

SER AND ESTAR IN TORTOSÍ CATALAN: LANGUAGE CONTACT, LANGUAGE VARIATION, AND LANGUAGE CHANGE

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1 Introduction¹

Until some thirty years ago, linguistic change was studied isolated from its social context, and consisted of a reconstruction of the change based on written data from old texts. It has been shown, however, that language change can be observed while it is taking place (Lavob 1972). Language change was only considered to be the direct result of a readjustment of the linguistic system. there is also evidence showing that, although internally motivated, language change is determined by sociolinguistic conditions and can be explained by describing the linguistic and social context that affect the change (Weinreich, Labov and Herzog 1968).

In recent years, different studies have been carried out on the evolution of *ser* and *estar* (or *être* and *avoir*) in both Canadian French (Sankoff and Thibaut 1977) and American Spanish (Silva-Corvalán in Los Angeles (1986, 1990) and her associates in the Southwest of the USA and Mexico). These studies conclude that linguistic changes which are internally motivated develop faster in situations of language contact. In the case of verbal copula (*ser/estar; avoir/être*), the linguistic change, which consists of the extension of *estar* to contexts previously limited to *ser*, is attested to be at a more advanced stage in the bilingual varieties of Spanish and French in contact with English.

The studies on Spanish copula conclude that *estar* appears in contexts that were reserved for *ser* when the semantic contrast disappears. The contrasts have been established so far along two criteria: a) distinction between an inherent and temporal quality of the subject referent, and b) comparison of the subject referent with itself (individual frame of reference) or with the rest of the members in its class (class frame of reference).

The research presented here is in line with the studies mentioned above. It focuses on the variety of Catalan spoken by Catalan-Spanish bilinguals in Villafranco del

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Delta, a village in southern Catalonia. The purpose of this paper is to give an account of the evolution concerning the use of *ser* and *estar* with locative predicates and predicate adjectives in this contact variety of Catalan.

The relevance of this paper comes from two different sources:

1. The change taking place in Romance equivalents of *ser* and *estar* has been studied in Spanish and French, but not in Catalan. Results from the present study should provide additional evidence to understand the whole process of language change.
2. The uses of *ser* and *estar* in Spanish and its equivalent in French have been studied in situations in which the Romance language is in contact with languages that mainly have one verb to express the locative and the copula system, such as English (see above) or Quechua (Escobar 1992). This is the first study to focus on the results from contact between two Romance languages with dual systems. We should not forget that both the typological structure of the two languages, the genetic relationship and the social prestige of the languages involved in the contact situation affect the direction and speed of the change (Weinreich 1974; Thomason & Kaufman 1988).

2 *Theoretical framework and linguistic variable*

In both Spanish and Catalan, *ser* and *estar* appear with three different functions: auxiliar, locative and copula. As locatives, *ser* and *estar* are used to express the position of the subject. As copulative verbs, they link the subject to a quality that characterizes it. This quality can be expressed by adjectives and noun phrases. In this study, we focus on their use with locative predicates and predicate adjectives¹.

From a historical perspective, the extension of *estar* over *ser* was already present in the early Middle Ages (Latin). Originally, the meaning of *estar* was already present in the early Middle Ages (Late Latin). Originally, the meaning of *estar* was restricted to "stand in a place" (Lloyd 1987) but it has lost its semantic restriction to extend its functions to that of auxiliar and copula. In this sense, this loss of restrictions is reflected in the history of Romance languages in the progressive replacement of *ser* (or its equivalent) by *estar* (or its equivalent) in more and more linguistic contexts.

After a review of different Romance languages, Falk (1979) concluded that Catalan is at an earlier stage in the evolution of the copula system keeping a use of *estar* that is closer to the etymological meaning of "permanence in a state". For example, Catalan uses *ser* to express location most of the time (1), and it also uses *ser* in a wider variety of contexts when it functions as a copula (2). These examples are cases in which Catalan differs from Spanish.

(1) *Ja sóc aquí* 'I am (SER) here'

(2) *En Pere és mort* 'Peter is (SER) dead'

¹ The term 'copula' is used in a broad sense in this study.

2.1 Description of the standard uses of *ser* and *estar* in both Spanish and Catalan

In Peninsular Spanish, and according to its official grammar, *estar* has completely replaced *ser* in its locative function, which remained alive until the Middle Ages, as in (3).

- (3) *¿Dónde es la vaquera/ de la Finojosa?* 'Where is (SER) the cowgirl/ from Finojosa?' (Esbozo 3.3.4.b and c)

Today, we can only think of cases such as (4)

- (4) *La casa es aquí* 'The house is (SER) here /This is the house'

As for their copulative function, both *ser* and *estar* can combine with most adjectives with a contrast in meaning (e.g. *es listo* 'he is clever // *está listo* 'he is ready') and there are certain adjectives which appear only with *ser* (e.g., *inteligente* 'intelligent') or with *estar* (e.g., *cansado* 'tired') (see Appendix Fig. 1). According to the Esbozo, the criterion to choose between *ser* and *estar* with an adjective is that of perfectivity. When we use *estar* we think of a change, real or possible, that has operated in the subject. The quality expressed by *estar* depends on a circumstance, it depends on the place, the time, what causes a circumstance. According to the Real Academia,

- "the circumstances are always there, in reality, but the speaker can choose whether to consider them or not. It is impossible to reduce this subjectivity to objective rules that can predict the choice between one copula or another. (...) Native speakers of Spanish do not doubt about their own use or the interpretation of how other native speakers use one copula or the other (Esbozo, 3.3.3.b)."

By default we understand that the use of *ser* is restricted to express imperfectivity. That might be the case with Peninsular Spanish, but it certainly does not apply to Latin-American varieties (Silva-Corvalán (1986), Gutiérrez (1989)).

In the case of Catalan, divergence between norm and use is important since the Catalan norm is in general more conservative than that of other Romance languages because it gets its inspiration from old written sources. This conservatism of the norm, and the fact that the use of *ser* and *estar* was not stipulated in the first grammar, written in 1918 by Pompeu Fabra, has contributed to the differences between the normative stipulations on the use of *ser* and *estar* and their everyday use. Although Fabra did not address the use of *ser* and *estar* in Catalan, he already suggested that variation in the use of these verbs was internally motivated.

