí-a	(Café Quijano, <i>Dame de esa boca</i>)
	2SG.REFL	know-PRS.2SG	1POSS-SG.F	
	‘You know yourself to be mine’			

For further reference on the relevance of coercion *via* reflexive pronouns in the verbless complement clause in English and Spanish, the interested reader is referred to González-García (2005).

⁸ For further details on the distinction between *se*-passives and periphrastic passives, see Fernández Ramírez (1987: 410-429) and Mendikoetxea (1999: 1669-1686), *inter alia*.

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the present paper draws concerns exclusively the subtype of *se*-passives. The choice of this subtype of passive configuration is primarily motivated in terms of the striking frequency of *se*-passives (99.5%) in relation to the periphrastic subtype concerning the asymmetrical environment under scrutiny here.⁹ This being the case, the use of the term “passive” should be understood throughout this paper as referring to the *se*-passive subtype, unless otherwise noted. Although the vast majority of examples utilized in this paper have been taken from the CREA Corpus, examples found in passing from other sources have also been included for the sake of a clearer argumentation, such as (i) material from songs (see footnote 7), and (ii) occasional examples invented by the author for the sake of ease of exposition (the examples reproduced in (5) – (7), (12) – (14)). Finally, although this paper basically examines asymmetrical passive verbless constructions from a synchronic viewpoint drawing on evidence from the CREA Corpus, two examples from the *Corpus Diacrónico del Español* (CORDE Corpus, see the *Real Academia Española* website listed in the bibliography section), viz. examples (37) – (38), are also reproduced here to further back up my contention that the lower-level *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* construction instantiates a case of early grammaticalization.

Moreover, all the examples reproduced in this paper, whether taken from the CREA Corpus or from other sources, were previously rated as (i) acceptable, (ii) marginally acceptable or (iii) unacceptable by a group of 30 Spanish university students aged between 21 and 22 at the University of Almería, Spain. The native speakers were given the following instructions as to how to interpret the acceptability labels above. “Acceptable” was taken to mean “the sentence is possible in Spanish”, while “unacceptable” was intended to reflect that “the sentence is impossible in Spanish”. Moreover, the “marginally acceptable” label was meant to capture the following acceptability judgements: (a) “the sentence is not altogether impossible but does not

⁹ The scarce productivity of the periphrastic passive type in comparison with the *se*-passive has been explicitly noted by Sepúlveda Barrios (1988: 20) and Takagaki (2005: 289), inter alia.

sound completely OK either” and/or (b) “I’m not quite sure about whether this sentence is acceptable or unacceptable”. The examples the native speakers were asked to rate were literally reproduced in the same format as these are found in the CREA Corpus, although no explicit indication of the source of the example was given in order to minimize any bias in their judgements. In the case of those instances of the *lo que se dice* configuration involving a focusing/emphasizer subjunct use, no further context was supplied beyond the limit of the sentence/clause. By contrast, in the case of some instances of the configuration in question with a conjunct function (viz. examples (33), (35) – (36) in section 7.3), a further stretch of discourse was supplied so as to help informants assess the connective function of the string appropriately. Only on two occasions was additional material added to the original CREA example so as to render more explicit either the contrastive focus potential of the configuration (i.e. example (31)) or its prototypical reading (i.e. example (32)). Furthermore, in order to meet the requirement of explanatory adequacy (Goldberg 1996, 2003, 2006), the original examples from the CREA Corpus were presented in conjunction with manipulated acceptable and non-acceptable versions of the target construction as well as of different constructions (the latter being used primarily as distractors). The manipulation of the original examples from the CREA Corpus is basically intended to illustrate a number of acceptability contrasts relevant for the constructionist analysis presented here which are not found in the corpus material as such (see e.g. example (11b) below).

In a second stage, the same group of native speakers was presented with a selected inventory of examples of the constructions involving the *lo que se dice* string taken from the following two categories of the CREA Corpus, viz. *Ciencia y Tecnología* (‘Science and Technology’) and *Ciencias Sociales* (‘Social Sciences’). Specifically, the informants were asked to rephrase the string in question using no more than three words altogether and staying as close as possible to the meaning of the original example. The three-word limit was established in order to assess more directly the equivalence of the string in question with the two major functions to be

investigated in this paper, namely, (i) a focusing/emphasizer subjunct (e.g. *realmente* ‘really’, *verdaderamente* ‘truly’), and (ii) a summative reformulatory conjunct (e.g. *o sea* ‘that is’, *en definitiva* ‘in short’, *en otras palabras* ‘in other words’).

Finally, the ratings given by the native informants to the examples are reflected as follows: the unmarked sentences were unanimously deemed to be acceptable by 100% of the informants. Sentences were marked as # if they were considered marginally acceptable by at least 90% of the informants. Finally, the examples marked as * were unambiguously taken to be ungrammatical by 100% of the informants.

4. A glance at asymmetrical passive verbless configurations in Spanish

The analysis of data extracted from the CREA Corpus yields a list of matrix verbs occurring exclusively in the passive verbless complement clause environment (see further Table 1 below).

For ease of exposition, these verbs can be grouped into at least three categories:¹⁰

- (i) *verba cogitandi* and sensory verbs with a indirect perception reading, such as e.g. *asumir* (‘assume’), *pensar* (‘think’), *sospechar* (‘suspect’), and so forth.
- (ii) *verba cogitandi* with a future-looking orientation, such as, for instance, *adivinar* (‘guess’), *prever* (‘foresee’), *vislumbrar* (‘glimpse’), etc.
- (iii) *verba dicendi*, such as e.g. *admitir* (‘admit’), *afirmar* (‘affirm’), and *decir* (‘say’).

Representative examples for asymmetrical passive verbless configurations are reproduced in (8a) – (8b) below.

¹⁰ Interestingly enough, the three groups of Spanish verbs discerned above are, broadly speaking, highly coincident with the matrix verbs attested in asymmetrical verbless configurations in English in the original edition of the BNC: *assume*, *confirm*, *estimate*, *guarantee*, *presume*, *repute*, *report*, *say*, and *state*. However, from the comparison of both inventories, two important corollaries can at least provisionally be established: (i) asymmetrical constructions of this type occur with a higher number of verbs in Spanish than in English, and (ii) although the inventory of verbs in both languages can be grouped under the rubric of *verba cogitandi et dicendi*, there is far from a perfect match between English and Spanish with respect to which lexical verbs are subject to the asymmetry in question. This can be taken to lend further credence to the contention made in Croft (2001, 2003) and Goldberg (2006: 225-226) that argument structure is by and large both language-specific and construction-specific.

(8a) La tarea de convert-ir el Barça en un nuevo
 DEF job of turn-INF DEF Barça in INDF new

Ajax no se adivin-a fácil (...)
 Ajax NEG PASS guess-PRS.3SG easy

‘The job of turning the Barcelona football team into a new Ajax does not appear to be easy’

(CREA Corpus, ABC Electrónico, 28/08/1997, El holandés Van Gaal pide tiempo para convertir al Barça en el Ajax de ...)

(8b) Y si result-a que ese comportamiento
 And if turn.out-PRS.3SG that[COMP] DIST behaviour

se dic-e “ignorad-o” por todos sus mando-s
 PASS say-PRS.3SG ignore-PTCP by all 3PL.POSS superior-PL

‘And if it turns out that that behaviour is said to be ‘ignored’ by all his superiors’

(CREA Corpus, 1995, Cristina Almeida, Carta abierta a una política honrada sobre la corrupción)

The specific distribution of each of the matrix verbs attested in the asymmetrical passive verbless configuration in Spanish is given in table 1 below:

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Number of hits</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>decir</i> (‘say’)	232	22.54%
<i>reputar</i> (‘repute’)	173	16.81%
<i>adivinar</i> (‘guess’)	18	1.74 %
<i>presentir</i> (‘have a feeling that’)	17	1.65 %
<i>presumir</i> (‘presume’)	16	1.55 %
<i>pronosticar</i> (‘predict’)	16	1.55 %
<i>prever</i> (‘foresee’)	16	1.55 %
<i>vislumbrar</i> (‘glimpse’)	16	1.55 %
<i>entrever</i> (‘glimpse’)	14	1.36 %
<i>intuir</i> (‘sense’)	13	1.26 %
<i>suponer</i> (‘suppose’)	8	0.77 %
<i>vaticinar</i> (‘foretell’)	8	0.77 %

<i>pensar</i> ('think')	8	0.77 %
<i>afirmar</i> ('affirm')	6	0.58 %
<i>concebir</i> ('conceive')	5	0.48 %
<i>admitir</i> ('admit')	5	0.48 %
<i>augurar</i> ('predict')	5	0.48 %
<i>presuponer</i> ('presuppose')	4	0.38 %
<i>augurar</i> ('predict')	4	0.38 %
<i>auspiciar</i> ('augur')	4	0.38 %
<i>atisbar</i> ('observe')	4	0.38 %
<i>auspiciar</i> ('augur')	4	0.38 %
<i>reconocer</i> ('acknowledge')	3	0.29 %
<i>anunciar</i> ('announce')	3	0.29 %
<i>asumir</i> ('assume')	2	0.19 %
<i>creer</i> ('believe')	2	0.19 %
<i>demostrar</i> ('show')	2	0.19 %
<i>esperar</i> ('expect')	2	0.19 %
<i>estimar</i> ('estimate')	2	0.19 %
<i>percibir</i> ('perceive')	2	0.19 %
<i>saber</i> ('know')	2	0.19 %
<i>alegar</i> ('allege')	2	0.19 %
<i>conjeturar</i> ('conjecture')	1	0.09 %
<i>predecir</i> ('predict')	1	0.09 %
<i>probar</i> ('prove')	1	0.09 %
<i>sospechar</i> ('suspect')	1	0.09 %
Total	1029	100 %

Table 1. Distribution of matrix verbs occurring exclusively in the passive verbless configuration in the CREA Corpus (listed in descending order of frequency)¹¹

¹¹ The data taken from the CREA Corpus utilized for the compilation of Table 1 comprises examples from both Castilian Spanish and South American Spanish. In this respect, it must be highlighted that not all matrix verbs are equally acceptable or even productive in either variety of Spanish. Thus, by way of illustration, passives with *reputar* ('repute') are considerably more frequent in the Spanish of South America than in Castilian Spanish. See further Mendikoetxea (1999: 1673) for the relevance of this distinction in the distribution of *se*-passives and periphrastic passives. Important as these issues are, space precludes further discussion of them here.

