

# REACTION OBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH\*

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## Abstract

Reaction Object Constructions are alternations involving the transitive use of manner of speaking verbs and verbs of signs and gestures (*She mumbled her adoration*) paraphrased as “express a reaction by V-ing” (Levin 1993). Research on these constructions has been limited to English, often without a thorough discussion of their different elements. A closer look at examples extracted from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* shows a wide variety of verbs and objects used in these constructions to denote different types of reported expressive acts. On the other hand, extensive searches of the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* have revealed the existence of these conflated constructions in Spanish (*Ella murmura su incredulidad*), where the verbal event denotes the manner by which the second event – the nominalized expressive act – is produced. The data provided in this paper supports recent claims that Romance languages may use some of these “information-packed” constructions the way Germanic languages do.

## Resumen

Las Construcciones de Objeto de Reacción son alternancias que implican el uso transitivo de verbos de manera de hablar y verbos de signos y gestos (*She mumbled her adoration*) parafraseables como “expresar una reacción V-ndo” (Levin 1993). La investigación sobre estas construcciones se ha limitado al inglés, con frecuencia sin un tratamiento detallado de sus distintos elementos. Un análisis más detallado de ejemplos extraídos del *Corpus of Contemporary American English* muestra una amplia variedad de verbos y objetos usados en estas construcciones para denotar diferentes tipos de actos expresivos de estilo indirecto. Por otro lado, extensas búsquedas en el *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* revelan la existencia de estas construcciones fundidas en español (*Ella murmura su incredulidad*) en las que el evento verbal denota la manera en la que se produce el segundo evento –el acto expresivo nominalizado. Los datos que se aportan en este artículo respaldan estudios recientes que afirman que las lenguas romances pueden usar algunas de estas construcciones de “información compacta” que usan las lenguas germánicas.

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*Keywords:* reaction object, Levin, English, Spanish, verbs of gestures, manner of speaking verbs.

*Palabras clave:* objeto de reacción, Levin, inglés, español, verbos de gestos, verbos de manera de hablar.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

“Reaction Object Construction” (hereafter ROC) is the label used by Levin (1993) to describe an alternation involving a transitive use of a verb of gestures or signs, or a manner of speaking verb (hereafter MSV):

Certain intransitive verbs — particularly verbs of manner of speaking and verbs of gestures and signs — take non-subcategorized objects that express a reaction (an emotion or disposition); possible objects include: *approval, disapproval, assent, admiration, disgust, yes, no*. When these verbs take such objects they take on an extended sense which might be paraphrased “express (a reaction) by V-ing,” where “V” is the basic sense of the verb. For instance, *She mumbled her adoration* can be paraphrased as “She expressed/signalled her adoration by mumbling.” (Levin 1993:98)

English ROCs have been discussed briefly in relation to other constructions. Researchers dealing with the much more discussed topic of cognate object constructions (*He died a peaceful death*) touch upon the subject (Massam 1990; Felser and Wanner 2001; Mirtó 2007). More recently the English ROC has been the focus of some research on its own (e.g. Kogusuri 2009; Martínez-Vázquez 2010; Bousó 2013). Scholars applying Levin's verb classes and alternations to other languages, also mention the construction. From these cross-linguistic studies we learn, for example, that the English ROC has not been attested in Basque (Aldezarbal et al. 1993), Bangla (Khan 1994) or Romance languages (Real-Puigdollers 2008:171; Guerra-García and Sacramento-Lechado 2011:28; Mateu 2012:274).

ROCs, like other resultative constructions, involve a fusion of two predicates in one construction: the resulting noun phrase expresses the main action (the expressive event), while the verb becomes the means of achieving it (manner of speaking, gesture):

(1) She kicked a hole in the wood. RESULTATIVE  
kick a hole = make a hole by kicking

(2) She smiled her gratitude. ROC  
smile her gratitude = express gratitude by smiling

There is general consensus on the absence of resultative constructions in Spanish and other post-Latin Romance languages.<sup>1</sup> As Levin and Rappaport (2006:2) state “Romance languages lack the resultative construction (Aske 1989, Green 1973, 1975, Talmy 1991, 2000, among others), and use a result verb plus a manner adjunct or modifier”. The lack of resultatives has been related to the absence of manner and motion conflation in Romance verb roots. There is abundant research on the typological difference between verb-framed languages, like Spanish and the Romance family, which do not allow manner and motion conflation in the verb, and satellite-framed languages, like English, which do (Talmy 1985, 2000; Aske 1989; Slobin 1996; Jackendoff 1995; Mora 1999, among others). However, recent studies have illustrated mixed behavior in Romance languages (Beavers 2008, Beavers et al. 2010, Filipovic 2007, Iacobini and Masini 2006, 2007; Fortis 2010, Croft et al. 2010, Martínez Vázquez 2013, among others).

A similar typological difference in the speech domain has not received much attention. It has been observed that Spanish tends to express manner information in adverbial phrases (*dijo adiós con un suspiro/suspirando*, “s/he said good-bye with a sigh/sighing”) and does not conflate manner and speech in the verb the way English does (*She sighed her good-bye*) (Faber and Sánchez 1990, Martínez-Vázquez 1998). Guerra-García and Sacramento-Lechado (2011:28) note that there is no constructional equivalent in Spanish to the English ROC. Thus, *Pauline smiled her thanks* becomes *Pauline sonrió* (“Pauline smiled”). Martínez-Vázquez (1998) mentions the inability of Spanish for encoding an ROC such as *\*Suspiró adiós* (“she sighed good-bye”). Real-Puigdollers (2008:171) and Mateu (2012:274) also signal the lack of ROCs in Spanish, and other Romance languages:

(3)

- a. \*Juan asintió su aprobación.
- b. John nodded his approval. (Real-Puigdollers 2008:171)

However, corpus data reveal Spanish examples –like the transitive uses of the verb *suspirar* (“sigh”) in (4)– which are clearly analogous to the English ROC. These occurrences demand a new look at the Spanish data.

(4)

- a. El redrojo humano suspira un ‘gracias’. (CREA: Mexico, FIC, 1985)  
“the human trash person sighs a ‘thank-you’”
- b. La Lucrecia, romántica, suspiraba sus remordimientos católicos. (CE: Chile, FIC, 19<sup>th</sup> c.)  
“romantic Lucrecia sighed her catholic remorse”

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<sup>1</sup> Resulting constructions were present in Latin, as illustrated by the following examples from a Latin Grammar: *iungere pontem* (“build a bridge by joining”), *aperire viam* (“make a way by opening”) (Bassols de Climent 1971:45-46).

