What do Spanish copulas have in common with Tibetan evidentials?

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Abstract

The Spanish copula estar has both well-known aspectual restrictions and evidential uses. Tibetan evidential 'dug' also shows similar aspectual constraints. Both features are derived from assuming that the relevant property in both cases is a gradability, which establishes a comparison class between-individuals (yielding ser-predicates) or within-individuals property (yielding estar-predicates). A between-individual comparison class is anchored by the nature of the comparison, whereas a within-individual comparison class must be contextually located. This location requirement results in the possibility of having evidential readings.

1. Introduction

The distinction between the two copular verbs ser and estar has received much attention in the literature, both traditional and contemporary (cf. Fernández Leborans, 1999; Camacho, 2012 for a summary of references). One general, if unstated goal has been to find an overarching analysis that can account for different aspects of the distribution of the two copular verbs. In this paper, I pursue two separate goals. At a general level, I suggest that no single, unified analysis accounts for the distribution of ser/estar, but rather that we require distinctions that operate at least at the lexical-semantic and pragmatic levels.1

The goal of achieving a unified account of copulas in Spanish has resulted in two families of analyses, those that ascribe the distinction between ser and estar to aspectual differences, and those that connect the distribution to pragmatic principles. Within the aspectual family, we find several lines, depending on how aspect is characterized. For some researchers, the aspectual primitive that best captures the differences is perfectivity (cf. Luján 1981; Roby 2009), for others it is change of state (cf. Fernandez Leborans, 1995). Gumiel-Molina and Pérez-Jiménez (2012a,b) propose that the scalar properties of adjectives determine a subset of the distribution of ser/estar, whereas an influential group of analyses considers the individual/stage level (IL/SL) distinction as the basic concept that derives the syntax of copulas in Spanish (cf. Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti, 2002; Arche, 2006, Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española, 2009, a.o.). The SL/IL distinction has been analyzed in different ways, for example following Kratzer’s (1995) proposal that SL predicates have an additional spatiotemporal argument. Raposo and Uriagereka (1995) and Jiménez-Fernández (2012), on the other hand, suggest that Kuroda’s (1972) distinction between categorial and thetic judgements underlies the SL/IL distinction, and both proposals argue that these two constructions have distinct structures that map to crucially different assertion structures. Another way to approach the aspectual distinction between ser and estar relates it to the presence of a locative null preposition (cf. Zagona, 2012 and Gallego and Uriagereka, 2011).

Maienborn (2005), on the other hand, argues that the lexical and syntactic structure of ser/estar is essentially the same, but whereas estar presupposes a specific topic situation, ser does not. As such, this approach relates the difference between the two verbs to a pragmatic condition.

In this paper, I propose that both lexical-syntactic constraints, and pragmatic constraints are required to account for the distribution of adjectival and nominal predicates. The first level involves the lexical interpretation of the predicate. Following Gumiel-Molina and Pérez-Jiménez 2012a,b; Gumiel-Molina et al. 2013, I assume that adjectival predicates establish a comparison class that can compare the relevant property either to different individuals (between-individual comparison) or to the same individual (within-individual comparison), yielding ser or estar respectively. When set in a context, the type of comparison class will either be located by default (in the case of a between-individual class), or have to be located through some contextual mechanism (in the case of a within-individual class). The need to locate the within-individual class, in turn, yields the possibility of having evidential readings.

I also compare evidential readings of estar to the distribution of the Tibetan evidential ‘dug’ (cf. Agha, 1993; Garrett, 2001; Tournadre and Dorje, 2003; Kalsang et al., 2013). Although connections between estar and evidentiality have been noted in the literature (cf. Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti, 2002; Maienborn, 2005 and Roby, 2009), this particular comparison attempts to explain why there seems to be a connection between evidentiality and SL-hood for both Spanish copulas and Tibetan evidential ‘dug’. This are derived from the contextual requirement to locate the within-individual comparison class.

Section 2., the paper describes the basic aspectual properties of ser/estar and the evidential readings of estar, as well as the evidential system of Tibetan and the aspectual restrictions of evidential ‘dug’. Section 3. presents analyses of the Spanish copulas and Tibetan evidential ‘dug’ based on the stage/individual-level distinction, as well as arguments against such an analysis. Section 4.1 introduces the notion of comparison class as applied to ser/estar and ‘dug’ and derives the evidential readings from the differences between comparison classes.

1Thanks to the organizers of “Ser & estar at the interfaces”, Silvia Gumiel, Manuel Leonetti and Isabel Pérez Jiménez for the invitation to present this work, and to two anonymous reviewers for insightful comments.
2. Parallelism between *ser*/*estar* and Tibetan evidentials

2.1 Spanish copular verbs *ser* and *estar*

2.1.1 Aspectual properties

Many have noted before that the primary distinction between *ser* and *estar* is aspectual in some broad sense. Descriptively, predicates with *estar* are typically interpreted as delimited, a feature that has been characterized by some in terms of perfectivity, and by others, as a stage-level property. Two consequences follow from the aspectual distinction: on the one hand, some predicates are typically restricted to appearing with either *ser* or *estar* based on their meaning as illustrated in (1): *arruinada* ‘ruined’ can only appear with *estar* (cf. (1a)), and *inteligente* ‘intelligent’ with *ser* (cf. (1b)). It is also true that a predicate’s typical interpretation can sometimes be coerced into the opposite value, as Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti (2002) have discussed. However, predicates that usually appear with *ser* are much more frequently coerced into a delimited interpretation than the other way around.²

(1)

| a. La población griega está / *es* arruinada |
| the population greek is.st. / is.n. ruined |
| ‘The Greek population is ruined.’ |

| b. La ajedrecista *está / es* inteligente |
| the chess-player is.st. / is.n. intelligent |
| ‘The chess player is intelligent’ |

On the other hand, certain predicates can be interpreted as delimited/stage-level if used with *estar* but as non-delimited/individual-level if used with *ser*. Thus, *verde* ‘green’ is a temporary property of a banana in (2a) with *estar*, or it can be a defining characteristic of a tree’s leaves when it appears with *ser*, as in (2b). The same holds for *feliz* ‘happy’ in (3).

