

Conciliating States and Locations: Towards a More Comprehensive and In-depth Account of the Spanish Copula *Estar*.

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Abstract

The case of *estar* may reveal how different proposals of study have failed to grasp grammatically relevant semantic features shared by its occurrences. The results of this study indicate that an integrative analysis of *estar* clauses would account not only for the consistent lexical properties observed – comprising (a)analogous lexical-syntactic structure predicting possible copular complements, (b)analogous selectional restrictions and (c)interpretative effects –, but also for the complementary distribution of two aspectually nontrivial verbal alternations (*ser / estar* and *estar / haber*). Our proposal lays on the standard syntactic structure of copular clauses – assumed to embrace locative clauses, against what traditional Spanish grammar suggests – in combination with (i) the structural analogy between *estar*'s alternative complements (APs and PPs) and (ii) the understanding of states as abstract spatial domains (*be at*). Thus, the eventual differences between clauses like '*estoy triste*' and '*estoy en casa*' could be accounted for by virtue of the semantic / syntactic properties of the lexical head selected.

1. Introduction

Although the topic of *estar* has already been dealt with at great length in the literature, as one of the major subjects of analysis in Spanish grammar, a more accurate and precise account of its grammatical properties, regarding both structure and meaning, may yet be attained.¹

In particular, besides being involved in a much studied complementary alternation with the copula *ser*, this verb can be said to be especially interesting for other reasons. In particular, over the past decades, grammarians and scholars have felt the need to explain the fact that clauses featuring *estar* (as only verb in the clause) essentially comprise two different constructions, briefly exemplified in (1).

- (1) a. Juan está feliz.
b. Juan está {en Angola / aquí}.

Interestingly, the general intuition behind this phenomenon is that these constructions involve two entirely different grammatical scenarios, if not two different verbs.² Yet, at least as far as our knowledge goes, such attempts – focused on what will be shown here to be *prima facie* differences – do not succeed in providing an explanation for four facts commonly overlooked or disregarded.

In the first place, the main argument for pursuing a different (comprehensive) approach to these constructions – as an alternative to the differentiated approach generally indicated – can be said to emerge from a nontrivial question: why is it the case that the constructions in (1) can be shown to have consistent (empirically instantiated) semantic properties? In addition, it may be objected that these constructions could also be argued to be structurally (lexically and syntactically) similar.³ Moreover, and in the third place, a further analogy between the two constructions in (1) would be not only possible but reasonable on the basis of meaning, since it could be posited that the (original) locative semantics of the verb – (only) featured by clauses like (1a) according to the traditional approach – may entail no incongruity with attributive⁴ constructions like (1b), as long as a fairly common cross-language phenomenon is brought into consideration. Last, but not least, it could be argued that the distinct aspectual properties of *estar* – which draw a sharp contrast with attributive clauses yielded by *ser* – may also account for its distribution in a further complementary alternation, this time involving locative clauses and the verb *haber*. More interestingly, the correlation between the two constructions in (1) could be shown to comprise strikingly similar semantic effects that are relevant not only at an interpretative level but which also touch on selectional restrictions,⁵ therefore suggesting consistent aspectually-related selectional patterns – among many other facts –.

In short, data seems to indicate that a more general lexical / syntactic explanation, construed on the basis of an integrative analysis, may be involved. On this account, the central aim of this paper will be to show that the phenomena under consideration can be explained in a unitary way as soon as two main assumptions which lie at the very heart of the traditional view on *estar* are challenged: that locative constructions cannot be analyzed as copular clauses and that there is no syntactic and / or semantic relation between locations and states, or between PPs and APs.⁶ Empirical support for this conclusion will be seen to come from the pairing allowed by the two complementary alternations *estar* is involved in, disclosing consistent structural properties and lexically-triggered phenomena which can hardly be considered accidental. Specifically, this paper will aim to show that significant information about *estar* (which touches on a further non-trivial alternation this verb is involved in) is only accessible when the differences claimed by the traditional approach are given up and the diverse occurrences of *estar* are paired.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 1 briefly introduces both traditional and innovative approaches on *estar* supporting the discrimination of two

syntactically different verbs; this review will provide a basic background for us to raise some essential methodological concerns about split strategies. In Section 2, diverse instances of the two complementary alternations (*estar* / *ser*; *estar* / *haber*) are paired in order to identify (lexically relevant) semantic properties in common. With this data on hand, Section 3 revisits the lexical / syntactic arguments supporting different proposals for a split analysis, which can be shown to no longer hold in view of the evidence gathered in Section 2. In turn, Section 4 shows that a wider interpretation of the term *copula* can allow for a principled account of both constructions on the grounds of a single *base* syntactic structure, and that a proposal for a unified lexical / syntactic treatment of the different potential predicates (AP / PP / AdvP) could not only be pursued, but explain *estar*'s selectional constraints. Finally, Section 5 features a unified semantic account of the clauses at issue, this time from a semantically-oriented perspective supported by a localist approach.

2. Split analysis: Some preliminary methodological concerns

Before introducing relevant evidence supporting a unified approach to *estar*, as well as the specific arguments on which it is construed, it will be useful to present some fundamental concerns about the split analysis indicated by both traditional and innovative approaches to *estar*. Specifically, the aim of the present section is to offer an introductory insight – to be examined in greater detail in the next section – on what may be lost in the partition put forward by these approaches.

Indeed, by looking closer at different grammatical accounts of *estar* – ranging from early foundational studies like Gili Gaya (1943 [2001], §121) to those reviewed in F. Leborans (1999) *inter alia* – it is not hard to notice that a split or differentiated analysis of the data is *unanimously* pursued (as the same F. Leborans 1999, p.2422 admits). Indeed, it could be said that if all these proposals agree at some point, it is on a basic distinction between the intransitive (use of the) verb found in locative constructions like those exemplified by (2), and the copula yielding attributive⁷ clauses like (3).

- (2) María está {aquí / en la escuela}.
 ‘María is here / at school.’
- (3) María está cansada.
 ‘María is tired.’

Quite interestingly, this partition is also reflected by newer studies on *estar* pursuing alternative approaches on the data represented above. In particular, more innovative proposals such as the *Light Verb* [henceforth, LV] approach – briefly mentioned in F. Leborans (1999) *inter alia* and specifically developed on *estar* clauses by Bosque (2001) – succeed in offering interesting observations about

clauses like (3). However, besides not being completely free of controversy,⁸ this specific approach (LV) also involves, at least in the way it has been applied, a radical distinction between a *copula* (exclusively underlying attributive clauses) and an intransitive locative verb (selecting for a spatial PP). On this account, clauses like (3) are assumed to display syntactic (lexically relevant) properties [exclusively] determined by the adjectival predicate combined with a copula lacking argument structure – hence, endowed with the LV treatment –,⁹ in opposition to the fully predicative verb corresponding to locative clauses like (2) – which are, consequently, set apart as non-light occurrences of the verb –. As a result, this strategy can be argued to face the same shortcomings that can be found in the traditional approach.

In the first place, it could be argued that overlooking the lexical properties of the verb itself¹⁰ would hinder a more accurate account of empirically instantiated grammatical facts involved. In particular, either (a) assuming *estar* to be a *lexically null* copula (according to the literature cited above) or (b) taking a LV approach (as developed, namely, in Bosque 2001) entail the risk of focusing strictly on the lexical relevance of other constituents of the clause (e.g. the AP predicate), at the expense of a specific analysis of the lexical properties of the verb itself.

In the particular case of *estar*, this is far from being trivial in at least three respects, since: (i) *estar* can be shown to impose semantically-related constraints which are relevant to both interpretative and selectional processes; (ii) there are semantic (grammatically instantiated) contrasts with both attributive clauses featuring *ser* and existential *haber* which can only be attributed to the lexical properties of the copula,¹¹ and, on the other hand, (iii) significant correspondences can be found between the two kinds of constructions under discussion, regarding both structure and meaning (e.g. temporal boundedness, contrastive flavor¹²) – to be detailed in §3.1 and §3.2, respectively – still unaccounted for at least as far as our knowledge goes, whereas, interestingly, the only constituent shared by these constructions is the verb *estar*.

In the second place, and following from this, it could be suggested that a strict focus on attributive constructions (regarded by these frameworks as sole instances of the *copula / LV*) can be misleading with respect to the actual empirical situation. Specifically, the next section will be devoted to showing that such reduction would imply disregarding a substantial body of facts and data (also involving locative clauses) which remain equally relevant for a thorough analysis of the syntactic and semantic properties of *estar*.¹³ In fact, a closer look on the general corpus defined by these two constructions will reveal that the distinct (lexically relevant) semantic properties of this verb can only be clearly appreciated when attributive clauses (rendered by the *ser / estar* alternation) are paired against locative constructions, therefore involving (and successfully accounting for) a further alternation¹⁴ with similar semantic characteristics.

Finally, a third caveat about split analysis is in order with regard to methodological economy, considering that a simpler theory without ad hoc stipulations is always desirable.¹⁵ In particular, a careful analysis of the lexical and syntactic properties of the two constructions at issue could show the discrimination so largely supported to be not only methodologically too *expensive* – considering that it implies building a double theoretical frame in order to deal with two (uses of the) verb(s) assumed to involve different semantic and syntactic characteristics – but actually not as relevant as it has been claimed so far. In short, the point being raised is that both traditional and recent proposals pursuing a split analysis can be shown to rely on *prima facie* or self-evident differences that might become irrelevant in view of the consistent semantic and syntactic properties revealed by a more general (and far-reaching) morphosyntactic and semantic account. Rather, one of the main goals of the present paper is to show that a unified lexical approach to *estar*-constructions like those in (2)-(3) has some important insights to offer with regard to their syntactic and semantic properties, as well as on the essential predicative relation (a) underlying these allegedly different constructions, and (b) setting them apart as a lexically (and syntactically) consistent group at the same time.¹⁶

In sum, in this section some preliminary methodological reasons to avoid splitting the corpus defined by the clauses under consideration were suggested. In turn, the next section will show that our proposal for a unified study of these constructions is to be grounded on strong empirical data.

3. Consistent lexical features

This section will refer to the way in which *estar* has been generally described and how it could be analyzed if certain grammatical facts were subject to careful consideration.

3.1 On the one hand (*ser* / *estar* alternation)

Broadly speaking, both early and current works on the grammatical properties of *estar* are – for the most part – reliant on the complementary distribution defined by its alternation with *ser*. This means that the semantic properties of *estar* are generally discussed and analyzed in relation to the (semantic) properties of the (copular) predicates selected by each copula. Accordingly, the different AP complements associated with each copula are usually accommodated in a binary classification grounded on semantic notions like ‘permanent attribute’ vs. ‘transitory attribute’ or, in more technical terms, on the \pm value of the [Perfective] feature. For instance, RAE’s description (F. Leborans 1999) makes use of some prototypical As (with regard to lexical affinity with one of the two copulas) which are presented in the fashion outlined in (5), in order to provide a seemingly accurate description of

the selectional patterns displayed in (4) for the purposes of accounting for the aspectual properties of these clauses.