An example of divergence was found by Falk (1979) between *ser* and *estar* in the standard variety of Catalan described by Badia and Margarit (1962), and the variety of Catalan spoken in Barcelona. he observed that in the Barcelona variety, *ser* had already been replaced by *estar* whenever *ser* was followed by certain adjectives that indicate aspectual differences, i.e., temporal vs. essential qualities. (5) and (6) exemplify this case.

(5) *L'aigua és calenta* 'The water is (ESTAR) hot'

(6) *Aquest cotxe és vell* 'This car is (ESTAR) old'

In order to resolve the disparity between norm and use, Vallcorba (1978), Falk (1979) and Solà (1987) in chronological order, have incorporated changes to what Badia had prescribed in 1962. The changes have invariably involved the spread in the use of *estar* to an increasing number of contexts in which originally only *ser* was used. What follows is a short summary of the evolution of the norm.

Initially, and according to Badia, *estar* was never to be used as a locative or copula with inanimate subjects. Vallcorba (1978) introduced two important modifications with respect to the use of *ser* and *estar* in these two functions (see Appendix Fig.2). As a copula, the use of *estar* with inanimate subjects is justified by the presence of a temporal adverb (e.g. *avui el cel està blau* 'the sky is blue today'). The adverb is there to underline the perfectivity of the predicate. With the locative, Vallcorba also accounts for the use of *estar* with inanimate subjects to establish the following contrast. While *ser* expresses the usual position of the subject, the use of *estar* implies that the position indicated is unusual and presupposes the presence of an agent as responsible for the change in position, as in (7). Solà has criticized this approach as unrealistic, because it does not account for the speaker's performance.

(7) *les forquilles són al calaix / les forquilles estan al terra*
'the forks are (SER) in the drawer / the forks are (ESTAR)
on the floor'

So far the criterion that prescriptivists have considered is that of perfectivity. However, Falk introduced class and individual frame of reference as an additional criterion to explain the choice of copula. According to Falk, when *ser* and *estar* combine with the same adjective with a contrast in meaning, as (8) shows, the contrast lies in what the subject is compared with.

(8) *l'home és cec / l'home està cec* 'the man is (SER) blind
'the man has been (ESTAR) blinded'

The vertical axis classifies the subject as a member of a class with the characteristic expressed in the adjective (e.g., *l'home és cec* 'the man is blind'), while the horizontal axis compares the subject with itself on the basis of the speaker's prior knowledge (e.g., *l'home està cec* 'the man is blind now'). This last criterion justifies the use of *estar* in a wider variety of contexts.

Summing up, the discussion on the difference between *ser* and *estar* both as copulas and locatives has centered around two criteria: perfectivity and frame of reference: class vs. individual. The same concept of perfectivity that has been applied to the Spanish case has prevailed among Catalan linguists. And just like in the Spanish case, the notion of perfectivity has not been able to account for all the Catalan uses, resulting in long explanations, even longer discussions, and endless lists of exceptions. As a solution, Falk proposed for Catalan the criterion of individual vs. class frame of reference. The two criteria discussed have also been used by Silva-Corvalán to account for the extension of *estar* over *ser* in the bilingual variety of Spanish in Los Angeles (1986). She points out that it is the lack of clarity in the opposition between both copulas that is responsible for the change that is taking place.

3 *Methodology*

3.1 *The speech community*

Villafranco del Delta is a village on the wet-lands in the Delta formed by the Ebre river, in the southern border between Catalonia and the Valencian Country. Its origins make it unique. Founded by General Franco (thus the name of the village) in the 1950s, it was settled by 200 families who were attracted by the prospects of a free house with a garden and a piece of land to grow rice. The settlers are a mix of Valencian Catalan and Tortosí Catalan bilinguals (Spanish/ Catalan) with different degrees of proficiency in Spanish.

Villafranco del Delta is of high interest for the sociolinguist for its ideal, natural delimitation as a linguistic community. The population, like most of the Catalan population, is Catalan-Spanish bilingual. The variety of Catalan they speak is known as Tortosí Catalan. The language of the community (spoken in the stores, in the church, in the playground) is Catalan, while Spanish is reserved for use outside the community (e.g. when interacting with representatives of the Spanish government and army). As a consequence of schooling, the children are exposed to the standard variety of both Spanish and Catalan more frequently than their parents. Linguistic attitudes (as assessed in long and frequent interactions with the people from Villafranco and the neighbouring towns and villages) are very peculiar, in the sense that the prestige they attribute to Spanish is higher than that attributed to Catalan. As an interesting note, the peculiarity of the community from a linguistic and social point of view is reflected even by the name of the village: its members voted in favour of keeping the Spanish name, Villafranco, instead of Poblenou 'new town', the Catalan name that the rest of the county (and the country) uses.

3.2 *Subjects*

The study is based on data collected in individual interviews with nine subjects: three men, aged 16, 19, and 61 and six women, aged 5,6,9, 12, 26, and 27. They were all Catalan/ Spanish bilinguals, having Catalan as their first language both in order of acquisition and frequency of use. The subjects 16 and under are schooled in standard Catalan, but they all say their teachers speak Tortosí Catalan. We chose age as a variable because we hoped to observe a difference in performance with respect to the use of *ser* and *estar* in their copulative and locative functions¹

3.3 *Methodology*

Three different tasks were used to gather the data: spontaneous oral production, controlled production, and a grammaticality judgement task. The order in which tasks were administered was kept invariable.

The first task consisted of a spontaneous conversation which engaged the subjects in descriptions of their relatives and the geographic area. Descriptions of famous actors, politicians and a picture were also elicited. The second task required the production of a sentence that contained one of the critical verbs and a given adjective. In the grammaticality judgement task, after listening to a sentence with *ser* or *estar* recorded by a male native speaker of Tortosí Catalan, the subject had to decide whether the sentence belonged to their own variety of Catalan or not. In

¹ We realize that the youngest portion of our sample is all formed by female subjects and need to take this fact into account when making claims based on the results.

some cases, when the subjects rejected the sentence as not representative of their variety, they were asked to elaborate on their judgements. A total of 62 adjectives, participles and prepositional phrases taken from Solà's classification were selected for this task. The numbers in the list correspond to the sections in Solà's article and group together those semantic fields to which, according to Solà, the use of *estar* is extending. A questionnaire eliciting personal information was also given.

