

ALL PASSIVE PARTICIPLES ARE ADJECTIVES*

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ABSTRACT. This paper argues that the passive participles in eventive passives (what is commonly referred to as ‘verbal passives’) are adjectival in Spanish. Thus, there is no categorial difference between eventive and stative passives (the latter commonly known as ‘adjectival passives’). I show that the differences between eventive and stative passive participles, and the argument structure configurations that each type allows, can be accounted for without the need to posit a different morphological category for each type. Rather, the grammatical context in which the participle is inserted will allow for a simpler (stative) or more complex (eventive) structure for the base verb. I thus also argue against a stativization operation in stative passives: what we have is a base verb that only spells out the result state of the event, not a verb that spells out a telic structure and then is stativized by a purported higher operator.

Keywords. Adjectives; argument structure; aspect; participles; passives; Spanish; syncretism.

RESUMEN. Este artículo defiende que los participios pasados en español (comúnmente conocidos como ‘pasivas verbales’ o ‘perifrásticas’) son adjetivales. En otras palabras, no hay diferencia categorial entre pasivas eventivas y estativas (estas últimas conocidas también como ‘pasivas adjetivales’). En este trabajo se muestra cómo las diferentes configuraciones de estructura argumental que se observan entre pasivas eventivas y estativas se pueden explicar sin necesidad de postular una categoría gramatical diferente para cada una de ellas.

Palabras clave. Adjetivos; aspecto; estructura argumental; participios; pasivas; sincretismo.

1. Introduction

Since Wasow (1977), a distinction between verbal and adjectival passives has been assumed in the generative literature. The received view is that verbal passives are eventive and adjectival passives are stative (Anagnostopoulou, 2003; Bresnan, 1982; Jackendoff, 1977; Kratzer, 2000, 2002; Levin and Rappaport, 1986; Lieber, 1980; Rapp, 1996, among many others). The two types of participles can be disambiguated with event modifiers and *by*-phrases, allowed in eventive passives but generally disallowed in stative passives (e.g. (1)).

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|
| (1) | a. The room is sealed. | Adjectival passive: Stative |
| | b. The room was quickly sealed by the police. | Verbal passive: Eventive |

* I am thankful to Antonio Fábregas for his support and patience. My thanks also go to two anonymous reviewers, whose comments and suggestions helped improve this article. Errors are my own.

For Spanish, this is also the common assumption (Bosque, 1999, 2014). Spanish distinguishes morphologically between eventive and stative passives: eventive passives take the copula *ser* (e.g. (2a)), whereas stative passives take the copula *estar* (e.g. (2b)).

- (2) a. La ciudad fue destruida
 the city WASSER destroyed
 ‘The city was destroyed.’
 b. La ciudad está destruida.
 the city ISESTAR destroyed
 ‘The city is destroyed.’

As we can see, there is morphological syncretism between these two types of passive participles, not only in Spanish but also in many other languages (Catalan, French, English, German, among many others). If they do belong to different lexical categories, as the received view assumes, the question arises as to why their morphological shape is identical in so many languages.

I argue that behind this apparent syncretism is the fact that passive participles in Spanish are adjectives across the board. An analysis is provided for eventive and stative passive participles in Spanish that accounts for their identical categorial status as well as their differences in terms of aspect and argument structure.

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 discusses the evidence in favor of classifying these participles as adjectives in Spanish. It shows how the purported arguments in favor of categorizing eventive participles as verbs only show that these participles start off as verbs, but not that they end up as such. Section 3 discusses a recent proposal by Bešlin (2023) for English and Serbo-Croatian. I analyze it critically and point out its problems. In Section 4, I present my proposal for eventive and stative passive participles in Spanish, grounded in the first-phase syntax framework from Ramchand (2008). I discuss how the differences between eventive and stative passive participles in terms of argument structure and aspect can be accounted for without the need to resort to categorial differences. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Passive participles (eventive and stative) are adjectives

In this section, I present the evidence that calls for a uniform analysis of passive participles in Spanish as adjectives. Before doing so, I discuss the precedents for my proposal in Spanish. Alarcos Llorach (1970) already argued that eventive passives (e.g. (3a)) are just one instance of attributive constructions such as (3b) with an underived adjective, and that they should receive a uniform analysis. This author shows that, for instance, both adjectives and participles can be substituted by a proform (e.g. (4)).

- (3) a. La ciudad fue destruida.
 the city WASSER destroyed
 ‘The city was destroyed.’
 b. La ciudad fue próspera
 the city WASSER prosperous
 ‘The city was prosperous.’
- (4) a. La ciudad fue destruida → Lo fue.
 the city WASSER destroyed it.ACC was
 b. La ciudad fue próspera → Lo fue.
 the city WASSER prosperous it.ACC was

García-Pardo and Marín (2021) have recently analysed participles derived from subject-experiencer psychological verbs, which take the copula *ser* 'to be' (e.g. (5)), and have argued that they are in fact adjectival. This challenged the received view that participles that appear with *ser* are verbal passives, whereas those that appear with *estar* 'to be' are adjectival passives.

- (5) a. El rey fue temido por todos.
the king _{WASSER} feared by all
b. Los museos de arte moderno son muy apreciados.
the museums of art modern _{are_{SER}} very appreciated
'The museums of modern art are very appreciated.'

I now turn to discuss the morphosyntactic evidence in favor of classifying eventive and stative participles as adjectives. I will also include bare participles (i.e. without an auxiliary) and perfect participles in the discussion, for completeness.

2.1. Morphosyntactic evidence

In Spanish, we find many morphosyntactic parallelisms between adjectives and participles. The discussion below draws mostly from Bosque (1999:284), who focuses on eventive passives. I include stative passives in the present discussion, to show that they both indeed have the same adjectival properties.

First, passive participles agree with their subject in gender and number, just like adjectives (e.g. (6a)). This is both for eventive passives and stative passives (e.g. (6b) and (6c)), as well as bare participles (e.g. (6d)). On the other hand, perfect participles do not have overt agreement with the subject (or the object), displaying a default masculine singular marking instead (e.g. (6e)).

- (6) a. La gente simpática; los libros buenos
the.FEM.PL people friendly.FEM.PL the.MASC.PL books good.MASC.PL
b. La gente {fue/ está} evacuada.
the.FEM.PL people _{WASSER are_{ESTAR}} evacuated.FEM.PL
'The people were/are evacuated.'
c. Los libros {fueron/ están} encuadernados.
the.MASC.PL books _{WASSER are_{ESTAR}} bound.MASC.PL
'The books are bound.'
d. las tuberías reventadas
the.FEM.PL pipes burst-ed.FEM.PL
'the burst pipes'
e. María y Juana han visitado ciudades.
María and Juana have visited.MASC.SG cities
'María and Juana have visited cities.'

Furthermore, both eventive and stative passives accept manner modifiers either before or after the participle. This categorizes them as adjectives, since verbs do not accept manner modifiers in preverbal position. The examples in (7a)-(7d) for eventive passives and active sentences are from Bosque (1999:284), and the examples in (7e)-(7f) for stative passives are mine. I further note that bare past participles also allow either order for manner modifiers (e.g. (8a) and (8b)), whereas present perfects only allow postverbal modifiers (cf. (8c) and (8d)).