- (4) a. {Estar / *Ser} {contento / descalzo / harto / lleno}
 b. {*Estar / Ser} {capaz / mortal / idóneo / válido}
- (5) a. [+Perfective]: contento, descalzo, harto, lleno
 b. [-Perfective]: capaz, mortal, idóneo, válido

However, a first (methodological) caveat is in order, as long as the grammatical implications of a (non-trivial) copular alternation are dealt with (exclusively) in relation to the aspectual properties of the (potential copular) predicates, with no claims being raised about the presence of semantic features (in the copula itself) necessary in order to trigger the selectional patterns observed¹⁷ – an observation that will become even more relevant in view of the data to be introduced next –.

In fact, it might also be noticed that this aspectual [+Perf] / [-Perf] classification introduced above is not exhaustive. Actually, there is a fair number – not to say a substantial proportion – of AP predicates that are actually eligible for either verb, as (6) shows. In view that these occurrences clearly exceeded a binary taxonomic description like (5), an additional class is suggested, usually arranged under the [±Perfective] notation (cf. F. Leborans 1999, p.2429, Luján 1981).

- (6) a. Estar {gordo / alto / alegre / amable}
 Be^{+PERF} {fat / tall / cheerful / kind}
 ‘To be [currently] fat, tall, cheerful, kind’
- b. Ser {gordo / alto / alegre / amable}
 Be-perf {fat / tall / cheerful / kind}
 ‘To be [by definition] fat, tall, cheerful, kind’

However, from our perspective, the main issue about the lexical / aspectual properties connected with Spanish copulas is still not solved. Rather, if their defining properties were to be drawn (directly) from the lexical features of the AP combined with each of them, then what remains unclear here is not how the APs in common can be accommodated in a classification, but why the selection of *estar* involves a semantically distinct entailment, even when the AP is the same appearing in the aspectually unmarked (indefinite) clause with *ser*, as the data in (6) also indicates. In other words, it can be said that the most significant fact revealed by data like those represented above does not actually lie in the existence of a number of AP predicates exceeding the traditional binary arrange, but rather on the striking semantic effects of the alternation they allow, conveying fairly different entailments according to the copula selected – which seem even more evident by looking at the English glosses both in (6) and (8).¹⁸ Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the

semantic differences disclosed by this alternation are significant at further grammatical levels, since they involve different selectional constraints, imposed not only on the AP predicate, but also on potential complements such as (aspectually) relevant adjuncts, as (7) shows.¹⁹

- (7) a. Juan {*es / está} callado {nuevamente / por la mañana / por horas / ahora}.
 ‘Juan is quiet {again / in the morning / for hours / now}.’
- b. Juan {es / *está} callado {desde chico / por naturaleza}.
 ‘Juan is quiet {since [he was a] kid / by nature}.’
- c. Juan {*fue / estuvo} calmo {en / por / durante} una hora.
 ‘Juan was peaceful {in²⁰ / for} an hour.’

This kind of evidence led us to conclude that the presence of (inherent) semantic content in *estar* is most clearly grasped not from the predicates which are exclusively compatible with this verb, but actually from those that are also compatible with *ser*. In fact, pairings like (8), leading to even more contrasting English equivalents, are introduced to stress our claim that the relevant conclusion to be drawn here is that the semantic differences at issue should be attributed to the copula itself, as part of its lexical meaning.

- (8) a. La situación es tensa.
 The situation Be-always tight
 ‘It’s an uptight situation.’
- b. La situación está tensa.
 The situation Be-currently tight
 ‘The situation is tense [at this moment].’

What is more, assuming that copulas lack inherent semantic features²¹ – as the standard definition of *copula* as well as the LV approach suggest – would imply that Spanish features a complementary alternation (with clearly different selectional patterns) of two lexically trivial verbs. Besides being grammatically pointless, such a scenario could not account in any way for the (empirically instantiated) differences shown.

Now, if we consent to the treatment of *estar* as a lexical item bearing syntactically relevant aspectual features as part of its lexical meaning – and therefore agree to think that these inherent semantic features are responsible for the aspectual contrast between *ser* / *estar* clauses revealed by syntactically identical (aspectually neutral) environments –, then a further theoretical concept could become methodologically useful in an attempt to define its lexical meaning, as the next subsection will show.

3.1.1 *Estar* as inherently bounded state²² and SLPs

In particular, a widely known – though not uncontroversial, as Jäger (1999) *inter alia* showed –²³ notion such as the Stage-Level Predicate [S-LP] (Carlson 1977 *inter alia*) presents two interesting aspects. In the first place, it has been used, in combination with the concept of Individual Level Predicate [I-LP],²⁴ to describe the different implications of (prototypical) sentences like those paired in (9a). Unsurprisingly, the equivalent Spanish clauses in (9b) involve a *ser* / *estar* alternation also conform with the scheme introduced by Carlson.

- (9) a. Firemen are altruistic (I-LP) / Firemen are busy (S-LP)
 b. Los bomberos son altruistas (I-LP) / Los bomberos están ocupados (S-LP)

In fact, and in agreement with our claim that the lexical contrast between the sentences under discussion is more clearly grasped from shared contexts, we could make use of the S-LP / I-LP opposition to lay out the two different interpretations allowed by sentences like (10a), which are morphosyntactically identical in languages with one single (pure) copula like English.

- (10)a. Those firemen are quiet.
 b. Esos bomberos {están / son} callados.
- (11)a. *Firemen are altruistic in the station / on Thursday.
 b. (The) firemen are busy in the station / on Thursday.

Indeed, this precise difference is what can be said to be grammatically instantiated in Spanish by virtue of the lexical codification of [aspectually relevant] semantic features in the copulas – i.e. regardless of the AP complement –. Empirically, the contrasting semantic features embodied by the two different entailments comprised in English clauses like (10a) renders a verbal alternation in Spanish, as (10b) shows – thus mirroring the contrast introduced above in (8) and in (9).

In the second place, and following from this, the S-LP concept seems to be remarkably consistent with the semantic entailments of *estar* clauses, as long as the *temporal stages corresponding to these attributes, conditions or situations* [in which the subject can be found] are conceived as spatio-temporally bounded manifestations – i.e. as “space-time slices” (Carlson 1977, p.128), as the contexts in (11b) roughly illustrate –. As it is widely known, this characterization is formulated in opposition to those predicates denoting permanent properties or characteristics of individuals, which are assumed to hold through an indefinite amount of time (i.e. I-LPs, corresponding in Spanish to copular clauses featuring *ser*),²⁵ in fact, temporo-spatial *framing* – setting a specific time / location in which the relation between the

attribute and the subject (exclusively) holds – is rejected by *ser* clauses, as (11a) shows.²⁶

On this account, the incompatibility between *estar* and those APs exclusively denoting I-LPs (by virtue of the lexical meaning of the A) not only becomes axiomatic if not self-explanatory, but also vindicates the presence of lexical / semantic features codified in the copula, since the existence of such lexical information is basically essential so as to explain the rejection. In practical terms, if I-LPs are about defining properties indefinitely ascribed to the subject, then there would be (lexically) no point in restraining them to a specific, limited situation in which the property holds (against other backgrounds) nor to a specific or defined entity, which is exactly what *estar* entails. This is rendered explicit by richer contexts such as (12b), in contrast to (12a).

- (12)a. *Los bomberos son altruistas {en la estación / los jueves}.
- b. Los bomberos están ocupados {en la estación / los jueves}.

Accordingly, it should also be noticed that a generic reading of the DP, which is natural with *ser*, is unavailable in combination with *estar*, as (13) helps to show; quite interestingly, the corresponding English glosses make this even more evident by virtue of the (mandatory) insertion of the definite DP heading the nominal projection in order to restrict the referential property of the subject.²⁷

- (13)a. Las alfombras orientales son bellas.
'Oriental rugs are beautiful.'
- b. Las alfombras orientales están [particularmente] bellas [hoy].
'[The] Oriental rugs are [particularly] beautiful [today].'

Accordingly, the choice for *estar* over *ser* with regard to APs denoting (emotional) situations or states of affairs (14) also seems natural on this account, as they cannot be conceived as indefinitely lasting states inherently ascribed to an indefinite / generic entity; which is, in turn, also stressed by English glosses – in this case, in relation with the additional information needed to lay out the different entailments involved in the Spanish clauses paired in (15). In fact, the specification of the subject by the addition of a genitive PP is only compatible with *estar*, as (15a) reveals.

- (14) {**ser* / *estar*} {enfadado / enfermo / disponible / cansado}
'to be angry / sick / available / tired'

- (15)a. Algunos (*de los) alumnos son callados.
'Some students are quiet.' (as a characteristic of the person)
- b. Algunos (de los) alumnos están callados.

‘Some (of the) students are quiet.’ (as a momentary state)

Indeed, examples like (15) are especially interesting for further reasons. In particular, they serve to bring another distinctive semantic feature of *estar* into consideration: its contrastive flavor. This semantic characteristic has at least four interesting, empirically instantiated, aspects: besides fitting what has been claimed so far – since it is inextricably related with temporal boundedness²⁸ –, contrastiveness could easily explain why the choice of *estar* over *ser* entails a partitive reading of the subject, therefore accounting for (and predicting) the contrast revealed by (15).²⁹ Besides, it could also account for the affinity of *estar* with comparative environments like those illustrated in (16) – also making the rejection of *ser* foreseeable on the same grounds. Moreover, pairings like (15) are particularly significant as they confirm that these semantic effects are also noticeable even when *estar* is combined with aspectually neutral APs initially shared with *ser*; in other words, they provide empirical evidence in support of the claim that these semantic properties are independent of the (lexical content introduced by the) adjectival predicate. Last, but not least, both contrastiveness and temporal boundedness are also corroborated in the data by the lexical affinity shown with adverbials denoting repetition, as (17) illustrates.

(16) Ese alumno { *es / está } realmente mucho más callado [que antes].

That student is_{-bound} is_{+bound} really much more quiet [than before]

‘That student is much quieter [than (he was) before].’

(17) Ese alumno { *es / está } callado { a menudo / algunas veces / en muchas situaciones }.

That student is_{-bound} is_{+bound} quiet often / sometimes / in many situations

‘That student is {often / sometimes} quiet’ / ‘the student is quiet in many situations.’

Summing up, a relevant conclusion that can be drawn from the facts exposed is that Spanish grammar offers a lexically instantiated differentiation between temporally bounded / specific and unbounded / generic expressions of state which remains morphosyntactically undifferentiated in languages with a single (pure) copula and which can be argued to hold regardless of the (grammatical) context. In fact, the next section is intended to show that semantic features similar to those revealed by *estar* when paired against *ser* can be found in another complementary alternation *estar* is engaged in.

