

***Estar* Predication in Spanish. Scales, Adjectives and Participles**

Carmelo Bazaco
The Ohio State University

1. **Estar predication.** The distribution of *ser* and *estar* in Spanish is traditionally analyzed in terms of the Individual or Stage Level nature of the predication (Escandell and Leonetti, 2002; Marín, 2000; 2004). Although other contexts for *estar* have been identified (Mangialavore, 2013), all Adjectives (*Marta está feliz*) and Participles (*Los cordones están atados*) are sensitive to this first mentioned use. The present study focuses on the first context of *estar* predications, and tries to provide a scalar account that explains and predicts all uses.

2. **Proposal.** The proposed interpretation is that *estar* predicates are determined by an interval on a scale. This interval is formalized by means of a difference function, similar to the one proposed by Kennedy and Levin (2008) and Baglini (2012). This difference function takes the following form.

$$r_{\Delta} = \lambda x \lambda e. r \uparrow_{r(x) \text{ (init (e))}} (x) \text{ (fin (e))}$$

The function r_{Δ} takes an individual x in the event e , and returns the scalar distance between two degrees. These two points on the scale correspond to the degree projected by the individual (initial point) and a final point, which interpretation varies depending on whether the predication involves a closed or an open scale. The final point of the interval also acts as a probe for a different truth-value segment of the scale that the individual could project, generating the temporal readings of these predicates. Crucially, it is not necessary that this different truth-value is ever projected by the individual.

Once this difference function is applied to the *pos* morpheme (Kennedy 1997, Husband 2011) necessary for the derivation, we obtain the following morpheme.

$$\text{pos}_r = \lambda x \lambda e. r_{\Delta} (x) (e) \geq \text{std} (e)$$

The morpheme takes an individual x and an event e , and compares the interval r_{Δ} generated by the measuring function and compares to a standard interval associated with the event. In the case of baseline interpretation of *estar*, this standard is any value $\neq 0$.

3. **Adjectives and Participles.** A homomorphic relationship can be established between scales and verbal event structure (Kennedy, 1999; Kennedy and McNally, 1999). In this manner, we can predict that the proposed account of *estar* will also be able to account for the distribution of *estar* with Participles. Adjectives always denote states. Participles on the other hand, do not. In order to be a candidate for *estar* predication, a Participle will need to determine a state, and also an event that delimits it, so the *estar* probe can access the different truth-value segment of the scale. If they have this structure, all that remains is that the *estar* measuring function can access a different truth-condition segment on the scale, just like in the case of Adjectives.

4. In the case of closed-scale adjectives, Interpretative Economy (Kennedy 2007) predicts that *estar* will make use of the endpoints of the scale in order to generate the necessary interval, not being context sensitive. In this manner, only the individual's accessibility of the opposite truth-condition segment of the scale is necessary (1a). As predicted, Participles that also project a closed scale, behave in the same way

- (1) a. *La puerta está abierta.* b. *Los cordones están atados.*

Non-gradable Adjectives (2a) and Participles (2b), if considered as having a binary scale, also follow this pattern.

- (2) a. *Pepe está vivo.* B. *La luz está encendida.*

In this case of closed scales, there is no context-independent points for the interval, so pragmatics need to take over, as per IE. This involves not only the necessity of the access to a different truth-value segment, but also a process that allows this access – Color adjectives (3a,3b), *rico* (3c) and *famoso* (3d) are examples that display the importance of this process.

- (3) a. *Marta está roja porque ha tomado mucho el sol.* b. **Mi bicicleta está roja porque la he pintado.*
c. *Pepe es/*está famoso.* d. *Pepe es/*está rico.*

Participles are also sensitive to this restriction (*conocido*).

5. Conclusion

A scalar account of *estar* based on intervals on a scale, and the homomorphism that can be established between scales and event structure, allows us to account for all *estar* predications that involve temporal/aspectual characteristics of both Adjectives and Participles. This provides us with a powerful that could be extended to the modal uses of *estar*, as well as account for the distribution of copulas in Passive and Progressive constructions.

References

- Baglini, Rebekah. 2012. The scalar source of stative passives. In *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung* 16.
- Escandell, V., and Leonetti, M. 2002. Coercion and the Stage/Individual Distinction. In *From Words to Discourse: Trends in Spanish Semantics and Pragmatics*, ed. J. Gutiérrez Rexach, 159-179. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Husband, Matthew. 2011. Severing scale structure from the adjective. *LSA 2011 Extended Abstracts* .
- Kennedy, Christopher. 1997. Projection the adjective: The syntax and semantics of gradability and comparison. Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Santa Cruz.
- Kennedy, Chris. 1999. Projecting the Adjective—the syntax and semantics of gradability and comparison: Outstanding dissertations in linguistics. New York: Garland.
- Kennedy, Chris, and McNally, Louise. 1999. ‘From event structure to scale structure: degree modification in deverbal adjectives’. In *The Proceedings of SALT 9, 1999*, eds. T. Mathews and D. Strolovitch, 163-180. Ithaca, NY: CLC Publications
- Kennedy, Christopher. 2007. Vagueness and grammar: The semantics of relative and absolute gradable adjective. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 30(1): 1–45.
- Kennedy, Christopher, and Levin, Beth. 2008. Measure of change: The adjectival core of degree achievements. *Adjectives and adverbs: Syntax, semantics, and discourse* 156–182.
- Mangialavore, Maria Eugenia. 2013. Not Always a Stage. *Atypical Patterns in Spanish Copular Clauses*. Iberia. Volume 5 Issue 2, December 2013
- Marín, Rafael. 2000. El componente aspectual de la predicación. *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona: Doctoral Dissertation*.
- Marín, Rafael. 2004. *Entre ser y estar*. Madrid: Arco/Libros.