Prepositional phrases in RRG.  
A case study from Spanish

SERGIO IbÁNEZ CERDA  
IIFL-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

1. Introduction

Following Jolly's work (1993) on preposition assignment, there are three types of prepositional phrases (PPs) in Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997; Van Valin, 2005), in terms of their status within the sentence and the relation they have with the nuclear predicate: 1) Adjunct PPs, which are introduced by a predicative preposition that contributes its semantics to the argument it licenses. They function as peripheral modifiers of the core, e.g. Mirna had lunch in the garden; 2) PPs with non-predicative prepositions that mark an argument directly licensed by the predicate, which function as oblique core arguments, e.g. Oswald gave a gift to Teresa; and 3) PPs that code an argument of the verb but are marked by a variable preposition that can contribute its semantics to the argument. They have the status of argument—adjuncts in the core—Robert put the CD in/on/behind/under the box.

Following this general schema, on this paper I will outline a more fine-grained characterization of PPs functions in Spanish, taking into account the semantic and syntactic relation they have with different kinds of predicates in some particular constructions. The main goal is to try to show that Jolly's types can be expanded into sub-classes as a way of covering some more specific functions in which the PPs can be used, at least in Spanish; I will also try to establish the inclusion of some 'problematic' PPs in this language to the class of the oblique core arguments.

In particular, I will deal with the following issues: Firstly, I will present the case of PPs in the periphery which do not modify the whole core, as they only have scope over a part of it. Although these PPs are predicative and define the semantics of the participant they introduce, because of such different scope, they have a different logical structure (LS) from the one the standard core peripheral PPs have. They can be considered as a sub-type of adjuncts PPs.
Secondly, I will analyze the recipient-beneficiary PPs introduced by the preposition para in constructions like ‘Margarita preparó la cena para los niños’ ‘Margaret prepared dinner for the kids’, and compare them to the goal PPs of putting verbs and directional motion verbs. Under the standard RRG analysis, these two types of PPs, at least in English, are considered to be a case of argument-adjuncts. I will show that in Spanish these PPs have different status: On one hand, goal PPs, when introduced by the canonical prepositions a ‘to’ and en ‘in/on’, behave as (oblique) core arguments; only when they appear with other semantically charged predicative prepositions as debajo ‘under’, dentro ‘inside’, detrás ‘behind’, hacia ‘towards’, etc., can they be considered argument-adjuncts. Even in this case, they seem to belong to the core. On the other hand, recipient-beneficiary PPs introduced by para share an argument with the LS of the verbs they appear with and, following RRG analysis, this makes them argument-adjuncts. Nevertheless, their preposition is predicative and, in syntactic terms, they behave like non-core arguments. In these terms, they must be in the periphery. As a way of capturing the differences and similarities between Goal PPs with non-canonical prepositions and PPs introduced by para, I suggest two sub-types of argument-adjuncts: argument-adjuncts in the core and argument-adjuncts in the periphery.

Finally, I will also explore the identity of some of the prepositional complements that have been treated under the category of ‘suplemento’ (Alarcos, 1968, 1994) in Hispanic linguistic literature, as the ones in bold letters in the examples in (1):

(1) a. Juan carece de oportunidades.
‘John lacks opportunities.’

b. Juan disfrutó del viaje.
‘John enjoyed the trip.’

In relation to this kind of data, it is argued, in the first place, that the PPs in (1a) and (1b) both fit, in general terms, in the oblique core argument category. Secondly, it is shown that, although they seem to be similar, they fulfill different functions and are not to be confused: They represent two subtypes of oblique core arguments.

The organization of the work is as follows: In the second section, I will approach the adjunct PPs types; in the third section, I will deal with the argument-
adjunct cases, and in the fourth, I will undertake the analysis of the different kinds of oblique core arguments in Spanish. Finally, some last conclusions are presented in the fifth section.

2. Some types of adjuncts PPs in Spanish

Jolly (1993), Van Valin and LaPolla (1997) and Van Valin (2005) identify one type of adjunct PP. This is exemplified in (2):

(2) John baked a cake after work.

In this example, after work is a PP that codifies an element that is not semantically required by the predicate; hence, it is an adjunct of adverbial category. It belongs to the periphery and from there it modifies the core of the clause, that is, the predicate and its arguments, as the whole event implied by baked takes place under the temporal axis denoted by the PP. Here, the preposition after functions as a two-argument predicate, one of them being the whole core and the other one the NP which the preposition introduces to the clause. A standard RRG representation for (2) is the logical structure (LS) in (3):

(3) be-after' (work, [[ do' (John, ø)] CAUSE [BECOME baked' (cake)]])

Beyond this type of PPs, usually called ‘setting’ PPs, there are other kinds of locative PPs in Spanish that can not take the clause in which they are modifiers as an argument, because they have a more ‘local’ scope, even though they are adjuncts in the periphery, as they are not arguments of the verb and are headed by predicative prepositions. This kind of PPs is exemplified in (4):

(4) Juan cortó el pastel sobre la tabla de madera.
   ‘John cut the cake on the wooden board.’

