

# Crosslinguistic Influence of Auxiliary Verbs in Spanish and English - ser, estar and be

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## Crosslinguistic Influence of Auxiliary Verbs in Spanish and English – *ser, estar* and *be*

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This paper presents a study on possible crosslinguistic influence between the Spanish and English auxiliary verb systems in Spanish learners of English. The first part of the paper provides an overview of the two auxiliary verb systems, together with the existing theoretical approaches to the distribution of Spanish verbs *ser* and *estar*. The research part of the study consists of a tripartite questionnaire that was given to Spanish students who attend a Spanish-English bilingual school program, as well as to their teachers, language assistants who are all English native speakers with Spanish as L2. The results indicate that Spanish students, even though involved in a Spanish-English immersion program still do not show any marked influence of English in their use of *ser* and *estar*, and mostly rely on their intuition in their choice between the two auxiliaries. English native speakers, as expected, had most problems in their choice of *ser* and *estar* with a particular adjective, as well as with fixed expressions which involve only one of the auxiliaries. In their choice they primarily rely on grammatical rules they acquired while learning Spanish.

*Key words:* crosslinguistic influence, auxiliary verbs, *ser, estar*, Spanish, English

### 1. Introduction

Aside from the verb *haber* 'to have', which serves as an auxiliary, the Spanish language has two auxiliary verbs which express a state of being – *ser* and *estar* – whereas English has only one – the verb *be*. The aim of this paper is to see how these two Spanish auxiliaries interfere with their English counterpart, and to give a closer insight into the distribution of one verb over the other in the Spanish language. We begin by presenting several existing classifications of the English auxiliary verb system, followed by an overview of Spanish auxiliaries, with special attention on the distinction between full auxiliaries (*ser, estar* 'to be', and

*haber* 'to have') and periphrastic conjugations. This distinction corresponds to the English classification of auxiliaries into primary (*be, have, do*) and secondary auxiliaries (or modal verbs). The paper then provides an overview of different approaches to the Spanish verbs *ser* and *estar*, highlighting the strong points but also the shortcomings of each approach. The fact that linguists, Spanish or other, still haven't come up with a unified approach to the issue of *ser* and *estar* shows the complexity of this phenomenon, which presents a great difficulty for non-native speakers and learners of Spanish. However, over the years, certain guidelines for the use of *ser* and *estar* have been agreed upon, and we present them at the end of the third part of the paper.

The research part of this study was conducted in Spain, using a questionnaire which consisted of three parts: the translation part, and two acceptability judgement tasks. The questionnaire was given to Spanish students enrolled in the bilingual Spanish-English program, and to their language assistants who were all native speakers of English.<sup>1</sup> The results are presented and discussed in Chapter 5.

## 2. The English auxiliary verb system

English grammar books and syntactic handbooks are very concise when it comes to the issue of the auxiliary verb system. Palmer (1965: 32) thus defines an auxiliary verb as

“the one whose forms are used together with the negative particle, the one which has paired the positive and negative forms”.

He lists four core characteristics for determining whether a verb in English is an auxiliary or not, and calls them the NICE properties<sup>2</sup> (**n**egation, **i**nversion, **c**ode, **e**mphasis):

a) Negation, which occurs with the particle *not* (*-n't*) placed on the finite element.

(1)        *I haven't seen her.*

The difference between auxiliary and lexical verbs can be seen in the formation of negation. As example (1) shows, auxiliary verbs in analytical tenses take the particle *not*. In synthetic tenses though, the negative particle does not fall on the

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<sup>1</sup> The authors wish to thank the students and teachers of the IES Victor García de la Concha in Villaviciosa, Spain, for their help and participation.

<sup>2</sup> Twaddell (1960) also listed these four criteria and called them the 'grammatical roles of the auxiliary verb'.

lexical verb, as would be the case in (2), but on the auxiliary verb *do*, which is inserted (the so-called *do*-support) (3).<sup>3</sup>

(2) \**I like not apples.*

(3) *I don't like apples.*

b) Inversion with the preceding element (usually the subject) in interrogative sentences (4a), after *seldom*, *hardly*, *never*, etc. (4b), and after third-conditional sentences:

(4) a. *Were you at the theatre yesterday?*  
b. *Never have I seen such beauty.*

c) Code – auxiliaries occur where a main verb has been omitted in order to avoid repetition:

(5) a. *She likes strawberries and so do I.*

d) Emphatic affirmation<sup>4</sup> or nuclear stress upon the auxiliary:

(6) *You were at the party, weren't you?*

Palmer (1965) also classified the auxiliaries with regard to their morphological and syntactic features. Morphologically, none of the auxiliaries apart from *be*, *have* and *do* have a distinct form for the third person singular in the present tense. It is precisely this characteristic that makes them primary auxiliaries, while all others are termed secondary (or modal). Primary auxiliaries *be* and *have* also have contracted forms: *I'm*, *you're*, *he's*, *I've*, etc. With regard to morphology, Palmer (1965) classifies auxiliaries, both primary and secondary, into five classes, based on the number of finite and non-finite forms. The auxiliary *be*, as expected, has the largest number of finite (five) and non-finite forms (three).

