Dead or *To Death?* On Translating into Spanish the Semantico-Pragmatic Implications Derived from the English Resultative Construction[1]

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Abstract

The almost complete non-existence in Spanish of the remarkably productive English resultative construction with *dead/to death*, together with the semantico-pragmatic connotations entailed by the choice of each of these two attributes, bring to the fore in the present paper a syntactic and semantico-pragmatic contrastive analysis of this peculiar structure. Our objective is two-fold: (a) to prove that both attributes are in complementary distribution and cannot be, consequently, systematically interchanged: specifically, that the adjectival alternative is required when the verb it complements ensures "death" outside the resultative pattern and that its prepositional counterpart is chosen, in turn, when "death" is not guaranteed by the semantics of the verbal constituent; and (b) to explain how the aforementioned pragmatic contrast is translated into Spanish: whereas in English such a pragmatic contrast is formally encoded, in Spanish it is morphologically expressed through singular/plural number in the translation of the English verb.

1. Introduction

Although syntactically simple, the attributive resultative construction is highly complex in semantic terms, since it lexically subordinates in the same syntactic unit two distinct predications —the first verbal in nature and the second, adjacent one, on the contrary, adjectival or attributive– between which a logical and temporal CAUSE-AND-EFFECT relationship is established:

(1) Then she methodically sellotaped these bags closed. (*PPS*: 126)[2]
Then she methodically sellotaped these bags SO THAT they became closed.

(2) It takes ten days to strip the trees bare. (*RL*: 100)
It takes ten days to strip the trees SO THAT they become bare.

(3) Las estufas teñían de rojo la estancia. (*MED*: 27)
   Las estufas teñían la estancia que, COMO CONSECUENCIA, se volvió roja.

(4) Se cuecen unos huevos duros. (*La cocina completa*: 137)
   Se cuecen unos huevos HASTA QUE estén duros.

As the previous examples illustrate, I take for granted in the present paper the existence of such a construction both in English and Spanish, albeit with particular syntactico-semantic, aspectual and distributional properties (cf. Rodríguez Arrizabalaga 2002; Demonte and Masullo 1999). Notice, for instance, that whereas in English it is very productive in all linguistic registers, ranging from the most vulgar to the most literary, in Spanish it is exclusively used in two clearly delimited semantico-pragmatic contexts: (a) in the gastronomic and culinary field, as evidenced by its common appearance in cookery books and (b) in those situations where chromatic changes are described, manifest in its frequency with colour verbs.

Due to such a productivity imbalance, the following two factors emerge. On the one hand, a clear contrast in the number of publications about the English resultative construction and its Spanish counterpart; whereas the English pattern has been the subject matter of numerous works (cf. Green 1970; Guimier 1980; Randall 1982; Simpson 1983; Yamada 1987; Levin y Rapoport 1988; 1995; Martínez Vázquez 1990; Rapoport 1993 and Wechsler 1997, to name just a few), the Spanish resultative construction has been devoted very little attention in the linguistic tradition (cf. Demonte 1988; Demonte and Masullo 1999; Rodríguez Arrizabalaga 2002). Notice at this point, also, that owing to the marginality such a clausal model has in the Spanish language (cf. Demonte 1988: 387, footnote 1; Bosque 1990: 196; Martínez Vázquez 1990: 96, footnote 18), there are linguists, such as McNulty (1988) and Aske (1989), for instance, who deny its existence in Spanish. In the former's own words, for example, "[...] resultative predicates do not exist in Spanish" (McNulty 1988: 152).

As a consequence, on the other hand, the Spanish language has to resort to some other grammatical devices to encode syntactically the meaning conveyed in the great majority of English resultative structures (cf. Rodríguez Arrizabalaga 1999a; 2000). A revealing example to contrast in this regard is, for instance, the English pattern having as resultative attribute either *dead* or *to death*, since, as will be demonstrated, it does not have an exact equivalent in Spanish. Apart from considering this kind of construction a clear example regarding what the Spanish language has to do when faced with the English resultative model, we analyse the structure with *dead/to death* mainly for two other reasons. First,

because of its high level of productivity: it represents, in fact, 6.8% of the total number of examples compiled[3]. Second, and more importantly, because of the semantico-pragmatic motivation underlying the choice of each of its two possible resultative attributes.