Here, the PP sobre la tabla de madera refers only to the local placement where the change of state of the cake takes place; more precisely, the wooden board is the place where the event of ‘dividing the cake into pieces’ happens. Certainly, Juan is doing something that involves the wooden board, but clearly, he is not located on
the board itself. Consequently, the semantic scope of the PP is not over the core but only over a part of it. This way, we can consider PPs as the one in (4) as partial modifiers of the core. A possible representation for (4) is shown in (5):

(5) do' (Juan, O) CAUSE [be-on' (tabla, [BECOME cut' (pastel)])]

In constrast to the LS in (4), here the adverbial predicate be-on' only has scope over the sub-event of change of state, leaving the activity sub-event out. Now, beyond the case of a sentence like (4), the fact that adjunct PPs can modify structural elements which are not necessarily the whole core, can be seen in a sentence with an added instrumental complement:

(6) Juan cortó el pastel con un cuchillo sobre la tabla de madera.
'John cut the cake with a knife on the wooden board.'

In this example, not only the change of state is under the scope of the locative PP, but part of the action performed by the effector does fall inside its scope: John's knife manipulation and, more clearly, the contact of this instrument with the cake, takes place on the wooden board. This fact can be represented in the following LS:

(7) [do' (Juan, use' (Juan, cuchillo))] CAUSE [[be-on' (tabla, [do' (cuchillo, [cut' (cuchillo, pastel)])])]] CAUSE [BECOME cut' (pastel)]]

Here, only one of the activity sub-events, the one that has the instrument as an effector, is under the scope of be-on', while the more external one, the one in which Juan is the effector, falls out of the scope of the preposition.

To Sum up, the PPs in (4) and (6) have a different behavior from the one exemplified in (2). The three are structurally different, as it is not always the case that, in their LS, the whole core of the clause they appear in is one of their arguments. Nevertheless, all of them have in common the fact that they clearly do not codify verbal arguments, that they are introduced by a predicative preposition and that they are modifiers in the periphery. In this sense, they represent different cases of adjunct PPs.
3. Types of argument-adjuncts in Spanish

The discussion now moves towards the analysis and comparison of the beneficiary-recipient PPs and the goal PPs. In the standard RRG analysis of English prepositions (Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997), these two are assumed to have the same status as argument-adjuncts in the core. In what follows, I will try to show that in the case of their equivalents in Spanish, this is not so, and that they have a different identity.

In section 3.1 I will undertake the analysis of the beneficiary PPs. In section 3.2 the case of the goal PPs will be presented, and in section 3.3 I will extend the analysis to two other types of Spanish PPs.

3.1. Beneficiary PPs introduced by para

As mentioned before, the RRG common analysis considers that the beneficiary-recipient PPs of a sentence like Robin baked a cake for Sandy is an argument-adjunct. This is so, basically because the predicative preposition that heads it has a LS which has an argument that is also an argument of the predicate that functions as nucleus, as can be seen in the representation in (8), as proposed by Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:383):

(8) ||do' (Robin, Ø)| CAUSE [BECOME baked' (cake)]| PURP [BECOME have' (Sandy, cake)]

In this LS, the PP for Sandy is represented by the segment introduced by the PURP operator, which basically has the purpose or finality value. This operator has a sub-structure where there are two arguments: One of them, Sandy, the beneficiary, is the participant being introduced to the sentence by the preposition; the other one, cake, is the semantic argument shared with the LS of the verb. This structural characteristic differentiates this kind of PPs from the adjunct ones and that is why they are labeled argument-adjuncts in the core.

There are, however, some problems if we transport this proposal to the case of the ‘equivalent’ PPs in Spanish, as can be seen if we look at them closer. First of all, the beneficiary-recipient PP introduced by para does not behave as a core argument in relation to its capacity to be controller of ‘pro-drop’ arguments in coordinated clauses and in non-finite final subordinate clauses, as the examples in (9)
show. This behavior is a standard test for identifying arguments that belong to the core. In RRG, the omitted elements in such constructions are called pivots.\(^1\)

(9) a. *Juan, dio un traje a Pedro, y le __, quedó muy bien.*
   'John gave a suit to Peter and it suit (him) pretty well.'

b. *Juan, dio un libro a Pedro para ____, leer.*
   'John gave a book to Peter to read.'

c. *Juan, hizo un traje para Pedro, y le ____, quedó muy bien.*
   'John made a suit for Peter and (he) made it pretty well.'

d. *Juan, elaboró un proyecto para Pedro, y le ____, gustó mucho.*
   'John worked on a project for Peter and (he) liked it very much.'

e. *Juan, envió una limosna para Pedro y María, para ____, ayudar a los pobres.*
   'John sent a donation for Peter and Mary to help the poor.'