Syntactically, Palmer (1965) classifies the English auxiliaries into four groups: infinitive, *to* + infinitive, gerund and past participle. It is interesting that Twaddell (1960) had already mentioned a similar division of the auxiliaries *be* and *have* but called them modifications<sup>5</sup>: past (*had*, *was*), current relevance (*have* + past participle), limited duration (*be* + *-ing*), and passive (*be* + past participle). As for the auxiliary *do*, he provided the following description:

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<sup>3</sup> Example (2) was once considered correct. However, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards the verb *do* becomes obligatory in negative (and interrogative) sentences with verbs in simple tenses.

<sup>4</sup> Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) call the last two properties pro-form function and tag question respectively.

<sup>5</sup> Twaddell (1960) used this term because he thought the auxiliary in these constructions modified the lexical verb, which shows that his classification was partly based on semantic criteria.

“*Do* is semantically empty auxiliary which performs as *auxiliary qua auxiliary* in the four obligatory functions when no other auxiliary is semantically appropriate in the construction”. (Twaddell 1960: 22)

In the similar vein Palmer (1965: 25) referred to the auxiliary *do* as “neutral or empty auxiliary, or a grammatical dummy”. Greenbaum/Quirk (1990) adopt the same viewpoint some thirty years later: auxiliaries share the four main features, and have a syntactic function in common – that of operator when they occur as the first verb of a finite verb phrase.

Biber et al. (1999), and Eastwood (2005) – to name but a few grammars – illustrate a didactic approach to auxiliary verbs in the English language. They discuss primary and secondary auxiliaries in separate chapters, and call the latter modal verbs or sometimes modal auxiliaries. Primary auxiliaries (*be*, *have* and *do*) are primarily used in forming tenses but can also function as full verbs. As a full verb, *be* is a copular verb, *have* expresses possession, and *do* expresses task performance. Primary and secondary auxiliaries can co-occur in a sentence, with secondary preceding the primary, and taking on the negative marker in negative sentences:

- (7)      a. *She must have forgotten about it.*  
          b. *She mustn't have forgotten about it.*

### 3. The Spanish auxiliary verb system

Approaches in defining the Spanish auxiliary verb system tend to be very similar to those defining the English auxiliary verb system. Gomes/Segura (1998) thus define auxiliaries as tense-forming verbs. They state that Spanish auxiliary verbs are *ser* ‘to be’ and *haber* ‘to have’. The latter is used to form all the tenses in Spanish. Our corollary would be that *haber* is the Spanish counterpart of the English verb *do*. They are both used only in the formation of other tenses<sup>6</sup> and *haber* has no forms other than the third person singular, which makes it even more restricted. Although Gili Gaya (1955: 100) stated that

“an auxiliary verb in Spanish is a verb that has lost its original lexical meaning and has acquired a grammatical function or meaning in specific syntactic contexts”,

most Spanish grammars adopt a less restricted position, and classify *ser*, *estar* and *haber* as primary auxiliaries, and all modal verbs as secondary auxiliaries.

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<sup>6</sup> Even though all three auxiliaries in English can function as full verbs when they are the only verb in the sentence, *do* is specific because it functions either as a pro-predicate, referring to some unspecified action, or as a general-purpose transitive verb, again with unspecified reference (cf. Greenbaum/Quirk 1990).

According to the Royal Spanish Academy (*Real Academia Española* 1998) a verb functions as an auxiliary when it loses its principal meaning when being a constituent of periphrastic conjugation.

Gómez Torrego (1997: 191) also classifies the auxiliaries as the verbs used to form tenses and periphrastic conjugations. Just as the English auxiliary verbs, the Spanish counterparts are also all irregular verbs, and they can function as full verbs as well. In that sense, *ser* and *estar* are copular verbs, equivalent to the English verb *be*, while *haber* has the meaning of 'to exist', and only one form which is impersonal (*hay, había*). The verb *haber* is also used in Spanish translations of English existential structures *There is... / there are...*

Hermoso et al. (2011) discuss the use of primary auxiliary verbs: the verb *ser* with a participle to form the passive voice (8), the verb *haber* to form analytical tenses and the subjunctive (9), and the periphrastic conjugation of *estar* + gerund (10):

(8) *La casa fue construida hace cincuenta años.*  
'The house was built fifty years ago.'

(9) a. *He comido tres manzanas hoy.*  
'I have eaten three apples today.'

b. *Espero que hayas entendido mi frase.*  
'I hope you understood the sentence.'

(10) *Estoy comiendo.*  
'I am eating.'

Just as English modal verbs are considered to be secondary auxiliaries, Spanish secondary auxiliaries are seen as periphrastic conjugation or, as *Nueva gramática de la lengua Española* (2009: 78) puts it, as

"syntactic combinations between the two verbs in which the first verb partially or completely loses its basic meaning and the second has the form of infinitive, gerund, or participle."

Gili Gaya (1955: 100) classifies Spanish periphrastic conjugations as follows:

with infinitives: *ir a, pasar a, echar a, venir a, volver a, haber de, haber que, tener que, deber de, llegar a, acabar de* and *alcanzar a*;

with gerunds: *estar, ir, venir, seguir* and *andar*;

with participles: *llevar, tener, traer, quedar, dejar, esta* and *ser*.

