Maximal syntactic/semantic divergence in deadjectivals: Evidence from Romance

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Abstract

This article explores semantic and syntactic properties of a set of Romance deadjectival verbs sharing comparable derivational morphology. I note: (i) asymmetries between languages where the choice of verbalizer does not become a significant variable; (ii) languages where the use of the verbalizer is associated with distinct syntactic and semantic properties. In Italian, the verbalizer defines a maximal structural contrast in a nontrivial derivation. Italian and Catalan verbs pattern as statives. Yet lack of eventivity and scalarity in Italian defines an empirically relevant distinction between stative types reflected by syntax (unergative behaviour correlated with lack of affected theme/change-of-state denotation). This differentiates Italian from Spanish or Catalan forms in not showing two key properties: (i) unaccusativity/transitivity; (ii) change-along-scale entailment. A continuum from minimally to maximally different aspectual and syntactic configurations obtains. Although the focus is set on deadjectival verbs and the unusual properties of Italian *-ggiare*, the results are extendable to further data.

Keywords: stativity, telicity, scale, unergative, verbs

Résumé

L'article explore les propriétés sémantiques et syntaxiques d'un ensemble de verbes deadjectivaux romans avec une morphologie dérivationnelle comparable. On observe: (i) des asymétries entre langues dans lesquelles le choix du verbalisateur spécifique ne se traduit pas par une variable significative; (ii) les langues où l'utilisation du verbaliseur est associée à propriétés syntaxiques et sémantiques distinctes. En italien en particulier, le verbalisateur définit un contraste structurel maximal dans une dérivation non triviale. Les verbes italiens et catalans sont tous deux statifs. L'absence de structure événementielle et de scalarité en italien définit une distinction sémantique empiriquement importante dans les types statifs, ce qui est reflété par la syntaxe (comportement inergatif en corrélation avec l'absence de thème affecté / dénotation de changement d'état). L'italien est différent des formes espagnoles ou catalanes en ce qu'il ne présente pas deux propriétés clés : (i) inaccusativité/transitivité; (ii) implication de changement scalaire. Un *continuum* de configurations aspectuelles et syntaxiques minimalement à maximalement différentes est obtenu. Bien que l'accent soit mis sur les verbes de-adjectivaux et les propriétés assez inhabituelles de l'italien -ggiare, nos résultats sont extensibles à d'autres langues et exemples.

Mots clés: stativité, télicité, scalarité, inergativité, verbes

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, 'deadjectival' verbs have become a fruitful topic of discussion about eventivity, aspect, and scalarity, posing important questions about the relevance of lexicalized scales and the different properties obtaining under derivation.[1] Questions concern, namely, whether (and when) the lexicalized scale plays a role in the aspectual behaviour of the verb, or whether a certain argument structure is uniformly allowed by the verbalizer, or what is its role in scalarity and aspect calculation.

The suffix *-ear/-ejar* (henceforth EAR) is an important component in deadjectival verb formation in Romance languages, producing a considerable number of verb sets, albeit with different results. Asymmetries concern both syntactic structure and semantic/aspectual representation. Here, I focus on Italian and how it contrasts (semantically and syntactically) with the result of the derivation in some other Romance languages. I consider colour (solid, chromatic) roots as a comparative basis, as they provide productive results in the languages on which I focus here, as well as useful examples of the differences noted.

2. SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE

In Spanish, EAR verbs generally behave as scalar change-of-state (henceforth COS) verbs, paralleling zero or *-en* English counterparts, as shown in (1). They allow causative formation, as in (2a–b); passive, and middle alternation, as in (2c); and often external and instrumental cause, as in (2d). These properties are central to the definition of verbs derived from gradable adjectives as *degree achievements* (henceforth DA), as generally expected in colour roots (Levin 1993: 245): as DAs, they describe events in which an individual or object undergoes change over time (Dowty 1979, Hay et al. 1999, Kennedy and Levin 2008).

