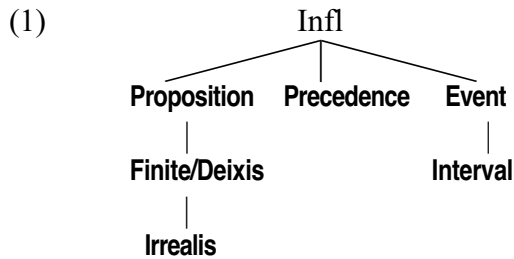


Simplex and Complex Progressives in English and Spanish

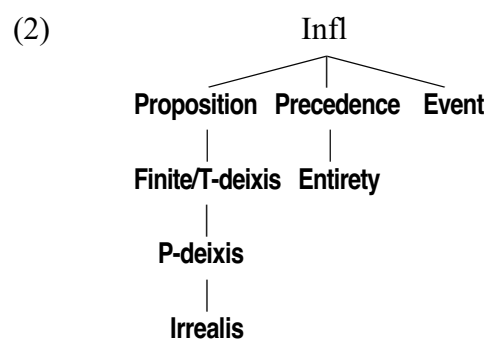
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 Workshop on Complex Predicates — University of Toronto
 January 31, 2003

1 Assumptions:

1.1 Features of Infl in English



1.2 Features of Infl in Spanish



1.3 Cyclic Vocabulary Insertion

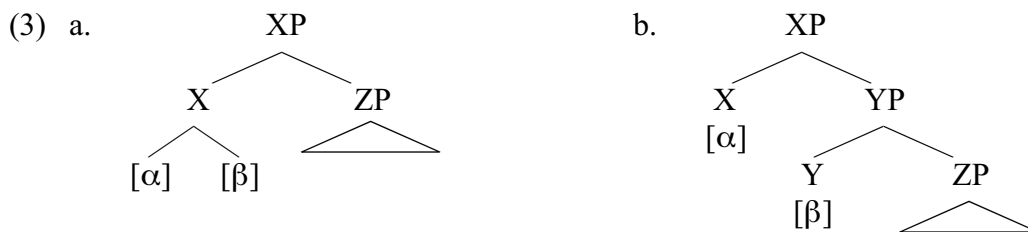
Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1993):

- Syntactic computation manipulates only features grammaticalized in the language in question.
 - Vocabulary items inserted cyclically, after syntactic computation on the cycle is finished.
- (Cowper and Hall 2002)
- Provisionally assume one cycle per syntactic projection

Insertion of inflectional vocabulary items depends on:

- a) which features are present in the syntactic structure, AND
- b) how they are arranged in syntactic projections.

If two features α and β occupy the head of a single syntactic projection, as in (3)a, then the best vocabulary item will be one that carries both features. However, if the two features are on different syntactic heads, as in (3)b, then vocabulary insertion will apply to the lowest head first, choosing a morpheme bearing only β . A morpheme carrying both α and β might be inserted on the XP cycle in (3)b, but it would not block the insertion of a morpheme carrying β on the YP cycle.



For example, in the English nominal system, the demonstrative *that* carries the features [deictic] and [distal], while the demonstrative *this* carries only [deictic]. Both features appear on the

Determiner node, and *that* will therefore block the insertion of *this* if both features are present. The feature [group], however, appears on the Number (#) node, below D. The demonstrative determiners *these* and *those* carry [group] in addition to the D features of *this* and *that* respectively. Notice that the existence (and eventual insertion) of *these* and *those* does not block the insertion of the plural morpheme *-s* in phrases like *these books*. The plural morpheme is inserted on the #P cycle, where only [group] is visible.

2 Progressives in English

2.1 Eventive Progressives

An ordinary progressive sentence like (4) has the inflectional features given in (5).

(4) Ann was reading the book.

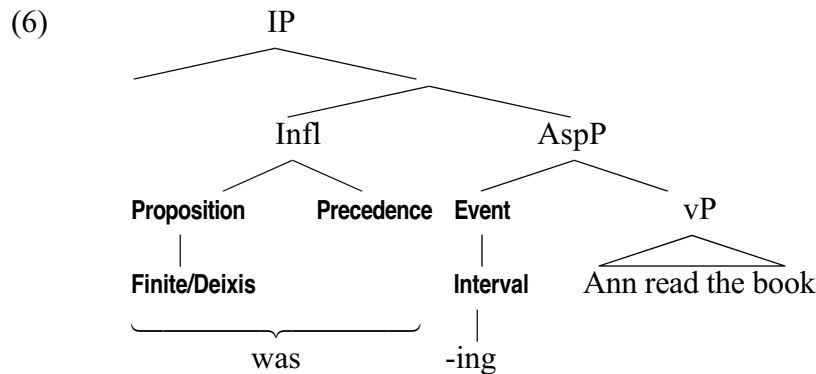
(5)	<u>Mood features</u>	<u>Narrow Tense Features</u>	<u>Aspectual Features</u>
	Proposition	Precedence	Event
	Finite/Deixis		Interval

- [Interval] is spelled out by the present participial morpheme -ing
- [Finite/Deixis] and [Precedence] are spelled out by the finite past auxiliary was.