- (7) a. El reo fue vigorosamente defendido por su joven abogado.
the defendant WASSER vigorously defended by his young lawyer
b. El reo fue vigorosamente defendido por su joven abogado.
the defendant WASSER vigorously defended by his young lawyer
c. *Un joven abogado vigorosamente defendió al reo.
a young lawyer vigorously defended DOM.the defendant
d. Un joven abogado defendió vigorosamente al reo.
a young lawyer defended vigorously DOM.the defendant
e. La sinfonía está maravillosamente interpretada por la orquesta.
the symphony ISESTAR marvelously interpreted by the orchestra
f. La sinfonía está interpretada maravillosamente por la orquesta.
the symphony ISESTAR interpreted marvelously by the orchestra
- (8) a. la persona injustamente acusada.
the person unfairly accused
b. la persona acusada injustamente.
the person accused unfairly
c. *Un joven abogado vigorosamente ha defendido al reo.
a young lawyer vigorously has defended DOM.the defendant
d. Un joven abogado ha defendido vigorosamente al reo.
a young lawyer has defended vigorously DOM.the defendant

Also, past participles can appear in postnominal and appositive positions, just like adjectives. The examples in (9) are from Fernández Murga (1984), *apud* Bosque (1999), for participles. I provide my own examples for adjectives in (10), for ease of exposition.

- (9) a. Los árboles podados a tiempo crecen más lozanos.
the trees chopped in time grow more lush
b. Los árboles, podados a tiempo, crecen más lozanos.
the trees chopped in time grow more lush
- (10) a. El niño feliz se comió la tarta.
the kid happy REFL ate the cake
‘The happy kid ate up the cake.’
b. El niño, feliz, se comió la tarta
the kid happy REFL ate the cake

Past participles, moreover, allow relative suffixes and degree adverbs, like adjectives do (e.g. (11a)). Crucially, this is possible both with stative passives (e.g. (11b)) and eventive passives (e.g. (11c)). It is also possible with bare past participles (e.g. (11d)), but not with present perfects (e.g. (11e)).

- (11) a. Una chica altísima/ muy alta.
a girl tall.ELAT very tall
b. Pedro está preocupadísimo/ muy preocupado.
Pedro ISESTAR worried.ELAT very worried
c. María fue criticadísima/ muy criticada.
María WASSER criticized.ELAT very criticized

- d. una calle transitadísima/ muy transitada de la ciudad.
 a street transitted.ELAT very transitted of the city
 ‘A very busy street.’
- e. *Los jugadores han comidísimo/ muy comido hoy.
 the players have eaten.ELAT very eaten today

A summary of these properties can be found in Table 1. The picture that emerges is that past participles (whether they appear with *ser* or *estar*, or bare) behave like adjectives morphosyntactically. In this they differ from participles in the present perfect construction, which differ considerably from adjectives, notably in the lack of gender and number agreement and the unavailability of degree morphology.

Table 1: Morphosyntactic properties of past participles

Properties	Ev. pass.	St. pass.	Bare prtclpls.	Present perf.
Gender and number agreement	OK	OK	OK	No
Preverbal and postverbal manner modifiers	OK	OK	OK	Postverbal only
Postnominal and appositive positions	–	–	OK	–
Degree morphology	OK	OK	OK	No

2.1.1. Bosque’s (1999, 2014) arguments for characterizing past participles as verbs

Despite all these morphosyntactic parallelisms between past participles and adjectives, Bosque (1999, 2014) concludes that past participles are verbal forms. His reasoning comes from the fact that some participles may have meanings that cannot be derived compositionally from the verb: in (12), the participle *complicado* may have the verbal meaning of having become complicated, or simply the property of being difficult, which Bosque associates with being an adjective proper. Other examples are given in Table 2.

- (12) a. Un asunto complicado.
 an issue complicated(=difficult)
- b. Un asunto complicado deliberadamente.
 an issue complicated deliberately
- c. Un asunto complicado por la administración.
 an issue complicated by the administration

Table 2: Syncretic participles in Spanish (from Bosque 2014:55)

Participle	Meaning as a verbal participle	Meaning as an adjectival participle
<i>aislado</i>	‘isolated’	‘alone’
<i>alargado</i>	‘lengthened’	‘long’
<i>animado</i>	‘encouraged’	‘lively’
<i>callado</i>	‘silenced’	‘quiet’
<i>complicado</i>	‘complicated’	‘difficult’
<i>divertido</i>	‘amused’	‘funny’
<i>educado</i>	‘educated’	‘cultured, learned’
<i>elevado</i>	‘raised, upgraded’	‘high’
<i>equivocado</i>	‘confused, taken wrong’	‘wrong’
<i>limitado</i>	‘limited’	‘short’
<i>ocupado</i>	‘occupied’	‘busy’
<i>reducido</i>	‘reduced’	‘small’
<i>resumido</i>	‘resumed’	‘short’

Bosque (2014) further notes that past participles can have secondary predicates, as verbs do. The examples with participles in (13) are from Bosque (2014:53). I provide examples with verbs in (14) for ease of exposition.

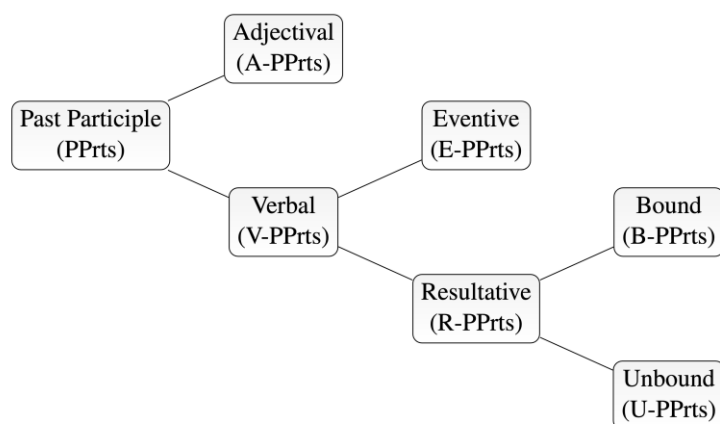
- (13) a. Un acusado considerado culpable.
‘A defendant found guilty’
b. Un concejal elegido alcalde.
‘A councilman elected mayor’
c. Una ventana hecha pedazos.
‘A window shattered into pieces’
d. Estudiantes de Secundaria encontrados borrachos en los botellones de fin de semana.
‘Secondary school students found drunk at weekend booze parties’
- (14) a. El juez consideró culpable al acusado.
the judge considered guilty DOM.the accused
‘The judge found the defendant guilty.’
b. Los ciudadanos eligieron alcalde al concejal.
the citizens chose mayor DOM.the councilman
‘The citizens elected the councilman mayor.’
c. El vándalo hizo pedazos la ventana.
the vandal made pieces the window
‘The vandal shattered the window into pieces’
d. La policía encuentra a muchos estudiantes de Secundaria borrachos en los botellones de fin de semana.
the police find DOM many students of Secondary drunk in the booze.parties of end of week
‘The police find many Secondary school students drunk at weekend booze parties.’