(2)

| a. Este plátano está verde |
| this banana is.st. green |
| ‘This banana is green.’ |

| b. Las hojas de este árbol son verdes. |
| the leaves of this tree are.n. green |
| ‘This tree’s leaves are green.’ |

(3)

| a. Ana está feliz |
| Ana is.st. happy |
| ‘Ana is happy (today).’ |

| b. Ana es feliz |
| Ana is.n. happy |
| ‘Ana is (generally) happy’ |

Second, it has frequently been noted that *estar* seems to imply a result without the corresponding cause that leads up to it. This is particularly salient for examples like *el vaso está lleno* ‘the glass is full’, where a “filling process” seems to be implied but only the result is stated. We will call this the ‘lingering effect’, which, as we will see, also appears with Tibetan ‘dug.

Third, as noted in Camacho (1994) a.o., *estar* cannot appear with DPs or NPs, as seen in (4a). The grammatical alternatives involve either a preposition *de* in front of the DP (as in (4b)) or the other copular verb *ser* (cf. Roy 2013).

(4)

| a. * Obama está (el) presidente |
| Obama is.st. (the) president |
| ‘Obama is president’ |

| b. Obama está de (*el) presidente |
| Obama is.st. of (the) president |
| ‘Obama is (temporarily, currently) president’ |

| c. Obama es (el) presidente |
| Obama is.n. (the) president |
| ‘Obama is president’ |

²How the delimitedness property is formalized remains a matter of debate: some proposals assume that it is encoded on the predicate (whether as a lexical feature or through a functional projection), others assume it is encoded both on the predicate and the copula. Below I will adopt a proposal that assumes that it is encoded on the predicate.
### 2.1.2 Source of evidence with *estar*

Maienborn (2005, 167) notes that “the speaker’s claim is made on immediate evidence” with *estar* (cf. also Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti, 2002 and Roby, 2009, 17). Consider, for example, (5)-(6). These sentences are appropriate when the relevant evidence is accessible to the speaker, whereas the counterparts with *ser* would simply be statements about a property of ham or of Pepe’s sister. Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti (2002) connect evidential uses of *estar* (which they call “personal evaluation”) with the fact that it is situation-dependent because it has a spatiotemporal variable that needs to be anchored. In this, they follow the classical analysis of stage/individual-level predicates (cf. Kratzer, 1995, for example). This anchoring allows the inference that the stage depends on someone’s perception of a situation.

(5) a. Este jamón serrano está fenomenal.
   'This Serrano ham is wonderful.'
   (Roby, 2009, 17)

b. La hermana de Pepe está linda
   'Pepe’s sister is pretty.'

(6) a. Tu trabajo está bastante flojo.
   'Your work is very weak.'

b. John Goodman está genial en esa película
   'John is great in that movie.'

An anonymous reviewer points out that evidentiality effects surface with *estar* in contexts where the two copulas alternate (as in (11)-(6 above), so examples like (7a) are not a counterexample because only *estar* is possible in that context. However, it seems to me that the demonstrative in (8) induces an “evidential effect” (to the extent that it does) with both verbs.

(7) a. Cuando Juan llegó a su casa, la puerta estaba abierta.
   'When Juan arrived to his house, the door was open.'

b. Me dijeron que el trabajo estaba flojo.
   'They told me that your paper was weak.'

(8) a. Este árbol está enorme.
   'This tree is huge.'

b. Este árbol es enorme.
   'This tree is huge.'

On the other hand, *estar* is compatible with indirect in addition to direct evidence (cf. (cf. (9a)) vs. (9b)). In this sense, *estar* is not an evidential in the sense that evidential morphemes are, since those morphemes aren’t ambiguous between different types of evidence.

(9) a. Aseguran que el mercado de tulipanes está saturado.
   'They say that the tulip market is saturated.'

b. (Witnessing a gigantic warehouse full of tulips:)
   El mercado de tulipanes está saturado
   'The tulip market is saturated'
This suggests that *estar*’s evidential meaning is indirectly derived and not part of the lexical meaning of *estar*. In fact, the more the situation involves deictic references, the more salient the evidential reading becomes. Thus, demonstratives favor an evidential reading, but generics disfavor it, as seen in (10), an example that does not require any type of direct evidence on the part of the speaker.

(10) El jamón serrano está fenomenal.
the ham Serrano is.st. wonderful
‘Serrano ham is wonderful.’

Finally, person does not affect *estar*-related evidentiality, so that a first person subject is not more (or less) compatible with an evidential reading than a third person subject is, as seen in (11). However, (11b) seems to imply some overt manifestation of happiness/hunger that does not seem required for (11a). As we will see below, person does affect the distribution of Tibetan ‘*dug*’.

(11) a. Estoy contento/hambriento.
am.st. happy/hungry
‘I am happy/hungry.’

b. Está contenta/hambrienta.
is.st. happy/hungry
‘She is happy/hungry.’

Although evidentiality is optional with *estar*, the copula appears with the same type of predicate that can complement a perception verb, as illustrated in (12)-(13) (cf. Arche, 2006, 20-21 and Asociación de Academias, 2009, 2813). In (12) we see examples of some possible predicates of two perception verbs, *ver* ‘see’ and *oir* ‘hear’, and in (13)-(14) we see that those same predicates can only appear with *estar*, not with *ser* ((13b) is grammatical with the meaning ‘the groundhog is bright enough to escape’).

(12) a. Pedro vio a la marmota sentada/lista para escapar.
Pedro saw to the groundhog sitting / ready to escape
‘Pedro saw the groundhog sitting/ready to escape.’

b. Marta oyó al niño cantando/angustiado por la tarea.
Marta heard to-the boy singing / anxious for the homework
‘Marta heard the boy singing/anxious about the homework.’

(13) a. La marmota está sentada/lista para escapar.
the groundhog is.st. sitting / ready to escape
‘The groundhog is sitting/ready to escape.’

b. # La marmota es sentada/lista para escapar.
the groundhog is.u. sitting / ready to escape

(14) a. El niño está cantando/angustiado por la tarea.
the boy is.st. singing / anxious for the homework
‘The boy singing/anxious about the homework.’

b. *El niño es cantando/angustiado por la tarea.
the boy is.u. singing / anxious for the homework

The opposite pattern holds for *ser*: Predicates that only appear with the IL copula cannot appear as complements of perception verbs (cf. (15) vs. (16) and (17)). Note that (17b) would be grammatical if *en el segundo piso* ‘on the second floor’ is used as a restrictive modifier (i.e. ‘the conference that was on the second floor, not the one on the third floor’), or if the PP is subject-oriented, but not as an object-oriented secondary predicate.

