

Argument structure in adjectival passives: an aspect-based approach

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Goals: This paper investigates the patterns regarding the (un-)availability of agent-oriented modification in adjectival passives in Spanish. Departing from the observation that telic participles ban agent-oriented modification but statives allow it, I put forth a novel theoretical account that derives the restrictions solely from the *Aktionsart* of the underlying verbal predicate, syntactically modelled and independently motivated.

Setting the stage: As is known, adjectival passives (APass) are grammatical constructions built with a copular verb and an adjectival participle derived from a verbal base. Despite having a verbal source, the participle shows restrictions regarding agent-related modification (*by*-phrases, manner adverbs and instruments). This has been observed for many languages, eg. Spanish (Navas Ruiz 1987; Gómez Torrego 1988); German (Rapp 1996; Gehrke 2012); Hebrew (Meltzer-Asscher 2011). I provide an example in (1a) with a participle derived from a telic verb, which are the ones typically discussed in the literature. Interestingly, when the base verb is atelic, as in (1b), agent-oriented modifiers become available. This has long been noted in the descriptive literature of Spanish (Fernández Ramírez 1951; Gómez Torrego 1988) and also recently for English and German (McIntyre 2013).

- (1) a. El jarrón está roto *{por los niños/ violentamente/ con un martillo}
the vase is broken by the kids violently with a hammer
b. El museo está vigilado {por unos perros/ cuidadosamente/ con cámaras}
the museum is watched by some dogs carefully with cameras

The descriptive literature in Spanish does not clarify, however, what kind of atelic predicates are good in adjectival passives, since activities and simple states are not good inputs for APass (Luján 1981, cf. (2)). They also leave unexplained why it is the case that APass derived from atelic predicates allow agent-oriented modification, yet those with telic predicates do not.

- (2) a. *La carreta está empujada. b. *Pedro está amado
the cart is pushed Pedro is loved

The proposal: I follow Kratzer (2000) and García-Pardo (2014) in that the atelic predicates that are licit as inputs for APass belong to the aspectual class of stative causatives (StCs), which are composed of two temporally-coextensive states, causally related (a causing state and a result state). I adopt a syntactic approach to *Aktionsart* and argument structure in the spirit of Hale & Keyser (2002) and particularly Ramchand's (2008) tripartite division of the VP. I assume three heads: vP, VP and R(esult)P. vP introduces the external argument and RP introduces the internal argument. Each head introduces semantically a sub-event, and sub-events are interpreted as causally related from their syntactic contiguity, effectively deriving different *Aktionsart* configurations. VP introduces a dynamic sub-event, whereas vP and RP introduce stative ones. StCs are thus derived by vP and RP, since they are formed with two causally related states, but not a VP, since StCs are not dynamic. Telic verbs, on the other hand, are formed by VP and RP (a telic pair), whereas vP may be absent in the case of unaccusative verbs. The basic idea is represented in (3).

- (3) a. StCs: Syntax: vP > RP Semantics: $\lambda e. \exists s_1, s_2 [e = s_1 \rightarrow s_2]$
b. Telics: Syntax: (vP) > VP > RP Semantics: $\lambda e. \exists (s_1)_e, s_2 [e = (s_1) \rightarrow e_1 \rightarrow s_2]$

The proposal, then, is that adjectivization of the verb phrase triggers different chunks of structure, depending on *Aktionsart* of the VP. For telics, the adjectivizer A takes a VP as a complement, but no vP (in the spirit of Kratzer 2000) (cf. (4a)), and hence agent-oriented adverbs are not licensed (cf. (1a)). For StC verbs, A selects vP (cf. (4b)) and hence agent-oriented modifiers are fully allowed (cf. (1b)).

- (4) a. APass derived from telic VPs: A > VP > RP No vP
b. APass derived from StCs: A > vP > RP

The proposal that APass lack vP was already introduced in Kratzer (2002) for English and German. Her evidence came from the different interpretation of the implicit external argument in APass and verbal passives (VPass). In the latter, we find the *disjoint reference effect*: the implicit argument cannot be coreferent with the internal argument, i.e. no reflexive reading is possible. In the VPass in (5a), for instance,

the climbers must have necessarily been secured by someone other than themselves. On the other hand, APass are vague with respect to the interpretation of the external argument, and therefore a self-action reading is possible. In (5b), then, *the climbers* may have very well secured themselves.

- (5) a. The climbers were secured with a rope. (VPass)
 b. The climbers are secured with a rope. (APass)

I note that these effects also hold in Spanish, but crucially only in APass derived from telic verbs. When the adjectival participle is derived from a StC verb, the disjoint reference effect observed in VPass equally holds in APass: in (6), we cannot interpret that Pedro protects himself or that Juan controls himself.

- (6) a. Pedro está protegido. b. Juan está controlado.
 Pedro is protected Juan is controlled

The idea here is that adjectivization must preserve the aspectual core of the verb phrase it selects: for telics, it is only VP > RP (the telic pair), but with StCs it is vP > RP, i.e. vP *must* be present, since it introduces the causative state. This follows from the hypothesis in (7) (originally proposed by Fábregas et al. 2012 for the domain of nominalizations).

- (7) Aspect Preservation Hypothesis: A verb's *Aktionsart* is preserved under adjectivization.

Note also that the requirement of an external argument (and hence a vP projection) with StCs verbs can be independently observed outside of APass. For instance, while telic verbs may anti-causativize (i.e. suppress the external argument, raising the internal argument to subject position, cf. (8)), StCs cannot (cf. (9)).

- (8) a. El gobierno subió los impuestos. b. Los impuestos subieron.
 the government raised the taxes the taxes went-up
 (9) a. El gobierno controló la inmigración. b. *La inmigración controló.
 the government controlled the immigration the immigration controlled

Comparison with previous accounts and crosslinguistic extensions: As it turns out, not all languages show these restrictions regarding agent-oriented modification in APass derived from telic verbs. Anagnostopoulou (2003) and Alexiadou et al. (2015) report that for Greek (and also Russian and Swedish) agent-oriented modification is always available (cf. (11)). They refer to these as “permissive languages”.

- (10) a. To psari itan tiganismeno apo tin Maria. (By-phrases)
 ‘The fish was fried by Mary.’
 b. Ta malia tis basilisas ine xtenismena me xrisi xtena. (Instruments)
 ‘The hair of the queen is combed with a golden comb.’
 c. To thisavrofilakio itan prosektika anigmemo/ skopima paraviasmeno. (Adverbials)
 ‘The safe was cautiously opened/ deliberately opened.’

In my terms, this means that APass in Greek are formed higher in the structure to include vP, as in (11) (drawing from a previous proposal by Anagnostopoulou (2003)).

- (11) APass derived from telic VPs in Greek-type languages: A > vP > VP > RP

Notwithstanding, recent accounts have proposed that APass project vP (or VoiceP) in all languages (eg. Alexiadou et al. 2015), on the basis that participial adjectives can also be formed from strictly transitive verbs and that agent-oriented modifiers may be available in some cases in Spanish-type languages. However, I think that such modifiers, when possible, are merely pragmatically licensed (cf. Schlücker 2005): it is the absence of vP when the base verb is telic that accounts for their general unavailability.

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