

For Workshop 2 “Agent control over non-culminating events”

Viewpoint aspect and agent control in Spanish non-culminating accomplishments

This paper studies the conditions where a non-culminating reading is available with accomplishments in the perfective in Spanish. Although this reading has not been highlighted in the literature, the examples below show that an accomplishment in the perfective can have a culminating reading, as attested by the compatibility with the adverbial *en diez minutos* ‘in ten minutes’ (1) and another one where culmination can be cancelled and is compatible with the durative adverbial *durante diez minutos* ‘for ten minutes’ (2).

- (1) Isabel pintó la valla en diez minutos.
Isabel paint-pfve.3ps the fence in ten minutes
- (2) Isabel pintó la valla durante diez minutos, pero no terminó.
Isabel paint-pfve.3ps the fence for ten minutes, but she did not finish.

In this paper such a reading is accounted for as a consequence of a specific viewpoint aspect composition. Specifically, the perfective form is argued to be ambiguous between a semantic perfective and a perfective progressive; the latter gives rise to the non-culminating reading, which is attested by the possibility of paraphrase by the periphrasis with the copula in the perfective followed by the present participle of the lexical verb:

- (3) Isabel estuvo pintando la valla durante diez minutos, pero no terminó.
Isabel be-pfve.3ps painting the fence for ten minutes, but she did not finish

The paper argues that there are two factors restricting the availability of the non-culminating reading in Spanish. One is the presence of an explicit durational adverb, as noted by Arche (2013). If an adverbial such as *durante diez minutos* ‘for ten minutes’ is not overt, the perfective cannot be paraphrased by a perfective progressive and the non-culminating reading does not ensue, as shown in (4).

- (4) ??Isabel pintó la valla, pero no terminó.
Isabel paint-pfve.3ps the fence, but she did not finish.

The second restriction is agent control. Non-controlling subjects are degraded with the perfective progressive and do not give rise to non-culminating readings.

- (5) a. La silla dibujó una ralla en el suelo.
The chair draw-pfve.3ps a line on the floor
- b. ??La silla estuvo dibujando una raya en el suelo.
The chair be-pfve.3ps drawing a line on the floor
- c. ??La silla dibujó una ralla en el suelo durante diez minutos, pero no terminó.
The chair draw-pfve.3ps a line on the floor for ten minutes but it did not finish

This approach differs from previous ones in that most of them locate the source of completion and lack thereof in the properties of the stems of the verbal predicates. For Bar-el et al. (2005), Salishan accomplishments are telic roots whose requirement of completion can be removed from the bare root in the syntax by a control transitivizer. Koenig and Muansuwan (2000) and Tatevosov (2008) argue that accomplishment stems contain an imperfective and a maximal operator that bias the predicate toward imperfectivity. By associating lack of culmination with a progressive viewpoint component, the present approach avoids the shortcoming of altering the properties of the roots as the derivation proceeds and offers a natural account for the agent restriction, as it parallels the one previously observed by Partee (1977) and Dowty (1979) with other progressives, **The river/The kid is being noisy*.

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References

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