

**verbs
movement
and
prepositions**

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Stative/eventive alternations in Spanish

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Abstract

This chapter focuses on the stative/eventive alternation in Spanish with the purpose of providing evidence to support the following ideas: the heterogeneity of the states as an aspectual class, the existence of verbs and verbal predicates which are neutral with respect to the criterion of dynamicity and the necessity to single out different levels of aspectual analysis, from lexical to discourse level. In order to prove these ideas, I will analyse a small but varied series of examples showing the above-mentioned alternation. In particular, I will examine the semantic-aspectual characteristics of the Spanish verbs such as *atravesar* ‘to cross’ (*atravesar* ‘to cross’, *rodear* ‘to surround’, *cubrir* ‘to cover’, etc.), which are used in both stative and eventive contexts; comparative progressives of the type *estar cada vez más guapa* ‘to look more and more beautiful’, which denote a gradual change despite being based on the stative predicate; the predicates of activity used in the characterizing sentences, for instance *Juan canta en locales nocturnos* ‘Juan sings in nightclubs’; and finally the *estarse quieto*-type of construction, which consists in the combination of the so-called aspectual *se* and a stative predicate. The results of the analysis have some direct implications for our way of understanding of the states as an aspectual class and their relationship with the events.

Keywords

Aspectual alternation, aspectual composition, stativity, dynamicity, Spanish aspectual *se*

1 - Introduction

According to the ‘traditional’ aspectual classifications of verbs (Kenny 1963; Vendler 1957; Verkuyl 1972; Dowty 1979; among others), the state/event opposition is established with respect to the criterion of ‘dynamicity’, which implies the existence of progress in time.

The lack of progress or, in other words, the homogeneity of its internal structure thus constitutes the basic feature of the states as it is shown in the following definition provided by Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach (2008: 300), in which the authors distinguish between homogeneous (or non-dynamic) eventualities and heterogeneous (or dynamic) eventualities¹: “An eventuality is homogeneous or non-dynamic if it consists of homogeneous parts and does not undergo any change along its temporal development”; and by contrast, “An eventuality is heterogeneous or dynamic if it is subject to internal changes in its development, thus its temporal evolution is modified.”

At the same time, the above-mentioned authors note that verbs like *medir dos metros* ‘to be two meters tall/long’ or *ser alto* ‘to be tall’, which are clearly stative, belong to the group of homogeneous or non-dynamic eventualities, while others like *correr* ‘to run’ or *dibujar un círculo* ‘to draw a circle’, which usually serve as typical examples of the eventive predicates, represent a heterogeneous or dynamic eventuality. According to the same authors, the latter examples “are dynamic eventualities, since they can be considered as complex events consisting of different phases or stages” (Ibid.).

The lack of phases or stages attributed to the internal structure of states is shown in the following representations offered by Pustejovsky (1991: 56) for states and processes²:



[S = State; P = Process; e = event]

Figure 1 - Internal structure of states and processes by Pustejovsky (1991)

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations included in this chapter are my own, even when the Spanish originals are taken from other authors.

² Apart from these two, Pustejovsky (1988, 1991) includes the third class in his classification of eventualities, which he names ‘transition’. However, I would like to focus attention on states and processes. They are both atelic eventualities and are distinguished only by the dynamicity feature.

According to these representations, states are thought as an indivisible whole, while processes have an internal structure which allows further subdivision into stages or phases of their development.

In a similar way, if states are characterized by the absence of internal progression, we could understand that they are kept constant throughout their existence. This property, known as ‘sub-interval property’, allows Smith to establish the following entailment pattern for states: “When a state holds for an interval it holds for every sub-interval of that interval” (1997: 32).

This definition reflects the vision of states according to which they are maintained identical in each and every one of their temporal subparts. From this point of view, one could say that states preserve their nature even if they undergo a temporal division into smaller parts. In this respect, I should note that, although processes (or activities) also allow temporal subdivision without losing their nature, they are different from states in having a minimal limit beyond which they cannot be divided (for example, the action of running consists of continuous repetition of a set of movements, but none of these movements can separately represent the process of running).

In accordance with what I have said earlier, I could draw a conclusion that states are non-dynamic situations that lack internal progression. However, what I would like to emphasize here is that states, once they have been marked as homogeneous or non-dynamic situations, tend to remain excluded from any further division, as it happens in the table offered by Smith (1997: 20, (2)):

Situations	Static	Durative	Telic
States	[+]	[+]	[-] ³
Activity	[-]	[+]	[-]
Accomplishment	[-]	[+]	[+]
Semelfactive	[-]	[-]	[-]
Achievement	[-]	[-]	[+]

Table 1 - “Temporal features of the situation types” proposed by Smith (1997)

As can be observed, this classification divides situations into states and events, and further divisions only affect the latter.

Nevertheless, due to considerable advances of research on stativity over the

³ According to the author, this feature is irrelevant for the analysis of states (Smith 1997: 20).

past decade (Arche 2006; Cunha 2007; Martin 2008; Roby 2009; Rothmayr 2009; Gawron 2009; Carrasco Gutiérrez 2011; Koontz-Garboden 2011; Ernst 2016; among others), there is nothing new in pointing out the heterogeneous character of states as an aspectual class. Works cited above and many others have revealed remarkable heterogeneity of states, and, at the same time, have allowed us to see the lack of a clear-cut boundary between states and events.

Among the most commonly accepted classifications of states are the following: the one which distinguishes between permanent (i.e. individual-level) states –e. g. *ser de Murcia* ‘to be from Murcia’– and transitional (i.e. stage-level) states –e. g. *tener hambre* ‘to be hungry’– (Carlson 1977; Kratzer 1995; Olsen 1997; Escandell-Vidal & Leonetti 2002); the one that singles out temporally delimited states –e. g. *estar distraído* ‘to be distracted’– and those which are not temporally delimited –e.g. *amar* ‘to love’– (Robinson 1994; Marín 2000; Marín & McNally 2005); and the classification that separates states perceived as the result of a previous event –e.g. *estar resuelto* ‘to be resolved’– from those which do not presuppose any previous change of state –e.g. *ser inteligente* ‘to be intelligent’– (Bosque 1990; Moreno Cabrera 2003).

Moreover, I should mention Maienborn’s approach (2003, 2005, 2008), which distinguishes the statives referring to an eventuality –e.g. *dormir* ‘to sleep’– from those which are ‘pure statives’ such as *poseer* ‘to possess’; according to this author, the former would share the Davidsonian argument with eventive predicates, while the latter would carry a different kind of aspectual argument, the so-called Kimian state argument. Rothmayr (2009) uses this distinction as one of the fundamental criteria in her classification of stative predicates in the German language, in which each class of stative verbs is given a different lexical-semantic structure.

And finally, it is also revealing the difference between result states and derived statives studied by authors as Dubinsky & Simango (1996) and Koontz-Garboden (2011). The following two examples illustrate the difference in question:

- (1) a. *We found a broken mirror in her room.*
- b. *What do white broken lines painted on the pavement mean?*

In the above examples, the verbal adjective *broken* receives two very different interpretations: while in the first example (1a) it refers to the result state of the event defined by the verb *to break* from which it is derived, in the example (1b) it indicates a property of being discontinuous without any implication that the line has previously suffered an action of breaking.