The aim of this paper is to explore the existence of the English ROC in Spanish, which would question the validity of some typological differences between post-Romance and Germanic languages sustained in the literature, and would add to the growing research which signals mixed typological behavior (cfr. Beavers et al. 2010 and references therein).

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 offers information on the source of the data used for the present analysis. Section 3 outlines the main features of the English ROC based on the data compiled. Section 4 explores the instantiation of such patterns in Spanish, a possibility not considered before, and provides corpus examples which demonstrate the existence and nature of ROCs in Spanish. Finally, section 5 discusses implications of the findings and offers conclusions.

## 2. DATA

The methodological focus of this paper is on the analysis of naturally occurring data extracted from corpora. The Spanish examples were extracted from the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA), except when otherwise noted. The CREA is an online corpus which has incorporated new data over the last decades. Its latest version (June 2008) comprises 160 million words from 1975 to 2004. Samples from Spanish speaking countries that were poorly represented in previous editions were added, although they only amount to 50% of the data, while peninsular Spanish represents the other 50%. Besides, new genres were included; thus, in 2005 the CREA added texts from blogs, emails, etc. The oral sample represents 10% of the data; the other 90% corresponds to written texts distributed in three groups: books (49%), newspapers (49%) and miscellaneous texts (2%). The searches were conducted in all registers of written Spanish from all geographical areas.

Extensive and elaborate searches for the two main lexical elements that may conform an ROC were conducted: manner of speaking and gesture verbs (e.g. *murmur*, *scream*, *roar*, *nod*), and nouns expressing feelings or speech formulae, which typically occur in English ROCs. All the results had to be filtered manually in search of potential Spanish ROCs with a representative variety of verbs.<sup>2</sup> Additional

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately the CREA is not parsed, so it offers no possibilities of retrieving parts of speech information, or lemmas. As a result, searches for different morphological forms of each verb had to be run (e.g. *reír*, *rió*, *rieron*, *rie*, *reímos*...). Besides, some word strings would yield both nominal and verbal forms (e.g. *murmuro*, *beso*, *guiño*). The searches for objects were also complex since postverbal subjects, quite frequent in Spanish, had to be discarded. Due to these

examples were extracted from the contemporary Spanish sample contained in the *Corpus del Español* (CE)<sup>3</sup>, parsed and made available online by Mark Davies, but with a much smaller sample of words than the CREA (approximately 5 million words from the 20th century). Occasional examples from Google Books (books.google.com) or newspapers are cited.

The English examples have been extracted from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA), a 450 million words corpus, also created by Mark Davies, which allows easier and more fruitful searches than the CREA. The COCA contains a wide collection of texts (more than 160,000) evenly divided between five genres: spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic journals. All the searches were run during 2013. Some examples have been shortened for the sake of clarity.

### 3. THE ENGLISH REACTION OBJECT CONSTRUCTION

The semantics of the ROC – “express (a reaction) by V-ing” – involves a communicative setting, with an expresser revealing his/her state of mind. This abstract entity is lexicalized into a condensed noun phrase, which appears as a non-subcategorized resultative object. Since ROCs are ‘reported’ expressive events, the synthetic nominal phrase functions as a pro-message,<sup>4</sup> which stands for the expressed emotion or attitude as perceived by the speaker. For example, in (5) the speaker reports that Charlene’s act of shouting exposed a feeling of rage. In (6) the reporter describes Meiglan’s blinking as one that revealed a feeling of surprise.

- (5) Charlene shouted her rage at him for keeping it a secret. (COCA: FIC, 1997)
- (6) Meiglan blinked her surprise. (COCA: FIC, 1992)

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difficulties, no overall statistics could be offered. The data supplied offers proof of the existence of ROCs in Spanish with a variety of verbs, which is the main aim of this paper.

<sup>3</sup> The CE does not provide the year of production. All the examples from the CE cited in this paper are from 20th century Spanish, except otherwise noted.

<sup>4</sup> Quirk et al. (1985:76) apply the term PRO-FORM to “words and word-sequences which are essentially devices for recapitulating or anticipating the content of a neighboring expression, often with the effect of reducing grammatical complexity”.

The ROC has been attributed to a compatibility condition: the object has to denote a feeling or disposition compatible with the act denoted by the verb (Martínez-Vázquez 1998).<sup>5</sup> Felser and Wanner (2001:11) define the object as an abstract noun “expressing an attitude, which can be made visible by the action denoted by the verb”. For example, smiling suggests a positive attitude; hence, “his sympathy” and “his pleasure” are “compatible” with the verbs in (7).

(7)

- a. The white-haired bus driver grinned his sympathy. (COCA: FIC, 1998)
- b. He dearly enjoyed seeing her grin, and he smiled his pleasure. (COCA: FIC, 1999)

The research on ROCs distinguishes two distinct groups of verbs that may form the construction: MSVs, and verbs of signs and gestures, i.e. expression through words and expression through nonverbal signs (Levin 1993:98, Huddleston and Pullum 2002:305). Table 1 shows Levin (1993)’s list of potential verbs in the construction. The great variety of MSVs that may appear in ROCs is not surprising given the fact that ROCs are communicative constructions. The number of nonverbal expression verbs is more limited. Under the label of “wink verbs” Levin (1993) includes nine verbs of signs and gestures made with a body part, which is always implicit, but does not need to be overtly expressed. In their intransitive use they allow for ROC formation, as illustrated in (8).

(8)

- a. She blinked agreement. (COCA: FIC, 2001)
- b. The other women around us clap their approval. (COCA: FIC, 2004)
- c. When asked why things had turned sour, Huang looked over at Tong, who nodded his permission for a frank answer. (COCA: NEWS, 1990)
- d. Tom is irritated, but shrugs indifference. (COCA: FIC, 1990)
- e. “It is blessed?” he asked. The man squinted incomprehension and moved away. (COCA: FIC, 1991)
- f. The spill absorbed, Zippy is set free to jump up and lick and wag her hellos. (COCA: MAG, 2008)
- g. “Only thirty minutes,” the pilot called after him. Theo waved acknowledgment, then hurried to make the telephone connection with London. (COCA: FIC, 1991)
- h. When Misha slyly winked approval, Corinne felt a little rush. (COCA: FIC, 1998)

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<sup>5</sup> This pragmatic compatibility condition will show cross-linguistic differences, since signs do not mean the same across cultures. For example, the Japanese and the Americans do not interpret the act of nodding in the same way.

