

Spanish individual-level and stage-level adjectives revisited

RAFAEL MARÍN

rafael.marin@univ-lille3.fr

1. Introduction

As is known, Spanish (along with other Romance languages, such as Portuguese and Catalan) has two copular verbs, SER and ESTAR, to express what in other languages (e.g. French or English) is expressed via a single copula. Hence, in French we find *Adán est intelligent* and also *Eva est malade*, and in English *Adán is intelligent* and *Eva is ill*, in every case using the same copular verb (*être* in French and *to be* in English). However, in Spanish we find *Adán es inteligente*, but not **Eva es enferma*; rather, we find *Eva está enferma*. In a way, we could say that Spanish categorizes illness as something subject to temporal limits which are not applied to intelligence.

Probably, the most widespread way of trying to explain this phenomenon is by means of the well-known dichotomy between individual-level (IL) and stage-level (SL) predicates: IL adjectives combine with SER, while SL adjectives combine with ESTAR. In this paper, however, it is claimed that for an adjective to be considered IL or SL, compatibility with SER or ESTAR is not a deciding criterion. Other grammatical contexts which have been shown to be sensitive to the IL/SL distinction in Spanish (Escandell and Leonetti, 2002; Marín, 2000; 2004) also have to be taken into account.

For example, an adjective like *enfermo*, in addition to be compatible with ESTAR (*Eva está/*es enferma*), can appear in other SL contexts such as *Llegó a su casa enferma* ('She arrived home sick') or *Con el niño enfermo, no podremos salir de viaje* ('With the child sick, we will not be able to go on a trip'), while another adjective such as *inteligente*, which can only combine with SER (*Adán es/*está inteligente*), cannot appear in such contexts: **Llegó a su casa inteligente* ('S/he arrived home intelligent'); **Con el niño inteligente, no podremos salir de viaje* ('With the child intelligent, we will not be able to go on a trip'). As we will see, such a procedure will be especially appropriate when dealing with adjectives of the type *nervioso* ('nervous') or *gordo* ('fat'), compatible both with SER and with ESTAR.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 consists of a brief introduction to the problem of aspectual analysis which SER and ESTAR + adjective constructions present. In the subsequent three sections, three different groups of adjectives are examined: in section 3, SL adjectives; in section 4, so-called ambivalent adjectives, and in section 5, IL adjectives. Finally, section 6 summarizes the conclusions drawn from this work.

2. The aspect of adjectives

Lexical aspect has traditionally concentrated on the study of verbal predication, such that other grammatical categories like adjectives, PPs or adverbs, which can also constitute predicative nuclei, have not received the attention they deserve. In the concrete case of adjectives, the (few) works in which the possible aspectual valence of adjectives is specifically addressed (e.g. Lakoff, 1970; Luján, 1981; Parsons, 1990; Rothstein, 1999) agree that they denote states, although not always the same type of state.¹

Nevertheless, as pointed out above, the distinction between individual-level (IL) and stage-level (SL) predicates (Carlson, 1977; Kratzer, 1995) is the most widespread way of dealing with the aspectual meaning of adjectives. However, there is no general agreement on the definition of the IL/SL dichotomy. Here, we will apply it exclusively to states, and we will differentiate between IL states and SL states, thereby underlining the aspectual character of such a distinction, relative to the absence (IL states) or existence (SL states) of internal temporal limits associated with adjective denotation (Marín, 2004; Marín and McNally 2005).

As a starting point, we will adopt the definition of state given by Schmitt (2005) and Schmitt and Miller (2007), modified from Smith (1991):

- (1) Every subinterval I' of an Interval I where a state is true is also an interval where the same state is true.

However, to ensure that the definition in (1) is only applied to states –both states and processes are homogeneous (Bach, 1986)– we will postulate, following Rothstein (2004) that states are strongly homogeneous:

- (2) If a predicate is homogeneous then x *P-ed for y time* ENTAILS that at any time during y , x *P-ed* was true.

The idea is that states, unlike processes, do not allow for gaps in their denotation.² This way, the state denoted by *Jordi is Catalan* is true at any time, however brief, during that state.

¹ Rothstein (1999) argues that adjectives refer to mass states, while the denotations of stative verbs are count.

² Rothstein (2004: 14) gives a detailed explanation: Although it is a real world fact that , for example, the quality of John's love for Mary may change over twenty years, this is not encoded in *John loved Mary for twenty years*. [...] *John loved Mary for twenty years* entails that at any time during those twenty years he loved her (allowing for contextually irrelevant pauses, which we shall discuss when we get to activities). States are unqualified homogeneous since they are homogeneous down to instants. If John loved Mary for twenty years (without any pauses), then he loved her at each instant during that twenty year period, and there is in principle no subpart of that period which is too small to contain an event which will verify *John love Mary*. And if John believed in the afterlife till the age of twenty-five, the sentence *John believed in the afterlife* was true at any instant during that interval, no matter how small. So stative eventualities are homogeneous down to instants and contrast with the other atelic eventuality type (activities), since we cannot say that *John ran* is true at an instant, but only at an interval, although a very small one”.

In this paper, it will be assumed that the only difference between IL and SL states is related to their bounded or unbounded nature: SL states refer to a bounded state, a state which is by definition a stage, a period; for IL states, the inference of temporal persistence applies.³ Following McNally (1994), it will be assumed that this inference of temporal persistence for IL states also extends backwards to the past. Thus, as far as aspectual denotation is concerned, the main difference between a sentence such as *Jordi es catalán* ('Jordi is Catalan') and another such as *Jordi está borracho* ('Jordi is drunk') is that the latter refers to a bounded state while the former refers to a persistent state.

As for the compatibility of adjectives with SER and ESTAR, from a purely descriptive point of view it is widely accepted that Spanish adjectives fall into three classes (Luján, 1981; Fernández Leborans, 1999): (3), those which only combine with SER; (4), those which only allow ESTAR, and (5), those which are compatible with both copulas, respectively:

- (3) a. *catalán* ('Catalan'), *cauto* ('cautious'), *constante* ('constant'), *cuidadoso* ('careful'), *(des)cortés* ('(im)polite'), *(des)leal* ('(dis)loyal'), *(im)prudente* ('(im)prudent'), *(in)discreto* ('(in)discreet'), *(in)capaz* ('(in)capable'), *(in)justo* ('(un)just'), *inmoral* ('immoral'), *(in)mortal* ('(im)mortal'), *inteligente* ('intelligent'), *listo* ('clever'), *llevadero* ('bearable'), *sabio* ('wise'), *socialista* ('socialist'), *temerario* ('reckless'), *vegetariano* ('vegetarian').

b. Juan {es/*está} leal/inmoral/inteligente/odioso.