Three possible syntactic structures for (4):

2.1.1 One clause, two functional projection

-ing and *was* are inserted on different cycles. See, e.g., Travis (1993) for EventP, a.k.a. AspP.



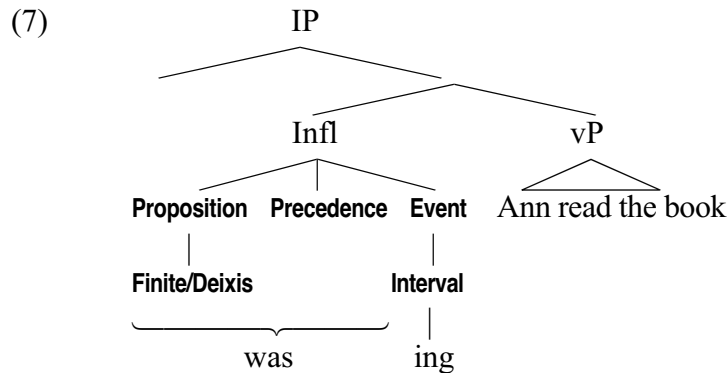
Merits: If we want to say that only one vocabulary item can be inserted per functional head, this structure permits it. Also, this structure corresponds to what has been proposed in the literature.

Shortcomings: Whenever a clause denotes a perfective event, AspP will completely lack morpho-phonological content.

Neither of these is decisive.

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2.1.2 One clause, one functional projection. Both VIs are inserted on the same cycle

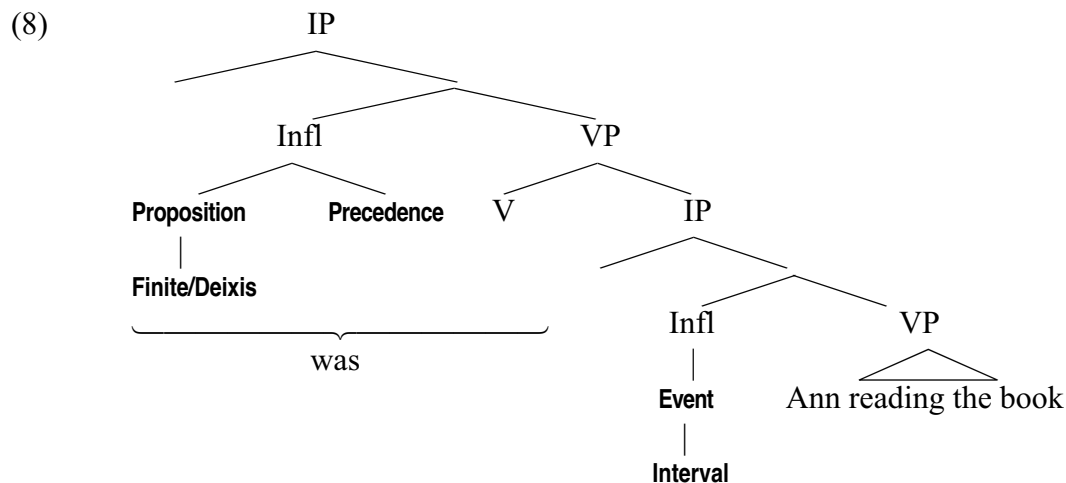


Merits: eliminates possibly unmotivated syntactic structure.

Shortcomings: requires that two vocabulary items be inserted at a single syntactic head.

Again, neither of these is compelling.

2.1.3 Two clauses, one or two functional projections per clause



Merits: Permits a treatment of auxiliary verbs that more closely approximates ordinary main verbs. To the extent that this is desirable, it supports the structure in (8). But it's not all clear that it is desirable.

Shortcomings: Forces the implicit claim that progressive sentences are, at the matrix level, stative. This is assumed by Schmitt (2001) and others, and may in fact be true in some languages (such as Spanish, which we'll discuss shortly). But it makes it difficult to capture the differences between sentences like (4) and the ones to be discussed in the next section.

2.2 *Stative Progressives*

- (9)
- Ann's reading a lot these days.
 - Kate was smoking very little before the war.
 - Barry's working too hard at the moment. That's why he's losing his temper so much.
It's a good thing he's asleep right now; otherwise he'd probably be yelling at us.