4 Results

The results of the study are presented comparing the use of *ser* and *estar* found in Villafranco with the prescribed use for Standard Catalan described in Solà (1987). There are two major divisions: *ser* and *estar* functioning as copulas and their use with locative predicates. As copulas, they are subdivided into obligatory uses of *ser*, obligatory uses of *estar*, *ser* and *estar* in free variation, and *ser* and *estar* in contrast. We will see that the majority of our findings are centered around these last two subdivisions.

4.1 'Ser' and 'estar' in copulative predicates

4.1.1.1 Obligatory uses of *ser*

The description of permanent or defining characteristics with animate subject referents is no longer the exclusive domain of *ser*. For instance, adjectives such as *capacitat* and *intel·ligent*, whose use was restricted to *ser*, are found with *ser* in five of the cases but also with *estar* in three cases, as (9) and (10) show¹.

(9) *el meu cavall és molt intel·ligent* 'my horse is (SER)
very intelligent' {29}

(10) *este xiquet està molt intel·ligent* 'this kid is (ESTAR)
very intelligent' {5}

We will see below the meaning of this alternation. With inanimate subjects, the use of *ser* is still a constant with abstract, invariable qualities such as *nacional* 'national', *tradicional* 'traditional' and *difícil* 'difficult'. However, the use of *ser* is not so general when dealing with adjectives that express permanent qualities like *llarg* 'long' since we find examples such as those in (11) and (12).

(11) *un riu és molt llarg* 'a river is (SER) very long' {60}

(12) *L'Huguet està llarg* 'the Huguet {a beach} is
(ESTAR) very long' {5}

4.1.1.2. Obligatory uses of *ESTAR*

There were no instances in the data in which *estar* was followed by a participle with animate subjects. *Estar* was preferred, however, with adjectives such as *coix* 'lame', *sord* 'deaf', *cec* 'blind', and *calb* 'bald'.

(13) *ma iaia està molt sorda* 'my grandmother is (ESTAR)
very deaf' {19}

Curiously, the youngest informants used these adjectives invariably with *estar*. Only one adult subject aged 29 recognized the contrast class vs. individual frame of

¹ The number in brackets at the end of the example indicates the age of the informant.

reference in the use of *ser* or *estar* in these cases, but the contrast was not used productively.

With inanimate subjects, *estar* was invariably used with participles (e.g. *encès* 'lit', *cuit* 'cooked', *obert* 'open', *calent* 'hot'). There were no differences in the use of *estar* to express the presence or absence of an agent. Such is the case with *fluix* 'loose/dim' in (14) and with *tort* 'crooked' in (15).

(14) *la llum està fluixa* 'the light is (ESTAR) dim' {12}

(15) *com a fuster, jo miro si la fusta està torta* 'since I am a carpenter, I check whther the wood is (ESTAR) crooked' {60}

With the adjective *tort*, two informants, {19, 16}, recognized the *ser/estar* contrast but did not use it productively as in the case with *sord* and *cec* above.

4.1.II Free variation: *ser=estar*

In this section of free variation we find cases of adjectives that were originally used with *ser* and that now appear with *estar*, as well as cases in which the original contrast between the choice of copulas is gradually disappearing. With inanimate subjects, *ser* and *estar* may appear next to *gord* 'fat' without any difference implied in the choice of verb, as can be seen in (16). In this case, the alternation between *ser* and *estar* does not imply a difference in meaning. The same happens in (17) where the two verbs are used synonymously with the loss of the class/ individual distinction. (Those cases in which the choice of verbs implies a contrast in meaning will be treated later.)

(16) *estos no són molt gordos ni tampoc molt prims ... estos ... un està gordo, bastant gordo i l'altre no molt ... si bueno, són molt gordos* 'these ones are (SER) neither very fat nor very thin ... these ... one is (ESTAR) fat, quite fat and the other not much yes, well, they are (SER) very fat' {12}

(17) *és més gordo ... este està gord, este és gordo is este també, estan més gordos* 'he is (SER) fatter ... this one is (ESTAR) fat, this one is (SER) fat and this one too, they are (ESTAR) fatter' {6}

A similar case is found in the example with *sà* 'healthy' in (18), where its use with *ser* or *estar* is no longer the result of individual vs. class differences or the perfectivity/imperfectivity criterion.

(18) *és sana una persona que no està malalta, que fa una vida sana, que no té vicis o que té vicis però que està sà i fort* 'a person is (SER) a healthy person when she is (ESTAR) not sick, lives a healthy life, does not have bad habits or has habits but is (ESTAR) healthy and strong' {60}

As we can see in the example, *estar sà* or *ser sà* 'to be healthy' both refer to not being ill, to having good health. *Ser sà* could also mean 'to be warm-hearted',

however, this meaning is completely absent from the context. We must point out, that *estar* was the verb used in the majority of the cases with this adjective.

In the section of obligatory uses of *ser*, we mentioned that adjectives such as *capacitat* and *intel·ligent* were no longer exclusively used with *ser*. We have found that in the Tortosí variety not only are these adjectives used with *estar*, but that their use with either *ser* or *estar* does not imply a difference in meaning. Let's look at the following examples in which *capacitat* can be interpreted as 'being intelligent enough'.

(19) *no està capacitat per estudiar (no es pot dir ser)* 'he is (ESTAR) not intelligent enough to study, you can't use *ser*' {27}

(20) *ma mare és capacitada para relitzar moltes coses* 'my mother is (SER) intelligent enough to do many things' {19}

(21) *la meua novia està capacitada pels estudis* 'my girlfriend is (ESTAR) intelligent enough to study' {16}

In these cases, we find almost the exact context and the choice of verb can not be understood as a difference in meaning. Rather, *ser* and *estar* appear in free variation in the case of *capacitat* as age decreases. Furthermore if we compare the use of *intel·ligent* in the oldest and youngest informants, we can see that *estar* replaces the use of *ser* as the age decreases, specially in the youngest informants, as the following examples illustrate.

(22) *el meu cavall és molt intel·ligent* 'my horse is (SER) very intelligent' {29}

(23) *el xiquet està intel·ligent* 'the kid is (ESTAR) intelligent' {6}

(24) *este xiquet està molt intel·ligent* 'this kid is (ESTAR) very intelligent' {5}

The same tendency that we find with animate subject referents to the use of *ser* and *estar* in free variation is also found when looking at inanimate subjects. Let us consider some examples with *llímpia*, *neta*, and *bruta*.