Juan {is/is} loyal/immoral/intelligent/hateful.

Juan is loyal/immoral/intelligent/hateful.

- (4) a. *absorto* ('absorbed'), *angustiado* ('anguished'), *asombrado* ('amazing'), *ausente* ('absent'), *contento* ('content'), *desnudo* ('naked'), *descalzo* ('barefoot'), *enfermo* ('ill'), *enojado* ('angry'), *harto* ('fed up'), *lleno* ('full'), *maltrecho* ('hurt'), *muerto* ('dead'), *perplejo* ('perplexed'), *presente* ('present'), *quieto* ('calm'), *satisfecho* ('satisfied'), *solo* ('alone'), *vacío* ('empty').

b. Eva {está/*es} contenta/enferma/perpleja/sola.

Eva {is/is} content/ill/perplexed/alone.

Eva is content/ill/perplexed/alone.

- (5) a. *alegre* ('happy'), *alto* ('tall'), *amplio* ('wide'), *(a)normal* ('(ab)normal'), *bajo* ('short'), *estrecho* ('narrow'), *feliz* ('happy'), *feo* ('ugly'), *flaco* ('thin'), *gordo* ('fat'), *grande* ('big'), *hermoso* ('beautiful'), *inquieto* ('restless'), *joven* ('young'), *libre* ('free'), *nervioso* ('nervous'), *pequeño* ('small'), *orgullosa* ('proud'), *tranquilo* ('tranquil'), *viejo* ('old'), *vivo* ('alive').

b. Tu hermano {es/está} alegre/gordo/inquieto/nervioso.

Your brother {is/is} happy/fat/restless/nervous.

Your brother is happy/fat/restless/nervous.

³ As Condoravdi (1992: 9) points out: "Individual-level predicates are associated with an inference of temporal persistence, stage levels are not. The inference of temporal persistence in effect specifies the following: if an eventuality is going on at time *t* and you have no information that it is not going on at some later time *t'*, then infer that it is going on at that later time *t'* as well. Note that this is a default inference, surfacing only if there is no information to the contrary".

In descriptions of Spanish, the adjectives in (3) are called IL adjectives; those in (4), SL adjectives, and those in (5), ambivalent (IL/SL) adjectives. Nevertheless, as a consequence of the present work's main claim (for an adjective to be considered IL or SL, in addition to SER/ESTAR alternation, other grammatical contexts have to be taken into account), this division will be considerably qualified.

3. Stage-level adjectives

Along with ESTAR constructions, we find several contexts in Spanish that also demand a temporally bounded denotation to their possible adjectival complements, such as pseudo-copular verbs, adjunct predicates or absolute constructions. In this section, the different behavior between IL adjectives, (3), and SL adjectives, (4), across these different contexts is discussed.

3.1. Pseudo-copular verbs

Besides copular verbs, Spanish has a wide set of verbs usually called *pseudo-copular* verbs. Generally, these are verbs that have lost all or at least a large part of their lexical meaning, which has been grammaticalized such that they are at present closer to auxiliary verbs than real lexical verbs, and in particular to *copular* verbs⁴.

Some, such as PARECER ('to seem') or SENTIRSE ('to feel') do not seem to present any aspectual constraint. Others, such as IR ('to go'), ANDAR ('to walk'), LLEVAR ('to carry'), QUEDARSE ('to remain') or SEGUIR ('continue'), which will be called *restrictive pseudo-copular* verbs, do present clear aspectual constraints; in essence, the same restrictions as with ESTAR.

As already indicated, one of the defining characteristics of pseudo-copular verbs is the loss –or, at the very least, weakening– of their lexical meaning. This is the case for verbs like IR, VENIR or ANDAR, for instance, which, when used as pseudo-copulas, have lost all or a large part of their “motion” meaning.

In terms of their aspectual constraints, these three verbs, like ESTAR, naturally combine with SL adjectives, but not with IL ones, as shown in the following examples:

- (6) a. Juan va/viene borracho.
Juan goes/comes drunk
'Juan is drunk.'
- b. Anda contento.
Walks content
'He is content.'

⁴ See Porroche (1990) and Morimoto and Pavón (2005, 2007) for a detailed discussion of the pseudo-copular character of these verbs.

- (7) a. *Juan va/viene inteligente.
 Juan goes/comes intelligent
 ‘Juan is intelligent.’
- b. *Anda discreto.
 Walks discreet.
 ‘He is discreet.’

Two other verbs, LLEVAR and QUEDAR(SE), also lose their literal meaning of movement when used as pseudo-copulas. Both accept SL adjectives, (8), as complements, but not IL ones, (9):

- (8) a. Madonna lleva contenta una hora.⁵
 Madonna carries content an hour
 ‘Madonna has been content for an hour.’
- b. Se ha quedado contento.
 SE has remained content
 ‘He has ended up content.’
- (9) a. *Javier lleva inteligente/injusto mucho tiempo.
 Javier carries intelligent/unjust much time
 ‘Javier has been intelligent/unjust for a long time.’
- b. *Se ha quedado injusto.
 SE has remained unjust
 ‘He has ended up unjust.’

As has been stated on more than one occasion (e.g. Bosque, 1990; Porroche, 1990), SEGUIR and CONTINUAR include clear presuppositional connotations in their meaning. In some way, by using SEGUIR or CONTINUAR in place of ESTAR or another pseudo-copular verb, one is making a point of the fact that a given situation –contrary to what might be expected– has not changed.

As for adjective compatibility, they naturally combine with SL adjectives, but not with IL ones:

- (10) a. Juan sigue perplejo.
 Juan continues perplexed
 ‘Juan continues to be perplexed.’
- b. Continúa absorto.
 continues absorbed
 ‘He continues to be absorbed.’

⁵As a pseudo-copular verb, LLEVAR imposes the strong syntactic requirement that it must be accompanied by a temporal complement: compare (8)a with **Madonna lleva contenta* (‘Madonna carries content’); **Santiago lleva alegre* (‘Santiago carries happy’).

