

**Inchoative states, gradable states and (anti-)causativization in the psych domain:  
the cases of Spanish and Korean**

Paola Fritz-Huechante, Elisabeth Verhoeven, Julian A. Rott

*Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*

INTRODUCTION. Recent work on the nature of stative eventualities claims that subclasses of states have to be distinguished, most prominently inchoative states (Bar-el 2005, Choi 2010), along with gradability as a significant feature. Among the lexical items discussed in this respect, psych adjectives and verbs are pertinent. For instance, Marín & McNally (2011) divide Spanish reflexive psych verbs (SRPV) into two groups, distinguishing between inchoative states (e.g. *deleitarse* ‘get/be pleased’, *angustiar* ‘get/be distressed’) and punctual states (e.g. *sorprenderse* ‘be surprised’, *enfadarse* ‘get angry’). Similarly, Korean possesses two types of basic psych items, an adjectival subclass denoting pure gradable states (e.g. *culkepta* ‘pleased’, *koylopta* ‘distressed’), and a verbal subclass denoting inchoative states (e.g. *nollata* ‘get surprised’, *hwanata* ‘get angry’) (cf. Choi 2015, Choi & Demirdache 2014). Comparing the morphological structure of their verbal inventories in the psych domain, the two languages differ in that Spanish derives intransitive experiencer-subject (ES) verbs from more basic transitive experiencer-object (EO) verbs by reflexivization (1a); while Korean uses the transitivizing operation of causativization on intransitive bases through the embedding under a causative predicate (1b).

- (1) *Morphological structure of experiencer verbs*
- |    |                                 |   |   |        |
|----|---------------------------------|---|---|--------|
| a. | transitive EO basis             | → | intransitive ES derivation                    |        |
|    | <i>enojar</i> ‘anger’           |   | <i>enojarse</i> ‘anger:REFL’                  | (Spa.) |
| b. | intransitive ES basis           | → | transitive EO derivation                      |        |
|    | <i>pwukkulepta</i> ‘be.ashamed’ |   | <i>pwukkulepkey hata</i> ‘be.ashamed:ADVR do’ | (Kor.) |

AIMS OF THE STUDY. Given the converse structure of the two languages, the present study aims to investigate its repercussions on how far the thematic structure and the operations of causativization vs. anticausativization bear on the lexical aspectual properties of the transitive and intransitive alternants. We expect effects of (non-)canonical syntactic behaviour (i.e. case marking, aspectual shift of the base predicate, among others) generally for intransitivizing Spanish, but not as widely for causativizing Korean; thus being in line with observations that non-canonical psych syntax is related to stativity and non-agentivity (Arad, 1998; Landau, 2010; Verhoeven, 2010).

METHOD. For both languages we elicited an inventory of alternating psych verbs based on a questionnaire featuring the basic emotion domains in terms of typical emotion triggering situations (resulting in 119 items for Spanish and 113 items for Korean). We applied pertinent semantic tests on the event structure and the stimulus properties in the resulting inventories based on previous studies (Fábregas & Marín 2014; Marín 2014; Marín & McNally 2011 for Spanish; Choi 2015; Choi & Demirdache 2014, for Korean extending their analysis to the psych domain). Event structure properties such as stativity, inchoativity, gradability were tested by the compatibility of a verb structure with state vs. event modifiers (Marín & McNally 2011, Fábregas & Marín 2014). The study thoroughly analysed the corresponding language expressions in terms of their semantic similarities/distinctions as in (2) and (3). For instance, the ‘habitual reading’ test shows stativity for Spanish in both EO and ES alternations (2a and b); in contrast, for Korean stativity is only present in the ES alternant (see (3), since states are not compatible with the progressive marker *-nun cwungi*).