(15) a. Doris es mortal / de Ponce.
Doris is.u. mortal /of Ponce
‘Doris is mortal / from Ponce.’

b. La conferencia es en el segundo piso
the conference is.u. on the second floor
‘The conference is on the second floor.’

(16) a. *Doris está mortal / de Ponce.
Doris is.st. mortal / of Ponce
b. * La conferencia está en el segundo piso
   the conference is.st. on the second floor

(17)  a. * Pedro vió a Doris mortal / de Ponce.
       Pedro saw to Doris mortal / of Ponce
       ‘Pedro saw Doris mortal / from Ponce.’

   b. # Marta oyó la conferencia en el segundo piso
       Marta heard the second on the second floor
       ‘Marta heard the conference on the second floor’

As Arche (2006, 20-12) notes, when the predicate such as guapo ‘handsome’ or gracioso ‘funny’ is ambiguous between an
SL/IL reading (and therefore compatible with ser or estar), using it with a perception verb, as in (18a)-(19a), only yields the
SL / estar reading (cf. (18b)-(19b)).

(18) a. Noté a Juan muy guapo
    noticed to Juan very handsome
    ‘I noticed that Juan looked very handsome.’

   b. Noté que Juan está muy guapo
    noticed that Juan is.st. very handsome
    ‘I noticed that Juan is(SL) very handsome.’

(19) a. Noté a Juan muy gracioso
    noticed to Juan very funny
    ‘I noticed that Juan was acting very funny.’

   b. Noté que Juan está muy gracioso
    noticed to Juan is.st. very funny
    ‘I noticed that Juan is(SL) acting very funny’

Arguably, complements of perception verbs have an evidential component (in the sense that perception verbs involve some type
of evidence about the complement of the verb), which strengthens the connection between aspect and evidentiality.

2.2 Tibetan evidentials

Tibetan speakers signal the type of evidence for stating a proposition through a portmanteau morpheme on an auxiliary verb
or copula. Evidential marking includes at least the following categories: ego, direct and indirect, as illustrated in (20)-(21).

According to Garrett (2001, 102-3), ego comprises sources of evidence centered on the speaker, and tend to impose a 1st person
interpretation in assertions, even when there is no grammatical 1st person, as seen (20a). This example could be interpreted
as either (20b-c), both with a 1st person interpretation, but not as (20d). This type of evidential is found almost exclusively in
Tibetan languages.3

(20) a. bod-la   g.yag yod
       Tibet-loc yak   EGO.EVID
       ‘I have yaks in Tibet.’

   b. ‘My yaks are in Tibet.’

   c. ‘My yaks are in Tibet.’ (Garrett, 2001, 102, ex. 1)

   d. ?? ‘There are yaks in Tibet.’

There is less agreement on the evidential content of ‘dug’. Garrett (2001, 11) classifies it as a direct evidential, so that (21a),
denotes that the speaker has first-hand experience in the situation s/he is uttering, but this evidence does not originate with the
speaker. Agha (1993, 162, 215), on the other hand, presents a more complex evidential picture for ‘dug, one where it interacts
with the main verb’s aktionsart and with its own aspectual properties (see below). Thus, he notes that in (21b), “the speaker
knows that Paama has been crying not because he saw him cry, but from some secondary evidence that he has been crying (p.
215)”.

(21) a. kho da.lta kha.lag za-gi-’dug
       he now food eat-IMP-EVID
       ‘He’s eating now (eg. I see him).’

   b. Pama ngus ‘dug
       Pama cry IMP-EVID
       ‘Pama has cried/has been crying.’

   (Garrett, 2001, 15)

   (Agha, 1993, 215, glosses adapted)

3 According to Agha 1993, ch. 4, ego evidentials track the speaker in assertions but the addressee in questions, and in this sense they are indexicals.
Finally, the indirect evidential \textit{gi-yod} in (22b) indicates that the speaker only has hearsay evidence about the situation.

(22) a. \textit{nyi.ma rtag.par bkra.shis-gis tshong.khang de thong-gi-yod.red day always Tashi-erg store that see-ind.ev.imp}
   ‘Tashi sees that store every day (e.g. I’m told, I assume).’ (Garrett, 2001, 14-5)

Evidential morphemes can appear either as part of an auxiliary to the main verb (as in (21)), as copulas, or as the so-called \textit{elpa} verbs that are used in existential, locative, possessive, and attributive contexts (hence the acronym). These are exemplified in (23). Kalsang et al. (2013, 4) argue that \textit{elpa} verbs are copulas with an evidential morpheme attached, however Garrett (2001, 71) notes that \textit{elpa} verbs and the corresponding copulas are not synonymous even when they mark the same type of evidentiality. Agha (1993, ch. 4) glosses copulas as factive, but not \textit{elpa} verbs. For purposes of the current analysis, the syntactic status of \textit{elpa} verbs is not essential, so long as their evidential properties are similar to those of copular verbs (which doesn’t seem to be a contested point).

(23) ‘\textit{dir mo.Ta mang.po ‘dug here car many evi}’
   ‘There are a lot of cars here.’ [eg. I see them] (Garrett, 2001, 15, ex. 13)

2.2.1 Tibetan evidentials and aspect

In addition to being evidential, ‘\textit{dug} has some aspectual content identified as imperfective by Agha (1993) and as stage-level by Garrett (2001). Agha describes this content as having some enduring effect which differs depending on the main verb’s aktionsart and the presence and type of adverbs, which recalls the ‘lingering’ effect described for \textit{estar} above. For example, if an end-point is specified (as in (24a)), the imperfective aspect indicates ‘complete relative to a specific point’, suggesting relevance beyond that endpoint (as in the present perfect in English). If the verb is durative, then ‘\textit{dug} allows for a progressive reading in addition to the present-perfect reading (cf. (24b)).