Although primary auxiliaries are used in periphrastic conjugations (e.g. *estar escribiendo* 'to be writing', *ser publicado* 'to be published'), there are a number of full verbs used in periphrastic conjugations which, following the traditional approach, are immediately considered to be auxiliaries. For example, in the

periphrastic conjugation *tener que trabajar* 'to have to work' the verb *tener* has lost its principal meaning 'to hold' or 'to possess', and in the mentioned structure carries the meaning of obligation. According to the traditional approach to auxiliary verbs, *tener* would then also be considered as an auxiliary verb in the Spanish language. Meza/Pineda (2002) closely examine this phenomenon. They present a syntactic account of the Spanish auxiliary verb system rather than a semantic one, which has been the traditional approach in explaining the auxiliary verb system in Spanish. They present five criteria for determining if a verb in a periphrastic construction is an auxiliary or not:

- it is not possible to construct periphrasis with the auxiliary in passive voice
- it is not possible to construct an interrogative sentence asking for the action named by the non-finite verb using the auxiliary verb only
- the conjugation of the auxiliary verb contains the syntactic subject, which is normally omitted; however, auxiliaries do not require agents, as the main semantic import of the periphrasis is marked by the verb in a non-finite form
- impersonal actions
- it is not possible to construct an interrogative sentence asking for the direct object
- of the periphrases using the auxiliary verb only

After testing all the properties on Gili Gaya's (1955) list of periphrastic constructions, Meza/Pineda (2002) concluded that periphrastic conjugations with participles should not be counted as auxiliaries, along with periphrastic conjugations *empezar a* 'to begin', *pasar a* 'move on to' and *haber que* 'have to'. They also concluded that these properties occur in English as well, which makes the auxiliary verb systems of both languages quite similar. However, the aforementioned NICE properties of English auxiliary verbs are not applicable to Spanish. In Spanish, for instance, lexical verbs do not need an auxiliary verb to form negation in simple tenses; the negative particle *no* is simply placed in front of the verb:

- (11) a. *El chico no estudia.*  
'The boy doesn't study.'

Subject-auxiliary inversion is also not applicable in Spanish, because Spanish is a pro-drop language; the verb itself has inflections that show agreement in person, number and tense, so the subject is in most cases omitted:

- (12) (Yo) *Estuve* todo el día en la playa. *Estuviste* (tú) todo el día en la playa?  
'I was at the beach all day. Were you at the beach all day?'

As for code and emphasis, they are signaled by other constructions in Spanish and not by auxiliary verbs.

On the overall, the auxiliary verb systems of both languages are usually defined in a similar way, at least with regard to their syntactic function. The mentioned NICE properties make the English auxiliary verb system more systematic whereas the Spanish auxiliary verb system produces a number of ambiguities that still have not been properly studied.

#### 4. Theoretical background

In this chapter we intend to provide a closer look at the Spanish verbs *ser* and *estar* and their use. The verbs *ser* and *estar* are the Spanish equivalents of the English verb *be*. Etymologically, *ser* is derived from Latin verbs *esse* 'to be' and *sedere* 'to sit', while *estar* is derived from the Latin verb *stare* 'to stand'. Other Romance languages also have two verbs as the equivalents of the English verb *be*, such as Italian (*essere* and *stare*) and Portuguese (*ser* and *estar*). French, however, has only one (*être*).

The existing literature on *ser* and *estar* is quite vast yet there are not many works that directly contrast it to the English verb *be*. Roby (2011) provides a detailed theoretical analysis of the use of *ser* and *estar*. The author states that in a language which has two verbs to express a state of being, they cannot be considered as synonyms but rather as being in complementary distribution, since each of them represents a different type of reality. Roby also claims that the use of one verb over another hasn't been unanimously agreed upon by linguistic theorists. We shall therefore first try to illustrate the most common approaches to the use of *ser* and *estar*, and then proceed to present the results of our study aimed at testing Spanish native speakers' intuition about the use of these verbs, and how it is possibly influenced by their learning of English.

##### 4.1. Binary opposition approaches

There are numerous approaches to the use of *ser* and *estar* that offer a single principle which supposedly accounts for all the situations in which we can use *ser* or *estar*. In such approaches, each verb is given a specific cognitive reality, putting the two verbs in binary opposition, either as permanent vs. temporary realities, or as a difference between inherent qualities and current states.

