

## The argument structure of V (DP) PP verbs in Spanish

In their theory of restrictions on argument structures, Hale and Keyser (2002, henceforth H&K) tackle the contrast in (1), in which verbs that apparently have the same lexical structure however differ in their behavior with respect to the inchoative/transitive alternation. To capture these facts, they introduce a new element into their theory: a manner index that can be either obviative or proximate, and that determines two different projection structures for the two groups of verbs. H&K didn't investigate further consequences derived from adding this new element, which thus remained as an ad hoc fix to their theory. In this paper I explore some consequences resulting from the addition of the obviative/proximate index, as it interacts with the structural requirements of the lexical categories. I show that the resulting system makes the right predictions in deriving the typology of Spanish prepositional verbs as described in Demonte (1991), exemplified in (2). Given the explanatory power of the obviative/proximate index, it is concluded that it is a welcome addition to the theory. A more detailed account follows.

Based on the contrast between “verbs of getting” like *splash* and “verbs of putting” like *smear* seen in (1), H&K claim that the different syntactic behavior of these verbs with respect to the transitive/inchoative alternation is due to the presence of a manner index that determines two different lp-structures for these verbs, and is part of the verbal lexical entry. Such an index can be of one of two types: “object-oriented” or “agent-oriented”. The “object-oriented” index is proximate, in that it should be “bound” by the internal argument, while the “subject-oriented” index, being obviative, should be “bound” by an argument other than the internal argument. “Binding” occurs under c-command in the syntactic representation.

I use Spanish data (see 2) to expand their proposal to cover another well-known phenomenon, the locative alternation. I show that the behavioral patterns presented by prepositional verbs (with syntactic frame [V NP PP]) with respect to this alternation are exactly the ones predicted by the logically possible combinations of the structural requirements and manner indices considered in H&K's analysis. In order to complete the picture of possible argument structures predicted by this interaction, the data is expanded to another group of prepositional verbs with the syntactic framework [V PP], that do not present locative alternation, but that complete the paradigm predicted by the theory. The resulting typology is the following:

|                    | Obviative Index | Proximate Index       |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| “verbs of putting” | rociar, “spray” | constar, “consist on” |
| “verbs of getting” | echar, “pour”   | llenar, “fill”        |

In sum, this paper shows that H&K's system, with the addition of the manner component index, now derives two important typologies, one found within a single language (Spanish in our examples), and one differentiating between two languages (Italian and English), and hence provides a strong indication that their theory is in the right track.

## 1. The smear/splash difference in transitivity alternation

- a. The pigs got/splashed mud on the wall (Hale and Keyser 2002)
- b. Mud got/splashed on the wall
- c. We put/smeared saddlesoap on Leecil
- d. \* Saddlesoap put on Leecil

## 2. Locative alternations and one kind of V PP verbs in Spanish

- a. Juan roció lejía en la camisa (Demonte 1991)  
Juan sprayed bleach on the shirt
- b. Juan roció la camisa con lejía  
Juan sprayed the shirt with bleach
  
- a'. Tobías echó agua en la jarra  
Tobías poured water into the jar
- b'. \* Tobías echó la jarra con agua  
Tobías poured the jar with water
  
- a''. \* Elena llenó agua en el vaso  
Elena filled water in the glass
- b''. Elena llenó el vaso con agua  
Elena filled the glass with water
  
- a'''. La tesis consta \*(de) cinco partes  
The dissertation includes five parts
- b'''. Esteban abusa (de) la bebida  
Esteban abuses of the alcohol

## References

- Demonte (1991): *Detrás de la palabra*. Alianza Universidad, Madrid.  
Hale and Keyser (2002): *Prolegomenon to a Theory of Argument Structure*. MIT Press.