- (2) a. *Esta situación/María enfada a Juan (ahora, en este momento).*  
This situation/María anger-PRS.3S to Juan  
‘This situation/María angers Juan.’ (now, at this moment) *Sp. transitive EO verb*

b. *María se enfada por la situación.*  
 María REFL distress-PRS.3S by the situation  
 ‘María is angry about the situation.’ (now, at this moment) *Sp. punctual state verb*

- (3) a. \**cwunho-nun ku sanghwang-ey tayhay hwa-ka na-nun cwungi-ta.*  
 Juno-TOP that situation-DAT about angry-NOM appear-PROG-DECL  
 ‘Juno is getting angry about the news.’ *Kor. inchoative state verb*
- b. *cwunho-nun swuni-lul hwana-key ha-nun cwungi-ta.*  
 Juno-NOM Suni-ACC angry-ADVR do-PROG-DECL  
 ‘Juno makes Mina angry.’ *Kor. causative EO verb*

MAIN RESULTS. For both Korean and Spanish, compatibility of intransitive (ES) psych predications with event modifiers associated with states identifies ES verbs/adjectives as atelic rather than telic. First, for Spanish, inchoativity (i.e. left boundary) shows an impact in both alternations. Spanish reflexive inchoative and punctual state verbs reflect a similar classification in their transitive counterparts. This classification pairs with their accusative and dative variants, where the former structure is associated with a punctual state reading, and the latter with an inchoative state reading. The acceptability of the quantificational adverbial *siempre que* ‘whenever’ (Marín & McNally, 2011) discloses the inchoativity of both predicates. The adverbial provides a reference time interval for the interpretation of the clause they modify. In stative constructions, the adverbial captures the inception of the state and some part of the state that holds; i.e. the onset occurs within the time evidenced by the quantificational adverbial. This is the case of (4a), where the call makes Luisa angry (i.e. her anger begins with the call) and keeps her in that state of mind for a moment. In eventive constructions, the adverbial only refers to the onset of the state. The reading that obtains in (4b) is that in all the occasions where Luisa receives a call from me, she gets angry (i.e. onset).

- (4) a. *Siempre que la llamo, a Luisa le enfada mi llamada.*  
 whenever that CL.ACC call-PRS.1S to Luisa CL.DAT anger-PRS.3S my call  
 ‘Whenever I call her, my call angers Luisa.’
- b. *Siempre que la llamo, a Luisa la enfada mi llamada.*  
 whenever that CL.ACC call-PRS.1S to Luisa CL.ACC anger-PRS.3S my call  
 ‘Whenever I call her, my call angers Luisa.’

In Korean, inchoativity occurs with the initial zero-marked BECOME operator in the lexical meaning of the verb whereas those items that are genuine adjectives are classified as pure gradable states (Choi 2015; Choi & Demirdache 2014). The inchoative marker is compatible with those predicates that denote pure states (5a) whereas its combination is ungrammatical with the inherently inchoative verbs (5b).

- (5) a. *Mina-ka icey-nun culkewe-ci-n-ta.*  
 Mina-NOM now-TOP please-INCH-PRS-DECL  
 ‘Mina is getting pleased now.’
- b. \**Mina-ka icey-nun nolla-ci-n-ta.*  
 Mina-NOM now-TOP surprise-INCH-PRS-DECL  
 ‘Mina is getting surprised now.’

Second, in terms of scalarity, both languages can be shown to have a *lower-bound scale* (Demirdache & Choi 2014). This can be seen by the infelicity of the respective psych verbs to combine with degree adverbs oriented towards a maximal value in a scale (such as equivalents of ‘completely/totally’, see (6a) for Spanish, (6b) for Korean). At the same time, the items in both languages accept modification by adverbs meaning ‘slightly/partially’, which refer to a

lower-bound scale of the lexical item in a minimal value measured property (see (7a) for Spanish, (7b) for Korean).

(6) a. \**Luisa deleitó/sorprendió a Pedro completamente.*  
 Luisa please/surprise-PRT.3S to Pedro completely  
 ‘Luisa pleased/surprised Pedro completely.’

b. \**Mina-ka ta culkew-ess-ta/nolla-ss-ta.*  
 Mina-NOM completely please-PST-DECL/surprise-PST-DECL  
 ‘Mina was pleased/surprised completely.’

(7) a. *Luisa deleitó/sorprendió a Pedro un poco.*  
 Luisa please/surprise-PRT.3S to Pedro slightly  
 ‘Luisa pleased/surprised Pedro slightly.’

b. *Mina-ka cokum culkew-ess-ta/nolla-ss-ta.*  
 Mina-NOM slightly please-PST-DECL/surprise-PST-DECL  
 ‘Mina was slightly pleased/surprised.’