Regarding the difficulty of drawing a clear boundary between states and events, it has been noted that there are many verbs or even entire predicates that would allow a dual (stative/eventive) aspectual interpretation. This situation, which could be characterized as ‘aspectual ambivalence’, is shown in the examples (2)-(6):

- (2) a. *Conozco bien a María.* [State]
 ‘I know María well.’
 b. *La conocí en una reunión.* [Event]
 ‘I met her in a meeting.’
- (3) a. *El camino atraviesa el bosque.* [State]
 ‘The path goes through the forest.’
 b. *La bala atravesó el muro.* [Event]
 ‘The bullet went through the wall.’
- (4) a. *Está más guapa.* [State]
 ‘She is more beautiful.’
 b. *Cada vez está más guapa.* [Event]
 ‘She looks more and more beautiful.’
- (5) a. *Carlos cantó una canción.* [Event]
 ‘Carlos sang a song.’
 b. *Carlos canta en locales nocturnos.* [?State]
 ‘Carlos sings in nightclubs.’
- (6) a. *El niño estuvo quieto.* [State]
 ‘The boy was_{ESTAR}⁴ still.’
 b. *El niño se estuvo quieto.* [?State]
 ‘The boy SE⁵ was_{ESTAR} still.’

The examples (2) show two different uses of the Spanish verb *conocer*: in (2a) it denotes a state and can be considered equivalent to the English verb *to know*, while in (2b) it refers to a corresponding inchoative event that is expressed by the English verb *to meet*⁶.

⁴ Bearing in mind that in Spanish there are two verbs that correspond to the English copulative verb *to be*, i.e. *ser* and *estar*, in my English translations of Spanish examples I will indicate which one of the two is used in the original text by means of the subindexes SER and ESTAR: ‘to be_{ESTAR}’ and ‘to be_{SER}’.

⁵ As will be explained later, the predicate in this example, *estarse quieto*, contains the clitic *se* (which has the following variants depending on person and number: *me, te, se, nos, os, se*). When translating the examples which contain this clitic, I will use the form SE in order to reflect its semantic contribution.

⁶ See Godoy & Soto Vergara (2017), for the similar alternation shown by the Spanish verb *saber* ‘to know’.

In a similar fashion, in the examples (3) the verb *atravesar* ‘to cross’ represents an aspectual alternation between state and event: in the example (3a), which is clearly stative, it defines a spatial situation of the path; whereas in the example (3b), which is eventive, it expresses the movement of the bullet. In their turn, examples (4) show that a stative predicate *estar guapa* ‘to be beautiful’ acquires a gradual change (hence, eventive) interpretation when it is used together with the comparative progressive expression *cada vez más* ‘(lit. each time more) more and more’.

In the case of (5), the sentence (5a) is eventive as it denotes a single, unrepeated action, that of singing a song; however, in the sentence (5b), despite the fact that it is constructed with the same verb *cantar* ‘to sing’, it acquires a characterizing interpretation as it now equals to *Carlos is a nightclub singer* and, in this sense, it can be considered stative.

Finally, the example (6a) –built with the verb *estar* ‘to be_{ESTAR}’– expresses a stative situation by attributing a property to the subject. On the contrary, the example (6b) –based on the pronominal form of *estar* (*estarse* ‘to be_{ESTAR}-SE’)-, is seen as equivalent to *The boy kept still*, and implies an active participation of the subject as it describes child’s behaviour over a certain period of time. This feature separates examples like (6b) from prototypical states.

In cases of the dual interpretation such as those we have just observed, it is usual to resort to the notion of recategorization, or an ‘aspectual coercion’, which allows a lexical unit to receive an aspectual interpretation different from the original one in accordance with the semantic demands of the syntactic context in which it is used (Pustejovsky 1995; Escandell-Vidal & Leonetti 2002). From this point of view, the inchoative interpretation of (2b), for instance, would be understood as a result of the aspectual coercion that functions over the stative verb *conocer* ‘to know’, triggered by the morphosyntactic context specific to this example.

It is important to note that I do not aim at questioning the validity of the coercion analysis for the example (2b) and for many other cases of dual interpretation. However, in what follows I would like to defend the idea that the origin of the aspectual ambivalence varies considerably depending on each circumstance, and that for some cases recategorization or coercion would not be the most adequate explanation. The point of view I have just offered is based on a series of theoretical assumptions that could be summarized in the following way:

- i) Recognition of the various types and degrees of stativity;
- ii) Recognition of the various levels of aspectual analysis;
- iii) Recognition of the existence of verbs and predicates which are aspectually ‘neutral’.

With respect to point (i), based on my previous works (Morimoto 2008, 2011) on *estarse quieto* ‘to be_{ESTAR}-SE still’-type construction –(6b)–, in section 4 I will defend the existence of states with a controlling subject. As we will see, this type of states represents some characteristics that are usually considered prototypical of the events (such as allowing an imperative or a progressive form), although their inherent temporal structure, lacking dynamicity and remaining inactive with respect to the temporal progression, perfectly adjusts to that of states in general.

Regarding the hypothesis (ii), I find it necessary to mention at least the following three levels or domains of aspectual analysis, taking into account the approaches of authors like Bertinetto (1994), Havu (1997), Guéron (2000, 2008), Horno Chéliz & Cuartero Otal (2010):

- Aktionsart domain: verbs and predicates
- Temporal-aspectual domain: sentences
- Discursive domain: utterances

However, unlike some authors like Bertinetto (1994), and following the ideas of Horno Chéliz & Cuartero Otal (2010), I argue that the stativity is applicable to all these levels; thus, I claim that it is possible to talk about stative verbs, stative sentences or stative utterances, although in each of these cases stativity will be defined by different factors.

And finally, as it is shown above –(iii)–, I argue for the existence of verbs and predicates which are ‘neutral’ regarding some aspectual criteria. Defending the existence of neutral verbs and predicates in connection with the criterion of stativity (or dynamicity) is one of my main goals in this chapter.

With these basic assumptions in mind, I will focus on the aspectual ambiguity previously presented in (3), (4), (5), and (6), starting with the first of them.

2 - Aspectual ambivalence at lexical level

Let us now return to the examples shown under (3), repeated here as (7):

- (7) a. *El camino atraviesa el bosque.* [State]
'The path goes through the forest.'
b. *La bala atravesó el muro.* [Event]
'The bullet went through the wall.'

In these examples, the same verb *atravesar* 'to go through' appears to be ambivalent in terms of the criterion of stativity (or dynamicity). As may be seen below in examples (8) and (9), verbs like *cubrir* 'to cover', *tapar* 'to cover', *adornar* 'to adorn' or *llenar* 'to fill' share a similar alternation:

- (8) a. *Esta valla tapa la vista de la sierra.*
'This fence covers the views of the mountains.'
b. *El pan de oro cubre toda la cúpula.*
'The gold leaf covers the entire dome.'
c. *Varias esculturas adornan el parque.*
'Various sculptures adorn the park.'
d. *Retratos de antiguos presidentes llenan las paredes.*
'Portraits of former presidents fill the walls.'
- (9) a. *Taparon el agujero con una chapa de hierro.*
'They covered the hole with a steel sheet.'
b. *Cubriremos esta pared {con/de} papel pintado.*
'We will cover this wall with wallpaper.'
c. *Los niños adornaron la sala con motivos navideños.*
'The children decorate the room with Christmas motifs.'
d. *Llenaron la casa {con/de} muebles baratos.*
'They filled the house with cheap furniture.'