The next section provides empirical evidence that verbless clause configurations in the passive qualify as constructions in their own right and, more exactly, as instances of the so-called “passive of opinion” (Wierzbicka 1988). The general constructional meaning of the passive verbless clause construction is the expression of an impersonal, direct, categorical evaluation of the state of affairs encoded in the clause with some instantiations implying more commitment (e.g. *pensar* ‘think’) than others (e.g. *decir* ‘say’).

5. Towards a paradigmatic, construction-based view of passives

This section is basically concerned with the relevance of the main motivations outlined for passivization in relation to passive verbless configurations in general and their occurrence in the relative clause environment in particular. Next, it briefly outlines the salient features of active verbless complement configurations (or, alternatively, the *Subjective-Transitive* construction). Finally, a constructional characterization of passive verbless complement configurations is presented under the rubric of the *Impersonal Subjective-Transitive* construction.

5.1 The main motivations for the passive revisited

The motivations posited for the passive in the literature can broadly be taken to be two-fold: (i) a topicalization device, and (ii) impersonalization. As for the former, given that the grammatical subjects of passives usually have topic status, the use of the passive contributes to the avoidance of redundancy in referential continuity when they are preceded by an active matrix verb (Bolinger 1977: 77; Noël 2001: 264), thus also possibly strengthening textual cohesion (Mair 1990: 189). The relevance of this parameter for verbless complement clauses in Spanish is illustrated in the preference of (9) over an alternative version in which the material in the relative clause is expressed in an independent sentence/clause:

(9)	(...)	Deb-e	cit-ar-se	otro	acontecimiento	que
		must-PRS.3SG	cite-INF-PASS	another	event	REL
		se	consider-a	igualmente	un	hito
		PASS	consider-PRS.3SG	equally	INDF	breakthrough
		importante				important
		en el	nacimiento	de la	industria	moderna
		in DEF	birth	of DEF	industry	modern

‘Another event must be mentioned that is equally considered an important breakthrough in the birth of modern industry’

(CREA Corpus, 1990, Fernando Hevia Cangas, Aprovechamiento de los hidrocarburos: Datos históricos [Historia de la geología])

In addition, Mair (1990: 191) notes that English passive matrix verbs with non-finite complement clauses occur more frequently in the relative clause environment, a generalization which can also be said to hold for verbless complement clauses in Spanish. Specifically, two pieces of evidence can be adduced to motivate the connection between the relative clause environment and the occurrence of the verbless complement clause in the passive construction. First, the passive configuration fits in nicely with the general tendency for grammatical subjects to be assigned topic status (Mair 1990; Noël 1998, *inter alia*). Second, and more crucially for our purposes here, the relative clause contributes to turning indefinite, non-specific nominal concepts or referents into definite, specific ones, thus rendering it compatible with the specific characterization/description required by the verbless frame in Spanish, as argued in section 5.2 below. Specifically, 13 out of the 36 matrix verbs under scrutiny here can be found in the environment under discussion here. They are listed in table 2.

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Relative frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>sospechar</i> ('suspect')	1/1	100 %
<i>prometer</i> ('to be promising')	3/3	100 %
<i>presuponer</i> ('presuppose')	4/4	100 %
<i>asumir</i> ('assume')	2/2	100 %
<i>intuir</i> ('sense')	6/8	75 %
<i>adivinar</i> ('guess')	13/18	72.22 %
<i>pensar</i> ('think')	3/6	50 %
<i>anunciar</i> ('announce')	1/2	50 %
<i>creer</i> ('believe')	1/2	50 %
<i>demostrar</i> ('show')	1/2	50 %
<i>esperar</i> ('expect')	1/2	50 %
<i>estimar</i> ('estimate')	1/2	50 %
<i>saber</i> ('know')	1/2	50 %
<i>presentir</i> ('have a feeling that')	7/17	41.17 %
<i>augurar</i> ('predict')	1/4	25 %
<i>suponer</i> ('suppose')	2/8	25 %
<i>presumir</i> ('presume')	4/16	25 %
<i>reputar</i> ('repute')	38/173	21.96 %
<i>admitir</i> ('admit')	1/5	16.66 %
<i>concebir</i> ('conceive')	1/5	16.66 %
<i>vislumbrar</i> ('glimpse')	2/14	14.28 %
<i>pronosticar</i> ('predict')	1/16	6.25 %
Total	95	100 %

Table 2. Distribution of matrix verbs occurring exclusively in the passive verbless configuration in the relative clause environment (frequencies based on data from the CREA Corpus) (listed in descending order of frequency)

As for the impersonalization effect of the passive, Bolinger (1977: 78) contends that “the most important effect of the passive is ... that of shifting the focus *away* from the main subject and the main verb” [emphasis in original], an insight also echoed in the semantico-pragmatic affinity observed between passives and impersonal constructions in Spanish (see further Mendikoetxea 1999: 1686-1719 and Sánchez López 2002: 134, inter alia). This contention brings *Constructions* SV1-5/2006 (www.constructions-online.de, urn:nbn:de:0009-4-6799, ISSN 1860-2010)

to the foreground another important facet of the asymmetry between actives and passives that needs to concern us here, viz. the presence or absence of the so-called agent complement. In this connection, Martínez Vázquez (1998: 81), drawing on Stein (1979) and Givón (1993), invokes the fact that between 80% and 85% of English passives lack a *by*-agent adjunct as a sufficient condition to ground the non-equivalence of actives and passives, given that the latter lack an argument in comparison to the former. This observation fits in nicely with the picture of passive verbless configurations with the matrix verbs under study here, where no instance of an overt agent adjunct has been attested, thus contributing to the unveiling of another dimension in which actives and passives are even more dramatically asymmetrical in Spanish.

With the above observations in mind, I would contend that the disparity concerning the expression of the agent in actives and passives as well as the apparently inexplicable acceptability contrasts in (8a) – (8c) above, can be shown to be semantically motivated if passives are agreed to be constructions – viz. pairings of form with semantic or discourse function (Goldberg 1995: 7, 2003: 219, 2006: 5, *inter alia*). Thus, it is only by considering the distancing effect alluded to above as an intrinsic semantico-pragmatic feature of what may be considered a “passive of opinion” (Wierzbicka 1988: 47) that one may begin to understand the asymmetries at hand here. Specifically, actives highlight the involvement of the subject/speaker towards the content of the clause, whereas passives de-emphasize such involvement in favour of a semblance of impersonality and/or objectivity.

At this stage, it is convenient to examine the implications of this finding for the inherent meaning and form properties of the NP XPCOMP sequence in both the active and passive voice in Spanish, to which I turn in sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

5.2 An overview of the Subjective-Transitive construction

González-García (2003) contends that depictive instances of secondary predication (e.g. *Encontré la silla bastante incómoda* ‘I found the chair quite uncomfortable’) can be adequately handled in *Constructions* SV1-5/2006 (www.constructions-online.de, urn:nbn:de:0009-4-6799, ISSN 1860-2010)

Spanish under the rubric of the *Subjective-Transitive* construction, whose general skeletal meaning can be glossed as follows: **X (NP₁) expresses a direct, personal and categorical involvement over Y (NP₂ XPCOMP)**.¹² Specifically, the *Subjective-Transitive* construction can be seen as an instance of constructional polysemy (see e.g. Goldberg 1995: 73-81), where the modulation of the lexical semantics of the matrix verb in question results in at least four distinct senses, viz. (i) the *Evaluative Subjective-Transitive* construction (with verbs of sensory or cognitive perception, such as e.g. *encontrar* ('find'), *considerar* ('consider')), (ii) the *Manipulative Subjective-Transitive construction* (after verbs of causation and volition, such as e.g. *querer* ('want')), (iii) the *Generic Subjective-Transitive construction* (with verbs of liking and preference, such as e.g. *desear* ('wish')), and (iv) the *Declarative Subjective-Transitive construction* (with verbs of calling/naming and official communication, such as e.g. *llamar* ('call')).¹³

The term “subjective” should be understood in the present paper at least in a three-fold sense, as in (i)-(iii) below:¹⁴

- (i) as referring to the main clause *subject*/speaker and the degree of involvement implicit in his/her stance towards the proposition encoded in the clause;
- (ii) as being connected with the semantico-pragmatic notion of subjectivity, that is, “the way in which natural languages, in their structure and normal manner of operation, provide for the locutionary agent’s expression of himself and his own attitudes and beliefs.” (Lyons 1982: 102; see also Stein & Wright 1995 as well as Scheibman 2002: 1-16 for further details on the different definitions proposed for this concept);
- (iii) as pointing to subjectification, understood by e.g. Traugott (1995a: 32) as “the development of a grammatically identifiable expression of Speaker’s belief or Speaker’s attitude towards what is said” (cf. also Traugott 1995b; Traugott & Dasher 2002: 30).

¹² The term “categorical” should be understood here as referring to a forceful rather than tentative or conjectural stance on the part of the subject/speaker towards the content of the NP XPCOMP.

¹³ The four classes of lexical verbs which may combine with this construction are in actual fact the basis of what Croft (2003: 56-59) calls “verb-class-specific constructions”.

¹⁴ The term “subjective”, as used in this paper, is also connected with evidentiality as in e.g. Chafe & Nichols (1986), in particular with the distinction between direct and ‘hearsay’ evidence, respectively.

Due to limitations of space, this section summarises only briefly the salient properties of the sense of the *Subjective-Transitive* construction having a direct bearing on the present discussion, as in (I) below:

I. Evaluative Subjective-Transitive Construction. This sense of the construction occurs after verbs of (sensory or cognitive) perception (e.g. *considerar* ('consider'), *pensar* ('think'), *creer* ('believe'), *encontrar* ('find'), etc). These configurations convey the expression of a (non-cancellable) direct, personal and categorical (i.e. forceful) stance by the speaker/subject towards the state of affairs encoded in the NP XPCOMP string:

- (10) Esta noche te encuentr-o más excitante y
 PROX night 2SG.ACC find-PRS.1SG more exciting and

 más atractiva que nunca
 more attractive than never

'Tonight I find you more exciting and more attractive than ever'
 (CREA Corpus, 1986, Oral, Esta noche pedro, 06/06/1986, TVE 1)

Configurations of the type in (10) above imply that the state of affairs expressed in the XPCOMP is the result of a direct experience on the part of the subject/speaker with the entity/person encoded in the NP specified in the object slot. In addition, these also express a high degree of commitment on the part of the subject/speaker towards the state of affairs in the XPCOMP, hence their pragmatic non-cancellability (at least in terms of the universe of perceptions of the subject/speaker).

In addition, two salient properties concerning the semantico-pragmatic profile of the postverbal NP and the XPCOMP must be mentioned.