- (11) a. *Sigue inteligente.
continues intelligent
'He continues to be intelligent.'
- b. *Continúa discreto.
continues discreet
'He continues to be discreet.'

Other restrictive pseudo-copular verbs, i.e. PERMANECER ('to remain'), MANTENERSE ('to maintain (oneself)'), HALLARSE ('to find (oneself)') and ENCONTRARSE ('to find (oneself)'), when in combination with adjectives, behave also identically to ESTAR: they accept SL adjectives as predicates, but not IL ones. This can be seen in the following examples:

- (12) a. Permanece/se mantiene absorto.
remains/SE maintains absorbed
'He is still/remains absorbed.'
- b. Se halla/se encuentra ausente.
SE finds/SE finds absent
'He is absent.'
- (13) a. *Permanece/se mantiene injusto.
remains/SE maintains unjust
'He is still/remains unjust.'
- b. *Se halla/se encuentra cauto.
SE finds/SE finds cautious
'He is cautious.'

The data reviewed throughout this section show that all restrictive pseudo-copular verbs without exception behave identically to ESTAR in the selection of adjectives.

3.2. Predicative complements

As several authors have shown (Hernanz, 1988; Bosque, 1989, 1990; Leonetti, 1994; Demonte and Masullo, 1999, to name just a few), subject predicative complements must necessarily denote SL situations.

The following contrasting pair of sentences, adapted from Leonetti (1994), shows that IL adjectives are unable to function as adjunct predicates of the subject, (b), while SL ones can, (a):

- (14) a. Ernesto llegó a su casa harto/furioso/borracho/enfermo.
Ernesto arrived at his house fed up/furious/drunk/sick
'Ernesto arrived at his house fed up/furious/drunk/sick.'

- b. *Ernesto llegó a su casa inteligente/francés/alto/despreciable.
Ernesto arrived at his house intelligent/French/tall/scorned
'Ernesto arrived at his house intelligent/French/tall/scorned.'

Other constructions that impose clear aspectual constraints are those formed by a verb like TENER ('to have') or DEJAR ('to leave'), which require the presence of an object-oriented predicate.⁶

- (15) Tiene sucia la camisa.
has dirty the shirt
'His/her shirt is dirty.'

The behavior of TENER and DEJAR is similar to that observed with ESTAR, the restrictive pseudo-copulas and the adjunct predicatives. They accept SL adjectives as complements, whereas IL adjectives are rejected:

- (16) a. Mario tiene enfermo/contento a su padre.
Mario has sick/content to his father
'His father is sick of/content with Mario.'
- b. Dejó perplejos/boquiabiertos a los oyentes.
left perplexed/open-mouthed to the listeners
'S/he left the listeners perplexed/open-mouthed.'
- (17) a. *Tiene inteligente/hinchable a su padre.
has intelligent/inflatable to his father
'His father is intelligent/inflatable of him.'
- b. *Ha dejado imprudentes/discretos a los oyentes.
has left imprudent/discreet to the listeners
'S/he has left the listeners imprudent/discreet.'

3.3. Predicative absolute constructions

Halfway between absolute constructions, e.g. *Una vez limpia la sala, cada cual se fue para su casa* ('Once the house was clean, everyone went home'), and parenthetical elements, we find other constructions, such as those in (18), which we shall call (following Dini, 1994) *predicative absolute constructions*, to distinguish them from what might properly be called *absolute constructions* (Hernanz and Suñer, 1999).

- (18) a. Almodóvar, deseoso de ganar el premio, se llevó una gran desilusión.
Almodóvar, desirous of win the award, SE carried a great disappointment
'Almodóvar, desirous of winning the award, was very disappointed.'
- b. Juan, maltrecho/atónito por lo ocurrido, no podía concentrarse.
Juan, hurt/astonished by the happened, no could concentrate
'Juan, hurt/astonished by what happened, couldn't concentrate.'

⁶ Without this predicative element, the sequence becomes ungrammatical: **Tiene sucia* ('Has dirty').

- c. El cerdo, hambriento/indefenso, se resignó a ser sacrificado.
 the pig, hungry/defenceless, SE resigned to be sacrificed
 ‘The pig, hungry/defenceless, resigned itself to being sacrificed.’

We may observe that the adjectives in (18) are all SL. IL adjectives are marginally accepted in these constructions (Marín, 1996):

- (19) a. ??Tu madre, odiosa, me hace la vida imposible.
 your mother, hateful, me makes the life impossible
 ‘Your mother, hateful, makes my life impossible.’
- b. ??Constante, tu conducta es muy comentada.
 constant, your conduct is very commented
 ‘Constant, your conduct is very much commented on.’
- c. ??Pierre, francés, se adaptó bien a nuestras costumbres.
 Pierre, French, SE adapted well to our customs
 ‘Pierre, French, adapted well to our customs.’

However, none of these adjectives allow the modification of *una vez (once)* or *ya (already)*, adverbs which refer to the absolute value of the construction. This once again highlights the differences that separate them from SL adjectives. In this concrete aspect, we can compare the ungrammaticality which IL adjectives induce in (20) with the acceptability of SL adjectives in (21):

- (20) a. *Julia, una vez inteligente y precavida, resolvió el problema.
 Julia, one time intelligent and cautious, resolved the problem
 ‘Julia, once intelligent and cautious, resolved the problem.’
- b. *Una vez inteligente, Esteban demostró sus cualidades.
 one time intelligent, Esteban demonstrated his qualities
 ‘Once intelligent, Esteban showed his (true) qualities.’
- c. *Joaquín, una vez cortés, se comportó como debía.
 Joaquín, one time polite, SE behaved as should
 ‘Joaquín, once polite, behaved as he should.’
- (21) a. Una vez solos, decidimos pasar a la acción.
 one time alone, we decided pass to the action
 ‘Once alone, we decided to act.’
- b. Al conferenciante, una vez borracho, no se le entendía una sola palabra.
 to-the conference participant, one time drunk, no SE to-him understood a single word
 ‘Once drunk, no one could understand a single word the conference participant was saying.’

- c. Esteban, ya exhausto, era incapaz de seguir peleando.
Esteban, already exhausted, was incapable of continue fighting
'Esteban, already exhausted, was incapable of continuing to fight.'