The author also provides examples of passive participles taking infinitival complements in causative sentences (e.g. (15a)), verbal periphrases (e.g. (15b)) and VP set phrases (e.g. (15c))

- (15) a. “El lío de las pruebas hechas desaparecer” (El País, 30/01/2012)
 ‘The mess of the proofs that were made disappear’
 b. “Renfe tendrá que pagar a Alsthom por los trenes dejados de comprar” (El País, 6/06/1992)
 ‘Renfe will have to pay Alsthom for the unbought trains’
 c. Garbanzos puestos a remojo.
 ‘Chickpeas left to soak.’

Bosque (2014) thus proposes the classification for Spanish past participles shown in (16). A-PPrts correspond to the participles in Table 2 (in their property-denoting meaning listed on the right column), and V-PPrts would be all the rest, comprising *ser*-passives (E-PPrts) and *estar*-passives (R-PPrts).

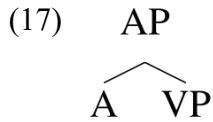
- (16) Classification of Spanish past participles in Bosque (2014)



2.1.2. Towards a unified characterization of passive participles as adjectives

Assessing Bosque’s (1999, 2014) work critically, I argue that none of the arguments he puts forth really conclude that passive participles are verbal. Rather, what they show is that these participles have verbal structure. The syntactic arguments that Bosque provides for the participles being verbal (possibility of having secondary predicates, infinitival complements, agent-oriented adverbs and *by*-phrases)¹ are perfectly compatible with a structure as in (17), where a head A selects a VP and adjectivizes it. Having a VP (or VoiceP) within the structure readily explains the verbal properties listed in Section 2.1.1. The schematic structure in (17) (to be refined later), I propose, is common to all passive participles, eventive or stative.

¹ Although Bosque (1999) uses the syntax of manner modifiers as evidence for the adjectival status of participles (See Section 2.1), the very availability of these modifiers is further evidence that participles have verbal structure, since underived adjectives do not accept manner modification. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that fact.



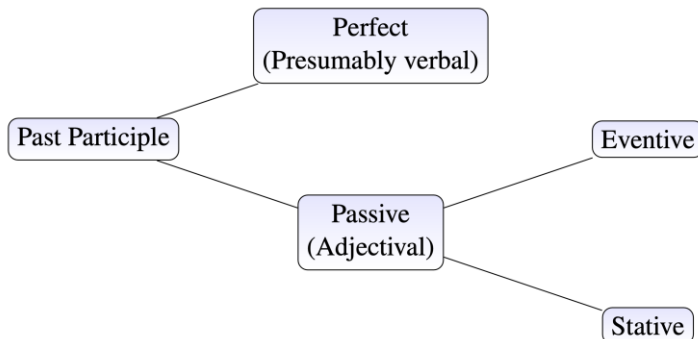
Regarding Bosque's examples in (12) (repeated below), the same logic applies: the 'adjectival' reading is simply a lexicalized participle, whereas the 'verbal' reading is a deverbal participle, both being adjectives.

- (12) a. Un asunto complicado.
 an issue complicated(=difficult)
 b. Un asunto complicado deliberadamente.
 an issue complicated deliberately
 c. Un asunto complicado por la administración.
 an issue complicated by the administration

- (18) a. Un asunto [AP complicado].
 an issue complicated(=difficult)
 b. Un asunto [AP [VP complicado deliberadamente por la administración]].
 an issue complicated deliberately by the administration

A more accurate classification of past participles in Spanish would be as in (19):

- (19) An alternative classification of past participles



As an interim summary, we conclude that passive participles in Spanish are adjectival across the board: they display all the morphosyntactic hallmarks of adjectives. Their verbal properties can be explained from the fact that they are deverbal adjectives. Under this view, the syncretism between stative and verbal passive participles is not surprising: they both belong to the same lexical category.

If this so, our task ahead is to sever the aspectual reading of the participle from its lexical category. Since we can no longer explain the different aspectual and argument structure properties of passive participles by resorting to their different categorical status, we have to look elsewhere for the source of these differences. Such is the purpose of the second part of this paper.

3. Bešlin (2023)

3.1. Bešlin's (2023) reassessment of the English data

Bešlin (*ibid.*), focusing on English and Serbo-Croatian (SC), argues that eventive and stative passives are both adjectival. For Serbo-Croatian, Bešlin notes that both stative and eventive passives have the adjectival suffix *-n* and have gender and number agreement, like adjectives do. For English, she reassesses some of the classic arguments for treating eventive passives as verbal.

The first classic argument involves prenominal modification. As is known, prenominal modifiers must be adjectives. If agentive *by*-phrases are not allowed with prenominal participles, the standard conclusion is that this is because said participles are verbal ((20a)). However, Bešlin argues that this can be explained by the Head-Final Filter (Williams 1982), which requires that a prenominal modifying expression be head-final. Thus, there can be no intervening material between the prenominal modifier and the noun, be it a participle (e.g. (20c)) or an underived adjective (e.g. (20d)).

- (20) a. a baked cake
 b. *a baked by the students cake
 c. *a baked yesterday/in the kitchen cake
 d. *the fond of Sam boy (Bešlin 2023:733)

I note that the Head-Final Filter is also operative in Spanish, among many other languages (see Cinque 2010; Sheehan 2017 for an overview), and the same effects that Bešlin observes for English can be observed in this language (e.g. (21)).

- (21) a. la vigilada (*por el ejército/ *desde ayer/ *desde la torre) ciudad
 the surveiled by the army since yesterday from the tower city
 b. el orgulloso (*de su hijo) padre
 the proud of his son father

The second classic argument concerns whether the participle can be a complement of the verbs *seem* and *remain*. We know that complements of *seem/remain* must be adjectives. If agentive *by*-phrases are not allowed with prenominal participles, the received view is that this is so because said participles are verbal (e.g. (22), from Bešlin 2023:733).

- (22) a. The suitcases seemed/remained packed (*by Tiyana's friends).

For Bešlin, the issue is that *seem* and *remain* additionally require that their complement be stative. *Seem* and *remain* can take nominal complements, as (23) shows. A noun like *destruction* can appear with *seem* when it has a resultative reading (e.g. (23b)), but not when it has an eventive reading, with full-fledged argument structure (e.g. (23c), from Bešlin 2023:734).

- (23) a. He seemed/remained a fool his whole life.
 b. There remained much destruction throughout the city.
 c. *There remained much destruction of the city by those left behind.

The third classic argument deals with *un*-prefixation. As is known, the negative prefix *un-* can only apply to adjectives (e.g. (24b)). When *un-* appears with verbs, its

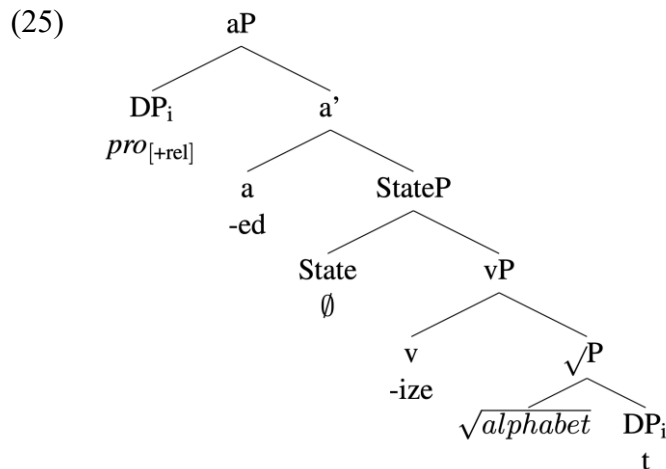
meaning is reversative (e.g. (24c)). In other words, (24b) means not happy/sad, whereas (24c) means that the workers took the cargo out of the truck (reversative reading), but not that they did not load the truck (negative reading).

