

“Elsa tiene el pelo largo”. Some remarks on the structure [Tener [DP AP]]

In a large number of works on possession, including the seminal work of Kayne (1993), it is proposed that the verb *tener/have* arises from the structure of the copular verb *ser/to be* plus a D/PP. Uriagereka (2002) proposes that there are two types of structures with *tener/have*, depending on the relationship established between the whole and the part. Thus, the example in (1), adapted from the work cited above, gives rise to the two following readings: first, we interpret that the engine is part of the car (integral reading), while the second gives us an interpretation in which, for example, we can understand that there is an engine in the trunk of the car (but that it is not part of it) (standard reading). Uriagereka proposes that the different interpretations follow from two different structures; in the integral reading my car and an Audi engine are part of a reduced clause; in the case of the standard reading, there is also a minimal clause but it is composed of an Audi engine and a PP in my car.

- (1) Mi coche tiene un motor Audi (My car has an Audi engine).

In a similar vein, Español (1997) proposes that secondary predication contexts with *tener/ have* involving a possesum and a possessor also derive from a basic structure formed from the verb *ser* plus a D/PP:

- (2) Elsa es de cara guapa → Elsa tiene la cara guapa ('Elsa has a nice face')
Elsa is of face handsome Elsa has the face handsome

This author points out that these structures must meet three requirements: a) a relationship of inalienable possession must be established between the possessor and the possesum (similar to Uriagereka's integral relationship); b) the adjectives involved in these structures must be gradable; and c) in the *be* sentences, the adjectival property must contribute to the possessor having this property. This third condition allows us to establish contrasts such as the following:

- (3) a. Elsa tiene {las piernas / el pelo} largas/o → Elsa es larga {de piernas / *de pelo}
Elsa has {the legs / the hair} long Elsa is long {of legs / of hair}
b. Juan tiene {las caderas / la nariz} ancha(s) → Juan es ancho {de caderas / *de nariz}
Juan has {the hips/ the nose} long Juan is wide {of hips/ of nose}

The object of study of this talk are those secondary predication structures that involve an inalienable relation between the possessor and the possesum but do not give rise to the contrasts pointed out by Español (we will say nothing of other examples in which an inalienable relation of possession is not established, of the type *Ese supermercado tiene los tomates muy baratos* 'These supermarket has cheap tomatoes'). These are examples such as those in (3):

- (4) a. Elsa tiene el pelo rubio/largo / a'. Marta tiene las uñas duras
Elsa has the hair blond / long / Marta has the nails hard
b. Elsa tiene el pelo sucio / b'. Marta tiene las uñas sucias/largas
Elsa has the hair dirty Marta has the nails dirty / long

To do so, we will follow the work of Gumiel Molina, Moreno-Quibén and Pérez-Jiménez (2015) [henceforth, GMP (2015)] where it is pointed out that in Spanish the distribution of the verbs *ser* and *estar* followed by adjectives is based on different ways of introducing a comparison. These authors propose that gradable adjectives are inserted by a Degree head (*pos*) that introduces a comparison class. When the comparison class is established by comparing the subject with other similar individuals, we have a **between individuals comparison class (BIC)** and the copula that surfaces is *ser* (*Su pelo es largo*, 'her hair is long'); when the class of comparison is established by comparing counterparts of the subject, we have a **within individual comparison class (WIC)** and the copula that surfaces is *estar* (*Su pelo está sucio*, 'Her hair is dirty').

Our proposal is that the verb *tener* is a **categorized root** in the lexicon (Embick, 2021) that selects for an external argument but has no internal argument. It combines with a PredP that is an unmarked phrase projected whenever there are no selectional restrictions (see GM and AEP). This PredP introduces the subject DP of the secondary predication and a DegP that determines the comparison class of the predicate:

- (5) [_{VP} DP √Tener [_{PredP} DP Pred [_{DegP} *pos* AP]]]

This structure helps to explain the following facts:

(a) Only the examples in which a *WIC* is introduced allow a **wide focus interpretation** since there is no contextual standard previously fixed and the introduction of the comparison standard can be considered new information (GMP 2015).

- (6) – ¿Qué pasa? / – #Que Elsa tiene el pelo rubio/ Que Elsa tiene el pelo sucio.
– What’s up? / – #That Elsa has the hair blond / That Elsa has the hair dirty

(b) Only the second type of DPs, the one that includes a gradable adjective with a *WIC*-based predication, can be **embedded to verbs of the Object-Experiencer-type like *molestar***, ‘to annoy’. The stages introduced by the *WIC*-based predication can be correlated with the psychological event, but this is not the case with the individuals introduced by the BIC-based predication.

- (7) a. Me incomoda muchísimo el pelo {#rubio / sucio} de Elsa
‘I’m very uncomfortable with Elsa’s {#blond / dirty} hair.’
b. Me encanta el pelo {#largo / limpio} de Elsa
‘I love Elsa’s {#long / clean} hair’.

(note that the odd reading is only possible if Elsa is interpreted as having one part of his hair blond and one part of another color or one part of his hair short and one part long)-

(c) Only *tener/have*-sentences in which the secondary predicates are a gradable adjective that introduces a *WIC* allow **the insertion of an adverb between the noun and the adjective**, since only in this case we have stages.

- (8) a. ??Elsa tiene el pelo {siempre/ a veces} rubio
Elsa has the hair {always / sometimes} blond
b. Elsa tiene el pelo {siempre / a veces} sucio.
Elsa has the hair {always / sometimes} dirty

References: Embick, D. (2021). “The Motivation for Roots in Distributed Morphology”. In: *Annual Review of Linguistics* 7(1). · Español, M. (1997). “Inalienable possession in copulative contexts and the DP structure”, *Lingua*, 101. · Gumiel-Molina, S. N. Moreno-Quibén & I. Pérez Jiménez (2015) “Comparison classes and the relative/absolute distinction: a degree-based compositional account of the *ser/estar* alternation in Spanish”, *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 33(3). · Gumiel-Molina, S. & N. Moreno-Quibén (2023) “What does it take to grammaticize a judgement: semicopulative verbs and evaluativity”, *Selected Topics in Spanish Syntax Workshop at the Goethe University of Frankfurt, (GM)* · Areses, I., Escribano, G. & Pérez-Jiménez, I. (2023) “Pseudocopular verbs as subjectivity markers in Spanish: the case of ‘se me hace’”, *Selected Topics in Spanish Syntax, Workshop at the Goethe University of Frankfurt (AEP)* · Uriagereka, J. (2002). *Derivations. Exploring the dynamics of syntax*. Routledge.