Grounding grammaticalization paths in contextual constraints:
The *categoricalization*-to-*generalization* process in three varieties of Spanish

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Introduction. The Progressive-to-Imperfective shift has three stages acting cyclically: (1) ***emergence***: a language changes from having only one imperfective marker expressing both *habitual* and *event-in-progress* readings to also recruiting a new marker to optionally express the *event-in-progress* reading, (2) ***categoricalization***: each marker becomes restricted to a mutually exclusive reading, and (3) ***generalization:*** the new marker is reanalyzed as a general imperfective marker thus encroaching into the old marker's domain (e.g., Bybee et al. 1994)

These stages are not clear-cut, and the mechanisms that bring one stage to the next are not well-understood. Currently, Modern Spanish presents two markers that convey *habitual* and *event-in-progress* readings. The Present Progressive marker is the *preferred* form for *event-in-progress* readings (e.g., *Ana está fumando* 'Ana is smoking'), yet, the Simple Present marker (e.g., *Ana fuma (ahora)* 'Ana is smoking now') can still express it, revealing an unfinished ***categoricalization*** process. Conversely, the Simple Present marker is the *preferred* form for the *habitual* reading (e.g., *Ana fuma mucho* 'Ana smokes a lot'), yet the Present Progressive can also express that reading (e.g., *Ana está fumando mucho* 'Ana is smoking a lot'), indicating that a ***generalization*** process is already underway. So, what drives this ***categoricalization-to-generalization*** shift? What are the specific contexts of use that already allow the Present Progressive to convey a *habitual* reading, pushing the shift towards **generalization**?

We test the proposal that the shift to ***generalization*** is driven by contextual constraints rooted in the lexicalized presuppositional content independently associated with *estar*, the auxiliary verb in the Present Progressive marker. *Estar*'s presupposition restricts the prejacent (e.g., *Ana + fumar*), to a specific circumstance of evaluation (Sánchez Alonso et al. 2016, Sánchez Alonso 2018). In doing so, it triggers the construal of alternative situations at which the embedded proposition does not hold. When this marker conveys an *event-in-progress* reading, the contrast is absolute: now vs. "not now". But if a new, *habitual* reading is to arise in this marker, contextual support that enables the construal of alternatives is needed. Why would this more involved, contextually-supported use ever take hold? Greater informativity. The use of Present Progressive-marking (*estar* + V-*ndo*) conveys both the *habitual* reading *and* the consideration of a set of rejected alternatives. This maximizes context-set restriction and proportionally strengthens the informativity of the expression that contains this marker. Overtime Present Progressive-marking becomes preferable to Simple Present-marking, which conveys only the *habitual* meaning. Difference in informational value thus underpins the observed encroaching of Present Progressive-marking over Simple Present-marking.

The Study. We measured the acceptability of these two markers when expressing a *habitual* reading in two types of contexts (Alternative **Supporting** Contexts/Alternative **Neutral** Contexts), across three Spanish varieties: Rioplatense, Mexican-Altiplano, and Iberian (RS/MS/IS). 118 subjects (RS=39/MS=40/IS=39) rated the acceptability of 180 context-sentence pairs on a 1-to-5 Likert scale. A context-sentence pair example is given in Table 1. ***Predictions***. Simple Present-marking will be the preferred form for the *habitual* reading; however, acceptability of Present Progressive-marking will be higher in *alternative-supporting contexts* in contrast to *neutral contexts*. Given the different usage levels of *estar* across Spanish varieties, we also expect different manifestations of the shift across such varieties. That is, variation should be constrained by the grammaticalization path direction. ***Results***. We found an interaction effect of Context*Marker*Dialect (p-values Tukey-corrected). As predicted, all three varieties showed a preference (p < .001) for Simple Present-marking to express *habitual* meaning. Moreover, while RS and IS speakers showed context modulation for Present Progressive-marking, (p < .001) MS speakers did not, allowing for Present Progressive-Marking across contexts (p = .0755). See Table 2 for means (SE), and Figures.

Context	Marker	Sentence
Pedro y Tomás están conversando acerca del clima y las estaciones. 'Peter and Thomas are talking about the seasons and the weather...' **Neutral**: Ambos viven en la Patagonia, y Pedro comenta que allí: Both live in Patagonia, and Peter comments that there: ' **Supporting**: El invierno acaba de comenzar y Pedro comenta que: Winter has just begun, and Peter comments...:'	Present Progressive	**Está anocheciendo** temprano. 'The sun **is setting** early'
	Simple Present	**Anochece** temprano. 'The sun **sets** early'

TABLE 1. SAMPLE STIMULI.

	Simple Present		Present Progressive	
	Supporting Context	Neutral Context	Supporting Context	Neutral Context
RS	4.57 (0.02)		3.98 (0.03)	
	4.54 (0.02)	4.60 (0.02)	**4.62 (0.02)**	**3.34 (0.04)**
IS	4.64 (0.02)		3.53 (0.03)	
	4.64 (0.02)	4.64 (0.02)	**4.17 (0.02)**	**2.88 (0.03)**
MS	4.63 (0.01)		4.33 (0.01)	
	4.64 (0.01)	4.62 (0.01)	**4.35 (0.01)**	**4.31 (0.01)**

TABLE 2. RESULTS. MEANS AND (STANDARD ERROR).

Discussion. Results show that in the presence of a *habitual* reading, Rioplatense and Iberian Spanish speakers are sensitive to whether *estar*'s presuppositional content is contextually satisfied. In contrast, for Mexican-Altiplano Spanish speakers, the use of Present Progressive-marking for the *habitual* reading is not dependent on context support, suggesting that they are satisfying the presupposition on their own.
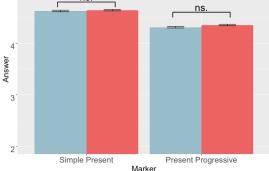
Conclusion. A *generalization* process is already underway in the three varieties. Mexican-Altiplano Spanish seems a step further along the grammaticalization path: Present Progressive-marking is no longer context-dependent. Variation and change appear to be driven by the contrastive informativity strength of the combined lexico-semantic properties associated with this marker (i.e., *estar* + V-*ndo)*.

References. Bybee, J., Perkins, R. & Pagliuca, W. 1994. *The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect, and Modality in the Languages of the World.* Chicago: UCP. / Sánchez Alonso, S. 2018. *The Cognitive Sources of Language Change and Variation: Connecting Synchronic Variation and Diachrony in Spanish Copula Use.* PhD dissertation, Yale University. / Sánchez-Alonso, S., Deo, A., Piñango, M.M. 2016. Copular Distinction and Constrained Variability in Copular Use in Iberian and Mexican Spanish. *U. Penn Working Papers in Linguistics*, 23.1.