Our objective in this function-based work is, thus, twofold. On the one hand, we will prove that the resultative attributes *dead/to death*, being in complementary distribution, are not at all interchangeable, but rather directly selected by the extra-linguistic implications of the verbal constituent in the clause. We will demonstrate specifically that the adjectival attribute is required when the verbal meaning ensures "death" outside the resultative pattern, and that its prepositional synonym is, on the contrary, chosen when "death" is by no means guaranteed by the semantics of the verb in question. And, on the other hand, in the section devoted to comparing this particular English resultative pattern with its Spanish counterpart, we will pay special attention to how the aforementioned pragmatic contrast is translated into the Spanish version. In this regard, we will show precisely that, whereas in English such a pragmatic difference is formally encoded, namely through the adjectival versus prepositional category of the attribute at issue, in Spanish it is morphologically expressed by singular versus plural number in the corresponding translation of the English verb.

2. The English pattern with the resultative attribute dead or to death

2.1. Syntactico-Semantic Description

As deduced from the general description provided at the beginning of this paper, the attributive resultative construction constitutes a syncretic mechanism used both in English and Spanish to convey the semantic notion of "becoming" because, as already pointed out, it expresses in a single clause a CAUSE-AND-EFFECT relationship between two distinct predications: the first, verbal in nature, describes the cause and the second, being, on the contrary, adjectival, denotes, in turn, its result:

(5) She towelled her hair dry. (*PPS*: 559)
    She towelled her hair SO THAT it became dry.

(6) So she began to run, to the stream, to wash herself clean. (*I*: 84)
    So she began to run, to the stream, to wash herself SO THAT she became clean.

(7) The drug runners beat the man to death. (*NG*: 27)

The drug runners beat the man SO THAT he became dead.

As a consequence of such a causal relationship, the syntactic encoding of such resultative contents calls for the semantic interaction of the three constituents integrating the clausal predicate: that is, the two predicative heads and the nominal participant they share. The verbal nucleus selects, in the first place, a resulting attribute coherent with its meaning and the two together opt, in turn, for a nominal entity semantically compatible with them both. Hence, the complex predicate analysis proposed in the literature for the English resultative construction (cf. Guimier 1980: 207; Simpson 1983: 143; McNulty 1988: 65; Rapoport 1993: 165; Amores Carredano 1996: 233-234 and Rosen 1997: 176, among others).

Though behaving in general as the canonical resultative pattern[4], the English construction with the resulting attributes *dead/to death* differs from the rest in expressing an irreversible change of state –namely, "death"– which, as the following examples illustrate, can be either carried out on purpose by a human agent, as in (8-10), or naturally caused, as in (11-12). In both cases, however, and contrary to what happens to the remainder of resultative attributes that, as seen in (5-6), can be predicated of either an animate or an inanimate entity, the aforementioned attributive pair can only have an animate entity as its logical subject:

(8) Hamilton shot dead 16 children and their teacher before killing himself. (*The Guardian* 15/10/1996: 2)

(9) [...] the Paradise Lad, a beautiful novice [...] flogged to death by the monks. (*S*: 138)

(10) Christ himself in his first appearance on earth was harried and tortured to death. (*MWV*: 123)

(11) An eight-year-old girl starved to death in a cell. (*The Guardian* 15/10/1996: 3)

(12) The prisoners froze to death. (Levin and Rapoport 1995: 39)

This semantic nuance turns out to be, furthermore, crucial in the analysis of this special sort of English resultative construction because, as will be immediately shown, it clearly determines its syntactic configuration. Notice in this regard that in the former case –that is, when a murder is described– the

resultative meaning is structurally conveyed through a transitive clausal model which reserves, both in the active and passive voices, a slot in the sentence for the agentive performer of the action: if it is active, it occupies the subject position, like *Hamilton* in (8); and if it is passive, in turn, it can either surface within an oblique phrase headed by the preposition *by*, as *the monks* in (9), or be definitely suppressed from the syntactic level of the clause, as happens in (10). But if, instead of an assassination, the event to recount is a natural death which, like *starving* and *freezing* respectively in (11-12), it does not require, as such, the intervention of an agent or instigator. The syntactic pattern to be used is then an intransitive one of the unaccusative type since, as evidenced in (11-12), it is the English clausal model that best fits the previous semantic description. In Haspelmath's (1993: 90) words, for instance, this particular structure "[...] excludes a causing-agent and presents the situation as occurring spontaneously"⁵.