3.2 On the other hand (*estar* / *haber* alternation)

Aspectual boundedness is also the complementary alternation of *estar* and the existential expression *hay*, illustrated by (18).

- (18)a. El alumno {está / *hay} en la biblioteca.
 b. Un alumno {*está / hay} en la biblioteca.

Of course, as it stands, the most prominent contrast might seem to lie in the syntactic layout³⁰ of these sentences, at least as far as word order is concerned. However, it may also be noticed with no further delay that the main difference between these clauses is connected with the lexical properties of the subject. In particular, *estar* is basically known to be compatible with definite / specific DPs, whereas *haber* is usually described on the basis of its affinity with indefinite / generic environments. From our perspective, this basic observation becomes especially relevant in view that it suggests a (first) noteworthy similarity with the semantic restrictions noticed with regard to attributive clauses like (13). Moreover, and even more interestingly, as soon as we turn our attention to pairings like (19), it becomes evident that this alternation is not mutually exclusive either, nor cannot be exhaustively accounted for on the basis of a binary array (as was the case for *ser* / *estar* above), since lexical contexts eligible for both verbs are not scarce.

- (19)a. Hay muchos alumnos en la biblioteca.
 ‘There are many students at the library.’
 b. Muchos alumnos están en la biblioteca.
 ‘Many students are at the library.’

Also in line with what has been indicated before with regard to AP complements, it can (once more) be pointed out that the most relevant evidence comes not from those constituents that are exclusively associated with *estar*, but rather from those shared with the alternating verb (in this case, *haber*). Just like it was observed regarding attributive clauses, radically different utterances are yielded according to the verb selected, even in shared or neutral contexts. Indeed, it is clear to any person familiar with Spanish that the sentences in (19) entail a significant difference between (a) the unspecified, indefinite existence of indefinite / generic entities (entailed by *hay*) and (b) the expression of the spatial situation of a specific entity (conveyed through *está*). Likewise, and in accordance with a very relevant claim raised by Milsark (1974), it can be said that whereas (19a) shows an indefinite, imperfective reading of the DP, (19b) discloses a *contrastive* or partitive meaning allowing to infer, for instance, that there is an equally fair number of students in another place or situation, which is not entailed by *hay*, as the examples in (20) indicate.

- (20) a. Muchos alumnos están en la biblioteca [los otros están en el patio].
 ‘Many students are at the library [the others are at the yard].’
 b. Un alumno está la biblioteca, [otros] tres están en el patio.
 ‘One student is at the library, [other] three are at the yard.’

In fact, a statement like *Hay muchos alumnos en la biblioteca* does not imply a similar contrast (e.g. that there are other students in other location) or partitive entailment, as (21) illustrates.

- (21) a. *Hay algunos de los alumnos en la biblioteca.
 There are some of the students in the library
 ‘There are some of the students at the library.’
 b. Algunos de los alumnos están en la biblioteca.
 Some of the students are in the library
 ‘Some of the students are at the library.’

Indeed, this does not seem fortuitous if we recall (a) that *contrastiveness* was one of the semantic properties also present in attributive clauses, and (b) that a similar reading was available for those clauses featuring *estar* also in that case. Moreover, this observation also agrees with the fact that (18b) above could only be taken as a legitimate construction in combination with *estar* as long as ‘un’ is not read as an indefinite article, but rather as a specific (i.e. as a quantifier) DP, as (20b) also shows. Moreover, the specific reading of the subject triggered by *estar* – already observed in attributive clauses in (15) – also suits the restriction pointed out by (21), as the introduction of the (partitive) genitive would determine the rejection of *hay* from what used to be a shared context.³¹ In addition, this would also account for the contrastive reading of the location, highlighted in environments like (22), as well as the possibility of iteration in (23a) and temporal framing illustrated in (23b-c).³²

- (22) Algún alumno {está /* hay} en la biblioteca [y no en el aula].
 Some student is there is in the library and not in the classroom
 ‘Some student is in the library [and not in the classroom].’
- (23) a. Algún alumno {está /* hay} nuevamente en la biblioteca.
 Some student is there is again in the library
 ‘Some student is in the library again.’
 b. *Hubo algunos alumnos en el aula una hora.
 ‘There were some students in the classroom for an hour.’
 c. Algunos alumnos estuvieron en el aula una hora.
 ‘Some students were in the classroom for an hour.’

In sum, a strict reading of the data indicates that *estar* clauses basically express the spatial situation of a specified entity whose existence is taken for granted – in opposition to the existential / generic flavor rendered by *hay* clauses. Accordingly, the selection of a definite NP is explained on the basis of the lexical meaning of the verb, in agreement with the Definiteness Effect largely studied in locative / existential clauses³³ at a cross-language level, as the data in (24), as well as the corresponding English glosses, reveal.

- (24) a. Un alumno {*está / hay} en la biblioteca.
A student is[now] there is in the library
'There's a student is in the library.'
- b. El alumno {está / *hay} en la biblioteca.
The student is[now] there is in the library
'The student is in the library.'
- c. Juan {está / *hay} en la biblioteca.
Juan is[now] there is in the library
'Juan is in the library.'

Quite interestingly, this may also shed further light on the behavior shown by attributive clauses featuring *estar*. In particular, what seems clearer now, in view of the evidence introduced by locative constructions, is (a) that a generic / indefinite reading of the subject is consistently blocked in combination with *estar*, and (b) that this restriction applies equally to attributive and locative constructions. In fact, it could be said that there is a striking similarity between the scenario embodied by (19)-(20) and the claim – first raised about (13) – that whereas utterances like *las alfombras son bellas / hay unas alfombras bellas* are ambiguous as to the reference of the subject (it may either be interpreted as generic or as referring to specific entities), the possibility of alternation with *estar* is subject, in either case, to the restriction on the referential property of the DP. In few words, both attributive and locative clauses consistently suggest that *estar* can alternate freely (though not nontrivially) only in the case that the subject denotes a specific reference. Even more interestingly, this fact can be argued to be directly connected with temporal boundedness, due to a generalized phenomenon which can be summarized as in (25).

- (25) Only subjects having a specific reference can take a predication that applies at specific (bounded) intervals of time (cf. Roby 2009, p.111).³⁴

Moreover, the entailment of *specific intervals of time* can be said to further the parallelism between the two constructions at issue at different levels. For instance, the boundedness implied by definite temporal intervals can be made explicit by temporal adjuncts like *hoy* (26b), consequently (and foreseeably) ruling *ser* out from

what would be, otherwise, a shared (neutral) context allowing either copula to occur, as (26c) clearly shows. Accordingly, it can be noticed that *una* in (26b) can only be allowed under a specific / definite reading (as a quantifier, rather than as an indefinite article), therefore disclosing a correspondence with what was observed about (20b) that seems far from being fortuitous.

- (26)a. La alfombra {es / está} preciosa.
 ‘[The] rug is gorgeous.’
 b. {Ésta / La / *?Una / *Cierta} alfombra está preciosa [hoy].
 ‘This / The / One / Certain rug is gorgeous today.’
 c. La alfombra {*es / está} preciosa hoy.
 ‘The rug is gorgeous today.’

Then, why is it the case that both attributive and locative constructions impose similar restrictions to the interpretation of the subject as well as on temporally relevant adjuncts? To be sure, those questions cannot be said to be innocuous for a split analysis considering them to be the result of two completely different verbs or predications. All in all, the relevant conclusion to be drawn for the current purposes of this study is that the *ser* / *estar* alternation cannot be taken as the only valid criterion when working out the relevant lexical properties of a verb like *estar*, especially when considering that both (*ser* / *estar* and *haber* / *estar*) alternations are closely related by consistent aspectual features (supported by grammatically instantiated phenomena), and, moreover, that this correlation may lead to think that the (*estar*) verbs involved in the two alternations are not completely unrelated predicates, as Spanish traditional grammars as well as other split approaches *unanimously* suggest.

Specifically, the data presented above can be argued to provide strong empirical support for the integration of locative and attributive constructions as temporally-bounded states, which is only available for subjects having a specific reference. In fact, such a lexical characterization may be regarded as a point where the different occurrences of this verb seem to converge, especially if we agree that a stative predicative relation can hold for the denotation of both locations and attributes (moods, personal situations, etc.), as it will be seen in detail in §5.3. However, before analyzing our own proposal for a unified treatment, it seems convenient to sketch out briefly the fundamentals of the different split analysis pursued on *estar*, in order to be contrasted with the data introduced in this section. Quite crucially, an important theoretical simplification will be shown to be motivated by further similarities between the two kinds of constructions, this time at a syntactic level (§5.2).

4. Leaving the traditional prescription behind

As it was briefly mentioned in the opening of the second Section, grammatical tradition “unanimously” (F. Leborans 1999, p.2421) indicates (and points to) a differentiated syntactic approach to the alternative occurrences of *estar* under discussion, instantiated here in (27).

- (27)a. Estoy contento de verte.
 I am glad of to see-you
 ‘I’m glad to see you.’
- b. Estoy en casa.
 I am in home
 ‘I’m home.’

Actually, the distinction proposed touches on both semantic and syntactic arguments, since it is drawn between occurrences featuring two (alleged) syntactically different constructions derived from different uses of the verb, or even from two entirely different lexical items (according to the specific model followed). In either case, the scenarios are seen as semantically diverse as well, since *estar* is basically assumed to yield a spatial relation in (27b), and to bear no meaning at all in cases like (27a);³⁵ for instance, Gili Gaya (1943 [2001], p.57) would describe sentences such as (27b) as instances of a meaningful predicative intransitive locative verb, in opposition to the semantically null copula in (27a). Likewise, and also as it was mentioned before, innovative proposals incorporating the LV concept (Bosque 2001, F. Leborans 1999) still agree on this radical distinction between a copula (assuming no relevance as to meaning and / or structural mapping) yielding clauses like (27a) and a predicative spatial verb yielding clauses like (27b).

In either event, postulating a lexically trivial item is not consistent with the evidence put together in the previous section, at least as far as selectional restrictions and other semantic effects are concerned. This notwithstanding, this paper will try to show that the aforementioned considerations determine the need of pursuing a complex double theoretical framework accounting for alleged differences which is not justified (nor desirable, for the sake of methodological economy) on morphosyntactic grounds.

Following an observation defended by traditional studies on Spanish grammar (e.g. F. Leborans 1999), studies supporting the LV variation of split analysis – restricted to attributive constructions as sole instances of LV in the case of *estar* – justify the distinction between a LV and a predicative verb on the basis of the following claim: the AP complement would be mandatory in the former (as copular predicate), whereas the locative construction would allow the omission of the (spatial) PP, which is regarded as a mere adjunct, as the pairing reproduced in (28) would indicate.