(24) a. \textit{kho gis yi.ge. bris-‘dug he erg letter write imp.ev}
   ‘He has written the letter.’
 b. \textit{kho gzas btang ‘dug he song send imp.ev}
   ‘He has sung/is singing.’ (Agha 1993, 214-5 glosses adapted)

As noted, Garrett (2001) argues that evidential ‘\textit{dug} is a stage-level evidential with a spatiotemporal argument (cf. Kratzer, 1995). In support of this claim, he points to several distributional properties. First, ‘\textit{dug} cannot appear in equative or predicative copular constructions with a DP (he does not give examples), whereas ego evidential \textit{yin} and indirect evidential \textit{red} are possible, as illustrated in (25) (cf. Garrett, 2001, 66-7). If direct evidential \textit{dug} is a SL predicate, and DPs cannot denote SL properties, then it follows that \textit{dug} should not appear in these constructions.

(25) a. \textit{nga dge.rgan yin I teacher ego.cop}
   ‘I am a teacher.’
 b. \textit{yang.chen dge.rgan red Yangchen teacher ind.cop}
   ‘Yangchen is a teacher.’ (Garrett, 2001, 13)

Second, while different types of evidentials are possible with attributive copulas, the distribution of ‘\textit{dug} patterns as if it were SL. Consider (26), with indirect evidential \textit{red} and (27b) with ‘\textit{dug}, used as an answer to (27a). In the second case, “the color is viewed as a temporary or impressionistic quality of the object in question” (Garrett, p. 69), as it would if it were SL. For this reason, (27b) is perceived as highly exceptional, because color predicates are typically IL, but ‘\textit{dug} coerces an SL interpretation.

(26) \textit{snyu.gu ‘di nag.po red pen this black ind.ev}
   ‘This pen is black.’ (Garrett, 2001, 67, ex. 5d)

   ‘How is the color of Lobsang’s book?’
 b. \textit{dmar.po ‘dug red evid}
   ‘It’s red’ (Garrett, 2001, 68, ex. 6)
Other predicates also alternate between different evidential markings in the manner predicted by the SL/IL distinction, as illustrated in (28). The first example makes a statement about the speaker’s current state, whereas the second one is a general statement that may or may not be true today. As a consequence, the first one cannot be followed by “but today I am not happy”, whereas the second one can (cf. Garrett, 2001, 73).

(28) a. nga skiyid.po ‘dug *yin-na’i de.ring nga skiyid.po mi-’dug
   I happy EVID but today I happy NEG-EVID
   ‘I am happy *but today I am not happy.’

b. nga skiyid.po yod yin-na’i de.ring nga skiyid.po mi-’dug
   I happy EGO.EVID but today I happy NEG-EVID
   ‘I am (generally) happy, but today I am not happy.’

(Garrett, 2001, 73, ex. 13)

Third, direct evidential ‘dug can appear with an imperfective morpheme in progressive constructions, both with eventive and stative predicates, as seen in (29). Once again, this is consistent with viewing ‘dug as a SL evidential.

(29) a. kho da.lta kha.lag za-gi-’dug
   he now food eat-IMP-EVID
   ‘He’s eating now.’

b. nga’a’i bu na-gi-’dug
   my boy sick-IMP-EVID
   ‘My son is sick.’

(Garrett, 2001, 15, ex. 10)

Garrett (2001) ascribes the SL nature of ‘dug to the fact that direct evidence requires a direct-information link between the speaker’s perspective and the situation. In this sense, SL-ness derives evidential content because SL predicates are located and by being located they are observable. However, Garrett notes that observability (the evidential property) and locatability (the SL property) are distinct notions. In (30), only the first person version is appropriate even when the situation is located here and now (as in 30b). He suggests that because someone else’s hunger cannot be directly observed (only perhaps its consequences), only the first person example in (30a) is possible with ‘dug. Hence, although the situation is located, it is not observable and ‘dug is not appropriate.

(30) a. nga grod.khog ltog-gi-’dug
   I stomach hunger-IMP-EVID
   ‘I’m hungry.’

b. * kho/*khyed.rang grod.khog ltog-gi-’dug
   he you stomach hunger-IMP-EVID
   Intended: ‘You’re hungry.’ / ‘He’s hungry.’

(Garrett, 2001, 81, ex. 21-22)

However, Kalsang et al. (2013, 554) point out that given the right context, the speaker can use ‘dug in (30b), so observability (as characterized by Garrett) cannot be the right notion. This is shown in (31), where the context allows the speaker to draw the relevant information and use ‘dug. Additionally, as (32) shows, the statement need not be restricted to the moment of speech, questioning whether the locatability property is also relevant. They conclude that in these examples, “[t]he direct evidential can be used because the situation of the dog being hungry is included in the situation of the dog rummaging around in the garbage dump, etc.”

(31) a. The speaker sees the dog right now rummaging around in the garbage dump, following tourists with food around, trying to take food away from other dogs and gulping down any food it is fed.

b. da lta kho grod khog ltog gi ‘dug
   now he stomach hunger eat PRES.EVID
   ‘He is hungry now.’

(32) a. Over the past few weeks the speaker has often seen the dog right now rummaging around in garbage dumps, following tourists with food around, trying to take food away from other dogs and gulping down any food it is fed.

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4The situation may be slightly more complicated, according to Garrett (2001, 71). He points out that ELPa verbs and copular verbs need to be distinguished, regardless of evidentiality, because one can find pairs of examples with an ELPa and a copular verb with the same evidential modality that are not synonymous, as seen in (i). Although he doesn’t specify what the difference may be between examples with the same evidential marking, he suggests that “copulas are used for marking inherent features of objects, while ELPa verbs are used for marking more subjective qualities of objects, perhaps along the lines of the distinction between the Spanish verbs ser and estar.”

