

# *an* International Journal of Theoretical Linguistics

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Not always a stage. A typical  
patterns in Spanish copular  
clauses

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# Not always a stage. A typical patterns in Spanish copular clauses

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## Abstract

The present paper focuses on cases that challenge the classical definition of the Spanish copula *estar* as stage-level, temporary or unstable predication by patterning with individual-level predicates (associated, by definition, with *ser*, rather than with *estar*).

More importantly, data also indicates that the choice for *estar* over *ser* is not semantically nor syntactically trivial, even in those contexts where similar aspectual implications are involved (i.e., even in the delivery of IL predicates). Accordingly, we aim to show that (i) the distinctive semantic properties of *estar* occurrences follow from its conceptual construal as a location (in either concrete or abstract space); and that (ii) a different implementation of an implied comparison approach to the IL/SL distinction (cf. Franco & Steinmetz 1986) could succeed in capturing the two kind of predications rendered by *estar* in way that is more in tune with its primary (locative) semantic properties. Moreover, we will claim that a view on semantic content sensitive to cognitive operations available for locative predicates (e.g., perspectival location) may correctly account for different facets of meaning classically ascribed to this copula (e.g., contrastiveness, subjectivity) as well as for the semantic and syntactic patterns restraining the selection of both the DP subject and the adjectival predicate.

**Keywords:** IL-Predication, Locative Semantics, Abstract Location, Stage Level Predicate, Copular Sentences.

## 1 Introduction

In previous work (Mangialavori Rasia 2011, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c) we have shown that the distribution of *estar*, as well as numerous semantic and syntactic defining properties of this copula, can be predicted and explained on the basis of its locative semantic content, as long as an abstract reading of the spatial relation conveyed the copula is consented. On this account, and against the largely defended split analysis on *estar* supporting a differentiated analysis of attributive and locative clauses, we provided empirical data –accompanied by the corresponding formal appreciations– disclosing a structural analogy between the these con-

structions both at semantic and syntactic levels<sup>1</sup> which, moreover, explains the selectional restrictions that do not follow from *estar*'s aspectual properties (i.e., incompatibility with Ns). In addition to the significant homomorphism between semantic and syntactic structure<sup>2</sup>, we entertained the proposal that this simplification can also be supported with regard to conceptual structure. Thus, by regarding states as abstract places (in the sense of Jackendoff 1983, 1990) and following the claim that the mind does not manufacture abstract concepts but rather adapts machinery already available (cf. Jackendoff 1983: 189); we propose that both locative and attribute constructions yielded by *estar* stem from a single conceptual (locative) structure, thus making them fall nicely inside a general theory grounded on *estar*'s spatial properties.

In this article, we will set out to explore new data sets which remain elusive to mainstream descriptions and generalizations about the semantic (aspectual) entailments of this copula, at least as far as our knowledge goes. In particular, we will address occurrences as those presented in (1) which –as evidence to be introduced

<sup>1</sup>Which we argue to be delivered by a same verb (a copula); and, more importantly, showing that the structural analogy can be extended to the alternative heads combined with it (by regarding PAs and PPs/AdvPs as structurally alike, following the claim raised by Hale & Keyser (2002), Mateu (2002) i.a.).

<sup>2</sup>Within the body of work alluded, which exploits the locative content of *estar*, some of the contributions we made converge in the postulation of a finer structure in which the copula is not seen as a primitive, simple verb. Instead, it is seen as a complex predicate resulting from the (prelexical) combination of a P projection [place, schematically represented by at] selected by a stative verbal head (a pure copula [BE]). In this structure, the complement of the locative copula can be alternatively realized either as a PP or as an AP, according to the degree of abstraction of the place conveyed (i.e., the situation in which the subject is located), along similar lines to those to be presented here with regard to (27)-(28). Thus, we assume *estar*'s locative content to be syntactically (though prelexically) assembled. On this account, we leave clear that we part ways with Gallego and Uriagereka's (2009) definition (*estar*=*ser*+P), as we believe it is a primitive BE head (a pure copula), combined with a locative P, that gives rise to *estar* and not *ser*. Among other things, because *ser* features semantic [specifically, aspectual] implications which are not found in *estar*.

Among other consequences, this allows us to consider the two main guises in which *estar* clauses come –traditionally regarded as the manifestation of two (sometimes semantically, sometimes syntactically) different verbs: the copula yielding attributive constructions (e.g. *Juan está feliz*) and the intransitive verb delivering locative predications (e.g. *Juan está en su casa*)– in the light of one common lexical-syntactic structure (same verb [copula] and structurally similar predicates. Besides, from this perspective, patterns and restrictions shown also by attributive constructions are seen to follow naturally from the locative content of the verb, which remains anyhow consistent through in the different constructions, thus providing also a significant simplification. Third, as these findings comprehend locative constructions, which have been traditionally excluded from the analysis of *estar* as a copula, important facts emerge accounting for the distribution of *estar* in the two complementary alternations in which it is engaged (*ser/estar* and *estar/haber*), touching on both grammatical and cognitively-rooted conditions (which eventually become grammatically relevant).



next will show— are not necessarily captured by parameters often involved in the analysis of *estar*, such as stage-level [SL] predicate (cf. also Fábregas 2012:22), briefness, perfectiveness, telicity, inchoativity, resultativity, changing state, non-stability, transiency, etc.

- (1) a. El guiso está fenomenal  
      'The stew is amazing'
- b. Esta muchacha está muy linda  
      'This girl is very pretty'
- c. Ese programa está muy interesante  
      'That show is very interesting'

Yet, and on the other hand, we will also focus on the fact that, even when featuring similar aspectual implications, these constructions are not equivalent, nor similar, to those delivered by *ser*. Rather, the choice of *estar* is related to a peculiar semantic flavor. For instance, the viewpoint of the speaker seems peculiarly engaged: indeed, the property conveyed through *estar* is traditionally described as subjective (cf. Fernández Leborans 1999:2928 and references therein, Gili Gaya 1943§46). Moreover, its use is restricted to certain adjectives in a fashion that does not follow from its aspectual definition as SL, temporally bounded or transitory predication. Furthermore, different truth conditions and implications are involved.

Against this background, we will put forward the idea that —apart from the differences regarding the temporal spread of the states denoted— the cases in (1) may be also derived from the original spatial meaning of *estar*, which remains, according to our proposal, somehow constant across its different occurrences, allowing it to deliver topographic as well as abstract situations (i.e., states of affairs), on the basis of a similar semantic construal and involving similar conceptual functions (in the sense of Jackendoff 2002). Furthering the proposal developed in Mangialavori (2011, 2013a, 2013c<sup>3</sup>, we will suggest that *estar* constructions convey the location, at different degrees of abstraction, of an entity; and that the contrast between occurrences like (1) and the prototypical semantic (aspectual) implications of *estar* can be related to the kind of comparison implied, following basic cognitive tenets. Additionally, this view makes the right predictions as to the restrictions imposed on both the DP subject and the AP predicate (not triggered by *ser*), thus suggesting an interesting relation between facts touching on cognitive levels and morphosyntactically-instantiated patterns.

<sup>3</sup>Of course, we are not unaware that the semantic entailment of *estar* clauses has been related to its locative content in other studies, such as Marín (2010) and Gallego & Uriagereka (2009); and that an integrative analysis of *estar* has been suggested since Demonte (1979), Suñer (1990:99), Brucart (2010) among many others. Still, the approach pursued here differs in several respects (cf. n. 3).

The paper is structured as follows: after this brief introduction, in section 2 and 3 empirical tests show how data under consideration challenge mainstream semantic (more specifically, aspectual) tenets associated with Spanish copulas (with special focus on the IL/SL approach), as well as classical generalizations about their mutual implication. Section 4 introduces an alternative analysis of the IL/SL distinction based on implied comparisons, whereas in section 5 we put forward a different implementation of this proposal: in particular, one which is more in tune with of *estar*'s locative meaning and following cognitive tenets associated with locative predicates. In the meanwhile, section 6 addresses the restrictions observed on DPs and APs combined with *estar*. The general proposal is furthered (and summarized) in section 7 by distinguishing two different scenarios accounting for ILP and SLP readings. Conclusions are offered in section 8.

Let us start with a brief review of mainstream descriptions of *estar*'s semantic entailments.

## 2 Parameters classically associated with *estar*

Even when we are not unaware of the fact that we can hardly do justice to the complexity and subtlety of the debate within the limits of this presentation, in very general and simplified terms, we could say that, given minimal pairs like (2), the combination with *ser* (2a) is traditionally seen to imply that a given property (Radha's blondness) extends through an unspecified time spread, probably running along the subject's lifetime. By contrast, the use of *estar* in (2b) renders the entailment that this property will hold for a relatively short time span; or, at least, for a shorter extent than the one covered in (2a). In few words—and abstracting away from finer-grained distinctions—the general wisdom concerning Spanish copulas is, anyhow, laid on the idea succinctly summarized in (3).

- (2) a. Radha es rubia 'Radha is blond'
- b. Radha está rubia 'Radha is blond [now]'
- (3) *Ser* describes a state that is permanent or more prolonged in time or stable than the one expressed by *estar*, which is mostly expected to be limited, transitory or to change at some point.

Departing from this basic insight, a huge range of proposals and parameters have been postulated with a view to capturing and/or predicting the semantic underpinnings and distribution of Spanish copulas, along with (in most cases) their aspectual implications.

Among them, one of the notions most recurrently engaged in the analysis of Spanish copulas is the division between individual-level [ILP] and stage-level predicates [SLP], respectively—following Carlson's (1977), influential work—especially as Spanish has been argued to lexicalize this partition through its pair of altern-

ating copulas (cf. Bosque 1993 i.a.). In fact, ILPs and SLPs have been associated with *ser* and *estar* respectively in a great many works (Bosque 1993, Demonte 1999, Leonetti 1994, Fernandez Leborans 1999, Arche 2006 i.a.) following the claim –roughly simplified here– that states delivered by *ser* apply to individuals, whereas *estar* denotes states applying to stages.<sup>4</sup>

Although not free of controversy, this distinction nevertheless conforms to the standard temporal implications associated to each copula (3). Indeed, predicates denoting properties attributed to an individual or a class of individuals are eventually interpreted as more lasting or holding for a rather extended period of time –if not through the whole lifespan of the subject (more on *Lifetime effect* later–; whereas predicates applying to a stage are defined by denoting *temporary* (Kratzer 1995) properties or traits holding within a phase or period of the lifespan of the individual (i.e., transitory situations/states in which the entity can be found).