(i) An important grammatical reflex of the relevance of the **direct involvement** of the speaker encoded in this environment is that the more specific the postverbal NP, the more felicitous it will be in this frame in Spanish. González-García (2003) further motivates the

preference of postverbal NPs of this type in terms of its semantico-pragmatic function as an object of perception (whether sensory or cognitive) by the subject/speaker. Thus, consider (11) below:¹⁵

- (11a) Por ahora encuentr-o a Aznar falt-o de imaginación
 By now find-PRS.1SG OBJ Aznar lacking-M of imagination

‘Thus far I find Aznar lacking in imagination’

(CREA Corpus, 1990, Tiempo, 23/04/1990: José Federico de Carvajal)

- (11b) [# Por ahora encuentr-o a alguna persona / a cualquier
 By now find-PRS.1SG OBJ some person OBJ any
 persona / a alguien falta de imaginación]
 person OBJ somebody lacking of imagination

[#‘Thus far I find a person/any person/somebody lacking in imagination’]

(ii) A direct semantico-pragmatic consequence of the **categorical (forceful) involvement** inherent to this construction is the fact that those XPCOMPs denoting subjective/evaluative matters of judgement occur more felicitously in the verbless complement frame than those denoting empirically verifiable or neutral matters of fact (Borkin 1984). Thus, for instance, only those characterizing XPCOMPs which can be felicitously construed in subjective, evaluative terms by the subject/speaker are acceptable in this construction, as in (12) below:

- (12a) #A Juan lo encontr-é (un) fontaner-o
 OBJ Juan 3SG.ACC find-INDEFPRET.1SG INDF plumber-M

#‘I found John a plumber’

¹⁵ In this respect, it must be noted that the indefinite pronouns (e.g. *alguien* ‘someone’) may be acceptable in the postverbal NP slot if stressed, thus carrying out the implication that the subject/speaker has a particular person in mind and making it specific.

(12a') A Juan lo encontr-é un fontaner-o
 OBJ Juan 3SG.ACC find-INDEFPRET.1SG INDF plumber-M
 muy eficiente
 very efficient

'I found John a most efficient plumber'

(12b) En ese momento, consider-ando que est-amos en
 In DIST moment consider-GER that[COMP] be-PRS.1PL in
 democracia, me consider-o Cervantes, el poeta, (...)
 democracy 1SG.REFL consider-PRS.1SG Cervantes DEF poet

'At that moment, considering that we are in a democracy, I consider myself Cervantes, the poet, (...)'

(CREA Corpus, Tiempo, 19/02/1990: Fernando Arrabal/Lanza una novela y estrena una obra de teatro en Madrid)

Thus, a robust generalization which emerges from the previous discussion is that, in the case of the Evaluative Subjective-Transitive construction, only those categories which can be construed as being evaluative in some way are felicitous in the XPCOMP slot, such as APs, NPs and *-ed* participles of a characterizing, evaluative-like kind. By the same token, such phrases as PPs with a literal locative meaning, *-ing* participles with a prominent verbal and/or dynamic character, adverbial phrases and identifying NPs are systematically ruled out in this slot in Spanish.¹⁶ In particular, example (12b) above shows that proper names are systematically non-acceptable in this construction in Spanish unless they can be subjectively construed via metonymy as evoking a character type and so forth.

¹⁶ For further information on the distinction between characterization and identification in attributive clauses, the reader is referred to Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 219-229), Quirk et al. (1985: 741-743) and Fernández Leborans (1999: 2366-2421), inter alia.

- (13) *(Yo) lo cre-o/ consider-o/ encuentr-o **John Chametzky**
 (1SG) 3SG.ACC believe-/ consider- / find-PRS.1SG John Chametzky
- *‘I think/believe/consider/find him John Chametzky’
 (proper noun as XPCOMP)

Thus, taking into account the ungrammatical configurations outlined above, it is possible to maximize the explanatory power of the anatomy of the Subjective-Transitive construction in Spanish by motivating semantically the morphosyntactic realizations of the postverbal NP and the XPCOMP frame (see further Newmeyer 2003: 172 for a similar position regarding the object slot in the ditransitive construction), as shown in figure 1 below.

<i>Sem.</i>	X EXPRESSES A DIRECT, PERSONAL CATEGORICAL INVOLVEMENT WITH Y (NP XPCOMP)	< Conceptualizer Experiencer Perceptor Attribuant	Theme	Attribute >
R: instance	PRED <i>considerar</i> (‘consider’) <i>decir</i> (‘say’) <i>llamar</i> (‘call’)			
<i>Information- Structure</i>		↓ TOPIC	↓ TOPIC	↓ FOCUS
<i>Syn.</i>	V	↓ SUBJECT NP + specific	↓ OBJ./ SUBJ.2 NP/ (TO-INF/- ING) CLAUSE	↓ XPCOMP NP (characterizing) AP PP (non-literal, non-locative) (-ED/-ING) participle

X = SUBJECT, Y = OBJ./SUBJ.₂, Z = XPCOMP

Figure 1. The anatomy of the Evaluative Subjective-Transitive construction in Spanish.

In view of the anatomy of the Evaluative Subjective-Transitive construction in figure 1, the syntactic characterization of the subject can be enhanced by mapping it onto relevant morphological realizations (e.g. NP) and semantico-pragmatic restrictions (e.g. + specific). A similar point can be made about the OBJ./SUBJ.₂ and the XPCOMP slots. In the latter, the NP realizations of the XPCOMP must be of a characterizing (rather than identifying) type and the PP realizations of the constituent in question must be non-literal and non-locative.

The next sub-section explores which features of the Evaluative Subjective-Transitive construction are shared by, and which are, by contrast, unique to, passive verbless complement configurations, whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, mainly after *verba cogitandi et dicendi* in Spanish.

5.3 The Impersonal Subjective-Transitive construction

In the version of CxG articulated in Goldberg (2001) and Goldberg and Casenhiser (to appear: 9), passives are taken to be constructions in their own right on the grounds that they differ from actives in terms of information structure, that is, the normally most prominent argument – the notional subject – is backgrounded.¹⁷ Moreover, passives are related via a hierarchy of constructions (Goldberg 1995: 224), thus making it possible to connect verbless passive configurations (tentatively named here the Impersonal Subjective-Transitive construction, as in figure 2 below) to other passives involving non-finite clauses, finite *que*-clauses or passives merely consisting of simple clauses (i.e. the passive ditransitive construction, the passive transitive construction, and so forth), as illustrated in (14 a) – (14 c) below:

¹⁷ Recall that in the case of asymmetrical passive verbless constructions, the relevance of this semantico-pragmatic characterization is even more striking in view of the fact that 100% of the instances found in our data are agentless. *Constructions* SV1-5/2006 (www.constructions-online.de, urn:nbn:de:0009-4-6799, ISSN 1860-2010)

- (14a) Se consider-a **que** **est-o** **es** **un** **error**
 PASS consider-PRS.3SG that[COMP] DIST-SG be.PRS.3SG INDF mistake

‘It is considered that this is a mistake’
 (finite complement clause)

- (14b) Se consider-a **est-o** **un** **error**
 PASS consider-PRS.3SG DIST-SG INDF mistake

‘This is considered a mistake’
 (verbless complement clause-se passive)

- (14c) Se consider-ó **una** **solución** **para** **el** **problema**
 PASS consider-INDEFPRET.3SG INDF solution to DEF problem

‘A solution to the problem was considered’
 (transitive clause)

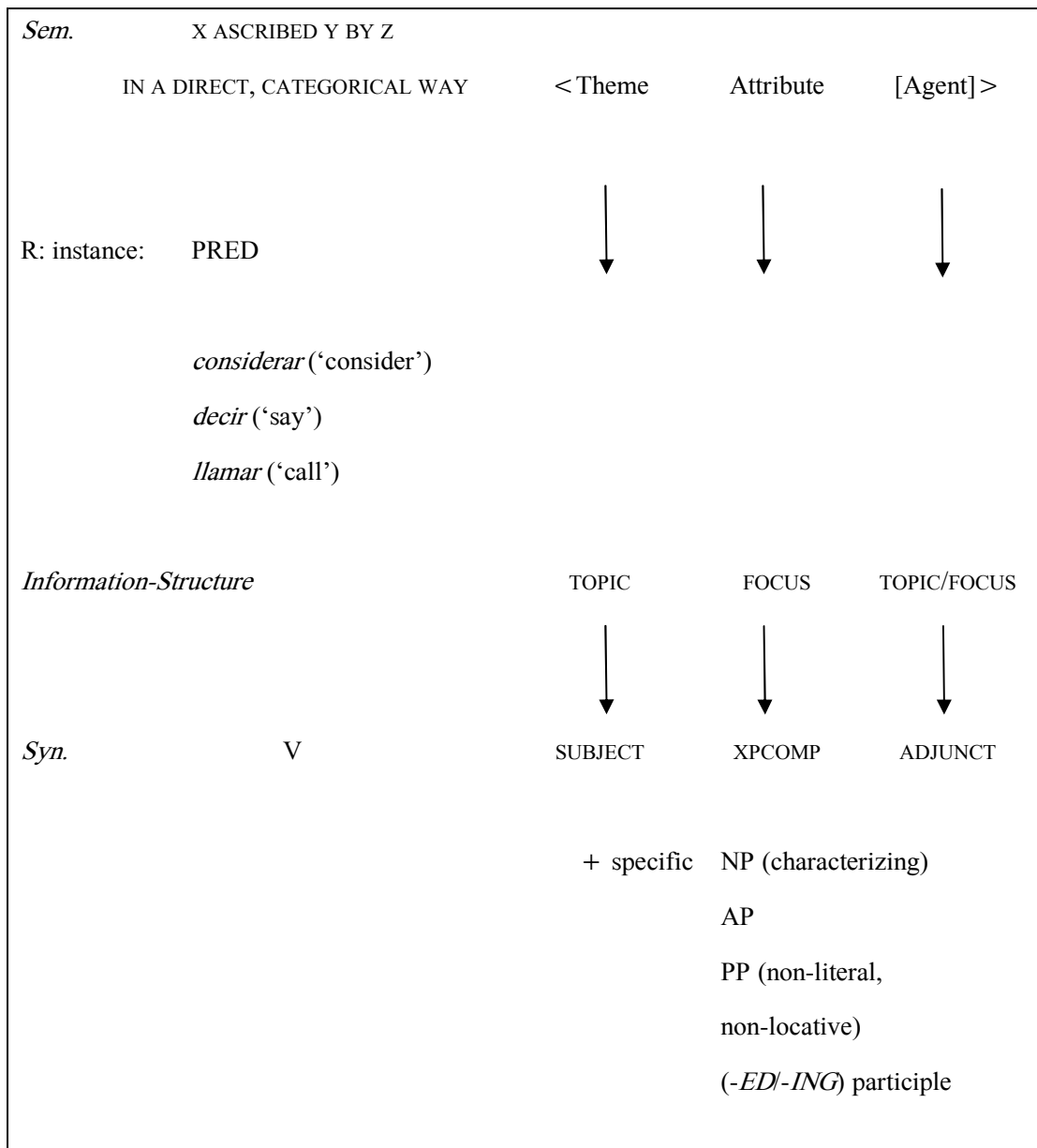
Given the semblance of impersonality intrinsic to the passive, it comes as no surprise that the **personal involvement** inherent to the verbless complement configurations in the active voice (cf. the Subjective-Transitive construction) is replaced in the characterization of verbless passives by an **impersonal involvement**, which can be further motivated in terms of the systematic absence of the agent-adjunct complement in *se*-passives in general and the asymmetrical verbless complement passives under analysis here in particular. This general characterization also fits in nicely with the observation that *se*-passives in Spanish are well-suited for the expression of a general statement in contrast to, say, the dynamic punctual reading commonly associated with periphrastic passives (see further Fernández Ramírez 1987: 410-429; Sánchez López 2002: 52-53, *inter alia*). However, the **direct, categorical (forceful) involvement** features associated with the Subjective-Transitive construction are shared by the corresponding passive verbless configurations. Thus, in the light of such a constructional characterization, a slightly modified version of sentence (4) above, reproduced below as (15) for convenience, can, under normal circumstances, be interpreted as expressing the speaker’s endorsement of a forceful general