(i) cha tsha.po yod / ‘dug / yod.red / yin / red
tea hot EGO.ELPA / DIR.ELPA / IND.EVID.ELPA / EGO.COP / IND.COP
Finally, Garrett (2001, 85) points out the contrast in (33), which strongly resembles the famous distinction in (34). (33a) can be generic, whereas (33b) must refer to a specific location and evidentiary event.

\[(33) \begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{ mi mang.po yod.red} \\
& \text{person many IND.EV} \\
& \text{‘There are many people (i.e. many people exist).’} \\
\text{b. } & \text{ mi mang.po ‘dug} \\
& \text{person many EVID} \\
& \text{There are many people (here/there/etc.)'} \\
\end{align*} \]  

\[(Garrett, 2001, 85, \text{ex. } 24)\]

\[(34) \begin{align*}
\text{a. Firemen are altruistic.} \\
\text{b. Firemen are available.} \\
\end{align*} \]

\[2.3 \text{ Summary of parallelism between ser/estar and Tibetan evidentials}\]

As we have just seen, Spanish copulas and Tibetan evidentials share a few properties, summarized in (35).

\[\text{(35) Aspectual properties of Spanish SL copula and Tibetan SL evidential ‘dug.’}\]

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Property} & \text{Tibetan ‘dug} & \text{Example} & \text{Spanish ‘dug} \\
\hline
\text{Evidentiality} & \text{oblig.} & \text{kho da.lta kha.lag za-gi-‘dug} & \text{Este jamón está bueno} \\
& & \text{‘He’s eating now (eg. I see him)’} & \text{‘This ham is very good.’} \\
\text{Person} & \text{Yes} & \text{nga/kho grod.khog lto-gi-‘dug} & \text{No} \\
\text{effects} & & \text{‘I/he is hungry’} & \text{‘I am/he is hungry’} \\
\text{Cop+DP pred} & \text{No} & \text{kho gzhas btang ‘dug} & \text{Yes} \\
\text{Linger} & & \text{‘He is singing/has sung} & \text{‘S/he is happy’} \\
\text{endpoint} & & \text{‘He is singing/has sung} & \text{‘He is singing/has sung} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

\[3. \text{ Stage-level/individual-level analyses}\]

The preceding sections have shown an interesting overlap between Tibetan evidentials and Spanish copular verbs. Given the distinct nature of both phenomena, the obvious question is whether this is a coincidence, or whether the same primitives connect aspect and direct evidentiality in Tibetan and in Spanish.

One natural approach to account for the evidential properties of estar and the SL properties of ‘dug stems from Kratzer’s (1995) account of the SL/IL differences, as suggested above. Specifically, if estar and ‘dug have a spatiotemporal argument, this argument will need to be anchored to a specific time and location, which in turn tends to favor situations in which the speaker has direct evidence. This is the suggestion Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti (2002) make for estar.

In a similar vein, Garrett (2001) argues that the direct evidential ‘dug encodes an SL meaning formalized through a Kratzer-style spatiotemporal variable. His analysis assumes that Tibetan direct evidentials involve three different layers. First, they project a situation (an event or state), second, they have a spatiotemporal argument bound by a demonstrative component Dem, and third, they contain a property Know, which relates to the fact that when “a person says something, he presents himself as knowing that thing (p. 53).” The combination of Dem and Know “enforces an observability restriction, which requires the situation described to have been directly observed by the origo [i.e. the speaker, J.C.].” The semantic representation for the spatiotemporal portion of the SL meaning is presented in (36), where “l” represents the spatiotemporal argument.

\[(36) \begin{align*}
\text{a. Tashi is eating.} \\
\text{b. } & \text{[Il] [Dem(l) \land \text{eat(l, Tashi)]} \\
\end{align*} \]  

\[(Garrett, 2001, 57)\]

In the following sections I will provide arguments against this specific implementation of the SL analysis.
3.1 Arguments against the Stage-level/individual-level characterization of ‘dug’

Kalsang et al. (2013, 552) argue that ‘dug’ is [+imperfective], not SL, at least not in terms of having a spatiotemporal argument. They point out that in Garret’s analysis, ‘dug’ should only be compatible with SL predicates, or IL predicates that are coerced into an SL reading. In his analysis, coercion involves linking the predicate to a specific spatiotemporal location through ‘dug’ s dem operator. This process is argued to happen with predicates of color, possession and generic attributes, as seen in (37), from Kalsang et al. (2013, 552). However, these predicates still convey general properties and the use of ‘dug’ does not make them delimited, coerced stages of the relevant property, but rather it signals that the speaker came to know the relevant property at some specific time or location. In other words, these examples involve restricted topic situations, not coerced SL predication.5

\[
\begin{align*}
(37) & \quad \text{a.} \quad \text{dmár po ‘dug} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{red evid} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{‘It’s red.’ (Garrett, 2001, 68)} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{b.} \quad \text{Psangs ma dpal chas zhi ‘dug} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{Pasang loc camera a evid} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{‘Pasang has a camera.’ (Agha, 1993, 167, cited in Garrett, 2001, 75)} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{c.} \quad \text{Américai ni tso zhe mang po ga ‘dug} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{America people food much eat impf evid} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{‘Americans eat too much.’} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{d.} \quad \text{Ipad de tso zhe drag yang po ‘dug} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{Ipad are very light evid} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{‘Ipad are very light.’} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{e.} \quad \text{chu sring la so mon po ‘dug} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{alligators loc sharp teeth evid} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{‘Alligators have sharp teeth.’ (from Kalsang et al., 2013, ex. 54)}
\end{align*}
\]

Finally, recall Kalsang et al.’s (2013, 554) observation that 3rd person subjects are possible with ‘dug’ if there is enough evidence to make the statement (cf. (32)-(31) above).

Based on these observations, Kalsang et al. (2013) conclude that Tibetan evidentials are best analyzed as relations between situations, building on Speas’s (2010) analysis in the situation semantics framework (cf. Kratzer 2004, a.o.). Specifically, evidential ‘dug’ entails that the situation depicted by the proposition (the Evaluation Situation) is contained in the Information Situation, which contains the information necessary to assess that proposition. In section 4.1, I will characterize the evidential properties of ‘dug’ as arising from the type of comparison class established by the predicate. I will suggest that like estar, ‘dug’ involves a within-individual comparison class that needs to be located.

3.2 Against the SL analysis of estar

The SL/IL analysis of ser/estar assumes that estar appears with SL predicates, and SL predicates go with estar (with some notable exceptions). On the other hand, not all of the properties usually ascribed to the SL/IL distinction pattern as expected with copular verbs in Spanish (cf. among others, Maienborn, 2005 and Camacho, 2012, whose presentation I summarize here).