In these examples, it can be seen that the recipient-argument of a verb like *dar* 'to give', an inherent participant of the act of giving, that is a core argument, can easily control the reference of the pivot in coordinated clauses. In (9a), clearly, it is Pedro who looks fine in the suit. Even in non-finite final clauses, as in (9b), the recipient outranks the effector as the controller of the pivot. In contrast, the partici-

\(^1\)As a way of making the typological comparisons among different languages possible, RRG get rid of categories like subject and direct object, notions that, accordingly to numerous studies, are not universally valid. As an alternative, this theory proposes the use of the category of privileged syntactic argument (PSA), which refers to each argument that in a particular construction, in a particular language, has access to the majority of the most important syntactic behaviors. The two most important functions that a PSA can have is to be a controller and to be a pivot. A controller is the syntactic element that in a given sentence controls the reference of an omitted element in a coordinated or a subordinate clause. A pivot is the function that bears the omitted element. It is important to consider that the PSA functions can be split among the various arguments in the clause. In this way, while in a given sentence an argument can control the verbal agreement, another one can control the reference of an omitted element in a subordinate clause. Most importantly, it is the case that in the majority of the languages, it is a requirement for a participant to be a core argument in order to be a controller or a pivot.
pant introduced by the preposition para cannot control the pivot in a coordinated clause: The example (9c) does not mean, at least in the first unmarked reading, that Pedro looks fine in the suit. The reference of the pivot is controlled by the undergoer un traje and this is the one that looks fine; just the same, in the example (9d) it is Juan who likes the project and not Pedro. Finally, when a beneficiary appears in a sentence with a final clause, it is always the effector which has priority as the controller of the pivot of that clause, as in (9e): Here, Pedro y María are more likely to be co-referential with the undergoer los pobres of the not finite verb; it is Juan who is helping them.

These data suggest that in a marked difference with the recipients of transference verbs, the beneficiary introduced by para does not behave like a core element. That this is true is confirmed by the fact that Spanish has an alternative mechanism for making core arguments out of the beneficiaries, as they cannot be projected as inherent participants from the LS of any kind of verbs. This mechanism is the dative or indirect object construction, where the beneficiary appears introduced by the preposition a and in which it can be duplicated by the clitic pronoun le:

(10) a. Juan, le hizo el traje a Pedro, y le__, quedó muy bien.
    'John made Peter a suit and it fit (him) pretty well.'

    b. Juan, le elaboró un proyecto a Pedro, y le__, gusto mucho.
    'John worked on a project for Peter and (he) liked it very much.'

    c. Juan, les envió una limosna a Pedro y María, para__, ayudar a los pobres.
    'John sent Peter and Mary a donation to help the poor.'

What is interesting about these examples is that in all of them the beneficiary functions as a controller of pivots, in both the coordinated clauses and the non-finite final clause. As opposed to the sentences in (9), it is now the case that in (10a), at least in the first reading, it is Pedro who fits the suit well. All the same, in (10b) it is Pedro who is preferred as the antecedent of the dative pivot of gustar. Finally, in (10c) the PP a Pedro y a María is controlling the pivot of the final clause; in this case, they are the ones who are helping the poor, although, cleverly, I might say, with Juan's money.

We can say, then, that these PPs introduced by the preposition a and duplicated by the clitic le are core arguments: they can be controllers and, importantly, their
preposition is non-predicative; one can posit that this preposition is assigned by means of a systematic rule applied in the linking through the mediation of a voice constructional scheme, just as it is the case of the assignment of the preposition that marks the actor in the passive construction. This scheme would have to specify the addition of one argument to the core and its marking by the preposition a, among other things.  

Another independent criterion that helps us to determine that the PPs introduced by para in Spanish do not belong to the core is that there are no non-predicative uses of this preposition. As we will see in section 4, a ‘to’, en ‘in, on’, de ‘form, of’, con ‘with’ and por ‘by’ can appear with what are called, in Hispanic linguistic literature, prepositional verbs, or verbs that govern their preposition, that is, intransitive verbs which have two obligatory arguments, one being a direct core argument and one an oblique core argument — ‘Juan se atiene a Peter’ / ‘Juan carece de oportunidades ‘John relies on Peter’ / ‘John lacks opportunities’, etc. —, but para is never used to mark the oblique argument of this kind of verbs. The corresponding Spanish verbs to the English ones of the type of to long and to hope, that appear with an instance of a non-predicative for, are mostly used transitively, e.g., espero la buena nueva, and when they are used in an intransitive way, they are coded with the preposition por, and not with para, e.g., espero por la buena nueva.