statement and/or judgement about the entity (a person or a thing) encoded in the preverbal NP functioning as the grammatical subject of the passive construction.

- (15) Mr John Spencer no es lo que se dic-e
 Mr John Spencer NEG be.PRS.3SG DEF.N.SG REL PASS say-PRS.3SG
- un hombre intachable
 INDF man irreproachable

‘Mr John Spencer was not what you may call an irreproachable man’

With these observations in mind, the skeletal constructional meaning of the Impersonal Subjective-Transitive construction can be established as follows: **X (NP₁) attributed Y (XPCOMP) by Z (NP₂) in a direct, categorical way**. The anatomy of this construction is represented in figure 2 below:



X = SUBJECT, Y = XPCOMP, Z = ADJUNCT

Figure 2. The anatomy of the Impersonal Subjective-Transitive construction in Spanish.

The remainder of this section highlights how a Goldbergian constructionist account, by placing the focus on paradigmatic rather than syntagmatic correspondences as well as on the specific semantico-pragmatic properties shared with the corresponding active configurations, can be seen as having the following advantages over other approaches to the semantico-pragmatic import of passives:

(i) A satisfactory account can be readily furnished for the existing restrictions impinging on (a) the specific character of the NP functioning as grammatical subject and (b) the characterizing (i.e. evaluative) vs. identifying potential of the XPCOMP (cf. Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 219-229; Quirk et al. 1985: 741-743; Fernández Leborans 1999: 2366-2421, *inter alia*), as illustrated in (16a) – (16b) and (17a) – (17c), respectively:

(16a) (...) **El debate de hoy** se presum-e tenso (...)
 DEF debate of today PASS presume-PRS.3SG tense

(specific NP)

‘One presumes today’s debate to be tense’

(CREA Corpus, El País, 17/12/1980: El dinero a repartir, el mismo que este año)

(16b) # **Un debate de hoy** se presum-e tenso
 INDF debate of today PASS presume-PRS.3SG tense

(non-specific NP)

‘One presumes some debate today to be tense’

- (17a) Continú-a el misterio de Agustina Izquierdo, esa
 Continue-PRS.3SG DEF mystery of Agustina Izquierdo DIST
- escritora fantasma que se dic-e **hij-a de**
 writer ghost REL PASS say-PRS.3SG daughter-F of
- exiliado-s español-es**
 exiled-PL Spaniard-PL

(characterizing NP as XPCOMP)

‘There still remains the mystery of Agustina Izquierdo, that ghost writer who is said to be the daughter of exiled Spaniards’

(CREA Corpus, 1996, ABC Cultural, 08/03/1996: El amor puro)

- (17b) # Continú-a el misterio de esa escritora fantasma
 Continue-PRS.3SG DEF mystery of DIST writer ghost
- que se dic-e **Agustina Izquierdo**
 REL PASS say-PRS.3SG Agustina Izquierdo

(identifying NP as XPCOMP)

‘There still remains the mystery of that ghost writer who is said to be Agustina Izquierdo’

Furthermore, the above-noted tendency towards specific NPs as objects in the Subjective-Transitive construction as well as grammatical subjects in the Impersonal Subjective-Transitive construction also sheds light on another interesting restriction exhibited by asymmetrical passives in the verbless clause environment, as illustrated in (18a) – (18c) below:

- (18a) Pero la Mesa es sólo el primero de
 But DEF Table be.PRS.3SG only DEF first of
 los temas a negoci-ar en un Congreso que
 DEF topics to negotiate-INF in INDF Congress REL
 se adivin-a duro y agotador
 PASS guess-PRS.3SG hard and exhausting

‘But the Table is just the first of those issues to be negotiated in a Congress which one guesses to be hard and exhausting’

(CREA Corpus, El Mundo, 08/04/1994: Congreso del psoc de andalucía: la batalla por el control)

- (18b) # **Un Congreso** se adivin-a duro y agotador
 INDF Congress PASS guess-PRS.3SG hard and exhausting
 (non specific NP)

‘One guesses some Congress to be hard and exhausting’

- (18c) **Este Congreso de hoy en particular** se adivin-a
 DIST Congress of today in particular PASS guess-PRS.3SG
 duro y agotador
 hard and exhausting
 (specific NP)

‘One guesses today’s Congress in particular to be hard and exhausting’

Crucially, the relative clause environment is normally selected in the verbless complement clause configuration when the antecedent of the relative clause is *indefinite* and thus non-specific. By contrast, when the pre-verbal NP functioning as subject is definite and also specific (as in (18c)), the relative clause environment is systematically absent. Thus, the presence of the relative clause here can be said to be motivated semantically insofar as *it turns an indefinite, non-specific phrase into a specific characterization/description* in keeping with the constructional semantics of *Constructions* SV1-5/2006 (www.constructions-online.de, urn:nbn:de:0009-4-6799, ISSN 1860-2010)

the verbless complement configuration. Crucially, this is also in consonance with the requirement that the postverbal NP in the active or the preverbal NP in the passive should be at least specific (cf. the acceptability contrasts impinging on the postverbal NP in (11a) – (11b) above).

Interestingly, another feature that the Impersonal Subjective-Transitive construction in Spanish shares with its active counterpart involves the presence of covert subjectivity (see further 2002: 158, 169) in the XPCOMP slot, as shown by the high frequency of predicate adjectives (e.g. *duro y agotador* ‘hard and exhausting’) and predicate nominals (e.g. *una verdadera ganga* ‘a real bargain’) encoding (i) difficulty (e.g. *duro y agotador* ‘hard and exhausting’), (ii) human propensity (e.g. *un hombre auténtico* ‘a genuine man’), (iii) physical property and (e.g. *enfèrmo* ‘sick’), and (iv) value (e.g. *positivo* ‘positive’) (cf. Dixon 1991), which make up 80% of the total number of realizations of the XPCOMP in this configuration.

(ii) By taking passives to be paradigmatically motivated, CxG may account satisfactorily for the inherent dynamism of serial relationship in general (Quirk 1965; Mair 1990: 178-179) and the fact that those Spanish matrix verbs which do not lexically encode the idea of judgement or evaluation per se, such as e.g. *decir* (‘say’) and *afirmar* (‘affirm’), may in actual fact be construed as *considerar* (‘consider’)-type verbs, thus being drawn into the orbit of passive verbless complement clauses.

6. The grammaticalization/passivizability continuum in Spanish verbless configurations with *se dice* (‘is said’)

The ongoing discussion has thus far been concerned with a macroscopic view of asymmetrical passive verbless complement configurations. However, in order to do justice to the full complexity of facts emerging from the data, it must be acknowledged that in the case of those matrix verbs especially productive in the configuration at hand here such as *decir* (‘say’), passivization (i.e. the acquisition of a passive meaning) can be seen as interacting in a number of non-trivial ways with grammaticalization (cf. 6.1 below). Specifically, this section provides compelling empirical

evidence in favour of the existence of (at least) a three-point scale in the case of passive verbless configurations introduced by *se dice* ('is said'), as outlined in 6.2-6.4 below. This three-fold continuum is in turn intended to serve as the background against which a quite detailed characterization of a particularly productive lower level configuration, viz. the *lo que se dice* XP_{FOCUS} construction, can be grounded.

6.1 A selected review of grammaticalization research

Grammaticalization is generally understood to be the *process* whereby linguistic items (of a lexical, pragmatic or even phonetic nature) become grammatical or whereby already grammatical items achieve an even more grammatical status, changing their distribution and function in the process (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993: xv; Lehmann 1982/1995, 2002: 10; Heine, Claudi & Hünnemeyer 1991a; Bybee 2003a: 146, inter alia).¹⁸ Within this general scenario, some researchers working on grammaticalization have prioritized the morphosyntactic dimension of the phenomenon, thus equating grammaticalization with increased morphosyntactic fusion and loss of syntactic freedom (see e.g. Lehmann 1995 [1985], 2002). By contrast, recent work into grammaticalization by Bybee and Traugott, inter alia, has adopted an essentially pragmatic perspective which emphasizes the role of an appropriate context for the phenomenon of grammaticalization. In particular, the notion of subjectification, viz. "the development of a grammatically identifiable expression of Speaker's belief or Speaker's attitude towards what is said" (Traugott 1995 a: 32; cf. also Traugott 1988; Traugott & Dasher 2002: 30), is argued to play a crucial role in grammaticalization. Both subjectification and increase in pragmatic meaning (or, alternatively, pragmatic strengthening) are taken "to arise out of the cognitive and communicative

¹⁸ Grammaticalization is generally considered to be a unidirectional process, that is, one that leads from less grammatical to more grammatical forms and constructions (Lehmann 1995 [1982]). For a more detailed critical discussion of grammaticalization than can possibly be afforded here, the reader is referred to Campbell and Janda (2001), Campbell (2001), Lehmann (2002) and Heine (2003), inter alia.

pragmatics of speaker-hearer interactions and discourse practices (Langacker 1987; Du Bois 1985) via invited inferencing” (Traugott 2003: 634).