The approach that is most widely used in Spanish textbooks, is the attribution of *ser* to permanent and *estar* to temporary realities. Bello (1903) was the pioneer of this interpretation, exposing it in his *Gramática de la lengua castellana* by arguing that *ser* is used to denote permanency and essence, and *estar* is used to denote accidents and temporariness. More than half a century later, Carlson (1977) used a somewhat different terminology for a basically similar approach. Instead of temporary and permanent concepts, he perceives *ser* and *estar* as individual



and stage-level predicate respectively. An individual-level predicate is true throughout the existence of an individual, regardless of a particular point in time, while a stage-level predicate is true of a specific temporal stage of its subject. Individual-level predicates are consequently more restricted than stage-level ones, which can occur in a wide range of grammatical constructions. However, Carlson (1977) was criticized (cf. Holtheuer 2011) for failing to account for the actual differences in distribution between *ser* and *estar*. Husband (2010: 9–10) notes:

“Many of the grammatical environments appear to be sensitive to whatever aspectual nature is ascribed to stage-level/individual-level predicates that captures the intuitive temporary nature of stage-level predicates compared to the relative permanency of individual-level predicates. Indeed, it may be natural to think of these temporal distinctions as a part of a predicate’s aktionsart. However, the connection between stage-level/individual-level predicates and aktionsart has been unclear. This may be in part due to the typical characterization of stage-level/individual-level predicates as a distinction about individuals, whether properties of individual are essential or accidental, or whether they are permanent or temporary (...) However, what makes a property permanent or temporary (or essential or accidental) may be more about the temporal characteristics of properties than about individuals themselves.”

Indeed, defining *ser* and *estar* as permanent and temporary bound verbs has long been considered as the most accurate explanation for the use of the two Spanish copulas. However, recent approaches show that it was just the most convenient way to account for the majority of differences in the use of the two verbs, but certainly not for all. *Ser* is used for the so-called general truths or stable properties (13), while *estar* is used for temporary actions and states (14):

- (13) *La tierra es redonda.*  
‘The Earth is round’.
- (14) a. *Estoy en casa.*  
‘I am at home’.
- b. *Estoy escribiendo mi tarea.*  
‘I am doing my homework’.

There are numerous other examples which may serve as proof that the permanent/temporary approach offers a sound explanation for the distribution of *ser* and *estar*. However, such an explanation most certainly cannot be applied to all the uses of *ser* and *estar*. Among other things, Andrade (1919: 21) regarded this dichotomy as “unpractical because it puts too much burden on the average

student at the very start". He argues that such an approach, when studied in depth, ends up with more exceptions than cases which actually comply with the rule. One of the obvious exceptions would be the expression *estar muerto* 'to be dead'. Death is a permanent state, yet in Spanish it requires the verb *estar*, traditionally considered as a marker of temporary actions and states<sup>7</sup>.

A somewhat different approach would be to perceive the verb *ser* as a marker of inherent qualities and *estar* as a marker of current state. Indeed, the qualities that identify someone's being and character are usually expressed with the verb *ser*:

- (15) *Soy croata. Soy mujer. Soy alta. Soy amable.*  
'I am Croatian. I am female. I am tall. I am kind'.

On the other hand, *estar* is used to describe a current state or a change from the usual state:

- (16) *Normalmente es amable, pero hoy está muy grosera.*  
'Usually she is very kind, but today she is very rude'.

When describing the taste of food it is correct to use the verb *estar*:

- (17) *La paella está rica.*  
'The paella is very tasty'.

By uttering this sentence, we are describing the paella that is in front of us and that we have just tasted. However, we do not know if all paellas are as tasty as this one, so distinction has to be made between stating something valid at the moment of speaking and stating something that may be considered a general truth – a distinction that cannot be established in the English translation. Examples like (17) were therefore the reason for criticising this approach on account of it being cognitively too demanding for the speaker.

Still, both approaches based on binary opposition are popular in teaching Spanish as a foreign language, because they provide us with two major features which to a great extent account for the uses of the two auxiliaries. Also, these approaches often serve as an introduction to more complex situations where the two auxiliary verbs are used. It is the easiest way for a teacher to present the notion of *ser* and *estar* and also the simplest way for the student to understand it upon the first encounter with this issue. Of course, further down the line the speaker has to become aware that it is not possible to classify all the actions and

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<sup>7</sup> We may speculate that religious beliefs played a part in the choice of the auxiliary in this particular example since in Roman-Catholic denomination, death is seen as a transitory state towards eternal life.

states with the two opposing poles since they cannot possibly account for all the situations in which the two verbs are used.

In terms of the approach based on implied comparison, both *ser* and *estar* are used to compare certain properties. Franco/Steinmetz (1983: 86) support this idea by stating that *ser* expresses implied comparison in which one entity is compared to another (the X/Y type of comparison). In contrast, *estar* expresses implied comparison in which an entity X is compared to itself (the X/X type of comparison). To illustrate such distribution Franco/Steinmetz (1983) use examples (18) and (19). In (18) Pedro's wealth is greater than the wealth of an average person. On the other hand, example (19) implies that his wealth is greater than it usually was. The extension of such sentences is illustrated in example (20).

(18) *Pedro es rico.*  
'Peter is rich'.

(19) *Pedro está rico.*  
'Peter is rich'.

(20) *A Pedro le tocó la lotería, y está rico.*  
'Pedro won the lottery and he is rich'.

#### 4.2. Other approaches to the distribution of *ser* and *estar*

Since the general tendency of all the approaches based on binary opposition was to oversimplify, there appeared many which were aimed at providing a more thorough perspective on the issue of the distribution of *ser* and *estar*. The most notable ones are the mental concept and perception approach (Andrade 1919), aspectual distribution (Luján 1981), and discourse-based analysis (Maienborn 2011). Before presenting the results of our own research, we shall briefly outline these approaches.