To sum up, PPs introduced by para in Spanish are always predicative and do not behave as core arguments. Importantly, they code a participant that is not part of the verb semantics. Nevertheless, they are not like the adjunct PPs analyzed in section 2, because they share one argument with the LS of the verb and, although they are introduced by a predicative preposition, they do not take the whole clause as one of their arguments. They must belong to the periphery, but with a different status. We can label them as ‘argument-adjuncts in the periphery’.  

---

The idea that this kind of indirect object construction is the result of a voice process is further developed in Ibáñez (2004) and (2008). Basically, what is argued in those works is that the canonical way of coding the beneficiaries is by means of the preposition para. If they appear introduced by a, they need to be reduplicated by the clitic le, as it is shown by the ungrammaticality of ‘Juan construyó una casa a María ‘John built a house for Mary’. This way, the beneficiary-indirect object construction is a derived one. It supposes an argument modulation, that is, the ‘promotion’ of a peripheral argument to the core, a process that is marked by the simultaneous presence of a and le, hence the appearance of both these particles is determined by the argument modulation constructional scheme.
3.2. The Goal PPs of movement and change of place verbs

Now, as it has been said before, along with the recipient–beneficiary PPs, the goal PPs of putting verbs —*poner* ‘to put’, *colocar* ‘to place’ *meter* ‘to put inside’, etc.— and intransitive motion verbs —*ir* ‘to go’, *llegar* ‘to arrive’ and *entrar* ‘to go in’, etc.— are considered to be a case of argument-adjuncts. Nevertheless, as I will show below, they have a different semantic and syntactic identity. A first important difference is that goal arguments do behave as typical core arguments; that is, they can control the reference of pivots in coordinated clauses, as it is shown in (11):

(11) a. *En la mañana, Juan, fue a la casa nueva, y se veía bien.*

    In the morning, John went to the new house and (it) looked nice.

    b. *Juan, puso una mesa en la sala nueva, y se veía bien.*

    'John put a table in the new living room and (it) looks nice.'

    c. *Juan, cenó en la sala nueva, y se veía bien.*

    'John had dinner in the new living room and (it) looks nice.'

    d. *Juan, corrió por la casa nueva, y se veía bien.*

    'John ran all over the new house and (it) looked nice.'

In (11a) both *Juan y la casa nueva* could be the controller of the pivot in the coordinated clause. Some speakers even prefer *la casa nueva* as the controller. The case is even clearer with putting verbs, because, as they inherently imply a kind of transference of a theme, the ‘focus’ of the process is in the change of place sub-event. This way, in (11b) the effector *Juan* is not even a competitor for the pivot controller function; the competition is between the theme and the goal. Examples (11c) and (11d) show that this behavior is not permitted to peripheral locative PPs. These data suggest that in a marked difference with the beneficiary PPs introduced by *para*, the goal PPs of change of place verbs are core arguments. They do not have the same status.

The syntactic differences between the goal PPs of change of place verbs and the beneficiary PPs that appear with transitive verbs are anchored in a more important difference, a semantic one: Goal arguments are an inherent part of the verb meaning, beneficiaries never are. There is nothing in the semantics of a verb
like *to bake* that makes us predict that the event linguistically described with that item implies a beneficiary. These are freely added to the linguistic conceptualization, and when they are not coded, they do not play a single role in the interpretation of a given sentence.

This again marks a big difference with the goal PPs of change of place verbs. Beyond the fact that they can be left out of the projection without yielding ungrammatical sentences, goals strongly tend to be coded. In a corpus study (Ibáñez 2005) of Spanish intransitive goal motion verbs like *ir* ‘to go’, *venir* ‘to come’, *llegar* ‘to arrive’, and *entrar* ‘to go in’, among others, it was found out that goals appear with the verbs they are implied by in a range of 70% to 90% of the cases, depending on the verb. More importantly, even when they are not coded, they still play a role in the interpretation of the sentences they appear in; they are clearly recoverable from the linguistic or situational context, and most of the time, they must be recovered in order to allow a complete interpretation of the sentences in case. Following this, we can say that only when an argument is not recoverable from the context it has to be explicitly coded. In this sense, it is really this function of being an indispensable element in the process of interpreting a clause that gives a certain participant its argument status, independently of its coding as an explicit complement.

Van Valin and Lapolla (1997) and Van Valin (2005) claim that the goal of putting verbs is optional because it can be projected in the form of an adverb as in *John put the book down*. Nevertheless, in the sense posited above, goals are always obligatory arguments. What is optional is the codification of that goal as a PP or as an adverb. But even in this last case, it still functions as an argument; that is why adverbs can function as a pro-form substituting the goal PPs:

(12)  

a. *Pon el libro abajo, ponlo en el piso.*

   ‘Put the book down, put it on the floor.’

b. *lleva el libro a la casa de María, llévalo allá.*

   ‘Take the book to Mary’s house, take it there.’

c. *Juan entró allí, a la tienda.*

   ‘John went in there, into the store.’