- (24) a. The road seemed unmarked and dangerous.
 b. The child seemed unhappy.
 c. The truck was unloaded by the workers. (Bešlin 2023:734)

However, Bešlin links the two meanings of *un-* to stativity and eventivity, rather than to categorical differences: Negative *un-*, Bešlin argues, only takes stative predicates. Reversative *un-*, on the other hand, gives the meaning of undoing the action denoted by the event described by the base verb, so it makes sense that this prefix would take eventive predicates.

3.2. Bešlin's (2023) proposal

The author proposes the following structure in (25) for a stative passive participle such as *alphabetized* in English, within the Distributed Morphology framework.



Bešlin assumes an uncategorized root with an internal argument, a telic vP with a verbalizing v head (materialized by *-ize* in (25)), a State head that stativizes the telic event below, and an adjectivizer head a that adjectivizes the vP. The internal argument of the verb *alphabetize* is an operator that moves to (Spec,aP) and λ -abstracts over its trace, creating a predicate of individuals (in the style of Heim and Kratzer 1998 for relative pronouns).

Bešlin labels the adjectivization operation STATE PROMOTION: assuming a bieventive semantics for telic predicates (dynamic event *e* + result state *s*), the author proposes that the dynamic event is existentially closed by the stativizer, resulting in a predicate of states (i.e. a "state promotion")

$$(26) \quad \text{StatePromotion}(Q) = \lambda s \exists e. T \text{ iff } Q(e)(s)$$

The author argues that VoiceP is absent from stative passives (see also Kratzer 2000). As is known, *by*-phrases are generally disallowed from stative passives (e.g. (27)).

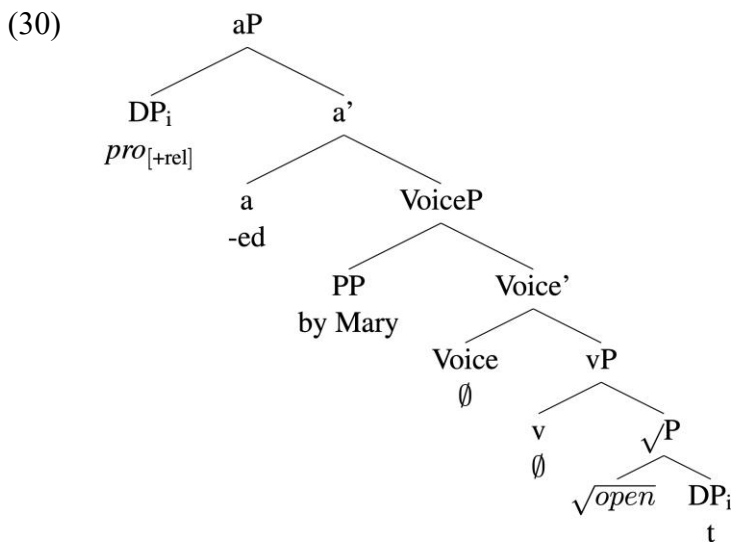
- (27) *The door seemed broken/opened/painted by Mary.

Bešlin discusses the apparent counterexamples in (28), from McIntyre (2013), and concludes that those *by*-phrases are all state-related, and thus they can appear in stative passives. The police are participating in the road being in a blocked state, and the report is participating in keeping Edeltraud in a flattered state. Bešlin notes that the reason that *by the journalist* is not a legitimate *by*-phrase in (28b) is that an animate agent such as *the journalist* induces an eventive reading of the eventuality, whereas an inanimate causer like *the report* induces a stative reading (cf. (29a) and (29b)). Recall that, for Bešlin, *seem* requires that its complement be stative, hence the unavailability of the *by the journalist* in (28b).

- (28) a. The road remained blocked by police/supported by pylons.
 b. Edeltraud seemed flattered by the report/??the journalist.
- (29) a. *The report was flattering Edeltraud all day.
 b. The journalist was flattering Edeltraud all day.

Bešlin follows prior literature in that there are two kinds of participial *by*-phrases: event-related (i.e. applying to the dynamic process of the telic predicate) and state-related (i.e. applying to the result state) (Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou, and Schäfer, 2015; Gehrke, 2011, 2012, 2013; McIntyre, 2013; Rapp, 1996, 1997).

For eventive passives, the author assumes a passive VoiceP, with the *by*-phrase generating in (Spec, VoiceP) à la Collins (2005), and the same adjectivizer as with stative passives.



3.2. Problems with Bešlin's (2023) proposal

While I fully agree with the author in that adjectival passives in English (and Serbo-Croatian) are adjectival, I take issue with some aspects of the technical implementation. First, the head Stat is not phonetically realized in any language that I know of. Also, the projection StatP is built from a telic vP, and there is no evidence that there is an underlying dynamic event within the participle, as we discuss in the next section. Furthermore, the proposal does not capture *Aktionsart* differences in the availability of *by*-phrases.

In what follows, I argue that stative passives take stative verbal inputs, and not eventive ones (i.e. there is no "stativization" operation as such, whereby an eventive predicate is transformed into a stative one). For stative passives, two verbal inputs will be assumed, following García-Pardo (2020): (a) Truncated telic VPs, with only the result state projected (and thus no *by*-phrase); (b) Stative causative VPs, which project a full transitive VP structure (and thus *by*-phrases are freely available). Eventive passives take transitive verbal inputs that are aspectually dynamic.

4. The proposal

This section develops my proposal. It builds on Bešlin's account for English and Serbo-Croatian, but modifies it so that it captures the asymmetries in the availability of *by*-phrases within stative passives. In so doing, I dispense with the unnecessary operator Stat, and I provide theoretical basis for the vague explanation that *by*-phrases are legitimate in stative passives when they are state-related (in this later point I follow García-Pardo 2020).

As is known, Spanish is like English in that it does not generally allow *by*-phrases in stative passives (e.g. (31)).

- (31) *La puerta estaba/ parecía rota/ abierta/ pintada por María.
 the door wasESTAR seemed broken opened painted by Mary

However, that is only the case with participles derived from telic predicates. Moving to participles derived from (agentive) states/ stative causatives (Fábregas and Marín 2017; García-Pardo 2020), we find that *by*-phrases become fine (e.g. (32)).

- (32) a. La ciudad está vigilada por la policía.
 the city isESTAR surveiled by the police
 b. Argentina está gobernada por Javier Milei.
 Argentina isESTAR governed by Javier Milei
 c. Los trabajadores están supervisados por el capataz.
 the workers areESTAR supervised by the foreman

Furthermore, in Spanish we find similar contrasts as in English regarding aspectual alternations (e.g. (33), cf. (28b)).