Moreover, proponents of this model take a firm stand on the investigation of semantic loss and bleaching for grammaticalization (Bybee 2003a, 2003b; Traugott 1988, 1995a, 1995b, 2003; Heine 2003), which has led to show, among other things, that the early stages of grammaticalization are characterized by an increase in pragmatic significance and subjective expressiveness (Hopper and Traugott 1993: 68; Traugott 1988, 1995a, 1995b, 2003). Recently, Bybee (2003a, 2003b, 2005), Heine (2003) and Traugott (2003) have highlighted the centrality of constructions to the context-induced view of grammaticalization, thus arguing that “grammaticalization of lexical items takes place within particular constructions and [...] that grammaticalization is the creation of new constructions.” (Bybee 2003a: 146; 2003b: 602; Diewald 2006). Together with the semantico-pragmatic context in which the construction is used, frequency is invoked within this model as a crucial factor for the description as well as the explanation of synchronic states and diachronic changes (e.g. Hopper & Traugott 1993; Bybee et al. 1994; Bybee & Hopper 2001, *inter alia*). In particular, within the general background of grammaticalization as a form of routinization of language (Haiman 1991), it has been further noted that (i) grammaticalization results in an increase in contexts where the grammaticalized item is used, and (ii) that a grammaticalized item increases in frequency (Wischer 2000: 357; Heine 2003: 587; Bybee 2003a: 147, 2003b: 603, 2005: 14), thus possibly becoming automated as a single processing unit (Bybee 2003b: 603).¹⁹ In keeping with this premise, frequency has been one of the main parameters around which the data presented in this paper revolves, especially the fine-grained characterization of the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* configuration provided in section 7.

¹⁹ For a more comprehensive review of grammaticalization in general and work on (morpho)-syntactic change in particular, the reader is referred to Lehmann (2002) and Heine (2003), *inter alia*.

Furthermore, two types of grammaticalization have been put forward in the literature, which can for current purposes be summarized as follows (cf. Wischer 2000: 356-357):

(i) Subtype I: This involves the grammaticalization of free syntactic units into highly constrained grammatical morphemes, which function *at the level of the proposition* (cf. Lehmann 1985). Moreover, it assumes the following stages for the process of grammaticalization (cf. also Givón 1979: 209):

discourse → syntax → morphology → morphophonemics → zero

Anticipating part of the discussion in the remainder of this paper (see further Section 7) regarding the behaviour of *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* constructions (e.g. *Mr John Spencer no era lo que se dice un hombre intachable* ‘Mr John Spencer was not what you may call an irreproachable man’), I concur with Traugott (1995b, 2003: 629-630) that this first subtype, as put forward in Lehmann (1985), proves somewhat inadequate to handle some data, including the synchronic dimension (and possibly also the diachronic development) of the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* configurations under scrutiny here. As shown below, there is no discourse → syntax → morphology progression in the case of the string in question, given that it keeps its formal clause appearance and, what is more important, it clearly does not enter the domain of morphology, as is evident in e.g. its invariable resistance to grammaticalization into an affix. Rather the examination of the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* configurations suggests the following alternative to subtype I above (cf. Traugott 1995b: 15):

Syntax via pragmatic strengthening in discourse → syntax with different function

As Traugott (2003: 631) is anxious to emphasize, this grammaticalization type involves the recruitment of already extant grammatical structures. In particular, the grammaticalization process under discussion here involves the same syntactic environment, namely, the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}*

configuration. What changes is the new polysemies/functions that the string develops throughout the grammaticalization process, as detailed in section 7.

(ii) Subtype II: This involves the development of textual or discourse markers and, unlike subtype I, it operates on *the textual or discourse level*, thus taking discourse to be the final stage in the process of grammaticalization (cf. Traugott 1982: 256):²⁰

proposition → text → discourse

With these caveats in mind, and given the pre-eminent semantico-pragmatic motivation of the grammaticalization process at work in the case of *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* configurations, the constructionist analysis presented in this paper of these configurations draws on the Traugottian versions of the grammaticalization subtypes I and II outlined above. However, for ease of exposition, I defer until section 7.4 a discussion of how grammaticalization can be assessed under the Traugottian account and, in particular, how some correlated structural and pragmatic features of grammaticalization can be pinpointed, as a corollary to the findings arising from the examination of the configuration in the data from the CREA Corpus.

Not only do I concur with Wischer (2000: 364)'s suggestion that the two types of grammaticalization are “not at all contradictory processes”, but I also contend in the remainder of this paper that both processes may well very often co-occur to the extent of being inseparable in specific contexts. This is shown in section 7.3 with particular reference to *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* configurations in Spanish.

Having provided a selected review of those aspects of grammaticalization directly impinging on the construction under analysis here, I now turn to the characterization of the three-

²⁰ A terminological note is in order here. As noted by Traugott (2003: 633), the terms “text” and “textual” should be understood here as referring to “the development of meanings signalling cohesion”.

point scale exhibited by passive verbless configurations introduced by *se dice* ('is said') in Spanish.

6.2 Non-grammaticalized configurations with an active counterpart

The first point in the three-fold continuum is instantiated by configurations of the type illustrated in (19), where the matrix verb *dice* (lit. 'says') can be paraphrased as *llama* (lit. 'calls').

- (19) (...) en alemán se escrib-e mit Karacho (pronunciése la
in German PASS write-PRS.3SG pronounce-IMP.2SG DEF
ch como en Bach) para lo que en español coloquial se
ch as in Bach for DEF.N.SG REL in Spanish colloquial PASS
dic-e a todo gas (...)
say-PRS.3SG at full gas

'In German one writes mit Karacho (you should pronounce the "ch" as in Bach) for what in colloquial Spanish would be described as a todo gas'

(CREA Corpus, 1997, ABC Electrónico, 22/09/1997: Tercera: no todo es inglés)

In configurations of this type, the *se*-clitic is more likely than not to be construed as an actor of the action encoded in the verb, which explains among other things why an impersonal interpretation (e.g. *En alemán uno escribe mit Karacho para lo que uno dice en español coloquial a todo gas*, 'In German one writes *mit Karacho* for what one would describe in colloquial Spanish as *a todo gas*') is feasible here.

6.3 Non-grammaticalized configurations without an active counterpart

The second point in the continuum is illustrated in (20), where the passive form *se dice* (lit. 'is said') can be rephrased as *se considera* (lit. 'is considered'). The non-felicitous result yielded by an active counterpart is conveniently illustrated in (20) below:

- (20) Hac-e un tiempo que Suárez no ha pod-ido
 Do-PRS.3SG INDF time REL Suárez NEG AUXPFV.3SG can-PTCP
 evit-ar mir-ar a Leopoldo con el ojo cruzado.
 avoid-INF look-INF OBJ Leopoldo with DEF eye crossed
 Sobre todo desde que la Prensa insist-e en
 above all since that DEF Press insist-PRS.3SG in
 present-ar-lo como una alternativa a su propia figura
 present-INF-3SG.ACC as INDF alternative to his own figure
 que **se dic-e** bien vist-a por el Ejército y
 REL PASS say-PRS.3SG well seen-PTCP by DEF Army and
 por la Iglesia, (...)
 by DEF Church

‘For some time Suárez has not been able to avoid looking disfavouredly on Leopoldo. Especially after the Press insists on presenting him as an alternative to his own figure which is said to be well looked upon by the Army and the Church, (...)’
 (CREA Corpus, 1981, Javier Figuero, UCD: La “empresa” que creó Adolfo Suárez. Historia, sociología y familias del suarismo)

6.4 Grammaticalized configurations without an active counterpart

Finally, the last type within this three-stage continuum is illustrated in (21), where the passive matrix string *se dice* (‘is said’), unlike the examples reproduced in 6.1 and 6.2 above, illustrates the case of a free syntactic structure, viz. a nominal relative clause, which has undergone an early process of grammaticalization observable among other things in a shift of the original processual meaning to develop into (i) a subjunct (focusing/emphasizer) as well as (ii) a summative reformulatory conjunct (Quirk et al. 1985: 631-647), as argued in some detail in section 7. However, in much the same vein as the configurations in 6.3, an active counterpart is invariably non-felicitous here.

- (21) Mr John Spencer no era **lo** **que** **se**
 Mr John Spencer NEG be.IMPPRET.3SG DEF.N.SG REL PASS
- dic-e** un hombre intachable
 say-PRS.3SG INDF man irreproachable

‘Mr John Spencer was not what you may call an irreproachable man’
 (CREA Corpus, 1980, Anónimo, Los tripulantes de ovníis)

It is this last type of configuration that will be the focus of analysis in the remainder of this paper. Therefore, the labels *lo que se dice* configuration/construction should be henceforth understood as referring to grammaticalized instances without an active counterpart, as in (21) above, unless otherwise noted.

7. A microscopic view of the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* construction in Spanish

The material on which this section is based consists of 206 examples of grammaticalized instances of the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* construction out of 232 tokens of *se dice* (‘is said’) in the verbless clause configuration (88.72%) in the CREA Corpus sampled from the following categories: *Ciencia y Tecnología* (‘Science and Technology’) and *Ciencias Sociales* (‘Social Sciences’). All the tokens extracted were found exclusively in the latter category.

Lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS} configurations are particularly interesting for two reasons: (i) these are especially productive within passive verbless complement configurations with *se dice*, accounting for an 80% of the total distribution for this verb (cf. table 1), and (ii) configurations of this type feature a prominent degree of syntactico-semantic versatility which can be conflated into two major functions: (i) a restrictive focusing and/or emphazier subjunct (Quirk et al. 1985: 610-612; Fuentes 1991; Fernández Lagunilla and De Miguel 2000, inter alia), and (ii) a connective discourse marker with a summative function roughly equivalent to *en definitiva* (‘in short’) or *o sea* (‘that is’).

Given that the occurrence of the string in question is considerably more frequent (178 out of 206 tokens, 86.40%) in its restrictive focusing and/or emphaser subjunct function than in its connective summative function (28 out of 206 tokens; 13.59%), the most salient general properties of the former function are presented in the first place.