(1) *Blanquear,   grisear,   amarronar,   platear,   dorar*
    √white-EAR   √grey-EAR   √brown-EAR   √silver-EAR   √gold-EAR
    'to whiten, grey, brown, silver, gold(en)'

(2) a. *Mamá   blanqueó   la camisa   (con cloro)*.
       mother   √white-EAR.3S.PST   the shirt   with chlorine
       'Mom whitened the shirt (with chlorine)'

    b. *La camisa   se   blanqueó.*
       the shirt   INCH   √white-EAR.3S.PST
       'The shirt whitened'

    c. *Las   camisas se   blanquean   fácil/como un sueño*
       the.PL   shirt.PL PAS/INCH   √white-EAR.3PL.PST   easy/like a dream
       'Shirts whiten easily/like a dream'

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[1] Abbreviations used: COS: change-of-state; DA: degree achievements; DAT: dative; EAR:– *ear/-ejar* suffix*; EN: becoming; FUT: future; GER: gerund; IMP: imperfect; INCH: inchoative; INF: infinitive; PART: partitive; PAS: passive; PL: plural; PPT: past participle; PST: past; RFL: reflexive; S: singular.

d. ***El   cloro***   *blanqueó*   *la camisa.*
the   chlorine   √white-EAR.3S.PST   the shirt
'The bleach whitened the shirt' (=bleach caused the shirt [to] become white)

Verbs like *blanquear* 'to whiten' further show the variable (a)telicity associated with DAs; that is, a kind of telicity sensitive to the type of scale associated with the root, with bounded-scale roots giving default telic predications (as in Hay et al. 1999, but also the sense of *variable telicity* (as in Kearns 2007). As noted in the literature (McNally 2011 and Clapp 2012, for analytic and experimental data, respectively; M. Rasia 2017, for Romance), colour roots are generally associated with bounded property scales. The DAs yielded by the Spanish suffix *-ear* on chromatic-denoting roots produce, by default, telic predications allowing resultativity, telicity indicators, endpoint, maximality, completion (3a), and adjectival passives (3b). Thus, they support the idea that the aspectual properties of deadjectival DAs follow from the scalar structure lexicalized in the root (Hay et al. 1999, Winter 2006, Kennedy and Levin 2008).[2]

(3)   a. *Blanquear*   *completamente/totalmente.*[3]
√white-EAR   completely/totally
'To whiten completely/totally' (=turn completely white)

b. *Camisas*   *blanqueadas*
shirts   √white-EAR.PPT.3PL
'Whitened shirts'

Brazilian Portuguese derivational grammars (Rio-Torto et al. 2016) describe *amarele (j)ar, negrejar, verde(j)ar* as causative-transitive resultative verbs as well. Verbs like *branque(j)ar* resemble Spanish in this sense (e.g., *Está encardido, tem de esfregar muito para branquear* 'It's filthy, you have to scrub hard to whiten [it]'). Yet, dictionaries and native speakers surveyed seem to associate *verde(j)ar* or *amare(j)lar* with different (stative, nonresultative) properties resembling Catalan counterparts shown in the next section.

3. CATALAN

Studies on Catalan *–ejar*, such as Oltra and Castroviejo (2013), show that, unlike Spanish and Portuguese, *-ejar* verbs yield monadic occurrences showing stative-like properties. These authors analyze these instances as inherently caused changes of state describing nonresultative *stative attributions of a property* (Oltra and

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[2]Similar properties are nonetheless present in Spanish verbs formed by other verbalizers, like zero (regardless of *-en/em-* or *-a* prefixation; e.g., *agrisar* 'to turn grey') and *-ecer* (*enrojecer* 'redden', *ennegrecer* 'blacken'), where verb telicity is correlative to (lexicalized) boundedness of the scale. These verbs also have properties expected from COS DAs, such as not allowing underspecified or null objects (Levin and Rappaport 2010, a.o.).
[3]This applies to both *qualitative* (degree on scale of wholly-perceived item) and *quantitative* (theme-part coverage) senses.

Castroviejo 2013: 132). They report a systematic behaviour with *-ejar* forms on similar (colour) roots.[4]

(4) a. *La   carn   ja   rosseja: aviat serà   cuinat.*
        the   meat   already   √crimson-EAR.3s soon be.FUT   cooked
        'The meat is already (≈starting to get) crimson(ish), it will be done soon'

    b. *El   blat   grogueja/verdeja*
       the   wheat   √yellow-EAR.3s/√green-EAR.3s
       'The wheat is (turning) yellow(ish)/green(ish)'

Although the behaviour advanced by Oltra and Castroviejo is evident, there seems to be a nontrivial ambiguity in certain colour-rooted verbs. According to dictionaries, corpus data and the judgment of Catalan native speakers, a telic, transitive change-of-state predication like (5a) is possible, and genuinely distinct from atelic (stative, non-resultative) monadic variant claimed for (5b). Hence, even if Oltra and Castroviejo's stative readings are natural, verbs like *blanquejar* 'whiten' in (7) – as well as *rossejar* 'redden' and others – can also yield the causative alternation and variable telicity seen in Spanish deadjectivals above. Partitive (*ne*) cliticization supports a common unaccusative frame for monadic guises (8); however, stative uses can be told apart from antipassive ones based on other facts, such as not allowing external causation nor middle constructions, as opposed to the monadic (transitive-alternant) variant, and as a logical consequence of their noncausative structure.