(25) *l'aigua és llímpia ... allí està prou llímpia, quin més entres més llímpia està* 'the water is (SER) clean ... it is (ESTAR) pretty clean there, the further you go in the cleaner it is (ESTAR)' {60}

(26) *la mar brava és una mica més llímpia, a l'altra la gent entra més i està més bruta* 'the rough sea is (SER) a bit cleaner, more people get into the other one and it is (ESTAR) dirtier' {60}

(27) *l'aigua normalment està guarríssima i molt bruta* 'the water is (ESTAR) normally disgusting and very dirty' {27}

(28) *a vegades està bruta, a vegades està neta ... sempre està neta, l'arena està neta* '(the water) sometimes it is

(ESTAR) dirty, sometimes it is (ESTAR) clean ... it is always clean, the sand is (ESTAR) clean' {9}

(29) *l'aigua és igual ... no, una està més neta i l'altra més bruta ... és normal que una sigui més neta que una altra* 'the water [in both sides] is (SER) the same ... no, one is (ESTAR) cleaner and the other dirtier ... it is (SER) normal that one is (SER) cleaner than the other' {5}

Solà had noticed that these adjectives were being affected by the *ser/estar* contrast. The use of *ser* or *estar* in these examples shows, however, there is not a clear distinction between the choice of one verb or the other. The choice does not imply a difference that could be related to permanent or temporary qualities since the use of *estar* is found both with expressions such as 'always' and 'normally', as in (27) and (28) (e.g., *sempre està neta*), and with time references that indicate temporality like *a vegades* 'sometimes', also as in (28) (e.g., *a vegades està bruta*). The choice can not be explained either if we consider the opposition individual vs. class frame of reference since even in this case the free alternation of verbs is present, as (30) and (31) show, where *la mar brava* refers to one specific beach and *l'aigua* refers to sea water in general.

(30) *la mar brava és una mica més llimpia* 'the open sea is (SER) a bit more dirty' {16}

(31) *l'aigua normalment està guarríssima i molt bruta* 'the water is (ESTAR) usually disgusting and very dirty' {27}

The use of *ser* and *estar* in free variation also takes place with *bo* 'good', *bonic* 'pretty' and *tendre* 'tender'. For instance, in (32) there is no real justification to use *ser* with food but *estar* with sauce, since the food is good because the sauce is good. In (33), we find again free variation in the use of the copula with no difference implied in the choice of one or the other. All these examples were produced by informants under the age of 19.

(32) *és bo el menjar, està ben fet ... hi tiren una salsa que està molt bona* 'the food is (SER) good, it is well prepared ... they mix it with a sauce that is (ESTAR) very good' {16}

(33) *l'enciam és bo i los crancs estan bons* 'lettuce is (SER) good and crabs (ESTAR) good' {all under 19}

The same reasoning applies to the instances with *bonic* and *tendre*. In the case of *tendre*, only two subjects, ages {27} and {19}, recognize and use productively the contrast between the use of *ser* and *estar*.

(34) *este cuadro està molt bonic* 'this painting is (ESTAR) very pretty' {60}

(35) *estes ulleres són molt boniques* 'these glasses are (SER) very pretty' {16}

(36) *la revista està molt bonica* 'the magazine is (ESTAR) very pretty' {5}

(37) *el pollastre és tendre* 'the chicken is (SER) tender' {9}

(38) *la carn està molt tendra* 'the meat is (ESTAR) tender' {5}

4.1.III. 'Ser' contrasts with 'estar'

With animate subjects, the contrast between the choice of copulas is still present in those adjectives that describe a state or change of mood (e.g., *alegre* 'happy', *tranquil* 'calm', *trist* 'sad'). As we mentioned earlier when talking about obligatory uses of *estar*, certain adjectives can be found both in cases of free variation and in instances of contrast. In most of the cases, the contrast is kept by the adults, while the instances in free variation are found in the youngest speakers. Such is the case of *gord*. We saw how this adjective can appear with *ser* and *estar* in free variation in (16) and (17), and now we will find that its use with the copulas can also imply semantic contrast. In the following cases with *gord* 'fat' and *guapo* 'handsome', the contrast *ser/estar* falls into the class vs. individual frame of reference criterion.

(39) *Gurrutxaga no és prim però aquí està gras*
'Gurrutxaga is (SER) not thin but he is (ESTAR) fat here'
{60}

(40) *està gord perquè s'ha posat coixins, perquè no és gord* 'he is (ESTAR) fat because he is wearing a cushion, because he is (SER) not fat' [talking about an actor in disguise] {19}

(41) *Gurrutxaga no és guapo ni està guapo* 'Gurrutxaga is (SER) not handsome and he does not look (ESTAR) handsome' [when talking about the actor himself] {26}

The *ser/estar* contrast has extended to other adjectives. However, the contrast does not necessarily respond to the class vs. individual frame of reference criterion. For instance, in example (42) with *interessant* 'interesting', the use of *ser* refers to an intellectual quality, while its use with *estar* is intended to mean 'attractive looks'.

(42) *tenia que ser interessant a la seva joventut (...) estan interessants perquè no tenen cap problema ni estan gord*
ni res 'he had to be (SER) interesting in his youth (...) they are (ESTAR) interesting because they do not have any problems they are (ESTAR) not fat or anything' {27}

As Solà pointed out, the *ser/estar* contrast is productive with adjectives such as *listo* 'clever/ ready', depending on whether it appears with *ser* or *estar* respectively, *alegre* 'happy' and *serio* 'serious', following the same pattern as Spanish. In the case of *bo* 'good', its use with *estar* in the Tortosí variety refers both to the health of the referent and to his/her physical appearance. Thus, depending on the context *estar bo* could mean that the person is not sick or that he/ she is 'good looking' (43); *ser bo*, on the other hand, only implies that the subject has good and positive qualities (44).

(43) *este noi està bo* 'this guy is (ESTAR) good-looking'
{16}

(44) *lo papa és bo* 'daddy is (SER) good' {5}

As we mentioned in the section on obligatory uses of *estar*, the *ser/estar* contrast with *sord* 'deaf' and *cec* 'blind' was recognized by one adult subject in the

grammaticality judgement task but was never used productively. *Estar* was preferred with adjectives such as *coix* 'lame', *sord* 'deaf', *cec* 'blind', and *calb* 'bald'. The youngest informants used these adjectives invariably with *estar*. We are inclined to believe that the use of *estar* with *sord*, *cec*, and *calb* does not refer to a temporary characteristic since there is nothing temporary in being bald, deaf, or blind. In the majority of the cases, these characteristics are non-reversible and if they involve any change, it develops only in one direction, that is, in becoming balder, for instance. The case of *lame* is particularly interesting since the contrast that existed between *ser coix* and *estar coix* has apparently disappeared. In Tortosí Catalan, *estar* appears to refer to the permanent quality while the temporality that used to be expressed with *estar* is now implied in the use of a movement verb such as *acaminar* 'walk' or *ir* 'go'.