This fact shows that the correlation between adverbs and adjuncts does not have to be a perfect match. It is true that linguistic categories tent to specialize for
certain uses: Names are mostly used as arguments, verbs as predicates and adjectives, and adverbs as modifiers. But in all languages there are plenty of mismatch-es. For example, it is not rare to find names (or NPs) functioning as adjuncts, e.g., *Juan nadó el domingo* ‘John swam on Sunday’. All the same, adverbs are mostly used for coding the circumstances that surround or that modify the states of affairs denoted by predicates, but this is not always the case. The examples in (12) show that the PPs can indeed be substituted by adverbs. More importantly, one should be aware of the fact that even when the substitution is not formally realized, a PP is always potentially replaceable by an adverb. Basically, in categorical and paradigmatic terms, they are the same.

Goal arguments, then, at least in Spanish, share some important semantic and syntactic characteristics with the recipient arguments of verbs like *dar* ‘to give’: a) They are inherently implied by the verbs they appear with; b) they are obligatory and c) they can be controllers of pivots. Based on this, we can say that they have full status as oblique core arguments.

This argumentation is valid for the cases where the goal arguments are coded by means of a PP introduced by the preposition *a* ‘to’, in the case of intransitive motion verbs, and by the preposition *en* ‘in/on’, in the case of change of place verbs. These prepositions are the canonical ones with these verb classes. In this respect, the corpus study that is presented in Ibáñez (2005) shows that the goal PPs of intransitive motion verbs tend to be coded with the preposition *a* in over 90% of the cases. A similar study in process, preliminarily shows a same pattern for the PPs of the change of place verbs: They strongly tend to be introduced by *en* in the corpus examples. It is possible to say that these prepositions are systematically assigned, at least in the unmarked cases, within the following structural contexts: *a* appears when the LS of a predicate has a BECOME pred’ (*z, y*), which is the case of motion verbs, and *en* shows up in the structural environment characterized by the present of INGR pred’ (*z, y*), which is the case of ‘putting verbs’. The basic difference between these two is that the motion verbs as *ir* ‘to go’ imply a change of place with a displacement or a movement on focus or as part of the semantics; that is why they are durative in aksjonsart terms and are characterized by the presence in their LS of the BECOME operator. On the other hand, a verb like *poner* ‘to put’ has an inherent punctual aspect. It does not imply a displacement and that is why its LS has the INGR operator in it.

Now, the goal PPs of these two types of verbs can alternatively be projected with other prepositions beyond the canonicals *a* and *en*. These alternative preposi-
tions such as hacia ‘towards’, dentro ‘inside’, detrás ‘behind’, debajo de ‘under’, etc., are predicative, since they have an inherent meaning which plays a role in determining the referential meaning of the goal argument in case, as the examples in (13) show:

(13) a. Juan puso el libro en la caja.
    ‘John put the book in the box.’

b. Juan puso el libro dentro de la caja.
    ‘John put the book inside the box’.

c. Juan puso el libro detrás de la caja.
    ‘John put the book behind the box’.

We can see in these examples that prepositions such as dentro ‘inside’ and detrás ‘behind’ specify the goal referent with more detail than the preposition en. They add their own semantics and it is in this sense that they are predicative. The example in (13c) is a little different. The preposition detrás ‘behind’ does not specify the same meaning of en; when something is behind an object, it is not on/in it. Rather, a preposition like detrás establishes the referent of its object as a point of reference that serves to construct the referent of the goal: ‘Behind the box’ denotes a place that is not the box, but a place that can be identified with the box as a point of reference.

Nevertheless, although this kind of prepositions are clearly predicative, the possibility to use them to introduce the goal arguments of the change of place verbs is not entirely free, as it is the case of the locative PPs that have the status of adjuncts. Poner ‘to put’, the predicate that serves as the nucleus in the sentences exemplified in (13), is the hyperonime in the domain of change of place verbs. As such, it has a very general and abstract locative meaning; it does not internally specify that much about its goal and that is why it can be used with goals introduced by almost any locative preposition. But this is not the case of other verbs that in terms of their own inherent semantics can prevent the use of certain prepositions to code their goals, as the examples of (14) show:

(14) a. ??Juan metió el libro fuera de la caja.
    ‘John put the book inside out of the box.’
b. ??Juan sacó el libro **dentro de la caja**.
   'John took the book out inside the box.'

c. ??Juan encerró a su perro **hacia su casa**.
   'John locked his dog towards his house.'

d. ??Juan hospedó a Pedro **fuera de su casa**.
   'John lodged Peter out of his house.'

e. ??Juan clavó el clavo **detrás de la pared**.
   'John nailed the nail behind the wall.'

f. ??Juan sumergió la cabeza **debajo de la fuente**.
   'John submerged his head under the fountain.'

