

## A Raising Account of *Llevar* + Time in Spanish

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**Issue:** The Spanish verb *llevar* “to carry” is used in temporal constructions to indicate the duration of an event:

- (1) Javier lleva escribiendo un libro seis meses  
Javier *lleva* writing a book six months  
‘Javier has been writing a book for six months’

The Royal Academy of the Spanish Language (RAE) classifies these constructions as gerund periphrasis (RAE, 2009 §28.15a); in other words, *llevar* would be an auxiliary verb, and *escribiendo* would be the main verb. In this presentation, I show why this analysis is incorrect and I propose an alternative one.

**Evidence:** There are two compelling reasons to reject the characterization of *llevar* as an auxiliary verb. First of all, auxiliary verbs do not project an argument structure because they are functional heads in the extended projection of the VP, but proofs such as substitution for an accusative pronoun (2) or deletion, which renders the sentence ungrammatical (3), indicate that the time DP (*seis meses*) is a complement of *llevar*.

- (2) Los últimos seis meses, Javier los lleva escribiendo un libro  
The last six months, Javier Acc.3Pl.Masc *lleva* writing a book  
‘For the last six months, Javier has been writing a book’
- (3) \*Javier lleva escribiendo un libro

Furthermore, if *llevar* was an auxiliary verb, it would depend on the existence of a main verb, but it actually can be alongside other constituents, such as adverbs, as in (4):

- (4) Javier lleva seis meses [aquí]  
‘Javier has been here for six months’

**Analysis:** *Llevar* is a predicative head (main verb) that selects a time phrase as its argument. The relationship between the *llevar* clause and the other one (the *escribiendo* clause, in our example) is of raising. *Escribiendo* is a tenseless clause, but it does project an argument structure. In the example, the internal argument is *un libro* “a book”, while the external argument is *Javier*. Evidence of idiomaticity (5) and voice transparency (6) show that it is a raising construction:

- (5) El burro lleva seis años hablando de orejas.  
The donkey *lleva* six years talking about ears.
- (6) Un libro lleva seis meses siendo escrito por Javier.  
A book *lleva* six months being written by Javier.

In (5), the interpretation is idiomatic (someone has been hypocritical for six months) rather than literal (a donkey has been talking about ears for six years). In (6), the interpretation does not

change when building a passive sentence derived from (1). Based on the evidence provided, we can see this is a raising construction and reject an alternative analysis that this is some sort of control predicate. The paper elaborates on the motivation for the movement while accounting for case assignment in the matrix clause.

**References cited in the abstract:**

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