Apart from determining the overall syntactic configuration of the resultative construction, the (in)compatibility with an agentive phrase previously remarked also conditions the lexico-semantic nature of its verbal constituent. Whereas a verb that lexicalizes in its meaning a manner component, like *bleed, burn, choke, dash, scald, strangle* and *torture*, among many others, is acceptable in the description of both types of deaths, as manifest in the intransitive and transitive examples of (13-14), an instrumental verb of the type of *bayonet, beat, bludgeon, flog, hack, lash, shoot, stab*, etc. is only possible, on the contrary, in a formally transitive resultative construction, like, for instance, (15-16). The latter's instrumental nature undoubtedly implies that the action it denotes has to be performed by an agent and, as already explained, a participant playing such a thematic role does not have any place in the unaccusative clausal model; hence, its exclusion from this syntactic type of resultative pattern:

(13) [...] from someone bleeding to death from an arterial wound. (*PPS*: 210)

(14) One of my daughters was scalded to death. (*MSW*: 456)

(15) A man bludgeoned to death three of his family with a claw hammer. (*The Guardian* 7/4/1998: 5)

(16) He was hacked to death. (*The Oxford Spanish Dictionary* 1994: 1188)

It has to be remarked at this point, nevertheless, that several of these instrumental verbs do not refer to the supposed instrument they apparently lexicalize, but to a specific manner of action. They belong, hence, to the verbal class that Kiparsky (1997: 488-489) calls *pseudoinstrumental verbs* and which he defines as follows: "Instrumental verbs include [...] verbs which are related to

nouns via a shared root, and which do not semantically incorporate the meaning of the noun. [...] Actually denoting manner of motion". Notice, for instance, that the action denoted by *bludgeon* in (15) is by no means performed with the instrument such a verb seems to derive from, but rather, as clearly indicated by the closing prepositional phrase in its clause, *with a claw hammer*. There is no doubt, then, that *bludgeon* exhibits the same behaviour as that remarked by Langendoen (1970: 82) and McCawley (1971: 26-27), among other linguists, for the verb *hammer*. In the latter's own words, for example, "Hammering need not be done with a hammer, [...] The verb *hammer* at least is surely analysable into more basic predicates having to do with striking and repetition" (McCawley 1971: 26-27).

2.2. Dead or to Death? A Semantico-Pragmatic Choice

In her excellent paper on the attributive constructions with the antonym pair *dead/alive*, Green (1970: 271) concludes that the resultative patterns with the former attribute exhibit a highly peculiar semantico-pragmatic behaviour in English, due to the grammaticality contrasts offered by the following series of nearly complete synonymous examples:

(17) Jesse shot him dead.

(18) *Jesse stabbed him dead.

(19) *Jesse hanged him dead.

Since the previous three examples only differ in the instrumental component –a gun, a knife and a rope, respectively– their corresponding verbs of killing incorporate in their meaning[6], Green deduces that the impossibility of combining these three verbal constituents with the resultative attribute *dead*, an adjective semantically compatible with their semantics, is not to be accounted for in syntactic, but in semantico-pragmatic terms. In her own words, "The restrictions [operating on the English resultative pattern with *dead/to death*] are severe, and are probably as much cultural as they are semantic" (Green 1970: 271).

This incompatibility does not mean, however, that the verbs *stab* and *hang* cannot form acceptable resultative constructions. Notice in this regard that the ungrammaticality of (18-19) can be perfectly corrected with the simple substitution of the adjectival attribute *dead* for its prepositional synonym *to death:*[7]

> (20) She was stabbed to death on a summer day in front of her young son, Alex. (*The Guardian* 15/10/1996: 2)

The acceptability contrast previously commented on leads us, then, to formulate our first significant conclusion: namely that, despite their synonymy, *dead* and *to death* are, by no means, two interchangeable attributes, but two mutually exclusive variants of the same resulting state: death. As we have proved, the insertion of one of them in the resultative complementation of a killing verb, except for that of *shoot*, as will be immediately proved, automatically excludes the appearance of the other one.