3.4. Absolute constructions introduced by *con*

Within the set of absolute constructions in Spanish, those that are introduced by the preposition *con* ('with') constitute a group with its own characteristics. In particular – and unlike the properly named absolute constructions– the predicative element (whether it be a participle, adjective, or PP) precedes the NP that it modifies. Suñer (1988) provides, among others, the following examples:

- (22) a. Murieron con las botas puestas.
they died with the boots put
'They died with their boots on.'
- b. En verano va con el pelo suelto.
in summer goes with the hair loose
'In summer s/he wears her/his hair down.'
- c. En la mesa quiero veros con las manos limpias.
in the table want to.see.you with the hands clean
'At the table I want to see you with your hands clean.'

Nevertheless, given that one might doubt the absolute character of the constructions in (22),⁷ it seems preferable to use examples of the type in (23), taken from Fernández Leborans (1995), in which the construction introduced by *con* appears in a peripheral position, and sufficiently separated from the matrix clause that it modifies to put into question its absolute nature:

- (23) a. Con las ventanas cerradas, no se respira bien.
with the windows closed, no SE breathes well
'One can't breathe well with the windows closed.'
- b. Con Juan enfermo, la vida no es como antes.
with Juan sick, the life no is like before
'With Juan sick, life is not the same (as before).'

Upon examining the aspectual restrictions that these constructions impose on the possible adjectives that can appear in them, we once again see a clear difference between SL and IL adjectives, since only the former produce grammatical sequences:

- (24) a. Con los participantes totalmente exhaustos, el concurso no podía continuar.
with the participants totally exhausted, the contest no could continue
'With the participants totally exhausted, the contest could not continue.'

⁷ Leonetti (1994) or Fernández Leborans (1995) consider them, rather, small clauses.

b. Con el chófer borracho, mejor que no continuemos el viaje.
with the driver drunk, better that no continue the trip
'With the driver drunk, it's better that we not continue the trip.'

c. Con el niño enfermo, no se puede trabajar.
with the child sick, no SE can to work
'With the child sick, one cannot work.'

(25) a. *Con Juan tímido, será difícil sortear esos obstáculos.
with Juan timid, will be difficult to overcome those obstacles
'With Juan timid, it will be difficult to overcome those obstacles.'

b. *Con tu hermana cortés, la reunión será un éxito.
with your sister polite, the meeting will be a success
'With your sister polite, the meeting will be a success.'

c. *Con Felipe temerario, perderán las elecciones.
with Felipe rash, will lose the elections
'With Felipe rash, they will lose the election.'

The comparative analysis realized thus far permits us to confirm that, as previously announced, various grammatical domains behave similarly –and sometimes identically– to ESTAR.

	IL adjective	SL adjective
Restrictive pseudo-copular verb	no	yes
Predicative adjunct	no	yes
TENER and DEJAR	no	yes
<i>Una vez</i> + predicative AC	no	yes
<i>Con</i> construction	no	yes
ESTAR	no	yes
SER	yes	no

These results provide additional evidence for determining the aspectual denotation of adjectives. This is especially relevant because, as we will see, the compatibility with SER and/or with ESTAR is not as reliable a criterion as it is usually assumed to be.

4. Ambivalent adjectives

As pointed out before, a large number of adjectives, such as those in (5) repeated here as (26), are compatible both with SER and with ESTAR, (27):

(26) *alegre* ('happy'), *alto* ('tall'), *amplio* ('wide'), *(a)normal* ('(ab)normal'), *bajo* ('short'), *estrecho* ('narrow'), *feliz* ('happy'), *feo* ('ugly'), *flaco* ('thin'), *gordo* ('fat'), *grande* ('big'), *hermoso* ('beautiful'), *inquieto* ('restless'), *intranquilo* ('worried'), *joven* ('young'), *libre* ('free'), *nervioso* ('nervous'), *pequeño* ('small'), *orgullosa* ('proud'), *tranquilo* ('tranquil'), *viejo* ('old'), *vivo* ('alive').

- (27) Tu hermano {es/está} alegre/gordo/inquieto/nervioso.
 your brother {is/is} happy/fat/restless/nervous
 ‘Your brother is happy/fat/restless/nervous.’

This is why these adjectives are traditionally considered to be ambivalent, i.e. they are underspecified with respect to IL/SL feature. Nevertheless, if other criteria are examined in addition to the compatibility with SER and ESTAR, among these adjectives at least two classes have to be distinguished, those resembling *nervioso*, (28), which are allowed in any SL context, and those resembling *viejo*, (29), which are not.

- (28) *alegre* (‘happy’), *feliz* (‘happy’), *inquieto* (‘restless’), *intranquilo* (‘worried’)
nervioso (‘nervous’), *tranquilo* (‘tranquil’).

- (29) *alto* (‘tall’), *bajo* (‘short’), *estrecho* (‘narrow’), *feo* (‘ugly’), *flaco* (‘thin’), *gordo* (‘fat’), *grande* (‘big’), *hermoso* (‘beautiful’), *joven* (‘young’), *pequeño* (‘small’),
viejo (‘old’).

Observe that the adjectives in (28) are possible complements of restrictive pseudo-copular verbs, while those in (29) are not:

- (30) a. Va/anda muy nervioso.
 goes/walks very nervous
 ‘He is very nervous.’
 b. Lleva inquieto un buen rato.
 carries restless a long time
 ‘He has been restless for a long time.’
 c. Sigue intranquilo.
 continues worried
 ‘He continues to be worried.’
- (31) a. *Robin va/anda viejo.
 Robin goes/walks old
 ‘Robin is old.’
 b. *Lleva feo varios años.
 carries ugly several years
 ‘He has been ugly for several years.’
 c. *Sigue bajo.
 continues short
 ‘He continues to be short.’

Similar behavior is observed for the rest of the SL contexts: adjunct predicates, (32), object complements of TENER and DEJAR, (33), absolute constructions, (34), and *con* constructions, (35). In all of them only *nervioso*-type adjectives are allowed:

- (32) a. Llegó a su casa nervioso/intranquilo.
 arrived at his house nervous/worried
 ‘He arrived at his house nervous/worried.’
 b. *Llegó a su casa bajo/feo.
 arrived at his house short/ugly
 ‘He arrived at his house short/ugly.’