<b>verbs of manner of speaking</b>	<i>babble, bark, bawl, bellow, bleat, boom, bray, burble, cackle, call, carol, chant, chatter, chirp, cluck, coo, croak, croon, crow, cry, drawl, drone, gabble, gibber, groan, growl, grumble, grunt, hiss, holler, hoot, howl, jabber, lilt, lisp, moan, mumble, murmur, mutter, purr, rage, rasp, roar, rumble, scream, screech, shout, shriek, sing, snap, snarl, snuffle, splutter, squall, squeak, squeal, squawk, stammer, stutter, thunder, tisk, trill, trumpet, twitter, wail, warble, wheeze, whimper, whine, whisper, whistle, whoop, yammer, yap, yell, yelp, yodel</i>
<b>verbs of nonverbal expression</b>	<i>beam, cackle, chortle, chuckle, cough, cry, frown, gape, gasp, gawk, giggle, glare, glower, goggle, grimace, grin, groan, growl, guffaw, howl, jeer, kiss, laugh, moan, pout, scowl, sigh, simper, smile, smirk, sneeze, snicker, sniff, snigger, snivel, snore, snort, sob, titter, weep, whistle, yawn</i>
<b>wink verbs</b>	<i>blink (eye), clap (hands), nod (head), point (finger), shrug (shoulders), squint (eyes), wag (tail), wave (hand), wink (eye)</i>

Table 1. List of verbs in ROCs (from Levin, 1993).

Notice, however, that the distinction between verbal and non-verbal communication cannot be exclusively circumscribed to the analysis of verb classes, since the interpretation as one or the other is highly dependent on the other lexical elements in the construction. For example, the verb *bark*, included as a MSV in Levin (1993), denotes the emission of a sound made by dogs, which may metonymically denote an aggressive or assertive way of speaking if used with a human subject, as in (9a-b), but if the subject is a dog, it will convey non-verbal communication, as in (9c-d). Conversely, non-verbal expression is not achieved exclusively through silent signs; it may be expressed through sounds, (10a), silent signs (10b), or even a mixture of both, (10c):

(9)

- a. The enforcer barks his demands. We can't quite make out the words but it's clear [...]. (COCA: FIC, 2000)
- b. Judge Atkins had glared at the two adversaries and barked his decision: Josh Eagle was not to step within 150 feet of the gift [...]. (COCA: FIC, 2007)
- c. 'Bitch,' I muttered. Jethro barked his approval. I turned around and saw his tail wagging in agreement. (COCA: FIC, 2003)
- d. They ran flat out, while the dog barked his warning. (COCA: FIC, 2002)

(10)

- a. The room is packed. Men groan their satisfaction; women hum anticipation. (COCA: FIC, 1992)
- b. She braced his shoulders firmly with her hands, smiled her approval and reassurance, and slipped away. (COCA: FIC, 2003)
- c. Diana's ecstasy awakened. She writhed and moaned her pleasure in an ancient voice which was no longer silent. (COCA: FIC, 1997)

The examples of objects suggested by Levin (1993:95) –*approval, disapproval, assent, admiration, adoration, disgust, yes, no, thanks* and *welcome*– reveal different types of pro-messages. Expressions like *yes, no, thanks*, or *welcome*, are “formulae used for stereotyped communication situations” (Quirk et al. 1985:852). They are irregular grammatical segments, which may stand in isolation. When they appear in ROCs they have a nominal function, as in (11). These formulae denote conventional communicative exchanges, even with verbs of non-verbal expression. Thus, *thanks*, in (12), is not a “linguistic” message, but it implies human communicative interaction.

- (11) “Robert, share my umbrella.” Robert Helman murmured his thanks and ducked under the protective cover. (COCA: FIC, 1997)
- (12) The bartender puts a mug in front of Cleeve, who nods his thanks. (COCA: FIC, 1999)

Objects like *approval, disapproval* or *assent* also suggest an interaction between a speaker and a recipient. However, they are not stereotyped formulae, but regular nouns, which derive from illocutionary verbs (“X approved/disapproved/assented”) and imply a performative speech act. These objects are regarded as a decision or declaration made by the expresser in response to a statement, or an event. The performative act does not need to be expressed linguistically; it may be conveyed through a sign, as in the following examples:

- (13)
  - a. Do you understand?” Peregrine nodded his assent. (COCA: FIC, 1991)
  - b. Brian asks. I shrug agreement. (COCA: FIC, 2005)
  - c. I was aware that if most kids knew that, they’d snort their disapproval. (COCA: FIC, 2001)
  - d. She began yowling her protest at being deserted again. (COCA: FIC, 1998)

Finally, objects like *admiration, adoration* or *disgust* denote feelings experienced in response to a situation:

- (14)
  - a. Wigwam’s main floor and balconies were packed with excited Lincoln supporters, shouting their admiration for the Rail Splitter. (COCA: NEWS, 1996)
  - b. “I’ll need help,” Bates insisted. The boatswain spat his disgust. (COCA: FIC, 1998)
  - c. Peggy saw him staring and frowned her annoyance. (COCA: FIC, 1991)
  - d. They astonished a crowd of waiting passengers, who clapped their pleasure at this unexpected bit of excitement. (COCA: FIC, 1998)

Some ROCs depict solitary situations, with an expresser releasing a strong or repressed sentiment. Reddy’s explanation of the way language is conceptualized through the Conduit Metaphor offers an interesting insight into these uses. In the

minor framework of the Conduit Metaphor ideas or feelings are squeezed out of human minds without necessarily entering someone else's mind, as in "Mary poured out all of the sorrow she had been holding in for so long" (Reddy 1979:291). The following "cathartic" ROCs are instances of this conceptualization:

(15)

- a. Greta Marie threw her head back and howled her misery to the skies. (COCA: FIC, 1999)
- b. He walked back and coughed into the feathers in the dank down pillow - he coughed his sorrow into the plucked sorrows of geese. (COCA: FIC, 1998)
- c. He raised his head and bellowed his triumph to the moons, a shout with a buzzing inhuman undertone. (COCA: FIC, 2002)
- d. Those right at the fence clung to it as they howled their despair to the sun. (COCA: FIC, 1992)

## 4. THE SPANISH ROC

### 4.1 ROCS WITH MANNER OF SPEAKING VERBS IN SPANISH

The extension of sound emission verbs to MSVs is very common in English, but it is not so straightforward in Spanish (Faber and Sánchez 1990). However, some Spanish MSVs exhibit transitive uses. For example, (16) illustrates different communicative uses of the verb *murmurar*, ranging from the expression of a thanking act as a direct quotation in (16a), to its syntactic integration in the clause as an object, in (16c). The thanking formula in quotation marks in (16b) lies in the fuzzy boundaries between a quote and an object. Notice that in (16c) *thanks* still appears in quotation marks, in spite of its clear nominal status (formally marked by a determiner). This example is similar to the English ROC in (11).