For example, frequency adverbs, which favor a SL reading, are possible with both ser and estar, as seen in (38). The reading of (38b) with ser seems to be that Luisa acted in an altruistic way several times a day. In other words, the sentence has a coerced SL reading, but the copula does not change to estar.

\[
\begin{align*}
(38) & \quad \text{a.} \quad \text{En esa época, Luisa estaba disponible varias veces al día.} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{‘During that period, Luisa was available several times a day.’} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{b.} \quad \text{En esa época, Luisa era altruista varias veces al día.} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{‘During that period, Luisa was IL altruistic several times a day.’ (Camacho, 2012, 460)}
\end{align*}
\]

Maienborn (2005, 163) notes that a location PP adjunct cannot modify estar + predicate, as seen in (39). This is unexpected if SL/estar involves some type of spatiotemporal argument that the PP identifies. However, we should note that the ungrammaticality of (39) shows that the whole combination of estar + predicate is not SL, but that still leaves open whether estar itself selects for a SL predicate, although the interpretation of estar + predicate has an aspectually delimited meaning.6

5I have preserved the original source’s orthographic representation, which may be inconsistent with that of other examples.
6An anonymous reviewer suggests that these examples “are not ungrammatical; rather, they are merely difficult to contextualize, since the state-of-affairs they describe is not consistent with what we know about how the world is. In fact, [(39a)] means exactly what it should mean: that the shirt is wet only when put on the chair”. I don’t believe there is anything conceptually inconsistent with the state-of-affairs described by that sentence, in fact it can be expressed with la camisa esté mojada cuando está sobre la silla ‘the shirt is wet when it is on the chair’. This second sentence requires some creative context building, but (39a) still sounds ungrammatical to my ear in this creative scenario. In fact, (39b) seems like a perfectly reasonable scenario, but the sentence still sounds odd with estar.
(39)  a. * La camisa está mojada sobre la silla.
    ‘The shirt is SL wet on the chair.’
   
    b. * El champán está tibio fuera de la nevera.
    ‘The champagne is SL warm outside the fridge.’

A second mismatch between SL/IL properties and ser/estar relates to conditional clauses. Only estar predicates appear as the restrictor of a when conditional (cf. (40a-b)), as one would expect if it combines and denotes SL properties, although Schmitt (1992, 414) has discussed examples like (40c) that systematically appear with ser in Brazilian Portuguese and in Spanish.

(40)  a. {Siempre que/Cuando} María está alegre, todo le sale bien.
    ‘Whenever Maria is SL in-a-good-mood, everything turns out well for her.’
   
    b. * {Siempre que/Cuando} María es alegre, todo le sale bien.
    ‘Whenever Maria is IL in-a-good-mood, everything turns out well for her.’
   
    c. {Siempre que/Cuando} María es grosera/cruel/amable, es bastante grosera/cruel/amable.
    ‘Whenever Maria is rude/cruel/nice, she is really rude/cruel/nice.’

A different line of concern about the SL/IL analysis of copular verbs in Spanish relates to the actual characterization of the SL/IL distinction. Kratzer’s (1995) initial analysis assigns an additional spatiotemporal argument to SL predicates, that anchors them to specific discourse spatiotemporal variables (cf. Jiménez-Fernández, 2012 for a specific account of ser/estar in those terms). However, the unavailability of locative PPs with SL predicates with estar casts some doubt on the viability of this analysis for ser/estar.

Several researchers have proposed a different foundation for the SL/IL distinction, building on Kuroda’s (1972) distinction between categorical and thetic judgements (cf. Higginbotham and Ramchand, 1996). The former are statements about the subject, whereas the latter affirm the existence of an eventuality. Based on this idea, Raposo and Uriagereka (1995) argue that IL clauses are categorical (in the above sense), whereas SL clauses correspond to thetic judgements. In their analysis, the thetic/categorical distinction follows from the relative scope of the subject and the predicate in the tree: if the subject is higher, the sentence leads to a categorical judgement, if the predicate is higher, it leads to a thetic one. Arche (2006) also assumes the categorical/thetic judgement distinction, in particular she proposes that estar provides linking to an external situation variable, yielding a thetic judgment, whereas ser is predicated of an individual.

The challenge this analysis poses is to link the categorical/thetic classification with evidential meaning. In Arche’s proposal this can still be accomplished, since she argues for linking estar to an external situation variable. We will return to this issue below.

4. Evidentiality and aspect

As we have seen, both Tibetan ‘dug’ and Spanish estar appear with predicates that convey aspectual and evidential meaning. In the case of ‘dug’ predicates, existing descriptions suggest that evidentiality is primary, whereas for estar predicates, I have argued that evidentiality is not always present. I will argue that evidentiality is the default by-product of the aspectual meaning, but in the case of ‘dug’, that mapping is stricter than for estar.

4.1 The aspectual component

Gumiel-Molina and Páez-Jiménez (2012a; 2012b) and Gumiel-Molina et al. (2013) propose an analysis of ser/estar that relates the distribution of adjectives to their gradability properties, following Toledo and Sassoon (2011a; 2011b). Specifically, they assume that gradable adjectives represent absolute or relative properties. Absolute interpretations depict properties compared to the same individual (the so-called within-individual comparison class), relative interpretations establish a comparison class between individuals (between-individuals comparison class). Absolute adjectives appear with estar, relative ones with ser. For example, alto ‘tall’ in (41a) is interpreted by comparison to other children, whereas for lleno ‘full’ in (41b), the degree of fullness is measured against other potential instances of the same glass.

(41)  a. El niño es alto.
    the boy is SL true
    ‘The boy is tall’
   
    b. El vaso está lleno.
    the glass is SL full
    ‘The glass is full’

---

7Crespo (1946) and more directly Falk (1979); Franco and Steinmetz (1983, 1986) are precedents for this line of analysis.
The general state of affairs is informally given in (42). A predicate like *feliz* ‘happy’ can be compared with other instances that apply to the same individual (X) within the same class, resulting in *estar*, or it can be compared with other instances applied to different individuals (X ... Y), resulting in *ser*.