- (33) a. Tenías a tu madre nerviosa/intranquila.
had to your mother nervous/worried
'You had your mother nervous/worried.'
b. *Tenías a tu madre baja/fea.
had to your mother short/ugly
'You had your mother short/ugly.'
- (34) a. Batman, una vez nervioso/intranquilo, ...
Batman, one time nervous/worried, ...
'Batman, once nervous/worried, ...'
b. *Robin, una vez bajo/feo, ...
Robin, one time short/ugly, ...
'Robin, once short/ugly, ...'
- (35) a. Con el jefe nervioso/intranquilo, no se puede trabajar.
with the boss nervous/worried, not SE can work
'With the boss nervous/worried, one cannot work.'
b. *Con el jefe bajo/feo, no se puede trabajar.
with the boss short/ugly, not SE can work
'With the boss short/ugly, one cannot work.'

These results, summarized in the following table, clearly indicate that among so-called ambivalent adjectives at least two groups have to be distinguished: those like *nervioso*, which are allowed in any SL context, and those like *viejo*, which are not.

	<i>viejo</i>	<i>nervioso</i>
Restrictive pseudo-copular verb	no	yes
Adjunct predicate	no	yes
TENER and DEJAR	no	yes
Absolute constructions	no	yes
<i>Con</i> construction	no	yes
ESTAR	yes	yes
SER	yes	yes

Thus, only *nervioso*-type adjectives are properly ambivalent or underspecified with respect to IL/SL feature; *viejo*-type adjectives cannot be considered such, because, as has been shown, the possibility of an adjective to combine with ESTAR does not necessarily prove its SL nature, related to a temporally bounded denotation, and *viejo*-type adjectives are not able to denote SL states.

In any case, one issue remains unexplained: why can *viejo*-type adjectives combine with SER as well as with ESTAR? In order to try to answer this question, the distinction –more pragmatic than semantic– between ‘general norm’ and ‘individual norm’ may be useful (Falk, 1979; Clements, 1988).

The idea of general norm, expressed via SER, indicates a comparison between one entity and others of its same class; in this case, it is the intention of the speaker to classify the entity referred to according to some general criteria valid in a particular culture or society. On the other hand, the idea of individual norm, referred to via ESTAR, describes

a comparison between the actual state of an entity and the state that one could expect as normal or habitual. From this perspective, it is the intention of the speaker to classify an entity in relation to an individual criterion, exclusively applicable to said entity.

From this proposal it follows, therefore, that constructions with *SER* assign qualitative properties to the subject according to a general norm of classification, whereas constructions with *ESTAR* attribute individual characteristics to the subject, considered deviations from what is considered normal for said subject. It is this difference which examples such as the following one, taken from Leonetti (1994), emphasize:

- (36) La carretera es/está ancha.
the highway is/is wide
'The highway is wide.'

As Leonetti (1994: 199) puts it: "With *ser* one is classifying the mentioned entity within the class of wide highways, comparing it to other highways whose qualities may be different; with *estar* one is presenting the entity according to the norm which one supposes it habitually possesses, and the variation between these differing states circumscribes that very entity." Contrasting sentences like those of (37) also reflect this type of difference:

- (37) a. Carol era/estaba muy guapa.
Carol is/is very good-looking
'Carol is very good-looking.'
- b. Las naranjas son/están muy caras.
the oranges are/are very expensive
'(The) oranges are very expensive.'

Nevertheless, despite its utility in expressing these and other differences in meaning, the distinction between general norm and individual norm is not entirely exempt from problems. According to Porroche (1988), some adjectives, such as those relating to colors or marital status, are difficult to explain via such a distinction because no norm exists with regard to color or people's marital status.

Leaving aside these and other problems that the distinction between general and individual norm presents, one must recognize that the distinction is particularly useful for describing certain uses of *SER* and *ESTAR*, especially in those cases of the same adjective, where the speaker can freely choose between one copula or the other. For the cases in which the speaker has no choice, however, it does not seem logical to resort to the distinction between general and individual norm.

Maienborn's (2005) discourse-based account of the *SER/ESTAR* alternation includes an interesting formalization of the general/individual norm distinction in the DRT framework. (38) is the DRS for an imperfective *SER* sentence such as *Carol era muy guapa*, which can be compared with that of (39), corresponding to an imperfective *ESTAR* sentence such as *Carol estaba muy guapa*:

- (38) $[t^0, s^*, z, v \mid \tau(s^*) < t^0, \tau(s^*) \subset \tau(z), z \approx [\text{pretty}(v)], \text{carol}(v)]$

(39) $[t^0, s^*, z, v \mid \tau(s^*) < t^0, s_i = s^*, \tau(s^*) \subset \tau(z), z \approx [\text{pretty}(v)], \text{carol}(v)]$

As pointed out by Maienborn (2005), both sentences are true if there is a state of Carol being pretty whose temporal extension includes a contextual topic time that precedes the utterance time. (39) requires an additional condition: the contextually supplied topic situation is required to be specific, i.e., the speaker's claim is restricted to a particular discourse situation already in mind.

The problem is that Maienborn (2005) considers that “in principle, both SER and ESTAR can combine with any predicate whatsoever” and, therefore, that her analysis applies to any predicate. And this is wrong. On the one hand, as we have already seen, there is a group of adjectives, (4), that only combine with ESTAR; they cannot combine with SER under any circumstance:

- (40) a. *Juan es contento/desnudo/harto.
 Juan is content/naked/fed up
 ‘Juan is content/naked/fed up.’
 b. *La sala es llena/vacía.
 the room is full/empty
 ‘The room is full/empty.’

On the other hand, as we will see, only a subclass of IL adjectives, and only under certain circumstances, can combine with ESTAR.

5. Individual-level adjectives

In this section it will be shown that among IL adjectives, fundamentally due to their different grade of compatibility with ESTAR, it is necessary to distinguish among relational adjectives, which cannot be easily coerced to appear with ESTAR, and so-called adjectives of behavior such as *cruel* (‘cruel’), which under certain circumstances can be coerced to appear with ESTAR.

5.1. By coercion

A substantial number of IL adjectives, (3), repeated here as (41), can indeed occur with ESTAR, as in (42).

