

Aspectual uses of saber + INF in (South) American Spanish varieties: a corpus-based study

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In addition to its well-attested modal value, the construction *saber* 'to know' + INF can exhibit aspectual values in certain American Spanish varieties (cf. Kany 1945, Di Tulio 2006, Pfänder 2009, Duque Enríquez 2021). Thus, it can be used to express present or past habituality (1) or, in the preterite form, encode completed events (2).

- (1) a. (El perro) en la calle sabe estar todos los días, salta a las personas, molesta.
'(The dog) is usually in the street every day, it jumps on people, it annoys them.'
(atb.com.bo, esTenTen18)
- b. A veces sabía entrar a las 9:00 de la mañana y salía a las 3:00 de la mañana.
'Sometimes I used to come at 9:00 in the morning and leave at 3:00 in the morning.'
(scielo.org.ar, esTenTen18)
- (2) el barrio albaicin que supo ser asiento de las cortes de los monarcas ziries en el siglo xi.
'the Albaicin neighborhood that was once/became the seat of the courts of the Zirid monarchs in the 11th century.' (1811-2011.edu.uy, esTenTen18)

The aim of the present study is to examine the different functions of this construction in three Spanish varieties (Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia). I conducted a qualitative corpus study using two big corpora of internet texts (blogs, newspapers). Results show that the situated meanings of *saber* + INF are indexed by specific properties of the context (animacy of the subject, perfectivity, adverbial modification) and that the use of the construction as opposed to non-periphrastic forms is motivated by functional differences. Moreover, this study allows me to postulate the hypothesis that the semantic extension of *saber* from the expression of internal-participant to external-participant modality may have constituted a decisive step in the development of aspectual values.

Corpora

esTenTen - Spanish corpus from the web. Available at: <https://www.sketchengine.eu/estenten-spanish-corpus/>
Corpus del Español: Web/Dialects. Available at: <https://www.corpusdelespanol.org/web-dial/>

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