- (33) Beber en la calle no está permitido por la ley/ *por mi padre.
 drinking on the street not isESTAR allowed by the law by my father

As we saw, Bešlin (2023) argues against there being VoiceP (or an analogous projection introducing an external argument) in stative passives. When *by*-phrases are to be found, they are state-related, meaning that the agent can be identified in the result state. Other authors have explained the availability of *by*-phrases in stative passives in similar terms, such as Hengeveld (1986) for Spanish or McIntyre (2015) for English. In particular, McIntyre (ibid.) formulates this idea as in (34), discussing *by*-phrases within the broader context of event-related modifiers or satellites, such as manner adverbs or spatiotemporal adverbials.

- (34) State Relevance Hypothesis: Event-related satellites are unacceptable in (German, English, Hebrew) adjectival passives unless they contribute to the description of the state expressed by the participle or of the theme during the

interval *i* during which this state holds. They are most acceptable if they provide information which can be inferred solely by inspection of the theme during interval *i*. [From McIntyre (2015: 941)]

As it stands, this explanation is grounded in vague pragmatic notions and, focusing on Spanish, counterexamples abound, as (35) shows. In (35a), the *by*-phrase is out even if it is obvious that the shredder destroyed the document (e.g. it is in the shredder’s disposal tray and it has been reduced to the characteristically thin paper strips into which said machines shred papers). The same goes for (35b), where the *by*-phrase is not possible even though the scratch marks on the curtain make it clear that it was my cat who scratched it (see García-Pardo 2020; García-Pardo and Marín in prep. for further discussion).

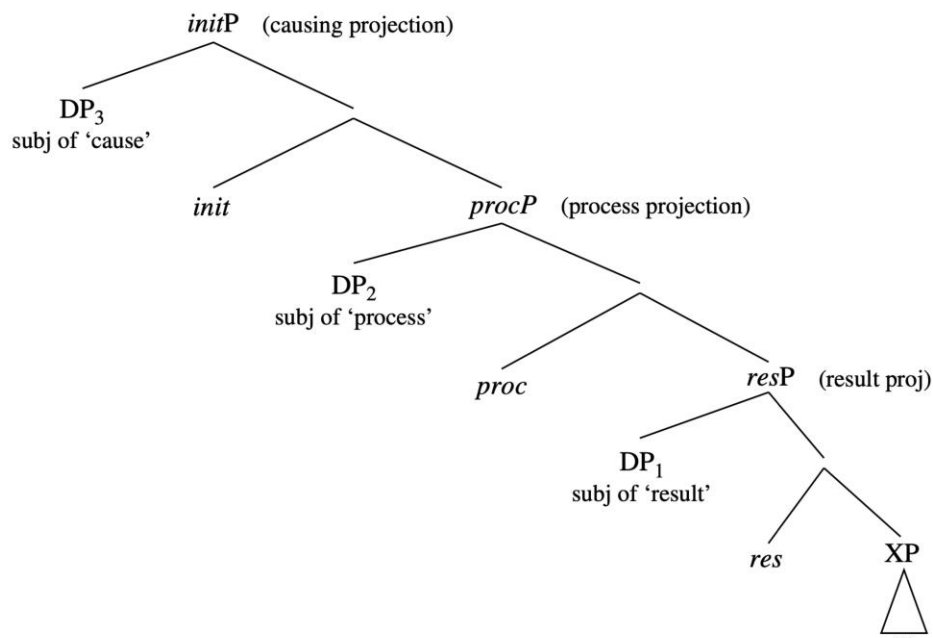
- (35) a. ??El documento está destruido por la trituradora.
the document *ISESTAR* destroyed by the shredder
b. ??La cortina está arañada por mi gato.
the curtain *ISESTAR* scratched by the cat

In what follows, I provide an account of passive participles that, as in Bešlin (2023), characterizes them uniformly as adjectives, be them eventive or stative. Departing from Bešlin, my account is grounded in an aspectually-sensitive framework for the syntax of the VP, known as first-phase syntax Ramchand (2008, 2018). I will show how the stative and eventive readings, as well as the (un-)availability of *by*-phrases, can be derived solely from the structural complexity of the base VP.

4.1. The framework

Ramchand (2008, 2018) assumes a decomposition of the VP in (maximally) three projections: *initP*, *procP* and *resP*, each hosting an argument in their specifier, as in (36).

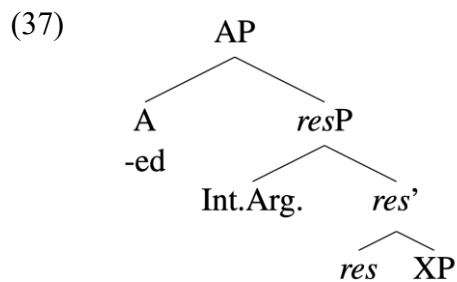
- (36) The maximal projection of the VP in Ramchand (2008)



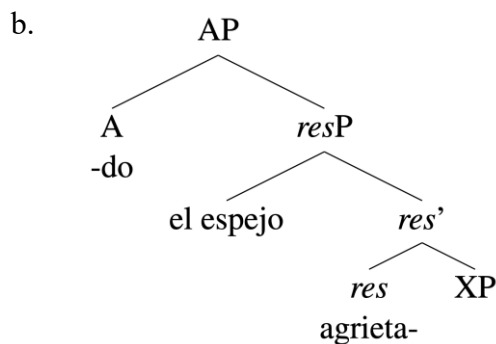
In isolation, *initP* and *resP* denote states, whereas *procP* denotes a dynamic event. When *initP* combines with *procP*, *initP* is interpreted as the causing eventuality, and its subject as the causer/agent of the event. When *procP* combines with *resP*, they form a telic pair (in the sense of Pustejovsky 1991), where *resP* denotes the result state of the dynamic event, and its subject is interpreted as the subject of the end result.

4.2. Stative passives and their Aktionsart

Remember that Bešlin (2023) argues that these participles are built with a root, an verbal categorizer and a stativizer. My take is that these participles do not have an eventive verbalizer nor a stativizer. Rather, the input to adjectivization is a truncated verbal structure consisting of *resP*, following García-Pardo 2020 (see also Ramchand 2018 for English; Caha and Taraldsen Medová 2020 for Czech). This structure is illustrated schematically in (37) and exemplified in (38).



- (38) a. El espejo está agrietado.
the mirror ISESTAR cracked



Nanosyntactic frameworks such as first-phase syntax assume late insertion of lexical items. Lexical entries in nanosyntax contain encyclopedic (conceptual) information, phonological content and syntactic features that inform the lexical item as to what syntactic structures it may materialize. This is ruled by the Superset Principle in (39).

- (39) Superset Principle (From Caha 2009:67)
A lexical tree L can match a syntactic tree S if L is a superset (proper or not) of S. L matches S if L contains a node that is identical to a node in S and all the nodes below are also identical.²

² Note that Caha (2009) assumes that lexical items lexicalize full syntactic phrases (phrasal spell-out), whereas in first-phase syntax it is assumed that lexical items lexicalize syntactically contiguous heads (spanning). Under a phrasal spell-out approach, a verbal argument in (Spec,XP) would have to be evacuated out of XP for such phrase to be lexicalized by the verbal exponent. I assume a spanning approach to lexicalization in this paper.

