

On the structure, interpretation, and distribution of English stative passive participles

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This talk examines a previously unexplained asymmetry in the syntactic distribution of manner modifiers in stative passive participles in English: we observe that where eventive manner modification is deviant with a predicative stative participle (1a), the attributive counterpart (1b) is fine.

- (1) a. #This tin can is violently/secretly/rapidly flatten-ed/kick-ed.
b. The violently/secretly/rapidly flatten-ed/kick-ed tin can...

The English stative (a.k.a. “adjectival”) passive plays a prominent role in architectural discussions of word formation, concerning whether such participles are formed *Lexically* (in contrast to eventive “verbal” counterparts) [9, 6], or (at least partly) syntactically [5, 3, 1, 3, 4]). In previous work in this vein, the (un)availability of manner modification has been a key diagnostic of two meanings of stative participles, argued to be derived from two structures: as notably put forth in [5] and developed in [1] (a.m.o), statives may be *target* states (a kind of resultative) or *resultant* states (similar to perfects; cf. [8]). This paper proposes the distributional asymmetry in (1) requires a new understanding of English stative passive participle interpretation, and a new unified structural analysis to explain the finding.

Data In (1b), *secretly kicked* can only mean that *the wall* underwent a kicking event, not that it holds some (secretly-kicked) state. Thus, in (1b) a manner adverb has direct access to an **event**. We argue (1b) exemplifies a broader generalization, as in (2)-(3): **eventive modifiers** can directly access an event in **stative passives** if the stative participle occurs in **attributive** syntactic position. In (2a), an eventive reading is facilitated by the presence of eventive adverbs. (3a) shows attributive stative participles also have a stative reading, facilitated by state-relevant adverbs. Predicative stative participle counterparts lack eventive readings (2b) (but have the stative reading (3b)).

- (2) a. EVENTIVE-ATT.: *twice-flattened box/ surreptitiously* photographed documents
b. EVENTIVE-PRED.: #This box is *twice-flattened* / #These documents are *surreptitiously* photographed
- (3) a. STATIVE-ATT.: *completely* flattened box/ *sloppily* written note
b. STATIVE-PRED.: This box is *completely* flattened/ This note is *sloppily* written

Proposal Building a *target* vs. *resultant* state into the structural analysis of English statives (as opposed to German/Greek) is controversial [2]. Given (2)-(3), we re-frame the two readings for English: the eventive reading identified by event modifiers (2a) is an E(vent)-reading (4a); the (caused change of) state interpretations in (3) are @-readings (4b). (The latter adapts Kratzer’s target state; the former departs from her perfect/resultant state). The close relationship between the E- and @-readings in (4a-b) accounts for their entailment relations: if e.g. a box is flattened, it has undergone a flattening event; but if it undergoes a completed flattening event, it is flattened.

- (4) a. E-reading: Argument underwent Root-named event prior to Topic Time.
 $\lambda x \lambda t \exists e [\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}(e) \wedge \text{Patient}(e, x) \wedge \tau(e) < t]$
- b. @-reading: Argument is in target state of Root-named event at Topic Time.
 $\lambda x \lambda s \lambda t \exists e [\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}(e) \wedge \text{Patient}(e, x) \wedge \text{cause}(e, s) \wedge \tau(e) < t]$

Implementation The E-reading in the attributive is significant because attributive syntax is a hallmark of adjectival/stative syntax. That the two readings (4a-b) (contextually) depend on clausal distribution (2-3) counters the idea that different meanings involve differences in participial syntactic structure. This paper proposes stative passives have a single structure. In a syntactic approach, this is: [Asp-St [Voice [$\sqrt{\text{ROOT}}$ v]]]. Asp-St is a stativizing head that results in the distribution of a typical adjective. Deriving the two (related) meanings from a single structure explains why the stative participle always has the same pronunciation and a single (stative) syntactic distribution.

Given a single syntax, we propose (4a-b) can be related by *allosemy* (in the sense of [7],[10]): if Asp-St is interpreted, there is the @-reading (2); when it is not, we have the E-reading (3a). We conclude by exploring how the obligatory interpretation of Asp-St in predicatives connects to the impossibility of some non-restrictive interpretations of predicative adjectives broadly in English.

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