Manuel LEONETTI (UAH/UCM)

Individual-Level predicates, locative adjuncts and perspectivization

Among the formal tests that are commonly used to distinguish Individual-Level predicates (ILPs) from Stage-Level predicates (SLPs), compatibility with respect to temporal / locative modifiers plays a salient role: only SLPs can be combined with temporal / locative modifiers, as shown in the examples in (1) and (2), from Maienborn (2004).

(1)   Maria was {tired / hungry / nervous} in the car.   (SLPs)

(2)   #Maria was {blond / intelligent / a linguist} in the car.   (ILPs)

In this presentation I will avoid discussing existing theoretical accounts of the contrast (for instance, accounts based on the existence of an eventive argument in SLPs) to concentrate on the contextual conditions under which an ILP can be acceptable in combination with a locative modifier, i.e. on the conditions that allow speakers to overcome the semantic mismatch between ILPs and locatives. I will simply assume that in fact some kind of interpretive mismatch is found in examples like (2) that precludes the possibility of obtaining a temporal reading of the adjunct akin to the one found in (1). The crucial fact is the possibility of accepting (2) with an *epistemic* or *experiential* reading of the adjunct, i.e. something like 'Maria was blond / … according to what you said in the car'; as Maienborn rightly points out, in this case the locative does not locate the subject, or a situation of Maria being blonde, but rather the source of a belief about Maria. According to Maienborn, non-locative readings of locative modifiers (i.e., temporal or epistemic readings) arise when the modifiers behave like *frame-setting modifiers* (Maienborn 2001), instead of VP-modifiers. In copular sentences, locatives tend to be interpreted as frame-setting modifiers. This interpretation is predominant –though not obligatory- when the locative occurs in initial position, as a topic, as in (3a), from Maienborn (2001:197); otherwise, the locative must be under narrow focus –i.e. informationally singled out from the rest of the proposition.

(3)   a. In Bolivia, Britta was blond.   ('For Bolivian standards, Britta was blond.')

        b. Britta was blond [$_{Focus}$ in Bolivia].

My claim is that epistemic / experiential readings are not exclusively but mostly obtained as effects of a last-resort inferential mechanism (cf. Escandell-Vidal & Leonetti 2011): more precisely, they result from an operation of mismatch resolution triggered by the search for a non-locative reading. A non-locative reading is needed when locative modifiers cannot receive a straightforward interpretation as VP-modifiers and must thus be interpreted as frame-setting modifiers (even occurring in VP-internal positions, as in (2) and (3b)). This typically happens with ILPs. Epistemic / experiential readings, then, arise as a way of making the modifier compatible with the predicate: in fact, in the communicated proposition the locative is no longer modifying the lexical predicate, but a higher predicate of communication, belief or perception that must be inserted in the explicature of the utterance ('The people in Bolivia considered Britta to be blond'). The different flavours of epistemic / experiential readings vary according to contextual factors. The key ingredient is the insertion of a subject that

experiences a situation, i.e. an alternative source of information –which allows us to characterize these readings as evidential. The resolution strategy is pragmatic.

The strongest argument in favour of a pragmatic approach to epistemic / experiential readings is their systematic presence in a wide variety of contexts and grammatical constructions that are completely unrelated to copular sentences and locative adjuncts. The Spanish example in (4) is one among many instances of the same interpretive strategy:

(4)   Alzó la vista. El valle se extendió hasta el horizonte.

        'He raised his eyes. The valley extended to the horizon.'

In (4) an experiential reading is again forced as a result of the incompatibility between the fictive motion interpretation of the verbal predicate –the only one compatible with the subject *the valley*- and the perfective feature of the past tense –fictive motion is mostly licensed by imperfective tenses. Thus, the event of extension to the horizon cannot involve the valley itself, and an alternative event of extension **of the perception** of the valley by a subject is inferred to solve the mismatch.

The same mechanism can be observed, for instance, in the evidential readings of the copula *estar* in Spanish (Escandell-Vidal 2018), in perspectival readings of tense in different languages (Saussure 2013), and possibly in logophoric and perspectival readings of anaphoric expressions (Kuno 1987). This opens the possibility of unifying the analysis of many disparate phenomena under the notion of *mismatch resolution*.

References

Escandell-Vidal, V. (2018): "Evidential commitment and feature mismatch in Spanish *estar* constructions". *Journal of Pragmatics* 128: 102-115.
Escandell, V. & M. Leonetti (2011): "On the rigidity of procedural meaning", in Escandell, Ahern & Leonetti (eds.). *Procedural Meaning*. Bingley: Emerald. 81-102.
Kuno, S. (1987): *Functional Syntax: Anaphora, Discourse, and Empathy*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Maienborn, C. (2001): "On the position and interpretation of locative modifiers". *Natural Language Semantics* 9.2: 191-240.
Maienborn, C. (2004): "A pragmatic explanation of the Stage-Level/Individual-Level contrast in combination with locatives", in B. Tucker (ed.). *Proceedings of WECOL 2003*.
Saussure, L. de (2013): "Perspectival interpretations of tenses", in L. de Saussure & K. Jaszczolt (eds.). *Time: Language, Cognition and Reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.