Compare the so-called "characterizing" use of the simple tenses (Krifka et al. 1995):

(10) Bill drives an old pickup truck.

Characterizing sentences are stative, attributing a property to their subject rather than denoting an event or set of events.

Evidence that the progressive sentences in (9) are stative:

Ordinary progressives can be modified by point adverbials, with the time of the event being interpreted as containing the time denoted by the adverbial.

- (11) a. Marie is reading the newspaper (at this very moment).
 b. Marie was reading the newspaper when the lights went out.

Characterizing sentences cannot be modified by point adverbials. The sentences in (11) are well-formed to the extent that a) the adverbial can be interpreted as denoting a period of time rather than a moment, or b) to the extent that the sentence is interpreted as eventive, rather than characterizing.

- (12) a. Bill drives an old pickup truck (#at this very moment).
 b. Annabelle played the piano (when the lights went out).

The progressive sentences in (9), like characterizing sentences in the simple tenses, cannot be modified by point adverbials.

- (13) a. Marie is reading lots of newspapers this year/#even as we speak.
 b. Marie was reading a lot during the summer (#when the lights went out).

With simple tense forms like (10), there is no overt element spelling out [Event], and it can thus simply be left out of the feature specification of Infl. With progressives like those in (9), however, the participial suffix overtly spells out [Interval], a dependent of [Event].

The biclausal structure in (8) accommodates both the overall stativity of the sentences in (9) and the fact that they contain an overt element spelling out a dependent of [Event]. The matrix clause in (8) is stative, while the embedded clause denotes an event.

2.3 Consequences for Predicates and Predication

Assuming that the sentences in (9) have a biclausal structure like (8), the subject in each of the sentences in is an argument of both the embedded imperfective event and the matrix stative predicate. Specifically, the matrix stative clause predicates a property of the subject. At the same time, the event denoted by the embedded clause includes the subject as a thematic participant. However, it can also be shown that the subject originates (in very traditional terms) in the lower clause, and raises to become the matrix subject. In other words, (8) is a raising structure, not a control structure.

2.3.1 Evidence from idiom chunks

- (14) a. Tabs are increasingly being kept on immigrants these days.
 b. Good headway was being made on this issue in the 1990's.

2.3.2 Evidence from expletives

- (15) a. It's bothering him more these days that the company's profits are down.
 b. It's seeming more and more likely that the Tories will win the next election.

2.3.3 Evidence from Active-Passive synonymy

- (16) a. The students in Grade 9 were reading *Romeo and Juliet* last term.
b. *Romeo and Juliet* was being read by the students in Grade 9 last term.

We can conclude from the grammaticality of idiom chunks and expletives in subject position, as in (14) and (15), that these biclausal sentences involve raising rather than control. The synonymy of (16)a and (16)b supports this conclusion.

Take-home message: English progressives are structurally ambiguous between a monoclausal, eventive representation and a biclausal, outwardly stative representation.

3 Spanish Progressives

Claim: the Spanish progressive construction is not, strictly speaking, an imperfective tense form the way the English progressive construction is. Rather, it is a purely copular construction whose predicate is a lexically derived participle. There is, in fact, essentially no inflectional Aspect in Spanish.

3.1 Important differences between Spanish and English:

• English simple tenses are perfective, and imperfective forms are morphologically marked with progressive *-ing*. Spanish simple tenses are neither imperfective nor perfective.

- (17) a. Mary talks to Peter.
If stative, then characterizing or habitual. If eventive, then futurate or reportive, both of which are perfective (Cowper 1998), but NOT ongoing at speech time)
b. Mary is talking to Peter. (If stative, then characterizing. If eventive, then futurate or ongoing at speech time)
- (18) María habla con Pedro. [Precedence] ([Event])
If stative, then characterizing or habitual. If eventive, then can be futurate, reportive or ongoing at speech time. Expresses meanings expressed by both perfective and imperfective present tenses in English.
- (19) a. Mary talked to Peter. [Precedence], ([Event], default interpretation Moment)
If stative, then characterizing or habitual. If eventive, then perfective.
b. Mary was talking to Peter. [Precedence], [Interval], possibly biclausal
If stative, then characterizing. If eventive, then futurate from a prior point of view, or ongoing at some moment prior to speech time.
- (20) a. So-called Imperfect tense:
María hablaba con Pedro. [Precedence], ([Event])
If stative, then characterizing or habitual. If eventive, then futurate from a prior point of view, or ongoing at some moment prior to speech time. Again, both perfective and imperfective meanings.
b. Preterite:
María habló con Pedro. [Entirety], ([Event])
If stative, then characterizing or habitual, and no longer true at speech time. If eventive, then complete prior to speech time.