(5) a. *Ha   blanquejat   la   camisa.*
        have.3s   √white-EAR.PPT   the   shirt
        '[he/she/it] whitened the shirt'

    b. *La   camisa   blanqueja.*
       the   shirt   √white-EAR-3s
       'The shirt is white(ish)'   ATELIC STATIVE
       'The shirt whitens (becomes white)'   (VARIABLE) TELIC DEGREE ACHIEVEMENT

(6) *(els dents)   Es   blanquejan   fàcilment /amb   diòxid de clor.*
     the teeth   INCH/PAS   √white-EAR.3PL   easily /with   dioxide of chlorine
     '(the teeth) whiten easily/with chlorine dioxide'

(7) *El sol   li   rosseja   els   cabells.*
     the sun   DAT   √crimson-EAR.3s   the   hairs
     'The sun makes her hair crimson' (Lit. 'The sun crimsons her hair')

(8) ***En** blanquegen   unes quantes,   de camises   (amb clor).*
     PART √white-EAR.3PL   some many   of shirts   (with chlorine)
     'Among shirts, some are (going) white-ish (with chlorine).'

This alternative in event and argument structure realization readily accommodates otherwise puzzling behaviours like variable (in)compatibility with perfective tenses

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[4]Spanish allows a similar use of the verb *amarillear* (√yellow-EAR) in the sense of 'grow yellow(ish)'. However, (i) this use does not extend to other roots nor Spanish variants; and (ii) similar properties hold for a distinct derivation (*amarill**ecer***).

(e.g., (5a) and (24)) correlated with the distribution of antipassive morphology (*se*-clitic in (9), attested also by Oltra and Castroviejo).

(9) *La camisa (s')ha   blanquejat.*
   the shirt   INCH-have.3S   √white-EAR.PPT
   'The shirt whitened'   INCHOATIVE
   #'The shirt has gone white(ish)'   STATIVE

A caveat therefore arises. Unlike what has been previoulsy assumed, several Catalan varieties could allow a nontrivial alternation in event type and meaning which is not seen in Spanish (5a–b). In Catalan, however, the alternative and the consequent structural contrast remain morphologically opaque.

(10) a. *La camisa   (es)   blanqueja.*
        (Catalan)
        the shirt   is   √white-EAR.3S
        'The shirt is going white(ish)'   ATELIC STATIVE
        'The shirt whitens (becomes white)'   CLITICIZED=TELIC DEGREE ACHIEVEMENT

    b. *La camisa   *(se)   blanquea.*   (Spanish)
        the shirt   INCH   √white-EAR-3S
        *'The shirt is going white(ish)'   ATELIC STATIVE
        'The shirt whitens (becomes white)'   TELIC DEGREE ACHIEVEMENT

4. ITALIAN

Italian carries distinct, complex commitments. Transitive/unaccusative uses paralleling Spanish, and the Portuguese and Catalan cases, are possible. They yield eventive, change-of-state predications with variable telicity (see M. Rasia 2021).

Nonetheless, Italian -*eggiare* is generally limited to the production of intransitive verbs lacking all the expected properties of colour-rooted DAs. These verbs fail to license internal arguments and lack change-of-state (COS) denotation. More important, they show stat(iv)e behaviour, contrasting with the mixed eventive-stative behaviour seen in Catalan monadic variants analyzed by Oltra and Castroviejo. This has two key consequences. On the one hand, Italian -*eggiare* yields 'deadjectival' verbs that do not convey scalar change, even if they are building on gradable-property-denoting roots, as in (19). Also, they do not enter the causative alternation, given their argument structure (unergative) and aspectual type (eventless predication) (next). The eventive, causative deadjectival – that is, the semantic and syntactic type corresponding to Spanish -*ear* in (2) and the Catalan alternate in (5) – obtains, instead, via different morphology (zero, -*ificar*, -*esc*), hence yielding a nontrivial alternation where derivational options depending upon the choice of verbalizer correlate with maximally distinct semantic and syntactic structures.