(16)

- a. Se inclinó con gratitud y murmuró 'Dios se lo pague'. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1994)  
"(s/he) bowed down in gratitude and murmured 'God bless you'"
- b. Ese muchacho fue retrocediendo, murmuró gracias, muchísimas gracias. (CE: Argentina, FIC, 1996)  
"that boy backed away, murmuring thank-you, many thanks"
- c. La muchacha, con la cabeza gacha, murmuró un escueto 'gracias'. (CE: Spain, FIC)  
"the girl, with bowed head, murmured a concise 'thanks'"

When the object of *murmur* does not stand for the actual words uttered, but for a mental state revealed from the speaker's manner of speaking, as in (17), the construction is clearly comparable to the English ROC.

(17)

- a. Ella murmura su incredulidad. (CREA: Chile, NONFIC<sup>6</sup>, 1988)  
“she murmurs her incredulity”
- b. Arzallus, [...] ha sido muy discreto para murmurar su alivio. (CREA: Spain, NEWS, 1997)  
“Arzallus, [...] has been very discreet in murmuring his relief”
- c. Varios de los contertulios murmuraron su asentimiento. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 2001)  
“some of the talk show guests murmured their assent”

The objects in (17) are not subcategorized by their verbs, even though *murmurar* may have transitive uses (*Ella murmuró su nombre*, “She murmured his name”). Likewise, the singing verbs in (18) take non-subcategorized objects. The verb *cantar* (“sing”) is a typically intransitive verb, which may take a cognate object or any nominal expression semantically related to it. However, the object in (18a) is not a song-related noun, but a speech act noun. A similar example appears under (18b), where the transitive verb *entonar* (“modulate, sing”) takes a figurative greeting noun as object. These constructions with non-subcategorized objects share the semantics of the English ROC: “express a greeting by singing”, where two predicates fuse into one.

(18)

- a. La señora Leverett canta su saludo. (CREA: Puerto Rico, FIC, 1996)  
“Mrs. Leverett sings her greeting”
- b. Steve Forbes entonó su adiós precipitado –que no definitivo– a la política. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1996)  
“Steve Forbes sang his hurried –though not definite– good-bye to politics”

In the examples under (17) and (18) a possessive determiner marks the predicative relation between the object and the subject, a feature common to most English ROCs. Spanish, in clear contrast with English, which “overworks” its possessives (Stockwell et al. 1965:72), makes little use of possessive determiners; their usage is limited to cases where the predicative relation is unclear. Hence, their use in Spanish reveals an idiosyncratic property of ROCs, which clearly distinguishes them from other Spanish constructions.

Our corpus findings show that ROCs with MSVs are felicitous and productive in Spanish; they appear with a variety of verbs of human sounds. One of the most productive verbs is *gritar* (“shout”), as in the following examples:

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<sup>6</sup> NONFIC stands for nonfictional books.

(19)

- a. Ni ella ni el Coronel Martínez son traidores: en la tortura grita su inocencia. (CE: Paraguay, FIC)  
“Neither she nor Colonel Martinez are traitors: under torture she shouts her innocence”
- b. [...] y en un momento trágico gritó su escepticismo. (CREA: Chile, FIC, 1983)  
“and in a tragic moment he shouts his scepticism”
- c. Esa noche tendrán ocasión de gritar su ira. (CREA: Chile, NONFIC, 1988)  
“that night they will have the chance to shout their rage”
- d. [...] y los españolitos gritaban su euforia ante la Embajada holandesa. (CREA: Spain, NEWS, 1983)  
“and the Spaniards shouted their joy in front of the Netherlands embassy”

Other verbs of loud sounds *–vociferar* (“vociferate”), *vocear* (“shout”) and *chillar* (“yell”)— have also been attested in ROCs:

(20)

- a. Algunos vociferaban su alarma. (CREA: Puerto Rico, FIC, 1991)  
“Some vociferated their alarm”
- b. Numerosos grupos naturistas, macrobióticos, vegetarianos y aun ecológicos han voceado su disconformidad sobre el uso tan difundido de los aditivos. (CREA: Argentina, NONFIC, 1987)  
“many naturist, macrobiotic, vegetarian, and even ecological groups have shouted their disagreement with such an extended use of additives”
- c. [...] se agarra a los barrotes y chillar su inocencia. (Google Books: Spain, FIC, 2012)  
“he grabs the iron bars and yells his innocence....”

Verbs of low sounds have also been found in ROCs, often denoting the expression of messages in a muted way.

(21)

- a. El viejo volteá hacia afuera y masculla maldiciones. (CREA: Mexico, FIC, 1976)  
“The old man turns towards the outside and mutters curses”
- b. Entró refunfuñando improperios don Carmelo. (CREA: Venezuela, FIC, 1976)  
“don Carmelo entered grumbling insults”
- c. Flynn barbota conjuros en idioma inglés. (CREA: Mexico, FIC, 1981)  
“Flynn mutters spells in English”
- d. A ella la dejaron ir, musitando su agradecimiento. (CREA: Mexico, FIC, 1991)  
“They let her go, whispering their gratitude”

Other MSVs attested in ROCs involve the use of imitative sounds, as in the following examples:

(22)

- a. [...] balbuceando un adiós. (CE: Chile, FIC)  
“stammering a good-bye”
- b. [...] a cada atasco rezongaba juramentos. (CREA Spain, FIC, 1975)  
“at each traffic jam he would grumble curses”
- c. La gorda va a tartamudear una excusa. (CREA: Mexico, NEWS, 1996)  
“the fat woman is going to stutter an excuse”
- d. Farfulló huecas disculpas. (CE: Argentina, FIC)  
“(s/he) gabbled hollow apologies”

Verbs of sound emission are expected to be more productive in a communicative sense than gesture verbs, since sound can be modulated into different tones to obtain a variety of meanings. For example, verbs of sound made by animals, like *groan*, *growl* and *howl*, may be used to denote human verbal and nonverbal communication. In fact, they are cross-listed in Levin (1993) as “verbs of manner of speaking” (1993:204), “verbs of sound made by animals” (1993:212), and “verbs of non-verbal expression” (1993:219). These different communicative uses are illustrated in (23). Their Spanish counterparts, *gruñir* (“groan”), *gemir* (“growl”), and *aullar* (“howl”), are also used both as MSVs, in (24), and as verbs of non-verbal expression, in (25).