Therefore, according to the essential tenets of this criteria, and also taking into account the successive readjustments postulated in order to grasp the semantic underpinning of Spanish copulas more accurately (cf. Escandell & Leonetti 2002, Arche 2006, Marín 2010), sentences like (2) are usually argued to denote (a) an individual property which, is in some sense, *possessed* by the individual (cf. Arche 2006:16); or, rather, (b) a relatively stable property which defines the individual by belonging to a class; the one outlined by people whose hair is of a pale yellow[ish] nature (cf. Leonetti 1994:199).<sup>5</sup>

By contrast, as the blondness expressed by (2b) is seen as applying to temporally delimited stage, it is usually characterized as an unstable (cf. Escandell & Leonetti 2002) or non-permanent quality (Camacho 2010), likely to change or resulting from a change. In other words, the application of the ILP/SLP distinction on Spanish copulas leads to the claim that when *ser* is involved the property denoted by the AP “is predicated of the individual as such”. By this, it assumed that the speaker claims that the subject is a yellow-haired person (if the terms exists), whereas through *estar* the speaker “predicates the properties of the subject on a particular occasion, *linked to external reasons* (Arche 2006:2; emphasis added).

In fact, such a link is relevant in that it would explain the widely known fact that an utterance like *Radha está rubia* can be argued to imply the idea of a contingency, transiency or contrast with a usual situation (i.e., that the girl had her hair bleached and that she is, say, a brunette). To be fair, *estar* has been extensively related to the restriction to a specific situation (since Carlson 1977:128) or con-

<sup>4</sup>As temporally bounded manifestations of the individual, according to Carlson’s (1977: 115). Regarding the applicability of this definition on Spanish data (cf. Leonetti 1994:184).

<sup>5</sup>Note that even if we define ILPs as classificatory instead of as permanent properties, it is also acknowledged that the nature of the concepts we conceive of as classificatory is such that the ascription of an individual to a class *tends to produce a lasting result* (cf. Escandell & Leonetti 2002:160), and, thus, the definition eventually matches mainstream descriptions of *ser*.

crete circumstance (Arche 2006:33 following Higginbotham & Ramchand 1996; or alternately, a *situation dependency* in Escandell & Leonetti 2002:169). However, it is also true that a definition of *estar* clauses as situation-dependent properties may comprise an overgeneralization, as we will see next.

## 2.1 Empirical data

As soon as we consider data mostly overlooked in the literature<sup>6</sup>, such as (4)-(6), a case emerges in which the *estar* alternative does not necessarily convey a state holding for a smaller time span than the one denoted by *ser*, or interpreted as an unstable quality restricted/linked to a particular situation or stage (following Chierchia's 1995:207 definition of SLP). Rather, as instances like (4b) essentially convey the idea that the subject is a handsome woman, this quality may actually be considered an individual property which is understood as somehow "possessed" by Radha (or by the water and the stew, respectively, in (5)-(6)<sup>7</sup>). In other words, the situation is unexpectedly close to Arche's and Leonetti's characterization of *ser* rather than of *estar*.

- (4) a. Radha es buenísima  
'Radha is [a] very good [person]'
- b. Radha está buenísima  
'Radha is very attractive'
- (5) a. El agua es buenísima  
'Water is very good'
- b. El agua está buenísima  
'The water is lovely'
- (6) a. El guiso es delicioso  
'The stew is delicious'
- b. El guiso está delicioso  
'This stew is delicious' [I really like this stew]

In general, any person who is familiar with Spanish may notice that utterances like those exemplified by (4)-(6) do not convey the idea that the same woman/stew will not be attractive/delicious in a different scenario or phase within the time span of its existence (i.e., the stew is not expected, or implied, to be less ambrosial if we taste it in a clay pot three hours later). Rather, these occurrences seem to fit Chierchia's (1995)<sup>8</sup> definition of ILPs as inherent generic predicates expressing stable properties that ascribe to their subject permanently. What is more,

<sup>6</sup>With some exceptions, like Fábregas (2012) and Roby (2009).

<sup>7</sup>This idea will be refined and accompanied with a contrast with *ser* predication in section 7.

<sup>8</sup>Rather succinctly, on Chierchia's (1995) account, states project a Davidsonian argument which



these cases may even be argued to feature classificatory properties —usually associated to ILPs—, as (4b) implies either the classification of Radha within the class of attractive females, (5b) the classification of the stew as an exceedingly tasteful dish, and so on.<sup>9</sup> Against this background the natural next step would be to corroborate the hypothesis that these instances could make a better fit for IL rather than for SL predication.

To begin with, the definition in terms of properties only ranging over a stage or circumstance (as SLP are usually defined) is rebutted by the incompatibility with adjuncts restricting this property to a particular situation, as (7) indicates. Actually, and rather surprisingly, *ser* seems more likely to tolerate this circumscription (under specific interpretations), as suggested by (8).

- (7) a. Radha está buenísima \*en la playa/\*en este momento  
‘Radha is very attractive at the beach/at this moment’
- b. El guiso está delicioso \*en la olla/\*en este momento  
‘The stew is delicious in the pot/at this moment’
- (8) a. Radha es buenísima ?en la playa/?en este momento  
‘Rhada is kind at the beach/at this moment’
- b. El guiso es delicioso ?en la playa/?en este momento  
‘The stew is delicious in the pot/at this moment’

According to Chierchia’s hypothesis, the oddity of the locative modifiers in prototypical Spanish ILP examples like (9) is due to the fact that the Generic operator ranges over a general location and therefore does not allow more specific locations, thus rendering a sharp contrast with regular *estar* occurrences (10a). Unsurprisingly (by this point), *estar* cases under discussion here, like (10b-c), echo the restriction and the uniqueness presupposition (De Swart, 1991: 59) that defines IL predicates.

- (9) \*Juan es inteligente en Francia  
‘John is intelligent in France’ (Chierchia 1995:207)

ranges over occasions/eventualities. Thus, the difference between SLPs and ILPs is rooted in the fact that ILPs predicates have this Davidsonian argument locally bounded by a generic operator (Gen), a null quantificational adverb over situations which is compulsorily combined with ILs though not with SLPs.

<sup>9</sup>In other words, both in (5a) and (6a) the speaker is positioning a given thing (the water, the stew) in a determined category, among a range of possible qualifications for a pool or a dish (more on this later).

- (10) a. Juan está contento en Francia  
'John is happy in France'  
b. \*? Radha está fenomenal en Francia<sup>10</sup>  
'Radha is stunning in France'  
c. \*?El guiso está delicioso en la cocina  
'The stew is delicious in the kitchen'

In the first place, this pattern is at odds with the semantic entailments prototypically ascribed to *estar* clauses (cf. McNally 1998:6); moreover, it discredits classical generalizations claiming that *when the property characterizes the subject in a permanent fashion, regardless of the space-time location, only ser can be used* (Di Tullio 2005:137 [translation ours]). Moreover, this line of reasoning brings about other challenges for usual descriptions of Spanish copulas, like the stipulation (Arche 2006) claiming that the IL reading of adjectives within DPs –inspired by Demonte's (1999) observation– can only be echoed by copulative predications with *ser*. In particular, data presented here would invalidate not only the ungrammaticality in (11), but also the claim that it is characteristic of *ser* to *leave the character of the predicate unchanged and simply ascribe the subject to the category denoted by the predicate* (Arche 2006: 250), since *estar* constructions may allow for this too.

- (11) los niños guapos = los niños {son/\*están} guapos (Arche 2006:249)

In logical terms, what we are trying to emphasize is that the property denoted in cases like (10b-c) can be truthfully predicated of the subject at any time inside his lifetime (in the case of the stew, a temporal spread presumably limited by its consumption). This is corroborated by the fact that the past tense delivers Life Time effect (Musan 1997) (12), which would be otherwise unexpected, since this conforms to the regular prospect for *ser* (as IL predication, cf. Arche 2006:196 i.a.) though nor for *estar*. The fact, the past tense in regular *estar* occurrences like (13) does not impose restrictions on the lifetime of the subject.

- (12) a. Radha estaba buenisísima [ \*?hoy no lo está]<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Avoiding the alternative interpretation of *fenomenal* as 'she's doing good in France'.

<sup>11</sup>We would like to state that the variability between Radha's and the stew case is sensitive to parameters set by the logic levels. For instance, it might be the case that Radha's life be so long that it might comprehend a period in which she is not defined as an attractive individual, whereas the stew is not thought of as an entity going through different stages but rather doomed to a quite short existence. Thus, it could be objected that (12a) is acceptable during Radha's lifetime if provided with a pragmatically convenient context inducing a temporally bounded reading of this property (e.g., *Radha estaba buenisísima en los años 80*). However, it is a widely known fact that ILPs can be subject to (or coerced into) some kind of SL or temporally bounded reading if provided with a pragmatically suitable temporal location; and, in fact, this also applies to *ser* (cf. *Radha era muy bonita/morena/alegre durante los años del instituto*). In view of this, we should perhaps emphasize

- |      |                                       |                     |
|------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
|      | ‘Radha was a very attractive woman’   | [today she is not]  |
|      | b. El guiso estaba delicioso/glorioso | [*ahora no lo está] |
|      | ‘The stew was delicious / glorious’   | [now it is not]     |
| (13) | a. Radha estaba tranquila             | [hoy no lo está]    |
|      | ‘Radha was quiet’                     | [today she is not]  |
|      | b. El guiso estaba caliente           | [ahora no lo está]  |
|      | ‘The stew was hot’                    | [now it is not]     |

Following Kratzer (1995, 2000), we can also notice that applying a past tense to the SL predicate should render an interpretation like (14); which in fact reflects the semantic flavor of prototypical *estar* constructions such as (13). However, the interpretation obtained in quirky *estar* occurrences like (12) actually patterns with (15) (i.e., the one associated with ILPs; cf, Arche 2006:195).