Andrade (1919) argued that the basic distinction between the two auxiliaries is in that *estar* is associated with the characteristic feelings related to immediate perceptions and their representations, while *ser* is related to concepts and judgements. *Ser* is thus an expression of mental concept, and *estar* is the expression of sensory perception. Thus, logical relations are expressed with *ser* and affections with *estar*. Andrade (1919: 23) also adds a didactic component to distinguishing *ser* and *estar*:

"The speaker should use *estar* in expressing literal or figurative position, in cases where *to feel* or *to look* can replace *to be* and to imply a change in the following terms:

- a) it has not happened yet: *está intacto* 'it is untouched'
- b) it is just taking place: *está lloviendo* 'it is raining'
- c) it has already taken place: *está listo/terminado/muerto* 'it is ready/finished/dead'."

On the contrary, the speaker should use *ser* for:

- "a) classification (with a nominal predicate): *Ella es profesora*. 'She is a teacher'.
- b) when speaking of a character of a person or of the elements of which something is composed (analysis): *Él es tímido*. 'He is shy'.
- c) for passive voice or any inference (synthesis): *La casa fue comprada*. 'The house was bought'."

There are still guidelines as to the use of *ser* and *estar*, which closely relate to those of Andrade (1919), and these may be found in many grammar books such as e.g. *Esbozo de una Nueva Gramática de la lengua española* (1998), or a handbook by Richmond (2010). They may be summarized as follows:

(21) Use *ser* to express:

- a) origin (*soy croata* 'I'm Croatian')
- b) family relation (*es mi hermana* 'she is my sister')
- c) physical attributes (*soy alta* 'I am tall'),
- d) personality characteristics (*soy inteligente* 'I'm clever'),
- e) possession (*es mi casa* 'it's my house'),
- f) profession (*soy profesora* 'I'm a teacher'),
- g) passive voice (*la casa fue construída hace cincuenta años* 'The house was built fifty years ago').

Use *estar* to express:

- a) location (*Zagreb está en Croacia* 'Zagreb is in Croatia')
- b) mood (*estoy feliz* 'I'm happy')
- c) physical condition (*estoy enferma* 'I'm ill')
- d) result of an action (*la casa está construída* 'The house is built')

There were of course other approaches in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – e.g. Morley (1925) who claimed that *ser* is the everyday translation of the verb *be*, or Bull (1942) who argued that one should use *ser* with common concepts or for first impressions and *estar* with exceptional concepts which stand out – however, none of them were universally accepted, which only highlights the complexity of the issue.

As for Luján (1981), she defined *ser* and *estar* as aspectual predicates – *ser* as imperfective and *estar* as perfective – with their use being determined by the adjectives that follow them. In this light, there are three types of adjectives in

Spanish: those that take only *ser*, those that take only *estar*, and those that can take both verbs. The criticism of this approach mainly lied in the fact that it failed to explain why *ser* and *estar* behave as partial synonyms in some contexts but have opposite meaning in others.

Maienborn (2011) proposes the discourse-based account which assumes that *ser* and *estar* both display the same lexical semantics (which is identical to the semantics of the English verb *be*); by using *estar*, speakers restrict their claim to a specific discourse situation, whereas by using *ser*, they make no such restrictions. In her discourse-based analysis of *ser* and *estar* Maienborn (2011: 10) defends the following claims:

- “1. The grammatical system is not sensitive to any conceptual opposition like “temporary vs. permanent” or “accidental vs. essential”.
2. Neither *ser* predications nor *estar* predications display an underlying eventuality argument.
3. Rather than mirroring a conceptual opposition, the *ser/estar* alternation is basically discourse-related: *estar* predications are linked to a specific discourse situation.
4. A discourse-based account offers a straightforward pragmatic explanation for the tendency of *estar* and *ser* predications to be interpreted in terms of the dichotomy “temporary vs. permanent”.”

According to Maienborn (2011: 16), at the heart of the *ser/estar* alternation is a specificity of the topic situation, or in short, *estar* is the discourse-dependent variant of *ser*:

“This discourse dependency is lexically triggered by *estar*, structurally resolved by means of the functional category of aspect, and finally pragmatically licensed through some kind of topic-situation contrast.”

Maienborn also stipulates the importance of determining the grammatical parameters which dictate the uses of *ser* and *estar*. Overall, she concludes that *ser* and *estar* have the same grammatical structure, and the same semantics, but differ only in pragmatic terms.

## 5. Research

### 5.1. Methodology and participants

The current study primarily investigates possible crosslinguistic influence between Spanish and English with regard to auxiliary verbs, with special attention devoted to the Spanish equivalents of the English verb *be*. Two groups participated

in the research and general information about the participants is given in Table 1. The first group consisted of Spanish students enrolled in the Spanish-English bilingual program in Instituto de Educación Secundaria (IES) Victor García de la Concha, in Villaviciosa, Spain. A total of 42 students participated in the study. They were students enrolled in the second and third year of compulsory secondary education (sp. *Educación Secundaria Obligatoria* (ESO)).