(11) a. *biancheggiare, verdeggiare, nereggiare, rosseggiare, gialleggiare*

       √white-EAR.INF   √green-EAR.INF   √BLACK-EAR.INF   √red-EAR.INF
       'be white(ish)'   'be green(ish)'   'be black(ish)'   'be red(dish)'
       √yellow-EAR.INF
       'be yellow(ish)'

b. *sbiancare,   inverdire,   annerire,   arrossare,   ingiallire*
 EN-√white.INF EN-√green.INF EN-√black.INF EN-√red.INF EN-√ yellow.INF
 'whiten'   '[turn] green' 'blacken'   'redden'   '[turn] yellow'

Italian is also dinstinct in that it contributes empirically clearer results, with several widely-studied tests for split intransitivity which are partially unavailable in other Romance languages like Spanish and, to a lesser extent, Catalan (which allows partitive-cl).[5] As expected, these tests reveal maximally divergent patterns, with *-eggiare* forms showing typical unergative behaviour – namely, auxiliary (*avere*) distribution in (12). Argument structure alternations involving internal-argument-licensing are also disallowed (13), correlating with *se-marking* (or the absence thereof). This is important as the clitic *si* is associated with inchoativity in the causative alternation, but also with passive, middle, and reflexive structures in Romance – that is, transitivity-dependent constructions. This contrasts with Spanish (see (14)) where passive, impersonal and middle readings are natural in cliticized EAR forms, unlike Italian occurrences.

(12) a. { ***ha/*è}*** *rosseggiato   /   verdeggiato   /   biancheggiato   /   gialleggiato.*
        has/is   √red-EAR.PPT   √green-EAR.PPT   √white-EAR.PPT   √yellow-EAR.PPT
    b. *{*ha/è}   arrossito   /   inverdito   /   sbiancato   /   ingiallito.*
        has/is   EN-√red.PPT   EN-√green.PPT   EN-√white.PPT   EN-√yellow.PPT

(13) a. *Questo *(si)   sbianca /   arrossa / inverdisce, / ingiallisce*
        this   INCH/PAS/RFL EN-√white.3s   EN-√red.3s EN-√green.3s   EN -√yellow.3s
        'This whitens, reddens, becomes green, becomes yellow'

    b. *Questo (*si)   biancheggia / rosseggia / verdeggia / gialleggia*
        this INCH/PAS/RFL √white-EAR.3s √red-EAR.3s √green-EAR.3s √yellow-EAR.3s
        'This looks white/red/green/yellow(ish)'

As a result, Spanish homogenous patterns for different deadjectival verbs (distinct verbalizers), noted above, contrast sharply with the divergent patterns seen in Italian (14b) , where unaccusative vs. unergative behaviour generally correlates with verbalizer choice (as in (12)).

(14) a. ****(si) arrossa   /   *(si) sbianca   /   (*si) biancheggia***   (Italian)
    b. **(se) enrojece /   *(se) ⁇enblanquece   /   *(se) blanquea*   (Spanish)
       INCH EN -√red.3s   INCH EN-√white.3s   INCH √white-EAR.3s

Additional tests support an unexpected – i.e., unergative – structure in Italian counterparts. As anticipated, *-eggiare* verbs are not often found in middle constructions (15), fail passivization (16), and, unlike in Catalan (see the constructions reported by Oltra and Castroviejo, in (9)), disallow ne-cliticization (17). Verbs formed by combining the same roots with different *(zero/-esc)* verbalizers are fine in these contexts, yielding the expected COS, transitive, eventive type.

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[5]Oltra and Castroviejo (2013) admit that the unaccusativity of Catalan stative-like variants is yet unclear, especially since few specific tests are available.

(15) a. *La pelle   (si) {arrossisce   /   *rosseggia} facilmente.*
the skin   INCH en.√red(-esc).3s   √red.EAR.3s easily
'The skin reddens/*looks red(ish) easily'

b. *Questa alga (si) {inverdisce / *verdeggia}   rapidamente/senza problemi.*
this seaweed INCH EN-√green-3s √green-EAR-3s quickly/without problems
'This seaweed turns green/*looks green(ish) quickly/smoothly'

(16) a. *Lo zucchero di canna grezzo non **è stato** {sbiancato   /   *biancheggiato}.*
the sugar of cane raw   not is been en.√ white.PPT   √white.EAR.PPT
'Brown cane sugar has not been whitened/*has not been looked white(ish)'.

b. *Le coperture sono stati {inverditi / *verdeggiati} **attraverso l'impiego di piante**.*
the roofing   are   been EN.√green.PPT   √green.EAR.PPT through the-use of plants
'The roofing has been greened up/*looked green(ish) with the use of plants'

(17) ***Dalle parti in plexiglass***, *ne {sbiancano/ *biancheggiano}   quelle in*
of-the parts in plexiglass PART EN-√ white.3PL √white.EAR.3PL   those in
gomma/plastica.
rubber plastic
'Among the parts (made of) plexiglass, those in rubber/plastic whiten/*look white(ish)'