- |      |                                       |                                  |
|------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (14) | [ before now (<e> ) ] & [<e> (be X) ] | (X=quiet/hot)                    |
| (15) | [before now (Y)]                      | (Y=Radha/The stew) <sup>12</sup> |

In other words, the application of the past tense in these atypical cases triggers an interpretation in which the individual (denoted by the subject) is understood as fully located in the past (i.e., it is not existent at the time of the utterance). In fact, if uttered out of the blue, the sentence is expected to be either problematic or a case of presupposition failure in a situation where Radha is still alive or that there are leftovers of stew which can be tasted (Musan 1997:278).

What is more, should we apply further tests used by classical works on IL/SL predicates (e.g. Kratzer 1995), we may notice that, unlike ‘true’ SLPs such as (16), the occurrences under consideration also pattern with ILPs in that they do not admit quantificational adverbs. On this account, the ungrammaticality of atypical examples in (17) would indicate that they lack the implicit quantificational adverb responsible for binding the spatiotemporal variable of the adverb (in Kratzer’s view). This is argued to lead to a crash traditionally related to the prohibition against vacuous quantification (Chomsky 1982).

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that our claim about *estar* delivering IL predicates does not intend to imply that it only does so; on the other hand, it can still be argued that *estar* does not induce defective SL predications with adjectives such as *bueno/a*.

<sup>12</sup>Also in accordance with what has been observed about ILPs (cf. Musan 1997), this effect can be cancelled by certain (e.g., temporally definite) contexts:

- (i) El guiso estaba buenísimo frío/antes de que lo calentaran. [=/=> no queda más guiso]  
 ‘The stew was wonderful cold/before they heated it up’ [=/=>there is no stew left]

- (15) a. Siempre que Radha está enferma, falta al trabajo.  
'Whenever Radha is sick, she takes the day off'
- b. Siempre que la comida está disponible, yo como.  
'Whenever food is available, I have some'
- (16) a. \*Siempre que este guiso está delicioso, como tres platos.<sup>13</sup>  
'Whenever the stew is delicious, I have three dishes'
- b. \*Siempre que Radha está fenomenal, la visito.  
'Whenever Radha is a very attractive woman, I visit her'

Moreover, these constructions do not allow the interpretation of *al+infinitive phrases* as temporal adjuncts, something expected when the copular verb is delivering a SL predicate (cf. Arche 2006:204). Whereas prototypical occurrences of *estar* (18) pose a context in which the infinitival phrase answers to question *when was the entity in such state?*, as a way of showing the temporal nature of these constituents, the marginality of (19) indicates otherwise, as the temporal modifier does not locate the moment in which the state held.

- (17) a. Radha estuvo encantada al vernos<sup>14</sup>  
'Radha was delighted in seeing us'
- b. ¿Cuándo estuvo encantada Radha? Al vernos  
'When was Radha delighted? In seeing us'
- (18) a. #Radha estuvo fenomenal al vernos<sup>15</sup>  
'Radha was stunning in seeing us'
- a'. \*El guiso estuvo delicioso al probarlo  
'The stew was delicious in tasting it'
- b. \*¿Cuándo estuvo fenomenal Radha? Al vernos  
'When was Radha stunning? In seeing us'
- b'. \*¿Cuándo estuvo delicioso el guiso? Al probarlo  
'When was the stew delicious?' In tasting it

<sup>13</sup>It is true that *siempre que* might be used in a conditional sense, thus improving the acceptability of the constructions (e.g. *Siempre que un guiso está delicioso, felicitamos al cocinero*). However, we want to emphasize that this does not affect the analysis pursued here; and, moreover, the ambiguity is possible only in certain regional variations of Spanish (e.g., American Spanish uses *cada vez que* to convey this meaning).

<sup>14</sup>Not in a causative reading but in a temporal one, such as 'Radha became glad when she saw us'.

<sup>15</sup>We want to emphasize that the ungrammaticality only emerges when *al + infinitive* is understood as temporal. In other words, the sentence could be accepted under a completely different (SLP) interpretation, similar to 'Radha was very clever in seeing us'.

Further to this, the properties rendered by quirky *estar* uses like (19) are not interpreted as resultative states, even if *estar* is regularly described by delivering this kind of implication (cf.18). On the other hand —and abstracting away from the fact that assuming every state/property rendered by *estar* to come from a change is also excessive (cf. Mangialavori Rasia 2013a *i.a.*)—, the implication of change largely claimed in clauses like (20a) is not necessarily involved in the cases under study here, as (20b) illustrates.

Moreover, it might also be noted that an alternative definition of *estar* as a [second] property replacing a prior one at a certain point in time, as illustrated in (21) for a case such both *La puerta está cerrada* —the Spanish equivalent to Dowty’s example, which applies just as well for *está cansado* in (20a)— does not necessarily hold of (20b) either, thus conforming to the observation raised about (15). Interestingly enough, this definition would not apply even if we assumed a case —parting ways with Dowty’s appreciations— in which the property/state denoted with *estar* [e1] does not necessarily negate the one replaced [e2] (thus parting ways with Dowty’s appreciations).

- (19) a. Juan está cansado [= => no lo estaba antes]  
 ‘Juan is tired [he wasn’t tired before]’  
 b. Este guiso está delicioso [=/=> no lo estaba antes]  
 ‘This stew is delicious [it wasn’t delicious before]’
- (20) The door is closed: [e1] replaced by [e2 closed] at X moment in time [Dowty 1977:75]

By the same token, cases like (20b) do not fit *estar*’s characterization in terms of perfectivity (Bosque 1989, F. Leborans 1999)<sup>16</sup>, since they do not conform to the *predication of the outcome of an action or process*. Moreover, they do not necessarily convey resulting states the subject is “lead to” —according to Bosque’s (1999:171) definition. This characterization in terms of telicity (Luján 1981, Schmitt 1992, Camacho 2010, Zagana 2009, *i.a.*) does not seem more felicitous, since these clauses do not entail progress towards an endpoint. In fact, they do not pass classical tests for telicity, such as the combination with endpoint adverbials (22a) —which is liable in standard *estar* clauses, even with non-participial adjectives, as (22b) shows.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Even though perfectivity has long been related to *estar* (cf. F. Leborans 1999), it is also necessary to admit that there are technical inconveniences in this respect. As we point out in previous works (Mangialavori Rasia 2012), studies like Borik and Reinhart (2004) have gathered empirical support in favor of a more rigorous differentiation between perfectivity (essentially related to morphological aspectuality) and telicity, and this suits the situation of Spanish copulas in different respects; nonetheless, this study also offers empirical tests showing that telicity follows not from the verb itself but from the constructions, as *estar per se* appears both in telic and atelic contexts.

<sup>17</sup>Although it might be claimed that this case actually activates Kearns’s (2007) “event delayed” reading, it might also be considered that this construction features different telicity-defining prop-

- (21) a. \*? El guiso estuvo delicioso en pocos segundos  
 'The stew was delicious a few seconds'
- b. El guiso estuvo caliente en pocos segundos  
 'The stew was hot in a few seconds'

Further aspectual parameters heavily used in *estar*'s characterization, such as inchoativity (Camacho 2010, Zagana 2009 i.a.) do not seem appropriate either, since this verb delivers a number of constructions which can hardly be considered inchoative. On these grounds, the occurrences under consideration here would add up to such (challenging) sets of data, since cases like (20b) clearly do not convey the idea that the stew became delicious at a given point in time.<sup>18</sup> In practical terms, these instances of *estar* do not seem to match its description as *transitory* (Pustet 2003, Maienborn 2005), *changeable or situation-dependant* (Escandell & Leonetti 2002), *unstable* (Givón 1984), or *modificable* (Gili Gaya 1943) states.

On similar grounds, these cases do not seem to pattern with the definition of *estar* as contrasting topic situations associated with the same subject referent. Such a claim –raised following Clements' 1998 postulation of the [Nexus] feature– is taken up among others by Maienborn 2005 in the study of *estar*. According to this proposal, *estar* represents the discourse-dependent variant of *ser*, whose use is licensed through some type of topic situation [\*s in (23)] contrasting with other topic situations where the predicate did (or will) not apply to the (same) subject referent, as ((23)b) sketchily illustrates. In turn, the lack of topic situation contrast (23a) would accommodate *ser* occurrences (Maienborn 2005:172).

- (22) a. Mónica es impaciente  $\lambda Q \lambda s^* [z | \tau(s^*) \subset_{\tau} (z), Q(z)]$   
 'Monica is an impatient person.'
- b. Mónica está impaciente  $\lambda Q \lambda s^* [z | \tau(z) \subset_{\tau} (z), Q(s^*)]$   
 'Monica is feeling impatient'. (Maienborn 2005:169)

With that said, we cannot help noting that, in our examples, the property denoted by the predicate does not necessarily "contrast with previous or later topic situations in which the predicate does not apply to the subject referent", according to Maienborn's (2005:172) definition of *estar*. In fact, if we applied the differentiation put forward by Husband (2010), then it could be argued that these cases indeed convey properties instead of states. In practical terms, *Este guiso está delicioso* is not necessarily read as a topic situation contrasting with other topic situations in which the state *delicioso* [tasty] did not apply to the same referent (the

erties: besides the end-point test, it also shows no subinterval property among other telicity-related characteristics. Cf. n. 15.

