

Real tense and real aspect in mirativity

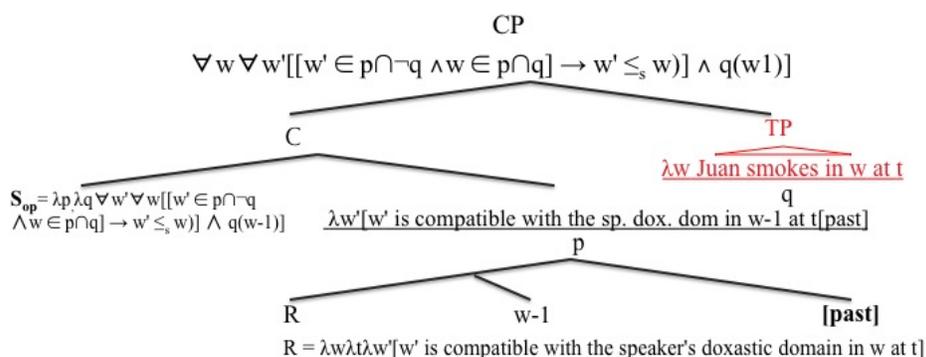
Phenomenon: Mirativity is defined as the grammatical category that encodes the speaker's surprise due to new and unexpected information (DeLancey, 1997). In Spanish miratives (1), the past imperfect and the pluperfect (Andean varieties) are used to express mirativity in the present and the past respectively. Past imperfect mirative only generates habitual/generic meanings, while the pluperfect generates episodic and stative meanings (usually interpreted in the present). There is also a higher degree of surprise for the pluperfect mirative.

(1)	statives	eventives
imperfect	a) ¡Eras alto! be.2s Past.Imp. tall 'You're tall!' (I wasn't expecting you to be tall)	b) ¡Fumabas! smoke.2s.Past.Imp. 'You smoke' (I wasn't expecting you to be a smoker)
pluperfect	c) ¡Habías sido alto! Aux.2s.Past be.PPE tall 'You're tall!' (I thought you weren't tall)	d) ¡Habías fumado! Aux.2s.Past smoke.PPE 'You smoked' (I thought you didn't smoke)

Questions: (i) what is the meaning of mirativity? (ii) what is the role of past tense in mirativity? (iii) why are the statives in the pluperfect case interpreted in the present and not in the past, as expected? (iv) why does the pluperfect carry a stronger sense of surprise?

Proposal - Tense: The surprise associated with mirativity arises as a consequence of the clash between the speaker's previous beliefs and the current state of affairs. I analyze mirativity as an operator S (in the C domain, see Torres 2011 for supporting evidence) that establishes a relationship between the speaker's beliefs and the asserted proposition (2). An accessibility relation R provides the right modal base: a set of worlds w' that are compatible with the speaker's doxastic domain. The past tense is 'fake', in Iatridou's terms (2000), since is not interpreted in the asserted proposition, but it is a real past tense which is interpreted under the modal operator S. The past tense is the time argument of the accessibility relation R (cf. Ippolito 2003 on counterfactuals). [past] represents the speaker's past beliefs up to the speech time in which she realizes that the actual state of affairs contradicts her previous beliefs. A 'real' past tense analysis explains both the form and the meaning the mirative presents (past morphology interpreted outside its T node, as the speaker's past beliefs), S ranks the set of $\neg q$ worlds as worlds that are considered to be more likely than q worlds. Hence the surprise on encountering evidence of q.

(2)



The past morphology in the main clause is a reflex of this modal past, which I analyze as agreement, syntactic evidence for this analysis comes from Albanian. For the imperfect, the proposition q is interpreted in the present, as default tense (1a-b); for the pluperfect, assuming it has a double layer of past tense (cf. Iatridou 2001), one of these layers is interpreted in q (cf. 1d). Here I have outlined my answers to questions (i-ii). In the talk, I will also discuss whether the first clause in S should be treated as a presupposition.

Pluperfect statives seem to pose a problem for the analysis above. Sentences like (1c) do not express surprise about the recent past in which the hearer was tall, but rather, it is about being tall

in the present. I claim that this effect is more apparent than real. Musan (2007) argues that individual and stage level predicates behave differently in past tense clauses, with respect to the lifetime of their subjects. (3a) implicates that Gregory is dead, but not (3b). She explains the effect in (3a) as an implicature arising from maximal informativeness, and argues that the implicature can be blocked under appropriate conditions.

(3a) Gregory was from America (3b) Gregory was happy.

In the same spirit, I propose the following implicature calculation for the stative pluperfect mirative. The extra past tense layer is also active in the main clause of (1c), but in order to avoid lifetime effects, the past reading is suppressed. It is possible to get the past interpretation in the following context: I am in a funeral and I thought the person who died was short. But then I see the coffin is surprisingly large, so I can say “*Oh, Juan había sido alto!*” (Oh, Juan was tall!). (Note that the mirative interpretation is not possible for the imperfect (cf. 1a) in this context because John is dead, the implicature associated with a present tense interpretation of his height cannot be supported). In answer to (iii), then, I claim that the past tense is there in the main clause of the stative pluperfect mirative but suppressed in order to avoid lifetime effects. However, it can also be active, given the right contextual framing.

Proposal - Aspect: Finally, I turn to the intuition that imperfective miratives involve less surprise than pluperfect miratives. I claim that aspect determines the set of propositions against which the assertion is measured. Imperfective goes with generic/habitual statements, as in (4a); perfective with episodic/particular statements as in (4b).

(4a) *Students don't smoke* (4b) *John didn't smoke at the party.*

Since generic statements like (4a) allow for exceptions, the set of worlds in the modal base includes those with students that smoke. The assertion, on seeing a student smoking does not require a revision of prior beliefs. Particular statements like (4b) do not admit worlds in which Juan smoked at the party. The assertion, on realizing that Juan did smoke, therefore involves a counterexpectation. This answer to question (iv) requires further articulation of the structure of the modal domain in miratives. I sketch this in (5), where aspect crucially occurs low in the structure: (5) [S[Asp] R] w-1] Past]]]]

In the talk I will give a compositional semantics for this structure. I will interpret aspectual morphology in the standard way, and use it to determine the type of propositions about which the speaker had beliefs in the past. Aspect thus plays its normal role under the S operator, contributing real meaning to the mirative. It is not fake aspect, such as the one analyzed for counterfactuals (Iatridou 2000, 2009, Bjorkman and Halpert 2011).

Advantages: the current proposal will be compared with earlier accounts of mirativity (Friedman 1980, Ivanova 2007, Peterson 2008) and shown to better handle the role of tense and aspect in generating the effect of surprise associated with mirativity. The cross-linguistic applicability of the proposal for mirativity will also be touched upon, with special reference to Albanian mirativity, which also makes use of the same past tense strategy. Differences between Albanian and Spanish can be reduced to syntactic ones. As for aspect, Albanian also generates generic/habitual meanings for the imperfect, and episodic/result states for the pluperfect, which supports the ‘real’ aspect analysis I have put forth for Spanish.

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