- (28)a. Estoy *(contento de verte).
 I am glad of to see-you
 ‘I’m glad to see you.’
- b. Estoy (en casa).
 I am in home
 ‘I’m home.’ (According to Bosque 2001 and F. Leborans 1991)

Briefly stated, the optionality of the PP is presented in these frameworks as first empirical argument supporting the intransitive (i.e. non-light) status of *estar* in locative constructions, in opposition to the LV / copula found in attributive constructions.³⁶ However, what remains disregarded here is that such a claim is actually held in spite of the fact that the omission of the PP is legitimate only under strict conditions of retrieval. More specifically, it is clear that an utterance like *Estoy* ‘I am’ would only be felicitous in a context implying, for instance, a preceding question, as (29) illustrates. Under such conditions, it becomes evident that the omission of any (originally mandatory) constituent³⁷ would be allowed, not to say welcome, on discourse-related grounds.

- (29)–¿Estás en casa? –Estoy *(?) (en casa)
 you-are in home I am in home
 ‘–Are you home? –I am.’
- (30)a. Estoy *(contento de verte).
 I am glad of to see-you
 ‘I’m glad to see you.’
- b. Estoy *(en casa).
 I am in home
 ‘I’m home.’

Thus, if *estar* were an actual intransitive verb in spatial clauses, then the PP *adjunct* should be dropped with no major syntactic or lexical consequences.³⁸ Yet, evidence provided by neutral contexts does not agree with this assumption, as (30) shows; rather, data indicate that the locative PP complement in locative constructions seems just as lexically relevant as the AP predicate in attributives expressions: in either case, facts indicate that *estar* needs a predicative complement in order to render a fully grammatical Spanish clause (leaving aside variations enabled by discourse-based phenomena).

A further argument (generally held in favor of the split analysis of two different verbs) is based on the observation that the omission of the spatial PP requires no further insertion (standing for the constituent being dropped), whereas the omission of the AP triggers the (mandatory) insertion of a neuter pronominal form (*lo*) (31).

- (31)a. –¿Juan está triste? –Lo está.
 Juan is sad So is
 –‘Is Juan sad?’ –‘He is so.’
- b. –¿Juan está en casa? –*Lo está.
 Juan is in home So is
 –‘Is Juan home?’ –‘He is so.’
- (32)a. –¿Juan está triste? –*Allí está.
 Juan is sad There is
 –‘Is Juan sad?’ –‘He is there.’
- b. –¿Juan está en casa? –Allí está.
 Juan is in home There is
 –‘Is Juan home?’ –‘He is there.’

However, it might also be argued that this effect might actually be due to the lexical characteristics of the constituent being dropped. Specifically, it may be considered that this argument strangely omits the fact that As present nominal features (therefore, matching the pronoun *lo*), which PPs lack. By the same token, it could be pointed out that the spatial PP can be successfully replaced by a locative Adv, and that this is rejected by the AP – with no implication of this being due to a different syntactic status –, as (32) shows.

In the third place, even when the optionality of the spatial PP in certain contexts can be related to the inherent spatial meaning of *estar*, as claimed by F. Leborans (1999), it may be also considered that this locative semantics does not suffice to support the postulation of an intransitive verb. Instead, the evidence presented in (29)-(32) seems to suggest that the spatial semantics of *estar* – a point on which this paper agrees – is rather insufficient for a satisfactory spatial predication *per se*, considering that the locative PP is indisputably required not only on syntactic grounds but also at a semantic level, taking into account that the PP is syntactically and lexically necessary as predicative head yielding the locative projection (in opposition to the potential attributive construction yielded by the AP). To put it crudely, the evidence of semantic features encoded in the lexical item *estar* does not change the fact that the predicate still needs to be defined by the selection of a AP or PP complement in order to disambiguate the (aspectually bounded stative) base predicate, which could potentially give place to either an attributive expression or to a locative one (respectively), depending on the lexical head selected. Moreover, and as an additional consideration, it would not be unreasonable to think that the underspecification of the spatial relation conveyed by *estar* could lie at the root of its use for the expression of states of affairs – which actually can be said to be as frequent as its use for spatial expressions.³⁹

In sum, by revisiting the fundamental arguments for the differentiated approach to *estar*, it seems that a careful analysis of the data could indicate otherwise. Rather, by assuming that (i) the final (syntactic) layout and meaning of the clause is easily explained on the grounds of the lexical properties of the alternative copular predicates, and that (ii) the relation between *estar* and its complements in locative sentences remains quite similar in multiple aspects to the one described for attributives, it is the traditionally pursued discrimination between a LV / *copula* and an intransitive verb which seems controversial. Instead, a different understanding of the concept *copula*, closer to the standard definition, may actually allow a unified formal analysis of the sentences under consideration, to be outlined next.

5. Syntax, semantics, argument structure: The copular approach

The question addressed in this section is the following one: are there (empirically grounded) theoretical reasons not to apply the copular approach to locative constructions as well? In particular, there are reasons to think that the copular approach may bring both constructions much closer than it has been assumed.

However, before we proceed any further with the specific theoretical and empirical data backing our proposal – to be introduced in Subsections 5.2 and 5.3 –, some introductory considerations are in order.

From a methodological perspective, and in view of the concerns raised in the previous section in regard to split models of analysis, it may be pointed out that the main limitation for pursuing a unified account of these clauses seems to be related to the curiously narrow definition of *copula* adopted. In fact, in general terms, both traditional and non-traditional works on *estar* agree on regarding it as a *copula* only when combined with an AP complement (Bosque 2001, F. Leborans 1999, p.2422), which may seem debatable, not only in view of the evidence suggesting that both AP and PP complements are equally relevant (both syntactically and semantically) for a satisfactory predication with *estar* as main verb – as noted in the previous section –, but especially considering what specific studies in the matter (e.g. Den Dikken 2006, Moro 1997, 2005, *inter alia*) indicate, in agreement with the most standardized definition of *copula*. In fact, and to the best of our knowledge, no principled account has been given for the decision to leave PP complements out of the discussion. Rather, it can be argued that the facts brought about by Spanish grammar raise some essential questions – listed in (33) and to be addressed in the three following subsections.

- (33)a. How do we define *copulas*? Does it necessarily imply a semantically null item?
- b. Can both locative and attributive expressions yielded by *estar* be considered to feature a same syntactic structure?
- c. Could AP and PP be regarded as structurally analogous projections?

5.1 Lack / presence of semantic features: Can a copula have inherent (syntactically relevant) meaning?

As first step towards a unified account of *estar* clauses based on a copular approach, a methodological observation is in order, in particular with respect to semantic content and copulas.

Concisely, following what has been claimed in recent works specifically devoted to Spanish copular constructions (e.g. those quoted in Roby 2009, *inter alia*), it seems that the presence of structurally relevant semantic features in *estar* may not necessarily be a real impediment to regard it as a copula.⁴⁰ Rather, it might be the case that the peculiar status of Spanish grammar – featuring non-trivial verbal alternations within the frame of copular clauses – would determine the need to adopt a more comprehensive or richer (semantic) definition of *copula*. More specifically, this concept should be wide enough to embrace not only the fact that there can be aspectual features lexically codified in *estar* which are essential in order to account for (a) the natural interpretation of the clause as a temporally bounded state even when combined with aspectually unmarked predicates, as well as for (b) the selectional constraints and other semantic effects outlined above.

Whereas this claim will be offered a formal solution in the next section, once the unified approach on the constructions under discussion is introduced (and justified), what remains to be answered first is whether the copular approach can also be extended to locative clauses, in opposition to what is *unanimously* assumed by Spanish grammarians.

5.2 Syntactic common grounds: A unified account based on the copular approach

Concisely, this section will aim to show that the decision to rule locative clauses out of the copular approach may be not well grounded at an empirical level – as data presented in §3 indicates –; moreover, it may not be theoretically motivated either.

In fact, the perspective pursued by specific studies on the matter (e.g. Stowell 1978, and those reported in Moro 1997, p.300, *inter alia*) can be argued to raise a significant issue by revealing that locative constructions, like those under discussion here, have been consistently regarded as legitimate copular clauses. Namely, Moro (2007, p.4) defines *copular sentences* as “those sentences whose main verb is (the copula) *be* and its equivalents across languages,” immediately adding that “such a verb can be followed by DPs, APs and PPs,” as the examples – reproduced here in (34) – illustrate.

- (34)a. John [VP is [AP angry]].
 b. John [VP is [PP on the wall]]. (Moro 2007)

- (35)a. Juan está feliz.
 ‘Juan is happy.’
- b. Juan está en la escuela.
 ‘Juan is at school.’
- c. Juan está aquí.
 ‘Juan is here.’

In view of this, the question naturally arises of whether the same reasoning should be valid with respect to the Spanish sentences in (35). Considering that it is generally assumed that the clause structure proposed for English copular clauses holds across languages, including Spanish, then there is no apparent reason to think that *estar* clauses in (35) – featuring AP and PP (as well as AdvP) complements – should not be comprised by the mainstream notion of *copular clause*. Moreover, the only restriction indicated is not connected with spatial PP complements; rather, our proposal is also vindicated by the observation that the only case that is generally not regarded as a *copular sentence* is that in which the copula is followed by a VP, “such as in *John is coming here* or *John is to come here*” (which are in fact expressions also involving *estar* in Spanish, as in *Juan está viniendo*, *Juan está por venir*, we may add) “since the verb *be* in these cases rather plays the role of an auxiliary or a modal respectively” (Moro 2007, p.18).⁴¹

Now, the current standard analysis for a copular sentence also posits that the copula selects a ‘small clause’ [SC] complement – indeed, seminal works on copulas like Stowell (1978) take this definition a step further by positing that copular sentences should be regarded as expanded SCs; thus overthrowing earlier approaches claiming SCs to be reduced copular sentences –. Therefore, and even though a general consensus on the nature of the SC and its structure has not been reached yet, as Moro (1997, 2005) claims, we can still rely on a standard definition of a SC sketchily summarized in (38) as well as on the generalized assumption pointed out in (39), to put forward the claim that *estar* could be regarded as a copula selecting for a SC both in attributive and in locative constructions.

Moreover, considering that it is the maximal projection in the SC which is expected to yield the specific predicative relation complementing the copula, it would be logical to assume that the temporally bounded base state (conveyed by *estar*) could be (alternatively) rendered either an attributive or a locative construction by virtue of the lexical head projecting the SC (A / P / Adv). Consequently, this allows a rather relevant simplification, since the two types of construction, that were traditionally claimed to involve two syntactically different verbs, can actually be argued to consist of a same verbal head (*estar*) complemented by a ‘predicative nucleus’ (i.e. the SC) that can be morphosyntactically realized either as a PP or as a AP, in agreement with the standard definition of copula and the prototypical examples illustrating it. In short, both constructions would share the core base structure outlined in (36), whereas their semantic and syntactic properties

can be said to be eventually defined by the alternative maximal projections complementing the copula, just as (37) would roughly indicate. Thus, the clauses in (35) could be regarded (and accounted for) as alternative eventual morphosyntactic realizations of a same base syntactic structure.