<sup>18</sup>On this account, these cases may challenge also Camacho's (2010:15) claim that a progressive aspect projection is selected by *estar*, involving a beginning boundary, encoded by an [INCH] feature.

very same stew). For that purpose, if a contrast were at stake, it would be in any case a contrast between the property ascribed to a token in contrast to a kind (the average stew), rather than a contrast between a specific topic situation/state of the (same) token-stew and a different one where *delicioso* does not hold of it —which could be the case in an environment triggering a SL reading, like *El guiso está delicioso hoy, mañana estará ácido*, where there is indeed a contrast between two topic situations of the same token. Hence, under regular conditions, *El guiso está delicioso* corresponds to a case in which a token-stew is being described individually, the AP predicate conveys a property rather than a state, and it would imply in any case a comparison held against a (contrasting) individual, rather than against a (contrasting) stage or situation applying to the same referent. Apart from this, if we still were to follow through on Maienborn’s analysis, then it may also be noted that in our cases the topic time would fall completely within the K-state time, and thus the situation would (once more) match *ser*’s definition rather than *estar*’s.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, given the arguments (and empirical data) offered above, the characterization as a specific state *anchored* (in Maienborn’s terms) on a given context/situation becomes troublesome for other reasons. Actually, restriction to a particular topic situation<sup>20</sup> (23b) is not free of controversy either as these expressions are usually uttered the first time that the speaker comes to perceive the entity and, therefore, a Nexus with a prior state is not likely to be established (cf. Escandell & Leonetti 2002, Roby 2009). In other words, here the speaker has no mental point of reference to compare against how Radha looked or the stew tasted

<sup>19</sup>According to Maienborn’s model, the selection of *ser* determines the imperfectivity of the clause, as the topic time falls within the K-state (defined as *abstract objects for the exemplification of a property P for a holder x at time t*, Maienborn 2005:168) time, and, therefore, Monica in (23a) is described as impatient independent of any specific context or time gap. By contrast, the perfectivity of typical *estar* cases like (23b) is (allegedly) derived from the fact that the K-state time falls completely within the topic time, and thus Monica is described as impatient in (23b) within a specific topic time which contrasts with previous or later ones; a situation which, clearly does not apply to those occurrences under question. Moreover, even if we were sympathetic to the idea that topic situation contrasts [*s\**] could predict any given use of *estar* with an AP, it may also be noticed that the temporal dimension against which *s\** is manifested in constructions like *Este guiso está fenomenal* encompasses the (referent of) subject entirely (i.e., the entire span of the stew being described) and not just parts of it; thus raising a question as to which might be the topic situations against which the contrast is held. As we will see later, quirky occurrences of *estar* lead us to consider an alternative scenario, whereby the referent of the subject is considered individually, and the property described with *estar* as a quality by which this token is highlighted and contrasted with the other members of the class.

<sup>20</sup>Even if we took another course as to the concept of a focus involved in the ILP/SLP distinction —cf. Raposo and Uriagereka’s (1995) claim that IL and SL predicates are differentiated by virtue of the constituent that scopes out to a functional position: which can be the individual denoted by the DP subject (IL) or the event (SL)—; then the instances under consideration still pattern with ILPs rather than SLPs.



at the utterance time, this being [allegedly] the first time he/she comes to perceive the object. We will take up the *anticipated state* hypothesis next, on the basis of examples like (26). For the moment, let us emphasize that, in point of fact, *Radha está muy bonita* does not bear the largely known implication regularly associated with *estar* that makes utterances like *Estás bonita* so offensive; in short, there are no reasons to assume that the speaker is implying that the addressee was not stunning at one time, as it is the case in the classical example just raised.

Summing the contents of this section, so far we presented evidence indicating that the property expressed through *estar* in these cases (i) is not associated to a particular moment or circumstance, but rather to the individual itself, and (ii) it does not seem to imply a change or result (and it is not *linked to external reasons* if we follow Arche’s definition); moreover, (iii) is not assumed to hold for a slice in the timespan determined by the existence of the individual, (iv) shows Lifetime effects and (v) it conveys a property rather than a state, and (vi) it does not necessarily contrast with previous or later topic situations in which the predicate does not apply to the (same) subject referent. Taken together, facts suggest that *estar* can deliver predicates with aspectual implications usually associated to *ser* in classical descriptions.

On the other hand, even if both copulas may succeed in delivering IL predications, we still have to consider that the copula choice is not trivial. In fact, ILPs delivered by *ser* like *Radha es fenomenal* or *El guiso es delicioso* are not —by any means— synonymous to those rendered by *estar* and these differences are significant at diverse levels. Yet, before we turn to this issue, a formal introduction of our proposal, which would account for this contrast between *ser* and *estar* IL-predication, is in order.

### 3 Ser not always implies estar

Before we proceed to lay out our proposal on the semantic properties of *estar* enabling these peculiar occurrences, there is a further traditional claim we want to bring under consideration. In particular, the examples proposed above represent an interesting challenge to the classical assumption that *ser* predication implies *estar*, but not the other way round.

More specifically, the idea behind this generalization is that the state denoted by *ser* refers to a stretch of time that can be decomposed into several delimited, successive, time intervals; and that each one of those intervals can be described by *estar* as well. In Lujan’s terms, all *ser*-predicates have to have been *estar*-predicates once (1981:177). Accordingly, a statement like *Radha es bonita* would imply that *Radha está bonita* applied (theoretically) at least once; whereas the state predicated by *estar bonita* may apply even without *ser bonita* ever applying, as (24) sketchily intends to summarize.

- (23) ser bonita ==> estar bonita  
 estar bonita !=> ser bonita

However, as those *estar* occurrences under discussion yield individual properties spanning over the subject's whole lifespan (or, at least, for an indefinite temporal gap) instead of applying exclusively to limited or brief time spreads only –i.e., intervals shorter than the ones covered by *ser*–, then the relation in (24) does not necessarily hold either. In fact, a case like (25) precisely illustrates the idea that the property denoted by *ser* does not necessarily implies that *estar* applied, not even once.

- (24) a. Esta almohada es blanda, pero [para mí] {no está/nunca estuvo} blanda.  
 'This pillow is soft, but {it's not/it has never been} soft [to me]'  
 b. Radha será guapa, pero no {está/\*es} guapa.  
 'Radha may be good-looking, but she's not good-looking today'

On the other hand, even when two copular predications like those articulated *ser blando* and *estar blando* can be argued to refer to permanent, stable properties not applying only to a specific situation or stage in the lifespan of the entity, they are not synonymic and one does not imply the other.

On this account, another fact we should consider is that the fact that (25) does not imply a contradiction is not due to the length of the time frame covered; actually, it has to do with the fact that *estar* implies the ascription of the property from the viewpoint of the speaker. So, what this example says is that the pillow may be individually regarded (in general) as holding a certain property (e.g., *blanda*); but that this same pillow is not deemed individually as such by the speaker (and, once more, the property rendered by *estar* is not implied to hold for a smaller time gap or expected to change). Thus, the fact that both clauses in (25) may be defined as ILPs –or, at least, have similar aspectual implications– does not imply (nor allow) a semantic correlation or synonymy in view of a number of semantic properties that clearly exceed temporal entailments, starting with the subjective flavor implied by *estar*.

In order to address this issue more clearly, we should first introduce the theoretical framework.

#### 4 An alternative approach

Indeed, we showed a particular interest on the IL/SL distinction as main axis for the review outlined above. This is due to the fact that these concepts have been formulated in a way that seems semantically promising for *estar* and the facts presented so far; and, in particular, for a cognitively-sensitive take on its semantics. Specifically, we will take pains to show that a different implementation of an IL/SL model of analysis based on implied comparisons might succeed in handling data

falling out of the scope in previous studies. Moreover, the approach we are about to introduce may prove fruitful in revealing semantic underpinnings shared by the different uses of *estar*.

Among the different options explored in the literature, Franco & Steinmetz (1983, 1986) make use of the IL/SL distinction to claim that the difference between the semantic implications of *ser* and *estar* is grounded on implied comparisons. However, this proposal is quite different to Clement’s Nexus and Maienborn’s discourse-anchored models. According to Franco & Steinmetz’ proposal, *ser* implies or signals a comparison between the entity being described and other of a same (or similar) kind. The idea is formalized in terms of an X/Y relation, whereby the entity (X) is compared against other(s) (Y) providing the standard by which the quality/trait is attributed to X. On the other hand, *estar* is argued to imply an X/X relation; that is, the entity [X] is compared against itself. On this account, a sentence like *Radha es bella* is argued to assert that Radha is pretty in the sense that her beauty is greater than, namely, that of some putative average woman. Thus, the quality attributed to Radha is relative to (the degree of that same trait in) other entities and relative to the set of women providing the standard for that quality. In turn, as *estar* expresses an X/X kind of comparison, an utterance like *Radha está bella* asserts that Radha’s (present) beauty is “greater than it is known or thought usually to be” (Franco & Steinmetz 1986: 377). In more Carlsonian terms, the quality is relative to other stages/situations in which Radha was (or will be) found.

As Roby (2009) also suggests, Franco & Steinmetz’s interpretation of *estar* can be related to Falk’s (1979) concepts of *individual norm* vs. *general norm* in order to appreciate certain coincidences with classical descriptions of *ser*, some of them succinctly mentioned above. Thus, if *ser* is understood as drawing a comparison in reference to the general norm of a class or set of (comparable) entities, whereas *estar* is defined by drawing a comparison in reference to an *individual norm* (Franco & Steinmetz 1986: 285), somehow, the classical depiction of *ser* as a classificatory predication (recently vindicated by Escandell & Leonetti 2002 i.a.) seems to be accounted for. In other words, this postulation also captures the idea that when a predicate appears in combination with *ser* the subject is categorized as belonging to the class denoted by the predicate; only that, in this case, the proposal highlights the fact that this is achieved through the comparison with other entities. By contrast, *estar* is used to compare the subject’s current state against its own usual state of affairs (i.e., that individual’s *norm*).

Anyhow, the occurrences under discussion in this paper seem to challenge this approach also, since—in view of all the facts brought into consideration above—they do not seem to entail an X/X comparison whatsoever. In other words, it is clear by this point that constructions like *El guiso está celestial* do not imply a comparison against prior stages or the usual condition of the same X (token), but

rather a comparison between a token (deemed individually) and others (thus, Y) setting the standard by which the trait ‘celestial’ is ascribed to X (the stew). In other words, IL predicates delivered by *estar* stem from an X/Y, instead of an X/X relation. Yet, *estar* is used instead of *ser*, even when it is the latter that is associated with X/Y comparisons in the model quoted.

Franco & Steinmetz (1986: 381) attempt to accommodate an example similar to ours —*Este acero está duro* [This steel is hard] in their version— as a “quite natural” extension of the same (X/X) kind of comparison. According to their tweak, these cases would be due to the fact the comparison is laid between the speaker’s perceptual expectancy prior to utterance time (and also prior to any sensory experience involving it) and the speaker’s sensory perception of the entity. Thus, the speaker would not be comparing X (*este acero*) with what he knows to be the usual state of X; instead, they claim, the speaker would be comparing the current state of X against an anticipated state of X. In few words, in order to deal with atypical occurrences, *estar* is analyzed as implying two different comparisons: that between X’s current state vs. X’s own usual/prior states, or, alternatively, one between the actual state of X and the speaker’s expectations about X (i.e., X’s anticipated state). However, as Roby (2009: 26) also notices —and also as we indicated above with regard to Maienborn’s proposal (p.9)— the anticipated state hypothesis [ASH] as a variable in the choice of *estar* over *ser* runs into problems in, at least, three respects.