The students enrolled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO are thirteen and fourteen years old, they have been studying English for eight to ten years, and they have been enrolled in the bilingual program for the past two years. 26 students from the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO participated in the research, 15 female and 11 male. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO there are 16 students, 11 female and 5 male. They are fourteen and fifteen years old and have been studying English for ten years. They have been enrolled in the bilingual program for the past three years. None of the students in both classes were simultaneous bilinguals.

The second group consisted of 10 native English speakers aged 20 to 30, who worked in Spain as language assistants. They have been studying Spanish for five to ten years and all of them have a BA degree. Three of them were British, and seven were American. There were 9 females and one male and none of them were simultaneous Spanish-English bilinguals.

Participants	Number of participants	Age	Gender F-female M-male	Years of studying English / Spanish as a foreign language
2 <sup>nd</sup> ESO	26	13-14	15F 11M	8-10
3 <sup>rd</sup> ESO	16	14-15	11 F 5 M	10
Language assistants	3 British 7 American	20-30	9F 1M	5-10

**Table 1.** Information about the participants

## 5.2. Materials and procedure

For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire with three different tasks was made. At the beginning of the questionnaire the students and the language assistants were asked about their personal data: gender, age, native language, level of education and number of years they had been studying the Spanish or the English language.

In the first part of the questionnaire the participants had to translate 19 sentences from Spanish into English (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO), or from English to Spanish (language assistants). The sentences contained the most basic uses of *ser* and *estar* and their English counterparts. Apart from *ser* and *estar*, the verb *tener* was also introduced into the questionnaire because it can either be translated into English as 'to have' or as 'to be'.

Following the translation part, the participants were given six pairs of sentences involving the use of *ser* and *estar* with an adjective. They had to state if the meaning of each sentence changed when the adjective was used with *ser* and *estar* respectively. Spanish has a lot of such examples, and for the purpose of this study we chose five very frequent adjectives (*listo*, *aburrido*, *malo*, *attento*, and *rico*) and one that is less common (*católico*) (see Tables 3 and 4).

The last part of the questionnaire was a multiple choice translation exercise. The participants were given English sentences and had to circle the Spanish translation that they found most acceptable for each sentence. The participants were given fifteen minutes for the first two tasks and then a minute and a half for each multiple choice task.

### 5.3. Results and data analysis

#### 5.3.1. ESO students

##### A) TRANSLATION TASK

In the translation part the most difficult sentences were the ones in which students had to translate the verb *tener*, and most of the students translated it as 'to have'. The results of this part of the questionnaire are presented in Table 2. The students made mistakes such as e.g. direct translation into English, the choice of wrong tense or verb, or a mistake in vocabulary. There were two sentences (see Appendix, translation task, sentences 15 and 17) in which *tener* had to be translated into English as 'to have', and three sentences (see Appendix, translation task, sentences 4, 10, 18) in which the same verb had to be translated as 'to be'. Nine students (56%) translated *tendré veinte cinco años* as 'I will have twenty five years'. A lot of students in both classes also translated *tenía sed* as 'have/had thirst' or as one of the following: 'I wanted water', 'I needed water', and 'I was dry'.

Type of mistake	2 <sup>nd</sup> ESO (N = 26)	3 <sup>rd</sup> ESO (N = 16)
Direct translation	15	16
Wrong tense/verb	22	15
Vocabulary mistake	20	9

**Table 2.** Types of mistakes in the translation part for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO

As Table 2 shows, 15 out of 26 students (53%) in 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO translated some of the sentences literally, while 22 students (84%) made mistakes in grammar, mostly regarding tenses, and 20 students (76%) made a vocabulary mistake. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO only five students translated all the sentences correctly regarding the copula change but they still made some mistakes regarding tenses or vocabulary. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO everybody translated literally the sentence *Al final tenías razón* as 'You had reason', sometimes not even translating the word *razón*. They made fewer grammar mistakes than the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO but everybody translated the sentence

*Después de correr 10 km tenía mucha sed* as 'After running for 10 km I had thirst'. For some of the students this was the only grammatical mistake in the whole exercise.

B) ADJECTIVES WITH A CHANGE IN MEANING

In this task the participants were given a total of six pairs of sentences containing an adjective used with *ser* and *estar*. In each pair the meaning of the expression changes even though the adjective remains the same. We chose the most frequent adjectives for this task, or at least those that are learned in the first two years of studying Spanish as a foreign language. A less frequent adjective was also added to the list to see how the students would interpret the less frequent half of the pair. The hypothesis was that Spanish natives would not have problems in illustrating the change in meaning in each pair. The results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO are presented in Table 3. Overall the students were able to explain the meaning of *ser* + adjective construction without any problems, but the meaning of *estar* + adjective part proved to be difficult for some of them. As expected, they struggled most with the third pair *es/está católico* 'to be catholic' / 'to be ill'. A total of 12 (75%) students never heard the expression *está católico* or they did not explain it correctly. The construction *es católico* refers to religion, meaning that one is Catholic, whereas *está católico* refers to one's wellbeing and is used only in the negative form and with negative implication. It is a somewhat obsolete construction; all the teachers were familiar with it but not the students.