(23)

- a. The pack howled a welcome to its newest members. (COCA: FIC, 2008)
- b. The dogs growled their disapproval at such strange goings on. (COCA: FIC, 1994)
- c. They’re betting diamonds, he and Schindler. A queen falls and Goeth groans his misfortune. (COCA: FIC, 1993)

(24)

- a. Cree que ya nadie va a gruñir un ‘por ahí te pudras’ a mi paso. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1988)  
“(s/he) thinks that nobody is going to groan a ‘get lost’ as I walk by”
- b. Lastima más cuando no puede gemir un ¡ay! con cada paso. (CREA: Puerto Rico, FIC, 1996)  
“it hurts even when (she) cannot growl an ouch! with every step”
- c. Por dentro algo esté aullando una interminable protesta. (CREA: Mexico, FIC, 1987)  
“inside something might be howling an endless protest”

(25)

- a. Doña Luisa gruñó su aprobación. (CE: Spain, FIC)  
“Doña Luisa growled her approval”
- b. Surgió Pancho a la borda opuesta, gimiendo su angustia. (CREA: Mexico, FIC, 1981)  
“Pancho appeared at the opposite gunwale, growling his anguish”
- c. La figura del cuerpo humano, desnudo [...] aullando su miedo y su dolor. (CREA: Spain, NEWS, 1996)  
“the figure of the human body, naked [...] howling its fear and its pain”

Other verbs of sounds emitted by animals may form ROCs both with human expressers, (26), and with animal emitters, (27).

(26)

- a. El sureño cacareaba sus agravios. (CE: Chile, FIC, 1998)  
“the southerner crowed his resentment”
- b. Como fieras en jaula, rugen su amor las criaturas del presidio. (CE: Spain, FIC, 1890)  
“like wild animals in cages, the creatures in prison groan their love”

(27)

- a. La gata ronroneaba su misteriosa felicidad en mi regazo. (CREA: Chile, FIC 1990)  
“the cat purred her mysterious happiness in my lap”
- b. En los árboles los pájaros se esponjan piando su saludo al nuevo día. (CE: Paraguay, FIC)  
“in the trees the birds swelled chirping their greeting to the new day”
- c. Y Pola ladrandó su bienvenida con aire desconfiado. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1975)  
“and Pola barking her welcome with a distrustful air”

#### 4.2. ROCS WITH VERBS OF NON-VERBAL EXPRESSION

The English ROC also conveys non-verbal communication with verbs of gestures and signs. As shown in table 1, the number of English non-linguistic verbs is more limited than that of MSVs, since gestures are more rudimentary ways of communication than words. Gestures made to convey messages are usually related to the domain of the face and head, or hands and arms, and they include processes like smiling, nodding, shaking the head or waving. Some of the English verbs denoting these gestures include the body part as an object, which may be omitted and substituted by a non-subcategorized expressive object, as in (8). However, their Spanish counterparts typically require the overt expression of the body member as an object (e.g. *guiñar un ojo* “wink an eye”), or a prepositional phrase (e.g. *asentir con la cabeza*, “nod one’s head”), not allowing for ROC formation. The only exception I have found is a verb that lexicalizes the body part, the verb *cabecear* (“shake one’s head, nod”). This intransitive verb may form ROCs:

(28) Mientras cabeceaba su negativa se le erizó la piel. (CREA: Uruguay, FIC, 2001)  
“while his head shook in refusal his skin crawled”

Another verb that also belongs to this class is the transitive verb *aplaudir* (“clap”), which, like the English *applaud*, shows formal equivalence to the ROC. However, unlike *clap*, both *aplaudir* and *applaud* take a non-predicative object. The

difference between the ROC with *clap* and the construction with the verbs *applaud/aplaudir* is illustrated in (29) and (30), respectively.

(29) Pedestrians clapped their approval. (COCA: FIC, 2009)

NP<sub>i</sub>                    V                    Poss<sub>i</sub> NP

(30)

- a. Debíamos aplaudir su actuación. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1985)  
“we had to applaud his performance”
- b. But they applauded his performance when he left. (COCA: MAG, 1990)

NP<sub>i</sub>                    V                    Poss<sub>ii</sub> NP

Levin's list of “verbs of nonverbal expression” comprises a wide class, involving different types of gestures (1993:98), as shown in table 1. One of the most prolific gestures in this class refers to the act of smiling or laughing; 15 out of the 41 verbs listed in Levin (1993) refer to this act (*beam, cackle, chortle, chuckle, giggle, grin, guffaw, laugh, simper, smile, grimace, smirk, snicker, titter, and snigger*). The Spanish class appears to be smaller: *reír* *sonreír*, and some uses of *carcajear* are the only intransitive, not pronominal, smiling verbs that may take an object.<sup>7</sup> The only examples of ROCs found with a smiling gesture verb in the CREA are grouped under (31). These 4 examples are quite limited compared to the 92 examples of ROCs found just with the verb *smile* in the COCA. Besides its limitation, it needs to be noted that examples (31a,b) are both from Puerto Rican Spanish, which might reveal a borrowing process (from the English collocation *smile one's approval*) in this bilingual context. Examples (31c,d) also come from American Spanish (Uruguay and Venezuela). No examples were found from peninsular Spanish.