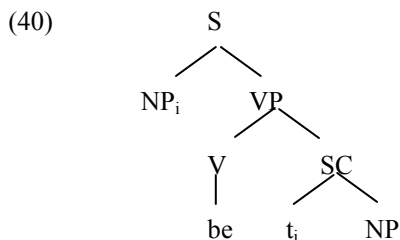
(36) [VP [SC]]

(37) [VP_{estar} [SC {AP / PP / AdvP}]]

(38) A small clause is a subject-predicate structure lacking tense. (Den Dikken 2006, p.60)

(39) The SC is normally expected to occur where maximal projections occur. (Moro 1997)

According to what is being said, this analysis can be regarded as compatible with Moro's ways of constructing syntactic(ally identical) argument structures for both locative and attributive clauses – and, therefore, for the different occurrences of *estar* under discussion. Nevertheless, it should also be considered that the layout represented in (36) is based on the proposal developed by Stowell (1978) *inter alia*⁴² – and also agreed on by Moro – according to which, in formal terms, a standard copular sentence would have the representation outlined in (40),⁴³ with the subject originally base-generated within the SC projection.



This model is particularly relevant since it efficiently deals with a further characteristic of the clauses under study, usually addressed as “lack of external argument” (as posited in regard to Spanish attributive sentences by Bosque 2001). For the current purposes of this paper, we will limit ourselves to observe that this allows explaining the selectional relation noticed between the subject and the lexical head in the SC – as well as the semantic restrictions that follow from this relation – as (41) indicates, by locating the lexical selection of the external argument within the frame of the SC projection (generated by the A / P / Adv). Curiously enough, subject selection by the copular complement is one of the cornerstones of Bosque’s

arguments for disregarding locative clauses; however, such a claim is rebutted (a) at a theoretical level, in view of the fact that both attributive and locative constructions are equally embraced even in this regard by the standard SC model; and (b) at an empirical level, by evidence like (42), indicating that this relation holds also for locative constructions.

- (41) a. *María está turbia.
 ‘María is murky.’
 b. *El agua está triste.
 ‘The water is sad.’
- (42) a. *Juan está en la taza.
 ‘Juan is in the cup.’
 b. * El río está en la escuela.
 ‘The river is at the school.’

From this, it would follow that *estar* clauses in (35) should be formally endowed with the layouts represented in (45) as alternative realizations of the base structure in (43) – taken from the frameworks referred to above –, as (44) summarizes for the case of Spanish.

(43) [DP_i VP [SC [t_i Pred]]] (cf. Den Dikken 2006, Moro 1997)

(44) NP_i [VP *estar* [SC [t_i {A / P / Adv}]]

- (45) a. [_S NPⁱ [_{SV} *estar* [_{CRed} [tⁱ SA]]]]
 b. [_S NPⁱ [_{SV} *estar* [_{CRed} [tⁱ SP]]]]
 c. [_S NPⁱ [_{SV} *estar* [_{CRed} [tⁱ SAAdv]]]]

In sum, the SC approach could be said to capture the selectional relation between the subject and the lexical head complementing the copula, and also to easily handle the eventual differences among the clauses at issue by virtue of the lexical / syntactic nature of the lexical head combined with *estar*.

Nevertheless, even the most generalized model of copular / SC analysis may prove unsatisfactory as to the semantic aspect of the problem, especially in view of the non-trivial alternation posed, for instance, by Spanish and Portuguese. Specifically, by expecting the SC to (exclusively) contribute the predicative content of the clause, it leaves unexplained the (syntactically relevant) semantic contrasts observed – i.e. the fact that the same AP gives place to a temporally bounded contrastive state only when combined with *estar*, but not in combination with *ser* – that cannot be accounted for in any way by assuming the AP to be the only

meaningful predicative head. In addition, this would not allow us to explain the lexical restrictions imposed by the copula on the subject (namely, the DP having only a definite / specific reading, as (15) and (26) indicate).

In short, Spanish data shows that copulas like *estar* clearly have some kind of lexical relevance and, specifically, that they impose selectional restrictions. Given this, the standard view on copulas – also embraced by innovative studies, such as those carried out by Den Dikken (2006) and Moro (2007) – can be argued to involve a non-trivial (to us, rather problematic) assumption, since these models basically “vindicate the view that copular elements are *meaningless* spell-outs of functional heads inside or immediately outside SCs” (Den Dikken 2006, p.4 <emphasis added by us>), which is hardly defensible for Spanish in view of the considerations offered so far. In short, the problem being raised is that the semantic implications of this approach are not adequate in relation to Spanish copular clauses,⁴⁴ and (probably) neither to other languages with aspectually non-trivial copular alternations, such as Irish and Portuguese.

Anyway, the copular account might still offer interesting insights – as well as a potential solution to the problem. A particular line of study, recently revisited in regard to copulas by Den Dikken (2006), offers a quite different view by taking the predication (in this case, the SC predication) to be mediated by a *RELATOR* projection [RP] (lexicalized in the constructions at issue as the copula), which is assumed to play the role of connector between the two terms of a proposition. According to this, the syntactic configuration of copular predications is laid out as an (asymmetrical) structure in which the copula is understood as the realization of a connective head [R] taking the predicate and its subject as its dependents⁴⁵ and, thus, mediating the syntactic relationship between the [SC] predicate and its subject in the base representation of the predication structure. In the examples under discussion, that relationship would be established in such a way that the subject is realized as the specifier of the RP and the predicate is its complement, as (46) illustrates.

(46) [RP [_{DP} SUBJECT] [_{R0} RELATOR [_{PP/AP} PREDICATE]]]

In fact, this state of affairs is claimed to be “the most common way the connection between the predicate and its subject is syntactically created” (Den Dikken 2006, p.3). Quite interestingly, with the RP providing the connection between the (AP / PP) predicate and its subject, the structure in (46) could actually be said to give a syntactic (configurational) expression to our perspectives on the grammatical relevance of a copula like *estar*,⁴⁶ since the claim originally posited in pure syntactic terms by Den Dikken could actually succeed in identifying the crucial point where the semantic features of *estar* render so relevant. Indeed, by considering that “it is the responsibility of the *relator* to establish the relationship between the predicate and its subject in the syntactic structure” (Den Dikken 2006, p.2),⁴⁷ this

kind of representation may allow us to ensure our claim that there is a basic grammatical relation between the copula and the (AP / AdvP / PP) predicate on the one hand – thus accounting for the selectional restrictions observed –, and between the copula and the subject of the clause on the other hand – explaining, in turn, the lexical restrictions imposed by the copula on the DP, e.g. (22)-(24), as well as the semantic impact of *estar* on further grammatical levels (as seen in (8)-(16), for instance).

In particular (and in opposition to Den Dikken's view, assuming copulas to be *meaningless* spell-outs, expressly quoted above), it could be though that this *relation* established by the RP might be semantically relevant. Moreover, it could be argued that this possibility finds a grammatical instantiation in Spanish (and, namely, Portuguese) clauses, especially given that the facts under consideration can be accounted for by *estar*'s lexical meaning. In other words, the point being raised is that a different understanding of this projection might offer an interesting solution to the problem by (a) endowing the copula with a specific lexical / predicative function and semantic relevance, and (b) allowing us to remain within the copular framework. Namely, such an approach may eventually succeed in explaining the fact that the subject, even though lexically selected within the SC projection, is still subject to the copula's inherent lexical properties (e.g. interpretation, selectional restrictions) both in locative and in attributive constructions.

In this sense, by offering a syntactic structure which successfully accounts for the two alternative (eventual) realizations of *estar* clauses, a unified lexical / syntactic explanation may be provided of why a differentiated analysis is not justified. Actually, finer-grained analogies between these clauses, to be presented in the next sections, can still be worked out.

5.3 Lexical common grounds

This Subsection will show that further structural similarities between the two constructions under study can still be suggested. In particular, the prospect for a morphosyntactic analogy between the lexical heads selected by *estar*, which can be seen from two different perspectives, is one of them.

On the one hand, the different lexical heads that can be combined with *estar* (As, Ps and AdvS and also Vs) can be brought together under the umbrella term of *Relational Elements* (Langaker 1987) as long as they all can be regarded as categories yielding syntactic predicates, in opposition to those lacking relational semantic features, such as Ns (Following Hale & Keyser 1993) – which happen to be lexically incompatible with *estar*.

In turn, this more comprehensive class, which accurately comprises the prototypical predicates selected by *estar*,⁴⁸ can be divided into two main clusters: on the one hand, Vs are set apart on the grounds of their eventive status, whereas, on the other hand, As, AdvS and Ps (i.e. the lexical heads combined with *estar* when

used as a copula) can be equated as non-eventive Relational Elements (or *Adpositions*⁴⁹). Quite significantly, and as it was mentioned before, this segmentation agrees with (and successfully predicts) *estar*'s selectional behavior, since (a) the lexical projections that can be combined with this copula (V, A, P, Adv) are accurately embraced by this category; and (b) it explains the contrast with *ser* as to the selection of non-relational elements – since only the latter allows for NPs to occur as copular complement, as (47) illustrates –, and, therefore, predicting a restriction which is rarely accounted for in structural terms.

- (47) a. Juan está {en paz / tranquilo / durmiendo / *(un) niño}.
 b. Juan es {*en paz / tranquilo / *durmiendo / (un) niño}.

On the other hand, lexical decomposition might have much to say in a more refined analogy between these categories. In fact, according to approaches based on L-Syntax (like that pursued by Mateu 2001⁵⁰), APs should not to be seen as atomic elements, but as composite units – and, more interestingly – in sheer analogy with PPs. According to these studies, an A can be argued to be decomposed into two more primitive lexical syntactic elements: a nonrelational element (similar to that instantiated by N) plus a relational element (similar to that instantiated by P), the former being conflated into the latter. Thus, by regarding the A as a derived category (succinctly: A = P + N), this proposal would succeed in accounting for both the nominal properties featured by As, as well as for its predicative force or *relational nature*, shared with Ps (Mateu 2002, p.276).

Specifically, Mateu (2001, 2002) proposes that the lexical head *x* in the structural layout (48c) – morphosyntactically realized as the category A – is actually analogous to that featured by PPs – illustrated in (48b) –; accordingly, the structural combination in (48b) would eventually account for the argument structure properties shared by PPs and APs (and AdvPs) as well – and, therefore, for the argument structure of the SC complement of *estar*. In other words, if the reduction put forward by Mateu holds, then the alternative copular complements combined with *estar* could be argued to bear a same argument structure themselves.