What we can see here is that besides the fact that the preposition in case can add a portion of meaning to the argument, such preposition is determined by the predicate it appears with, and hence, it is a function of that predicate. Importantly, these PPs with non-canonical prepositions seem to behave as core arguments: They still can control pivots in coordinated clauses:

(15) a. **Paseando por el bosque, Juan llegó hasta a la vieja cabaña, y aún se veía bien.**
   'Walking through the forest, John got to the old cabin and (it) still looked fine.'

b. **Juan puso un pez, dentro de la pecera nueva, y se ve bien.**
   'John put a fish inside the new fish bowl and (it) looks good.'

The first more accessible reading for (15a) is the one in which it is the cabin that looked fine. Much the same, in (15b) it is the fish bowl that looks good.

Therefore, these data show that in the case of the goal arguments introduced by non-canonical prepositions, we do have a case of a predicative PP which functions as a core argument. That is what is properly called an argument-adjunct in the core in RRG. This situation clearly contrasts with the case of the beneficiary PPs. These last ones are argument-adjuncts in the periphery.
3.3. Actor PPs in passive and anticausative constructions

Other cases that can render the distinction between argument-adjuncts in the periphery (as opposed to adjuncts) and argument-adjuncts in the core (as opposed to oblique core arguments) productive are the PPs in the passive construction and the PPs in what is usually called the anticausative or inchoative construction. Both are exemplified in (16):

(16) a. El ejército atacó la ciudad.
   ‘The army attacked the city.’

   b. La ciudad fue atacada por el ejército.
   ‘The city was attacked by the army.’

   c. El viento abrió la puerta.
   ‘The wind opened the door.’

   d. La puerta se abrió con el viento /por el viento.
   ‘The door opened with the wind /by the wind.’

(16a) and (16c) are canonical transitive sentences, while (16b) and (16d) are the corresponding passive and anticausative versions of the formers, respectively. On one hand, as one can see, the actor of passive construction, an agent-effector, is coded as a PP introduced by the preposition *por*. On the other hand, the actor of the anticausative construction, a cause-effector, is coded as a PP introduced by *con* ‘with’. Following the standard treatment in RRG for this kind of phenomena, we can say that the assignment of these prepositions is ruled by constructional schemas that specify the characteristics of each one of these voice modulations. In RRG terms, both are PSA and argument modulations, because both suppose a marked assignment of the PSA function to the undergoer and a marked coding of the actor as a PP. The difference between the two, for our purposes, is that beyond losing its PSA status and being marked as an oblique, the actor in the passive voice can still function as the controller of a pivot in a non-finite final subordinate clause, as can be seen in the examples (17a) and (17b) below, while

---

3 In RRG, a PSA modulation is a morpho-syntactic process that has as a result a change of the PSA. This is the case of the passive voice, which implies that the actor argument los-
this behavior is not accessible to the actor of the anticausative construction, as it is shown in (17c):

(17)  
   a. *La ciudad fue atacada por el violento ejército para _i,j saquearla*  
       'The city was attacked by the violent army in order to sack it.'

   b. *La puerta fue desmontada por los trabajadores para _i,j pintarla*  
       'The door was taken apart by the workers in order to paint it.'

   c. *La puerta se abrió con el viento, para _i,j meterse / y _i,j se metió.*  
       'The door opened with the wind in order (for it) to get in / and it got in.'

It is possible to say that the application of the respective constructional schemes in the linking leave the actor with a different status in each one of these voice modulations: On one hand, the actor of passive construction, an inherent argument of the verb in case, is coded as an oblique by means of a PP. This way, it does not have its unmarked status as a direct core argument, but it is not a peripheral adjunct either, as it remains, beyond being optional, a verbal argument. Furthermore, its preposition is not predicative and does not take the clause as one of its arguments. So, this kind of PP must be something different. It has even been assigned macro-role status and never loses it during the linking; this is so, at least in the standard RRG treatment. We can label it as an argument-adjunct PP in the core.

On the other hand, the actor of the anticausative construction loses all of its PSA properties as a result of the application of the constructional scheme during the linking. It is now an oblique optional complement out of the core, but, just the same as the passive actor, it is not an adjunct in the typical sense, because its preposition is not predicative and does not take the whole clause as one of its arguments. So, it can be considered as a case of an argument-adjunct in the periphery.