This kind of alternation was characterized by Rothmayr (2009) as an 'instrumental alternation'⁷. According to this author, in the stative use of these verbs, the subject corresponds to the instrumental modifier in their eventive use. Nevertheless, I think that the semantic function of the subject of the examples like (8) –e. g. *esta valla* 'this fence' in (8a)– and of the prepositional modifier in (9) –e. g. *con una chapa de hierro* 'with a steel sheet' in (9a)– is not instrumental but that of *locatum*, the location of

⁷ See also Kratzer (2000), who points out the aspectual ambivalence (stative/eventive) of the verbs like *obstruct*, *surround*, *cover* or *support*, and argues that these verbs express 'causal' relationship even when used in their stative meaning.

which constitutes an essential part of the eventuality expressed by the verbs.

As for this group of verbs, and in accordance with what I have described in my previous work (Morimoto 2013), I would like to propose the idea that they are neutral with respect to the stative/eventive opposition. In other words, I would like to defend the idea that stativity or dynamicity of the situation expressed by these verbs is determined at the sentence and discourse levels. Examples as the following help illustrate this idea:

- (10) a. *Los enemigos rodearon la ciudad durante varios meses.* [State]
‘The enemies surrounded the city for several months.’
b. *Los enemigos rodearon la ciudad en una hora.* [Event]
‘The enemies surrounded the city in an hour.’
- (11) a. *En otoño, las hojas caídas tapan la pista.* [State/ Event]
‘In autumn, fallen leaves cover the track.’
b. *Las hojas caídas tapan la pista poco a poco.* [Event]
‘The fallen leaves cover the track little by little.’
- (12) *Ese chico me tapa la pantalla.* [State/ Event]
‘That boy blocks my view of the screen.’

These pairs represent the cases in which the sentences based on verbs like *rodear* ‘to surround’ allow both stative and eventive interpretations.

In the examples (10) and (11) the same sentence expresses a state or an event depending on the temporal or aspectual modifier it appears with: with PP *durante varios meses* ‘for several months’, the sentence (10) acquires a stative interpretation, while temporal PP headed by *en* ‘in’ imposes an eventive reading. In the example (11) we can observe that the adverb *poco a poco* ‘little by little’, referring to the dynamicity of the situation it modifies, imposes an eventive reading on the sentence, which is ambiguous in itself with respect to stativity/eventuality. In a similar way, the example (12) will be interpreted as stative if the subject is understood to be blocking the view of the screen just by the way he stands, even without intention to do it; the same sentence will be interpreted as eventive if it is assumed that the subject is voluntarily doing something to obstruct the view of the screen.

As far as semantic value of these verbs is concerned, I maintain that, as lexical units, they are limited to defining a spatial relationship between two entities. In their stative use –(13)–, they define the spatial situation of the subject with respect to the direct object (*rodear* ‘to surround’ places one entity around another one; in the case of *tapar* ‘to cover’ and *cubrir* ‘to cover, to coat’ one entity hides the surface of another, etc.):

- (13) a. *Una muralla medieval rodea el pueblo.*
‘A medieval wall surrounds the town.’
b. *Esta valla tapa la vista de la sierra.*
‘This fence covers the view of the mountain range.’
c. *El pan de oro cubre toda la cúpula.*
‘The gold leaf covers the entire dome.’

My semantic characterisation of the *rodear* ‘surround’-type verbs might seem inadequate in view of their eventive use shown in example (14), since in this case the same verbs express causative event of change with an impact on the object:

- (14) a. *Rodearon el pueblo con alambradas.*
‘They enclosed the village with barbed wire.’
b. *Taparon el agujero con una chapa de hierro.*
‘They covered the hole with a steel sheet.’
c. *Cubrieron esta pared {con/de} papel pintado.*
‘They covered the wall with wallpaper.’

In these examples, the entity referred to by the direct object is affected as consequence of the event expressed by the verb: as a result of the event expressed in (14a), the village would be surrounded; the event of (14b) would end at the moment when the hole is covered; and, finally, the event of (14c) implies that the wall would end up being completely covered by wallpaper.

Nevertheless, I would like to draw the attention to the fact that the change of state expressed by these verbs presupposes the existence of an object that ends up in a determined location in relation to the affected object. For example, if we cover the hole with a steel sheet, the steel will end up in a particular location with respect to the hole. Furthermore, this spatial relation also underlies their use as verbs of gradual change –(15)– or as displacement verbs –(16)–:

- (15) Gradual change of state:
a. *La nieve cubrió la casa rápidamente.*
‘The snow covered the house quickly.’
b. *Los libros llenaron la casa en muy poco tiempo.*
‘The books filled the house in a very short time.’

(16) Spatial displacement:

- a. *Rodeamos el lago por un camino.*
'We went around the lake following a road.'
- b. *Hoy hemos cubierto mucha distancia en poco tiempo.*
'Today we have covered a long distance in little time.'

Although I cannot delve into this class of verbs here, I would like to indicate the possibility that this kind of analysis is also valid for other groups of verbs, such as the following:

(17) *Atravesar*-type verbs (*atravesar* 'to cross', *colgar* 'to hang', etc.):

- a. *Una cinta azul atraviesa el cuello del vestido.* [State]
'A blue ribbon goes through the neck of the dress.'
- b. *Atravesó un palo en la puerta.* [Event]
'He blocked the door with a stick.'

(18) *Limitar*-type verbs (*limitar* 'to limit, to border')

- a. *La finca limita con un terreno rústico.* [State]
'The farm borders with a rustic land.'
- b. *Limitaremos la finca con una valla.* [Event]
'We (will) enclose the farm with a fence.'

(19) Displacement or situational verbs (*ir* 'go', *recorrer* 'travel, walk', *llegar* 'arrive', etc.):

- a. *Esta carretera va hacia la frontera.* [State]
'This road goes to the border.'
- b. *Vamos hacia la frontera.* [Event]
'We are going to the border.'

In this respect, I would like to refer to the analysis put forward by Horno Chéliz & Cuartero Otal (2010) for the utterances like the following—which are similar to the stative examples of (17)-(19)—:

- (20) a. *Las carreteras recorren la costa.*
'The roads run along the coast.'
- b. *Las lámparas cuelgan del techo.*
'The lamps hang from the ceiling.'

c. *La tela esconde el regalo.*

‘The cloth hides the gift.’

(Horno Chéliz & Cuartero Ota 2010: 99, (21a-c))

In the work cited above, Horno Chéliz and Cuartero Ota single out two fundamental classes of the stative utterances: classifying and situative⁸. According to the same authors, a classifying stative “assigns a particular participant to a specific group and characterizes it by attributing a particular property to it” (op. cit. 90), while situative utterances, despite being stative, “behave in a very similar way to eventive predicates” (op. cit. 95). In consideration of this division, Horno Chéliz and Cuartero Ota draw a conclusion that examples like (20) constitute situative stative utterances based on an eventive predicate (op. cit. 99), and that in this type of utterances stativity arises due to a certain syntactic process.

I share the opinion of the authors that the stativity of the examples (20) is determined syntactically. However, from my point of view, the key factor of this stativity is the spatial relation that underlies the utterances in question. I also believe that contextual dependence of the stative interpretation of verbs like *recorrer* ‘to travel, to walk’, *colgar* ‘to hang’ or *esconder* ‘to hide’ does not necessarily imply that they undergo aspectual recategorization. If we accept the fact that stative interpretation of these verbs comes from syntax, there is no reason to deny the syntactic nature of their eventive interpretation.