7.1 *The structural and functional properties of the grammaticalized lo que se dice string*

The most outstanding properties of the *lo que se dice* string as a restrictive focusing and/or emphaser subjunct can be summarized as in (i) – (iii) below:

(i) Configurations of this type can draw attention to a part of a sentence as wide as the predication or as narrow as a single constituent of an element (such as a postmodifying qualifier in a noun phrase as subject complement, or an auxiliary within a verb phrase) (Quirk et al. 1985: 604), as in (22a) – (22b) below:

(22a)	Ésta	ha	sido	una	faena	lo	que
	DIST	AUXPFV.3SG	be.PTCP	INDF	performance	DEF.N.SG	REL
	se	dic-e	de	altura			
	PASS	say-PRS.3SG	of	height			

(scope: postmodifier within an NP)

‘This has been a performance that you might call worthy of the occasion’
(CREA Corpus, 1975, Gabriel García-Badell, Funeral por Francia)

(22b)	(...)	Y	aquella	noche	i-ba	lo	que
		And	DIST	night	go-IMPPRET.1SG	DEF.N.SG	REL
	se	dic-e	corr-iendo,	urgid-o	por	algo (...)	
	PASS	say-PRS.3SG	run-GER	press-PTCP	by	something	

(scope: lexical verb within a progressive VP)

‘(...) And that night I was, you might say, running off, driven (on) by something’
(CREA Corpus, 1995, Luciano G. Egido, Corazón)

(ii) In much the same way as some focusing subjuncts in English (e.g. ‘only’), the configuration under examination here may occur either before or after the element it brings into focus. Consider, by way of illustration, (23) below, where the configuration in question occurs as a postmodifier:

- (23) (...) ¡veng-a veng-a aquí! Usted ten-drá más
 Come- come-IMP.2SG here you have-FUT.2SG more
 IMP.2SG
 fuerza pero le falt-a maña no tien-e
 strength but 2SG.DAT lack-PRS.3SG skill NEG have-PRS.3SG
 [buena mano **lo** **que** **se** **dic-e**],
 good hand DEF.N.SG REL PASS say-PRS.3SG

(...) ‘come, come here! You may be stronger but you are not skilful, you don’t have what you (would) call a knack’ (...)

(CREA Corpus, 1975, Gabriel García-Badell, Funeral por Francia)

(iii) Crucially, the sequence instantiated by *lo que se dice* is almost completely fixed: *lo que* is frozen with respect to gender and number and must invariably appear in the simple present tense, as illustrated in (24) and (25), respectively.

- (24) La “lambada” lleg-a a su clímax cuando sus
 DEF lambada arrive-PRS.3SG to its climax when[SUB] its
 protagonistas tien-en sangre latina en sus venas y
 protagonists have-PRS.3PL blood Latin in their veins and
 sus cuerpos son **lo** **que** **se** **dic-e**
 their bodies be.PRS.3PL DEF.N.SG REL PASS say-PRS.3SG
 pura fibra elástica
 pure fibre elastic

‘The lambada comes to a climax when the participants have Latin blood in their veins and their bodies are what you (would/might) call pure elastic fibre’

(CREA Corpus, 1989, ABC, 02/09/1989: La “lambada” ya está aquí)

- (25) Mr John Spencer no era lo que [***se**
 Mr John Spencer NEG be.IMPPRET.3SG DEF.N.SG REL PASS
dec-ía/ ***se** **ha** **dicho/** **??pued-e**
 say-IMPPRET.3SG PASS PFV AUX.PRES.3SG say.PTCP can-PRS.3SG
dec-ir-se/ **??pod-ría** **dec-ir-se/** ***ha**
 say-INF-PASS can-CONDITIONAL.3SG say-INF-PASS PFVAUX.PRS.3SG
pod-ido **dec-ir-se]** un hombre intachable
 can-PTCP say-INF-PASS INDF man irreproachable
 *‘Mr John Spencer was not what was called/has been called [?can/may be
 called/*has been called] an irreproachable man’

A further interesting facet of the fixedness of the *lo que se dice* string concerns the impossibility of having any intervening material, as illustrated in (26) below:

- (26) Mr John Spencer no era lo que (# **comunmente**)
 Mr John Spencer NEG be.IMPPRET.3S DEF.N.SG REL commonly
 G
se **dic-e** (**# comunmente**) un hombre intachable
 PASS say-PRS.3SG commonly INDF man irreproachable

Even more important perhaps for our purposes here is the high degree of obligatoriness exhibited by the *dice* (‘says’) form in the *lo que se dice* string, as evidenced among other things by the fact that it cannot be replaced with any other *verba dicendi or cogitandi* at least in the grammaticalized version of the configuration with no active counterpart illustrated in (27) below:

(27)	Mr John Spencer	no	era		lo		que	se
	Mr John Spencer	NEG	be.IMPPRET.3SG		DEF.N.SG		REL	PASS
	dic-e/	#	llam-a/	#	denomina/	#	supon-e/	
	say-PRS.3SG		call-PRS.3SG		label-PRS.3SG		suppose-PRS.3SG	
	# consider-a		un		hombre		intachable	
	consider-PRS.3SG		INDF		man		irreproachable	

‘Mr John Spencer was not what you may say/ call/ label/ suppose/ consider an irreproachable man.’

Thus far this section has been solely concerned with structural and semantico-pragmatic evidence pointing to the high degree of internal fixedness as well as the heavy lexical restrictions exhibited by the *lo que se dice* string. Moreover, the increased syntactic freedom of the *lo que se dice* string as a whole unit, especially manifest in its feasibility to occur as a postmodifier fits in nicely with what has been characterized as the main syntactic consequence of subjectification in grammaticalization, namely, the cancellation of syntax (Company Company 2004: 22, forthcoming). The relatively high degree of fixedness of the string in question, however, dramatically contrasts with the versatility of the following XP_{FOCUS} element, as shown in section 7.2.

7.2 A structural and semantico-pragmatic characterization of the XP_{FOCUS} element

This section examines the most salient structural and semantico-pragmatic characteristic properties of the XP_{FOCUS} following the *lo que se dice* string. These are detailed in (i) – (iii) below:

(i) There is an extraordinary degree of morphosyntactic flexibility with regard to the category of the element filling in the postverbal XPCOMP slot. Specifically, the perfect acceptability of NPs,²¹ APs, PPs, Adverbial Phrases, and full Verb Phrases dramatically contrasts with the marginal acceptability of non-finite clauses, as illustrated in (28a) – (28b):

21 Interestingly, NPs realized by proper nouns with an unambiguous identifying character are invariably non-acceptable (e.g. **Yo soy lo que se dice Fernando Martínez Cervantes*: I am what you (would) call Fernando Martínez *Constructions* SV1-5/2006 (www.constructions-online.de, urn:nbn:de:0009-4-6799, ISSN 1860-2010)

- (28a) Que España va bien, lo que se
 That[COMP] Spain go.PRS.3SG well DEF.N.SG REL PASS
 dic-e bien, pero que muy bien, es cosa
 say-PRS.3SG well but that very well be.PRS.3SG thing
 sabida (...)
 know-PTCP

(Adverbial Phrase)

‘That Spain is doing well, what you (would) call well, indeed really well, is something well-known’

(CREA Corpus, 1997, *Época*, 08/12/1997: *Retrosesos de la España de Aznar*)

- (28b) Claro que caér-se-le la baba, lo que se
 Clear that[COMP] fall-INF- DEF saliva DEF.N.SG REL PASS
 3SG.DAT
 dic-e caér-se-le la baba a Mary, con la
 say-PRS.3SG fall-INF-3SG.DAT DEF saliva OBJ Mary with DEF
 foto de tío Ramón en bañador, una foto
 picture of uncle Ramón in swimming.trunks INDF Picture
 donde se ve-ía clarísimo que tío Ramón
 REL PASS see-IMPPRET.3SG clearest that[COMP] uncle Ramón
 ten-ía una facha estupenda
 have-IMPPRET.3SG INDF outward.show wonderful

(Non-finite clause)

‘But drooling, Mary what you (would) call her drooling over the picture of her uncle Ramón in swimming trunks, a picture where it was really evident that uncle Ramón was incredibly good-looking’

(CREA Corpus, 1991, Eduardo Mendicutti, *El palomo cojo*)

Cervantes) in the XPCOMP slot here, this being perhaps one of the very few restrictions shared with (non-grammaticalized) active and passive verbless complement configurations in Spanish, as illustrated in (12) – (13).

Crucially, the examples reproduced in (28a) – (28b) above can be taken to evidence a dramatic increase in the syntactic scope of the grammaticalized *lo que se dice* string, as shown among other things by the fact that none of the XPCOMPs reproduced in (28a) – (28b) – including syntactically complex strings consisting of an NP and an infinitival complement clause, as in (28b) – is acceptable in the environments outlined in 6.2 and 6.3 above.

(ii) Interestingly enough, the NP XPCOMP configuration cannot enter in competition with a finite *que*-clause, as illustrated in (29) below:

(29)	*Mr John	no	era	lo	que	se	
	Spencer						
	Mr John Spencer	NEG	be.IMPPRET.3SG	DEF.N.SG	REL	PASS	
	dic-e	(que)	es	un	hombre	intachable	
	say-PRS.3SG	that[COMP]	be.PRS.3SG	INDF	man	irreproachable	

* Mr John Spencer was not what you may call that it is an irreproachable man'

(iii) From a semantico-pragmatic viewpoint, the contribution of the *lo que se dice* $XPCOMP_{FOCUS}$ construction in question is to focus the denotation of the element in the XP_{FOCUS} slot as a prototypical (or 'real') instance, usually with a contrastive focus, as shown by their feasibility of being replaced with *realmente* ('as a matter of fact') and *verdaderamente* ('really') in Spanish.