(45) *la meua veïna acamina coixa* 'my neighbour limps'
{29}

(46) *aquella no va coixa* 'that one does not limp' {12}

The need to express circumstantiality with this adjective is justified since, among adjectives in this group, it is the only one which could imply a non-permanent state. It is interesting to see that these movement verbs are also used to express temporality with other expressions in Catalan (e.g., *va boig* (he goes nuts) he's nuts) and in Spanish (e.g., *anda cansado*, *anda atareado* (he walks tired, he walks busy) 'he feels tired, he is busy'), where the verb does not seem to retain its basic meaning but rather refers to the circumstances expressed by the adjective.

Finding a clear pattern for the predicates of inanimate subjects is a tougher job. The data suggest that the *ser/estar* contrast is maintained to differentiate between the class, the species and the individual, like in (47) through (49) but we also find counter examples like (50).

(47) a. *un rio és molt llarg* 'a river is (SER) very long'
{60} b. *l'Huguet està llarg* 'the Huguet [a beach] is (ESTAR) long' {5}

(48) a. *la muntanya és alta* '(+generic) the mountain is (SER) high' {60} b. *lo Caro està alt* 'Caro [a mountain] is (ESTAR) high' {60,5}

(49) a. *lo sucre és dolç* 'sugar is (SER) sweet' {60} b. *la carn està dolça* 'this meat needs (ESTAR) salt' {6}

(50) *un caramel està molt dolç* 'a piece of candy is (ESTAR) sweet' {60}

4.2 'Ser' and 'estar' in locative predicates

The three linguists that have written about *ser* and *estar* in its locative function in Catalan agreed that the use of *estar* is much more restricted than in Spanish, where it has completely taken over the space that was reserved for *ser*.

In the case of animate subjects, both Vallcorba and Solà propose a contrast between *ser* and *estar*. They both agree that *estar* is restricted to expressing permanence, temporal location, as in (51).

(51) *m'agrada aquest poble, crec que m'hi estaré un parell de dies més* 'I like this town, I think I'll stay (ESTAR) for a couple more days'

In other words, in their proposal *estar* is the marked form, *ser* is the default. The three types of data gathered in this study (spontaneous, controlled production, and grammaticality judgements) generate the same results without exception, i.e., there are no cases of *ser* with locative predicates.

(52) *s'està la gent des del matí hasta la nit* 'people stay (ESTAR) from morning to night' {60}

(53) *casi sempre estem dins de l'aigua* 'we are (ESTAR) almost all the time in the water' {9}

In the case of inanimate subjects, there has not been a consensus, however, on what the restrictions are in the use of *estar*. Should *estar* be used to express an unusual location that presupposes the existence of an agent responsible for it as in (54)?

(54) *les forquilles estan al calaix* 'the forks are (ESTAR) in the drawer (Vallcorba 1978)

Or should *ser* be used without exception? In Tortosí Catalan, *estar* has completely replaced *ser* in its locative function. That is, we could not find one single instance of *ser* followed by a locative predicate in the production data, and that includes sentences with animate as well as inanimate subjects. Moreover, all the subjects rejected all the sentences that matched this type of construction in the grammaticality judgement task.

(55) *els castells en realitat estan sempre a la punta de la muntanya* 'castles are (ESTAR: *SER) always on top of the mountain'

(56) *en aquest dibuix los moixons estan al cel* 'in this drawing the birds are (ESTAR: *SER) in the sky'

Furthermore, Solà suggests that in a number of expressions, the contrast *ser/estar* should be kept. Consider for example (57), where the choice of verb differentiates between metaphorical and actual position. Similarly in (58), the use of *ser* or *estar* establishes the difference between essential quality and position.

(57) a. *sóc al teu costat* 'I'm (SER) on your side' b. *estic al teu costat* 'I'm (ESTAR) next to you'

(58) a. *A és més alt que B* 'A is (SER) taller than B' b. *A està més alt que B* 'A is placed (ESTAR) higher than B'

Our data indicate that in Tortosí Catalan the first difference (i.e., metaphorical vs. actual position) is made by the context, not by the copula. As for the second (i.e., quality vs. position), the youngest informants, all under age 12, were unable to perform the task of matching the drawing with the sentence that described it. We cannot yet conclude on the cause of this behaviour, whether it was cognitive complexity or the lack of semantic contrast between both copulas that was responsible for it.

Summing up, then, not one instance of *ser* with locative function was found in the production data, and not one locative predicate containing *ser* was accepted by the subjects as grammatical in their variety. Based on these results, we can safely conclude, that in Tortosí Catalan *estar* has completely replaced *ser* in its locative function. In all the cases, *estar* is used to express location irrespective of the type of subject, length of stay, type of location or any other linguistic or pragmatic variable.

5 Conclusions

The previous discussion suggests that the linguistic change that has been attested in other Romance languages concerning the extension of *estar* over *ser* is also present in the development of Catalan, both in its function as copula and with locative predicates. Despite the attempts to prescribe the use of these verbs in the Catalan norm, the generalization of *estar* is affecting even those domains that were exclusive use of *ser*. Such is the case with locative predicates, where *estar* has completely replaced *ser*, and with adjectival predicates like *intel·ligent*.

Several scholars have pointed out that language change spreads in a step- by -step fashion outwardly through the speech community, and inwardly through the system of a language (e.g. Bynon 1977, Aitchinson 1991). Applying this concept to our case, the process of language change in favour of *estar* can be observed at two levels. At the linguistic level, we have discussed how the use of *estar* is gradually spreading to an increasing number of contexts, as can be seen when considering the instances in which *estar* now appears in contrast or in free variation with *ser*. In particular, the presence of adjectives that refer to physical descriptions, animate subject reference, and to a lesser degree inanimate subjects, favor the change (see also Silva-Corvalán, 1986 for Spanish). At a more specific level, we notice that, keeping the tendency towards the use of *estar* as a constant, not all the adjectives that appear with *estar* do so in all their occurrences. That is, there are certain cases in which a given adjective may appear both in contrast and in free variation with *ser* (e.g., *gord*). It is at this second level that individual differences among the community come into play. In our case, age is a good predictor of use of *estar* over *ser*. In general, what the older informants report as ungrammatical is what we find in the speech of the younger informants, who show a clear preference for the use of *estar*. This includes those cases in which *estar* may sound rather shocking to speakers of standard Catalan, since neither the context of the situation¹, nor the previous reference to the subject, nor the nature of subject referent accounts for its use, as in (59).

