

### **P incorporation and Spanish copulas: it may be not so different from dancing a jig.**

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Many studies have attempted to capture the fact that SER/ESTAR feature distinct semantic content relevant enough to draw different (sometimes complementary) selectional restrictions on AP complements (1) and nontrivial differences between minimal pairs where they overlap (2). The implications of this semantic content do not end in the delivery of two different types of stative predicate: they also comprise occurrences in non-stative environments (3). Whatever is drawing the contrast in (2) is relevant to the point of (i) precluding free alternation even within a same aspectual type (cf. (3)) and (ii) delivering a consistent predication even when combined with APs featuring opposite aspectual properties (4), differences prevailing above mere aspectual type (cf. (5)). The question is basically one: What do Spanish copulas combine in each case in order to mean what they mean and do what they do? Here we will build our answer on P-incorporation hypothesis and address two specific problems about this approach.

- (1) a. {#Ser/Estar} {contento/descalzo/harto/lleño}  
BEser BEestar happy barefoot sick full  
b. {Ser/#Estar} {amable/grosero/capaz/mortal/idóneo/válido}  
BEser BEestar kind rude able mortal suitable valid
- (2) {Ser/Estar} calmo  
BEser BEestar quiet
- (3) a. Un periodista vio al diputado {\*estando/siendo} grosero [con un colega] (cf. Arche 2006)  
‘Some journalist saw the congressman being rude [to a fellow]’  
b. La habitación {\*será/estará} (completamente) fría {en pocos minutos/hasta el último minuto}.  
‘The room will be completely cold in few minutes / to the last minute’
- (4) Juan está inteligente [hoy] (BE<sub>SLP</sub>+AP<sub>ILP</sub>=SLP)  
‘Juan is smart [today]’
- (5) Este jamón ibérico {es/está} excelente. (cf. Roby 2009, Leonetti 2015, Mangialavori 2013)  
‘This Iberian ham is excellent’

**P in Spanish copulas. Advantages & Background.** Different proposals converge in the assumption that the semantic properties of ESTAR can be better explained by appealing to a locative constituent, roughly represented through *at* —conceived either semantically, as abstract location à la Jackendoff (7), or syntactically, as a preposition-like element or p-feature. In our case, this take has previously helped to unfold a unified account of ESTAR embracing its two apparently different guises (Mangialavori 2013), and, subsequently, the two aspectually non-trivial alternations involved (SER/ESTAR-ESTAR/HABER), with the additional advantage of avoiding the long-encouraged lexical proliferation (e.g. Bosque 2001). The involvement of a prepositional element can also be employed in developing a unified account of the selectional restrictions on the copular complements that remain elusive to semantic (aspectual) features. Such patterns (mostly excluding Ns) seem to be better captured on the basis of argumental structure of the lexical categories chosen to head the SC predicate (A/P/Adv), under the claim that A/Adv are not primitive categories, but the result of the conflation of P+N (Kayne 1997, Jayaseelan 2007, Mateu 2002, Gallego & Uriagereka 2001). Hence, a significant simplification is allowed by the insight that predicates taken by ESTAR (6) share major structural properties.

- (6) Juan está {calmo / en calma / bien /\*buena persona}  
Juan is {calm / in peace / fine / \*good person}
- (7) [State BE [Thing JUAN], [Place AT [Property CALM]]] (cf. Gruber (1965), Jackendoff (1983, 1990))

In turn, the involvement of a prepositional constituent receives further support from aspectual properties. Namely, abstract location (*at*) could readily explain (i) the inchoative and/or resultative flavor delivered by ESTAR (e.g., terminal coincidence *p* à la Hale & Keyser 1993:72, cf. Gallego & Uriagereka 2011; INCH<sub>p</sub>feature in Zagona 2009), as well as two instances falling out of this program: (ii) the temporally-bounded flavor rendered in non-resultative occurrences (and, thus, the selection of AP predicates not bearing a specific [terminal/INCH] feature), and (iii) the specific semantics of ILPs rendered by ESTAR (5).