- (48) Head (*x*); complement (*y* of *x*), predicate (*x* of *z*) (Mateu 2001, 2002)

- a. [_X X Y]
 b. [_X Z [_X X Y]]
 c. [_Y Z [_Y Y X]]
 d. X

- (49) a. is [the cat [in the room]]
 is [the cat [happy]]
 b. estar [el gato [en la habitación]]
 estar [el gato [feliz]]

(50) is [x z [x x y]] (Mateu 2001, p.11)

In fact, it is not hard to notice that there is a significant correlation between the examples on which Mateu's proposal is construed on (reproduced here in (49a)), and the Spanish equivalents in (49b) – both of which, significantly, involve *estar*. In view of this, it seems reasonable to assume that the structural representation of the constructions in (49a), sketched in (50), would also apply to Spanish clauses in (49b). Therefore, the structural analogy between attributive and locative clauses can be analyzed a much greater level of detail.

All in all, the simplification put forward in these subsections could be said to support our claim that the (apparently) different constructions yielded by *estar* can actually be seen as structurally alike at different grammatical levels.⁵¹ Moreover, it could be shown to be not only empirically or theoretically supported, but actually welcome from a methodological perspective, since it offers a much more economical solution to the problem addressed in this paper.⁵² Further to this, the following section will show that a formal analogy also seems natural from a conceptual perspective, on the basis of the much studied parallelism between physical and abstract spatial domains.

6. Primitive meaning and abstraction: The localist approach

As stated in the Introduction, a strong differentiation between the two (allegedly different) clauses at issue is suggested by Spanish traditional grammar at a semantic level as well; in this case, the main contrast is drawn between a (meaningful) locative verb yielding spatial clauses, in opposition to an (allegedly) semantically bleached (or even null) verb rendering attributive clauses (cf. Gili Gaya 1943 [2001], §121, F. Leborans 1999, §37, *inter alia*). Instead, the hypothesis to be put forward in this section is that the unified approach to *estar* clauses can also be justified from a semantic perspective, and that in neither case *estar* would be accurately described as a semantically null verb. Rather, from our perspective, there is strong evidence supporting the claim that both constructions bear similar (lexically relevant) semantic properties.

In particular, it might be argued that a Localist Perspective on stative expressions – originally developed by Gruber (1965), Anderson (1971), *inter alia* and taken to new levels by Jackendoff (1990) and Mateu (2001), namely, following an abstract reading of spatial relations – could give strong support to the simplification pursued on this paper, on the basis of the largely studied analogy between locations and states of affairs posited by seminal works like Lyons (1968) *inter alia*. By taking this perspective, it could be noticed that spatial semantic content may play a nontrivial role when accounting for the lexical properties of constructions like those yielded by *estar*.⁵³

In actual fact, a preliminary argument supporting the prospect of a semantic unified approach to *estar*-clauses was initially provided by the traditional description of the locative (use of) *estar*, since this (use of the) verb is described, in rather general terms, as conveying a *temporary situation*. Quite interestingly, from our perspective, such a definition, if subject to a careful reading, could actually be said to involve an analogy – rather than a difference – with those states conveyed by *estar* attributive clauses, which are (un)surprisingly defined as *transient states* in the same frameworks supporting a sharp semantic differentiation with respect to locative *estar* clauses (cf. F. Leborans 1999, p.2021).

Actually, what is relevant is that such a ‘coincidence’ turns out to be easily predictable as soon as a different theoretical perspective is taken. In particular, what is interesting about the Localist Perspective is that it nicely fits the (otherwise inexplicable) phenomenon represented by *estar* clauses at a semantic level, since, from this perspective, states (yielded by attributive clauses) are conceived as abstract or metaphorical locations in which an entity can be situated (just as those expressed by locative PP constructions). In view of this, the definition of *estar* clauses as *temporary situations*, originally posited by traditional studies only for locative utterances, can be argued to apply equally to the different constructions under discussion as long as they are understood as temporally bounded (\pm abstract) situations. Accordingly, the stative utterance is assumed to be construed in full analogy with a spatial expression (to be in a certain position), which is also in agreement with those studies positing that the same conceptual functions we use when dealing with physical space can also be applied to our conception of abstract space (i.e. states).⁵⁴ Empirical support for this postulation can be found, namely, in the generalized (cross-language) use of spatial predicates to express states of affairs and (emotional) situations, as (51) illustrates.⁵⁵

- (51)a. {Estar en / permanecer en / entrar en / salir de} una crisis
 b. {To be in / to remain in / to go into / get out of} a crisis

With this in mind, the analogy between the alternative guises comprised by *estar* clauses – presented above in (35) and exemplified here in (52) – can be eventually claimed to find further theoretical (and empirical) support.

Further to this, an additional parallelism between these clauses can be drawn from the claim that the Conceptual Structure – following the approach developed by Jackendoff (1990) *inter alia* – assigned to clauses conveying states of affairs like (52a) can be argued to contain a *Relational Element* introducing an Abstract Place (AP) – which, we may add, could be regarded as analogous to the (concrete) locative relation featured by the PP in (52b) –. Interestingly enough, this line of reasoning also entails an agreement with the structural stipulations introduced in the previous section.

- (52)a. El gato está feliz.
 b. El gato está en el patio.
 c. El gato está aquí.

Moreover, also following the Jackendovian perspective, Mateu (2001) posits that a clause like ‘The cat is happy’ (i.e. the English equivalent to (52a)) features the structure reproduced below in (53), which can therefore be argued to partake in both locative and attributive clauses. If this reasoning holds, then the constructions in (52a-b) (and hopefully, also (52c)) should be endowed with the structures outlined in (54), respectively.

(54)[State BE [_{Thing} CAT], [_{Place} AT [_{Property} HAPPY]] (Mateu 2001)

- (55)a. [State ESTAR [_{Thing} JUAN], [_{ABSTRACT}Place EN [_{Property} FELIZ]]
 b. [State ESTAR [_{Thing} JUAN], [_{Place} EN [_{Property} LA ESCUELA]]

Quite importantly, the proposal outlined above would eventually succeed in capturing (and formalizing) a consistent core meaning shared by the verb *estar* and the alternative lexical projections associated with this copula, considering the former as a copula conveying a temporally bounded situation, whereas the latter happen to render \pm concrete locations specifying the base [_{temporally bounded}] stative relation projected by *estar*. More importantly, according to this, the alternative morphosyntactic realization of the clauses at issue can be argued to stem not only from a common base syntactic structure, but also from a common base predication (i.e. a temporally bounded locative relation) which can eventually be instantiated (a) as two different semantic relations and as (b) two different syntactic constructions (projection of different lexical heads P / A / Adv), according to the degree of abstractness of the spatial reference denoted, as (55) sketchily summarizes. Besides, and interestingly enough, these entailments turn out to be remarkably suitable in regard to the original (locative) meaning of *estar*.⁵⁶

- (56)a. CONCRETE (temporally bounded) situation → AP
 b. ABSTRACT (temporally bounded) situation → PP

6.1 A further riddle

As an additional puzzle, a further refinement of this analysis could be expected to account for the aspectual implications involved, also by virtue of local abstraction. In particular, supplementary confirmation of the inherent semantic features born by *estar* could be argued to come from the aspectually-oriented interpretation of the core locative predicative relation. In particular, it could be suggested that the locative semantic content of *estar* is not necessarily absent in attributive

constructions. This possibility follows from the observation that this relational element featuring an *abstract place* is not aspectually trivial: even in English, a local situation like *be at* is assumed to hold for a delimited period of time; in other words, it conveys a temporary (or temporally bounded) coincidence between the subject and the predicate.⁵⁷ Furthermore, such aspectual implications could be argued to hold in attributive clauses as “metaphorical extensions of the etymological meaning,” as Leonetti (1994, p.197) claims. In other words, the aspectual properties featured by *estar* could also be accounted for on the basis of its original locative meaning, since temporal boundedness and contrastiveness both follow from the kind of local *situation* conveyed by *estar* (entailing a transitory position, thus rendering it equivalent to *be at* and not just *be*), as (56) succinctly summarizes.

- (57) a. ESTAR (= situation in a temporally bounded state of affairs) + A → State
 b. ESTAR (= location in a temporally bounded state of affairs) + SP / Adv → Location

Of course, there are many further empirical issues to be developed to this respect and these observations only suggest a need for further investigation on the matter.⁵⁸ All in all, the intention here is not to offer a final solution, but rather to single out a potential development for the current theory in the assessment of the data under discussion.

7. Discussion

In general terms, it can be said that traditional and innovative studies on *estar* may be failing to note the close relation between states [of affairs] and locations with regard to both semantic and argument structure. Otherwise, why is it the case that the Spanish copula gives place to these two constructions which happen to share significant semantic properties, as well as a syntactic layout which is usually considered to be the same by the standard definition of copular clauses?

In this sense, accounting for the grammatical properties of the (allegedly) different occurrences of *estar* required us to deal with a topic that touches on core issues of lexical semantics-syntax interface, as well as on complex grammar topics ranging from lexical / syntactic mapping and morphosyntactic realization to abstract reading of spatial predicative relations.

As shown above, our solution to such a puzzle has been argued to lay on the syntactic layout associated with copular clauses – and the morphosyntactic properties associated with the alternative lexical projections selected as copular complements – in combination with the understanding of states as abstract locations. However, our proposal crucially parts ways with the standard definition of *copula* in a non-trivial point: Spanish data indicates that the possibility that a copula may bear relevant (lexically codified) semantic features should not be

rejected outright. Further to this, in the particular case of *estar*, such features show an empirical (grammatical) instantiation, determining interpretative and selectional restrictions on the different components of the clause (impacting on the subject, the copular clause and adjuncts), and rendering aspectually bounded states even when combined with aspectually unmarked predicates. All in all, the simplification put forward is backed by (and derived from) a more careful consideration of the conceptual and structural properties that the two constructions (traditionally seen as completely diverse occurrences of different [uses of the] verb[s]) have in common.⁵⁹

To conclude, the data gathered in the present paper suggest that if a syntactic approach to *estar* were to be pursued, it should not disregard the (consistent) grammatical instantiation of nontrivial semantic features shared by the two constructions at issue, especially given that such features would make it unnecessary to elaborate complex hypotheses in order to explain facts that follow from lexical meaning and from the eventual syntactic divergences allowed by copular clauses.

On the other hand, let us emphasize that our intention was not to provide a complete picture of the semantic properties of both Spanish copulas, nor of every possible use of *estar*. Rather, this paper has focused on dealing with what can be taken to be some of the most relevant facts instantiated by Spanish grammar, i.e. the presence of consistent lexical features codified in *estar* making these sentences rather similar (and also indicating the need of a different understanding of the role played by the copula) and the close (semantic and syntactic) connection between the different constructions analyzed.