In the work cited above, Horno Chéliz and Cuartero Ota establish that situative interpretation of the examples (20) and similar utterances are achieved only when the syntactic subject position is occupied by an argument or an adjunct different from the lexical subject (the theme argument in case of the verb *recorrer* ‘to walk, to travel’ and the agent argument in case of *esconder* ‘to hide’ and *colgar* ‘to hang’). According to the same authors, examples like (21) show that when the predicates under consideration appear with the lexical subject in their syntactic subject position, the only possible stative interpretation is a classifying one:

- (21) a. *Este tren recorre la costa.* [Classifying stative]
‘This train goes along the coast.’

⁸ This opposition is parallel to that of individual-level predicates and stage-level predicates. The authors defend the use of the terms *clasificador* ‘classifying’ (o *caracterizador* ‘characterizing’) and *situativo* ‘situative’ for the characterization of the stative utterances and, in this way, they try to maintain lexical stativity clearly separated from the stativity of utterances.

- b. *Esa máquina cuelga lámparas.* [Classifying stative]
'That machine hangs lamps.'
c. *Los perros esconden huesos.* [Classifying stative]
'Dogs hide bones.'

(Horno Chéliz & Cuartero Ota 2010: 99, (22a-c))

However, I would like to point out that the subject-related patterns formulated by Horno Chéliz and Cuartero Ota are not always systematic, as it can be proven by examples (22):

- (22) a. *Ese señor me tapa la pantalla.*
'That man blocks the view of the screen.'
b. *Un fuerte dispositivo de seguridad rodea el recinto durante el encuentro.*
'A high-end security device surrounds the premises during the meeting.'

Stativity of the examples (22), thus, depends crucially on its locative interpretation, which is compatible with the agentivity of the subject. Although I admit that the distinction between situative stative utterances and classifying stative utterances is more than justified, I also believe that it would be difficult to account for all the mode-actional variants of the verbs under examination without taking into consideration the common semantic feature underlying their stative interpretation, that of indicating a specific locative relation.

3 - Recategorization versus composition

In this section, I would like to focus on the examples (4) and (5) of our initial list. These examples also present a clear aspectual ambivalence, even though they are based on an unambiguous predicate (*estar guapa* 'to be beautiful' = stative; *cantar* 'to sing' = eventive) unlike the cases addressed in the previous part. I will start with the examples under (4), which will be repeated here:

- (23) (=4) a. *Está más guapa.* [State]
'She is more beautiful'
b. *Está cada vez más guapa.* [Event]
'She looks more and more beautiful.'

As I have pointed out in the Introduction, while *estar más guapa* ‘to be more beautiful’ –(23a)– defines a state based on a comparison, *estar cada vez más guapa* ‘to look more and more beautiful’ –(23b)– expresses a progressive situation consisting in a gradual change of state. In this latter example, based on a progressive comparative construction, “successive stages of an increasing (or decreasing) degree of property are being compared” (NGLE: §45.12).

At this point it is important to ask if *estar más guapa* ‘to be_{ESTAR} more beautiful’ has been recategorized and turned into an event. My answer to this question is negative. I sustain that *cada vez* ‘each time, day by day’, when used together with the comparative *más* ‘more’, projects the situation described by the rest of the sentence –e.g. *Está guapa* ‘She is beautiful’, in (23b)– onto the temporal axis associated with the whole construction, so that the temporal progression necessarily implies a parallel increase of the property’s degree. From this point of view, instead of recategorization, it would be more appropriate to talk about aspectual composition in the sentence domain.

Turning to the examples (5) of our initial list, repeated here under (24), it seems clear that the situation of these examples differs considerably from the previous case:

- (24) (=5) a. *Carlos cantó una canción.* [Event]
 ‘Carlos sang a song.’
 b. *Carlos canta en locales nocturnos.* [?State]
 ‘Carlos sings in nightclubs.’

Example (24b) illustrates the use of eventive predicates in a characterizing utterance: unlike example (24a), which describes an accomplishment-type event, (24b) characterizes the subject by indicating his habitual activity. This type of predicates are known as ‘attitudinal predicates’, which, according to Bertinetto (1994), express an activity of the subject that has come to characterize it. Additional examples that also represent this kind of utterances are given below:

- (25) a. *Juan fuma tabaco rubio.*
 ‘Juan smokes blond tobacco.’
 b. *Carmen escribe novelas.*
 ‘Carmen writes novels.’
 c. *Juan repara coches de lujo.*
 ‘Juan repairs luxury cars.’
 d. *Carmen arregla ropa de vestir.*
 ‘Carmen mends clothes.’

As it has been pointed out quite frequently, this kind of sentences can be paraphrased into sentences based on a stative predicate. The examples in (26) that belong to Martínez-Atienza (2007) prove this equivalency:

(26) a. *Juan y Nuria bailan danza clásica.* = *Juan y Nuria son bailarines de danza clásica.*

‘Juan and Nuria dance classical dance. = Juan and Nuria are_{SER} classical dancers.’

b. *Paco canta ópera.* = *Paco es cantante de ópera.*

‘Paco sings opera. = Paco is_{SER} an opera singer.’

(Martínez-Atienza 2007: 157, (11a-b))

From my point of view, this is a typical case of stativity in the discourse domain. In this sense, I fully agree with Horno Chéliz and Cuartero Otal (2010) when they include this kind of examples in their ‘classifying stative utterances’ (2010: 90).

Moreover, as it has been also frequently noted, not all eventive predicates can develop a characterizing meaning. For example, Bertinetto (1994: 413) emphasizes the importance of the ‘typification’: acts like singing, smoking, eating a lot, writing novels are interpreted more easily as a characterizing habit of the subject, unlike sharpening a pencil or building a fence. These would serve as ‘pure’ habitual predicates but it would be more difficult to turn them into characterizing predicates.

However, as the author himself admits, it is practically impossible to determine which predicates can be understood as characterizing ones and which cannot. In this respect, I would like to add that this judgement may vary considerably according to the personal and sociocultural background of each speaker or interlocutor and, additionally, to the information they have about the subject. Some simple examples like the following could help clarify this point of view:

(27) a. *María recoge {fresas/colillas/exámenes/migas}.*

‘Maria picks up {strawberries/cigarette butts/examination papers/bread crumbs}.’

b. *Pelan {patatas/melocotones/plátanos}.*

‘They peel {potatoes/peaches/bananas}.’

If we consider that *recoger fresas* ‘to pick up strawberries’ or *pelar patatas* ‘to peel potatoes’ can generate attitudinal predicates more easily than, for instance, *recoger migas* ‘to pick up bread crumbs’ or *pelar plátanos* ‘to peel bananas’, this

judgement depends on various extralinguistic factors, and there is no guarantee that any other speaker, with a different socio-cultural background, shares it.

Therefore, I conclude that the characterizing stative interpretation of the examples like those in (24) and (25) does not imply any recategorization of their predicates. Stativity arises at the different levels of analysis, as it is the case with boundedness or telicity. In view of this situation, it would be interesting to achieve a more systematic description of different types of aspectual ambiguities.

4 - Stative predicates with a controlling subject: *estarse quieto*-type construction

4.1 - Aspectual *se* as an indicator of the endpoint

Let us now turn to the difference of interpretation between the following pair of examples (already presented in the Introduction):

- (28) (=6) a. *El niño estuvo quieto.* [State]
'The boy was_{ESTAR} still.'
b. *El niño se estuvo quieto.* [?State]
'The boy SE was_{ESTAR} still.'

Example (28b) shows a use of the Spanish so-called aspectual *se*, that is, the aspectual use of the Spanish reflexive pronoun *se*, which also appears in the examples in (29). Aspectual *se* has aroused the interest of many authors, and there is an extensive bibliography on its nature and function.