- (41) *catalán* (‘Catalan’), *cauto* (‘cautious’), *constante* (‘constant’), *cuidadoso* (‘careful’), *(des)cortés* (‘(im)polite’), *(des)leal* (‘(dis)loyal’), *(im)prudente* (‘(im)prudent’), *(in)discreto* (‘(in)discreet’), *(in)capaz* (‘(in)capable’), *(in)justo* (‘(un)just’), *inmoral* (‘immoral’), *(in)mortal* (‘(im)mortal’), *inteligente* (‘intelligent’), *listo* (‘clever’), *llevadero* (‘bearable’), *sabio* (‘wise’), *socialista* (‘socialist’), *temerario* (‘reckless’), *vegetariano* (‘vegetarian’).

- (42) a. Hoy estás muy discreto/valiente.
 today are very discreet/brave
 ‘Today you are very discreet/brave.’

- b. Últimamente estaba muy prudente/sincero.
 lately was very prudent/sincere
 ‘Lately s/he was very prudent/sincere.’

Nevertheless, for this to occur, other elements besides ESTAR must usually be present, including adverbials of the type *hoy* (‘today’) or *últimamente* (‘lately’), which also contribute to the anchoring of the IL adjective in a temporal stage.

Following Escandell and Leonetti (2002), we will explain this phenomenon in terms of ‘aspectual coercion’ (Pustejovsky, 1995; Fernald, 2000).⁸ Escandell and Leonetti (2002) state that, apart from a small number of cases such as *necesario* (‘necessary’), *falso* (‘false’) or *evidente* (‘evident’), most Spanish IL adjectives can be coerced by ESTAR. They even maintain that relational adjectives, as *británico* (‘British’) or *internacional* (‘international’), are coercible as well:

- (43) a. ¡Estás internacional hoy!
 are international today!
 ‘You’re international today!’
- b. ¡Vaya! ¡Estás muy británico!
 wow! are very British!
 ‘Wow! You are very British!’

Nevertheless, these examples seem somewhat exceptional⁹ since, in the majority of cases, relational adjectives are anomalous: **Estás mortal hoy* (‘You are mortal today’); **Estás socialista últimamente* (‘You are socialist lately’).

Therefore, it seems clear that within the group of IL adjectives, fundamentally due to their different grade of compatibility with ESTAR, it would be useful to introduce a distinction between nonrelational adjectives, (44), which in certain contexts can combine with ESTAR, and relational adjectives, (45), which can do this in a much more restricted way.

- (44) *cauto* (‘cautious’), *cuidadoso* (‘careful’), *(des)cortés* (‘(im)polite’), *discreto* (‘discreet’), *(im)prudente* (‘(im)prudent’), *(in)discreto* (‘(in)discreet’), *infiel* (‘(un)faithful’), *(in)justo* (‘(un)just’), *sincero* (‘sincere’), *valiente* (‘brave’).
- (45) *británico* (‘British’), *catalán* (‘Catalan’), *(in)mortal* (‘(im)mortal’), *internacional* (‘international’), *socialista* (‘socialist’), *vegetariano* (‘vegetarian’).

⁸ In accordance with Escandell and Leonetti (2002), “coercion is a process of reinterpretation activated to eliminate conflicts between a constituent’s semantic content and the requirements of other elements in the same construction. [...] Thus, it produces some sort of conceptual adjustment in order to make sense of the utterance and restore its acceptability”.

⁹ As Bosque (1993) points out, adjectives such as British or French can refer to the stereotype associated with these nationalities. Other nationalities, such as Andorran or Guinean, are not associated with any clear stereotype and this is why they are not compatible with ESTAR: *??Estás muy andorrano/guineano* (‘You are very Andorran/Guinean’). Observe, moreover, that adjectives like British or French can only be coerced if they refer to human subjects: **Este queso está muy francés* (‘This cheese is very French’).

Apart from the possibility of being coerced by ESTAR, there are several pieces of evidence indicating the need to distinguish between nonrelational adjectives of the type *discreto* and relational ones. Among these pieces of evidence, the possibility for *discreto*-type adjectives, as opposed to relational ones, to appear in constructions of ESTAR + gerund of SER is probably the most significant:

- (46) a. Hoy estás siendo muy discreto/valiente.
today are being very discreet/brave.
Today you are being very discreet/brave.
- b. Está siendo muy prudente/sincero últimamente.
is being very prudent/sincere lately.
S/he is being very prudent/sincere lately.
- (47) a. *Hoy estás siendo muy británico.
today are being very British.
Today you are being very British.
- b. *Está siendo muy internacional últimamente.
is being very international lately.
S/he is being very international lately.

It seems reasonable to associate the possibility for an IL adjective to appear in such constructions with the possibility of being coerced by ESTAR. In fact, ESTAR + gerund of SER could be seen as another version of the same coercion mechanism.

Fernald (2000) offers a formal analysis of the coercion of IL into SL predicates that we will adopt here to deal with *discreto*-type adjectives. In (48) a formulation of what he calls ‘evidential coercion’ is presented:

- (48) Let α be an ILP with interpretation α' . α can be used as a SLP with the following interpretation:
 $\lambda x^s \exists Q [Q(x) \ \& \ G_{y,s,zi}(Q(y) \ \& \ R(y,z)) \ [\alpha'(z)]]$

As pointed out by Fernald (2000: 67), in (48): “ G is the generic operator. The coerced predicate denotes a set of stages for which there is some stage-level property Q that holds of the stage, and in general, having Q predicated of a stage entails that the individual associated with the stage has α , the ILP, predicated of the corresponding individual.”

Fernald (2000: 67) applies this formulation to examples like *Laura is often pedantic*, which is very close to the cases we are dealing with here:

By this formulation, *?Laura is often pedantic* will be coerced into expressing the claim that often there is some stage-level eventuality, in which Laura participates, and one would generally judge the individual who participates in such eventualities to be “pedantic.” The success of coercion in this case depends on the hearer’s ability to imagine there being stage-level evidence of having the ILP property, which is not difficult in the case of *pedantic*.

In fact, as Fernald himself acknowledges, although it is not totally explicit in (48), the idea is that the stage-level property Q refers to a behavior. And this is precisely what we need in order to account for evidential coercion of Spanish *discreto*-type adjectives, which also refer to a behavior, as we will see in the following section.