- (59) a. *la revista està molt bonica* 'the magazine is (ESTAR) very pretty' {5} b. *el paper està llarg* 'the paper is (ESTAR) long' {6} c. *lo xiquet està intel·ligent* 'the kid is (ESTAR) intelligent' {6}

The results presented also suggest that the pattern of change in the use of the copulas in Tortosí Catalan is the following. At an early stage, only *ser* is used. Then, *estar* appears to contrast in meaning with *ser*. The contrast that is established between the two verbs can be one of frame of reference or perfectivity. When the

¹ It is possible to find a context for each occurrence of *ser* and *estar* elicited by the first of the two production tasks; i.e., spontaneous conversation and elicited descriptions.

distinction is not clearly defined nor perceived, the contrast disappears and the copulas are used in free variation. At a later stage, *estar* takes over the space previously restricted to *ser*. And finally in certain cases with animate subject reference the opposition that was originally established between the choice of copulas appears to be expressed through the use of movement verbs such as *ir* 'to go' and *andar/acaminar* 'to walk'. That is these movement verbs seem to indicate susceptibility to change and circumstantiality, which used to be expressed with *estar*. The justification for the use of movement verbs with this function could result from two complementary sources. One would be the wider scope of use and generalisation in meaning that *estar* is acquiring in the language (see Bybee and Pagliuca, 1985). The other could be the already attested tendency of movement verbs towards grammaticalization as they develop to convey epistemic meanings (Bybee and Pagliuca, 1985). Furthermore, it has also been suggested that in Spanish, preverbal position of clitics is favored when a matrix verb like *venir* 'to come' has a grammaticalized meaning. In cases like (60), the matrix verb is conveying one of the following meanings: epistemic, progressive aspect, or future tense (Silva-Corvalán 1990:171). Additional data are needed to account for the behaviour of these movement verbs in Catalan, a language that has chosen the present tense of *anar* 'to go' followed by an infinitive to form the past tense.

(60) *Matrix verb: venir* (grammaticalized meaning). *Pepe me viene molestando por años ya.* 'Pete's been/kept bothering me for years' (Silva-Corvalán 1990; ex. 13)

The tendency of development in the copular system common to Spanish, French and Catalan indicates that the generalisation of *estar* over *ser* is internal to the language system and not particular to the language contact situation in which the languages are analyzed (i.e., type of languages involved and type of relationship between them). In the Catalan case, however, in addition to being a language contact situation, we can find another external force pushing in the same direction. That is, there is contact with Spanish, a Romance language undergoing the same direction in the development of *ser* and *estar*. These two historical, particular factors may account for the acceleration in the extension of *estar* over *ser* in the variety of Catalan under study. Underlying both, however, there is a more universal explanation, namely the generalization that regular paradigms (*estar* is a regular verb) spread¹.

Additional subjects and instances are needed before we can provide a thorough analysis of the Catalan Spanish contact in Villafranco. We also need to take into consideration the effects of exposure to the Catalan norm in high school and the linguistic attitudes towards dialect, the norm, and Castillian (Sanz 1992). Two important areas for further research are the behaviour of movement verbs when followed by adjectival predicates, and the use of *estar* as an existential verb in this variety (61), an unacceptable outcome in both standard varieties of Catalan and Spanish (Ferrater 1981). The existential use of *estar* has been attested by Echaide (1968) in the Spanish spoken in the Basque Country and by Escobar (1992) in the bilingual variety of Spanish spoken in Peru.

¹ We would like to thank Peter Patrick for this suggestion.

- (61) *a San Carlos està la zona marítima, la part vella* 'In San Carlos there is the marine, the old area' [listing the areas in which a neighbouring town is divided][16]

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RESUM

Ser i estar en Tortosí: llengües en contacte, variació i canvi lingüístic

Diversos estudis sobre l'evolució de les còpules verbals (com els de Silva-Corvalán (1990) sobre *ser* i *estar* a l'espanyol de Los Angeles i els de Sankoff i Thibaut (1977) sobre *être* i *avoir* al francès del Canadà) assenyalen que alguns canvis lingüístics motivats internament en la llengua es desenvolupen més ràpidament en situacions de llengües en contacte. En els estudis abans esmentats el canvi lingüístic consisteix en la substitució de *ser* per *estar* i de *être* per *avoir*, respectivament. La direcció d'aquest canvi, que ja era present en el llatí tardà, es troba en un estadi més avançat en les varietats bilingües de l'espanyol i el francès. L'estudi que presentem se centra en l'ús de *ser* i *estar* que es fa en la varietat bilingüe del català parlat a Vilafranca del Delta (Catalunya), un poble fundat durant la dictadura del General Franco. Els participants, tots ells bilingües consecutius, amb el català com a primera llengua i l'espanyol com a segona, van realitzar tres tasques diferents, les quals variaven en modalitat (percepció vs. producció) i grau d'atenció (entrevista controlada vs. conversa informal). L'anàlisi qualitativa de les dades bilingües aporta evidència addicional per al canvi lingüístic que afavoreix l'ús d'*estar*. Específicament, la generalització d'*estar* sembla ser afavorida per factors lingüístics com ara la qualitat d'animat del tema discursiu i del subjecte sintàctic, i per l'ús d'adjectius emprats per a realitzar descripcions físiques.