Aux + adj pair	Mistaken the meaning of <i>ser</i> + adj.	Mistaken the meaning of <i>estar</i> + adj.	Never heard one of the pair	Stated there is a change in meaning, but failed to explain it	Stated there is no change in meaning
<i>Ser/estar listo</i> 'to be clever' / 'to be ready'	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Ser/estar aburrido</i> 'to be boring' / 'to be bored'	2	2	1	1	1
<i>Ser/(no) estar católico</i> 'to be catholic' / 'to be ill'	0	9	3	0	1
<i>Ser/estar malo</i> 'to be naughty' / 'to be ill'	0	1	0	0	1
<i>Ser/estar atento</i> 'to be careful' / 'to pay attention'	0	0	5	1	1



<i>Ser/estar rico</i> 'to be rich' / 'to be delicious'	1	0	0	0	1
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Table 3. Types of mistakes – 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO

One of the students said that all of the pairs meant the same regardless of whether they were used with *ser* or *estar*, and only one student got all the meanings right.

Table 4 illustrates the results of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO. Seven (26%) students have never heard the expression (*no*) *está católico*, and four students (15%) never heard the expression *ser/estar atento*. Four students (15%) explained all the meanings correctly, which is unusual compared to 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO where only one student achieved this result.

Aux + adj pair	Mistaken the meaning of <i>ser</i> + adj.	Mistaken the meaning of <i>estar</i> + adj.	Never heard one of the pair	Stated there is a change in meaning, but failed to explain it	Stated there is no change in meaning
<i>Ser/estar listo</i> 'to be clever' / 'to be ready'	2	2	1	2	1
<i>Ser/estar aburrido</i> 'to be boring' / 'to be bored'	1	2	2	3	0
<i>Ser/estar católico</i> 'to be catholic' / 'to be ill'	0	4	7	4	3
<i>Ser/estar malo</i> 'to be naughty' / 'to be ill'	0	0	1	5	0
<i>Ser/estar atento</i> 'to be careful' / 'to pay attention'	0	0	4	4	2
<i>Ser/estar rico</i> 'to be rich' / 'to be delicious'	0	0	2	4	0

Table 4. Types of mistakes – 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO

### C) MULTIPLE CHOICE EXERCISE

In the final, third part of the questionnaire, the students were given eight English sentences and had to circle the Spanish translation that was most acceptable to them. The first sentence (see Appendix, multiple choice task) was deliberately put in passive voice so students had to choose between forming

the passive voice with *ser* or *estar* and a sentence in the active voice. As Figure 1 shows, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO 14 students (87%) chose the passive form with *ser*, and two (13%) of them chose the active sentence. Nobody chose a passive sentence with *estar*. Figure 2 shows the results of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO. In that class 14 students (54%) chose a passive sentence with *ser*, three (11%) of them chose a passive sentence with *estar* and nine (35%) of them opted for an active sentence.



Figure 1. Passive voice formation (3<sup>rd</sup> ESO)



Figure 2. Passive voice formation (2<sup>nd</sup> ESO)

In sentence 2 the students had to choose the most acceptable way to express marital status. Spanish grammar books usually state that the use of *ser* and *estar* in expressing marital status is interchangeable, yet few people would ever say *ser casado* 'to be married' in everyday conversation. *Soy casado* refers to the quality of being married, and it would be translated as 'I am a married man', while *estar casado* emphasizes the current state of being married. Hence, it is correct to use both constructions but most Spanish people use *estar* with adjectives *casado/a* 'married', *divorciado/a* 'divorced', and *soltero/a* 'single', and *ser* with *viuda/o*

'widow/er'. In every legal document in Spain people have to state their civil status (*estado civil*), and from the expression itself one can conclude which verb to use in such a situation. Most Spanish people say that the expression *ser casado* sounds very unnatural to them and they would never use it. The results from the questionnaire also speak in favor of the *estar* +adjective construction. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO, 14 students (87%) chose *está soltera* and only two (13%) *es soltera*. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO, 25 students (96%) circled *está soltera* and only one circled *es soltera*.

In sentence 3 the students had to choose the most acceptable expression of date. The options were *es/estamos a/tenemos 14 de Mayo*. Regarding the use of *ser* and *estar* with the dates, both are acceptable; *ser* is to be used as a rule but *estar a* in this sense is largely used in informal and everyday conversation. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO, 12 students (87%) circled *es 14 de Mayo* and four (25%) of them circled *estamos a 14 de Mayo*. Nobody circled the third option. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO 21 (80%) students chose *es 14 de Mayo* and five (19%) of them chose *estamos a 14 de Mayo*.

Sentences 4, 5, and 8 involved adjectives that are exclusively used either with *ser* or *estar*, and may thus be considered as fixed expressions. It is correct to say: *es consciente* 's/he is aware', not *está consciente* because it refers to one's consciousness; *está muerto* 'he is dead' and not *es muerto*, and also *está claro* 'it's obvious' and not *es claro*. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO, 15 (94%) students circled *es conciente*, and only one circled *está consciente* (6%). However, all of the students unmistakably circled *está muerto* and *está claro*. The results in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO were comparable with those in the 3<sup>rd</sup>: 25 (96%) students circled *es consciente* and only one (4%) circled *tiene consciencia*, which is not considered as acceptable. A total of 25 students (96%) chose *está muerto* and there was only one who opted for *es muerto*. All of the students chose *está claro*.