On the one hand, because the selection of *estar* comprise examples that can perfectly occur even if the speaker experiences or describes an object/entity without any prior knowledge or expectation about it. What is more, the “discovery interpretation of *estar*” (Maienborn 2005:160) —which can be lined up with *Querido*’s (1976: 354) assertion that *estar* is the appropriate choice of copula for describing a first sensorial experience— fails to predict the copula choice in cases in which *estar* is employed to describe a usual state or condition. Secondly, the prediction of *estar*’s distribution based on the ASH is also flawed as *discovery interpretations* can also be reported through *ser*. For instance, one could very well claim *Los limones son ácidos* after tasting lemons for the very first time, just as one could easily say *Las amebas son diminutas* [Amoebas are minuscule] after discovering them in the microscope (and, in fact, this case would make a much better candidate for comparison against anticipated states).

- (25) a. Estos limones están ácidos  
       ‘These lemons are sour’
- b. El cielo está celeste           [en un día despejado]  
       ‘The sky is blue’               [on a clear day]

Abstracting away from the fact that it would be very hard to prove that an expression like *Radha está fenomenal* does imply a contrast against an expect-

ted/anticipated state, ASH as a variable in the choice of *estar* over *ser* breaks down against utterances like (26) for other reasons. First, because these sentences denote exactly what one could expect from their subjects (i.e., lemons and the sky, respectively). On the other hand, and following from this, because it can also be argued that what sentences like (26a) actually convey is not that lemons are deemed sour in relation to what one might expect from lemons, but rather that lemons are found sour in relation to something else; most likely, in comparison to other lemons. Accordingly, these cases can be accommodated in our schema as long as they can be argued to imply a comparison between the acidity of some given lemons and either the average acidity of lemons in general (kind) or the acidity of other lemons (as tokens; e.g., other lemons tasted before). In other words, the shortcoming could be easily solved by acknowledging the possibility that these cases may instantiate an X/Y kind of comparison, which can be held (alternatively) between a token and the class or between two (lemon) tokens. Thus, sentences like (26a) would denote a property, which is established not in relation to expectations but to the average degree of that property in the class represented by Y (thus, setting the standard by which property P is ascribed to X, in Franco & Steinmetz’s terms); or, alternatively, against other (comparable) lemon-tokens which may not be deemed as sour according to the speaker.

This situation contrasts sharply with (26b), where the predicate indeed denotes a state (the light-blueness of the sky) held comparison against the referent’s average condition, its anticipated state, or against a different situation (e.g., how the sky looks like on a cloudy day). On this account, a legitimate X/X implied comparison is therefore instantiated, as the property is ascribed in relation to other stages/states of this same (token) sky. As a matter of fact, (26b) allows the explicitation of the particular stage in which the property holds of the sky (e.g., *El cielo está celeste hoy*); whereas a similar specification is not consented by (26a) –indeed, *Estos limones están ácidos hoy* does not make an acceptable construction, at least under normal circumstances.<sup>21</sup> In our view, this represents another indicator of the fact that the implied comparison is held individually between tokens (or between a token and a class) rather than between stages or contrasting situations of the same token (anticipated states included).<sup>22</sup>

Against this background, we will set out to show that an (abstract) spatial representation of these notions could be very revealing, apart from being more in tune with the semantic content of this copula. In particular, an abstract reading

<sup>21</sup>Even if it might be deemed possible in a context in which, for instance, we are repeatedly tasting the same lemons (in different days); yet, the comparison would still be of an X/Y kind.

<sup>22</sup>On this account, pairings like (26) could be argued to show that the anticipated state hypothesis does not handle quirky uses of *estar* like (26a), and it does not necessarily capture regular cases (26b) either. We want to thank an anonymous reviewer for the indication allowing us to make a stronger point here.



of *estar*'s locative meaning would not only give us the possibility to account for the occurrences in question without abandoning the X/X-X/Y implied comparison model; but it would also involve the additional advantage of capturing the differences between the two types of *estar* clauses on the basis of a same core semantic content. In addition, and what is more interesting, such an approach will allow us to explain the semantic features distinguishing them from *ser* clauses even in those cases where the aspectual implications are not that different —i.e., in delivering IL predicates.

### 5 Space and abstraction

As we already argued in the introduction —in reference to previous works (cf. Mangialavori 2013a)— an abstract reading of *estar*'s spatial content carries a number of advantages in the analysis of this copula, especially concerning its semantic implications and grammatical properties. In particular, this hypothesis shows that similar grammatical patterns emerge across apparently unrelated semantic constructions rendered by this copula (i.e., between spatial/existential clauses and those conveying states of affairs). In consequence, relevant insights about its distribution in the two complementary alternations involving this verb (*estar/ser* and *estar/haber*) arise.

In the present case, abstract location will allow us to introduce the hypothesis that the semantic underpinnings of quirky uses of *estar* become predictable if a different view on the implied comparison model (presented above) is pursued. In particular, we will take pains to show that a localist conceptualization of the comparison model put forward by Franco & Steinmetz would nicely fit the phenomenon represented by *estar* clauses; and, indeed, it may account for relevant facets of meaning making these constructions different to those articulated through *ser*, even when conveying stable, long-term properties. More interestingly, this view could support a connection between cognitively-based facts and grammatical patterns in Spanish.

In particular, we will depart from two postulations. On the one hand, the widely known assumption that states can be conceived as abstract or metaphorical locations (since Fillmore, 1968; Gruber, 1965 and Jackendoff, 1983 i.a.); on the other hand, the fact that locative predicates serve as structural templates for other (non-topographical) expressions (cf. Miller & Johnson-Laird, 1976:375 i.a.). This means that in exploring the organization of concepts such as IL/SL predication in the case of *estar* we do not have to start de novo. Rather, we can constrain the possible hypotheses by adapting, to a certain extent, the conceptual structure of spatial relations to our new purposes.

In other words, we want to entertain the hypothesis that, as *estar* can express the concrete topographical sense of objects located in space in its regular (or original) use, it seems logical to consider that it may also be employed to de-

liver a more abstract, often *psychological* (Talmy 2000:291), meaning. Thus, states (therefore, the occurrences of *estar* under consideration here) could be easily accommodated within the proposed (locative) semantics of this copula, as abstract situations in which an entity can be found. All in all, the proposal of a same conceptual construal (to be in a certain situation/position) connecting *estar*'s different guises fits the widely known claim that the same conceptual functions we use when dealing with physical space can also be applied to our conception of abstract space (Gruber 1965 and Jackendoff 1990 i.a.<sup>23</sup>). Therefore, and against the general wisdom in Spanish grammar (cf. Fernández Leborans 1999:2424), the concept of temporary situation, originally posited only for —allegedly non-copular<sup>24</sup> — constructions like (27), could be argued to apply to cases like (28) just as well, following Jackendoff (1983:194) (Cf. Mangialavori Rasia 2013a).

- (26) El guiso está en la heladera  
 'The stew is in the fridge'
- (27) El guiso está caliente  
 'The stew is hot'

Two further endorsements for this view —or, rather, for the proposed simplification that comes from the idea that *estar* can be used to render non-spatial predicates, such as states of affairs, just like many other spatial verbs, on the basis of a same semantic structure— come from the (psychological) claim that the mind does not manufacture abstract concepts *out of thin air*, but it rather adapts machinery already available (cf. Jackendoff 1983: 189); and also from the observation that spatial organization is of central importance in human cognition (since Lyons 1977: 718). On this account, cases like (28) —and, therefore, also quirky *estar* occurrences like *El guiso está celestial*— can also be argued to conform to the semantic content of this copula as 'sense of objects in space', by virtue of an abstract representation of the predicative relation rendered in (27). In fact, locative semantics<sup>25</sup> may account for great part of the facts under consideration here.

<sup>23</sup>We refer to the 'Thematic Relations Hypothesis' (Jackendoff 1983, 1990 inspired on Gruber 1965), according to which *in any semantic field of states and events, the principal functions are a subset of those used for location and motion* (Jackendoff 1983:188).

<sup>24</sup>Considering, as posed in detail by Mangialavori Rasia (2013), that locative content has traditionally been claimed to be absent in copulative occurrences of *estar*, as opposed to the (alleged) intransitive locative verb.

<sup>25</sup>From our perspective, it is important to emphasize that cognitive operations, like those deriving atypical uses of *estar*, are enabled by its locative meaning, which we believe to be (following Mateu 2002) a function of both conceptual content and syntactically-encoded semantic construal (cf. n. 3); and, indeed, such options are not available for a non-spatial copula like *ser*. So, even if conceptual content has been defined as grammatically opaque (cf. Mateu 2002 i.a.), data offers strong reasons to believe that conceptual structure may not be homomorphically related to syntax, but might match it on crucial respects. In the case of *estar*, the convergence of structural and conceptual spatial semantic features may not only set a constant among *estar* occurrences, but

In particular, we want to focus on the fact that information passed on by conceptual domains –on the basis of both the locative meaning of *estar*– could account for the delivery of both IL and SL predicates, and, in particular, for the special semantic features driving the choice for *estar* in the delivery of ILPs. We refer to the fact that location, from the view point of cognition and conceptual construal, is *relative*.

More specifically, the spatial disposition of a (focal) object in a scene is *largely characterized in terms of a further object, which is also selected within the scene, and whose location and sometimes also **geometric** properties are already known and so can function as a reference object* (Talmy 2000: 182). Thus, human perception of space and location stipulate that the site of an object –which, in our view, also applies to states such as those conveyed by *estar* in (28)– is indicated in terms of distance from or in relation to the location of a further, secondary object. Summing up, location of an object in a scene is conceived in relation to another's.