The significant divergence as a result of language-specific grammatical processes – notably, the role of each verbalizer in each subsystem of verb derivation and the derivational choices available – is particularly important here, especially since the lexical base (i.e., the root) remains invariable across very different instantiations. The asymmetry gains theoretical and empirical relevance in the case of Romance, since the availability of such alternatives points to structural (i.e., VP-internal configuration) differences in languages sharing Latin-inherited derivational morphology (Cockburn 2012, a.o.), and are generally seen as grammatically similar. These types of contrasts are not often considered in the literature on Romance verb formation, especially the trivial vs. crucial status of the derivational choice in Spanish and Italian illustrated in (12) to (17), although they bear direct implications on argument structure in deadjectival verbs and aspect.

Moreover, unergative deadjectival verb formation is a phenomenon rarely discussed in the traditional construction(al)ist literature. The existence of this class is a major problem for influential theories on verb formation (e.g., Hale and Keyser 2002, Harley 2005, Ramchand 2013), and a yet underexplored option in lexically-driven approaches (e.g., Kennedy and Levin 2008, Levin and Rappaport 2010). One of the problems is that, for example in Hale and Keyser (2002) and Harley (2005), argument structure follows from the category (on a structural definition) of the base. Ideally, transitive-unaccusative COS verbs like *redden* result from incorporating an 'adjectival' root at the base of the VP configuration, while unergative configurations should obtain from noun-incorporation instead. By systematically producing unergative verbs from 'adjectival' roots, Italian forms raise a pressing theoretical question in this respect.

There are also serious implications concerning semantic accounts. Namely, Italian could challenge the assumption that in deadjectival verbs, roots associated with gradable bounded scales yield inherently telic verbs (Hay et al. 1999, a.o.), which is the pattern reflected by Spanish variants (see (3)). If, for deadjectival verbs, (a)telicity (and, presumably, resultativity) is expected to follow as a direct result of the type of scale lexicalized in the root (especially with colour-denoting bases (see Levin 1993, and McNally 2011 on English), one could expect deadjectivals sharing a lexical root to show similar aspectual properties. Yet Italian breaks up this relation by yielding stative, eventless patterns: -*eggiare* forms are not felicitous with endpoint adverbials.[6] Similarly, the *for-x-time* modification, if admitted (i.e., if timespan adverbials do occur at all with -*eggiare*), yields the reading expected in pure statives; that is, a temporal frame on a state homogeneously extending *for x time*, thus indicating for how long the property holds of the referent, as in (18).

(18) *{biancheggiare / rosseggiare}   {^{??}**per un'ora** /#in un'ora /#completamente}.*
√white-EAR.INF √red-EAR.INF   for an-hour in an-hour completely
'Look white/red(ish) (^{??}for an hour/#in an hour/#completely)'

(19) *Il cielo   rosseggia   {[#]molto/[#]poco/[#]abbastanza}.*
the sky   √red-EAR.3S   *a lot   little   enough*
[#]'The sky looks very/a bit/quite red(dish)'
! 'The sky looks red(ish) for much/little/enough time.'

(20) *Ha {smesso/*finito}   di   biancheggiare.*
has stopped finished   of   √white-EAR.INF
'[it] has stopped/*finished looking white(ish)'
(compare with :)
Ha {smesso/ finito}   di   sbiancare/si)
has stopped/finished   of   EN-√white (INCH)
'[it] stopped/finished whitening (up)'

Unlike Catalan, Portuguese, and Spanish occurrences, these Italian verbs do not necessarily describe an event(uality) (a scalar change) progressing over time (DA). Hence, degree adverbials fail to mark scalar progression (see (24b)); but only mark a degree of property statively attributed to the subject, as (19) shows. This follows from the absence of change-of-state denotation proposed.[7] Similarly, in combining

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[6]Stativity tests like imperative formation and imperfective entailments give positive results; yet they require additional clarifications given the oddity of Italian EAR variants in perfective and progressive tenses, which is, in turn, another common indicator of stativity (see (24)).

[7]Further observations not discussed here obtain, as even atelic deadjectivals on non-bounded scales (e.g., *schiarire* 'to lighten') can generate the entailment that a particular end-state is reached under certain conditions. In variable-telicity (transitive) verbs (DAs), endstate entailment is defined by comparison with prior states of the same token (the 'become A-er' sense discussed by Declerck; see Kearns 2007, a.o.). In Italian, even if both variants are atelic, the behaviour of Italian -*eggiare* deadjectivals is consistent with eventless (change-less), nonscalar stativity, vs. the resultative, atelic scalar increase and resultativity in COS (zero-derived) verbs, but also unlike Catalan 'stative' – i.e., Davidsonian – variants with parallel morphological composition (i.e., -*ejar* alternates).

with verbs like *stop* but not with culminative/resultative verbs like *finish* (see Rothstein 2004, a.o.), Italian variants contribute further stative patterns (see Dowty 1979).