For Korean, there is a difference related to the type of lexical item: i.e. for *pure state* verbs (*culkepta* ‘pleased’ in (7b)), which base is a gradable adjective, the scale refers to a property that is instantiated to the smallest value that follows the zero degree at the lower bound of the scale. For *inchoative state* verbs (*nollata* ‘get surprised’ in (7b)), the scale relates to the *transition* from one state to the other, i.e. to the onset of the result state (7b). For Spanish, for both *inchoative* and *punctual states*, the ‘lower-bound scale’ refers to the onset of the result state (7a).

Finally, in terms of causativization, the Korean periphrastic causative structure (see 3b) alters the aspectual nature of the base predicate whereas the anticausativization of Spanish verbs (see 2b) does not. SRPVs are anticausatives that retain their CAUSE meaning from their lexical representations. This relates to previous observations that anticausatives marked with reflexive morphology denote simple inchoative events entailed by their lexical causative counterparts (Schäfer & Vivanco 2015). This is not the case for Korean ES predicates due to the lack of CAUSE in their lexical items. In terms of case marking, Spanish systematically correlates dative experiencer constructions with a subject matter stimulus and accusative constructions with a causer stimulus (Pesetsky 1995; Fábregas et al., 2017). Korean has a similar alternation where accusative marking occurs with causer stimuli while dative experiencers occur with subject matter stimuli (Lee & Shin 2007; Lee 2007).

The present study contributes to a better understanding of the typology of psychological verbs and their alternations revealing the similarities and differences within and between languages with converse directionality of the psych alternation. We explore the new subcategorization of psych items according to their inchoativity (Marín & McNally, 2011) and expand such premises systematically to both ES and EO alternants. At the same time, the study contributes to the exploration of scale structures in the psych domain.

#### REFERENCES

- Arad, M. 1998. VP-Structure and the Syntax-Lexicon Interface [PhD]. Bar-el, L. 2005. *Aspectual Distinctions in Skwxwu7mesh* [PhD]. Choi, J. 2015. On the universality of aspectual classes: Inchoative states in Korean. In E. Labeau & Q. Zhang (Eds.), *Taming the Tame Systems*, pp. 123-135. Choi, J. & Demirdache, H. 2014. Reassessing the Typology of States Evidence from Korean (Degree) Inchoative states. [electronic resource]. Fábregas, A. & Marín, R. 2014. Deriving individual-level and stage-level psych verbs. *The Linguistic Review*. Fábregas, A., Jiménez-Fernández, A. & Tubino, M. 2017. What’s up with dative experiencers? In R. Lopes, J. Ornelas de Avelar & S. Cyrino (Eds.), *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 12*, pp. 30-47. Jung, H. 2014. Comprehension and production of psych verbs in Korean. *Enehak Cey* 68, 119-148. Lee, S-G. 2007. A semantics-syntax correlation analysis of Exp-Subj psych-verbs. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 15 (4), 1-20. Lee, S-G. & Shin, K-S. 2007. On Exp-Subj psych-verbs: A lexicalist approach. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 15(2), 39-58. Landau, I. 2010. *The Locative Syntax of Experiencers*. Cambridge. Marín, R. & McNally, L. 2011. Inchoativity, change of state, and telicity: Evidence from Spanish reflexive psychological verbs. *NLLT* 29, 467-502. Marín, R. 2014. Stativity and agentivity in Spanish psych verbs. *Workshop on the Syntax and Semantics of Experiencers*. Berlin. Parodi-Lewin, C. 1991. *Aspect in the syntax of Spanish psych verbs*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA. Pesetsky, D. 1995. *Zero Syntax: Experiencers and Cascades*. Cambridge. Schäfer, F. & Vivanco, M. 2015. Anticausatives are weak scalar expressions, not reflexive expressions. *Proceedings of Going Romance 2013*, Amsterdam. Verhoeven, E. 2010. Agentivity and stativity in experiencer verbs. *Linguistic Typology* 14, 213-251.