Going back to the analogy between (27) and (28) above, this suggests that stative expressions also define a one-dimensional "pseudospace" (Jackendoff 1983: 134) in which entities are located. Thus, in its abstract use, *estar* predication is about things that are located not only in concrete, topographical space, but in abstract situations or *states*<sup>26</sup> as well. To appreciate the force of the parallelism, consider the inference patterns of corresponding spatial and stative expressions. In the spatial construction, the function *be at* –corresponding to the locative copula– maps a *thing* into a spatial frame and asserts that the *thing* occupies a specific point within this space. When shifted into the stative domain, the function *be at* maps a thing into a state and asserts that the thing occupies a determined site within this [pseudo-]spatial frame. Along these lines, *estar* could be argued to denote the situation of entities in concrete or abstract space; nonetheless, in being articulated by a locative verb, this situation will be essentially characterized in terms of a further object. Accordingly, the reference frame set up by the (implied relation with) a secondary object would explain the peculiar semantic flavor of these clauses –mostly related to subjectivity, contrastiveness and relativity of the property ascribed– and, therefore, the choice for this copula instead of *ser*.

In particular, this relativity of location can be easily lined up with the implied comparison model we are advocating for, as X (the subject) is always described in relation to something else (be it against other instances of itself [X/X] or other individuals [X/Y]). In practical terms, it predicts the contrastiveness described in

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also operate in differentiating them from other copular constructions (i.e., *ser*-IL predications) and predicting patterns not following from the IL/SL distinction, which makes it all fall nicely inside a general theory explaining its semantic qualities.

<sup>26</sup>Let us clarify that we use the word *state* here in the sense of the state [of affairs] rendered by *estar* clauses like (28), to differentiate them somehow from topographical constructions such as (27); as we are well aware that (27) is also a stative predication.

*estar* since Gili Gaya (1943 [2001] §46). In fact, this relative positioning would also accommodate cases challenging Franco & Stenmetz proposal of an extended X/X comparison like *Estos limones están ácidos* (26 above) since the use of *estar* here can only be accounted for its relative flavor.

On the other hand, the relative component of location would account for the divergent aspectual entailments between prototypical and quirky *estar* clauses in a way that eventually conforms to the X/X-X/Y implied comparisons model, as we will show later. However, before passing on to this part of the proposal, further considerations about location and the grammatical relevance of conceptually-encoded content are in order. Among other thing, the relativity of location would predict restrictions on the AP predicate that are not captured by aspectual features related to the SL/IL distinction, as we will see next.

## 6 Restriction on the DP (subject) and AP (predicate)

As we already mentioned, further facts –following from the proposed semantics– can be noted in the *quirky* occurrences under consideration. In particular, we refer to the contrast drawn between *ser* and *estar* by the different patterns of compatibility with the other constituents of the clause. In this respect, we want to emphasize that even if this implies a semantic contrast rooted on extragrammatical levels –as the use of *estar* in the delivery of IL predicates stems, as we proposed above, from a cognitive operation available for locative predication (to be dealt with in the next section)–, this mismatch is grammatically relevant, as it yields selectional patterns and restrictions (i) on the AP predicate –which remain elusive to aspectual (i.e., SL/IL) features–, and (ii) on the DP subject, which seem to respond to either pragmatic (Leonetti & Escandell 1995, i.a.) or cognitive factors (Talmy 2000).

### 6.1 Restrictions on the adjectival predicate

On the one hand, there is the inescapable fact that quirky (ILP) readings of *estar* depend on the kind of adjective combined with the copula. Among other things, the adjectival predicate must feature semantic properties compatible with a trait/position ascribed from the viewpoint of the speaker. This means that, in order to allow an IL/epistemic predication, the adjective needs to possess something else that allows for the positioning of the token described in a site relative to the viewpoint of the speaker. Unsurprisingly, evaluative (29a) adjectives (Dixon 1977, Demonte 1999) make a perfect choice for quirky uses of *estar*, and so do elatives (29b). However, other adjectives are not so easily combined with this copula (29c); and, even if they could –under very extraordinary circumstances according to word knowledge– they would not allow, as we will see next, the kind of predication under analysis.

- (28) a. Esta casa está {buena/agradable/cara}  
 b. Esta casa está {preciosa/horrible/repugnante/feísima}  
 c. Esta casa está {\*?blanca /\*?cuadrada /\*peruana /\*regional/\*típica/\*grande}

According to one of the possible definitions, an epistemic reading —like that allowed by quirky uses of *estar*, such as (29a, b)— is related to the existence of a situational frame whereby (i.e., some circumstances or parameters arise so that) the individual (X) is placed in a situation indicated in terms of distance from or in relation to the location of another. Besides matching the conceptual entailments of location exposed above (cf. Section 5), this means that X is described as having some property by virtue of (its position within) a given frame of reference, and, more importantly, that outside such a frame, the belief that the property is possessed by X may no longer hold.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the possibility that the property may be no longer ascribed to the subject does not depend on a stage in its life (a temporal slice, in the Carlsonian definition), but on the frame against which it is located.

For instance, the epistemic/IL reading of *estar* in a case like *La casa está espectacular* arises as one conceive a situation where the house excels —for example, it features two floors a garden and a balcony. However, if we describe the same house in a frame where the standard is set by other residences —e.g., within the frame of luxury residential areas populated by houses featuring four floors, rooftop decks with a Jacuzzi, beautiful beach and ocean views, multiple patios and a customized gourmet kitchen—, then this same house-token would not be deemed (or positioned) as *espectacular*, just because there is a different set of Ys setting the standard for X’s site. Rather importantly, the fact that the property is no longer ascribed to the house has nothing to do with SL predication.

In fact, adjectives not implying a position held from the viewpoint of the speaker such as *feliz*, *alegre*, *triste* do not allow an IL predication with *estar*, even when they actually pose no problem in rendering IL predications *per se* (cf. *La mujer [es] feliz*).<sup>28</sup> In other words, the restriction follows not from aspectual restrictions (e.g., IL-hood) but from conceptual tenets related to the locative relation denoted by *estar*. By the same token, color adjectives like *blanca* (29c) are also incompatible with *estar* IL predication as they do not entail a position sensitive to the standard or position of other (comparable) entities, ascribed from the perspective of the speaker, nor a trait valid within a particular frame<sup>29</sup> either. Thus, even

<sup>27</sup>Not in the sense of conditions delivering a SL reading of IL constructions, as seen in §2.

<sup>28</sup>Of course there is an exception, since *alto* can also be ascribed from the perspective of the speaker (cf. *Este balcón está muy alto* [this balcony is too high]; and, yet, *estar* does not *coerce* it into a SL-reading.

<sup>29</sup>Abstracting away from the relativity of what is considered ‘white’, in the sense of Kearns

when information provided by the C-I systems may invite us to predict oddity of *blanca* in combination with *estar* because of the relative stability of this property (at least in a house) and the SL-hood of the copula, what is actually blocked is the epistemic reading. This is exactly what the perspectival location —i.e., the localist implementation of the implied comparison model, which we will present in detail next— predicts. Indeed, we may want to consider that *Esta casa está blanca* could only be deemed acceptable in a context in which an X/X kind of comparison is at stake (e.g., comparing the whiteness of the house against its usual hue, very much in the sense discussed above with regard to (26b)). So, against all odds, considering the semantic nature of the adjective as a stable/permanent property (IL adjective), *estar blanco* —and, perhaps, *cuadrado* or *grande*— may only be acceptable if applying only to a stage in the lifetime of the house.<sup>30</sup> In sum, a SL reading might be available, though an epistemic/IL reading will not. The same goes to adjectives indicating nationality/origin, shape, size etc. (29c). On this account, we want to emphasize that even when the properties blocking an epistemic/IL predication are most likely codified by extralinguistic systems<sup>31</sup>, that does not make them grammatically irrelevant. Among other things, because *esta casa está blanca*, if accepted, will show the syntactic behavior associated with SL-hood (as reviewed in §2.1); whereas the behavior of a quirky *estar* predication like ‘*esta casa está espectacular*’ will not necessarily adjust to (and therefore, be predicted by) those patterns.

In this respect, it is important to underline that the fact that *estar* may be able to deliver IL predications does not imply that the copula will accommodate every IL adjective. In fact, Spanish adjectives representative of the class of individual/stable predicates such as *psicópata*, *egocéntrico*, *idóneo* (cf. Demonte 1999: 142) are utterly incompatible with *estar*, even in an IL reading, for very much the same reasons exposed above. That is, the restriction is not based on aspectual features; indeed, these adjectives might also be allowed in exceptional conditions only in a SL reading, just as it was the case for *blanco* in (29c).

On the other hand, and contrary to what it might be expected *prima facie*, our proposal would make the right predictions about epistemic adjectives. Indeed, adjectives like *presunto*, *falso*, *verdadero*, imply epistemic judgments and, nevertheless, they cannot be combined with *estar* no matter how hard we try. More interestingly, this restriction also escapes aspectual distinctions.<sup>32</sup>

(2007).

<sup>30</sup>Given a scenario, for example, in which the house has been modified (e.g. rooms were added).

<sup>31</sup>Since color or shape being ascribed objectively and not subjectively is something rooted outside grammar.

<sup>32</sup>In fact, the incompatibility of these adjectives with *estar* has been an issue of content since Bosque (1990) pointed it out. Leonetti & Escandell (2002) offer an argumentation based on the nature of the subject, as it “do[es] not seem to be conceivable as *the object of perception*” (Escandell & Leonetti 2002:11 [emphasis ours]). Even if these authors make this claim while working on a

(29) Este razonamiento está {\*cierto/\*verdadero/\*falso/\*presunto/\*real}

At least as far as our knowledge goes, the adjectives in (30) are essentially characterized by the fact they not assign properties; instead, they express the intention with which a concept applies to its referent—in fact, they are referred to as *adjetivos intencionales*; Demonte (1999:140). In practical terms, and following Demonte’s example, in *El presunto asesino* [the alleged killer], *presunto* does not convey a property of the killer, but it actually refers to the fact that the person described may or may be nor a killer. This involves two predictable conflicts with *estar*. First and foremost, as these adjectives do not describe the situation of (referent of the) subject—rather, they scope over the intention linking the concept conveyed by the N and its referent—, and, therefore they cannot be conceived of as abstract locations/positions in which an entity can be placed. On the other hand, as Demonte (1999:139) claims—and as it also follows from the conceptualization offered before—, these adjectives cannot enter comparative relations, thus another inescapable conflict with the semantics we propose for *estar* arises.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, and quite interestingly, the division between open and closed-scale adjectives, which is expected to correlate with the delivery of IL and SL predicates respectively (Husband 2010), does not seem to be as relevant to the IL reading of *estar* as (31) indicates (cf. also Fábregas 2012).