SUMMARY

Studies considering the evolution of verbal copula such as *ser* and *estar* in Los Angeles Spanish (e.g. Silva Corvalán 1990) and *être* and *avoir* in Canadian French (e.g. Sankoff & Thibaut 1977) point out that linguistic changes that are internally motivated in the language develop faster in situations of language contact. In these studies, the linguistic change involves the substitution of *ser* by *estar* and *être* by *avoir*. The direction of this change, already present in Late Latin, is found at a more advanced stage in the bilingual varieties of Spanish and French. The study presented here focuses on the use of *ser* and *estar* in the bilingual variety of Catalan spoken in Villafranco del Delta (Catalonia), a village founded during General Franco's regime. Consecutive bilinguals of Catalan (L1) and Spanish (L2) were asked to perform three different tasks, which vary in modality (perception vs. production) and degree of attention (controlled interview vs. spontaneous conversation). The qualitative analysis of the bilingual data provides additional evidence for the linguistic change favoring the use of *estar*. In particular, the generalization of *estar* appears to be favored by linguistic factors such as animacy of the discourse topic and syntactic subject and by the use of adjectives denoting physical description. In addition, it was found that the age of the informant also helps in predicting the use of *estar* over *ser*; i.e., the younger the speaker, the higher the chance of finding *estar* in the data. The paper concludes with a discussion of the pattern of the change in the use of copulas in Tortosí catalan.

APPENDIX

Figure 1. *Ser* and *estar* in Standard Peninsular Spanish (Real Academia's *Esbozo*)

1. copula + noun, pronoun, infinitive verb: SER
2. copula + qualifying adjective or participle: SER or ESTAR
 - a.1. imperfective quality (permanent): SER
e.g. el salón era lujosísimo 'it was a luxurious sitting room'
 - a.2. perfective quality (transitory/temporary/circumstantial): ESTAR
e.g. el salón estaba lujosísimo 'they arranged the room in a luxurious way'
 - b.1. copula + resultative adjectives: ESTAR
-with those adjectives that always express results of a change
e.g. lleno 'full'; vacío 'empty'; maduro 'ripe'; intacto 'untouched', roto 'broken'
 - c.1. copula + qualifying adjective or participle: SER /ESTAR
-to express the contrast between intrinsic quality and quality as a result of a change
e.g. bueno 'good/ attractive'; vivo 'alive/ clever'; listo 'clever/ ready'
Pedro es muy bueno / Pedro está muy bueno 'Pedro is good/ is attractive'
3. locative predicate: ESTAR
e.g. no están en casa 'they're not at home'
Madrid está en España 'Madrid is in Spain'

Figure 2. *Ser* and *Estar* in Standard Catalan: Badia i Margarit (1962) and Vallcorba (1978)

1. copula + attribute or adverb: SER
2. copula + qualifying adjective or participle
 - a) animate subject:

- a.1. imperfective quality (permanent): SER
- a.2. perfective quality (transitory/ temporary): ESTAR
- b) inanimate subject: always SER
- Vallcorba: 1) permanent quality: SER
- e.g. the water is hot (hot springs)
- 2) circumstantial quality, influence of an agent is presupposed: ESTAR
- e.g. the water is hot (on the stove)
- 3. locative predicate + SER / ESTAR
- a) animate subject:
 - a.1. imperfective aspect (to be at a place): SER
 - a.2. perfective aspect (remain at a place for a given time): ESTAR
- b) inanimate subject: SER
- Vallcorba: 1) regular location: SER
- e.g. les forquilles són al calaix 'the forks are in the drawer'
- 2) special location: ESTAR
- e.g. les forquilles estan al terra 'the forks are on the floor'

Figure 3. *Ser* and *Estar* in Standard Catalan: Solà (1987)

I. Obligatory uses

I.1. Obligatory use of SER

I.1.1. copula + attribute

- a) animate subjects: permanent, classifying or defining characteristics
- e.g. savi 'wise'; llest 'listo'; intel·ligent 'intelligent'; bo (de caràcter) 'good'; alt 'tall'; baix 'short'; cec 'blind'; sord 'deaf'; calb 'bald'; treballador 'hard working'
- b) inanimate subjects: with adjectives that express permanent characteristics
- e.g. alt 'tall'; llarg 'long'; bonic 'pretty'; bo 'good'; difícil 'difficult'

I.1.2. locative

- a) animate subjects: indicates merely location (as opposed to ESTAR that expresses temporal permanency)
- e.g. -On ets? -A casa 'Where are you? At home'
- b) inanimate subjects: SER
- (ESTAR is occupying the place of SER when the presence of a participle can be inferred)
- e.g. Menorca està (situada) al Nord de Mallorca 'Menorca is (situated) to the north of Mallorca.'

I.2. Obligatory use of ESTAR

I.2.1. copula + attribute

- a) animate subjects: with past participles, adverbs and adjectives that express temporary characteristics
- b) inanimate subjects: with adverbs
- e.g. bé 'well'; malament 'badly'

II. Free variation: SER + ESTAR

II.1. copula + attribute

- a) animate subjects: use of ESTAR with adjectives that previously appeared only with SER.
- e.g. mort 'dead'; vidu 'widow'; casat 'married'
- b) inanimate subjects
- e.g. encès 'lit'; cuït 'cooked'; obert 'open'; calent 'hot'; fred 'cold'; dolç 'sweet'; salat 'salty'; tendre 'tender'

III.1. copula + attribute

- a) animate subjects:
 - contrast with: alegre 'happy'; tranquil 'calm'; trist 'sad'; quiet 'still'

- productive contrast with certain adjectives that can express both permanent and temporary characteristics
e.g. jovial 'merry'; jove 'young'; bonica 'pretty'; maco 'nice'; lleig 'ugly'; boig, 'crazy'; coix 'lame'; sord 'deaf'; calb 'bald'; animat 'outgoing'
- the contrast is disappearing with certain adjectives resulting in innovative uses of ESTAR
e.g. Ramon està coix/ sord / cec/ calb meaning 'Ramon is lame/ deaf / blind / bald'
- b) inanimate subjects:
 - SER or ESTAR implies semantic contrast
e.g. la bombeta és fluixa 'the bulb is dim'; la bombeta està fluixa 'the bulb is loose'
 - productive contrast affecting other adjectives
e.g. espès 'thick'; net 'clean'; brut 'dirty'; tou 'soft'
 - the contrast has disappeared in the case of bo 'good' (ESTAR = SER)
e.g. l'arròs és bo = l'arròs testà bo, 'the rice is good'
 - with past participles and adjectives that indicate transitory characteristics
e.g. encès 'lit'; cuit 'cooked'; obert 'open'; tancat 'closed'; calent 'hot'; fred 'cold'; dolç 'sweet'; salat 'salty'; tendre 'tender'

III.2. Locative

- a) animate subject: SER when permanent; ESTAR when temporary.
- b) inanimate subjects: SER with regular location; ESTAR with special / unusual location.