Translated to the spanning account in first-phase syntax, a verb listed as [*init,proc,res*] in the lexicon could match a full transitive dynamic VP-structure as in (36) or, in principle, smaller syntactic chunks thereof (i.e. a bare *initP* or *procP*). However, the Superset Principle is further restricted by the Anchor Condition (see Abels and Muriungi 2008; Caha 2009), which can be stated as in (40).

- (40) Anchor Condition: The hierarchically lowest feature in a lexical entry must be matched by the S-tree.

The hierarchically lowest feature in the lexical entry is the feature associated to the syntactic projection that is lowest in the tree. Per the Anchor Condition, the hypothetical verb listed as [*init,proc,res*] could then lexicalize a full transitive dynamic VP structure (*initP* > *procP* > *resP*), an unaccusative dynamic structure (*procP* > *resP*) or an unaccusative stative structure, *resP*. All these structures are legitimate because *res*, the lowest feature in the lexical entry, is matched by *resP* in the syntactic tree. Structures not containing *resP* would not be legitimate for verbs that have a *res* feature in their lexical entry. My proposal is that the verbal input to stative passives is precisely this minimal *resP* projection.

As support for my proposal, I note that we have no evidence of *procP* (i.e. of there being a dynamic event/telic pair) in stative passives. These constructions do not pass the *in x time* test, the hallmark test for telicity, nor do they allow dynamic adverbs such as *rápidamente* ‘quickly’ (e.g. (41)).

- (41) *La ciudad está destruida en cuatro horas/ rápidamente.
the city _{ISESTAR} destroyed in four hours quickly

We also do not have any evidence of there being an *initP*, as *by*-phrases are not generally allowed in these participles (e.g. (31), repeated below).

- (31) *La puerta estaba/ parecía rota/ abierta/ pintada por María.
the door _{WAS_{ESTAR}} seemed broken opened painted by Mary

As we would expect, it is possible to have contexts where an (extralinguistic) change-of-state event referring to the eventuality denoted by the participle is explicitly denied. The examples in (42) confirm this.³

- (42) a. La radio ha estado averiada siempre.
this radio has been_{ESTAR} broken always
‘This radio has always been broken.’

³ A similar effect is discussed in Kratzer (2000) for English, which can be reproduced for Spanish. Kratzer notes that adjectival passives in English need not have event implications, i.e. express the result of a change. Kratzer puts forth the examples in (i), which can be easily reproduced in Spanish (e.g. (ii)).

- (i) a. The blood vessel was obstructed.
b. Because of a congenital malformation, tissue obstructed the blood vessel.
(ii) a. El vaso sanguíneo está obstruido
the blood vessel is obstructed
b. Debido a una malformación congénita, el vaso sanguíneo estaba obstruido por tejido
because of a malformation congenital the vessel blood.ADJ _{WAS_{ESTAR}} obstructed by tissue

- b. La puerta está cerrada desde que se construyó.
 the door *ISESTAR* closed since that *REFL* built
 ‘The door is closed since it was built.’

We now turn to stative participles derived from stative causative verbs, as in (32a), repeated below.

- (32a) La ciudad está vigilada por la policía.
 the city *ISESTAR* surveiled by the police

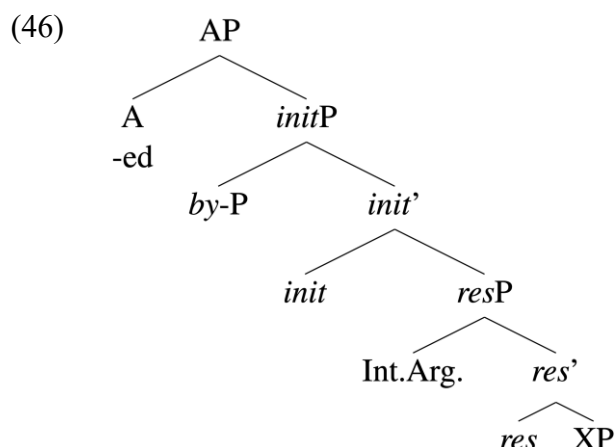
I follow García-Pardo (2020) in that verbs like (43) are stative causatives.⁴ Aspectually, these verbs can be classified as states. They do not have a habitual reading in the present tense (e.g. (44a)) and, in cessative periphrases, they cannot take the auxiliary *parar* ‘stop’, which is restricted to dynamic predicates (de Miguel 1992), as (44b) shows. However, they have a causative-resultative structure, as evidenced by their availability of having intentional agents as subjects (e.g. (45)) and their impossibility to participate in the (anti-)causative alternation (e.g. (45b)).

- (43) *gobernar* ‘govern’, *vigilar* ‘surveil’, *controlar* ‘control’, *proteger* ‘protect’,
presidir ‘preside’ ...
- (44) a. Pedro Sánchez gobierna España.
 Pedro Sánchez governs Spain
 b. Mariano Rajoy dejó/ *paró de gobernar España.
 Mariano Rajoy stopped stopped of governing Spain
- (45) a. Pedro Sánchez gobierna España inteligentemente.
 Pedro Sánchez governs Spain intelligently
 b. *España gobierna.
 Spain governs

García-Pardo (2020) accounts for these facts by positing that stative causatives are built with an *initP* and a *resP* (but no *procP*), which in combination deliver a causative relation between two states, as well as a transitive predicate, as each projection introduces an argument. The structure of these stative passives would be as in (46).⁵

⁴ But see Fábregas and Marín (2017) and Gibert-Sotelo and Marín (2022) for a different view.

⁵ I do not discuss other projections that are likely also present in passive participles but are not directly relevant to my discussion, such as the one hosting the theme vowel of the verb (see Fábregas 2022 for a recent proposal) or the degree morphology of the adjectival participle.



Note that the availability of *by*-phrases with stative causative verbs is also found in other languages such as German (e.g. (47)), Hebrew (e.g. (48)) and English (e.g. (49)) (see García Pardo 2020 for an overview).

- (47) a. Das Land ist gut regiert.
the country is well governed
'The country is well-governed.'
- b. Die Arbeiter sind durch den Vorarbeiter überwacht.
the workers are by the foreman supervised
'The workers are supervised by the foreman.' (Thomas Borer, p.c.)
- (48) a. ha-ictadion šamur al-yedey šotrim xamušim.
the-stadium guarded by policemen armed
'The stadium is guarded by armed policemen.'
(From Meltzer-Asscher 2011:826)
- b. Ha-bayit yihiye šamur al-yedey šloša šomrim.
the-house be.FUT guarded by three guards
'The house will be guarded by three guards.'
(From Horvath and Siloni 2008:107)
- (49) a. The road remained {blocked by police/supported by pylons}.
- b. The dictator remained {unsupported/propped up/underestimated} by the warlords.
(From McIntyre 2013:7)

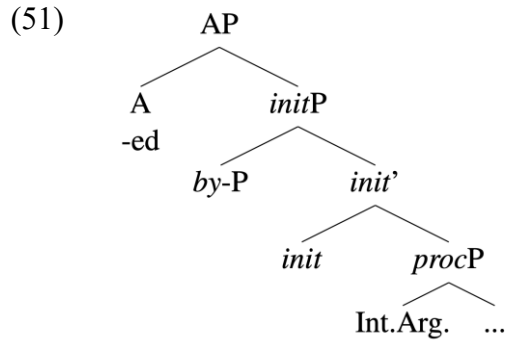
As the causing state and the result state are coextensive, this accounts (at least in big part) for the State Relevance Hypothesis (see McIntyre 2015 for English, Hengeveld 1986 for Spanish), as stated in (34) and repeated in (50).