(30) Esta pizza está {picante/seca} (para mí).

## 6.2 Restrictions on the DP

On the other hand, there are visible restrictions on the subject that also fit the expression of a relative position. According to this, the conceptual (locative) properties of *estar* can be deemed syntactically relevant in that they trigger specific selectional patterns on the DP.<sup>34</sup>

In particular, we refer to empirical data indicating that *ser* seems compatible with either indefinite or definite DPs, whereas *estar* (in both guises) usually accommodates definite DPs. In point of fact, this tendency has been largely reported in the analysis of this copula within the frame of its alternation with *haber* and the instantiation of the definiteness effect in Spanish (cf. Leonetti 2008:147).

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completely different agenda (i.e., coercion), the remark they offer might prove functional to our proposal. In particular, as the subject related to these predicates cannot be *the object of perception*, location from the viewpoint of the speaker (which is what we claim *estar* to convey) would not be feasible.

<sup>33</sup>Though we cannot proceed any further, the argument could benefit from a fine-grained elaboration, and it will certainly be the subject of subsequent research.

<sup>34</sup>For more details on the fact that these patterns remain equally restrictive both in topographical and in abstract uses (cf. Mangialavori Rasia 2013).

When shifted into the domain of abstract location, we may note that, as the pairing between (32) and (33) shows, the *ser/estar* alternation is free —though not semantically trivial— as long as the N is headed by a definite DP.<sup>35</sup>

- (31) a. El jamón {es/está} fenomenal.  
 b. La mujer {es/está} buena
- (32) a. Cierta jamón {es/?está} fenomenal.  
 b. Alguna mujer {es/?está} buena.

In our view, this effect can also be related to the denotation of a (concrete /abstract) site and the restrictions imposed by cognitive levels. In this case, what is determined by the conceptual construal and cognitive systems is the specificity of the object described. As *estar* locates objects in space (be it abstract or concrete), then these objects need to be specific. This is due to the fact that, according to the prototypical conceptualization, in order to be located in (either abstract or concrete) space, the object must be demarcated as an individuated entity. Moreover, in the ideal scenario, there should also be a speaker's inference as to the addressee's ability to identify some referent that the speaker is currently specifying; and on this identification depends the acceptability of (33). Thus, the marginality of this example is largely determined by human sense of location, which establishes that entities which *are impalpable, vague and perhaps faint are not amenable to localization in space* (Talmy 2000:154). In fact, it is a widely known generalization that NPs headed by a definite D and proper nouns are accommodated by locative constructions; and, in fact, this predicts *estar*'s distribution in contexts of complementary alternation (against *haber*).

Now, if we consider that Spanish definite articles allow both specific and generic (or kind/token) readings, an interesting pattern arises.

Let us begin by noting that *ser* allows both readings with DPs. For instance, a construction like *La mujer es bonita* invites a reading in which the woman, in the generic sense, is defined as a kind of entity pleasing to the eye (cf. *La mujer es bonita; el hombre, no, y los niños, sólo en ciertos casos* [Women are beautiful, men are not, and children, only in certain cases]). However, at the same time, it allows an alternate reading in which the woman defined as 'bonita' is a specific/defined

<sup>35</sup>Although IL predicates have been related to strong construals (Milsark's generalization), it should be also taken into account that this has been rebutted on several works (cf. Svenonius 1996) as this appears to be an epiphenomenon related to the propositional nature of some subjects. In any case, we feel one caveat is in order here, and it is that we are dealing with these data from a cognitive point of view, i.e., abstracting away from matters of pragmatic choices, interpretation of categorical judgments and topic/focus patterns (addressed in great detail by Jimenez-Fernández 2012).

woman (i.e., a token-woman), presumably known at least by the speaker. By contrast, *estar* apparently seems to exclude the first option, since an utterance like *La mujer está bonita* does not evoke the ception of all women generically, but just that of one ‘palpable’ (in the Talmian sense) woman. In other words, the trait *bonita* is assigned to a token-woman, or, at least, one which is identified or singled out by the speaker.<sup>36</sup>

The case of (32a)-(33a) mirrors this situation, as the combination with *ser* invites two possible readings –we can either interpret that the ham, as type of food, is incredibly delicious (generic/kind reading), or that a given piece of ham has this property (specific/token reading). In turn, the combination with *estar* only supports the second option, as it does not evoke the ception of *ham* generically, but just of one ‘palpable’ ham, which must be, at least, identified by the speaker in order to be located/positioned in a given site from his/her viewpoint. In sum, in order to become a viable utterance in Spanish in combination with the locative copula, the reading of *la mujer* or *el jamón* in (32) should only be a specific one (i.e., a token-reading). In point of fact, *La mujer está buena*, if uttered out of the blue, would leave us wondering which specific lady the speaker is talking about.

Indeed, the felicity of this construction increases considerably if the (referent of the) subject is singled out or specified by grammatical means, namely, by a genitive complement or a demonstrative determiner (34). Otherwise, its acceptability would depend on (its individualization within) the domain of implied/understood information, as (33) suggested. In this respect, the widely-known observation about definite DPs in existential constructions forcing a locative/topographic reading (cf. Moro 1997 i.a.) converges with the appreciations we offer here.<sup>37</sup>

Actually, these considerations seem to fall nicely inside a general theory of cognitive structures claiming that the ception of genericness in human cognition may occur only at the non-spatial kind of attribution (cf. Talmy 2000:157). On this account, facts like those illustrated by (34) become utterly predictable, and so does the generic reading for the non-spatial copular predication available for the non-locative copula (*ser*).<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Even if *estar* (on the “IL” interpretation explored in this paper) could be argued to be compatible with a kind-referring DP subject, as an anonymous reviewer indicates, it is not compatible with referents which cannot be identified or individuated by the speaker (i.e., if we say *Los jamones de Teruel están espectaculares* we assume that they must be singled out by the speaker when she/he places them within the reference frame set by a second object); in addition, there is also the presumption that the speaker must have tasted them.

<sup>37</sup>Moreover, similar locative sentences are characterized by the presence of a focal definite DP in pragmatically-based accounts (cf. Leonetti 2008). For a different take on the problem based on information structure (cf. Jiménez-Fernández 2012).

<sup>38</sup>The more straightforward version (Pepe’s sister is pretty) is avoided in order to reflect, somehow, the additional semantic flavor entailed by *estar*.

- (33) a. *La mujer* ?({*de Pepe/esa*}) *está buena*  
 The wife of Pepe/that is pretty  
 ‘Pepe’s wife is attractive’ / ‘That woman is attractive’
- b. *La casa* \*?({*de la esquina/del Intendente/esa*}) *está espectacular*  
 The house of the corner/of-the Mayor/that is amazing  
 ‘I find {the house on the corner/the Mayor’s house/ that house} amazing’

By the same token, it may also be noted that the fact that determiners such as *un* deliver contexts allowing a choice between *ser* and *estar* (35a) can be largely related to its ambiguity. In broad terms, the combination with *estar* leads to the interpretation of *un* as a quantifier signaling one entity within a set or group —though not as an indefinite/unspecific determiner, in the fashion allowed by *ser*—, thus forcing a disambiguation sketchily illustrated in (35c). This might be more visible in the glosses, as the two interpretations correspond to two different determiners (a/one) in English.

- (34) a. {*El/este/aqué*} actor {*es/está*} fenomenal  
 ‘The/This/That actor is great’
- b. {*Cierto/Un*} actor {*es/?está*} fenomenal  
 ‘Certain/An actor is great’
- c. *Un*[o] [*de los*] actor[*es*] {*es/está*} fenomenal  
 ‘One of the actors is great’

## 7 Two kind of locations

To finish our proposal, we will present the localist conceptualization of the implied comparison model accommodating SL and IL readings.

From our perspective, the existence of two kinds of stative predications delivered by *estar* (SLP/ILP) is due to the convergence of two phenomena: (i) the fact that location is established in relation to a secondary object setting a parameter of contrast; and (ii) the fact that this secondary object can be instantiated either by a different stage/state went through by the same individual (i.e., a location relative to a prior/former location of the same entity) or by another individual. Taking up Franco & Steinmetz’ model of implied comparison, what we mean is that the relativity of location makes it possible to locate an object in space either in a X/X or in a X/Y relation, as we sketchily illustrate in (36).

- (35) a. Position occupied by X [individual<sub>1</sub>]... (*relative to*)... Position occupied by Y [token-individual<sub>2</sub>/kind]
- b. Position occupied by X [stage<sub>1</sub>]... (*relative to*)... Position occupied by X [stage<sub>2</sub>]

Let us now see how this approach holds up against the data discussed in this paper.

On the one hand, the SLP reading is easily explained by an X/X relation. Thus, the ‘location’ or ‘situation’ conveyed by *estar* in its regular use (37) is understood as contrastive, transitory or temporally bounded given the implied comparison with respect to (i) other situations in which the same entity (X) was/will be found or (ii) the usual position occupied by X (which must be different to the current one). In sum, the situation would match the proposal laid out by Franco & Steinmetz in the sense that it implies a comparison against the entity and other instances of itself.

- (36) Radha está fenomenal [antes {no lo estaba tanto/estaba pasada de peso}]  
 ‘Radha is splendid’ [{she wasn’t that way/she was overweight} before]

By contrast, as the occurrences now under discussion pattern with ILPs rather than with SLPs, then an X/Y kind of comparison should be expected. Interestingly enough, the locative perspective allows a cognitively-based explanation for an X/Y relation in *estar*. We can start by noting that, as soon as you work with individuals, rather than with stages, you can give them a place (i.e., locate/classify them) either (a) within a group or (b) in relation to the position marked by others (individually). According to this, atypical *estar* constructions could be argued to imply the comparison of X against either (a) one or more entities (Y) providing the standard by which the quality denoted by the AP is attributed to the subject of the clause (X) —i.e., a group—, or (b) against a single (comparable) entity (Y) occupying a different position from the speaker’s standpoint or perspective, thus X’s site indicated in terms of distance from or in relation to this Y (as posed in section 5 above) —i.e., a position marked by others.<sup>39</sup>

In our view, this is what determines the main difference with respect to *ser*, as both copulas succeed in delivering IL predicates though they are not trivially interchangeable, and the clauses yielded by them are not synonymic. Indeed, both copulas may eventually draw a comparison in reference to the norm of members of a class or set possessing that quality (X/Y relation). However, as we saw above in section 2, *ser* is essentially characterized by expressing a property that is somehow ‘possessed’ by the subject (cf. Arche 2006 i.a.). In turn, *estar* also defines the entity as an individual, though it does not imply possession, as it does so by locating the entity within a reference frame (set by the secondary object Y). This frame may

<sup>39</sup>By means of illustration, note that these cases can be paraphrased with other originally spatial predicates that conform to a similar conceptual construal (38) (roughly put: find/locate X at Z).