In the same fashion as Green (1970), we defend, thus, that the distributional properties of the adjectival attribute *dead* and its prepositional counterpart *to death* are clearly determined by the semantic and pragmatic connotations inherent in the verbal constituent they adhere to. Observe in this regard that the resultative attribute *to death* combines with verbs that describe either a specific manner of killing, like *bayonet, shoot, stab*, and *strangle*, for instance, or a more or less violent impact between two different entities, like *beat, bludgeon, dash, hack, lash* and *torture*, among others:

(21) a. The drug runners beat the man to death. (NG: 27) ~ /~

b. The drug runners beat the man.

(22) a. A Rwandan woman had been bayonetted to death. (*The Guardian* 15/10/1996: 3) ~/~

b. A Rwandan woman had been bayonetted.

Although both verbal classes denote highly violent and aggressive actions, having on many occasions lethal consequences, it has to be highlighted that the performance of such activities does not ensure, outside the resultative pattern, the death of the patient participant of the predication. This explains the lack of synonymy between the previous pairs of examples. It is, in fact, the non-existence in their meaning of such an unavoidable and systematic cause-and-effect relationship that Levin (1993: 232-233) stresses most in her semantic description of these two verbal groups: "In principle, as means verbs, these verbs need not entail that the action they denote results in death. [...] Some of these verbs are not exclusively verbs of killing, since they describe actions that have death as only one of their possible results".

Apart from radically modifying its meaning, as already seen, the insertion of the prepositional attribute *to death* also has significant aspectual consequences for the primitive transitive predication it fuses with: specifically, it makes its verbal constituent acquire an iterative meaning, which it lacks outside the resultative construction. Notice at this point that it seems extremely difficult to

believe that the logical subjects of the resultative attribute in the two previous examples –*the man* in (21) and *a Rwandan woman* in (22)– die after receiving just one blow or a single bayonet stab. They die, on the contrary, because their respective agentive subjects repeatedly perform the actions denoted by *beat* and *bayonet*. It is, in point of fact, with their deaths that such verbal actions finish. This continuous repetition, implicit in the meaning of the resultative pattern with *to death*, manifests itself as well at the syntactic level of the clause through the preposition that introduces the resulting attribute into discourse: *to* is a clear telic marker, whose function, as such, is to signal the end of a trajectory: in this particular case, it indicates the transition from life to death.

The iteration of the verbal action implies, furthermore, that the aforementioned transition lasts a considerably long period of time. Therefore, the resultative construction with *to death* does not encode an instantaneous change of state, but a gradual becoming. Hence, its compatibility with any progressive tense, as shown in (23), and with temporal adverbials of the type of *gradually* in (24):

(23) The fog's choking us to death like mustard gas. (I: 69)

(24) She gradually starved to death. (I: 283)

The behaviour of *shoot* in the attributive resultative construction turns out to be, however, somewhat surprising. Notice in this regard that, expressing in the same fashion as *bayonet, stab* and *strangle*, for instance, a specific manner of killing which does not guarantee death outside such a clausal model, as evidenced by the lack of synonymy existing between the following pairs of examples, *shoot* does not obligatorily require the prepositional counterpart of the attributive dichotomy *dead/to death*. Apart from being grammatically acceptable, as seen in (26a), its conjunction with the adjectival alternative is, amazingly, more frequent than its juxtaposition with *to death*:

(25) a. I shot him to death. (Simpson 1983: 145) ~/~
    b. I shot him.

(26) a. Hamilton shot dead 16 children and their teacher before killing himself. (*The Guardian* 15/10/1996: 2) ~/~
    b. Hamilton shot 16 children and their teacher before killing himself.