- (30) **Bail-ar,** lo que se dic-e **bail-ar,** Pedro Osinaga
 dance-INF DEF.N.SG REL PASS say-PRS.3SG dance-INF Pedro Osinaga
- no lo muestr-a en el escenario [más bien
 NEG 3SG.ACC demonstrate-PRS.3SG in DEF stage more well
- muev-e su cuerpo ligeramente al son de la
 move-PRS.3SG his body gently to.DEF rhythm of DEF
- música]
 music

‘Dancing, really dancing, Pedro Osinaga never does any on the stage [rather, he gently moves his body to the rhythm of the music]’

(CREA Corpus, 1987, ABC, 13/11/1987: Pedro Osinaga: “Nuestra única subvención es la sonrisa del público”) ²²

More specifically, these configurations are very similar to instances of *contrastive reduplication* (Ghomeshi, Jackendoff, Rosen & Russell 2004), and in actual fact they often occur with instances of this type (or may even feature an actual contrastive reduplication instance in the XP_{focus} slot), as illustrated in (31) below:

- (31) Como Sebas no est-á **loco,** lo que se
 As Sebas NEG be.PRS.3.SG mad DEF.N.SG REL PASS
- dic-e **loco, loco de at-ar,** pues se
 say-PRS.3.SG mad mad of tie-INF therefore 3SG.REFL
- d-ió cuenta de que aquello no
 give-INDPRET.3SG account of that[COMP] DIST NEG
- era normal (...)
 be.IMPPRET.3SG normal

‘Since Sebas is not mad, not really mad, what you (would) call mad, stark raving mad, he therefore realized that was not normal’

(CREA Corpus, 1988, Manuel Hidalgo, Azucena, que juega al tenis)

²² The material within square brackets has been added by the author for the sake of clearer argumentation. *Constructions* SV1-5/2006 (www.constructions-online.de, urn:nbn:de:0009-4-6799, ISSN 1860-2010)

Interestingly enough, configurations of this type very frequently (30% of the cases) involve left dislocation of the XPCOMP (see further Valenzuela, Hilferty & Garachana 2005), as in (32) below, a feature often associated with a colloquial style in Spanish (cf. Vigara Tauste 1992: 144-163):

(32) Pero vamos, **enfermo**, **enfermo**, lo que se dic-e
 but well sick sick DEF.N.SG REL PASS say-PRS.3SG

enfermo, pues no [mas bien algo debilidad-o]
 sick really NEG more well somewhat weaken-PTCP

‘But, sick, sick, what you (would/might) call sick, I don’t think he is
 [but rather a bit weak]’

(CREA Corpus, 1992, Santiago Moncada, Caprichos)

Therefore, an interesting corollary that can be established from the preceding discussion is that the distribution as well as the versatility of the XP_{FOCUS} element must be understood in terms of an interaction of morphosyntactic, syntactic and lexical factors. Moreover, the versatility of the XP_{FOCUS} element and the fixedness of the preceding *lo que se dice* configuration can be adequately captured by positing a lower-level subconstruction, viz. the *lo que se dice* XP_{FOCUS} within the Impersonal-Subjective Transitive construction in Spanish. In turn, the evidence presented so far can be seen as lending further credence to the notion of construction articulated by Bybee, Thompson, and colleagues (see e.g. Bybee & Hopper 2001) as conventionalized recurring sequences of morphemes or words with open slots (i.e. some positions that allow choices among classes of items of varying size – in this case the XP_{FOCUS} slot; cf. Bybee 2003a, 2005, inter alia). Furthermore, the considerable degree of frequency and entrenchment exhibited by this configuration argues the case for the need to recognise it as a construction in its own right even if some of its grammatical and semantico-pragmatic properties can be predicted from the corresponding higher level construction (cf. Goldberg 2006: 214-215).

7.3 The *lo que se dice* configuration as a connective discourse marker

This section examines grammaticalized instances of the *lo que se dice* string functioning as a discourse marker (see further Schifffrin 1987; Fraser 1990) or, more precisely, a conjunct (Quirk et al. 1985: 631-647; Portolés Lázaro 1993; Fuentes 1993; Martín Zorraquino & Portolés Lázaro 1999: 4055-4056, inter alia), which has the function of “conjoining independent units rather than one of contributing another facet of information to a single integrated unit” (Quirk et al. 1985: 631), as illustrated in (33) below:²³

- (33) La cantante Alaska (abajo) no sólo cant-a que
 DEF singer Alaska below NEG only sing-PRS.3SG that[COMP]
 su novio es un zombi, sino que también
 her boyfriend be.PRS.3.SG INDF zombie but that also
 visit-a todas las salas cinematográficas que proyect-an
 visit-PRS.3SG all DEF rooms cinematographic REL play-PRS.3PL
 historias para no dorm-ir. **Lo que se dic-e**
 stories for-PURP NEG sleep-INF DEF.N.SG REL PASS say-PRS.1SG
un amor de película
 INDF love of movie

‘The singer Alaska (below) not only sings that her boyfriend is a zombie, but also visits all the theatres playing horror movies. In short, a fascinating love’
 (CREA Corpus, 1989, ABC, 25/07/1989: La vía láctea).

The scope of modification of the *lo que se dice* configuration in its function as a conjunct may go all the way from phrasal elements functioning as single phrasal constituents (as in (34) below) to, crucially, sentences, paragraphs, or even larger parts of a text (cf. Martín Zorraquino & Portolés Lázaro 1999: 4070), as in (33) above.

²³ By virtue of their grammaticalized status, the conjunct uses of the *lo que se dice* configuration under examination here also share the fixed expression status of their focusing/emphasizer subjunct grammaticalized counterparts, as argued in section 7.1.

(34)	Después	exist-ía	un	segundo	deber	consistente	en	
	Afterwards	exist-	INDF	second	duty	consisting	in	
		IMPPRET.3SG						
	solt-ar	el	agua	al	final	de	cada	servicio, que
	release-INF	DEF	water	at. DEF	end	of	every	service that[COMP]
	usted	sólo	ha	hecho	aguas	menores,	lo	que
	you	only	PFVAUX.PRS.2SG	do.PTCP	waters	minor	DEF.N.SG	REL
	se	dic-e	un	meado	normal?			
	PASS	say-PRS.3SG	INDF	pee	ordinary			

‘Then there was a second duty consisting in releasing the water at the end of every service, so you have just peed, what you may call an ordinary pee?’
(CREA Corpus, 1975, Gabriel García-Badell, Funeral por Francia)

Crucially, by virtue of their inherent connective function, conjuncts unambiguously display a coherence-building potential. This textual dimension is evidenced among other things in the fact that these very often summarize the preceding discourse. In fact, all 28 tokens of the conjunct use of the configuration under examination here perform a *summative* (Quirk et al. 1985: 634) or *reformulatory* (Fuentes 1993; Portolés Lázaro 1993; Martín Zorraquino & Portolés Lázaro 1999: 4072-4073) function. In keeping with such a summative value, they are invariably placed in initial position in the sentence/clause that wraps up the preceding discourse (see further example (33) above). Interestingly enough, this summative value is also physically reflected in a dramatic condensation of the preceding discourse into the XP_{FOCUS} element following the *lo que se dice* string (cf. also Kovacci 1999: 767). Specifically, the most productive strategy is to encapsulate the preceding stretch of discourse in a relatively short NP (24 out of the 28 tokens; 85.71%), as in example (33) above, or in an equally succinct infinitival clause (4 out of the 28 tokens; 14.28%), as in (35) below:

- (35) De todas maneras, mis hijos tuv-ieron más
 Of all ways my children have-INDEFPRET.3PL more
 suerte que yo. Cuando yo nac-í,
 luck than 1SG when[SUB] 1SG be.born-INDEFPRET.1SG.ACT
 el mío est-aba de cuerpo presente. **Lo**
 DEF.M.SG mine be-IMPPRET.3SG of body present DEF.M.SG
que se dic-e ni conoc-er-lo
 REL PASS say-PRS.3SG not.even know-INF-3SG.ACC

‘Anyway, my children were luckier than myself. When I was born, my father was dead, waiting to be buried. In other words, I didn’t even get to know him’

(CREA Corpus, 1986, Miguel Delibes, La hoja roja)

Furthermore, a two-fold distinction can be made between *paraphrastic* reformulatory conjuncts/markers and *non-paraphrastic* reformulatory ones (cf. Fuentes 1993; Portolés Lázaro 1993; Martín Zorraquino & Portolés Lázaro 1999: 4133). This distinction is motivated by the nature of the recapitulation introduced by the *lo que se dice* string. In the former type, as in example (34) above, the recapitulation does not involve any kind of variation in semantico-pragmatic import and is basically of a semantic type, as shown crucially by e.g. the near-synonymy relationship holding between the NPs *aguas menores* (‘pee’, or, alternatively, ‘do number one’ in British English) and *un meado normal* (‘an ordinary pee’). In the latter type, by contrast, the basis for the recapitulation in question is pragmatic in nature, and the material encoded in the XPCOMP after *lo que se dice* is not just a mere reformulation of the preceding discourse elements. This is the case in example (33) above, where the NP *un amor de película* (‘a fascinating love’) further adds, through a pun, an overwhelming laudatory appraisal by the subject/writer of Alaska’s compelling passion for (horror) movies. Interestingly enough, non-paraphrastic reformulatory uses of *lo que se dice* rank higher in frequency (25 tokens out of 28; 89.28%) in comparison to paraphrastic ones (3 out of 28; 10.71%).

As in the case of the Subjective-Transitive construction, and the emphasizer/focusing use of the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* configuration, the notion of subjectivity can be seen to play a role here. In particular, covert subjectivity (cf. Scheibman 2002: 158, 169) is encoded through the choice of predicate nominals in the *XP_{FOCUS}* slot conveying a value judgement on the part of the subject/speaker, as illustrated in (33) above. In addition, the *lo que se dice* string, by virtue of its conjunct or textual elaborator status is considered to be subjective in itself, insofar as it expresses the speaker's attitude towards some element in the discourse flow (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 632; Traugott 1995a: 40, inter alia).

Bearing in mind that the analysis of discourse markers may, in some cases, resist a clear-cut classification, especially in view of the fact that "... any one marker may have a wide variety of meanings which overlap with the meanings of other markers" (Brinton 1990: 48), it is convenient to highlight at least one example where the *lo que se dice* string as a focusing/emphasizer subjunct is practically indistinguishable from its connective summative use. In fact, more than 75% of the native informants agreed that the string given as example (36) below could be felicitously paraphrased as *realmente/ciertamente* ('really', 'truly') and *en definitiva/o sea* ('in short', 'that is'). Interestingly enough, this example builds on the evidence reported in e.g. Schwenter (1996: 870) that Spanish *o sea* ('that is') manifests properties of both epistemic markers and commentary pragmatic markers, while also lending further credence to Traugott's contention that grammaticalization is gradual (Traugott 2003: 626).

(36) Ahora ya sí que no entiendo nada
 now already yes that NEG understand-PRS.1SG nothing

–cabeceó el maestro con gesto serio–.
 nod-INDEFPRET.3SG DEF teacher with gesture serious

Lo que se dice nada
 DEF.N.S REL PASS say-PRS.3SG nothing

G

‘Now I do not really understand anything –nodded the teacher with a serious gesture. **Anything** at all’

(CREA Corpus, 1984, Ramón Ayerra, La lucha inútil)

7.4 The *lo que se dice* string as a case of early grammaticalization

The synchronic behaviour of the *lo que se dice* configuration, involving a focusing/emphasizer subjunct function as well as a reformulatory connective use, can be taken to point to an early stage of grammaticalization involving a cluster of structural and semantico-pragmatic factors detailed in (i) – (iv) below:

(i) **Decategorialization:** This term is generally taken to refer to “the set of processes by which a noun or verb loses its morphosyntactic properties in the process of becoming a grammatical element” (cf. Heine et al. 1991a). In the case of verbs in particular, decategorialization implies that as they become grammaticalized, they may lose such verb-like attributes as the ability to show variation in tense, aspect, modality, and person-number marking (see further Hopper & Traugott 1993: 105). As will be recalled, this is the picture that emerges in the case of the form *dice* (‘says’) in the configuration under scrutiny here, where the verb is invariably found in the present tense (cf. example (25) above). Moreover, the fact that the form *dice* still preserves some of its verbal traits and is also etymologically transparent to most native speakers, can also be taken to give evidence for the fact that this configuration lies at one of the intermediate points in a decategorialization cline (see further *ibid.*). Furthermore, it has also been noted that the lexical items that grammaticalize are typically what are known as “basic words”

(Hopper & Traugott 1993: 97), which fits in nicely with the general, basic nature of *decir* ('say') in Spanish, especially in relation to the other *verba cogitandi et dicendi* reproduced in table 1 (see also Davies 2006: 12 *inter alia* for further evidence).