(42) *feliz* ‘happy’

Formally, Gumiel-Molina et al. (2013) propose that the relative/absolute distinction (i.e. whether the adjective is interpreted as a within- or between-individuals comparison class) is introduced by a functional projection *pos* (positive). The actual comparison class generated separately, so that an AP like (43a) is represented as (43b).

(43) a. *Alto para ser jugador de fútbol*
   tall for *be* player of football
b. ‘Tall for a football player’

4.2 Evidentiality

How does the characterization of *estar/’dug* as within-individual class comparisons connect with evidentiality? Consider what is involved in elucidating the meaning of a within-individual comparison class vs. a between-individual one, based on the scheme in (42). In the first case, the situation involves a comparison of properties that applies to a single individual, so the "slices" of properties are not individuated. In this sense, in order to elucidate whether the actual property obtains, the individual/property slice pair needs to be individuated, so that the relevant comparisons can be established, as in (45). Individuation locates the relevant slice-individual pair.

(44) ‘*dug* encodes an absolute (within-individual) comparison class.

(45) Property-slice individual pairs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>before individuation</th>
<th>after individuation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *feliz*(Juan)...*feliz*(Juan)...*feliz*(Juan)... | *feliz*(Juan)at loc1...*feliz*(Juan)at loc2...*feliz*(Juan)at loc3...

The need to locate SL predicates has been at the core of several approaches based on Kratzer’s (1995) proposal that SL predicates project an additional spatiotemporal argument (cf. Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti 2002; Arche 2006). Maienborn (2005), on the other hand, suggests that *estar* presupposes a specific topic situation. The current approach assumes with Maienborn that SL predicates (within-individual comparisons) are individuated pragmatically, but it also assumes a different lexical-syntactic representation for sentences with *ser* and *estar*, namely one that distinguishes between within-individual and between-individual comparisons.

Because within-individual comparisons require individuation through location, evidentiality has a dedicated path to become potentially salient. The more evidential cues in the situation, the likelier an evidential interpretation will surface.

By contrast, between-individual comparisons can be establish without any further operation, since they apply to different individual/property pairs, hence each of them comes with implicit existential import. Individuation through location is not required, hence evidence has no dedicated path to become salient.
One important question is how the differences just described are introduced. From a syntactic point of view, I assume that the intuition behind the scheme in (42) corresponds to a structural difference. In particular, I assume Raposo and Uriagereka’s (1995) proposal that thetic judgements (with *estar*) are higher than categorical ones (with *ser*). However, since I am assuming (following Gumiel-Molina et al. 2013 that the aspectual difference is introduced by the predicate, not by the copula, I propose the representations in (46), where X represents a projection of the predicate (the adjective or the noun). Within-individual comparisons arise when the predicate takes scope over the subject (cf. (46a)), and between-individual differences arise when the subject takes scope over the predicate (as in (46b)). In order to establish the comparison class, the first case will require a single property distributed over the same individual, hence the slice-individual pairing. In the second case, an individual/property pair can be compared to other (implicit) individual/property pairs (cf. also Diesing 1992; Kratzer 1995 for a structurally different representation of SL/IL predicates).

The representation in (46a) states that Deg raises to the specifier of DegP, under the assumption that Deg holds the relative/absolute properties of the adjective (as in (43) above), however, it is possible that a larger projection including the adjective raises.
In sum, the slice-of-subject reading is simply the result of the semantic meaning of the predicate as gradable in conjunction with the scope relations in (46a) and (46b).

Let us turn to how this analysis applies to the facts described earlier. First, consider one of the observations noted in (30) about ‘dug. As seen in the repeated examples in (47), in the absence of a context, ‘dug can only be used in 1st person but not in 2nd or 3rd person, presumably because the speaker only has direct access to his/her own internal states. If ‘dug involves a within-individual comparison class, the absence of a context means that no comparison classes can be established regarding internal states of the addressee or another participant, but the speaker does have access to different pairs of his own individual/property slices. Whenever the right context is given for 2nd or 3rd person subjects, then the individual/property slices are located and evidentiality can be linked to this location. In plain words, I can tell when I am hungry by comparison to other instances in which I have not been hungry. However, when speaking about the addressee or third person, the comparison does not directly involve comparing stages of the speaker, so the only way in which I can have access to those stages is by contextual evidence, as we saw in (31)-(32).

The analysis also explains Agha’s (1993) observation that ‘dug may convey direct evidence (as in (21a) above), or indirect knowledge (as in (21b) above). Since the evidential effect is contextually derived from the requirement to individuate an individual/property slice pair, the actual type of evidence will depend on other elements. First-persons will tend to involve direct evidence, but past-tense situations may not.

For estar, the basic analysis would be similar: examples like (5)-(6) above, repeated below, involve pairs of individual/property-slices resulting from the within-individual comparison predicate taking scope over the subject, hence these pairs need to be located, and the context allows for a direct-evidence interpretation. This interpretation is favored by the demonstrative in (48a), (49b), by the present tense in all of the examples, and plausibly the preceding discourse background in (48b), (49b).

The proposed analysis can help explain the contrast observed in (50)-(51). A statement like the first part of (50a) with estar can be followed by a denial that the situation holds generally, but not by a denial that the situation doesn’t currently hold (cf. (50b).
Because *estar* requires individuation that anchors it to moment-of-speech, it makes no commitments to the general validity of that situation, so (50a) is perfectly sensible, but (50b) is not.

In the case of *ser*, the opposite is true (cf. (51a)): *ser* does not require individuation, hence no entailment of moment-of-speech anchoring, so the first clause isn’t interpreted as a statement restricted to the moment of speech and the denial of that situation yields a contradiction. Conversely, if the followup specifies the time frame as moment of speech, no contradiction arises (cf. (51b)).

(50) a. Julián está feliz, pero generalmente no es feliz.
   ‘Julián is (currently) happy, but isn’t generally happy.’

   b. *Julián está feliz, pero hoy no está feliz.
   ‘Julián is happy today, but isn’t happy.’

(51) a. *Julián es feliz, pero generalmente no es feliz.
   ‘Julián is happy, but isn’t generally happy.’

   b. Julián es feliz, pero hoy no es feliz.
   ‘Julián is happy today, but he isn’t happy today.’