- (29) a. *Espera que me fume este cigarrillo.*
'Wait until I finish smoking this cigarette.'
b. *Necesito irme ahora mismo.*
'I need to leave right now.'
c. *No podía dormirme a causa del ruido.*
'I couldn't fall asleep because of the noise.'

Regarding the role of this aspectual clitic within the sentence, there is a more or less general consensus that it serves to focus on the endpoint of the event expressed by the verbal predicate (Maldonado 1999; De Miguel & Fernández Lagunilla 2000; Teomiro García & Romero Pascual 2012).

The concept of endpoint is closely linked to that of change. In fact, as we will

see below, in all the examples shown in (29) it is possible to associate the presence of the clitic *se* with the idea of change or with that of total affectedness, which would mark the endpoint of the situation conveyed by the sentence.

In the situation expressed by (29a), the change consists in the total consumption of the cigarette. It is evident that, in case of consumption acts, the existence of an endpoint depends crucially on the boundedness of the consumed object; in fact, the use of the clitic *se* proves to be impossible in sentences like *Mi padre (*se) fuma cigarrillos* ‘My father SE smokes cigarettes’ or *Mi hermano (*se) comió carne* ‘My brother SE ate meat’, in which the object has no quantitative limit.

In the example (29b), *irse* ‘to go-SE’ is interpreted as “to leave (a place)”; in this case, the change, which is locative in nature, takes place at the moment when the subject moves away from its original location. Note that this interpretation is impossible with the non-pronominal form of the verb *ir* ‘to go’; in fact, the absolute use of *ir* ‘to go’ as a verb of movement is limited to the situations in which the information about the goal is given by the context. For instance, it is possible to say *¡Voy!* ‘I’m coming!’ when addressing a person behind the door. In a similar fashion, *dormirse* ‘to sleep-SE’ used in (29c) indicates a change of state consisting in the transition from being awake to being asleep, in clear contrast with the non-pronominal form *dormir* ‘to sleep’, which is usually classified as a verb of activity (cf. *Durmió hasta las seis* ‘(He/She) slept until six o’clock’; *Suelo dormir ocho horas diarias* ‘I usually sleep eight hours a day’).

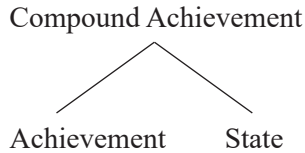
With these observations in mind, I will now concentrate on the aspectual effect of *se* in combination with the copular verb *estar* ‘be_{ESTAR}’.

4.2 - *Estarse quieto*-type construction and previous achievement

As I have mentioned earlier, one of the problems we have to solve when studying the use of *estarse quieto*-type construction is that it is based on a predicate of state. If we bear in mind the usual definition of states as non-dynamic situations which lack internal progress, it is difficult to admit that a predicate of state may contain a natural endpoint in its structure.

In this regard, one interesting solution comes from De Miguel & Fernández Lagunilla (2000). The idea presented by these authors could be summarized as follows: the clitic *se* indicates that the given event contains a culminating point which results in a change of state. According to this proposal, a verb can appear with the aspectual *se* if its event structure presents an achievement followed by a

state. Although there are different kinds of events that meet this requirement⁹, the one which is called ‘compound achievement’ by the aforementioned authors can be considered a paradigmatic case of an achievement that triggers a change of state.



Examples: *marearse* ‘to get sick’, *ocultarse* ‘to hide’, *sentarse* ‘to sit’, etc.

Figure 2 - Compound Achievement based on De Miguel & Fernández Lagunilla (2000: (17e))

If the presence of the aspectual *se* is linked to the existence of an achievement followed by a state, as argued by De Miguel and Fernández Lagunilla, stative predicates, lacking a culminating point in their temporal structure, could not be used with that clitic. However, although the ungrammaticality of examples like **Juan se amó a tres mujeres* ‘Juan SE loved three women’ or **Ana se detesta las espinacas* ‘Ana SE hates spinach’ could be attributed to this restriction, it is obvious that not all stative predicates reject the presence of aspectual *se*:

- (30) a. *Me sé la lección.*
‘I SE know the lesson.’
b. *Me estuve callada.*
‘I SE was_{ESTAR} silent.’

(De Miguel & Fernández Lagunilla 2000: (18c), (18d))

According to the same authors, the use of *se* with *estar* ‘to be’ or with other stative verbs like *saber* ‘to know’ is possible because, despite containing a stative predicate, examples like (30) allow to assume the existence of a previous achievement that triggers a new state (for instance, the achievement of ‘moving into knowing the lesson’ or ‘entering the state of being silent’ –De Miguel & Fernández Lagunilla 2000: 28-29–). This means that the authors admit the existence of an achievement

⁹ Among the eight classes of the events singled out by De Miguel & Fernández Lagunilla (2000) there are three which contain an achievement followed by a state: transition (T1) –*leer un libro* ‘to read a book’, *ver la película* ‘to watch a film’, etc.; transition (T2) –*aparecer(se)* ‘to appear’, *bajar(se)* ‘to go down’, etc.–; and compound achievement, mentioned here. For a more detailed description, see the above-mentioned work, pp. 27-28.

followed by a state in the temporal structure of the sentences like those in (30).

However, although De Miguel and Fernández Lagunilla do not provide explanation concerning the ‘previous achievement’ associated with the stative predicates like those in (30), I would like to put forward the following idea: the achievement, instead of being a part of the situation referred to by the predicate, is located outside that situation while maintaining a cause-effect relationship with it in a broad sense.

Contrary to what happens with the prototypical achievements like *ocultarse* ‘to hide’, for the meaning of *estarse callado* ‘to be_{ESTAR}-SE quiet’ the presence of the prior achievement remains only presupposed; in other words, the change does not pertain to the situation expressed by *estarse callado*. This idea is reinforced by the fact that this construction, unlike *quedarse callado* ‘to {become/remain} quiet’, for instance, cannot refer to the exact moment of change:

- (31) *El niño no dejaba de gritar y de corretear; pero en el momento en que pusimos su película favorita {se quedó/ ?se estuvo} callado.*

‘The boy wouldn’t stop screaming and running around; but the moment we put his favourite film, he {SE became / SE was_{ESTAR}} quiet.’

In the context shown in (31), which activates the interpretation of change, *quedarse callado* ‘to {become/remain}-SE quiet’ accepts this interpretation without any problem, while *estarse callado* ‘to be_{ESTAR}-SE quiet’, in the same context, appears to be strange or considerably less adequate than *quedarse callado*. This contrast seems to confirm that even in a context in which interpretation of change is preferred, the *estarse quieto*-type construction keeps referring to the maintenance of state and not to the moment of change. Using the now classical terminology of Langacker (1987), I assume that the change, though it is present in the scene evoked by *estarse callado*, is a part of the base and not of the profile.

A possible representation of the state expressed by the *estarse quieto*-type construction is thus given below:

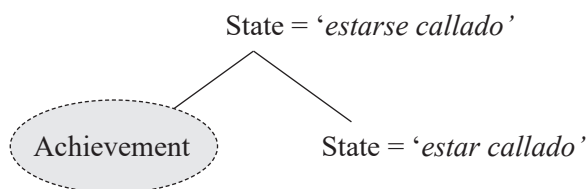


Figure 3 - State with a ‘presupposed’ achievement

My proposal is that the state denoted by the *estarse quieto*-type construction consists of the two components which appear at the bottom line of the figure 3: the achievement of ‘becoming quiet’ and the state of ‘being quiet’. The shaded part codifies the implication associated with *estarse callado* ‘to be_{ESTAR}-SE quiet’. If we compare figure 3 with figure 2, which represents verbs like *marearse* ‘to get sick’ or *ocultarse* ‘to hide’, the aspectual effect attributed to the clitic *se* would become even more obvious: unlike the structure shown in figure 2, corresponding to an achievement, the structure in figure 3 defines a type of state; however, both structures share a common feature: the existence of an achievement followed by a state.