See Labelle (2002) for an argument that in French, both the *Imparfait* and the *Passé Simple* are aspectually neutral. Both can be either perfective or imperfective, and both are compatible with

all event-types. The difference between them is that the *Passé Simple*, like the Spanish preterite, places its entire eventuality prior to the moment of speech, while the *Imparfait*, like the Spanish imperfect, places at least some of its eventuality prior to the moment of speech.

3.2 *Imperfectives and Progressives*

The question: If the English progressive is simply the spelling out of imperfective viewpoint aspect, and the Spanish imperfect has nothing to do with viewpoint aspect, what about the Spanish progressive? Does it spell out imperfective viewpoint aspect, like the English progressive, or is there more (or possibly less) to it than that?

3.2.1 Progressives with stative verbs

If it spells out imperfective viewpoint aspect, then like the English monoclausal progressive, it should not appear with stative main verbs. Although there are not many examples, some can be found, as in .

- (21) a. **Estoy temiendo** que va a llegar tarde
I'm afraid he's going to arrive late
b. **Estoy viendo** que vamos a acabar mal
I see that we're going to end badly
c. Por un instante pensó que de algún modo él, Martín, **estaba** de verdad **siendo** necesario a aquel ser atormentado
For an instant he thought that he, Martin, **was** really necessary to that tormented creature
d. La convocatoria a las distintas manifestaciones **está siendo** variada
The calling to the various demonstrations **is** varied (i.e. the people attending come from various sources)

These sentences lack the coerced-event reading found in English when a normally stative verb appears in a progressive construction.

- (22) a. Arthur is resembling a giraffe (by stretching his neck ...)
b. The children are being polite.

3.2.2 Lack of futurate progressives

- (23) a. ¡Me estoy cayendo!
I'm falling (uttered while in midair)
b. ¡que me caigo! (simple present)
I'm falling! (uttered while slipping from the branch)

Futurate clauses in the past, like the English example in , appear in Spanish with the so-called Imperfect tense, and are ill-formed with the progressive.

- (24) I was leaving next week, but now it appears I'll have to stay for another month.
(25) a. Yo **salía** a la mañana siguiente para París.
I was leaving the following morning for Paris
b. *Yo **estaba saliendo** la mañana siguiente para París.

3.2.3 Marked auxiliary verb

The progressive construction in Spanish uses the verb *estar*, not *ser*. *Estar* is used in copular sentences denoting stage-level predications, while *ser* is used for individual-level predications. However, in the verbal passive construction, the auxiliary is *ser*, regardless of whether the clause has a stage-level or an individual-level interpretation. An adjectival passive can have the auxiliary *estar*, as in (27).

(26) yo no estoy siendo juzgado.
I'm not being judged.

(27) Estuve destinado en Bilbao dos años
I was posted in Bilbao for 2 years

3.2.4 Absence of contrast elsewhere in the system

In English, all eventive clauses can be characterized as either perfective or imperfective. The fact that the feature [Interval] is active in the English inflectional system triggers the default interpretation of [Event] as perfective when [Interval] is absent.

If the Spanish progressive construction (or more properly the present participle) spelled out the feature [Interval], then it should follow that all Spanish eventive clauses are characterizable as perfective or imperfective. This is clearly not the case, as we saw above. Despite the existence of the present progressive, the Spanish simple present is not perfective.

3.3 *The structure of the Spanish progressive*

If the Spanish progressive can't be the realization of imperfective viewpoint aspect, and if indeed there is no distinctive viewpoint aspect in the system, then what?

The participle is not an adjective

We might think that the participle is really an adjective, generated by derivational morphology, and serving as the predicate of a small clause complement to the verb *estar*. BUT:

- Adjectives in Spanish agree in number and gender with the nominal they modify, or are predicated of. The participle doesn't.
- The participle retains all of the case-marking and argument-taking properties it had when it was still a verb. Adjectives don't in general do that.
- ??? Adjectives normally appear both attributively and predicatively. The participle appears only as a predicate, never as an attributive modifier of a noun.
- There is another suffix that derives an adjective with approximately the same meaning: *-nte*

The participle is a morphologically derived verbal form (a participle? go figure)

The participial affix *-ndo* is a derivational affix, with approximately the meaning "engaged in V-ing". It has no effect on the argument structure of the verb it attaches to, but it makes the verb immune to further inflection (though it can take postverbal clitics). The participle thus projects a participial small clause, whose subject requires case from outside the small clause. The semantics of *-ndo* make it compatible with the stage-level copular verb *estar*, and not with the individual-level, and default auxiliary, copular verb *ser*.

So, the Spanish “progressive” isn’t really a progressive at all. It’s a participial, copular construction with a stative Infl. Like the English biclausal progressive, the Spanish progressive is stative. But it’s monoclausal, in the sense that it has only one Infl.

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