(31)

- a. Meghan mira a su madre, que sonríe su aprobación. (CREA: Puerto Rico, FIC, 1996)  
“Meghan looks at her mother, who smiles her approval”
- b. Miss Susan sonrió su aprobación. (CREA: Puerto Rico, FIC, 1997)  
“Miss Susan smiled her approval”
- c. El abogado sólo atinó a sonreírle una bienvenida. (CREA, Uruguay, FIC, 2001)

<sup>7</sup> Word Reference (wordreference.com) lists only one synonym of *sonreír*: *reír*. The latter has the following synonyms: *carcajear, sonreír, desternillarse, descuajaringarse* and *troncharse*. A second group of synonyms of *reír* –*burlarse, chancarse, mofarse* and *cachondearse*– relate to a different sense of the verb, “laugh at, make fun of”. El Mundo (diccionarios.elmundo.es) groups together synonyms for both senses of *reír*: *sonreír, chancarse, carcajear, cachondearse, burlarse, desternillarse, descuajaringarse, mofarse* and *troncharse*. Casares (1997) lists *reír, reírse, sonreír, carcajear* and *encanarse* together with two transitive generic verbs –*tomar* and *soltar*– and a group of collocations like *morirse de risa*.

d. “the lawyer only managed to smile him a welcome”  
 ¡Ríen su alegría! (CREA: Venezuela, FIC, 1979)  
 “they laugh their happiness”

Curiously, however, its antonym, *llorar* (“weep”), is frequently found in ROCs both in peninsular and American Spanish:

(32)

- a. No tenía palabras con las cuales llorar su inconsuelo. (CREA: Dominican Republic, NEWS, 2004)  
 “he did not have words with which to weep his despair”
- b. No podría andar por ahí llorando mis desventuras. (CE: Argentina, FIC)  
 “I couldn’t go around there weeping my misfortunes”
- c. Amaranta se encerró en el dormitorio a llorar su soledad hasta la muerte. (CE: Colombia, FIC)  
 “Amaranta locked herself in her bedroom to weep her solitude till death.”
- d. Lloró su rabia y lloró su duelo. (CREA: Costa Rica, FIC, 1992)  
 “he wept his anger and he wept his mourning”
- e. Swaggart apareció llorando su arrepentimiento. (CREA: Chile, NEWS, 1990)  
 “Swaggart appeared weeping his regret”
- f. Y otros llorarán su amargura (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1994)  
 “and others will weep their sorrow”

The examples under (32) illustrate a conventionalized transitive usage of the verb *llorar*, described in the *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española*<sup>8</sup> (DRAE) as: “sentir vivamente algo. *Llorar una desgracia, la muerte de un amigo, las culpas, los pecados.*” (“Feel something vividly. Weep a misfortune, the death of a friend, one’s faults, one’s sins”). But there is an important difference among the illustrative objects mentioned in the DRAE; some of them are predicative, *llorar las culpas/los pecados* (“to weep one’s faults, one’s sins”), and some, as in *llorar la muerte de un amigo*, (“to weep the death of a friend”) are, apparently, not predicative (one cannot weep his/her own death; it has to be the death of someone else). However, this non-predicative object turns out to be predicative in a figurative sense: the death stands as a source domain for the effect it causes on the speaker: “to weep the suffering state caused by a friend’s death.” This cause for effect metonymy makes it predicative, and may, thus, qualify as an ROC. This metonymic usage is highly entrenched and can be traced back to, at least, the 13th century, with an example by the Spanish poet Gonzalo de Berceo (c. 1198-c. 1264) extracted from the CE: *llorando sus peccados* (“weeping their sins”). Notice that the figurative sense is so automatic that it even alternates with a nonfigurative

<sup>8</sup> Available online ([rae.es/recursos/diccionarios/drae](http://rae.es/recursos/diccionarios/drae)).

meaning, as in (33), which presents both the effect (*su pena*, “his sorrow”) and the cause (*lo que ha perdido*, “what he has lost”) together in an ROC.

(33) Soy un hombre insensible que sólo sabe llorar *su pena, lo que ha perdido*. (CREA: Uruguay, FIC, 1988)  
 “(I) am an insensitive man who only knows how to weep his sorrow, what he has lost”

Other synonyms of *llorar –lloriquear, gimotear, moquear, sollozar* and *planir*—whose transitive usage is not acknowledged in the DRAE, have been attested in ROCs, (34). These usages have probably emerged by analogy with *llorar*. Most of these examples denote the cathartic liberation of a negative emotion.

(34)

- a. Domènec lloriqueaba su impotencia. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1986)  
 “Domenec snivelled his helplessness”
- b. Donde el rey Felipe IV gimotea sus cuitas a sor María Jesús de Ágreda. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1991)  
 “where the king Philip IV weeps his grief to sister María Jesús de Ágreda”
- c. Ella moqueó su indignación en soledad. (CREA: Mexico, FIC, 1994)  
 “she sobbed her indignation in solitude”
- d. Su madre recién viuda, que sollozaba su pena en casa de una vecina piadosa. (CREA: Mexico, FIC, 1991)  
 “her mother recently widowed sobbed her grief in the house of a pious neighbor”
- e. En el exterior planían su desconsuelo. (CREA: Mexico, FIC, 1991)  
 “outside they mourned their grief”

Since ROCs are perceived as “reactions” (i.e. speech acts performed or feelings experienced in response to a situation or event), a stimulus may be overtly expressed in the construction. In the following examples the cause of the emotional release has been incorporated as a complement of the object:

(35)

- a. Así no tendré ojos para llorar la vergüenza de haber criado un fenómeno. (CE: Colombia, FIC)  
 “this way I will not have eyes to weep the shame of having bred a monster”
- b. Siguió llorando la desdicha de su destino. (CE: Colombia, FIC)  
 “(she) kept on weeping the misfortune of her fate”

Interestingly, this cathartic usage of a weeping verb is rare in English, with only five examples in the COCA:

(36)

- a. They wept their sorrow and their anger as the coffin was lowered. (COCA: ACAD, 1992)
- b. She wept her supplication, her hurt into my hair. (COCA: FIC, 2004)

- c. In live performance, (or taped recordings of live performances) al-Nawwab alternately whispers his words, weeps his laments [...]. (COCA: ACAD, 1997)
- d. When I had cried my despair into silence at last, I let Colin lead me back down the hill. (COCA: FIC, 2003)
- e. [...] who'd lain in a corner of my bed in Virginia and cried her lament of long years. (COCA: FIC, 1997)

Verbs of gestures made with the eye area are more restricted in this expressive usage. This fact is also confirmed by the English data. Thus, from the list of eye gestures included in Levin (1993), I have only come across English ROCs with the verbs *frown*, *scowl* and *glare* in the 450 million words COCA, (37). My searches did not yield ROCs with *gape*, *gawk*, *glower* and *goggle*. There are no Spanish counterparts to these verbs; therefore, no possibility of forming ROCs.