The idea that the *estarse quieto*-type construction implies the existence of a previous stage is congruent with the characterization of the predicates with *estar* as stage-level predicates, that is, temporally anchored ones (for this see Escandell Vidal & Leonetti 2002, among others). A temporally anchored state presupposes possible prior and subsequent stages although there is no explicit mention to either of them. The effect of *se* in the construction examined here would thus be to indicate the relevance of that presupposition. Nevertheless, I have to admit that to make this work it would be necessary to explain why the use of *se* does not extend to all predicates with *estar*.

4.3 - Durativity and *estarse quieto*-type construction

While acknowledging the existence of a prior achievement associated with the event structure of the *estarse quieto*-type construction, I also believe that this construction has a further aspectual property, that is, the sense of permanence already noted by authors as Bello (1847) and Cartagena (1972).

In his *Gramática* Bello points out the semantic similarity between *estarse* ‘to be_{ESTAR}-SE’ and *permanecer* ‘to remain, to stay’ (Bello 1847 [1988]: §764). A similar observation can be found in Cartagena (1972: 204 ff.), who consider that sentences like *Me estoy aquí* ‘I SE am_{ESTAR} here’, *Permanezco aquí* ‘I {remain/stay} here’ and *Me quedo aquí* ‘I {remain/stay}-SE here’ are equivalent to each other; the same author also indicates that the sense of permanence or inherent durativity of *estarse quieto*-type construction explains the frequent use of durative modifiers like *horas enteras* ‘whole hours’ or *toda la tarde* ‘all afternoon’ with it. Example (32), provided by the author, illustrates this point:

- (32) *Mientras encuentre de comer aquí en esta casa, aquí me estaré.*
'As long as I find things to eat in this house, I will stay here.'
(Juan Rulfo, "Macario", taken from Cartagena 1972: 204; author's emphasis)

The meaning of permanence can also be seen quite clearly in the following example:

- (33) a. *Puedo estarme aquí al menos ocho minutos más antes de que empiece la cuenta atrás.*
'I can SE be_{ESTAR} here at least eight minutes more before the countdown starts.'
(C. Rico Godoy, *Cómo ser una mujer y no morir en el intento*, taken from CREA (country: Spain; topic: novel); author's emphasis)
- b. *Te conozco y eres capaz de que te entre la contemplativa y estarte allí solo durante horas como San Simeón el Estilita, [...].*
'I know you, and you are capable of falling into a contemplative state and of SE being_{ESTAR} there alone for hours like Saint Simeon Stylites.'
(L. Ortiz, *Luz de la memoria*, taken from CREA (country: Spain; topic: novel); author's emphasis)

In connection with this point, it is important to note the difference of interpretation between the two examples in (34):

- (34) a. *No voy a estarme en la tienda hasta mañana.*
'I am not going to SE be_{ESTAR} in the shop until tomorrow.'
- b. *No voy a estar en la tienda hasta mañana.*
'I am not going to be_{ESTAR} in the shop until tomorrow.'

While the most natural interpretation of the example (34a) is that of the negation of permanence (equivalent to *I'm not going to stay in the shop*), example (34b) allows quite naturally a reading of absence (equivalent to *I am going to be absent from the shop*). Thus it seems clear that *estarse en la tienda* 'to be_{ESTAR}-SE in the shop' is not simply a description of a spatial location but it also indicates the permanence in it.

Of course, the existence of a prior achievement, pointed out in the previous section, and the duration of the resulting state are not incompatible with each other. Moreover, I do not discard the possibility of including the sense of permanence in a

representation of Figure 3. However, instead of developing this idea, I will dedicate the next section to the role of the subject in the *estarse quieto*-type construction in order to clarify its semantic and aspectual properties.

4.4 - Stative predicates and controlling subjects

There is a considerable number of authors who consider the agentivity of the subject, as well as several other properties closely connected with the agentivity like volition, effort or involvement, as a more or less stable characteristic of the sentences marked by the aspectual *se* (see, among others, Bull 1952; Maldonado 1997; Sánchez López 2002). In theory, predicates of state do not accept the presence of an agentive subject since they denote non-dynamic situations that occur or can be experienced, but that cannot be realized or executed by any agentive subject. Nevertheless, some stative verbs, among them the verb *estar* ‘to be_{ESTAR}’, have been frequently used to illustrate the agentivity meaning of the predicates marked by *se*. The following is taken from the *Gramática* of Bello (1988 [1847]: §764): “[...] if we focus our attention on the variety of meanings that the complementary reflexive case usually gives to the neutral verbs, we can notice a certain tinge of action that a subject seems to exercise by itself. *Estar* is to remain voluntarily in a certain situation or state [...]”.¹⁰ In this respect, Sánchez López (2002: 121) points out that with some verbs the presence of the clitic indicates the intentionality of the subject. For this author, *estarse* ‘to be_{ESTAR}-SE’, like *reírse* ‘to laugh-SE’, is a good example of this intentional *se*. According to her, “the subject of *estarse* has agentive properties and is considered responsible for the process denoted by the predicate”¹¹ (2002: 121). Examples (35), provided by the same author, show the difference between *estar* and *estarse* with respect to the degree of compatibility with the volitional adverb *deliberadamente* ‘deliberately’:

- (35) a. ??*Estuvo en casa de un amigo deliberadamente para que no pudieran localizarlo.*
‘He was_{ESTAR} deliberately at a friend’s house so that no one could find him.’

¹⁰ The Spanish original by Bello (1988 [1847]: §764): “[...] si fijamos la consideración en la variedad de significados que suele dar a los verbos neutros el caso complementario reflejo, percibiremos cierto color de acción que el sujeto parece ejercer en sí mismo. *Estar* es permanecer voluntariamente en cierta situación o estado [...]”

¹¹ The Spanish original by Sánchez López (2002: 121): “El sujeto de *estarse* tiene propiedades agentivas y se considera responsable del proceso denotado por el predicado.”

- b. *Se estuvo en casa de un amigo deliberadamente para que no pudieran localizarlo.*

‘He was_{ESTAR} deliberately at a friend’s house so that no one could find him.’
(Sánchez López 2002: 121, (106a) and (106b))

In his turn, Bogard (2006) in his diachronic study of the clitic *se* highlights the feature of ‘subjective involvement’ in combinations like *saberse* ‘to know-SE’, *conocerse* ‘to know-SE’ or *creerse* ‘to believe-SE’. The author argues that, when used in this context, the clitic should be considered an ‘affectedness marker’, which he distinguishes from the aspectual *se* (2006: 771). Thus the author brings back one of the most frequent characterizations of *se* in the traditional grammar, which can be observed, for example, in the Real Academia Española’s prior *Gramática de la lengua española* published in 1931: “In these sentences, the pronouns *me, te, se, nos, os* do not represent a direct object but an indirect or dative one, which means that the subject is not merely an agent of the action expressed by the verb, but it is also interested in that action in a certain way and verifies it for itself or for its own benefit [...]”¹² (Real Academia Española 1931: §277).