5.2. Dynamic adjectives

The set of problems raised by *discreto*-type adjectives has been recognized for some time (e.g. Partee, 1977; Williams, 1984; Schmitt, 1992, 2005), although until now these have been linked almost exclusively to the properties that express agentivity in these adjectives.

Recently, Arche (2006) and Marín and Tayalati (2006) have demonstrated for Spanish that these adjectives form a separate group in that they are the only ones that denote dynamic situations, very much like what is observed in non-stative verbs. As will be shown when applying to these same adjectives the classic tests used for establishing the dynamicity of verbs, the parallels that exist between *discreto*-type adjectives (which we will call ‘dynamic adjectives’ henceforth), and non-stative verbs is remarkable.

Along the same lines suggested in Marín and Tayalati (2006), the tests that deal with agentivity will be separated from those that establish dynamicity. Let us start with the latter ones first.

5.2.1. Tests for dynamicity

Unlike dynamic verbs, (49), stative ones, (50), generally do not allow the progressive form:

- (49) Jaimito está durmiendo/paseando/pintando un cuadro/escribiendo su tesis.
Jaimito is sleeping/out walking/painting a picture/writing his thesis
‘Jaimito is sleeping/out walking/painting a picture/writing his thesis.’
- (50) *Juan está queriendo a sus abuelos/odiando a su primo/sabiendo inglés/
teniendo muchos libros. [apud De Miguel, 1999]
Juan is loving to his grandparents/hating to his cousin/knowing English/having
many books
‘Juan is loving his grandparents/hating his cousin/knowing English/having many
books.’

As for adjectives, we observe a similar behavior. Dynamic adjectives are compatible with ESTAR + gerund of SER, (51); the remaining adjectives, which will be called non-dynamic, are not, (52):

- (51) a. Mortadelo (le) está siendo infiel a su mujer.
Mortadelo (to-her) is being unfaithful to his wife
‘Mortadelo is being unfaithful to his wife.’

b. Filemón está siendo amable/condescendiente/valiente.
Filemón is being nice/obliging/brave
'Filemón is being nice/obliging/brave.'

- (52) *Batman está siendo británico/vegetariano.
Batman is being British/vegetarian
'Batman is being British/vegetarian.'

In accordance with De Miguel (1999), sequences of the type (*lo que*) *ocurrió (fue) que* ('what happened was that') only allow dynamic verbs, (53); this explains the ungrammaticality of stative verbs, (54):

- (53) Lo que pasó fue que saltó la valla/envió la carta.
what happened was that jumped the fence/sent the letter
'What happened was that s/he jumped the fence/sent the letter.'

- (54) *Lo que pasó fue que supo francés/poseyó muchos libros.
what happened was that knew French/possessed many books
'What happened was that s/he knew French/possessed many books.'

Adjectives exhibit a similar behavior: dynamic adjectives are accepted (55), while non-dynamic ones are rejected, (56):

- (55) a. Lo que pasó es que (le) fue infiel a su mujer.
what happened is that (to-her) was unfaithful to his wife
'What happened is that he was unfaithful to his wife.'
b. Lo que pasó es que ha sido deshonesto/injusto/valiente.
what happened is that he was dishonest/unjust/brave
'What happened is that he was dishonest/unjust/brave.'

- (56) *Lo que ha pasado es que ha sido catalán/vegetariano.
what has happened is that has been Catalan/vegetarian
'What happened is that he was Catalan/vegetarian.'

Dynamic verbs are compatible with *dejar*, (57); stative verbs are not, (58):

- (57) Jaimito dejó de saltar/fumar/dibujar obscenidades/escribir la tesis.
Jaimito stopped to jump/smoke/draw obscenities/write the thesis
'Jaimito stopped jumping/smoking/drawing obscenities/writing the thesis.'
- (58) *Julia dejó de saber inglés/conocer Roma/ser alta. [apud De Miguel, 1999]
Julia stopped to know English/know Roma/be tall
'Julia stopped knowing English/being familiar with Rome/being tall.'

As far as adjectives are concerned, we find this same dichotomy. Dynamic adjectives accept *dejar*, (59); the non-dynamics do not (12):

- (59) a. Ha dejado a serle infiel a su mujer.
has stopped to be-to.her unfaithful to his wife
'He stopped being unfaithful to his wife.'

b. Ha dejado de ser amable/valiente.
has stopped to be nice/brave
'S/he stopped being nice/brave.'

(60) *Ha dejado de ser catalán/mortal.
has stopped to be Catalan/mortal
'He stopped being Catalan/mortal.'

As is well known, stative verbs cannot receive a habitual reading in the present tense, (61), a possibility reserved for dynamic verbs, (62):

(61) Habitualmente, Julia dibuja obscenidades/fuma.
habitually, Julia draws obscenities/smokes
'Habitually, Julia draws obscenities/smokes.'

(62) *Normalmente, Jaimito sabe inglés/es alto.
normally, Jaimito knows English/is tall
'Normally, Jaimito knows English/is tall.'

Dynamic adjectives also allow a habitual interpretation, (63), while non-dynamic ones do not, (64):

(63) a. Normalmente, es cruel con sus empleados.
normally, is cruel with her/his employees
'Normally, s/he is cruel with her/his employees.'
b. Habitualmente, es amable/considerado.
habitually, is nice/considerate
'Habitually, he is nice/considerate.'

(64) *Normalmente, es británico/socialista.
normally, is British/socialist
'Normally, he is British/socialist.'

5.2.2. Tests for Agentivity

Dynamic verbs constitute appropriate responses to question (65), which somehow presupposes the interpretation of the subject as an agent:

(65) ¿Qué ha hecho?
'What has s/he done?'

(66) Ha paseado/hablado en clase/dibujado un círculo/aprendido la lección.
has taken a walk/spoken in class/drawn a circle/learned the lesson
'S/he has taken a walk/spoken in class/drawn a circle/learned the lesson.'

On the other hand, non-dynamic verbs (with a non-agent for a subject) do not generate valid responses for (65):

- (67) *Ha amado a su mujer/sabido matemáticas/poseído casas/odiado las acelgas.
has loved his wife/known mathematics/possessed houses/hated the Swiss chard
'He has loved his wife/known mathematics/possessed houses/hated Swiss chard.'