Thus, Italian variants contrast with the traditional characterization of (colour-based) deadjectival verbs (see Levin and Rappaport 2010). The patterns shown by Italian are of further interest to studies on stativity (e.g., Maienborn 2008, Rothmayr 2009), as they offer further evidence of a finer-grained distinction between two distinct (stative) types of predication, illustrated in the next section.

5.   ITALIAN AND CATALAN: DISTINCT STATIVE TYPES

In Catalan, stative *-ejar* uses license three types of elements: (a) locative/temporal, (b) manner and (c) progression adverbials (22). This suggests not only a certain eventive status but also a sense of incremental scalarity, shown, namely, by the value difference in *yellowness* returned by the inceptive adverbial in (24a). This value difference is crucial as it replaces the notion of change over the course of an event in order to capture DA properties and different facts more accurately (Deo et al. 2013). These, along with internal-argument-licensing, are two properties crucially missing from Italian equivalents.

Italian counterparts are odd in progressive tenses (#*La camicia stava gialleggiando* ($\sqrt{}$yellow-EAR.GER) 'The shirt was looking yellow(ish)') and disallow location in space, manner, or progression adverbials, as in (23) and (19b)). Moreover, they show the expected behaviour in *pure* states (Rothmayr 2009: 29, a.o.), as opposed to *statives* with mixed eventive-stative properties (known as Davidsonian Statives), which allow such combinations, as in (22) (Maienborn 2008, Rothmayr 2009). Mixed eventive-stative (Davidsonian) behaviour in Catalan in turn explains adjuncts like those in (21a), with entailment patterns following the one expected for eventive forms entailing change of state (21b), consistent with the sense of progression and gradability/ scalarity returning value difference in (21c). Crucially, the pattern in (21a) passes the tests used to identify stative-like DA occurrences (Gawron 2009) – that is, somehow expressing a difference in the value of this argument over a contextually given ordered domain (Deo et al. 2013).[8]

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[8]See M. Rasia (2021) on how data dovetail with Deo et al.'s 2013 axial cumulativity condition for stative degree achievement. Satisfactory combination with the adverb *gradually* and progressive morphology would confirm the INCREASE component and clear DA status (Gawron 2009) in Catalan stative monadics. The semantic difference is also supported by syntactic configuration. Whereas Catalan stative-progressive forms point to unaccusativity (Oltra and Castrovienjo 2013 and tests within); in Italian, auxiliary distribution, tense restrictions (generic tenses only), lack of causative/middle alternation, inchoative *se,* and *ne*-cliticization – as discussed above – indicate that absence of eventivity/COS correlates to absence of theme (unergative).

(21) a. *El prat   grogueja*   *en avançar l'estació/amb la calor/cap al Nord*
the lawn   √yellow-EAR-3s   in advance the-season/with the heat/towards North
/al'horitzó.
/at-the horizon
'The lawn goes yellow as the season advances/with the heat/ Northwards/in the horizon'

b. *El blat   està   groguejant.*   ⇒   *El   blat   ha   groguejat.*
the wheat   is   √yellow-EAR.GER   the   wheat   has   √yellow-EAR.PPT
'The wheat is going yellow(ish)'   ⇒   The   wheat   has   gone yellow(ish)'

c. *La camisa   ha   groguejat   una   mica.*   (Oltra and Castroviejo 2013)
the t-shirt   has   √yellow-EAR.PPT   a   bit
'The t-shirt has gone a bit yellow(ish)'.

This distinction is not only consonant with Oltra and Castroviejo's description of Catalan verbs as Davidsonian statives, but it also accounts for the asymmetric distribution in (22–23). A refined view of DA and the possibility of certain eventivity in predicates with stative-like properties is key.

(22) a. *Aquest vi agreja / aspreja **en el paladar**.*   (Catalan)
(Oltra and Castroviejo 2013: (43))
'This wine goes bitter / sharp in my palate.'

b. *El cel fosqueja **(naturalmente/usualment/com sempre)**.*
'The sky darkens (naturally/in the usual way/as always)'

c. *Els faigs **gradualment** groguegen i s'oxiden.*
'The beeches gradually grow yellow(ish) and oxidate'

(23) a. *I pomodorini datterini rosseggiano **(#sul balcone)**.*   (Italian)
'The date tomatoes look red(ish) [#]on the balcony'

b. *Il bosco verdeggia **(#omogeneamente/#naturalmente/#gradualmente)**.*
'The forest looks green(ish) [#]homogeneously/[#]naturally/[#]gradually'

This contrast, as well as the alternation suggested above, would also be helpful to explain that the occurrence of Catalan forms in perfective tenses may not be as restricted as initially assumed (see (24)). Note the coherent contrast in morphological and adverbial marking indicating progress or change (25). Conversely, both progressive periphrases and graduality adjuncts are odd in Italian.