The different status of the passive and the anticausative actor manifest in the fact that the former almost always plays a role in the interpretation of the sentence, even when it is not coded. That is why, even in this last case, it can still function as a pivot controller as in (18a):

es its syntactic privileges as the controller of the verbal agreement and as the bearer of the nominative case in favor of the undergoer. In contrast, an argument modulation is a process that implies a change in the morpho-syntactic properties of one or more of the arguments, but without taking out the PSA role from the argument which originally bears it.
(18) a. A las tres de la tarde llegaron los trabajadores. A las 5, la puerta fue desmontada para _i, pintarla.
   ‘At three in the afternoon, the workers arrived. At 5, the door was taken apart in order to paint it.’

b. la puerta se abrió sola.
   ‘The door opened by itself.’

As it has been noted in the literature before, when the actor is not coded, the anticausative construction can have a spontaneous meaning, as in (18b). In this version of the construction, the cause has been completely removed, not only in syntactic terms, but also in semantic ones, and does not play any function at all.

To sum up, on one hand, passive actors and goal PPs, as argument-adjuncts in the core, have in common the fact that they are inherently required by the verb semantics and that they can function as controllers of pivots; they differ in the sense that the preposition which they are introduced by can be predicative (non-canonical prepositions of goals) or non-predicative (passive actors). On the other hand, the cause PP of the inchoative construction and the beneficiary-recipient introduced by the preposition para have in common the fact that they do not function as pivot controllers and that they do not have the clause as one of their arguments; They are in the periphery but they are not completely adjuncts.

4. Types of oblique core arguments in Spanish

The category of oblique core argument in Spanish subsumes at least three different classes of PPs. The first type is the case of the recipient argument of transference verbs like dar ‘to give’ and ofrecer ‘to offer’, the addressee of saying verbs like decir ‘to say’ and contar ‘to tell’, and of the source PPs of verbs like sacar ‘to take out’ and quitar ‘to remove’. As Spanish is a language that does not allow more than two direct core arguments, the third arguments of three-place predicates are always coded as PPs; hence, they are oblique core arguments. As shown in section 3.2, this is also the case of the goal arguments of change of place verbs like poner ‘to put’.

A second class of oblique core arguments is the one that groups together the PPs that are introduced by the preposition con ‘with’. In a very similar fashion as it is in English, these PPs code, in general terms, arguments that are competitors for
the macro-role assignment but are not selected for it (Jolly, 1993; Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997).

These two types of oblique core arguments have in common the fact that the preposition they are introduced by is systematically assigned and can be predicted from specific structural environments: Recipient and addressee PPs get their preposition a from the context characterized by the presence of a BECOME pred' (z, y); sources get de from the presence of a BECOME NOT pred' (z, y) in the LS; and, as mentioned before, goals of change of place verbs get en from an INGR pred' (z, y) context.

A third kind of oblique core arguments in Spanish corresponds to PPs usually grouped together under the category of 'suplemento' in the Hispanic linguistic tradition (cf. Alarcos 1968, 1994). These are exemplified in (19):

(19) a. Juan carece de oportunidades.
    'John lacks opportunities.'

    b. Juan renunció a su empleo.
    'John quit his job.'

    c. Juan necesita de María.
    'John needs Mary.'

Basically, the verbs in these clauses are two-place predicates and the PPs that appear with them code one of their inherent semantic participants. The preposition that introduces this kind of arguments is of the non-predicative type: It does not contribute any meaning to the argument. In this sense, it functions as a case mark. Furthermore, it always has to be the same preposition with each one of the verbs in case; that is, the verb 'imposes' one specific preposition to its argument.

Now, the interesting thing about the PPs in (19), and the factor that separates them from the other two types of oblique core arguments, is that there does not seem to be a clear semantic environment that can make predictable which preposition will mark these arguments. In the clauses in (19), we can see that the prepositions that mark their oblique arguments are a and de, the most used with this kind of verbs. In (20a) there are more examples of items that appear with a and in (20b) examples of items used with de:
(20) a. *Atreverser ‘to dare’, *oler ‘to smell like’, *recurrir, ‘to resort to’,
renunciar, ‘to renounce’, *aspirar ‘to aspire’, *atenerse ‘to rely on’.

b. Carecer, ‘to lack’, *abstenerse ‘to abstain’, *abusar ‘to abuse’, *constar,
‘to consist of’, *desistir ‘to desist’, *desconfiar ‘to distrust’.

Among the items on these lists, there are activity predicates and state verbs. It is
possibly true that the verbs that are used with the preposition *a tend to be activi-
ties and the verbs that are used with *de usually correspond to state predicates, but
this is not an exhaustive condition. Besides this, it is commonly assumed that these
verbs are learned along with their preposition in the acquisition process. In some
way the preposition seems to be part of the verb. That is why these items are com-
monly referred to in the Spanish grammars as ‘verbs that govern their preposition’.
So, although they are non-predicative, the assignment of these prepositions seems
to be more of an idiosyncratic lexical phenomenon than something systematically
ruled. It is likely that these prepositions have to be listed in the lexical entry.