Figure 4. *Ser* and *Estar* in Villafranco del Delta

I. Obligatory uses

I.1. Obligatory use of SER only

I.1.1. copula + attribute

- a) animate subjects
[intel.ligent, capacitat 'intelligent'] {60, 29, 19, 12, 9}
e.g. el meu cavall és molt intel.ligent 'my horse is very intelligent' {29}
- b) inanimate subjects
abstract invariable qualities: nacional, tradicional, difícil
'national, traditional, difficult'
e.g. pescar és molt difícil 'fishing is really hard nowadays' {60}
[llarg] {60, 29, 27, 19, 16, 12, 9}
e.g. un rio és molt llarg ' {60}

I.1.2. locative

- a) animate subjects: ser
only instances of estar found
- b) inanimate subjects: ser
only instances of estar found

I.2. Obligatory use of ESTAR

I.2.1. copula + attribute

- a) animate subjects
 - participles; insyances of obligatory use not created
 - preference for the use of ESTAR
 - e.g. [Ramon està coix / sord/ cec / calb]
'Ramon is lame/ deaf / blind / bald
 - 2 instances of ser {12, 16} but see "free variation" below
 - two subjects recognize the contrast class / individual
 - the contrast is not used productively
 - metaphoric use

e.g. com quan jo li dic al meu fill: que estàs cego o que, que no veus que ho tens als nassos?
'it's like when I tell my son: are you blind or what, don't you see that it's in front of your nose?' {60}

b) inanimate subjects

-participles: encès, cuit, obert, calent, fluix 'lit, cooked, open, hot, dim-loose'

-innovations:

- no difference between [+agent] / [-agent] with a participle

-fluixa 'weak, loose, dim'

e.g. la llum està fluixa {19:ser}

-tort

e.g. com a fuster, jo miro si la fusta està torta {60} 'since I am a carpenter, I check whether the wood is crooked'

[two subjects {19, 16} recognize the contrast ser /estar although they do not use it productively]

1.2.2. copula + locative predicate

a) animate subjects:

estar is used in all cases

b) inanimate subjects

estar is used in all cases

II. Free variation: SER = ESTAR

II.1. copula = attribute

a) animate subjects:

-gord 'fat'

e.g. estos no són molt gordos ni tampoc molt prims ... estos ... un està gordo, bastant gordo i l'altre no molt ... sí bueno, són molt gordos 'these ones are (SER) neither very fat nor very thin ... these ... one is (ESTAR) fat, quite fat and the other not much yes, well, they are (SER) very fat' {12}

e.g. és més gordó ... este està gord, este és gordo is este també, estan més gordos 'he is (SER) fatter ... this one is (ESTAR) fat, this one is (SER) fat and this one too, they are (ESTAR) fatter' {6}

-sà 'healthy'

e.g. és sana una persona que no està malalta, que fa una vida sana, que no té vicis o que té vicis però que està sà i fort 'a person is (SER) a healthy person when she is (ESTAR) not sick, lives a healthy life, does not have bad habits or has habits but is (ESTAR) healthy and strong' {60}

-intel·ligent 'intel·ligent'

e.g. este xiquet està molt intel·ligent 'this boy is very intelligent' {15}

[capacitat 'intelligent']

e.g. no està capacitat per a estudiar 'he is not intelligent enough to study'

b) inanimate subjects

-[llímpia, bruta, neta] 'clean, dirty, clean'

e.g. l'aigua és llímpia ... allí està prou llímpia, qun més entres més llímpia està 'the water is (SER) clean ... it is (ESTAR) pretty clean there, the further you go in the cleaner it is (ESTAR)' {60}

e.g. la mar brava és una mica més llímpia, a l'altra la gent entra més i està més bruta 'the rough sea is (SER) a bit cleaner, more people get into the other one and it is (ESTAR) dirtier' {60}

e.g. l'aigua normalment està guarríssima i molt bruta 'the water is (ESTAR) normally disgusting and very dirty' {27}

e.g. a vegades està bruta, a vegades està neta ... sempre està neta, l'arena està neta '(the water) sometimes it is (ESTAR) dirty, sometimes it is (ESTAR) clean ... it is always clean, the sand is (ESTAR) clean' {9}

e.g. l'aigua és igual ... no, una està més neta i l'altra més bruta ... és normal que una sigui més neta que una altra 'the water [in both sides] is (SER) the same ... no, one is (ESTAR) cleaner and the other dirtier ... it is (SER) normal that one is (SER) cleaner than the other' {5}

-[bo]

e.g. és bo el menjar, està ben fet ... hi tiren una salseta que està molt bona 'the food is (SER) good, it is well prepared ... they mix it with a sauce that is (ESTAR) very good'

e.g. l'enciam és bo i los crancs estan bons 'lettuce is SER good and crabs are ESTAR good' {all under 19}

-bonic

e.g. este cuadro està molt bonic {60} / estes ulleres són molt boniques {16}

'this painting is very nice /these glasses are very nice

-tendre

e.g. los bistecs són /estan molt bons 'the steaks are very good' {29}

[two subjects aged 27 and 19 use the contrast]

III. SER contrasts with ESTAR

III.1. copula + attribute

a) animate subjects

- contrast (e.g. alegre 'happy'; tranquil 'calm'; trist 'sad'; quiet 'still'): no change

-[gord] 'fat'

e.g. Gurrutxaga no és prim però aquí està gras 'Gurrutxaga is not thin but he is fat here'

e.g. està gord perquè s'ha posat coixins, perquè no és gord 'He is fat because he is wearing a cushion'

- guapo 'good-looking'

e.g. Gurrutxaga no és guapo ni està guapo 'Gurrutxaga is not handsome and he does not look handsome'

- the contrast extends to other adjectives:

- interessant 'attractive looks'

e.g. tenia que ésser interessant a la seva joventut (...) estan interessants perquè no tenen cap problema ni estan gords ni res 'he had to be (SER) interesting in his youth/ they are (ESTAR) interesting because they do not have any problems they are not fat or anything' {29}

-listo 'clever'

e.g. la xiqueta està lista/ ell és listo 'the girl is ready/ he's clever' {6}

- [bo] good / healthy- good-looking

e.g. este noi està bo / lo papa és bo

'this boy is healthy/ good-looking/ daddy is good