(24) a. *La camisa ha groguejat   una mica **#(des de la primera rentada)**.*   (Catalan)
the shirt   has   √yellow-EAR.PPT   a bit   from of the first wash
'The t-shirt has gone yellow(wish-er) #(since the first wash)'

b. *La camicia [??]ha gialleggiato   un po' (**#dal** primo lavato)*.   (Italian)
the shirt   has yellow-EAR.PPT   a bit   from the first wash
'The t-shirt has looked yellow(ish) (#since the first wash).

(25) a. *El blat va grogejando (gradualment)*.   (Catalan)
'The wheat is (gradually) going yellow(ish)'
b. [#]*Il vetro stà nereggiando (#gradualmente)*.   (Italian)
'The glass is (gradually) looking black(ish)'

The choice of a gloss (and approximate translation) building on a verb like *to go* or *to grow* in Catalan stative variants ("go.yellow", Oltra and Castroviejo 2013) is not trivial (recall (5), (22) and (24)); it reflects a sense of incremental scalarity supported by the distributional asymmetries in specific aspectual tests on eventivity and stat(iv) es seen above. Specifically, Catalan data seem to suggest that incrementality and scalarity in Davidsonian statives are possible, raising a problem worth bringing into the discussion. The description of the stative verb's basic denotation in terms of 'a formal *approaching* relation' (Oltra and Castroviejo 2013: 150) is consistent with this idea. This would, however, not apply to Italian alternates, which do not seem to be generally associated with ingressive or incremental scalar values. Thus, Italian verbs systematically fail tests for scalarity and gradability (Levin and Rappaport 2010), such as comparative, superlative, and degree modification, as (26) illustrates.[9] This crosscut is also predicted under the distinction between stative (Davidsonian vs. pure eventless) types.

(26) a. *La camisa {cada dia grogueja més / grogueja més que la samarreta}.* (Catalan)
           the t-shirt each day √yellow-EAR.3s more √yellow-EAR.3s more than the jacket
           'The t-shirt {goes yellower each day/ is turning yellower than the jacket}'

      b. *La camicia (??ogni giorno) gialleggia /   ingiallisce   (#più).* (Italian)
           the t-shirt each day   √yellow-EAR.3s √yellow-EAR.3s more
           'The t-shirt looks yellow(ish) (#more) each day'

Hence, two important differences arise, insofar as Italian verbs yield an eventuality (state) that may extend over a limited time span (recall (18)) but not one that evolves or progresses over time, thus neutralizing the aspectual relevance of (the scale lexically coded in) the Root as a natural structural result (no COS denotation, no internal-argument-licensing).[10] Given these syntactic and semantic conditions, Italian verbs could also challenge other assumptions; namely, that verbs building on these lexical bases ('colour verbs') generally involve external causation (Levin 1993; Levin and Rappaport 1995: 95) or causative readings (Harley 2009: 329); or, further, that they produce clear-cut result verbs (Levin and Rappaport 2014: 337) or DAs. Catalan (see Oltra and Castroviejo 2013: 136) and Italian stative *-ejar/-eggiare* variants, however, are similar in that they generally resist causativization, with the necessary proviso that this holds only for stative variants, especially in light of evidence like (7) and the alternative illustrated in (5).

(27) *Les   taques   {*groguegen   /^ok engroguixen}   el paper.* (Catalan)
       *Le   macchie   {*gialleggiano   /^ok ingialliscono   la carta.* (Italian)
       the   stains   √yellow-EAR.3PL   √yellow.3PL   the paper
       'The stains were {{*going_(Cat)/*looking_(It)}yellow(ish)/^ok turning the paper yellow.}'

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[9]In the few examples found, the quantifier marks the degree of whiteness in two distinct moments in time, in a stage-level kind of estimation (e.g., O*ggi biancheggia molto meno di un secolo fa* 'Nowadays, it looks less white than a century ago').

[10]The kind of atelicity and nonresultativity produced is hence different in each case (see M. Rasia 2021).

