

Relevance of the scope of operators in determining the basic meaning of a construction. The case of «took and went away» (“agarró y se fue”) in Spanish

Felipe Hasler, Carlos González, Silvana Guerrero, Matías Jaque & Verónica Orqueda
Universidad de Chile, Universidad Católica, Universidad de Chile, Universidad de Chile & Universidad Católica

As stated in Jaque et al. (2018), in Spanish there is a type of constructions that combines two finite verbs in a single predicate and, therefore, constitute the nucleus of a single clause, as shown in the following example:

- (1) Mi hijo agarr-ó y se fu-e
 My son AUX.took-3SG.PST and went.away-3SG.PST
 Out of the blue, my son went away

This type of constructions bears similarities with serial verbs in semantic-grammatical terms (as they constitute a single predicate), but it differs from them in formal characteristics, such as that they can be interrupted (My son took, and after hesitating a moment, went away/*Mi hijo agarró y, luego de dudarle un momento, se fue*), suffer the individual denial of the finite verbs that compose them (My son, does not took and leaves without saying me nothing?/*¿Mi hijo, no agarra y se va sin decirme nada?* / Even having made many undercover threats, finally my son took and did not leave/*Aunque había hecho muchas amenazas encubiertas, al final mi hijo agarró y no se fue*) and show a linking element in the conjunction *and* (*y*). Likewise, it bears similarities with the so-called verbal periphrasis of Spanish grammatical studies in which only the second of the verbs conveys a lexical meaning, while the first expresses a grammatical value. This is the case, for example, in *My son had to leave* (*Mi hijo tuvo que irse*), in which the verbal periphrasis *had to* (*tener que*) + *infinitive* expresses a deontic modal meaning. It differs from these, however, in that periphrasis is always constructed with the lexical verb in one of its non-finite forms. Considering the similarity between these constructions, serial verbs and verbal periphrasis, we call them *multiverbal constructions*, in the sense proposed by Aikhenvald (2011).

Although multiverbal constructions of the type of (1) have not received much attention in Spanish grammatical studies, those who have studied them do not agree on what is meaning of the construction. It has been proposed, fundamentally, five explanations that justify it: (a) the first verb is an expletive (Valdés, 1553, Correas, 1631, Cuervo, 1867); (b) the construction expresses a completive aspectual meaning, in opposition to the consideration of the event in its phases (Keniston, 1936, Kany, 1951, Coseriu, 1966); (c) the construction has an ingressive aspectual meaning (Fraenkel, 1926, Havers, 1927, García Sánchez, 2007); (d) the construction expresses mirative meaning (Keniston, 1936, Coseriu, 1966); (e) the construction has a topic informative function (Arnaiz and Camacho, 1999) or a focalizing one (Seco, 1961, Aleza Izquierdo and García-Mendall, 1986, Garachana, personal communication).

Our proposal is that the multiverbal constructions of the type of *took and went away* (*agarró y se fue*) express essentially an aspectual value, although not ingressive or completive, but interruptive, and that the value of mirativity and focus indicated in the bibliography is derived from this main value by an inference process. In this framework, the objective of this research is to characterize the scope and the combinatorial of the operators as a test to determine the basic meaning of a construction, for which we will focus on the

distinction between the basic interruptive meaning and two of the meanings proposed in related literature: the ingressive, which can be discarded, and the mirative, which is proposed as a meaning inferentially derived from the basic meaning of the construction.

Regarding the ingressive meaning, we propose that it is not the basic meaning because it is possible to combine it with periphrasis that express that meaning. In contrast, the ingressive periphrasis do not combine well between them, as shown in (2), which is expected, given that they try to establish focus on the same section of the event and, consequently, occupy the same place in the projection of operators.

- (2) a. *It started to begin to rain (Se puso a empezar a llover)
 b. Arrived and it started to rain (Llegó y se puso a llover)

In fact, it seems that a sentence like *arrived and it started to rain* (*llegó y se puso a llover*) is even preferable to the simplest one *arrived and rained* (*llegó y llovió*), which indicates that the construction in question, although it does not transmit an ingressive meaning, is highly compatible with it.

As for the mirative meaning, since mirativity is one of the broadest operators in the structure of the clause and has effects all over it, then, this construction should not be able to appear under the control of an operator of narrower effects, such as, for example, a deontic modal operator. However, as seen in the example in (3), the desemantised verb *come* (*llegar*) may be under the domain of a deontic modal verb as *can* (*poder*), compatible with an aspectual meaning, since the aspect has one of the narrowest reach in the structure of the clause.

- (3) Tú no pued-es lleg-ar y entr-ar
 You NEG can-2SG AUX/come-INF and go.in-INF
 sin pagar
 without paying
 You can't go in without paying, unexpectedly

As we have indicated, the mirative meaning arises inferentially in more specific contexts, such as the combination with stative verbs, usually imperfective, as can be seen in (4)

- (4) Encontraron un guardapelo cerrado y va y era un
 They found a closed locke and go.3SG and was.3SG a
 Horrocrux
 Horrocrux
 They found a closed locke and it came to be a Horrocrux

References

- Aikhenvald, A. (2011). Multi-verb constructions: setting the scene. A. Aikhenvald y P. Muysken (Eds.), *Multi-verb constructions. A view from the Americas*. Leiden: Brill.
- Aleza Izquierdo, M., y García-Medall, J. (1986), "Funcionalidad de la perífrasis «cojo y me voy» en español", *Cuadernos de Filología II: Studia Lingüística Hispánica*, 3, 5-17.

- Arnaiz, A., y Camacho, J. (1999), "A Topic Auxiliary in Spanish", J. Gutiérrez-Rexach y F.M. Gil (eds.): *Advances in Hispanic Linguistics: Papers from the 2nd Hispanic Linguistics Symposium (Vol. 2)*, Somerville, MA, Cascadilla Press, 317-331.
- Correas, G. ([1631] 1906). *Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales y otras fórmulas comunes de la lengua castellana: en que van todos los impresos antes y otra gran copia que juntó el maestro Gonzalo Correas*. Madrid: J. Ratés.
- Coseriu, E. ([1966] 1977). *Tomo y me voy. Un problema de sintaxis comparada europea. Estudios de lingüística románica*. Madrid: Gredos.
- Cuervo, R. J. (1867). *Apuntaciones críticas sobre el lenguaje bogotano con frecuente referencia al de los países de Hispano-América*. Paris: A & R, Rogers y F. Chernoviz, Editores
- Fraenkel, E (1926). "Zur Parataxe und Hypotaxe im Grieschischen, Baltoslawischen und Albanischen", en *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 24, 290-315.Havers
- García Sánchez, J. (2007). "Tomo y me voy". Expresión plena y elipsis. *Actas del XV Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*. México D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica Arnaiz y Camacho
- Jaque, M., C. González Vergara, S. Guerrero, F. Hasler y V. Orqueda. 2018. Es llegar y llevar: construcciones multiverbales de verbo finito coordinadas en español. *Boletín de Filología*.
- Kany, Ch. ([1945] 1970). *Sintaxis hispanoamericana*. Madrid: Gredos
- Seco, M. ([1961] 2002), *Diccionario de dudas y dificultades de la lengua española*. Madrid: Espasa.
- Valdés, J. de. ([1535]1990). *Diálogo de la lengua*, (ed. C. Barbolani). Madrid: Cátedra