(37)

- a. She frowned her disagreement at me. (COCA: FIC, 2012)
- b. Ben scowled his determination. (COCA: FIC, 1990)
- c. Several pairs of eyes, most notably Marla's and Karl's, glared hostility at Georgy. (COCA: FIC, 1995)

Verbs of gestures related to the mouth area are more recurrent in Spanish. I have distinguished a first group with verbs that imply a certain type of discharge from inside the body. In line with Reddy's Metaphor Theory, we may face them as instantiations of the Conduit Metaphor: ideas or feelings are expelled from the speaker's body through the mouth. This matches the cathartic sense I have claimed for some ROCs. One of the most representative verbs in this group is the verb *escupir* ("spit"), which is not included in Levin's class of verbs participating in the English ROC. This verb appears in ROCs both in English, (38), and in Spanish, (39). Another verb of body discharge found in an ROC in both languages is *vomitar* ("vomit"), (40), though it shows limited productivity.

(38)

- a. So do continue to spit your curses at the Spider Queen. (COCA: FIC, 1992)
- b. They spat their resentment about the rooms. (COCA: FIC, 2004)
- c. She would spit her contempt at his face and never come back. (COCA: FIC, 1991)

(39)

- a. Las lenguas afiladas de las mujeres escupieron toda la ira contenida. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1994)  
"the sharp tongues of women spat all the rage held"
- b. La Linda bramaba y escupía desalientos. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1993)  
"Linda roared and spat discouragement"
- c. El suicida escupía su desprecio sobre cualquier cosa o persona. (CREA: Nicaragua, FIC, 1995)  
"the suicide was spitting his contempt at any thing or person"

(40)

- a. Parecía dispuesto a vomitar su decepción. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1985)  
“he seemed ready to vomit his disappointment”
- b. To be honest, I would have wanted to vomit my discomfort at Betzi. (COCA: FIC, 1995)

Verbs related to the release of air through the mouth have also been attested with expressive objects, for example, *resoplar* (“snort”), *suspirar* (“sigh”), *toser* (“cough”) and *exhalar* (“breathe out”):

(41)

- a. El jardinero sin apoyo cayó dentro del hueco resoplando maldiciones. (CREA: Venezuela, FIC, 1985)  
“the gardener, without support, fell into the gap snorting curses”
- b. Carolina suspiró un adiós que les sirvió para llegar hasta la puerta y verle pedalear calle arriba. (CREA: Spain, FIC, 1987)  
“Carolina sighed a good-bye that helped her to get to the door and see him cycle up the street”
- c. Don Alvaro de Aliaga y Harriman le tosió su presencia en el *breakfast room* a su esposa. (Google Books: Peru, FIC, 1995)  
“Don Alvaro de Aliaga y Harriman coughed his presence in the breakfast room to his wife”
- d. Ester exhala su desdén por las narices. (CREA: Puerto Rico, FIC, 1996)  
“Esther breathes her disdain out through her nose”

Another non-verbal sound sign used in the ROC is *silbar* (“whistle”), as in (42). It is also used in sports contexts (“blow the whistle”) with a resulting object that announces a decision of the referee, for example, awarding a penalty, as in (43a) or declaring the end of a game with its variant, *pitar* (“whistle”), in (43b). This performative sports sense offers an interesting conventionalized usage of the verb.

(42)

- a. Él se para, silba su aprecio, envuelve un brazo alrededor de su cintura, besa su mejilla. (CREA: Puerto Rico, FIC, 1996)  
“he stops, whistles his appreciation, places his arm around her waist, kisses her cheek”
- b. Pajarito silbaba su ira con silbido suave de reptil. (CE: Spain, FIC, 19<sup>th</sup> c.)  
“Pajarito whistled his anger with the soft whistle of a reptile”

(43)

- a. El árbitro capaz de pitá un penalty contra el equipo local. (CREA: Spain, NEWS, 1995)  
“the referee capable of whistling a penalty against the local team”
- b. El árbitro silbó el final del partido. (CREA: Spain, NONFIC, 1995)  
“the referee whistled the end of the game”

Gestures involving the arms have also been spotted in an ROC with the verbs *agitarse* (“to shake, wave”), *bracearse* (“to wave one’s arms”) and *sacudirse* (“shake”):

(44)

- a. Los pobres ejercieron su derecho democrático a protestar, llorar sus penas y agitar su desesperación frente a las cámaras. (CREA: Bolivia, NEWS, 1997)  
“the poor exercised their democratic right to protest, weep their sorrows and wave their despair in front of the cameras.”
- b. Cristiano rompió el silencio marcial del vestuario, primero en el campo braceando su desesperación. (Spain, NEWS, *Deportes Cuatro*, April 30, 2011)  
“Cristiano broke the martial silence of the changing room, first in the field waving his desperation”
- c. Los jugadores madrileños sacudieron su euforia. (CREA: Spain, NEWS, 1997)  
“Real Madrid players shook their euphoria”

The use of the ditransitive ROC with *besar* (“kiss”) for greetings, which is so productive in English (e.g. *kiss someone good-night/Hello*),<sup>9</sup> does not seem felicitous in Spanish. The only examples I have found are both from the bilingual Puerto Rican writer Esmeralda Santiago, and probably reflect the English influence on Spanish in a bilingual context, as observed for examples (31a-b):

(45)

- a. Ella mete a cada uno en su cama, les canta La Malagueña y les besa sus buenas noches. (CREA: Puerto Rico, FIC 1996)  
“she puts each one to bed, sings them La Malagueña and kisses them her good-nights”
- b. [...] la madre que no le pudo besar su adiós. (CREA: Puerto Rico, FIC, 1996)  
“the mother who could not kiss her her good-bye”

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

English corpus examples show that the ROC is not reduced to a closed class of MSVs and gesture/sign-verbs. The number of verbs taking part in this construction is only limited by pragmatic compatibility factors. The construction is allowed as long as the verb denotes a sound or sign which may be understood as communicative in a given situation. Sound related verbs are more easily associated with communication; hence, the list of MSVs found in ROCs is ample, as shown in

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<sup>9</sup> Haïk (2011) offers a detailed analysis of the English *kiss good-bye* construction.

table 2. However, notice that 19 out of the 77 verbs listed by Levin (1993) (reproduced in table 1) were not found in ROCs in the 450 million words COCA. Nonverbal communication is less common than verbal communication, which explains the more limited number of sign and gesture verbs in ROCs, as shown in table 2. The only verb from Levin's *wink* class that was not found in an ROC was *point*. The number of nonverbal expression verbs attested is more limited: only 10 out of the 41 verbs listed in Levin (1993) formed ROCs in the COCA. Corpus examples with verbs not listed in Levin (1993)'s preliminary analysis, as in (46), provide evidence of the wide scope of ROCs, and their potential usages in different communicative contexts. The list of verbs shown in table 2 must, therefore, not be considered closed.

