

Aspectual conditioners on *by*-phrases in adjectival passives

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Setting the stage: Spanish adjectival passives (<*estar* ‘to be’ + past participle>, henceforth *estar*-passives) tend to disallow the addition of a *por* ‘by’-phrase introducing the external argument. This is unlike verbal passives, which are more permissive when it comes to *por*-phrases, as the contrasts in (1) and (2) show.

- (1) a. *Los neumáticos están rajados por unos pilluelos del barrio. *estar-passive*
(‘The tires are slashed by some urchins from the neighborhood.’)
b. Los neumáticos han sido rajados por unos pilluelos del barrio. *verbal passive*
(‘The tires have been slashed by some urchins from the neighborhood.’)
- (2) a. *La ventana está cerrada por Pedro Sánchez. *estar-passive*
(‘The window is closed by Pedro Sánchez.’)
b. La ventana ha sido cerrada por Pedro Sánchez. *verbal passive*
(‘The window has been closed by Pedro Sánchez.’)

Previous accounts: In the descriptive literature, it has been argued (Hengeveld 1986) that *por*-phrases are possible in *estar*-passives when the agent is somehow detectable in the result state. Thus, (3) would be acceptable since the ambassador is recognizable in the resulting signature on the document. Similar claims have been made for German (Rapp 1996), Hebrew (Meltzer 2005) and English (McIntyre 2015 calls it the State Relevance Hypothesis).

- (3) El documento está firmado por el embajador.
(‘The document is signed by the ambassador.’)

Gehrke and Marco (2014), building on Gehrke (2012), propose that *estar*-passives denote the consequent state kind of an event kind, and *por*-phrases are acceptable when they modify such event kind. For instance, in their example in (4), a non-specific indefinite such as *un niño* ‘a kid’ is OK in a *por*-phrase because it helps create an event kind, namely the kind of event of a kid painting and its consequent state kind (a painting that looks like the kind of painting a child would produce).

- (4) El cuadro estaba pintado por un niño.
(‘The painting was painted by a kid.’)

Problems with previous accounts: The state-relevance and state-kinds hypotheses are riddled with counterexamples. Take (5) and (6), for instance. The examples are ungrammatical even if it is detectable that the scratches were produced by my cat or that it was my nephews who stepped on the sand. Note that (5) and (6) do not improve with a non-specific indefinite, even though one can easily conjure up the kind of scratches that a cat makes on a curtain, or the way that children step on the sand (not less easily that the way a kid could paint a portrait, as in (4), which to our native ears is not fully acceptable to begin with).

- (5) La cortina está rasgada *{por mi gato/ por un gato}.
(‘The curtain is torn {by my cat/ by a cat}.’)
- (6) La arena está pisoteada *{por mis sobrinos/ por unos niños}.
(‘The sand is stepped-on {by my nephews/ by some kids}.’)

Our proposal: We put forth the generalization in (7):

- (7) Only *estar*-passives derived from stative verbs accept *por*-phrases.

This generalization encompasses object-experiencer psych verbs (e.g. (8a)), Davidsonian/causative states (e.g. (8b)), see Fábregas & Marín 2017 and García-Pardo 2020) and locative verbs (e.g. (8c)), all of which allow *por*-phrases in *estar*-passives.

- (8) a. María está impresionada por su hijo. ‘María is impressed by her son’
b. El edificio está vigilado por la policía. ‘The building is guarded by the police’
c. La casa está rodeada por árboles. ‘The house is surrounded by trees.’

So what, then, happens with examples like (3), where *por*-phrases are allowed with participles derived from telic verbs? Our claim is that verbs like those listed in (9), all of which allow for *por*-phrases in *estar*-passives, have both a telic and a stative reading, and it is precisely the stative reading that allows the addition of a *por*-phrase.

- (9) *firmar* ‘sign’, *convocar* ‘summon’, *homologar* ‘homologate’, *apadrinar* ‘sponsor’, *editar* ‘edit’, *solicitar* ‘request’...

We exemplify the stative reading of *firmar* in (10), which does not pass the telicity test of *in x time* modification nor does it accept dynamicity-oriented adverbs like *rápidamente* ‘fast’. Also, (10) does not have a habitual reading despite being in the present tense, unlike what happens with dynamic predicates. Note that the predicate in (3) is also stative, as it fails the *in x time* test and disallows dynamicity-oriented modification (e.g. (11)).

- (10) La nota la firma Camila Sosa Villada (*en cinco segundos/ *rápidamente), quien actualmente prepara un nuevo libro.
‘Camila Sosa Villada, who is currently working on a new book, signs the note (*in five seconds/ *quickly).’
(11) El documento está firmado por el embajador (*en cinco minutos).
‘The document is signed by the ambassador (*in five minutes).’

Why is it, then, that participles derived from strictly telic verbs do not accept *por*-phrases in *estar*-passives? (e.g. (1) and (2)). Here, we follow García-Pardo (2020) in his proposal that only stative verbal predicates are good inputs for adjectival passives. The telic verbs that appear as inputs of *estar*-passives are, in fact, truncated structures that only include the result state (which, for Ramchand (2008), is encoded in a projection she labels *resP*). The consequence is that the higher projection introducing the external argument is absent in the *estar*-passive (e.g. (12)), and hence a *por*-phrase is impossible.

- (12) [_{AP} -ados [_{resP} los neumáticos [_{res}’ raj-]]] *No external argument* (e.g. (1a))

On the other hand, transitive stative predicates can be inputs for *estar*-passives while maintaining their full argument structure, hence allowing *por*-phrases. We provide an example in (13), where *vP* is the stative projection that introduces the external argument.

- (13) [_{AP} -ado [_{vP} por el embajador [_{vP} el documento [_v’ firm-]]]]

Conclusions: This paper sheds new light on *por*-phrases in *estar*-passives, whose availability in said constructions has hitherto been hard to systematize. We have shown how (at least many of) the puzzling examples in the literature, such as (3), are not problematic once we take a closer look at the aspectual composition of the verbal input.

References: Fábregas & Marín. 2017. On non-dynamic eventive verbs in Spanish. *Linguistics* • García-Pardo. 2020. *Stative Inquiries* • Gehrke & Marco. 2014. Different by-phrases with adjectival and verbal passives: Evidence from Spanish corpus data. *Lingua* • Gehrke. 2012. Passive states. In *Telicity, Change and State. A Cross-categorical View of Event Structure* • Hengeveld. 1986. Copular verbs in a functional grammar of Spanish. *Linguistics* • McIntyre. 2015. Event modifiers in (German) adjectival participles: Remarks on Gehrke (this issue). *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* • Meltzer. 2005. *Adjectival Passives and Adjectival De-causatives in Hebrew*. M.Phil thesis • Ramchand. 2008. *Verb meaning and the lexicon* • Rapp. 1996. Zustand? Passiv? Überlegungen zum sogenannten “Zustandspassiv”. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft*