

RECONSIDERING STATIVE PREDICATIONS, THEIR BEHAVIOUR AND CHARACTERISTICS

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Concerning their aspectual profile, stative predications do not form an unvarying category. Conversely, they constitute a complex and heterogeneous aspectual class. In fact, the situations that traditionally are labelled “states” exhibit a great variability in their linguistic behaviour patterns, which reveal significant dissimilarities at their internal temporal structure. This is particularly noteworthy in languages like Portuguese, in which the distinction between *ser* (‘be’) and *estar* (‘be’) plays an important role in the aspectual interpretation of sentences.

The main goal of this paper will be, therefore, to provide a reclassification for the different kinds of stative predications, trying to establish linguistic criteria that make possible to justify the validity of such distinctions.

In this way, we will depart from a discussion of the well-known criteria suggested by Dowty (1979) in order to distinguish states from events, showing that some of them are clearly inadequate for this purpose.

In order to solve this problem, we will follow the hypothesis that there are several subclasses of statives, characterized by specific aspectual properties, which explain the above-mentioned differences. We will make use, in particular, of the distinctions between individual-level and stage-level predicates (cf. Carlson (1977), Chierchia (1995), Kratzer (1995) and between phase and non-phase states (cf. Cunha (1998), (2004)).

Finally, we will suggest some criteria that can really describe the opposition that arises between states and events, justifying the maintenance of this distinction in the framework of the aspectual classes of predicates description.

1. Dowty criteria and the Heterogeneity of Stative Predications

Dowty's analysis was one of the first efforts to establish purely linguistic criteria in order to distinguish states from the other aspectual classes of situations. Departing from ideas developed, among others, by Vendler (1967), Dowty presents a categorization of eventualities predominantly based on differences at the linguistic behaviour of the predications supporting them.

Dowty suggests the following "tests" in order to distinguish states from events:¹

A. Only non-statives are unproblematically compatible with the Progressive (cf. (1) vs. (2)-(4)):

(1) * O João está a ser alto. (state)

'The João ESTARPres to SER tall'

'João is being tall'

(2) O João está a dançar. (process)

'The João ESTARPres to dance'

'João is dancing'

(3) O João está a comer a maçã. (culminated process)

'The João ESTARPres to eat the apple'

'João is eating the apple'

(4) O João está a abrir a porta. (culmination)

'The João ESTARPres to open the door'

'João is opening the door'

B. In "normal" contexts, only non-statives require a frequentative or a habitual reading with the simple present tense (the Presente do Indicativo, in languages like Portuguese); statives, under the same conditions, receive preferentially a "real present" interpretation (cf. (5) vs. (6)-(8)):

¹ We will use here the terminology proposed by Moens (1987) who classifies eventualities into states, processes, culminated processes, culminations and points.

- (5) O João é alto neste momento / * habitualmente. (state)
 ‘The João SERPres tall in this moment / habitually’
 'João is tall right now / habitually'
- (6) O João dança # neste momento / habitualmente. (process)
 ‘The João dancePres in this moment / habitually’
 'João dances right now / habitually'
- (7) O João come a maçã # neste momento / habitualmente. (culminated process)
 ‘The João eatPres the apple in this moment / habitually’
 'João eats the apple right now / habitually'
- (8) O João abre a porta # neste momento / habitualmente. (culmination)
 ‘The João openPres the door in this moment / habitually’
 'João opens the door right now / habitually'

C. Only non-statives can occur as imperatives (cf. (9) vs. (10)-(12)):

- (9) * João, sê alto! (state)
 ‘João, SERImper tall!’
 'João, be tall!'
- (10) João, dança! (process)
 ‘João, danceImper!’
 'João, dance!'
- (11) João, come a maçã! (culminated process)
 ‘João, eatImper the apple!’
 'João, eat the apple!'
- (12) João, abre a porta! (culmination)
 ‘João, openImper the door!’
 'João, open the door!'

D. Only non-statives occur as complements of agentive verbs like *forçar* ('force') or *persuadir* ('persuade') (cf. (13) vs. (14)-(16)):

- (13) * O João persuadiu o irmão a ser alto. (state)
 ‘The João persuadePPerf the brother to SER tall’
 'João persuaded his brother to be tall'

(14) O professor proibiu o João de dançar. (process)

'The teacher forbidPPerf the João from dance'

'His teacher forbade John from dancing'

(15) A mãe forçou o João a comer a maçã. (culminated process)

'The mother forcePPerf the João to eat the apple'

'His mother forced João to eat the apple'

(16) Os policiais obrigaram o João a abrir a porta. (culmination)

'The policemen forcePPerf the João to open the door'

'The policemen forced João to open the door'

E. Only non-statives co-occur with agentive adverbials like *deliberadamente* ('deliberately') or *voluntariamente* ('voluntarily') (cf. (17) vs. (18)-(20)):

(17) * O João foi alto voluntariamente. (state)

'The João SERPPerf tall voluntarily'

'João was tall voluntarily'

(18) O João dançou deliberadamente. (process)

'The João dancePPerf deliberately'

'João danced deliberately'

(19) O João comeu a maçã propositadamente. (culminated process)

'The João eatPPerf the apple purposely'

'João ate the apple purposely'

(20) O João abriu a porta intencionalmente. (culmination)

'The João openPPerf the door intentionally'

'João opened the door intentionally'

F. Only non-statives appear in pseudo-cleft sentences of the form "O que X fez foi..." ("What X did was...") (cf. (21) vs. (22)-(24)):

(21) * O que o João fez foi ser alto. (state)

'The what the João doPPerf SERPPerf SER tall'

'What João did was be tall'

(22) O que o João fez foi dançar. (process)

'The what the João doPPerf SERPPerf dance'

'What João did was dance'

(23) O que o João fez foi comer a maçã. (culminated process)

'The what the João doPPerf SERPPerf eat the apple'

'What João did was eat the apple'

(24) O que o João fez foi abrir a porta. (culmination)

'The what the João doPPerf SERPPerf open the door'

'What João did was open the door'

If we look more carefully at the above-mentioned “tests”, however, we will conclude that most of them are not able to provide an adequate distinction between events and states. In fact, if there are many statives that behave in accord with Dowty’s predictions, others exist that cannot be subsumed under these criteria. Thus, states like the one presented in (25)-(30) not only occur unproblematically in the Progressive (cf. (25)) but can also be found in agentive contexts like those in (26)-(29) and may be interpreted habitually (cf. (30)), although they are also perfectly compatible with a “real present” reading:²

(25) O João está a ser amável.

'The João ESTARPres to SER kind'

'João is being kind'

(26) João, sê amável!

'João, SERImper kind!'

'João, be kind!'

(27) A sua namorada pediu ao João para ser amável.

'The his girlfriend askPPerf to the João to SER kind'

'His girlfriend asked João to be kind'

(28) O João foi deliberadamente amável com a sua namorada.

'The João SERPPerf deliberately kind to the his girlfriend'

'João was deliberately kind to his girlfriend'

(29) O que o João fez foi ser amável.

'The what the João doPPerf SERPPerf SER kind'

'What João did was be kind'

² As a consequence, Dowty (1979) is lead to consider the (in)existence of changes of state as the unique criterion effectively suitable to distinguish states from all the other classes of situations.

(30) O João é amável neste momento / habitualmente.

‘The João SERPres kind in this moment / habitually’

‘João is kind right now / habitually’

These observations forced Dowty to reanalyse his characterisation of stative predications, leading him to a redefinition of the aspectual category of states.

Taking into account that, as Dowty himself refers, the main function of the Progressive is to assert the truth of a given eventuality – whose non-progressive form can only be ascribed to an interval – in a unique moment of time, statives like the one referred to in (25)-(30) must be true with respect to intervals and not at instants: if their truth-value were evaluated at each of the instants that they occupy, the Progressive would be automatically ruled out since its use would be completely irrelevant (i.e., the progressive and non-progressive forms would describe one and the same thing: the truth of the situation with respect to a moment of time). In this view, we can say that, concerning their internal temporal constitution, those states are very close to processes in that the differences distinguishing these two kinds of eventualities seem to be very weak in such contexts (cf. section 3).

On the other hand, Dowty re-evaluates the status of his own “tests” for stativity, taking into account that, in any way, all aspectual classes (including states) can behave agentively or non-agentively. Such observations determine a reorganization of his classification for aspectual entities, as we can see in the systematisation he proposes (cf. Dowty (1979), pp. 184). The compatibility of stative predications with clearly agentive constructions can be confirmed by examples like (26)-(29) above.

Another important proposal made by Dowty, to which we will return in section 2, respects the extension of the opposition between individual-level and stage-level predicates (cf. Carlson (1977)) to the domain of stative predications. In this way, Dowty distinguishes the states that predicate directly over objects, that is, states that describe longer or shorter intervals of time at which a given individual holds, from states that predicate over stages, that is, states that are restricted to slices of time at which some portion of a given individual holds. In the course of their existence, individuals can occupy a number of distinguishable intervals that we will call stages.

In light of some of these problems, Dowty (1979) suggests a reformulation for the classification of the stative predications. In fact, he recognises the existence of three different kinds of states: interval states, whose truth value is evaluated only with respect

to intervals of time (and never with respect to any of the instants that constitute them)³, characterized by the compatibility with the Progressive operator; stage-level momentary states, which, although dependent on intervals, are necessarily true at all instants compounding them; and, finally, object-level momentary states, which predicate over all the moments characterizing a given individual or object.

In this way, we can recognise two main criteria underlying the classification Dowty proposes for stative predications: one predominantly related with their temporal internal constitution, distinguishing states that are true at intervals from those that are true at instants of time; the other having to do with the nature of the entities that are predicated, distinguishing states that predicate directly over individuals from those that apply only to their temporal limited portions, i.e., to their stages.

Although Dowty explicitly offers a first subclassification for statives, thus recognising their heterogeneity, he leaves some important questions unsolved. We refer the following:

- What linguistic tests enable us to distinguish unquestionably the different subclasses of states?
- Which semantic properties determine such linguistic behaviours?
- Given the inadequacy of most of the tests proposed by Dowty (1979) for this purpose, how can we establish a difference between states, on the one hand, and events, on the other?

In the following sections, we will look for some answers to these questions.

2. Individual-level vs. Stage-level States

As we have already said, the opposition between individual-level and stage-level predicates plays an important role with regard to the classification of states and to their linguistic behaviour. Departing from the analysis developed by Carlson (1977), Dowty

³Note that, typically, in the most part of the formalization efforts that take temporal notions in order to characterize aspectual classes, the evaluation of the truth value of a situation according to intervals or to the set of instants constituting them is frequently evoked to model the distinction between processes and states (cf. Bennett and Partee (1978), Bennett (1981)). In this sense, we can say that the subclass of interval statives, as Dowty presents it, seems very close to this definition of processes. We will return to these remarks, in a different perspective, in section 3.

(1979), Kratzer (1995) and Chierchia (1995), among others, study the influence of such property in different contexts involving stative predications.

Individual-level predicates apply directly to the entities they combine with, expressing essentially permanent or stable properties. This means that, in some way, the characteristics associated with an individual-level predicate accompany the entities they are attributed to along their temporal and spatial existence.

Stage-level predicates, on the other hand, establish with their accompanying individuals an obligatorily indirect relationship, since they express only spatio-temporal limited characteristics. Thus, we can say that they describe transitory or episodic properties, strictly dependent on shorter or longer intervals of time.

Taking all these facts into account, Kratzer (1995) argues that stage-level predicates must always be accompanied by an argumental position specifying a given spatio-temporal location, contrasting with individual-level predicates, which should not include such an argumental position in their formal representation, since, as we have seen, they apply directly to the individuals they predicate on.⁴

Generally speaking, we can define a stage as a temporally well-established and perfectly delimited “portion” of some individual. This means that a stage represents a specified part of an entity, characterizing it at the spatio-temporal level.

Based on Kratzer and Chierchia’s proposals, we suggest the following linguistic criteria in order to distinguish individual-level from stage-level statives in languages like Portuguese:⁵

- A. Only stage-level states combine freely with all kinds of durational and locating temporal adverbials (cf. (31)-(32) vs. (33)-(34)):

(31) Ontem / no Sábado, a Maria esteve contente. (stage-level state)

‘Yesterday / on the Saturday, the Maria ESTARPPerf happy’

‘Yesterday / on Saturday, Maria was happy’

⁴ It is not surprising, thus, that only statives can describe individual-level predicates: being the only eventualities that are not constituted by successive phases, they can persist indefinitely in time, in contrast with events, which are inherently restricted by the conditions associated to their internal constitution. Stage-level predicates, however, can be eventive or stative, given that both classes support easily an intrinsic or extrinsic temporal delimitation.

⁵ Note that some of the criteria for the distinction between individual-level and stage-level predicates developed by Chierchia (1995) and Kratzer (1995) do not apply to languages like Portuguese. It is the case, for instance, of the there-sentences test or the bare plural in subject position test. We will, therefore, ignore them here.

(32) A Maria teve febre durante três dias. (stage-level state)

‘The Maria havePPerf fever for three days’

‘Maria had fever for three days’

(33) * Ontem / no Sábado, a Maria foi Portuguesa. (individual-level state)

‘Yesterday / on the Saturday, the Maria SERPPerf Portuguese’

‘Yesterday / on Saturday, Maria was Portuguese’

(34) * A Maria soube latim durante três dias. (individual-level state)

‘The Maria knowPPerf latin for three days’

‘Maria knew Latin for three days’

B. Stage-level statives co-occur, in the most part, freely with locatives, contrasting with individual-level predicates, which show strong restrictions in those contexts (cf. (35)-(36) vs. (37)-(38)):

(35) A Maria esteve contente na escola. (stage-level state)

‘The Maria ESTARPPerf happy in the school’

‘Maria was happy at school’

(36) A Maria teve febre em casa da avó. (stage-level state)

‘The Maria havePPerf fever in home of the grandmother’

‘Maria had fever at her grandmother’s home’

(37) * A Maria foi portuguesa na escola. (individual-level state)

‘The Maria SERPPerf Portuguese in the school’

‘Maria was Portuguese at school’

(38) * A Maria soube latim em casa da avó. (individual-level state)

‘The Maria knowPPerf Latin in home of the grandmother’

‘Maria knew Latin at her grandmother’s home’

C. Only stage-level statives may occur with punctual adverbials, leading to a reading in which we typically obtain the inclusion of the adverbials into the time of the situation accompanying them (cf. (39)-(40) vs. (41)-(42)):

(39) A Maria esteve contente às cinco horas (stage-level state)

‘The Maria ESTARPPerf happy at the five hours’

‘Maria was happy at five o’clock’

(40) A Maria teve febre às duas da manhã. (stage-level state)

‘The Maria havePPerf fever at the two of the morning’

‘Maria had fever at two o’clock in the morning’

(41) * A Maria foi portuguesa às cinco horas. (individual-level state)

‘The Maria SERPPerf Portuguese at the five hours’

‘Maria was Portuguese at five o’clock’

(42) * A Maria soube latim às duas da manhã. (individual-level state)

‘The Maria knowPPerf Latin at the two of the morning’

‘Maria knew Latin at two o’clock in the morning’

D. Only stage-level statives may be quantified by expressions like *sempre que* (‘whenever’), *todas as vezes que* (‘every time’), etc. (cf. (43)-(44) vs. (45)-(46)):

(43) Sempre que está contente, a Maria canta. (stage-level state)

‘Whenever that ESTARPres happy, the Maria singPres’

‘Whenever she is happy, Maria sings’

(44) Todas as vezes que está com febre, a Maria toma uma aspirina. (stage-level state)

‘Every the times that ESTARPres with fever, the Maria takePres an aspirin’

‘Every time she has fever, Maria takes an aspirin’

(45) * Sempre que é Portuguesa, a Maria vai a Lisboa. (individual-level state)

‘Whenever that SERPres Portuguese, the Maria goPres to Lisbon’

‘Whenever she is Portuguese, Maria goes to Lisbon’

(46) * Todas as vezes que sabe latim, a Maria traduz um texto. (individual-level state)

‘Every the times that knowPres Latin, the Maria translatePres a text’

‘Every time she knows Latin, Maria translates a text’

The above-mentioned criteria derive fairly from the different properties defining the two kinds of predicates under analysis: the fact that individual-level statives apply directly to the entities they predicate on, and not to any of their spatio-temporal slices, difficulties their occurrence with structures that, in some way, imply spatio-temporal restrictions, as locating and measuring adverbials, locatives and punctual adverbials. Moreover, quantifying expressions like *whenever* or *every time*, which clearly quantify

over spatio-temporal limited periods, can only be combined with stage-level predicates, excluding, as expected, individual-level ones.

If the opposition between stage-level and individual-level predicates describes adequately the temporal contrasts just mentioned, it cannot explain satisfactorily some configurations in which statives assume the characteristic pattern of events, that is, in which aspectual factors play the essential role. In particular, we are talking about the co-occurrence of statives with aspectual operators that require “processuality” features at the input level, as the Progressive or *começar a* (‘begin’) (cf. (47)-(48)), or their appearance in structures exhibiting a successive reading between situations, be it in the context of when-clauses (cf. (49)) or in linear ordered discourses (cf. (50)):

(47) A Maria está a ser simpática.

‘The Maria ESTARPres to SER nice’

‘Maria is being nice’

(48) A Maria começou a ser simpática.

‘The Maria beginPPerf to SER nice’

‘Maria began being nice’

(49) Quando o Pedro lhe pediu ajuda, a Maria foi simpática.

‘When the Pedro her askPPerf help, the Maria SERPPerf nice’

‘When Pedro asked her help, Maria was nice’

(50) O Pedro pediu ajuda. A Maria foi simpática e emprestou-lhe dinheiro.⁶

‘The Pedro askPPerf help. The Maria SERPPerf nice and lendPPerf him money’

‘Pedro asked her help. Maria was nice and lent to him some money’

An essentially temporal opposition, such as the one between stage-level and individual-level predicates, is not sufficient, by itself, to provide adequate answers to the different questions raised by the above examples. A reclassification of stative predications, which explicitly takes into account the role played by aspectual properties, seems to be needed in these cases.

⁶ Note that the relevant reading associated with examples like these is the exclusively temporal one; we will ignore, thus, other interpretations, such as the causal one, which require a differentiated treatment (cf. the proposals developed by Lascarides and Asher (1993)).

In the following section, we will investigate a hypothesis that, we think, will shed some light on the intriguing process-like behaviour of an important set of states.

3. Phase vs. Non-Phase States

It is very interesting to point out that, in appropriate contexts, some statives behave like events, i.e. they follow the pattern that is traditionally invoked in the literature to characterise the aspectual class of processes. Thus, we observe that those states, like event situations, occur unproblematically with aspectual operators that select an eventive or processual “input” – it is, for instance, the case of the Progressive or of *começar a* (‘begin’) – and allow a successive reading in the context of when-clauses and linear ordered discourses (cf. Dowty (1979), Vlach (1981), Kamp and Rohrer (1983), among others).

In order to accommodate such unusual behaviours, Cunha (1998)-(2004) proposes the inclusion of the idea of “phaseability” in the general conception of stative predications: due to the possibility of integration in the Aspectual Network proposed by Moens (1987), some states, which were labelled phase-states, can be coerced into processes, incorporating, in this way, the feature [+dynamic], which, typically, identifies the different kinds of events.

It is important to point out that the inclusion in the Aspectual Network – and, consequently, the coercion into events – is restricted to a limited number of statives, those we labelled phase-states, not being available for all the elements of this set of eventualities. Those states that cannot integrate the Aspectual Network, being, thus, prevented from acquiring eventive characteristics, will be called non-phase states.

Taking into account the above discussion, we postulate the existence of another property underlying the class of statives: phaseability. Phase-states will be those states that can integrate the Aspectual Network and thus reveal an event-like behaviour, in that they are coerced into processes; non-phase states, in contrast, have not this property, behaving always and consistently as stative situations, independently of their context of occurrence.

The criteria we suggest in order to distinguish these two subclasses of states are the following:

- A. Only non-phase statives are completely incompatible with aspectual operators requiring a dynamic input, such as the Progressive or *começar a* ('begin') (cf. (51)-(52) vs. (53)-(54)):

(51) A Rita está a viver na Holanda. (phase-state)

'The Rita ESTARPres to live in the Netherlands'

'Rita is living in the Netherlands'

(52) O meu cão começou a ser agressivo. (phase-state)

'The my dog beginPPerf to SER aggressive'

'My dog started being aggressive'

(53) * O João está a ter olhos azuis. (non-phase state)

'The João ESTARPres to have eyes blue'

'João is having blue eyes'

(54) * O meu casaco começou a ser verde. (non-phase state)

'The my coat beginPPerf to SER green'

'My coat began being green'

- B. Only non-phase states are completely impossible, in the Pretérito Perfeito tense, occurring in the main clauses of temporal constructions introduced by *quando* ('when') with a preferential successive reading (cf. (55)-(56) vs. (57)-(58)):

(55) Quando saiu de Portugal, a Rita viveu na Holanda. (phase-state)

'When leavePPerf from Portugal, the Rita livePPerf in the Netherlands'

'When she left Portugal, Rita lived in the Netherlands'

(56) Quando encontrou o ladrão, o meu cão foi agressivo. (phase-state)

'When findPPerf the thief, the my dog SERPPerf aggressive'

'When it found the thief, my dog was aggressive'

(57) * Quando chegou à escola, o João teve olhos azuis. (non-phase state)

'When arrivePPerf to the school, the João havePPerf eyes blue'

'When he arrived at school, João had blue eyes'

(58) * Quando eu o vesti, o meu casaco foi verde. (non-phase state)

'When I it dressPPerf, the my coat SERPPerf green'

'When I dressed it, my coat was green'

- C. Only non-phase statives, in the Pretérito Perfeito tense, cannot be admitted in sequences of linearly ordered discourses exhibiting a successive reading (cf. (59)-(60) vs. (61)-(62)):⁷

(59) A Rita casou-se com o João. Viveu na Holanda durante dois anos. (phase state)

‘The Rita marryPPerf herself with the João. LivePPerf in the Netherlands for two years’

‘Rita married João. She lived in the Netherlands for two years’

(60) Eu levei o meu cão ao veterinário. Ele foi agressivo e mordeu-lhe a mão. (phase-state)

‘I takePPerf the my dog at the doctor. It SERPPerf aggressive and bitPPerf his hand’

‘I took my dog to the doctor. It was aggressive and it bit his hand’

(61) * O João chegou à escola. Teve olhos azuis. (non-phase state)

‘The João arrivePPerf at the school. HavePPerf eyes blue’

‘João arrived at school. He had blue eyes’

(62) * Eu vesti o meu casaco. Ele foi verde. (non-phase state)

‘I dressPPerf the my coat. It SERPPerf green’

‘I dressed my coat. It was/has been green’

- D. Only non-phase statives lead to semantic anomaly when they are combined with expressions that convey habituality (cf. (63)-(64) vs. (65)-(66)):

(63) A Rita vive habitualmente na Holanda. (phase-state)

‘The Rita livePres usually in the Netherlands’

‘Rita lives usually in the Netherlands’

(64) O meu cão é habitualmente agressivo. (phase-state)

‘The my dog SERPres usually aggressive’

‘My dog is usually aggressive’

(65) * O João tem habitualmente olhos azuis. (non-phase state)

‘The João havePres usually eyes blue’

⁷ Note that the use of the Imperfeito tense, leading to the reading in which the state includes the event, is perfectly acceptable with both phase and non-phase states.

'João has usually blue eyes'

(66) * Este casaco é habitualmente verde. (non-phase state)⁸

'This coat SERPres usually green'

'This coat is usually green'

As we have just said, the linguistic criteria that identify phase-states correspond, in some extent, to those describing the behaviour exhibited by events in general and, in particular, by processes. The following sentences, involving the above-mentioned aspectual class, confirm our assumption:

(67) A Maria está / começou a chorar.

'The Maria ESTARPres / beginPPerf to cry'

'Maria is / began crying'

(68) Quando o pai a deixou na escola, a Maria chorou.

'When the father her leavePPerf in the school, the Maria cryPPerf'

'When his father left her at school, Maria cried'

(69) O Pedro insultou a Maria. Ela chorou.

'The Pedro insultPPerf the Maria. She cryPPerf'

'Pedro insulted Maria. She cried'

(70) A Maria chora habitualmente / todos os dias.

'The Maria cryPres habitually / every the days'

'Maria cries habitually / everyday'

In view of the examples just mentioned, we may ask in which respects phase-states really differ from processes, in order to be considered true stative constructions. Or, in other words, which linguistic criteria enable us to distinguish states from events? We will address this problem in the following section.

⁸ We must stress, however, that, given the data we have analysed, it is not easy to determine if this test applies to the distinction between phase and non-phase states or to the opposition between individual-level and stage-level predicates. In fact, European Portuguese speakers seem to recognise this criterion for the two possibilities mentioned and the data are not conclusive in this respect, being very difficult to decide for one or the other of the hypotheses exploited here. We suggest, however, that the habitual reading test can function, at least partially, as a valid criterion for the two possibilities under discussion, in virtue that, in most of the cases, they are indissociably related.

4. States vs. Events

We have already seen that, in appropriate circumstances, there exist some states that behave like processes. We have argued, however, that these structures are basically stative, being their eventive behaviour the result of the application of some coercion possibilities in the Aspectual Network that lead to their change into processes.

In order to validate this kind of analysis, however, it will be necessary to find out some criteria that enable us to identify the class of statives in its own right, distinguishing it clearly from events. Concerning languages like Portuguese, the tests that seem to be operative in this respect are the following:

- A. Only states, in the Presente do Indicativo tense (simple present), exhibit a preferential reading expressing a “real present” meaning, i.e., a purely temporal locating interpretation, although some of them, in appropriate contexts, admit also a habitual reading (cf. (71)-(73) vs. (74)):

(71) A Maria é alta neste momento / * habitualmente. (state)

‘The Maria SERPres tall in this moment / habitually’

‘Maria is tall right now / usually’

(72) A Maria é simpática neste momento / habitualmente. (state)

‘The Maria SERPres nice in this moment / habitually’

‘Maria is nice right now / usually’

(73) A Maria está contente neste momento / (??) habitualmente. (state)

‘The Maria ESTARPres happy in this moment / habitually’

‘Maria is happy right now / usually’

(74) A Maria canta # neste momento / habitualmente. (process)

‘The Maria singPres in this moment / habitually’

‘Maria sings right now / usually’

- B. Only states, in the Imperfeito tense, receive an exclusively temporal reading; events, on the contrary, lead almost always to habitual or semi-progressive interpretations (cf. (75)-(77) vs. (78)):

(75) Em 1999, a Maria era alta. (state)

‘In 1999, the Maria SERImp tall’

‘In 1999, Maria was tall’

(76) Em 1999, a Maria era simpática. (state)

‘In 1999, the Maria SERImp nice’

‘In 1999, Maria was nice’

(77) Em 1999, a Maria estava contente. (state)

‘In 1999, the Maria ESTARImp happy’

‘In 1999, Maria was happy’

(78) Em 1999, a Maria cantava (habitualmente / muitas vezes) (process)

‘In 1999, the Maria singImp (habitually / many times)’

‘In 1999, Maria sang (habitually / many times)’

C. Only states, embedded in subordinate sentences introduced by temporal *quando* (‘when’) – even combined with the Pretérito Perfeito –, or include the events occurring in the main sentence or lead to semantic anomaly; events, in similar conditions, favour a successive reading (cf. (79)-(81) vs. (82)):

(79) * Quando foi alta, a Maria jogou basquetebol. (state)

‘When SERPPerf tall, the Maria playPPerf basketball’

‘When she was tall, Maria played basketball’

(80) Quando a Maria foi simpática, os seus amigos ajudaram-na. (state)

‘When the Maria SERPPerf nice, the her friends helpPPerf her’

‘When Maria was nice, her friends helped her’

(81) ? Quando esteve contente, a Maria cantou e dançou. (state)

‘When ESTARPPerf happy, the Maria singPPerf and dancePPerf’

‘When she was happy, Maria sang and danced’

(82) Quando a Maria cantou, todos a elogiaram. (process)⁹

‘When the Maria singPPerf, everybody her praisePPerf’

‘When Maria sang, everybody praised her’

⁹ Note that, typically, while in (80) we have an inclusive reading, i.e., the period of time in which Maria was nice precedes and, in principle, goes beyond the interval in which their friends helped her, in (82) succession is, undoubtedly, the preferred relationship between the two clauses: all praised Maria only after she had sung.

D. Only states (and culminations) are completely incompatible with aspectual operators like *acabar de* ('finish') and *parar de* ('stop') (cf. (83)-(85) vs. (86)):

(83) * A Maria parou / acabou de ser alta às 5 horas. (state)

'The Maria stopPPerf / finishPPerf from SER tall at the five hours'

'Maria stopped / finished being tall at five o'clock'

(84) * A Maria parou / acabou de ser simpática às 5 horas. (state)

'The Maria stopPPerf / finishPPerf from SER nice at the five hours'

'Maria stopped / finished being nice at five o'clock'

(85) * A Maria parou / acabou de estar contente às 5 horas. (state)

'The Maria stopPPerf / finishPPerf from ESTAR happy at the five hours'

'Maria stopped / finished being happy at five o'clock'

(86) A Maria parou / acabou de cantar às 5 horas. (process)

'The Maria stopPPerf / finishPPerf from sing at the five hours'

'Maria stopped / finished singing at five o'clock'

Examples like those we have just presented support the claim that it is important to distinguish clearly states from events. In fact, we have found linguistic characteristics that in principle are common to all subclasses of states.

The above-mentioned criteria provide evidence that, irrespectively of the subclass they belong to, all statives seem to share a common semantic behaviour. This leads us to consider them as pertaining to a consistent and unique aspectual category, that of states, although, in many respects, as we have pointed out in sections 2 and 3, they may diverge significantly.

5. Characterizing Properties of Stative Predications

Until now, we have primarily concentrated on the linguistic behaviour exhibited by stative predications. It is, however, also important to look at the properties that give rise to the main dissimilarities we have found. Thus, we will briefly discuss the features that enable us to identify the different subclasses of statives and the role they play in their semantic characterization.

5.1. The Subinterval Property

Traditionally, states are considered completely homogeneous eventualities. That means that any subinterval of a given state, including all the moments constituting it, preserves integrally its basic characterizing properties, i.e., represents a state of exactly the same type. As a consequence, gaps are completely excluded from stative predications.

If such claim seems to be somehow unproblematic concerning the gaps inherent to habitual states, because, following Cunha (2004), as aspectual “perspectivizers”, these configurations may preserve some of the properties of the basic situations with which they are combined, it cannot be extended to sentences like the ones presented below:

(87) A Lígia esteve triste durante todo o fim-de-semana.

‘The Lígia ESTARPPerf sad for the whole weekend’

‘Lígia was sad for the whole weekend’

(88) O Pedro esteve em casa da avó durante as férias de Natal.

‘The Pedro ESTARPPerf in home of the grandmother for the holidays of Christmas’

‘Pedro was at his grandmother’s home for the Christmas holidays’

(89) Esteve frio durante o Inverno passado.

‘ESTARPPerf cold for the Winter before’

‘It was cold last winter’

Intuitively, it is reasonable to think that the truth value of the sentences in (87)-(89) is not radically affected by the presence of some gaps along the states described: thus, the sentence in (87) can be considered true even if there were stretches of time included in the referred weekend in which Lígia was not sad (for instance, while she was sleeping); similar remarks are extensive to the other examples: (88) can receive a positive truth-value even if Pedro was not at his grandmother’s home in all the moments constituting the period corresponding to the Christmas holidays. Likewise, the sentence in (89) will retain its truth-value unchanged even if some of the days making up the last winter interval were not cold ones.

Contrary to the predictions made by some influential proposals, (e.g. Vendler (1967), Dowty (1979), Bennett and Partee (1978)), we will say that not all stative are obligatorily true with respect to the total sum of their constitutive moments. In fact, we have found examples in which states admit the presence of gaps along their course, although they seem to remain true stative predications in their own right.

From the above discussion, we can conclude that the subinterval property, by itself, is manifestly inadequate in order to identify stativity, although, as we will see, it is an important feature concerning the characterization of some of the stative subclasses, namely, that of individual-level states.

In connection with these problems, we must answer two fundamental questions:

- 1- Which properties can really be evoked in order to distinguish states from events?
- 2- What is, after all, the role played by the subinterval property in the domain of stative predications?

A suitable answer for these questions requires a more close discussion about the concept of homogeneity. It is what we will attempt in the following section of this paper.

5.2. Homogeneity vs. Uniformity

Taking into account that the strict temporal homogeneity cannot be invoked to identify stativity, as we have pointed out in the last section, it is essential to determine what properties characterize, then, the aspectual class of states, distinguishing it from all other categories of eventualities.

We will propose that the notion of uniformity meets the adequate conditions to describe satisfactorily the principal differences between states and events. We will, in turn, clarify this concept, showing how it can solve the problems we are facing now.

Firstly, it is important to define, as clearly as possible, the borderline that divides states from processes (remember that processes are those events that, concerning their aspectual features, are more intimately related to stative predications).

Although they exhibit, until a certain limit, a relative degree of homogeneity, processes can never be considered a homogeneous class in absolute terms, because, as

pointed out, among others, by Dowty (1979), Parsons (1990) or Smith (1991, 1999), these events reveal, let's say, a "molecular" internal temporal organization, that is, the minimal portions characterizing them form a subatomic structure, beyond which their typical properties are substantially altered. Or, in other words, processes are constructed with minimal discrete units, beyond which homogeneity is simply impossible.

Thus, following this point of view, we will say that, for instance, walk and run are constituted by sequences of discrete steps, swim by movements of the body in the water, talk by vocal articulations, breath by inspirations and expirations, and even sleep by sleeping cycles, etc.

This means that processes are obtained by the cyclic recurrence of successive subphases. We can thus say that processes are, in essence, events, that is, dynamic situations, showing an intrinsic phase structure leading to significant modifications of the initial state of affairs.

States, on the other hand, are completely uniform situations, in that they do not support any intrinsic aspectual modification. This means that, in principle, we will never find significant alterations concerning the internal constitution of the eventualities at issue. In this sense, we can say that the above-mentioned aspectual class points to a certain "permanency" or "immutability" of the states of affairs it describes.

Concerning their aspectual profile, states behave, thus, as completely continuous and uniform situations, showing no subphases or relevant subeventualities that, in any way, could be detached from the state as a whole.

Notice that, as we have demonstrated, phase-states can be ascribed an aspectual behaviour very close to that of processes. This could lead one to think that uniformity does not meet the requirements to identify states as such and, therefore, could not be considered an adequate property to distinguish states from events.

However, as we have said before, the eventive behaviour associated with phase-states results from their previous coercion into processes. Thus, in the relevant contexts, we are dealing with derived events and not with basic states. This will enable us to explain some violations of the uniformity property shown by this kind of eventualities without being forced to give up from considering it a valid feature with respect to the distinction between states and events.

Summing up, it seems reasonable to conclude that, although they support gaps at their temporal structure, violating, thus, the principle of temporal homogeneity in the strict sense of the term, states differ from events (and particularly from processes) in

that they are absolutely uniform, i.e., they do not support any differentiable subphases along their course (although, as we have said, a number of them admits the presence of some alterations, thanks to the coercion possibilities allowed by the Aspectual Network, assuming, in this case, the status of derived processes).

Uniformity will be taken, therefore, as a necessary and sufficient condition for the identification of the presence of stativity features.

Departing from the above discussion, we will propose, basically, the existence of three different conceptions of homogeneity:

- A traditional conception, in the line of proposals like Vendler's (1967) or Dowty's (1979), in which homogeneity is conceived as the possibility of preservation of the identity and of all the properties characterizing a given situation when it is subjected to divisibility or to cumulativity.
- An essentially temporal conception of homogeneity, in which this term denotes the course of a situation without any alterations, including interruptions or gaps, in all moments that constitute the interval it occupies, identifiable, in a certain way, with the so-called subinterval property.
- A fundamentally aspectual conception of homogeneity, which we have labelled uniformity, referring to the absence of any kind of aspectual modification along the course of a given situation, that means, complete lack of successive phases in the internal structure of an eventuality.

Following this line of thought, it becomes clear that, in order to characterize adequately all the subclasses of stative predications, we must take into account, besides the traditional wider concept of homogeneity, as presented by Vendler (1967), two autonomous and perfectly distinct types of homogeneity: the first one, exhibiting a strictly temporal character, is identified with the impossibility of the occurrence of gaps in the course of an eventuality; the second one, eminently aspectual in nature, which we have labelled uniformity, is related to the non-existence of successive phases in the course of an eventuality, i.e. the non-existence of identifiable subeventualities in the temporal constitution of the main situation.

The traditional concept of homogeneity is involved in the distinction between states and processes, on the one hand, and culminated processes and culminations, on the other. The first two kinds of situations can be subdivided (at least until a certain

limit, in the case of processes) preserving their basic characteristics, i.e., without any modification of their identifying properties; the last two aspectual classes, in turn, lose their defining characteristics whenever they are subdivided.

Temporal homogeneity seems to establish the division between individual-level and stage-level states. In fact, only individual-level predicates match perfectly all the requirements of the subinterval property, as the following examples prove:

(90) A Maria foi alta durante dez anos.

‘The Maria SERPPerf tall for ten years’

‘Maria was tall for ten years’

(91) Os meus cortinados foram brancos durante seis anos.

‘The my curtains SERPPerf white for six years’

‘My curtains were white for six years’

(92) O João foi rico durante toda a sua vida.

‘The João SERPPerf rich for whole the his life’

‘João was rich for the whole of his life’

In order for a sentence like (90) to describe a true state-of-affairs, it is necessary that Maria has been tall for all the moments constituting the period corresponding to ten years. Similar remarks can be extended to the other two sentences in (91) and (92): the relevant situations must be true at all temporal stretches (including moments) that constitute the intervals they occupy, that is, this kind of states does not allow the presence of any gaps along its course.

Sentences like the ones in (90)-(92), containing individual-level states, contrast with those represented in (87)-(89), which, as shown, although describing stative situations, do not respect integrally the subinterval property. The variable in issue, here, seems to be the opposition between individual-level and stage-level predicates: only individual-level predicates conform to the subinterval property and, hence, may be considered temporally homogeneous, in the strict sense of the term.

Finally, as we have tried to clarify in the present section, aspectual homogeneity, also labelled uniformity, seems to be responsible for the distinction between states and events, since states, unlike events, do not support subphases or subeventualities in their internal temporal structure.

We would even suggest that, in some ways, the notions of uniformity and strict temporal homogeneity we have described refine and elucidate Vendler's original idea of homogeneity, which integrates, without explicitly distinguishing them, the two concepts just mentioned. Notice that the proposal we have made has the advantage of pointing to a clear distinction between two different perspectives in the analysis of predications – Tense and Aspect – enabling us to evaluate the role played by each of them in the structure and profile of the different kinds of eventualities.

We will define the two concepts under analysis in the following way:

- Homogeneity is a strict temporal notion that refers to the impossibility of the emergence of any gaps or interruptions along the course of the interval in which a given situation holds.
- Uniformity is a mainly aspectual notion that refers to the complete absence of subphases or subeventualities at the internal structure of a given situation.

The distinction we have just made is closely related to the opposition between phase and stage, at which we will look more carefully in turn.

5.3. Phase vs. Stage

The above discussion about the need for distinguishing a strict temporal notion of homogeneity from an essentially aspectual one, which has been labelled uniformity, sheds some light on the nature and relevance of the concepts of phase and stage, which we have been using informally since the beginning of our paper. Let's look at them more closely now.

Taking into account the differences with respect to linguistic behaviour observed in the domain of states, it is obvious that we must distinguish temporal factors from aspectual ones whenever we want to provide a subclassification for situations and, in particular, for stative predications.

We will assume that a “stage” is an essentially temporal concept (eventually revealing now and then an aspectual flavour), which designates a limited temporal portion of time, a simple bounded interval whose duration is perfectly defined or established.

On the other hand, we will assume that a “phase” is a predominantly aspectual notion (eventually associated with temporal information, even being responsible for some temporal effects), which designates a characterizing and identifiable portion of an eventuality, capable of producing significant changes in the course of the state-of-affairs in which it occurs. A phase will then be a parcel that is responsible for some kind of transformational dynamics in the course of a situation, an aspectually relevant element in the internal structure of the situation it is involved in.

We now synthetically present the concepts of phase and stage in light of the notions of temporal homogeneity and uniformity:

- A stage is an essentially temporal concept, which designates a perfectly circumscribed interval of time, with well-defined boundaries. A completely homogeneous situation has no identifiable stages.
- A phase is a predominantly aspectual concept, which designates a relevant period of time with respect to the change of the eventuality profile it is involved in. A completely uniform situation has no phases along its internal temporal structure.

The concepts we have just defined play a crucial role concerning the distinctions made along the two initial sections of this paper. Let’s look briefly at the influence displayed by the notions of phase and stage with respect to the subclassification of stative predications.

The behaviour exhibited by stage-level states – in particular, their ability of occurring with locating and durational temporal adverbials, as well as the possibility of being quantified by expressions like *sempre que* (‘whenever’) or *todas as vezes que* (‘every time’) – reflects the fact that they are easily bound and, therefore, temporally quantified. Aspectual properties seem to be almost irrelevant with respect to these criteria.

In contrast, the linguistic performances associated with the property we labelled “phaseability” are related to significant modifications at the aspectual level, changes in the internal temporal profile of statives that lead to event-like behaviours, such as the preferential successive readings in linear ordered sentences or in when-clauses, as well as the co-occurrence with specific aspectual operators like the Progressive or *começar a* (‘begin’), which require a dynamic eventive input (cf. Cunha (1998a,b)).

Remark finally that far from being fully unconnected constituents phases and stages do not behave separately, independently one from the other. On the contrary, they conjoin themselves in a mutual and dynamic interaction, being subjected to a reciprocal and bi-directional influence. This fact will be particularly evident in the behaviour of the different subtypes of statives, as we will try to clarify in the next section.

6. Some Arguments in Favour of the Stative Reclassification

In order to evaluate the plain adequacy of the proposals about the statives' reclassification developed here, it is crucial to exploit some arguments that can support such analysis. Thus, we will try to demonstrate that, at least in languages like Portuguese, it is possible to find predications that are representative of each of the subclasses proposed in sections 2 and 3, obtained from the articulation of the two features responsible for the distinction between individual-level and stage-level statives, on the one hand, and between phase and non-phase statives, on the other. We will next discuss the complex interaction that arises between these two levels of classification. Finally, we will apply our reclassification to an appropriate description of the opposition between *ser* ('be') and *estar* ('be') in predicative contexts.

6.1. The Four Subclasses of Stative Predications

Taking into account the intersection that takes place between the two kinds of opposition proposed in sections 2 and 3 to describe states' linguistic behaviour, we obtain four distinct subclasses of stative predications: individual-level non-phase states; individual-level phase states; stage-level non-phase states and stage-level phase states.

In order to evaluate the soundness of the hypothesis we have presented in this paper it is essential to find predications that can be taken as representative of the above-mentioned four classes of states.

Taking into account the appliance of the linguistic criteria exploited above, we can conclude that it is really the case that we can find examples of the four predicted subclasses of statives, at least in languages like Portuguese. The series of sentences that we give in turn confirms our suppositions:

A. Individual-level non-phase states

- (93) * O carro do Pedro foi espaçoso ontem / no Sábado.
‘The car of the Pedro SERPPerf large yesterday / on the Saturday’
‘Pedro’s car was large yesterday / on Saturday’
- (94) * O carro do Pedro foi espaçoso na Avenida da Boavista.
‘The car of the Pedro SERPPerf large in the Avenida da Boavista’
‘Pedro’s car was large in Avenida da Boavista’
- (95) * O carro do Pedro foi espaçoso às 5 da tarde.
‘The car of the Pedro SERPPerf large at the five of the evening’
‘Pedro’s car was large at five pm’
- (96) * Sempre que o carro do Pedro é espaçoso, ele faz uma grande viagem.
‘Whenever the car of the Pedro SERPres large, he doPres a great trip’
‘Whenever Pedro’s car is large, he goes in a great trip’
- (97) * O carro do Pedro está / começou a ser espaçoso.
‘The car of the Pedro ESTARPres / beginPPerf to SER large’
‘Pedro’s car is / began being large’
- (98) * Quando o Pedro o estacionou, o seu carro foi espaçoso.
‘When the Pedro it parkPPerf, the his car SERPPerf large’
‘When Pedro parked it, his car was large’
- (99) * O Pedro comprou um carro novo. (Ele) foi espaçoso.
‘The Pedro buyPPerf a car new. (It) SERPPerf large’
‘Pedro bought a new car. It was large’
- (100) * O carro do Pedro é espaçoso habitualmente.
‘The car of the Pedro SERPres large habitually’
‘Pedro’s car is usually large’

B. Individual-level phase states

- (101) * A Rita gostou de matemática ontem / no Sábado.
‘The Rita likePPerf DE mathematics yesterday / on the Saturday’
‘Rita liked mathematics yesterday / on Saturday’
- (102) * A Rita gostou de matemática na sala 11.

'The Rita likePPerf DE mathematics on the room 11'

'Rita liked mathematics at room 11'

(103) * A Rita gostou de matemática às 5 da tarde.

'The Rita likePPerf DE mathematics at the five of the evening'

'Rita liked mathematics at five pm'

(104) * Sempre que gosta de matemática, a Rita ajuda os seus amigos.

'Whenever that likePres DE mathematics, the Rita helpPres the her friends'

'Whenever she likes mathematics, Rita helps her friends'

(105) A Rita está / começou a gostar de matemática.

'The Rita ESTARPres / beginPPerf to like DE mathematics'

'Rita is / began liking mathematics'

(106) Quando mudou de professora, a Rita gostou de matemática.

'When changePPerf of teacher, the Rita likePPerf DE mathematics'

'When she got a new teacher, Rita liked mathematics'

(107) A Rita fez os exames. Gostou de matemática e decidiu tirar esse curso.

'The Rita takePPerf the tests. LikePPerf DE mathematics and decidePPerf to do this course'

'Rita took the tests. She liked mathematics and decided to course it'

(108) A Rita gosta de matemática habitualmente.

'The Rita likePres DE mathematics habitually'

'Rita usually likes mathematics'

C. Stage-level non-phase states

(109) A água do mar esteve fria ontem / no sábado.

'The water of the sea ESTARPPerf cold yesterday / on the Saturday'

'Sea water was cold yesterday / on Saturday'

(110) A água do mar esteve fria na Costa Ocidental / a Norte do Cabo da Roca.

'The water of the sea ESTARPPerf cold in the Coast West / at the North of the Cabo da Roca'

'Sea water was cold in the West Coast / North of Cabo da Roca'

(111) A água do mar esteve fria às 5 da tarde.

'The water of the sea ESTARPPerf cold at the five of the evening'

'Sea water was cold at five pm'

- (112) Sempre que a água do mar está fria, eu fico em casa.
 ‘Whenever that the water of the sea ESTARPres cold, I stayPres in home’
 ‘Whenever sea water is cold, I stay at home’
- (113) ??/* A água do mar começou a estar fria.
 ‘The water of the sea beginPPerf to ESTAR cold’
 ‘Sea water began being cold’
- (114) * Quando chegámos à praia, a água do mar esteve fria.
 ‘When arrivePPerf at the beach, the water of the sea ESTARPPerf cold’
 ‘When we arrived at the beach, sea water was cold’
- (115) * Chegámos à praia. A água do mar esteve fria e fomos dar um passeio.
 ‘ArrivePPerf at the beach. The water of the sea ESTARPPerf cold and
 getPPerf for a walk’
 ‘We arrived at the beach. Sea water was cold and we went for a walk’
- (116) (??) A água do mar está fria habitualmente.
 ‘The water of the sea ESTARPres cold habitually’
 ‘Sea water is usually cold’

D. Stage-level phase states

- (117) A Maria esteve indisposta ontem / no Sábado.
 ‘The Maria ESTARPPerf sick yesterday / on the Saturday’
 ‘Maria was sick yesterday / on Saturday’
- (118) A Maria esteve indisposta no centro comercial.
 ‘The Maria ESTARPPerf sick in the center shopping’
 ‘Maria was sick at the shopping center’
- (119) A Maria esteve indisposta às 5 da tarde.
 ‘The Maria ESTARPPerf sick at the five of the evening’
 ‘Maria was sick at five pm’
- (120) Sempre que está indisposta, a Maria toma uma chávena de chá.
 ‘Whenever that ESTARPres sick, the Maria takePres a cup of tea’
 ‘Whenever she is sick, Maria takes a cup of tea’
- (121) A Maria começou a estar indisposta.
 ‘The Maria beginPPerf to ESTAR sick’
 ‘Maria began being sick’

(122) Quando chegou a casa, a Maria esteve indisposta.

‘When arrive_{PP} at home, the Maria ESTAR_{PP} sick’

‘When she arrived home, Maria was sick’

(123) A Maria comeu dois quilos de lagosta. Esteve indisposta e foi levada para o hospital.

‘The Maria eat_{PP} two kilos of lobster. ESTAR_{PP} sick and was taken to the hospital’

‘Maria ate two kilos of lobster. She was sick and she was taken to hospital’

(124) A Maria está indisposta habitualmente.

‘The Maria ESTAR_{Pres} sick habitually’

‘Maria is usually sick’

The different patterns we have just presented suggest – at least with respect to languages like Portuguese – the viability of each of the four subclasses of statives hypothesised above, resulting from the interaction exhibited by the main properties discussed in sections 2 and 3. Thus, we must admit that the distinction between stage-level and individual-level states, on the one hand, and the opposition between phase and non-phase states, on the other, must be thought as perfectly separate properties, acting independently one from the other.

This does not mean, however, that there are no interferences or reciprocal interdependencies between the two characteristics under analysis. In fact, they interact in a very complex way, revealing an unquestionably mutual influence.

One of the most evident interactions that arise between these two features is related with the fact that phase states can be coerced into processes. Given that in principle events are “transitory” or “episodic” situations, describing well-limited properties or relationships, they must be normally integrated in the class of stage-level predicates (cf. Carlson (1977), Kratzer (1995)). This means that a basic individual-level stative when coerced into a process can, in appropriate contexts, exhibit the typical characteristics of this kind of situation, that is, it behaves in some ways as an event, and, therefore, as a (derived) stage-level predicate.

As we will see in turn, these remarks will be of great relevance when we set up a proposal that encodes an adequate treatment for the opposition between *ser* (‘be’) and *estar* (‘be’) in predicative constructions. In this way, we will try to demonstrate that the

subclassification developed here matches satisfactorily with an appropriate description of the phenomenon in issue.

Finally, it is important to stress that the distinctions we have made do not arise in a bipolarised way. In the contrary, they seem to behave as gradual properties. This means that we can easily find statives whose linguistic behaviour alternates between the characterising pattern of individual-level predicates and that of stage-level predicates (cf. (125)-(128)). Similarly, we have states that, at the same time, share properties of non-phase and phase statives (cf. (129)-(132)):

- (125) A Maria esteve casada durante dois anos / ?? ontem / ?? na segunda-feira.
‘The Maria ESTARPPerf married for two years / yesterday / on the Monday’
‘Maria was married for two years / yesterday / on Monday’
- (126) A Maria esteve casada na Holanda / * em casa dos primos.
‘The Maria ESTARPPerf married in the Netherlands / in the home of the cousins’
‘Maria was married in the Netherlands / at her cousins’ home’
- (127) * A Maria esteve casada às 5 da tarde.
‘The Maria ESTARPPerf married at the five of the evening’
‘Maria was married at five pm’
- (128) * Sempre que está casada, a Maria compra uma casa nova.
‘Whenever that ESTARPres married, the Maria buyPres a house new’
‘Whenever she is married, Maria buys a new house’
- (129) * O Zé está a querer um gelado e um bolo.
‘The Zé ESTARPres to want an ice-cream and a cake’
‘Zé is wanting an ice-cream and a cake’
- (130) * O Zé começou a querer um gelado e um bolo.
‘The Zé beginPPerf to want an ice-cream and a cake’
‘Zé began wanting an ice-cream and a cake’
- (131) Quando entrou no café, o Zé quis um gelado e um bolo.
‘When enterPPerf in the coffee shop, the Zé wantPPerf an ice-cream and a cake’
‘When he entered the coffee shop, Zé wanted an ice-cream and a cake’
- (132) O Zé entrou no café. Quis um gelado e um bolo.
‘The Zé enterPPerf in the coffee shop. WantPPerf an ice-cream and a cake’
‘Zé entered the coffee shop. He wanted an ice-cream and a cake’

6.2. *Ser* ('be') vs. *Estar* ('be')

Linguists such as Mateus et al. (1989) support the idea that the distinction between *ser* ('be') and *estar* ('be'), in the predicative context, can be seen as the reflex of the most general opposition between individual-level and stage-level predicates. In this view, structures involving *ser* ('be') would be individual-level and structures involving *estar* ('be') would be stage-level.

This kind of analysis seems, at first glance, very interesting, since it enables us to account for the fact that constructions integrating *ser* ('be') express stable properties, contrasting with constructions involving *estar* ('be'), which point preferentially to episodic situations (cf. (133)-(134) vs. (135)-(136)):

(133) A minha casa é fria.

'The my house SERPres cold'

'My house is cold'

(134) A Maria é loura.

'The Maria SERPres blond'

'Maria is blond'

(135) A minha casa está fria.

'The my house ESTARPres cold'

'My house is cold'

(136) A Maria está loura.

'The Maria ESTARPres blond'

'Maria is blond'

This proposal faces, however, some puzzles that are not easy to solve. Taking into account the different criteria pointed in section 2, we notice that the following examples, although involving *ser* ('be') in their structure, behave like stage-level predicates:

(137) O meu cão foi agressivo ontem / no Sábado.

'The my dog SERPPerf aggressive yestarday / on the Saturday'

‘My dog was aggressive yesterday / on Saturday’

(138) O meu cão foi agressivo no consultório do veterinário.

‘The my dog SERPPerf aggressive in the room of the doctor’

‘My dog was aggressive at the doctor’s room’

(139) O meu cão foi agressivo às 5 da tarde.

‘The my dog SERPPerf aggressive at the five of the evening’

‘My dog was aggressive at five pm’

(140) Sempre que o meu cão é agressivo, eu prendo-o na cozinha.

‘Whenever that the my dog SERPres aggressive, I shutPres it in the kitchen’

‘Whenever my dog is aggressive, I shut it in the kitchen’

The simple adoption of the individual-level vs. stage-level opposition seems to be insufficient in order to account for such examples. Let’s explain why this is so.

If we assume that a sentence like “O meu cão é agressivo” (‘My dog *serPres* aggressive’) expresses a stage-level state, we will be saying, counter-intuitively, that it is, in a certain way, totally equivalent to a sentence like “O meu cão está agressivo” (‘My dog *estarPres* aggressive’). However, Portuguese speakers give to those sentences quite different interpretations: the first one expresses a stable property, while the last one conveys preferably an episodic property.

If, on the other hand, we think of the above-mentioned sentence as expressing an individual-level predicate, we will not be able to explain the behaviour illustrated by the sentences in (137)-(140), which, as we have said, conforms to the stage-level property.

However, if we take seriously into account the interactions that arise between the two classifying parameters applying to stative predications we have discussed along this paper, we will find an elegant solution to this problem.

Note, firstly, that the state represented in a sentence like “O meu cão é agressivo” (‘My dog *serPres* aggressive’) can be easily coerced into a process, i.e., it is a phase state, as the application of the relevant tests confirms:

(141) O meu cão está / começou a ser agressivo.

‘The my dog ESTARPres / beginPPerf to SER aggressive’

‘My dog is / began being aggressive’

(142) Quando os meus amigos entraram em casa, o meu cão foi agressivo.

‘When the my friends enterPPerf in home, the my dog SERPPerf aggressive’

‘When my friends came in the house, my dog was aggressive’

(143) O carteiro entrou no jardim. O meu cão foi agressivo e mordeu-o.

‘The postman comePPerf into the garden. The my dog SERPPerf aggressive and bitPPerf him’

‘The postman came into the garden. My dog was aggressive and bit him’

(144) O meu cão é agressivo habitualmente / todos os dias.

‘The my dog SERPres aggressive habitually / every the days’

‘My dog is usually / every day aggressive’

Departing from the investigation we have pursued in the above sections, we will provide a tentative explanation for the problems posed by examples like (137)-(140).

Taking into account that phase states can assume the typical characteristics of events and that these situations, by themselves, are stage-level predicates, we will propose that it is the “phaseability” inherent to sentences like the ones in (137)-(140) – and not the fact that they describe originally stage-level predicates – the principal responsible for their unexpected behaviour.

Our hypothesis makes possible, on the one hand, to maintain the proposal adopted by Mateus et al. (1989) that says that all predicative constructions involving *ser* (‘be’) correspond, originally, to individual-level predicates, thus enabling us to describe the speakers’ intuitions subjacent to the opposition between sentences like “O meu cão é agressivo” (‘My dog *ser*Pres aggressive’), describing stable properties, and sentences like “O meu cão está agressivo” (‘My dog *estar*Pres aggressive’), describing episodic properties; and, on the other hand, it solves the problem of the stage-level like behaviour of some of the sentences involving *ser* (‘be’), due to the assumption of their previous coercion into processes, making available the emergence of a linguistic derived behaviour in some ways similar to that of stage-level predicates.

7. Conclusion

The predications traditionally conceived of as being stative situations do not constitute a homogeneous aspectual class. In fact, as we have seen, their linguistic behaviour varies significantly. This leads us to consider the requirement of establishing subclasses within the domain of the above-mentioned category.

We tried to prove that the distinctions between individual-level and stage-level predicates, on the one hand, and between non-phase and phase states, on the other, – the first predominantly temporal, the second eminently aspectual – are the two main properties that set up an adequate subclassification for stative predications.

We have also seen that the notions of phase and stage play an important role with respect to stativity, since they enable us to describe appropriately a great number of divergences observed within the different kinds of stative predications. Namely, these two concepts helped us to explain the patterns of occurrence exhibited by *ser* ('be') and *estar* ('be') in predicative contexts in languages like Portuguese.

Finally, we argued in favour of the idea that, although their internal diversity, statives constitute a relevant aspectual class. In fact, we found several important criteria that explicitly identify states, distinguishing them from all the other types of situations, thus unequivocally supporting the traditional opposition between states and events.

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