(ii) Generalization of meaning: This term designates "the loss of specific features of meaning with the consequent expansion of appropriate contexts of use for a grammar" (Bybee et al. 1994: 289; Lehmann 1995 [1982]; Bybee 2003b: 605) usually through a process of habituation conditioned by repetition. Moreover, in the process of grammaticalization, meanings expand their range through the development of various polysemies (Hopper & Traugott 1993: 100). In other words, the meaning generalizes in the sense that more and more domains (i.e. polysemies) progressively become available. In the case of the *lo que se dice* string under scrutiny here, these polysemies involve: (i) a restrictive focusing/emphasizer subjunct, and (ii) a summative reformulatory conjunct. In particular, when these polysemies are balanced against the original processual meaning of the *lo que se dice* string, it can be seen that they involve a shift, rather than a loss, of meaning, thus possibly pointing to an early stage of grammaticalization (see further Hopper & Traugott 1993: 89, *inter alia*). Furthermore, as noted by Bybee (2003b: 605), this generalization of meaning appears to pervade the whole grammaticalization continuum, with grammaticalizing items becoming increasingly more general as the process unfolds. This observation ties in well with the fact that the focusing/emphasizer subjunct is less general and/or abstract than the chronologically later reformulatory connective counterpart.

(iii) Increase in pragmatic function/pragmatic strengthening: The string in question acquires pragmatic meanings (i.e. a reinforcing emphasize/focusing subjunct meaning as well as a summative reformulative connective meaning) but only at the expense of a weakening of part of its original meaning (cf. Traugott 1988, 1995a, 1995b). Furthermore, the string appears to move along a cline (or, alternatively, a path) of referential > non-referential functions (see further Dasher 1995). In particular, the synchronic behaviour of the string can be seen to be motivated in

terms of a “unidirectional movement away from (its) original specific and concrete reference and toward increasingly general and abstract reference” (Pagliuca 1994: ix), as detailed below (see further Traugott 1995b: 14):

concrete action (i.e. a process of saying-evaluation) > evidential/epistemic element (i.e. a (focusing/emphasizer) subjunct) > metatextual elaborator (i.e. a summative reformulatory conjunct)

This tentative claim may well be on the right track especially in view of the following two facts emerging from the examination of the 850 tokens of *lo que se dice* available in the CORDE Corpus comprising data from the early origins of Spanish up to 1990:

(a) The earliest record of the grammaticalized *lo que se dice* configuration attested in the CORDE Corpus goes back to as late as 1888, in which the string in question unambiguously functions as a (focusing/emphasizer) subjunct, as illustrated in (37):

(37) (...) su casa de la calle de los Reyes era
his house of DEF street of DEF Majesties be.IMPPRET.3SG

lo que se dic-e una tacita de plata
DEF.N.SG REL PASS say-PRS.3SG INDF little.cup of silver

‘His house in the Majesties Street was what you would call really clean’
(CORDE Corpus, 1888, Benito Pérez Galdós, *Miau*)

(b) By contrast, the earliest instance of a connective use of the string in question in the CORDE Corpus is attested considerably later than its subjunct counterpart, in 1962, as shown in (38):

(38) ¿es que ni usted, Ruiz, ni nadie, lo
 be.PRS.3SG that[COMP] nor you Ruiz nor nobody DEF.N.SG

que se dic-e nadie!, quier-e acept-ar los
 rel pass say-PRS.3SG nobody want-PRS.3SG accept-INF DEF

hechos?

facts

‘Is it that neither you, Ruiz, nor anybody else, really nobody wants to accept the facts?’

(CORDE Corpus, 1962, Francisco Ayala, El fondo del vaso)

It must be emphasized that the *lo que se dice* sequence in examples (37) – (38) above exhibits the same degree of fixedness as its focusing subjunct counterpart, especially regarding number and tense (see examples (24) – (25)), while also disallowing any intervening material (cf. example (26)) and the insertion of any verba *dicendi et cogitandi* other than *decir* (‘say’).

Further additional support for the above-mentioned cline arises from the fact that the connective configuration, as in (38) above, is relatively rare up to 1990 (only 3 tokens in the CORDE Corpus), while the subjunct function is relatively more frequent, especially from 1970 onwards. Crucially, it must also be noted that the three tokens of the conjunct use of the configuration can also be interpreted as a focusing/emphasizer subjunct (as in example (35) above). In other words, no example of the configuration in question with an exclusive conjunct use of the type in (23) above is found in the CORDE Corpus, which means that instances of the configuration under analysis used as a purely reformulatory connective appear to be the last stage in a gradual grammaticalization process. However, whether the above-mentioned cline can be actually taken to work for the historical evolution of the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* configuration under analysis here, only future diachronic research on a larger scale will tell.

(iv) Subjectification: It has been shown throughout this paper that the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* configuration becomes increasingly more associated (in both its (emphasizer/focusing) subjunct

and reformulatory summative conjunct functions) with speaker's attitude in general and evaluation in particular regarding the content of the proposition, which is especially evident in the choice of evaluative predicative adjectives and predicate nominals in the XP_{FOCUS} slot. However, the summative reformulatory conjunct uses of the configuration in question are even more subjective than their subjunct counterparts, on the grounds that these signal the speaker's attitude to elements in the discourse flow.

All in all, the evidence presented in this paper lends further credence to the following (context-induced) characterization of grammaticalization, understood as:

the process whereby lexical material in highly constrained pragmatic and morphosyntactic contexts is assigned grammatical function, and once grammatical, is assigned increasingly grammatical, operator-like function. (Traugott 2003: 645; cf. also Traugott 1995b: 15)

8. Conclusion

In the preceding pages, I have argued the case for a number of claims that can be summarized as follows:

[i] Otherwise perplexing asymmetries involving asymmetrical passive verbless configurations in Spanish like those in (8) above can be shown to be semantically-motivated and can thus be satisfactorily accounted for if passive configurations of this type are considered to be *constructions* in their own right paradigmatically, rather than syntagmatically, related to the active configurations in question. Specifically, I submit that the examples of the configuration in (8) above are best handled as instances of the *Impersonal Subjective-Transitive* construction, whose general skeletal meaning is **X (NP₁) attributed Y (XPCOMP) by Z (NP₂) in a direct, categorical way**.

[ii] Furthermore, a non-monotonic version of CxG à la Goldberg (1995, 2001, 2003, 2006), by placing the focus on an inheritance network of constructions and allowing for constructional polysemy, can also provide a satisfactory account of the distribution of grammatical subjects and

the XPCOMPs, while also capturing the commonalities with regular passives, especially in relation to the semantico-pragmatic restrictions exhibited by the postverbal XPCOMPs.

[iii] Compelling empirical evidence has been adduced that Spanish passive verbless complement configurations with *se dice* ('is said') illustrate a three-point continuum consisting of (i) non-grammaticalized configurations with an active counterpart, (ii) non-grammaticalized configurations without an active counterpart, and (iii) grammaticalized configurations without an active counterpart.

[iv] More specifically, configurations of the type illustrated in (4) above have been argued to be instances of the Spanish *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* construction, in which the *lo que se dice* string is almost completely fixed and may function on semantico-pragmatic grounds like a focusing/emphasizer subjunct in the sense of Quirk et al. (1985: 610-612) (e.g. *verdaderamente* 'really'). However, it has also been noted that the string in question may function, albeit less frequently, as a summative reformulatory conjunct (e.g. *o sea* 'that is', *en otras palabras* 'in other words', and so forth), as in (33) above.

[v] The structural and semantico-pragmatic properties exhibited by the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* construction appear to point to an early process of grammaticalization, characterized by a cluster of structural and semantico-pragmatic factors involving decategorialization as well as generalization of meaning in conjunction with a prominent increase in pragmatic function and subjectification (cf. Traugott 1988, 1995a, 1995b, 2003).

[vi] Last but not least, the distribution and the cluster of structural and semantico-pragmatic properties of the higher level and lower level configurations of verbless complement constructions in Spanish, whether shared or not, can be aptly characterized and explained within the Goldbergian constructionist account provided here, while also circumventing the theoretical and descriptive problems posed by transformational derivations with no actual active counterparts. Crucially, the relatively high degree of frequency of this configuration with *decir* ('say') in

comparison with the other matrix verbs attested in the asymmetrical passive verbless construction in Spanish (206 tokens out of 232; 88.72%) can be seen to lend further credence to the firm stand on local parsimony taken by those formulations of CxG, such as the Goldbergian one, Croft's Radical Construction Grammar as well as Langacker's Cognitive Grammar, which endorse the usage-based model (cf. Barlow & Kemmer 2000, Bybee & Hopper 2001, Tomasello 2003). Specifically, it shows that "*lower-level schemas*, expressing regularities of only limited scope, *may on balance be more essential to language structure than high-level schemas representing the broadest generalizations.*" (Langacker 2000: 3, emphasis added to the original; see also Croft 2001: 57; 2003: 56-59; Thompson & Hopper 2001: 39-54 for similar representative views). Specifically, the frequency of this configuration with *decir* ('say') underscores the fact that subjectivity is crucial to "the kinds of things human beings talk about and the way they choose to structure their communications" (Bybee 2003b: 622; see also Scheibman 2002). Moreover, the high degree of frequency and therefore also of entrenchment of the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* construction provides compelling evidence that typically local, language-specific and lexically bound schemas or collocations of this type with very explicit material included are psychologically more real and perhaps also more important than broad syntactic templates (à la Levin 1993). In the last instance, the constructionist characterization of the *lo que se dice XP_{FOCUS}* construction presented here provides even more compelling evidence regarding the appropriateness of the paradigmatic view of passives advocated in this paper.

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