Since the subcategorization frame of *shoot* accepts both attributes as grammatically possible resultative complements, it is obvious that such a verb has to differ in some sense from the other members of its verbal class. Being, as

it is, syntactically and semantically similar to the aforementioned killing verbs, we suppose that the reason for such a contrast has to lie in pragmatics. This supposition is borne out because, when contrasting the different manners of carrying out a murder, the one described by the verb *shoot* stands out for being undoubtedly the most effective and precise of them all. The effectiveness and accuracy of just one shot is, by no means, pragmatically comparable, in point of fact, to that of a single stab or a strangulation because, according to our extralinguistic knowledge, more than one single stab or knife wound are usually needed, on the one hand, to kill someone, and on the other, because a strangulation requires more skill and time on the part of its performer than any other murder caused with a firearm. Owing, hence, to the aforementioned pragmatic contrast, *shoot* exhibits a particular syntactic behaviour: apart from admitting, like the other members of its verbal class, the prepositional phrase *to death* as resultative attribute, implying, hence, that the transition from life to death takes a somewhat long period of time, the pragmatic circumstances surrounding such a verb make it also accept in its subcategorization frame the adjectival resultative attribute *dead*, entailing, on the contrary, that death is both successfully and relatively quickly reached.

As *shoot* is the only verb from all those that describe a particular manner of killing having the semantico-pragmatic connotations previously pointed out, the productivity disparity between *dead* and *to death* is clearly justified. Observe in this regard that, whereas the prepositional resultative attribute appears in twenty-two instances out of the twenty-four compiled, its adjectival counterpart solely surfaces in the two remaining examples.

The previous figures clearly prove, thus, that the syntactic distribution of *dead* is severely conditioned, once again, by the semantico-pragmatic connotations of the transitive predication it fuses with. According to our corpus-based analysis, in point of fact, it only appears juxtaposed to those verbs that, like *shoot*, imply that death will be succesfully reached in most cases, or to those others that, like *kill*, guarantee the victim's death even outside the resultative construction. As a consequence, the syntactic omission of the resultative attribute in this latter case does not alter the overall meaning of the original construction. Hence, the complete synonymy between (27a-27b):

(27) a. The sheriff killed him dead. (Randall 1982: 103) ~
     b. The sheriff killed him.

Since its unique function here is simply to make explicit the resulting state innate in the semantics of *kill*, we absolutely agree with Randall (1982: 103,

footnote 19) when stating that "[...] *dead* is being used here not to give new information, but emphasis".

It has to be highlighted, nevertheless, that from among all the verbs that inherently incorporate in their meaning the final state of death, *kill* is the only one able to form a grammatically acceptable resultative construction. Notice, for instance, that the insertion of its close synonym *murder* in the same resultative pattern turns out to be ungrammatical:

(28) *Brutus murdered Julius Caesar dead. (Levin 1993: 231)

This is so because *kill* stands out in its verbal group for being the most neuter and vague in semantic terms. In Levin's (1993: 231) words, for instance, "The verb *kill* is the class member with the least specific meaning: it lexicalizes nothing about the specific means, manner or purpose involved in bringing about death".

After having examined the grammatical behaviour of the English resultative pattern with the attributive couple *dead/to death*, it is evident that not every verbal predication containing *dead* as its final constituent can be assigned a resultative interpretation. If such a predication lacks the semantico-pragmatic connotations previously detailed, the possible resultative reading it might be attributed has to be directly excluded: either it is an idiomatic expression of the type *stop dead* in (29), or it is a depictive attributive construction, like *dropping dead* in (30), describing, as such, a state that exists with total independence from the action denoted by its verb:

(29) The car stopped dead. (*The Oxford Spanish Dictionary* 1994. 690)

(30) Out there on the Nullarbor, birds are dropping dead. (*NG*: 47)

2.3. On its translation into Spanish

As indicated at the beginning of this paper, the attributive resultative construction has an extremely limited distribution in the Spanish language. As a consequence, solely those English patterns belonging to the gastronomic field, like (31a), and those others describing a chromatic change, like (32a), have an exact resultative equivalent in Spanish:

(31) a. The baker beat the egg whites into stiff peaks. (Tenny 1987: 221)
    b. Bátanse las seis claras a punto de nieve fuerte. (*La cocina completa*: 111)

(32) a. He dyed the cloth red. (*The Oxford Spanish Dictionary* 1994: 1070)
   b. Tiñó la tela de rojo. (*The Oxford Spanish Dictionary* 1994: 1070)

Since the resultative construction with the attributive pair *dead/to death* semantically differs from the two aforementioned structures, it is obviously going to lack a resultative analogue in Spanish. Therefore, the Spanish language has to resort to several other grammatical devices to encode syntactically such English resultative contents.

