On the nature of the Catalan prefix entre-

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1. Introduction. I first show that the Catalan prefix entre- ‘between’ is a non-head, i.e. a modifier, when found in compounds like entreobrir (to-half-open) ‘to open halfway’. Secondly, I argue for a unification of the three apparent different interpretations of the prefix, namely reciprocity (1a), location (1b) and incompletion (1c) (cf. Gràcia et al. 2000, Déchaine & Tremblay 2006) in Lieber’s (2004) framework of lexical semantic representation. Finally, I claim that entre- selects for some notion of ‘plurality’.

(1) a. entremar-se (between-kill-SE) ‘to kill each other’
   b. entre/interposar (between-put) ‘to put (something) between (something else)’
   c. entreobrir (between-open) ‘to open halfway/not completely’

2. Head vs. non-head status. I argue that entre- is a modifier of the head it attaches to, i.e. the prefix semantically subordinates into the V (cf. e.g. Di Sciullo 1997). Some evidence for this view comes from the unchanged argument structure of the prefixed V with respect to its base (2) (cf. Mateu 2001). In addition, if entre- were the head, it would be difficult to explain existing prefixed and unprefixed verbs with the same meaning (3). The nonhead status of entre- can explain the ‘optionality’ of this element.

(2) a. L’Adrià va [obrir], la porta. ‘Adrià opened the door’
   b. L’Adrià va [entreobrir], la porta. ‘Adrià opened the door halfway/not completely’
(3) a. Els dos enemics es maten. ‘The two enemies kill each other’
   b. Els dos enemics s’entrematen. ‘The two enemies kill each other’

3. Lieber’s (2004) framework and interpretations of the prefix. According to Lieber, the lexical semantic representation has two parts: the skeleton and the body. The skeleton decomposes the representation into those aspects of meaning that are relevant for syntax (cf. Jackendoff’s (1990), Levin & Rappaport Hovav’s LRH (2005) level of lexical conceptual structure). The body is the encyclopaedic, holistic and idiosyncratic part of the representation (the ‘constant/root’ in LRH’s terms). The skeleton consists of functions and arguments. Functions are decomposed into features which are active across a number of categories. The two relevant features here are [Loc] (for “Location”) and [IEPS] (for “Inferable Eventual Position or State”), which are used to distinguish between locations and paths (e.g. English [+Loc] prepositions: in and [+IEPS] prepositions: to). Prepositions have skeletons composed of the features [Loc] and [IEPS], and arguments. The
preposition *between* would be characterized as in (4) and so would the Catalan preposition *entre* ‘between’ and its bound counterpart, the prefix.

(4) *between*: [+Loc ([ ], [ ])]

I take the locational interpretation of the preposition as the basic reading of the prefix (1b), on which the other readings are based (1a, 1c). My claim is that the different readings associated with *entre*-prefixed Vs arise from a single affixal skeleton (4) interacting with the syntactic and semantic properties of different bases. (5) shows the composed skeleton of the derived word (viz. the prefix plus the base). Co-indexation of prefix arguments with base arguments explains the creation of a single referential unit out of two distinct semantic skeletons.

(5) a. *interposar* (between-put): [+Loc ([ ]), [ ]], [+dynamic, +IEPS ([ ], [ ], [ ])]
   b. *entrebesar-se* (between-kiss-SE): [+Loc ([ ]), [ ]], [+dynamic, ([ ]), [ ]), [ ]]
   c. *entreobrir* (between-open): [+Loc ([ ]), [ ]], [+dynamic, +IEPS ([ ], [ ])]

The concept of location can be physical, as in (5a) (see translation in (1b)), and metaphorical, as in (5b) and (5c). The reciprocal V *entrebesar-se* (5b) treats the two people performing the action of kissing as locations; the kisses then go from one person/location to the other. As for incompletion predicates (5c), I claim that the base denotes a scalar quality. That is, the predicate projects a scale which may manifest different degrees of the gradable property at different times. Degrees can be seen as a set of points/locations on the scale (e.g. OPENING) (cf. Hay et al. 1999). Concerning incompletion predicates (5c) I make the prediction that only those predicates that can be viewed as having scalar properties can be prefixed with *entre*- and have the incompletion reading. This prediction is borne out by the data (*entremorir* (between-die) vs. *entreobrir* (between-open)).

4. **Selectional requirements of *entre*-**. The prefix requires some notion of ‘plurality’, which is satisfied in the reciprocal V (6a) and in the locational V (6b) by having plural marking, and in incompletion Vs like (6c) by viewing the object placed somewhere in between a range of points on a scale.

(6) a. La mare s’entrellaça les mans ‘The mother intertwines her (own) hands’
   b. La noia es va interposar entre ells ‘The girl interposed herself between them’
   c. La mare va *entreobrir* la porta ‘The mother opened the door halfway’

5. **Conclusion**. The Catalan prefix *entre*- is a modifier, not a head. Its three apparent different interpretations of the prefix, namely reciprocity, location and incompletion, can be unified in Lieber’s (2004) framework of lexical semantic representation. Its selectional requirement is that of plurality.
References