8. Conclusions

In general terms, the case of *estar* may be crucial in revealing how different proposals of study may fail to grasp grammatically relevant properties shared by apparently dissimilar occurrences.⁶⁰ In this sense, an integrative, unified account – embracing the different constructions yielded by this verb, and, therefore, the two (aspectually nontrivial) verbal alternations involved – may help to unfold the prospect of a more comprehensive and sound approach to the facts revealed by Spanish grammar and, also, of the lexical relevance of copulas in languages featuring nontrivial alternations. Moreover, bringing *estar* clauses together under a unified approach could make an important contribution to the understanding not only of the syntactic and semantic properties of this copula, but also of the implications (and relevance) of the parallelism between locations and states of affairs (i.e. between physical and abstract spatial domains) at different levels, from lexical structure to meaning.

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Notes

- 1 That is, as main verb. For a specific account on the decision not to embrace other *estar* constructions cf. §5.2.
- 2 E.g. those surveyed in F. Leborans 1999 *inter alia*. This will be introduced in detail in §2 and §3.
- 3 Regarding not only the syntactic mapping of the clause, but also in view of the lexical / syntactic properties of the potential complements themselves (AP / PP / AdvP) allowing a unified analysis to be introduced in §4.3.
- 4 The term ‘attributive’ is used in this paper in reference to the way in which these clauses have been traditionally designated, and also as a quick and clear way of setting them apart from locative constructions, even in spite of the fact that the investigation is not about an attributive but rather a predicative use of the AP itself (in this sense, it should be noticed that we refer to *attributive constructions* and not to attributive APs).
- 5 On the subject and on the copular predicate – as well as on temporally relevant adjuncts.
- 6 Instead, it could be suggested that copular constructions represent a particular grammatical domain where such different clauses can be argued to stem from a same syntactic structure.
- 7 As to the use of the term ‘attributive,’ cf. note 4.
- 8 Even though LV constructions have inspired a vast array of theoretical perspectives and goals, comprising very heterogeneous definitions, approaches and terminology (Butt 2003), copular constructions (even those addressed by Bosque, corresponding to the *estar* + AP combination) do not suppose a straightforward correspondence with mainstream theories on LV such as the ones revisited in Ramchand (2002), Butt (2003) and Wittenberg, Jackendoff, Kuperberg, Paczynski, Snedeker & Wiese (under review), among other specific works on the matter, at least as far as lexical / syntactic mapping is concerned. In fact, it should be considered that Bosque’s analysis of *estar* as a LV is not uncontroversial, basically in view of the fact that *estar* is critically different from those verbs traditionally defined as LVs – e.g. the Japanese verb *sur*,

English verbs *take*, *give* and *make*, Spanish *dar*, *hacer*, Italian *fare*, Yiddish *geb*, the French *faire*, as an anonymous reviewer points out – in that it imposes lexical restrictions on both its potential complements and adjuncts, besides determining the interpretation of the (referential property of) the subject, as the present research shows. Moreover, it could also be argued to project its own argument structure (as to the selection of the SC yielded by the non-eventive relational elements A, Adv and P). On the other hand, assuming copulas to be LVs is not uncontroversial in the sense that the latter are usually defined as semantically “bleached” verbs associated to a N contributing the main predicative meaning (Butt 2003) which “occupies a syntactic argument position within this subcategorization frame [...] associated with the Theme” (Wittenberg et al. under review). Besides, another defining feature of LVs is that their surface syntax usually does not differ from the surface syntax of non-light occurrences of the same verb (Wittenberg et al. under review), whereas copulas do not seem to feature an alternative non-light syntax.

In any case, a more detailed account of this discussion exceeds the aims and scope of this paper.

- 9 Basically, the premise that only those clauses featuring an AP complement can be regarded as copular clauses underlies the assumption that only the latter can be regarded as a LV, even in spite the fact that, as we will see later, the standard definition of *copula* indicates otherwise.
- 10 Regarding this observation, we may want to emphasize that the claim for aspectually relevant information associated with *estar* is shared by a fair number of proposals, such as pragmatically-anchored models (like the one put forth by Maienborn 2005), compositionally-based analysis grounded on the consideration of *estar* as an aspectual verb (suggested by Schmitt & Miller 2007 in consonance the aspectual morpheme theory developed by Luján 1981), to name a few of them. However, there are critical differences between these arguments and the view presented in this paper, since we assume *estar* to bear lexically relevant semantic features codified as part of its meaning (see note 27).
- 11 That is, utterances with radically different aspectual properties with same AP / PP predicate and subject (and no aspectually-relevant adjuncts). Namely, we refer to those cases in which the semantic contrast between *ser* / *estar* or *estar* / *haber* clauses cannot by any means be attributed to the lexical properties of the AP / PP or to any constituent other than the copula (e.g. *Juan es* / *está calmo*). What seems relevant is that syntactically homomorphic clauses yield lexically relevant differences depending on the copula selected, triggering specific (aspectually-related) selectional patterns (**Juan es calmo esta mañana*) which cannot be accounted for in compositional (neither morphological nor syntactic) terms.

- 12 In this sense, evidence introduced in §3 will show that the particular system of non-trivial alternations posed by Spanish grammar also challenges the alleged lack of inherent lexical structure.
- 13 To be specific, the claim defended here is that locative clauses should not be overlooked – which is, as we mentioned above, a problem shared by both traditional and innovative proposals supporting two-fold approaches on *estar* – basically because they engage *estar* in a further non-trivial alternation, in this case with *haber*.
- 14 As an anonymous reviewer points out, it would be perhaps interesting to evaluate if the aspectual properties claimed for *estar* apply to the overall grammar of Spanish, thus involving its use as auxiliary in progressive phrases (e.g. *están lavando ropa*) and passive constructions (*la ropa está lavada cuidadosamente*). However, besides involving a considerable research work, this question exceeds the aims and scope of the present paper, which focuses on clauses featuring *estar* as main (and only) verb. Moreover, it is still not clear whether such constructions are diachronically related to the copula, as Fernández Ramírez (1986) indicates.
- 15 In the sense of Chomskian minimalism (cf. Hornstein, Nunes & Grohmann, 2005, p.8)
- 16 From a methodological perspective, the facts brought into consideration will lead us to opt for a broader definition of copula as main framework to construe the unified account. In particular, we will opt for one allowing us to embrace both the possibility of semantic features codified by *estar* as part of its lexical meaning – leading among other things to the natural interpretation of sentences featuring an aspectually unmarked As as temporally bounded states, besides posing semantic selectional and interpretative restrictions) – and the integration of the (so far, unclaimed) locative constructions.
- 17 In fact, more recent works on the matter acknowledging certain telicity related to *estar* clauses also seem to fall in a similar reduction by attributing those features to the adjectival complement (c.f. Camacho 2012, F. Leborans 1999), since (as they consider) stative expressions can only be imperfective (F. Leborans 1999, p.2436). In turn, Schmitt (1992) claims *estar* to be an aspectual copula, although her views on aspect are built on compositional terms: according to her account it seems to be assumed *estar* would not be able to denote aspect independently, since telicity is not claimed as a lexical property inherent to the verb (cf. Roby 2009 for a detailed discussion). Camacho (2012) also analyses *estar* in aspectual terms, but here the copula is claimed to match its complements (inchoative feature) and supports his proposal on the basis of a feature-checking mechanism between the copula and the inchoative AP; however, this could not account for the inchoative interpretation allowed by *estar* clauses featuring an aspectually neutral (non resultative) AP, like ‘*Juan está pálido*.’ In other words, from our perspective the inchoative reading of

‘*pálido*’ can only be attributed to its combination with *estar* and its inherent lexical features encoding temporal boundedness and contrastiveness (which can therefore give place to an inchoative reading), especially in view that the same AP renders a completely different reading when combined with *ser* (e.g. *Juan es pálido*).

- 18 In short, the point being raised is that the contrast between (8)a and (8)b – for instance – could not be accounted exclusively by virtue of the aspectual properties of the AP, since the (lexically relevant) differences are found between (semantically and syntactically) identical environments. In a similar vein, configurational approaches on (semantic) aspect would also be ruled out on the basis of the homomorphism of the clauses at issue.
- 19 Furthermore, the fact that *estar* can appear with *framing* SPs – a situation traditionally ascribed to eventive rather than to stative predicates in the spirit of Vendler (1967) – raises the question on the existence of a lexical (aspectual) structure in *estar*, which, as stative predicate, should not be supposed to entail telicity or endpoint; however, evidence seems to point in a different direction. Indeed, such proposal also in development, as part of a postdoctoral project carried out under the supervision of Nora Múgica.
- 20 Actually, the semantic nature of *estar* makes it very hard to find a way to express this sentence in English, since it entails an inchoative interpretation that makes it similar to ‘Juan was eventually peaceful after an hour.’ In this regard, cf. Mangialavori Rasia (201) and Mangialavori Rasia (under review) for further insights on the telicity (resultativity) of certain *estar* clauses in combination with endpoint adjuncts like ‘en una hora.’
- 21 Therefore, regarding *estar* as a semantically null vehicle for the predication projected by the (lexically relevant) complement.
- 22 A terminological clarification might be in order at this point about the term *temporally bounded*. In particular, this expression has been chosen over standard aspectual concepts like *perfectivity* and *telicity* in view of the fact that, broadly speaking, the former is often interpreted in compositional terms (either syntactically or morphologically; cf. Borik & Reinhart (2004) for a detailed presentation of the topic), whereas the latter is usually taken to imply an endpoint generally associated with culminativity or attainment of a certain resultant state (following Dowty 1979) – in fact, *telicity* is involved in certain resultative clauses featuring *estar*, as a research currently in progress shows; however, it does not apply to every sentence yielded this verb –. In short, the concept ‘temporally bounded state’ is intended to refer to a state holding for a delimited amount of time, in the sense that states conveyed through *estar* can be said to have a duration which is comprehended between two (temporal) points; i.e. they have a beginning and an end entailed as part of the verb’s lexical meaning. In Schmitt’s words (1992), the initial point is a change into the state; and the final point is a change out of the state. By contrast, telicity is