**Main problem.** Yet, what is clear from ongoing discussion is that consensus on the exact nature of this element is far from being reached.

**Proposal.** To avoid the limitations of a p-feature approach, we will appeal to H&K's (1993:72) view on semantic and syntactic structure of lexical categories and analyze *at* as a  $V^0$ -incorporated preposition (8). We will submit that SER and ESTAR result from the combination of a semantically-trivial *v* head (=BE) and a P ( $P_{HAVE}$  and  $P_{AT}$ , respectively) which provides semantic constituency to V and structurally heads the SC predicate (i.e., sits both DPs). Semantically, we will follow H&K also in assuming that the notional type of V is a generic event (states included), for this solves the potential contradiction of P-insertion onto a verb with opposite aspectual properties (e.g. ESTAR=ser+en, Gallego & Uriagereka 2011). In turn, the notional type of P would amount to a (bi)relation that includes, but is not to be strictly identified with, spatial or locational relations—in fact, *have* (employed for SER following Harley's 2005  $P_{HAVE}$ ) has been considered as a suppletive form of *be* plus an expression of location (Uriagereka 2008:383). As for the role of P in the aspectual configuration of the copula, we will introduce Harley's (2005) proposal on measuring out effects: accordingly, the specific aspectual properties allowing the range in (1)-(5) and (most crucially) the relative immunity to the semantic specifications of the copular predicate (4) would be readily explained by the fact that the latter is not sitting in a position from where it can measure-out the event; rather, P is.

(8) [ $V^0$  [ $\uparrow$ ] [ $_{SC}$  DP] P(*at*) [DP]]

**Subsequent problem.** As it stands, P would need to be either pre-empted before Vocabulary Insertion [VI] to sit the overt PP (*en*) or conflated with DP to render an A/Adv. Besides, if these verbs bear a P incorporated in them, a logical question is what prevents them from occurring without an overt PP complement; yet, this does not dismiss the fact that there must be a compatibility between the structural properties of the predicate and the lexical head allegedly incorporated into V. **Our answer.** A similar structural challenge is posed by hyponyms selected by verbs already undergoing conflation/incorporation of the N complement of V (e.g. *dance a jig*, (9)b). Both cases in (9) involve significant restrictions on lexical selection, which is only allowed for items bearing a semantic relation with the element incorporated into V (cf.(1)). With this background, we can say something now about P incorporation in SER/ESTAR.

(9) a. [ $_{VP}$   $V_{BE}$ {*at*} ESTAR [ $_{PP}$  [NP P{*at*} en [*calma*]]]

b. [ $_{VP}$  V{*dance*} [NP{*dance*} a *jig*]]

(Hale & Keyser 2002)

The problem goes away by the *replumbing* of an incorporation into Merge-VI (H&K 2002:90).

**In sum.** We assume that the relevant ingredients here are: (i) the relations expressed in the argument structure configuration, and (ii) a determination between certain semantic features of the incorporated P and the designated complement. We will take this classificatory selectional relation linking V to its complement (arbitrarily represented by braced indices in (9)) to license the overt complement (SP/AP), above and beyond the purely structural relation expressed by the verb-complement configuration alone. **Advantages:** The inability of SER/ESTAR to take a nonovert complement, even with a P incorporated within, is explained by two facts (i) SER/ESTAR are semantically too light to succeed merely by satisfying the EPP; (ii) the relation between the NP and the copular predicate is rendered by P, not by V, and the selection of the VP-internal NP subject rests on this configuration. The incorporated P would readily handle both the delivery of predications with diverse aspectual properties even out of aspectually-trivial SC predicates (2), and the constant aspectual properties of the resulting predicate (even with a SC predicate featuring opposite properties (4) or within a same predicate-level type (5)) via event-P homomorphism. As the element sitting in the measure-out position would be P, then P would be responsible for the specific formal properties of the verb ensuing from its incorporation, the selectional restrictions, the aspectual contour of the predicate, and the relative insensitivity to the aspectual specifications of the AP, thus capturing the facts in (1)-(6) at once, but staying clear of the problems posed by other P—incorporation proposals.