4.2.1 Tibetan evidential ‘dug’ vs. Spanish *estar*

As noted, Tibetan ‘*dug*’ differs from *estar* in that the former seems to be obligatorily (and perhaps primarily) evidential, whereas *estar* is not. Put another way, there are no non-evidential uses of ‘*dug*’ (to the best of my knowledge), but there are non-evidential uses of *estar*. One manifestation of this difference relates to the person distinction effect noted for ‘*dug*’ (cf. (47)). As noted, without a clear context, only first persons allow for ‘*dug*’ with predicates like ‘be hungry’. This is not the case in Spanish, as seen in (11), also repeated below.

(52) a. Estoy contento/hambriento.
   ‘I am happy/hungry.’

   b. Está contenta/hambrienta.
   ‘She is happy/hungry.’

I take the absence of person asymmetries with *estar* vs. ‘*dug*’ to be independent of the principles that drive the distribution we have been discussing. In this respect, Denwood (1999, 136) describes interactions between two different categories: evidentiality (source of evidence) and viewpoint (self or other). For example, -byung. indicates ‘self-centered’, witnessed, whereas -song indicates ‘other-centered’, witnessed. -red, on the other hand, indicates unwitnessed (with no distinction for self- or other-centered), as seen in (53). It should be stressed that these viewpoint morphemes are not the same as person, and they are not agreement, since the two types of viewpoint (self and other) can appear with the same person.

(53) a. kho gis. gnang-byung.
   ‘He gave it (to me).’ (Denwood 1999, 143)

   b. kho gis. gnang-song.
   ‘He gave it (to someone else).’

   c. kho phyin-pa-red
   ‘He left (I infer it)’ (Garrett 2001, 14)

These categories interact in complex ways (cf. Agha 1993; Denwood 1999; Garrett 2001), but these examples suggest that viewpoint and evidentiality are independent properties in Tibetan. Viewpoint serves as a way to provide the contextual individuation for ‘*dug*’ in a way that is not systematically present in Spanish (because Spanish lacks a grammatical expression of viewpoint).
4.3 *Estar + D/NP

Next, let’s consider the observation that DPs cannot appear with estar (or with ‘dug’). I will argue that this restriction stems from the fact that D/NPs are not gradable, hence cannot establish a comparison class by themselves. In Gumiel-Molina et al.’s (2013) approach, D/NPs lack the DegP functional architecture.

Many authors have claimed that nominals may be gradable (cf. Bolinger, 1972; Sassoon, 2007, 2011; Morzycki, 2009), based on a number of tests such as the ones illustrated in (54) (cf. Bolinger, 1972; Constantinescu, 2011). In each of these examples, the NP (amigo ‘friend’, inútil ‘useless person’ and tonto ‘fool’) is modified by another category that indicates a high degree of the property associated with the NP, so that (54a) means ‘Pedro is a friend to a high degree.’

(54) a. Pedro es un gran amigo.
   ‘Pedro is a great friend’
   ‘Pedro is a great friend.’
   b. No podemos mantener a un inútil semejante.
      not can keep to a useless such
      ‘We can’t keep such a useless (person).’
   c. Domingo es todo un tonto.
      the minister is all an fool
      ‘The minister is such a/ a complete fool’

If these are instances of degrees of a property, they certainly do not constitute within-individual comparisons. Thus, (54a), for example, does not compare degrees of Pedro’s friendship to other instances of his being a friend, but rather to common standards of friendship across different individuals.

On the other hand, Constantinescu (2011) argues that alleged D/NP gradability is different from adjectival gradability. She notes that the proposed tests don’t necessarily yield a consistent set of gradable nouns, and that when they are applied to nominals, they may be signalling slightly different properties than gradability does for adjectives. In effect, she reaches the conclusion that nouns are not gradable in the way that adjectives are. For example, degree quantifiers like more, más quantify over different properties in nouns than in adjectives, as illustrated in (55). Más inteligente ’more intelligent’ compares degrees of intelligence, whereas más libros ’more books’ compares amounts of books.

(55) a. La araña es más inteligente que la mosca.
   the spider is more intelligent than the fly
   ‘A spider is more intelligent than a fly.’
   b. La librería compró más libros de auto-ayuda que de economía.
      the bookstore bought more books of self-help than of economics
      ‘The library bought more self-help books than Economics books

Constantinescu (2011) assumes that gradability should be analyzed as the presence of a salient ordering in the domain of an adjective, and argues that what makes nouns different is that they cannot establish an ordering in their domains.\(^9\) If she is right, then adjectives are gradable but nominals are not, and we can ascribe the ungrammaticality of *Estar + D/NP to the lack of ordered domains for nominals. The explanation for the grammaticality of (4b) with de, repeated below would follow if de introduces the necessary domain ordering. Formally, de heads pos, the degree head associated with adjectives (cf. 43).

(56) Obama está de presidente
    Obama is.st. of president
    ‘Obama is (temporarily, currently) president’

5. Conclusions

In this paper, I have argued that explaining the distribution of ser and estar requires at least two types of constraints: an aspectual domain that determines whether the predicate is gradable (estar lexicalizes absolute predicates and within-individual comparisons, ser relative properties and between-individual comparisons), and a pragmatic constraint that facilitates evidential interpretations for absolute predicates. Within-individual comparisons give rise to individual/property-slice pairs that need to be individuated by locating them. Once located, evidentiality can be readily expressed. Finally, I have argued that Tibetan ‘dug’ is primarily evidential by virtue of a separate property of Tibetan, namely the presence of a grammatical category for viewpoint that signals whether the proposition is self-centered or other-centered. This additional category acts as a default locating-device for individual/property-slice pairs, so evidential content is much more readily available. The impossibility of having DPs with estar relates to the fact that DPs cannot be graded because they lack the relevant functional projection. Once this structure is introduced (through de), they become gradable and can appear with estar.

\(^8\)Note that several of these NPs can also be used as adjectives, as in personaje inútil ‘useless character’ or orden tonta ‘dumb order’.

\(^9\)Nouns that seem gradable resort to different mechanisms, for details, see Constantinescu (2011).
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