- (50) State Relevance Hypothesis: Event-related satellites are unacceptable in (German, English, Hebrew) adjectival passives unless they contribute to the description of the state expressed by the participle or of the theme during the interval *i* during which this state holds. They are most acceptable if they provide information which can be inferred solely by inspection of the theme during interval *i*. (From McIntyre 2015: 941)

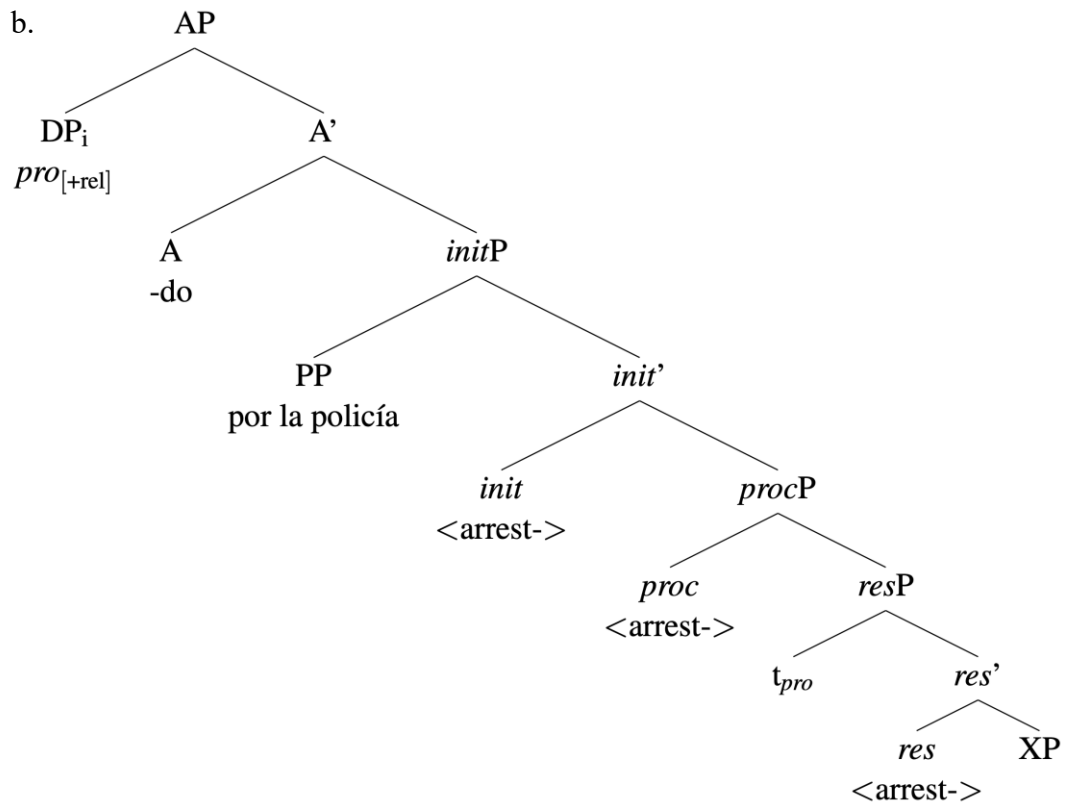
4.3. Eventive passives

For eventive passives, I assume essentially Bešlin's (2023) structure for English and Serbo- Croatian, *mutatis mutandis*. The same adjectivizer that forms stative passives

takes a transitive VP structure, effectively adjectivizing it. I also assume that in all passive participles (eventive or stative), the internal argument is a lambda-abstractor operator that moves to (Spec, AP), creating a predicate of such argument, as in Bešlin (2023) (see also Bruening 2014; McIntyre 2013; Meltzer-Asscher 2011 for stative passives). I provide a schematic tree in (51) and an example in (52).



- (52) a. Juan fue arrestado por la policía
 Juan WASSER arrested by the police



- c. $\llbracket \text{AP} \rrbracket = \lambda x e [e = s_1 e_1 s_2 \ \& \ \text{Subject}(\text{la policía}, s_1) \ \& \ \text{arrest-}(s_1) \ \& \ \text{arrest-}(e_1) \ \& \ \text{Subject}(x, s_2) \ \& \ \text{arrest-}(s_2)]$

4.4. On copular selection

As all passive participles are adjectives, we can no longer maintain that *ser* is the copula for verbal passives and *estar* is the copula for adjectival passives (i.e. we have to explain the examples in (53) differently).

- (53) a. La ciudad fue destruida {por los romanos/ en tres horas/ rápidamente}.
the city WASSER destroyed by the Romans in three hours fast
b. La ciudad está destruida *{por los romanos/ en tres horas/ rápidamente}.
the city iSESTAR destroyed by the Romans in three hours fast

An account of copular distribution in terms of eventivity or stativity would not suffice. As I briefly noted in Section 2, participles derived from subject-experiencer psychological verbs, unequivocally stative, take the copula *ser*, not *estar*.⁶

- (5) a. El rey fue temido por todos.
the king WASSER feared by all
b. Los museos de arte moderno son muy apreciados.
the museums of art modern areSER very appreciated
‘The museums of modern art are very appreciated.’

While a full account would exceed the limits of this paper, I will nonetheless outline a tentative proposal. With stative participles, *ser* and *estar* manifest aspectual distinctions, quite possibly the same Stage-Level (S-L)/ Individual-Level (I-L) distinction that we find with underived adjectives (e.g. (54)) (M. J. Arche 2006; Fernández-Leborans 1999, a.o.).

- (54) a. Juan es guapo/ alto/ moreno.
Juan iSSER handsome tall dark-haired
b. María está viva/ enferma/ atenta.
María iSESTAR alive sick attentive

Stative participles pass S-L/I-L tests depending on whether they take *ser* or *estar*.⁷ For instance, Carlson (1977) noted that, in English, bare plurals have a generic reading when they are subjects of I-L predicates (e.g. (55a)) but definite when they are subjects of S-L predicates (e.g. (55b)). Even though Spanish does not allow for bare plural subjects, we do get a similar contrast when we have plurals accompanied by the definite article: when they are subjects of I-L predicates, only a generic reading is possible (e.g. (56a)), whereas with S-L the specific reading is more salient (e.g. (56b)), albeit that a generic reading is not impossible with the appropriate type of modifiers. The same situation holds with stative participles with *ser* and with *estar*, as shown in (57).

- (55) a. Firemen are brave. Generic reading
b. Firemen are available. Specific reading

⁶ See Fábregas and Marín (2015), where it is argued at length that subject-experiencer psychological verbs are Individual-Level predicates, as opposed to object-experiencer psychological verbs, which, they argue, are Stage-Level predicates. As for the availability of *by*-phrases, we assume, following Ramchand (2008), that subject-experiencer psychological verbs project *init*P, which effectively license such phrases.

