

Aspectual mismatches and aspect-preserving reinterpretations

The cases analysed in the literature under the label of ‘aspectual coercion’ (Francis & Michaelis 2003; Carlson 2006; Pustejovsky 1993, 2008; de Swart 1998, 2011) usually target *Aktionsart* and event structure adjustments, such as the coercion of an accomplishment into an activity by iterating a punctual event to match the temporal frame introduced by an adjunct PP (*He played the sonata for 2 hours*). Coercing accomplishments, achievements and activities into each other seems to be the prototypical case.

There are, however, instances of aspectual mismatches that are not solved by changing the *Aktionsart* or the event structure of the predicate involved. The examples in (1) and (2) illustrate the cases in point:

- (1) a. *Juan venía en enero.*
Juan come.IMPF.3SG in January.
‘Juan was coming in January. (> I was told that Juan was coming in January.)’
- b. *Se examinaba del carnet de conducir {ayer / mañana}*
REFL take-exam.IMPF.3SG of-the license of driving {yesterday / tomorrow}
‘She was doing her driving test {yesterday / tomorrow}. (> She was supposed to do her driving {yesterday/tomorrow})’
- (2) a. *María ha estado inteligente.*
María bestAGE.PERF.3SG intelligentINDIVIDUAL
‘María has been intelligent. (> María has behaved in an intelligent way.)’
- b. *La película está aburrida.*
The movie bestAGE.PRS.3SG boringINDIVIDUAL
‘The movie is boring. (> I found it boring.)’

The sentences in (1), featuring the imperfective past (Cipria & Roberts 2000; Leonetti & Escandell-Vidal 2003; Leonetti 2004; Saussure & Sthioul 2005) are systematically interpreted as second-hand information, a case of covert quotation in which the state-of-affairs conveyed is presented as sourced in a different speaker (reportive interpretation). The sentences in (2), where the copula *estar* is combined with an individual-level adjectival predicate (Leonetti 1994; Kratzer 1995; Escandell-Vidal & Leonetti 2002; Maienborn 2005; Escandell-Vidal 2018), commit the speaker to being the direct source for the assertion (experiential interpretation). Most significantly, these enriched interpretations are obligatory without situating the utterances in any particular context. Thus, in addition to the proposition they express, the examples in (1) and (2) carry additional evidential information (Davis et al 2007; Speas 2010).

The aim of this talk is to argue that this additional evidential content arises as the result of a pragmatic process of mismatch resolution. In both cases, a mismatch arises between the constituents in the sentence. In (1), the adjunct modifier does not qualify as an adequate anchor for the imperfective past, and an acquisition-of-information event has to be inferred to avoid the conflict in aspectual and temporal anchoring. In (2) the presuppositional requirements of the copula *estar* are not matched by the individual-level adjective with which it combines. In both cases, the mismatch obtains under very specific

conditions and is solved in a fully predictable way. What is significant here is that the process of mismatch resolution is not carried out by changing the aspectual class of the predicate, but by adding new assumptions that embed the propositional content expressed.

My proposal suggests a general hypothesis about how mismatches involving spatiotemporal anchoring will be repaired by inferring situations of information acquisition that give rise to evidential commitments:

- Reportive interpretations are obtained when the (unsatisfied) head (i.e., the imperfective past) requires a disjoint reference point (relative interpretations).
- Experiential interpretations are obtained when the (unsatisfied) head (i.e., the copula *estar*) does not require a disjoint reference point (absolute interpretations).

The analysis of these phenomena has implications for the design and properties of grammar, and provides new insights on the relations between linguistic form and interpretation.

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