The general tendency here consists of inverting the syntactic order of the two English predicative constituents –that is, verb and resulting attribute– and, consequently, their form and function. The results of this functional switch, traditionally known as "chassé-croisé" in the French linguistic tradition (cf. Vinay and Darbelnet 1966; Wyss 1975), are, then, as follows: the English resultative attribute systematically surfaces in the Spanish version as the verb *matar*, which inherently lexicalizes the final state of death, and the English verb, in turn, appears translated in one of two possible ways, depending on its intrinsic nature: if it is a verb that incorporates in its meaning a manner component, like *dash* and *strangle* in (33a-34a) respectively, it is translated as a gerund subordinate clause:

(33) a. She might dash the animal to death on the ground. (*I*: 69)
   b. = Ella podía matar al animal estampándolo contra el suelo.

(34) a. The Boston Strangler strangled his victims to death. (Levin 1993: 233)
   b. = El estrangulador de Boston mató a sus víctimas estrangulándolas.

If it is, on the contrary, an instrumental verb, its translation usually takes the form of a prepositional phrase headed by the Spanish preposition *a*. It should be noticed, furthermore, that the Spanish translation of this second type of English resultative construction takes into account the semantico-pragmatic connotations entailed by the choice between *dead/to death*. Therefore, if the English resultative pattern contains the prepositional counterpart of such an attributive dichotomy, the translation of its verb corresponds to a prepositional phrase of the type illustrated in (35b-36b). That is, a plural noun phrase introduced into discourse by the preposition *a*. The plural morpheme has, thus, in Spanish the same semantico-pragmatic implications as the telic marker *to* in English: on the one hand, it provides the sentence with an iterative meaning; and on the other, it suggests that the resulting state of death is reached after a relatively long period of time:

(35) a. Those who found the strength to refuse were lashed, often to death. (C: 138)

    b. = A aquellos que encontraban la fuerza para negarse los mataban a latigazos.

(36) a. He was hacked to death. (*The Oxford Spanish Dictionary* 1994: 1188)

    b. = Lo mataron a machetazos/hachazos.

If the English clause opts, on the contrary, for the adjectival attribute *dead*, its verbal constituent either does not have any correspondence at all in Spanish for redundancy reasons, as in (37b), or is translated, in turn, as in (38b), as a prepositional phrase with the following configuration: *de* + singular noun phrase. Since such a noun phrase is singular in number, the verbal action expressed in its clause is to be understood as taking place once and only once; that is, it has to be assigned a semelfactive reading (cf. Comrie 1976: 29), which implies that the resulting and final state of death is almost immediately achieved[8]. The semantico-pragmatic connotations underlying the choice of *dead* are, once again, reflected in Spanish, therefore, through the morphological number of the noun phrase that stands for the translation of the English verb in question:

(37) a. Brutus killed Julius Caesar dead. (Levin 1993: 231)

    b. = Bruto mató a Julio César (*muerto).

(38) a. We heard on the news that she had been shot dead. (*Collins Cobuild Dictionary* 1989: 1337)

    b. = Nos enteramos por las noticias que la habían matado de un tiro.

In short, whereas the semantico-pragmatic contrast previously analysed is formally encoded in English through the adjectival versus prepositional category of the resultative attribute at issue, such a difference is morphologically expressed in Spanish by singular versus plural number in the corresponding translation of the English verb.

Apart from this "chassé-croisé" method of translation, the Spanish language offers a second alternative to convey the meaning of the English resultative construction with *dead/to death*. This alternative differs from the previous one in maintaining the same syntactic order as the English pattern: the verb is, then, translated literally and the resultative attribute, in turn, appears systematically translated as the verb *matar*:

(39) a. The drug runners beat the man to death. (*NG*: 27)
   b. = Los camellos golpearon al hombre hasta que lo mataron.