It seems clear that the feature of intentionality or involvement discussed above has to do with the strong tendency of the verb *estar* to take the clitic *se* in its imperative form. Indeed, as *Diccionario Panhispánico de Dudas* of the Real Academia Española (s.v. *estar(se)*) puts it, the pronominal form *estarse* is the only possible one for the imperative of the second person singular. Intentionality or involvement is probably not the only relevant factor for explaining this tendency; but it is noteworthy enough that the imperative, typically used to exert influence on the interlocutor’s actions, clearly prefers *estarse* to *estar*.

Examples like (36) and (37) help to confirm the feature of intentionality or involvement associated with our construction:

- (36) a. *Te estarás aquí hasta que amanezca.*

‘You SE will be_{ESTAR} here until dawn.’

- b. **Este abeto se estará aquí hasta Navidad.*

‘This fir tree SE will be_{ESTAR} here until Christmas.’

¹² The Spanish original by the Real Academia Española (1931: §277): “En estas oraciones, los pronombres *me, te, se, nos, os* no son complemento directo, sino indirecto o dativo, lo que viene a significar que el sujeto no es mero agente de la acción del verbo, sino que se interesa en ella en cierto modo y la verifica para sí o en su provecho [...]”.

- (37) a. *El fugitivo se estuvo escondido en una cueva durante semanas.*
'The fugitive SE was_{ESTAR} hiding in a cave for weeks.'
- b. **El cadáver se estuvo escondido durante semanas entre los escombros.*
'The corpse SE was_{ESTAR} hidden for weeks in the rubble.'

These examples show that the subject of *estarse* has to refer to an entity capable of controlling the situation described by the sentence: it should be an animate, preferably human, entity.

Nevertheless, the control does not necessarily imply realization of an action: in order for a subject to bear the controller role, it would suffice to carry responsibility for the situation expressed by the sentence. In fact, in *estarse quieto*-construction, unlike what happens in sentences like *Juan se comió el filete* 'Juan SE ate the steak', the subject does not realize any action. Precisely for this reason, I propose the use of 'controlling subject' instead of 'agentive subject' to refer to the subject of this construction.

Furthermore, the contrast of grammaticality observed in example (38) also appears to confirm the control feature in our construction. The combinations of (38b) prove to be ungrammatical because, in a clear contrast with (38a), they refer to a state difficult to control by the subject:

- (38) a. *El niño se estuvo {callado/ quieto/ sentadito}.*
'The boy SE was_{ESTAR} {quiet/ still/ sitting}.'
- b. **El niño se estuvo {perdido/ atónito/ enfermo}.*
'The boy was_{ESTAR} {lost/ astonished/ sick}.'

Hence, it seems reasonable to assume that *estarse quieto*-type construction has a controlling subject. However, this conclusion might seem problematic, since it means that in our construction the theme or experiencer of a state bears the control feature. I will discuss below how we can understand this apparently contradictory situation.

4.5 - Control as a classifying criterion for states

The consideration of the semantic role of the subject as a criterion for the internal division of states is not new. In fact, it was initially motivated by the peculiar behaviour of the English posture verbs (*to sit, to stand*, etc.) and of those of attitude

(*to be polite*, etc.) when they undergo some common tests on stativity.

According to Dowty (1979), stative predicates are divided into agentive and non-agentive, and the posture verbs like *to sit*, *to stand*, *to lie*, etc. in combination with a human subject¹³ belong to the first group, while *to be asleep*, *to love*, *to know* are included in the second. He also points out that predicates like *to be polite* or *to be a hero* admit both agentive and non-agentive readings¹⁴.

Similarly, Bach (1986: 6) separates the posture verbs from other types of stative predicates: in his aspectual classification, posture verbs (*to sit*, *to stand*, *to lie*) are labelled as ‘dynamic statives’ in contrast with ‘static statives’, which include, according to this author, predicates like *be drunk*, *be in New York*, *own x* or *resemble x*. In his turn, Dik (1997), in his well-known typology of states of affairs, acknowledges the existence of non-dynamic situations (our ‘states’) marked by the control feature; the author includes the verb *to sit* in its progressive form among his examples for this type of situations.

The division established by these authors has a clear grammatical consequence. In English, verbs like *to sit* and predicates like *to be polite* allow the progressive form, while prototypical statives like *to know* as a rule do not allow it:

- (39) a. John was sitting in front of you.
b. John is being too polite.
c. *John was knowing the answer.

As can be observed in the examples (40) and (41), predicates like *to be polite*, as opposed to those like *to know*, are compatible with the imperative, with the verb *forzar* ‘to force’ and with the adverb *deliberadamente* ‘deliberately’, all of which require agentive predicates, according to Dowty (1979: 184).

- (40) a. Be polite.
b. My parents forced me to be polite to him.
c. I’m being deliberately polite.
(41) a. *Know the answer.
b. *John forced Harry to know the answer.
c. *John deliberately knew the answer.

¹³ These verbs also allow an inanimate subject (for example, *The socks are lying under the bed* ‘Los calcetines están debajo de la cama’), which naturally cannot act as an agent.

¹⁴ Dowty (1979: 184) points out that in some of their agentive uses these predicates could be classified as activities.

However, not all of these tests can be applied to *sit*-type verbs due to their dual (stative/eventive) interpretation. As is shown in the examples (42a-b), these verbs, when they appear in the imperative or as the object of the verb *to force*, receive an inchoative interpretation, which blocks their stative interpretation. In contrast, in the example (42c) the inchoative reading of *to sit* is now blocked by the use of the progressive form. Note that this example, despite its stative reading, accepts the volitive adverb *deliberately*, which allows us to confirm the compatibility of the stative interpretation of these verbs with agentive contexts:

- (42) a. Sit down. [inchoative]
b. They forced me to lie on the ground. [inchoative]
c. I was deliberately sitting there. [stative]

Yet, though Dowty uses the term ‘agentive’ for verbs like *to sit* and *to lie*, I believe that it is justified to assume that he is referring to what we call ‘control’ feature.

It should be reminded that in the Spanish language the pronominal construction with *estar* ‘be_{ESTAR}’ can be used both in the imperative and with the volitive adverb *deliberadamente* ‘deliberately’, although its subject does not realize any action. In my opinion, this lack of dynamic action is common for all ‘agentive’ stative predicates in Dowty’s classification. To be seated or to stand presuppose certain control by the person taking these postures; however, this control does not imply any action. The same applies to the *to be polite*-type predicates: being polite, for example, requires some control on the part of the subject; even if the politeness can be manifested through concrete actions, it cannot be adequately defined by any of these actions.

I thus conclude that the defining feature of Dowty’s ‘agentive’ stative predicates, which include dynamic statives of Bach’s classification (1986), is that of control, and that, in this sense, *estarse quieto*-type construction of the Spanish language does not represent a totally unique case.

In the Spanish language, the pseudocopulative verbs *mantenerse* ‘to keep’ and *conservarse* ‘to keep’ also manifest the control feature. Examples (43)-(44), which I reproduce from Morimoto & Pavón (2007: 1792-1793), will illustrate this point:

- (43) a. *Él se mantiene {despierto/ *dormido}*. [Porroche 1990:109]
‘He stays {awake/asleep}.’
b. *Él sigue {despierto/ dormido}*.
‘He is still {awake/asleep}.’

- (44) a. {*Sigue/ Continúa/ Se mantiene/ Se conserva*} *en forma*.
'{He/She} {is still/keeps himself/herself} in good shape.'
b. {*Sigue/ Continúa/ *Se mantiene/ *Se conserva*} *en coma*.
'{He/She} {is still/keeps} in coma.'