This behavior is also observed, at least in part, in the case of adjectives. Dynamic adjectives also can respond to (65); non-dynamics cannot:

- (68) a. (Le) ha sido infiel a su mujer.
(to-her) has been unfaithful to his wife
'He has been unfaithful to his wife.'
b. Ha sido deshonesto/despiadado/amable.
has been dishonest/heartless/nice
'He has been dishonest/heartless/nice.'

- (69) *Ha sido catalán/vegetariano.
has been Catalan/vegetarian
'He has been Catalan/vegetarian.'

It is established that adverbs of the type *voluntariamente* ('voluntarily') or *deliberadamente* ('deliberately') combine with dynamic verbs, but they are incompatible with stative verbs:

- (70) Ana ha dibujado un círculo/empujado a su hermano/cruzado la frontera voluntariamente.
Ana has drawn a circle/pushed her brother/crossed the border voluntarily
'Ana has drawn a circle/pushed her brother/crossed the border voluntarily.'
- (71) *Ana ha amado a su marido/poseído dos coches/sabido la respuesta voluntariamente.
Ana has loved her husband/owned two cars/known the answer voluntarily
'Ana loved her husband/owned two cars/knew the answer voluntarily.'

In the case of adjectives we observe a similar behavior. Thus these same adverbs are compatible with dynamic adjectives, but not with non-dynamic ones:

- (72) a. Pedro le ha sido infiel a su mujer voluntariamente.
Pedro has been unfaithful to his wife voluntarily
'Pedro has been unfaithful to his wife voluntarily.'
b. Pedro ha sido deliberadamente deshonesto/despiadado.
Pedro has been deliberately dishonest/heartless
'Pedro has been deliberately dishonest/heartless.'
- (73) *Pedro ha sido catalán/socialista voluntariamente.
Pedro has been Catalan/socialist voluntarily
'Pedro has been Catalan/socialist voluntarily.'

Certain verbs, like *convencer* ('to convince'), *forzar* ('to force'), *obligar* ('to oblige') or *persuadir* ('to persuade'), impinge upon the intentional character of the subject; for this reason they combine with dynamic verbs, and not with states:

- (74) Batman obligó a Robin a cantar/comprar una casa.
Batman obliged Robin to sing/buy a house
'Batman obliged Robin to sing/buy a house.'
- (75) *Mortadelo convenció a Filemón de saber la respuesta/odiar a sus abuelos.
Mortadelo convinced Filemón of know the answer/hate to his grandparents
'Mortadelo convinced Filemón to know the answer/hate his grandparents.'

With these same verbs only dynamic adjectives are compatible; non-dynamic ones produce ungrammatical sequences:

- (76) a. Mortadelo convenció a Filemón de ser(le) infiel a su mujer.
Mortadelo convinced Filemón to be unfaithful to his wife
'Mortadelo convinced to Filemón of be(to.her) unfaithful to his wife.'
b. Astérix obligó a Obélix de ser deshonesto/despiadado/cuidadoso.
Astérix forced to Obélix of be dishonest/heartless/careful
'Astérix forced Obélix to be dishonest/heartless/careful.'
- (77) *Astérix convenció a Obélix de ser catalán/vegetariano.
Astérix convinced to Obélix to be Catalan/vegetarian
'Astérix convinced Obélix to be Catalan/vegetarian.'

Unlike dynamic verbs, stative ones generally reject the imperative:

- (78) ¡Acaríciame!/¡No escribas una tesis!
caress.me!/don't write a thesis!
'Caress me!/Don't write a thesis!'
- (79) *¡Conoce la respuesta!/¡Posee muchos coches!
know the answer!/possess many cars!
'Know the answer!/Possess many cars!'

Something similar happens with adjectives. Dynamic adjectives allow the imperative, whereas non-dynamic ones do not:

- (80) a. ¡Sé infiel y no mires con quién!
be unfaithful and don't look with who!
'Be unfaithful and don't look at with whom!'
b. No seas tan amable/cuidadoso/conciliador.
don't be so nice/careful/conciliatory
'Don't be so nice/careful/conciliatory.'
- (81) *Sé catalán/vegetariano.
be Catalan/vegetarian
'Be Catalan/vegetarian.'

From the results obtained throughout this section, and summarized in the preceding table, it can be clearly seen that among Spanish IL adjectives two groups have to be distinguished: those which have a dynamic sense and those which do not.

	Dynamic adjectives	Non-dynamic adjectives
Progressive	yes	no
<i>Ocurrir que</i>	yes	no
Complement of <i>dejar</i>	yes	no
Habitual interpretation in present	yes	no
Answer to <i>¿qué ha hecho?</i>	yes	no
<i>Voluntariamente, deliberadamente</i>	yes	no
<i>Convencer, obligar, persuadir, forzar</i>	yes	no
Imperative	yes	no

This helps us to explain why dynamic adjectives, unlike non-dynamic ones, can be coerced quite easily to coappear with ESTAR.

6. Conclusions

Contrary to what is traditionally assumed, the compatibility with SER or ESTAR is not a defining diagnosis for determining the IL or SL nature of Spanish adjectives. As has been demonstrated in this paper, additional criteria have to be taken into account, such as the ability to appear in other SL environments, such as with certain pseudo-copular verbs, adjunct predicates or absolute constructions. Adjectives like *enfermo* ('ill'), which in addition to its compatibility with ESTAR can appear in all these contexts, can be properly considered SL adjectives.

On the other hand, among so-called ambivalent adjectives (underspecified for IL/SL feature), at least two groups have to be distinguished: those like *nervioso* ('nervous') which, in addition to their compatibility with SER, are allowed in any SL context, and those like *viejo* ('old'), which are not. That way, only *nervioso*-type adjectives can be considered as properly ambivalent.

Likewise, within the class of IL adjectives, fundamentally due to their different grade of compatibility with ESTAR, it is necessary to introduce a distinction between adjectives of behavior, like *cruel* ('cruel'), which under certain circumstances can be coerced to appear with ESTAR, and relational adjectives like *vegetariano* ('vegetarian'), which cannot be easily coerced. In order to try to explain the different behavior of these two types of IL adjectives, it has also been shown, by applying a large set of aspectual tests, that *cruel*-type adjectives, unlike the rest of the adjectives, express a clear dynamic sense.

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