Another factor that points out the idiosyncratic identity of this type of PP
marking is that *a and *de, although they are the most commonly used, are not the
only prepositions that appear with this kind of verbs. Some of these verbs can have
their second argument coded by *por as *abogar ‘to advocate’, by *con, as *contar ‘to
count on’, and by *en, as *consistir ‘to consist’.

To sum up, the PPs in the examples of (19) above, code semantic arguments
that are introduced by non-predicative prepositions. They are, then, oblique core
arguments, but they are a special case, different from the two other types men-
tioned above, because their preposition is not assigned by a systematic rule; it is in
some way lexically determined.

Now, although in a general level all the PPs in (19) have the same oblique
core argument status, and although they have always been grouped together in
the Hispanic linguistic tradition, it seems that, in a closer look, they belong to two
different sub-types of oblique arguments. Let us look at these examples again, but
now with the added counterparts that are shown in (21):

(21) a. *Juan carece de oportunidades.
‘John lacks opportunities.’

a’. *Juan carece oportunidades.
‘John lacks opportunities.’
b. *Juan renunció a su empleo.*
   ‘John quit his job.’

b’. *Juan renunció su empleo.*
   ‘John quit his job.’

c. *Juan necesita de María.*
   ‘John needs Mary.’

c’. *Juan necesita a María.*
   ‘John needs Mary.’

The sentences in (21a) and (21b) have verbs which always appear with a PP argument; as their prima examples in (21a’ and (21b’) show, they cannot be used in a transitive fashion. They are specialized for intransitive uses and this is why one of their arguments always has to be coded as an oblique; in RRG terms, they have to have the M-intransitive specification in their lexical entry.

Contrary to this, the verb in (21c), *necesitar* ‘to need’, can appear in both, an intransitive and a transitive construction, as (21c’) shows. In this last one, the second argument is a direct core NP that receives undergoer status. This alternation exemplified is found with stative verbs such as *disfrutar* ‘to enjoy’, *gozar* ‘to enjoy’, *dudar* ‘to doubt’, *creer* ‘to believe’, *saber* ‘to know’, etc., and activities as *pensar* ‘to think’, *sonar* ‘to dream’ and *reflexionar* ‘to reflect’ among others. All these predicates have in common the fact that they denote some kind of internal psychological process, but beyond this, it is not completely clear what the specific semantic, syntactic and pragmatic features are, which are implied by the intransitive construction that has the oblique argument. One can roughly say, that this construction gives more prominence to the actor argument, more than the one this argument has in the transitive construction, because the second argument loses some important syntactic privileges, a fact that marks it is not an undergoer anymore: Beyond its oblique coding, it cannot be the subject of a passive construction and it cannot be substituted by the accusative pronominal clitics. Nevertheless, the participant coded as a PP remains an argument: It is obligatory and can not be freely omitted; moreover, it can still control the reference of pivots as in *María necesita de Juan para lavar los platos* ‘Mary needs John to wash the dishes’.
This way, it seems that the alternation in case is a voice phenomenon that does not imply a PSA modulation, but only an argument modulation. In this sense, we can say that the assignment of the preposition takes place through the application of a voice constructional scheme during the linking. The problem with this way of solving this situation is that, even though the preposition de is the one used with the majority of the verbs that appear in this construction, other prepositions like en and con can also be used with certain verbs — cumplir con ‘to comply’, creer en ‘believe in’ —. This suggests that the phenomenon is quite idiosyncratic and that the assignment of the preposition is determined by something more than the constructional scheme. This situation calls for a more detailed analysis, something that goes beyond the scope of this work.

To Sum up, then, the PPs that appear within this voice construction type code a semantic argument in the core and are introduced by a non-predicative preposition assigned through the application of a constructional scheme in the linking. In this respect these PPs are quite different from those in the (a) and (b) examples of (20) and (22). Nevertheless, they are all oblique core arguments in RRG terms, just as the recipient, the addressee, the goal and the source PPs of three-place predicates are.

5. Conclusions

This work constitutes a first attempt to show that, in general terms, the RRG notions of predicative adjunct PP, argument-adjunct PP and oblique core argument PP are useful for covering a broad range of PP types in Spanish. Nevertheless, it also tries to show that these notions can be, in the same RRG terms, ‘expanded’ in subcategories, in order to capture more specific differences among the PPs in this language. In particular, it has been proposed that: a) There can be PP adjuncts in the periphery modifying other structural levels than the core; b) the argument-adjunct category, one that already covers frontier cases, can be split into argument-adjuncts in the core and argument-adjuncts in the periphery in order to cover some PPs in Spanish that do not fit the argument-adjunct category as it stands, and c) there are different kinds of PPs that belong to the same general oblique core argument category.
References