(46)

- a. I have great respect for the work you are doing. Seed tut-tuts his thanks. (COCA: NEWS, 1998)
- b. I simply do not have time to go back in there. I honk good-bye to Charles and Faye. (COCA: FIC, 2009)
- c. I gestured hello, a kind of jutting out of one elbow while shaking my head side to side. (COCA: FIC, 2005)
- d. 'Howdy, Miss Emily,' I said as I creaked open the screen door, my hand springing up, my fingers fluttering hello. (COCA: FIC, 2001)
- e. We bowed farewell to the last man. (COCA: FIC, 1997)

<b>verbs of manner of speaking</b>	<i>babble, bark, bawl, bellow, bleat, boom, bray, burble, chant, chatter, chirp, cluck, coo, croak, croon, crow, cry, drawl, gibber, groan, growl, grumble, grunt, hiss, holler, hoot, howl, hum, lisp, moan, mumble, murmur, mutter, purr, rage, rasp, roar, rumble, scream, screech, shout, shriek, sing, snap, snarl, squeal, stammer, stutter, thunder, trill, trumpet, wail, wheeze, whimper, whine, whisper, whistle, yap, yell, yelp, yodel, yowl</i>
<b>verbs of nonverbal expression</b>	<i>blink, bow, chortle, chuckle, clap, cough, frown, gesture, glare, grin, honk, nod, scowl, shrug, sigh, smile, snort, spit, squint, tut-tut, vomit, wag, wave, weep, whistle, wink</i>

Table 2. English verbs attested in ROCs in COCA.

In the present paper, I have tried to prove that ROCs are allowed in Spanish. The fact that Spanish, like other Romance languages, shows a strong tendency to encode manner information in adverbial phrases separated from the verbal root is not a matter of dispute, as has been widely discussed in the domain of Motion. This would be an impediment to the formation of ROCs in Spanish. However, the examples provided in this paper show that, even though Spanish avoids conflated

patterns, some ROCs are felicitous. The Spanish examples show the same structure as the English ROC ([SUBJ<sub>i</sub> [V → [(POSS)<sub>i</sub> message] OBL]]), with two causally linked events implied: the verbal event, denoting the means by which the second event – the nominalized expressive act – is produced. Like in the English ROC, a possessive determiner frequently introduces the expressive object. This is surprising, because, unlike English, which makes an extensive use of possessive determiners, Spanish tends to use definite determiners instead (e.g. “She washed *her* hands” / “Se lavó *las* manos”). This use of a possessive determiner in the Spanish ROC may suggest a case of constructional borrowing.

ROCs are complex indirect speech constructions, which involve “lexical subordination” (Levin and Rapoport 1988); the verb encodes a process, which is subordinate to the main expressive event introduced as a nonsubcategorized object. These “elaborate” constructions imply a shift of the verb’s meaning to a new, typically “figurative”, sense; therefore, it is not surprising that they are more frequent in fiction (88.7% of the English examples, 80.8% of the Spanish occurrences), while their production is more restricted in oral English (none of the examples cited in this paper, although collocations of the type *wave/kiss good-bye* are frequent in oral English).

The semantics of the Spanish and English ROCs is alike, but the class of verbs that may form ROCs is smaller in Spanish. A list of verbs attested in ROCs is provided in table 2. The transitive use of MSVs is more abundant than generally perceived, though some of the examples stand in the fuzzy boundaries between ordinary communicative constructions with *verba dicendi* and ROCs. Some verbs of nonverbal expression showed low productivity, but ROCs seem to be extending by analogy to other more frequent uses, as was suggested for the class of “weep” verbs, which is quite productive in Spanish. Moreover, a specific usage with the verb *llorar* (“weep”) has been traced back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It must also be remarked that ROCs with gesture verbs are also quite limited in English; 31 of the 41 verbs listed in Levin (1993) were not attested in ROCs in the COCA, and 11 out of the 25 English verbs of nonverbal expression in ROCs yielded less than 5 examples (*chortle, chuckle, cough, gesture, honk, scowl, squint, tut-tut*<sup>10</sup>, *vomit, wag* and *weep*).

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<sup>10</sup> This novel verb appears only 11 times in the COCA, 1 in an ROC.

<b>verbs of manner of speaking</b>	<i>agitar, besar, bracear, cabecear, escupir, exhalar, gemitear, llorar, lloriquear, moquear, pitir, planir, reír, resoplar, sacudir, silbar, sollozar, sonreír, suspirar, toser, vomitar</i>
<b>verbs of nonverbal expression</b>	<i>aullar, balbucear, barbotar, cacarear, cantar, chillar, entonar, farfullar, gemir, gritar, gruñir, ladrar, muscular, murmurar, musitar,piar, refunfuñar, rezongar, ronronear, rugir, tartamudear, vocear, vociferar</i>

Table 3. Spanish verbs attested in ROCs.

Regardless of their origin –analogy with other older usages or borrowing from English in a global area– it seems that Spanish ROCs are increasing and extending to cover different expressive situations. The construction works as long as it denotes a pragmatically plausible situation. Thus, for example, a football player waving his arms in despair has been felicitously captured by a sports commentary in example (44b).

The corpus data extracted for this work have provided an excellent arena for cross-linguistic comparison. There are still issues that require further research. It seems that some ROCs are more frequent in certain varieties of American Spanish,<sup>11</sup> where a closer contact with English might favor a process of borrowing. A study of how these patterns are used in different varieties of Spanish is needed.

On a more general level, the findings of the present analysis might question the validity of typological approaches that classify Spanish, and other Romance languages, as languages that do not exhibit event conflation. The corpus data in this study have shown that the conflated pattern in Spanish is not ungrammatical, merely peripheral, and perhaps of a literary nature. Large corpus samples should be analyzed in other Romance languages.

<sup>11</sup> From the 73 examples cited in this paper, 47 are from American Spanish and 26 from Peninsular Spanish. Given the fact that the two varieties are balanced in the CREA (50% each) ROCs appear to be more frequent in American Spanish.

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