(40) a. Christ himself in his first appearance on earth was harried and tortured to death. (*MWV*: 123)
   b. = Al propio Cristo lo hostigaron y torturaron en su primera aparición terrenal hasta que lo mataron.

The maintenance of exactly the same syntactic order both in the English pattern and in its Spanish counterpart does not mean, however, that both constructions are structurally identical. The subordinate relationship expressed in each of these two constructions is, for instance, completely different: whereas in English it constitutes a clear representative of what Levin and Rapoport (1988: 277-278) call "lexical subordination", namely, the syntactic fusion of two distinct predications without the intervention of any conjunction and with the mere presence of one single verb, in Spanish it is a common case of syntactic subordination since, as seen in (39b-40b), the secondary predication, governed by the verb *matar*, obligatorily requires the telic conjunction *hasta que* in order to be correctly attached to the primary predication.

3. Conclusion

In this paper we have demonstrated, in the first place, that the choice between the resultative attributes *dead* and *to death* is directly determined by the semantico-pragmatic connotations inherent in the verbal predication they combine with. Therefore, they cannot be considered two interchangeable attributes, but rather two mutually exclusive varieties of the same resulting state: namely, "death". The results of our corpus-based analysis have proved specifically here that, whereas the adjectival attribute is required when the verbal meaning ensures "death" outside the resultative construction, its prepositional synonym is chosen when "death" is by no means guaranteed by the semantics of the verb in question.

Since the attributive resultative construction turns out to be a marginal clausal model in Spanish, we thereafter have researched how the contents conveyed in this particular English resultative pattern are syntactically expressed in the Spanish language, paying particular attention to how the aforementioned semantico-pragmatic contrast is marked. In this regard we have shown precisely that, whereas in English it is formally encoded –adjectival versus prepositional category of the attribute at issue–, in Spanish it is morphologically indicated –singular versus plural number in the corresponding translation of the English verb–.

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Notes

1. This paper is a revised version of one presented at the Second International Conference in Semantics and Pragmatics, held at Newham College (Cambridge) in September 2000. I would like to thank Dr. Jefferey Simons, a colleague at the University of Huelva (Spain), for his generous help throughout its elaboration.

2. The abbreviations in parentheses stand for the title of the publication from which the example at issue has been extracted: COOPER, JILLY. 1999. *Score!*. (S) London: Bantam Press. FROMBERG SCHAEFFER, SUSAN. 1983. *The Madness of a Seduced Woman*. (MSW) Harmondsworth: Penguin. GEORGE, ELIZABETH. 1999. *In Pursuit of the Proper Sinner*. (PPS) London: Hodder and Stoughton. PHILLIPS, CARYL. 1991. *Cambridge*. (C) London: Picador. ROGERS, JANE. 1991. *Mr Wroe's Virgins*. (MWV) London: Faber and Faber. SHIELDS, CAROL. 1993. *The Republic of Love*. (RL) London: Flamingo. WARNER, MARINA. 1992. *Indigo*. (I) London: Vintage. *National Geographic, 193. Nº 4*. (NG) 1998.

3. I refer to a corpus of 220 examples analysed in my doctoral dissertation (Rodríguez Arrizabalaga 2002) and taken from the selection of contemporary English writing indicated in note number 2.

4. It should be noted here that the English language possesses two different classes of attributive resultative constructions that, surprisingly, are structural homonyms: on the one hand, the canonical or true resultative structure of the type of *Then I clamped my mouth shut*, built around a transitive or an unaccusative verb; and on the other, the fake resultative construction that, like *The king laughed himself silly*, for instance, is constructed, in turn, around an unergative or a pseudointransitive verb. For their syntactico-semantic and aspectual differences, see, among others, Yamada (1987: 77), Wechsler (1997: 39) and Rodríguez Arrizabalaga (1999b: 121-126).

5. For the unaccusative/unergative dichotomy, see Perlmutter (1978) and Burzio (1986).

6. Hence, their inclusion in the group of killing verbs Levin (1993: 232) calls *Poison Verbs*.

7. Guimier's opinion (1980: 202), however, the resultative combination *stab ... dead* is grammatically acceptable.

8. Some linguists, however, translate both the adjectival and prepositional resultative combinations in the same way: *a tiros* (cf. Garrudo 1996: 613).