- (i) Yo la encuentro fenomenal [en relación a las otras mujeres]  
 ‘I find her stunning’ [in relation to other women]

either (a) conform the norm according to which phenomenal is imputed to Radha (38a), or (b) offer the reference in relation to which Radha is located within a given set —that of women deemed phenomenal by the speaker— in (38b), in agreement with the two options for location of individuals offered above.

- (37) a. Radha está fenomenal  
 [→ pertenece al grupo de mujeres consideradas excepcionalmente atractivas/norma: ‘mujer fenomenal’]  
 ‘Radha is a very attractive woman’  
 [→ she belongs to the set of women regarded as exceptionally attractive/‘attractive woman’ norm]
- b. Radha está fenomenal  
 [{María no tanto/Carla está pasada de peso}]  
 ‘Radha is a very attractive woman’  
 [{María is not that attractive/Carla is overweight}]

In this respect, we want to emphasize that the ‘comparison’ is clearly not an extension of the X/X relation (as posited by Franco & Steinmetz), since in neither case the entity is compared against itself. Indeed, the evidence gathered above clearly indicated that these predicates are not about stages, but about individual properties, and that the individual is located as a whole (thus triggering, among other things, LifeTime effects), and, as we already claimed, a X/Y implied comparison is expected on conceptual grounds.<sup>40</sup>

Therefore, by readjusting Franco & Steinmetz’ proposal, we would be able to account for the fact that in regular *estar* occurrences like (37) or (39a) Radha is described as *fenomenal*; the implication being be that Radha’s present appearance (i.e., her situation) is held in relation to the situation/position in which she usually is found (e.g., her usual looks) or the situation in which she was in a previous temporal gap, perhaps because she dropped some pounds or had a makeover. By contrast, in quirky cases like (38a,b) the implication would be that her beauty is prominent compared to other women —either by comparison with one or more women positioned by the speaker as not-good looking (38b), or with one or more entities providing the standard *fenomenal* (38a). This alternative could be summarized in pairings like (39), which intend to make explicit the different entailments associated with regular *estar* occurrences (represented by (39a) and the alternative use described in this paper (39b).

<sup>40</sup>Apart from this, our proposal has the advantage of avoiding a strict dependency on (though there might be sensitivity to) discursive levels (cf. Maienborn’s approach, which by claiming two semantically null copulas fail to explain many facts observed).

- (38) a. Radha está fenomenal [antes estaba bastante floja]  
 ‘Radha is splendid [she was pretty plain before]’  
 b. Radha está fenomenal [su hermana no es ni de cerca tan bonita]  
 ‘Radha is splendid [her sister is not nearly as good-looking]’

All in all, the implication of an implied comparison (be it of the X/X or Y/X kind) can be explained on the basis of the conceptual tenets introduced in section 5, which also account for finer-grained conceptual entailments. For instance, given this relativity, it remains implicit that a secondary object is needed as a reference by virtue of its known spatial (situational) disposition. Accordingly, the object is located as follows: the primary object (i.e., the subject referent) features unknown spatial properties (situation) to be determined; therefore, the secondary object acts as a reference entity, having known properties that can characterize the primary object’s unknowns. Indeed, this matches certain cognitive implications (in the Talmian sense) that can be noticed in *estar* clauses, as the primary object is seen as more recently located on the scene (e.g., in awareness) and appears as an object of greater concern or relevance (more salient, once perceived), whilst the secondary object is located earlier on the scene or in memory<sup>41</sup> and can be characterized as an object of lesser concern/relevance (more backgrounded, once primary object is perceived).

### 7.1 Further features captured by Perspectival Location

Apart from this, the approach offered here also captures an already largely described flavor (cf. Gili Gaya 1943 [2001] §46, Escandell & Leonetti 2002, F. Leborans 1999), though yet unaccounted for in connection with *estar*’s spatial content. The general intuition we refer to is that *estar* implies a classification depending on the speaker’s opinion; whereas *ser* describes the subject as possessing a certain quality regardless of the speaker’s standing. In our account, the relativity of location is directly associated with the fact that the property is ascribed from the *viewpoint* of the speaker—in fact, this component is what predicted *estar*’s compatibility with certain APs, as seen in section 6— and this fits the standard conceptualization of locating an object in space. Indeed, the involvement of the viewpoint matches the conceptual terms involved in the setup of location, as long as the concept of *perspectival location* (cf. Talmy 2000: 68) is considered. Thus, the ‘subjectivity’ in *estar* is due to the fact that the conceptual system establishes a perspective point from which the entity (X) is cognitively regarded (situated), be it either in relation to other stages or other individuals. This also predicts the compatibility patterns for AP predicates laid out above.

<sup>41</sup>Thus, matching the (debatable, though largely known) claim that *estar* compares the object either with another similar, already known, object or with the speaker’s expectation, as we mentioned with regard to (26).

Finally, this proposal also fits other implications signaling a difference between *ser* and *estar* IL predications. For instance, there is a general consensus as to the fact that *estar* predication implies (i) the existence of the (token) referent, (ii) a judgment about a specific item identified by the speaker and (iii) the direct appreciation of this item by the speaker, as (41) indicates (cf. F. Leborans 1999:2428). By contrast, *ser* seems to convey a generic statement implying no direct experience on the speaker’s end, nor the existence of such entity. In fact, the sentences in (40) can be uttered even if the speaker never met Radha nor tasted the pizza because, by using *ser*, there is no opinion or evaluation necessarily implied. In our view, and in sheer contrast with the case of *estar*, not being a perspectival location set by the speaker, no viewpoint is involved.

- (39) a. La pizza es buena [yo no la probé]  
           ‘Pizza is good<sup>42</sup> [I haven’t tasted it]’  
       b. Radha es buena [yo no la conozco]  
           ‘Radha is (a) good (person) [I haven’t met her]’
  
- (40) a. La pizza está buena [\*yo no la probé]  
           ‘The pizza is (very) good [\*I haven’t tasted it]’  
       b. Radha está buena [\*yo no la conozco]  
           ‘Radha is stunning [\*I haven’t met her]’

In fact, the perspectival point from which the location/situation is established must be somehow specified with *estar*, whereas this requisite does not hold for *ser*.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, and even if we will not proceed any further on this issue, note that *ser* allows a discrepancy that becomes problematic with *estar* (42), as it already involves a location set from the speaker’s standing, and therefore, a different position is not liable.

- (41) a. Andar sin comer y sin dormir no es bueno (pero yo creo que sí es bueno)  
           ‘To go without food and without sleep is not good (though I think it is good)’

<sup>42</sup>In the sense, namely, that pizza is good for your health; though we would nowadays disagree.

<sup>43</sup>For example, if we say *Andar sin comer y sin dormir no es bueno* [To go without food and without sleep is not good]’ it can be understood as a general belief not involving a specific viewpoint. By contrast, in the case of *Andar sin comer y sin dormir no está bueno* [To go without food and without sleep is not a ride] a dative complement explicating in sentential syntax what is conceptually implied is expected (e.g. *para ella*). The fact that this can be syntactically elided is not an indication of viewpoint not being relevant; in fact what happens is that it can be retrieved somehow (contextually or deictically) or, otherwise, it is assumed that this is held from the speaker’s standing; whereas none of this necessarily happens with *ser*.



- b. Andar sin comer y sin dormir no está bueno (\*pero yo creo que sí está bueno)  
 ‘To go without food and without sleep is not a ride (though I think it is a ride)’

### 8 Summing up

Although *estar* has traditionally been related to SL predication, in this paper we present evidence indicating that this copula also delivers predicates with IL properties. By suggesting a different implementation of Franco & Steinmetz’s analysis of SL/IL predication, we relate this to the entailment of two different kinds (X/X vs. X/Y) of [implied] comparisons, accommodating SL and IL predicates respectively.

Still, even if the delivery of ILPs by *estar* can be lined up with the semantic properties usually ascribed to *ser* (e.g., LifeTime effects, absence of temporal boundedness, etc.), the copula choice is not semantically trivial. In particular, we assume that when *estar* is involved we are dealing with a locative predication no matter whether it describes a topographical or a more abstract sense of objects in space, or whether there is temporal boundedness in the situation conveyed or not. If the latter does not occur, instead of proposing a mutation/coercion from SL to IL predicate, we put forward an alternative approach which follows directly from its spatial semantics. On this account, instances like (1) become predictable and consistent with the semantic underpinnings of *estar* by virtue of a cognitively-determined fact (i.e., location is relative, set in relation to a secondary object. Thus, quirky *estar* constructions can be argued to denote the location of an entity (X) as well, the only difference being that, in this case, the position it is not set in relation to other points formerly or successively occupied by the same entity (X/X comparison). Instead, the entity (X) is located as a whole, individually, in relation to other (comparable) individuals (Y) setting the standard by which a given site is ascribed to X; hence, a X/Y kind of implied comparison –which happens to be the one associated to IL predicates– arises.

Whereas the implied comparison model accounts for the contrastive flavor largely described in *estar* in a way that also fit cognitive entailments related to locative predicates, the fact that this situation/position may be construed from a perspectival location would explain both the involvement of the speaker’s perspective –thus capturing the judgmental/subjective flavor described since Gili Gaya (1943)– and the contrastiveness traditionally pointed out in semantic studies. Moreover, it captures not only finer-grained semantic entailments (novelty, prominence) and truth conditions, but also grammatically-relevant patterns drawn by restrictions on both the DP subject and the AP predicate.

To our understanding, these considerations are interesting not only in view of grammatical facts determined by cognitive operations available in a natural language featuring a locative copula –thus, also applicable to languages with a similar



features like Portuguese—, but as indicators of the interaction between semantic information encoded by extralinguistic (conceptual) systems and grammar.

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