- usually taken to imply that the final point is a change into the state (which is only true for some *estar* sentences like ‘*El asado estuvo listo en una hora,*’ ‘*El lugar estuvo vacío en minutos*’).
- 23 In the particular case of Spanish copulas, such a controversy led some authors, like Escandell & Leonetti (2002) to redefine the ILP and SLP concepts in order to reflect more accurately the meaning of attributive constructions yielded by *estar* and *ser*. Other aspectually-based classification for states, like the Davidsonian / Kimian distinction has not been considered in the present paper in view of the lack of semantic instantiation, as claimed by Rothmayr (2009, p.206).
 - 24 It might be assumed that such a widely known classification needs no further definition. However, the basic claim can be summarized, according to Smith (1992, p.38), as follows: there is an interesting difference among stative predicates which depends on the types of referents to which they apply. Carlson argues that one class of predicates denotes relatively stable properties, such as [be altruistic], and applies to individuals (i.e. I-LPs). A second class consists of predicates such as [be available], [be sick] [be angry]; this class denotes transitory properties and apply to stages of individuals (S-LPs).
 - 25 In the sense posited by Chierchia (1995).
 - 26 Regarding the general intuition – shared among others by Kratzer (1995) and Chierchia (1995) – that only temporally bounded states can be located in space.
 - 27 These facts will be taken up and dealt with in detail in the next section, also involving locative sentences.
 - 28 In the sense that the subject / predicate relation must have a beginning and end in order to be compared with another state / property assigned to the same subject in another time interval. Cf. for instance, the anomaly of contrasting ILPs: **María es amable hoy, [no ayer]* (‘*María is a kind today, [she wasn’t so yesterday]*’).
 - 29 Given that the contrast applies not only to the property but also to the subject of the predication (thus, entailing something like: x [but not Y] is quiet).
 - 30 In short, *haber* has a post-verbal argument that establishes no agreement with the verb, while the subject of *estar* meets the conditions imposed to syntactic subjects (preverbal position and explicit agreement with the verb). For reasons of a more practical presentation, and making use of the flexibility that characterizes Spanish grammar, it was decided to expose an alternative word ordering in the examples.
 - 31 In more practical terms, the specification of the (reference of) the subject puts an end to the alternation.
 - 32 As long as they are regarded as semantic phenomena directly related to temporal boundedness and definiteness. Actually, the temporal boundedness of *estar* in locative constructions is somehow more difficult to be exposed through paring than it is in attributive clauses, because the existential *hay* also allows

temporal framing or punctualization in non-generic readings. However, the latter does not entail a temporary location that is intended to be replaced by a different one once the time period is over. For instance, consider:

(i) a. Muchos chicos están en el parque a las 8 en punto [y en la escuela a las 9].

‘Many kids were in the park by 8 o’clock and at school by 9.’

b. Hay muchos chicos en el parque a las 8 en punto *[y en la escuela a las 9].

‘There are many kids in the park by 8 o’clock and at school by 9.’

33 In the sense that the aspectual markedness of *estar* supports the lexical restriction on the subject, which is expected to correspond to a specific, aspectually defined entity, against the genericity entailed by the subject of the *hay* clause. For antecedents on this matter in Spanish, see Brucart (2005, pp.185-186) and Leonetti (2006). In fact these observations contradict some standardized assumptions about the generic reading of S-LPs (cf. Jäger 1999, p.66).

34 Which is exactly what we claim *estar* to convey constantly throughout the different occurrences at issue.

35 Cf. for instance, the works quoted in F. Leborans (1999, §37), where *estar* is described as “*desemantizado*.”

36 Cf. F. Leborans (1999, p.2424) in an exposition with examples very close to (24). For more details on the current support of this claim, cf. Camacho (2012, p.471).

37 To our understanding, this constitutes an extra grammatical situation in which pragmatic factors have much to say, which does not actually work in favor of the argumentation posed by F. Leborans and others.

38 In this case, the problem would be reduced to a syntactic requirement of realization of mandatory arguments.

39 Besides, and almost as a trivial additional observation, the assumption of an intransitive predicative verb in opposition to a copula does not explain the possibility of bringing both types of complements together within the same sentence, as utterances like *Estoy contento y en un lugar seguro* (‘I am happy and at a safe place’) roughly illustrate (also suggesting a same core predication: temporary situations). In the same line, it should be noticed that *estar* is connected with a large number of expressions which basically employ the original syntactic locative layout to express situations and moods, like *estar en paz, en silencio, en calma, etc.* Indeed, a radical distinction between a copula (states of affairs) and a locative intransitive verb would make it quite difficult to account for the fact that states can also be conveyed through (originally spatial) PPs, or even for the semantic similarity entailed by sentences like *Juan está calmo / en calma*.’ Even when these cases could be considered to be a light variation of the (originally) locative preposition, it can still be posited that they

- represent an interesting empirical token indicating a close lexical relation between both structures which could be easily explained by following a localist perspective, like the one outlined in §6.
- 40 Moreover, our argument – and, especially, the empirical facts backing it – can be said to be in agreement with Moro’s sharp remark that “considering the copula as a mere identity relation has prevented grammar from reaching a simpler theory and has thus forced the introduction of complex mechanisms” (Moro 1997, p.15). What is more, these new approaches actually posit that it is “by no means accidental that a theory of the copula should play a role in the reformulation of the theory of clause structure” (Ibid. p.15).
- 41 In the particular case of Spanish, this is significant because it spares us from having to embrace other (not necessarily related, as Fernández Ramírez 1986 shows) occurrences of *estar* (e.g. as an auxiliary in progressive clauses).
- 42 This said strictly in relation to the fact that the subject is generally assumed to sit within the SC.
- 43 In this sense, Den Dikken’s proposal – though being built on the case study of qualitative binominal noun phrases – can be said to further the parallelism between attributive and locative constructions on the basis of the same structure outlined in (44).
- 44 This issue is not without importance for the argument being developed in this paper, and we will return to it at a later stage.
- 45 It might be worth stressing that this framework is visited on very general terms and only with regard to its conception of the copula as a connective projection – i.e. beyond the specific implications of this model stemming from the particular (syntactic, configurational) framework followed, like the RP potential realizations (as functional or lexical head), role and case assignment, its relation with a further LINKER projection and its analysis in non-copular clauses, etc. Rather, a lexical interpretation of this concept is briefly suggested here.
- 46 Mindful of what was argued about the subject generated within the SC projection, it might be important to stress that the schema in (46) entails no conflict with the structure sketched in (43) as global outlook on these constructions. In fact, this proposal agrees on pursuing a structure in which the verb selects a complement that comprises the category yielding the SC and its subject (Cf. Den Dikken 2006, §3).
- 47 This relationship seems to be essentially related to the fact that the subject surfaces as the specifier of the *copula* and the predicate as its complement.
- 48 Even if this paper does not address those clauses featuring *estar* + VP, on the grounds laid out in §4.2, it must be acknowledged that only NPs seem to be (lexically / syntactically) incompatible with *estar*.

- 49 In particular, Ps are seen as corresponding to a covert bi-relational term for an adposition, a concept generally embracing the other lexical heads selected by *estar* (i.e. As and Advs).
- 50 Inspired in arguments originally raised by Fillmore (1968), Lakoff (1968), Lyons (1969).
- 51 Regarding either the lexical / syntactic mapping of the clause (*estar* + SC), or the argument structure of the lexical heads taken as complement. From our perspective, the decomposition of adjectival predicates into two lexical syntactic elements (P + N) seems to be justified especially in view that this entails a striking correlation with the lexical projection (PP) selected by *estar* in locative clauses (which is generally taken to be, according to the traditional view, the primitive structure of the verb).
- 52 Moreover, the structural analogies introduced could be said to agree with the claim that there is a strong homomorphism between the syntax and semantics of argument structure (cf. Mateu 2001).
- 53 For alternative treatments of the predicative relation entailed by *estar*, cf. the definition of *estar* as ‘*ser* + P’ put forward by Gallego & Uriagereka (2009) (although such account leaves several facts unexplained).
- 54 This extension being expected under the ‘Thematic Relations Hypothesis’ (Gruber 1965, Jackendoff 1990)
- 55 In fact, a similar analogy has been widely used to account for resultative SC constructions (cf. Mateu 2001). On the other hand, in the particular case of Spanish, this resource seems much more evident in the verbs chosen since this language is characterized for encoding Path. This makes certain spatial verbs great candidates for resultative expressions, as revealed by the contrast between the literal gloss and the idiomatic English version in examples like the *Llegar a una situación crítica* (lit. ‘to arrive at a situation critical;’ ‘To reach a critical situation’). The codification of Path in *estar* is dealt with in a further paper currently in preparation.
- 56 Contrary to what has been suggested by other attempts to develop a unified account (cf. Brucart 2009 or Demonte 1979 among others) grounded on the attributive expression as core predication.
In addition – and almost as a trivial observation – the abstract reading of the spatial relation could also account for the (highly frequent) use of the syntactic layout corresponding to the locative clause in expressions like *Estar en {paz / silencio / peligro / en [un buen] estado}* [‘To be in peace / silence / danger / [good] shape’].
- 57 Almost in the sense of the Coincidence Relations developed by Mateu.
- 58 In fact, the locative meaning of *estar* and its lexical relevance can be addressed through several and distinct theories, some of which we shall briefly introduce as follows:

- (i) Stative predication through a locative verb by Central Coincidence Relation [CCR] and Terminal Coincidence Relation [TCR]: considering the link between the stative nature of *estar* and its primary spatial meaning, the CCR (Mateu 2001) emerges as an interesting theoretical option to account for the grammatical situation observed, corresponding to the situation in which the relation between the entity and the state predicated holds without alteration or change.
- (ii) Aspectual boundedness and locative reference: Even when the basic proposal can be connected with the classical distinction between S-LPs and I-LPs, it has quite interesting results in the particular case of *estar*. Chierchia 1992 develops the claim that certain states – those usually addressed as I-LPs, in the spirit of Carlson (1977), among others – manifest *location independence*. This is presented as a crucial property of presentational sentences, understood as follows: the entities participating in these states will, in the general case, do so *no matter what their location happens to be* (McNally 1998, p.6, see note 50). Considering the complementary distribution posed by Spanish, we can notice that such a description fits the case of the aspectually unmarked copula (*ser*), in opposition to the aspectually marked copula corresponding to location-dependent predicates, that is, those states that only hold in certain conditions (cf. (9)). In practical terms, it could be said that predicates prototypically associated with *estar*, such as *cansado* ‘tired,’ *contento* ‘glad,’ *asustado* ‘scared,’ all depend on a specific context or situation to hold true. From this perspective, the denotation of a temporary location or positioning seems to correspond with the interval over which the predicate is presumed to hold true. On these grounds, the relation between (i) locative meaning of the verb, (ii) local dependency of the complement and (iii) aspectual boundedness starts to unfold.
- 59 Specifically, our proposal could be said to exploit recent developments in I-syntax (following Hale & Keyser 1993, Mateu 2001) and semantics (according to Jackendoff 1990 and Mateu 2001) which posit a semantic and structural analogy between states and locations (both regarding clause argument structure as well as the structural / lexical properties of the predicates selected by *estar* themselves), in order to capture the positive aspects of both the SC theory and the abstract reading of spatial relations. Unlike the standard SC account, the need of consenting to the presence of semantic content in the copula is not only raised – with no objection being raised to the syntactic structure suggested – but offered an interesting solution by making use of the concept of relator (Den Dikken 2006).
- 60 In fact, significant information about *estar* (touching on the two non-trivial alternations this verb is involved in) is only accessible when the (alleged) differences are given up and the diverse occurrences of *estar* are paired.

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