In the above-mentioned work (Morimoto & Pavón 2007), we presented the idea that examples like these demonstrate that, despite the continuative meaning shared by *mantenerse*, *conservarse*, *seguir* and *continuar* (all of which are more or less equivalent to the English verbs *to keep*, *to remain*, etc.), the first two differ from the rest in requiring attributes referred to states that can be controlled by the subject. It should be noted that the states expressed by *despierto* 'awake' and *en forma* 'in shape' are considered, to a certain extent, susceptible to control by the subject, as opposed to the non-controllable states expressed by *dormido* 'asleep' and *en coma* 'in a coma'. Therefore, the contrast of grammaticality observed in (43) and (44) can be considered as further evidence of the relevance of the control feature in the classification of stative predicates.

In short, English verbs of posture and of behaviour, on one hand, and *estarse* 'to be_{ESTAR}-SE', *mantenerse* 'to keep' and *conservarse* 'to keep' of the Spanish language, on the other, all have a subject that, being a central participant of the state, bears the control feature as well.

I believe that the key to explain this dual function of the controlling subject of stative predicates consists in acknowledging that the controller does not belong to the attributive (or locative) relation defined by the predicates. In order to articulate more precisely this point of view, I assume the existence of a function, CONTROL, which indicates the existence of control between a person and a situation. This function would yield a conceptual structure like (45)¹⁵:

- (45) [CONTROL ([_{ENTITY}], [_{SITUATION}])]

The structure above represents a relation of control between an entity –the first argument of the CONTROL function– and a situation –the second argument of the same function–; the use of the term 'situation' reflects the fact that this second argument can be a state as well as an event. Two different realizations of this conceptual structure can be seen below in (46):

¹⁵ Semantic representations included in this section are based on the conceptual decomposition system developed by Jackendoff (1990).

- (46) a. Juan keeps the grass green:
 [CONTROL ([JUAN], [_{STATE} BE ([GRASS], [GREEN])])]

b. Juan lets the child cry:
 [CONTROL ([JUAN], [_{EVENT} CRY ([CHILD])])]

In the same fashion, the control relation expressed by the construction with *estarse* ‘to be_{ESTAR}-SE’ could be represented as follows:

- (47) [CONTROL ([Xi], [_{STATE} BE_{ESTAR} ([Xi], [Y])])]

In the conceptual structure (47), control is established between a person, X, and a state, the theme (or experiencer) of which is correferent with the first X (this relation is indicated by the subindex ‘i’). In (48) it is shown how this kind of analysis is applied to the actual realizations of the construction:

- (48) a. *Juan se estuvo quieto.* ‘Juan SE was_{ESTAR} still.’
 [CONTROL ([JUAN], [_{STATE} BE_{ESTAR} ([JUAN], [STILL])])]

b. *Alicia se estuvo aquí (toda la tarde).* ‘Alicia SE was_{ESTAR} here (all afternoon).’
 [CONTROL ([ALICIA], [_{STATE} BE_{ESTAR} ([ALICIA], [HERE])])]

Given that the structure (47) only reflects the relation of control existing in the meaning of *estarse quieto*-type construction, we cannot accept it as the full conceptual structure of the construction. In my opinion, the conceptual structure in question would contain the representation of (47) integrated into another one as shown below:

- (49) *Juan se estuvo quieto.* ‘Juan SE was_{ESTAR} still.’:

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} [\text{BE}_{\text{ESTAR}} ([\text{JUAN}], [\text{STILL}])]\text{i} \\ \text{STATE } [\text{CONTROL } ([\text{JUAN}], [\text{STATE }]\text{i})] \end{array} \right)$$

In this representation, the main description of the state expressed by *Juan se estuvo quieto* ‘Juan was still’ appears in the first line (in which the state of the subject is shown); the second line codifies the relation of control existing in the same state (which is established between the subject and his own state). The identity between the state defined in the first line and the one that appears as the second argument of

CONTROL is guaranteed by the subindex 'i'.

It should be further noted that the conceptual structure (49) reflects my opinion that the theme of the state of *estarse quieto* 'to be_{ESTAR} still' also acts as the controller of the same state: the subject of the construction, represented as JUAN, is the first argument of both the BE_{ESTAR}-function and the CONTROL-function.

A similar idea could be found in the analysis proposed by Gisborne (2001) for sentences like *Jane is looking scary*. According to this author, this type of progressive construction "denotes the adjustments the referent of the subject is making to their appearance" (op.cit., p. 613). His analysis, centered on the force dynamics (Talmy 1985) of the construction, consists in establishing a cause-effect relation between the subject and the state to which it belongs. The force dynamics scheme the author proposes for the above-mentioned English sentences can be seen in (50):

(50) *Jane is (deliberately) looking scary.*

initiator	→	endpoint
'Jane'		'Jane scary'

[Example and representation are based on Gisborne 2001: 614]

This analysis coincides with my view –cf. (49)– in attributing a dual function to the subject: *Jane* in the representation (50), apart from being the argument of *scary* in the state defined as 'Jane scary', acts as the initiator of the same state.

Although Gisborne focuses on the initial phase of the state and hence opts for the term 'initiator', I believe that his proposal is totally compatible with the presence of a controller in a stative predicate like *estarse quieto*. If we admit that the controller is responsible for initiating and maintaining the situation, we can assume that the concept of controller encompasses that of initiator. In this sense, it would also be possible to consider that the English construction studied by Gisborne and the Spanish *estarse quieto*-type construction basically share the same conceptual structure and the same force dynamics.

5 - Conclusions

In this chapter I have focused on a series of stative/eventive alternations shown by some Spanish verbs and verbal predicates. Through my analysis I have tried to support the following fundamental ideas on the differentiation between states and events: firstly, there are different types and degrees of stativity and hence states

do not constitute a homogeneous aspectual class; secondly, in order to obtain better understanding of aspectual ambivalence, it is necessary to recognize the existence of different levels of the aspectual analysis (lexical, phrasal, sentence and utterance level); and, finally, there are verbs and verbal predicates which are neutral with respect to the stative/eventive opposition and, therefore, receive both stative and eventive interpretations depending on the contextual factors.

The alternations studied in this chapter are: the dual (stative/eventive) interpretation of verbs like *atravesar* ‘to cross’ (*atravesar* ‘to cross’, *rodear* ‘to surround’, *cubrir* ‘to cover’, etc.) –§ 2–; the eventive interpretation of the progressive comparative expressions like *estar cada vez más guapa* ‘look more and more beautiful’ –§ 3–; the characterizing interpretation of predicates of activity like *cantar en locales nocturnos* ‘to sing in nightclubs’ –§ 3–; and the interpretive effect of the so-called aspectual *se* in combination with the verb *estar* ‘to be_{ESTAR}’ –§ 4–.

Based on the semantic and grammatical analysis of verbs as *atravesar* ‘to cross’, I have defended that this type of verbs defines an aspectually neutral spatial relationship and the aspectuality of the situation expressed by these verbs is determined at the sentence or utterance level. The eventive interpretation of *estar cada vez más guapa* ‘to look more and more beautiful’ and the habitual use of the predicates like *cantar en locales nocturnos* ‘to sing in nightclubs’ only corroborate the idea that stativity (or dynamicity) is determined at different levels of analysis. The study of *estarse quieto*-type construction, in its turn, has allowed to attribute the feature of control to the subject of the construction. Taking into account the absence of dynamicity in its meaning, I have concluded that the construction in question serves as evidence for the existence of stative predicates with a controlling subject. This conclusion clearly reinforces the consideration of states as a heterogeneous aspectual class.