⁷ For a thorough overview of the S-L/I-L distinction in Spanish and its connection to *ser* and *estar*, see Fábregas (2012), from whose work I partly draw for this discussion.

- (56) a. Los políticos son tontos.
the politicians are_{SER} stupid
b. Los políticos están disponibles.
the politicians are_{ESTAR} available (From Fábregas 2012:16)
- (57) a. Los diamantes son muy apreciados.
the diamonds are_{SER} very appreciated (Generic reading only)
b. Los diamantes están protegidos.
the diamonds are_{ESTAR} protected
(Definite reading more salient, but generic possible)

Furthermore, only S-L predicates can function as secondary predicates, be it subject-oriented or object-oriented (e.g. (58)). Again, the same situation happens with stative participles: those which take *ser* in copulative structures cannot be secondary predicates, whereas those that take *estar* can.

- (58) a. Juan volvió de la fiesta {harto/ *español}.
Juan returned from the party fed.up Spanish
b. Llevaba {sucia/ *de seda} la camisa.
wore.he dirty of silk the shirt (From Fábregas 2012:17)
- (59) a. Juan salió de la fiesta {arrestado/ *amado}.
Juan left from the party arrested / loved
b. Llevaba {rasgada / *admirada} la camisa.
wore.he torn / admired the shirt

Eventive participles take *ser* in copulative structures, as is known. Note that with eventive underived adjectives, *ser* is the copula of choice. See for instance the mental relational adjectives discussed by Arche (2006) (e.g. (60)).

- (60) Juan fue muy cruel con Pedro.
Juan was_{SER} very cruel with Pedro
'Juan was very cruel to Pedro.'

I follow García-Pardo and Marín (2021) in that *ser* is the default copula with eventive and stative participles.⁸ *Estar* appears with stative participles and has a *res* feature that must be checked against a *res* head. This explains why stative passives derived from telic verbs and stative causative verbs take *estar*, since they both have a *resP* projection.

I would like to suggest here that the only restriction that adjectival participles have with respect to *por*-phrases and manner, time and place modification is in fact *external* to the participle, i.e. restrictions brought by the grammatical environment in which the participle is inserted. Take the verb *estar*, for instance. In the absence of *estar*, these participles can in fact be fully eventive. This is not only the case in eventive passives with *ser*, but also with bare participles in postnominal position (what is generally referred to as *reduced relatives*; see García-Pardo 2020; Sleeman 2017 for discussion), as shown in (61) and (62). These are not verbal passives in disguise, but rather, attributive adjectival participles with a full-fledged passive verbal structure. If

⁸ Or verbal and adjectival passives, in the authors' terminology.

these participles are derived from eventive transitive verbs, as is the case in (61a) and (62a), there is no reason why we should not have a *por*-phrase, licensed by *init*P, or an adverbial that locates the event encoded by *proc* spatially or temporally. Since *estar* requires stativity (M. Arche, Fábregas, and Marín 2017), its participial complements will have to be truncated structures consisting of just *res*P. The same happens with the verb *parecer* ‘seem’, which, like its English counterpart (Bešlin 2023), also seems to require stative complements.

- (61) a. La puerta destrozada por los ladrones ayer
 the door destroyed by the thieves yesterday
 b. La puerta está/ parece forzada (*por los ladrones ayer)
 the door ISESTAR seems forced by the thieves yesterday
- (62) a. La muestra analizada por los científicos en el laboratorio nuevo
 the sample analyzed by the scientists in the laboratory new
 b. La muestra está/ parece analizada (*por los científicos en el laboratorio)
 the sample ISESTAR seems analyzed by the scientists in the laboratory

5. Conclusions

To sum up, I have proposed a uniform analysis for the eventive and stative passive participles in Spanish as adjectives. In a nutshell, I have argued that both types of participles are adjectival, and share the structure in (63).

- (63) AP
 / \
 A VP

The differences that adjectival participles share with respect to argument structure and aspectual properties, I argue, are due to two main factors: (i) the grammatical properties of the base verb (i.e. if it has an external argument or if it is telic); (ii) the syntactic environment of the participle (e.g. if it is selected by a verb that imposes semantic restrictions on its participial complement). Crucially, these differences are not (and cannot be) attributed to any purported categorial difference among participles.

This paper has thus challenged the long-standing assumption that eventive passives are verbal (Levin and Rappaport 1986; Siegel 1973; Wasow 1977; Williams 1981, and much subsequent work), and sided with a minority of authors that hold that these passives are as adjectival as stative passives (Alarcos Llorach 1970; Gutiérrez-Ordóñez 1989 for Spanish, Bešlin (2023) and Lundquist (2013) for English). It has also gone against the relatively recent trend that posits a complex event structure in stative passives derived from prototypical telic verbs (Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou, and Schäfer 2015; Arche, Fábregas, and Marín 2017; Bešlin 2023; Bosque 2014; García-Pardo 2017, among many others), and again sided with a minority that posits that the input to stative passives is in fact a truncated stative VP (a *res*P in first-phase syntax terms; see García-Pardo 2020 for Spanish; Ramchand 2018 for English; Caha and Taraldsen Medová 2020 for Czech).

The empirical and theoretical gains of the proposals put forth here are significant. By positing that passive participles are adjectival across the board, we readily explain the adjectival properties of eventive passives, such as gender and number agreement with the subject and degree morphology. Further, we account for the pervasive

syncretism between eventive and stative passive participles: they are built by exactly the same adjectivizing head hosting the participial *-do* ‘-ed’ suffix.

Note that the solution given to participial syncretism in this paper is only partial. As is well known, perfect participles are also syncretic with passive participles (cf. the passive participle in (64a)) and perfect participle in (64b)).

- (64) a. Pablo {está/ fue} *arrestado*.
 Pablo ISESTAR WASSER arrested
 ‘Pablo is/ was arrested.’
 b. La policía ha *arrestado* a Pablo.
 the police has arrested DOM Pablo
 ‘The police has arrested Pablo.’

This syncretism is a puzzle, given the perfect participle has many and clear morphosyntactic and semantic differences with passive participles (active argument structure, perfect semantics, no overt agreement, syntactic distribution, etc.). But this can hardly be accidental, particularly since it occurs in so many languages other than Spanish (e.g. English, Catalan, French, German, Dutch, Danish, to name a few). The issue of participial syncretism has barely been tackled in the literature, with exceptions (see Larsson and Svenonius 2013 for Swedish and Lundquist 2013 for English). Larsson and Svenonius (2013) argue that participial morphology lexicalizes a semantic feature that is common to perfects and passives (they represent it as *VPART*, although its specific semantic contribution and how it integrates in deriving the different constructions is unclear). Lundquist (2013), on the other hand, suggests that the syncretism is a matter of the attachment height of the adjectivizer: in participles, it would merge at the tense level, before a specifier of TP is merged. Be as it may, clearly more work is necessary to determine what is behind this syncretism, and how we could model it in a way that it captures all the empirical facts. I leave this aside for future work.

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