Finally, there is the fact that Italian verbs show unergative patterns, while Catalan counterparts, according to Oltra and Castroviejo, instead behave as unaccusatives. This, if correct, is crucial, as it means that Italian yields a maximal contrast in aspect and argument structure reflected by the choice of derivational morphology, with change-of-state and eventive-like behaviour correlating with split transitivity and clitic (*se-ne*) distribution. In turn, Catalan retains an(other) important relation in which scalarity and transitional (change) denotation go hand in hand with internal-argument licensing (28), and where a difference in external-argument licensing (transitive vs. unaccusative frames) correlates with full eventivity (proper COS events vs. Davidsonian states), yet somehow, it uniformly involves an affected theme. Eventive patterns like progressive and perfective tenses thus seem to depend on transitivity (dyadicity). On the one hand, Italian dramatically contrasts by giving pure state noncausative, nonresultative (changeless, scalarless) patterns correlated with unergative frames.

(28) *Estava   blanquejant   *(diners negre).*   (Catalan)
      be.3s.IMP   √white-EAR-GER   money   black
      '(He) was laundering money' (Lit.) '(He) was whitening black money'

On the other hand, Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese *-ear/-ejar* data, together with the relative triviality of choice of verbalizer, point to two subsequent conclusions. First, that an important alternative in argument and event structure like the one seen in Italian is unavailable. Second, that the notion of transitivity, change-of-state denotation, and eventivity as constant properties of deadjectivals works better as a sweeping generalization for these two Romance languages. Even if Catalan nevertheless allows such properties in some instances, also allowing for an eventive vs. stative option, it still fails to reflect the alternation which is derivationally transparent and nontrivial in Italian (see (11) vs. (2)).

Finally, it may be worth noting that French, and European Portuguese, apparently allow the stative atelic alternative in unergative patterns.[11] Yet, productivity is limited, in contrast to the quantitative and qualitative regular productivity noted in Italian and, to a lesser extent, in Catalan.

(29) a. *blanchir/blanchoyer,*   *rougir/rougeoyer,*   *verdir/verdoyer,*
          (French)
          EN-√white /√white-EAR   EN-√red /√red-EAR   EN-√green/√green-EAR
          noircir/*noiroyer,   *bleuir/*bleuoyer,*   *empourprer/*pourproyer*
          EN-√black/√black-EAR   EN-√blue/√blue-EAR   EN-√purple /√purple-EAR

      b. *sbiancare/biancheggiare,*   *arrossare/rosseggiare,*   *inverdire/verdeggiare,*
          (Italian)
          EN-√white /√white-EAR   EN-√red /√red-EAR   EN-√green/√green-EAR
          annerire/nereggiare,   *azzurrare/azzurreggiare,* *imporporare/proporeggiare*
          EN-√black/√black-EAR   EN-√blue/√blue-EAR   EN-√purple/√purple-EAR

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[11]Finer-grained studies on split (in)transitivity in Romance languages suggest that verbs like French *rougir* ('to redden, to blush') are not core unaccusatives, in the gradient determined by auxiliary distribution (see Sorace 2000). Similar considerations seem to apply to French *rougeoyer* ('to glow'. Further analysis will be needed to corroborate whether parallels with Italian or Catalan apply.

In conclusion, a major contribution of the Catalan vs. Italian contrast proposed in this section touches on scalarity in statives. Apparently, (incremental) scalarity is dependent on certain eventivity. This sets a clear but generally undebated contrast between stative – Davidsonian vs. pure (completely eventless, Kimian-like) – types (see Maienborn 2008, a.o.). By describing a change in the value of a scalar property over time vs. some other (nontemporal) domain, the opposition would empirically connect with recently claimed distinctions between eventive and non-eventive flavors of scalarity and change (see Rappaport 2021) and more comprehensive approaches on DA denotation.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I have argued the following: First, that the derivational alternative seen in Italian defines a consistent crosscut in event and argument structure, with (non)eventivity correlating with (a)transitivity. Second, that a relatively similar structural option is either collapsed under the same morpheme (as in Catalan), or unavailable in other Romance languages (such as Spanish), in both cases rendering an opaque derivational choice. Third, by systematically producing **unergative**, change-of-state**-less** verbs from 'adjectival' roots (specifically, those designating properties like colours), Italian poses an empirical problem and a theoretical question not only for mainstream theories of lexical syntax and verb formation, but also for lexically-driven approaches which also fail to predict (or, at least, discuss) this possibility. If correct, Romance – and, especially, Italian – data support the need to revisit and, ultimately, refine, nontrivial syntactic and semantic generalizations on deadjectival verbs and verb formation that have been circulating in the literature for the last few decades.

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