The famous saying 'to be or not to be' in sentence 6 should be translated into Spanish as *ser o no ser*, while the expression *está a* in sentence 7 is used to express distance. All of the students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO chose the right translation for both expressions. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO however, 24 students circled *ser o no ser*, one circled *ser o no estar* as correct, and one chose *estar o no estar*. With regard to the distance marker, 25 students chose *está a...*, and only one chose *es a...* The option *hay 534 km entre Madrid y Sevilla* 'There are 534 km between Madrid and Seville' is correct but it is considered rather formal and Spanish people would not use it in everyday conversation.

Fixed expression with <i>ser</i> ( <i>es consciente, ser o no ser</i> )	Fixed expression with <i>estar</i> ( <i>está soltera, está muerto, está claro</i> )	Fixed expression with <i>tener</i> ( <i>tener razón</i> )
3	1	1

**Table 5.** Mistakes in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> ESO with fixed expressions containing *ser, estar* and *tener*

### 5.3.2. Language assistants

## A) TRANSLATION TASK

In the first part of the questionnaire, language assistants did not have many problems with grammar or vocabulary mistakes. However, they made some mistakes regarding the choice of *ser* and *estar*. The types of mistakes are presented in Table 6. The most frequent mistakes were made in sentences 13 and 19 (see Appendix, translation task). The two possible translations for the sentence *The windows are made from glass* are 'Las ventanas son de vidrio', or 'Las ventanas están hechas de vidrio'. Five participants (50%) chose the expression *están hechas*, two of them (20%) wrote *son de*, and three of the assistants (30%) translated the sentence using a mixed expression *son hechas de*. In sentence 6 a lot of them confused the use of *ser* and *estar* to talk about location. In this sentence – *The World Championship in basketball will be in Spain* – the verb *ser* has to be used because it has the meaning of 'to be held' or 'to take place'. However, the participants were divided on this issue: an equal number of them – four (40%) – chose *ser* and *estar* respectively, while two (20%) used the expression *tener lugar* ('take place'). As for the expression of age in sentence 4 (*Next year I will be 25*), four of the assistants translated it using the verb *cumplir* which would correspond to 'I will turn 25'. Six participants (60%) chose the target verb *tener*. Overall, eight out of 10 assistants made a mistake regarding the choice of verbs in the translation part of the questionnaire.

Type of mistake	Language assistants (N = 10)
Mistake in the choice of <i>ser</i>	0
Mistake in the choice of <i>estar</i>	4
Wrong verb or expression	4

**Table 6.** Types of mistakes in the translation part for language assistants

## B) ADJECTIVES WITH A CHANGE IN MEANING

In this part, the most common reply was that the difference in meaning lies in the distinction between permanent and temporary characteristics. Only two of the assistants made no mistakes in explaining the differences in meaning. The example with most mistakes was *es/está católico* but this is not surprising given that even the native speakers of Spanish did not know the difference or were unfamiliar with one of the two expressions. Seven participants (70%) explained the difference still relying on the permanent/temporary notion, questioning the possibility of being temporarily religious. One participant stated that there is a difference in meaning but failed to explain it. The first and the last sentence caused least trouble because these expressions are quite common in everyday conversation. It is curious how the pair with the adjective *atento*, which is quite common, presented problems for language assistants as well: two of them failed to explain the difference in meaning while one stated there is no change in meaning.

This adjective was also problematic for students. As may be seen in 5.3.1., four of them, even though they are native speakers of Spanish, claimed never to have heard the expression *ser/estar atento*.

Aux + adj pair	Mistaken the meaning of <i>ser</i> + adj.	Mistaken the meaning of <i>estar</i> + adj.	Never heard one of the pair	Stated there is a change in meaning, but failed to explain it	Stated there is no change in meaning
<i>Ser/estar lista</i> 'to be clever' / 'to be ready'	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Ser/estar aburrido</i> 'to be boring' / 'to be bored'	0	2	0	0	0
<i>Ser/estar católica</i> 'to be catholic' / 'to be ill'	0	7	0	1	0
<i>Ser/estar malo</i> 'to be naughty' / 'to be ill'	0	5	0	0	0
<i>Ser/estar atento</i> 'to be careful' / 'to pay attention'	0	0	0	2	1
<i>Ser/estar rico</i> 'to be rich' / 'to be delicious'	0	0	0	0	0

**Table 7.** Types of mistakes – language assistants

### C) MULTIPLE CHOICE EXERCISES

The passive voice in Spanish is rarely used so the most suitable option would be to translate it with an active sentence. In English, however, passive voice is quite common and frequently used. This fact most certainly influenced the choice that language assistants, as native speakers of English, made with regard to sentence 1 in the third part of the questionnaire (see Appendix, multiple choice task). As can be seen in Figure 3, only two of the assistants (20%) opted for an active sentence, seven chose a passive sentence with *ser* (70%), which is also acceptable, and two (20%) chose a passive sentence with *estar*, which is not acceptable in this example. In sentence 2, which regards the expression of marital status, five participants (50%) opted for *está soltera* 'She is single', which was the correct expression, and five (50%) chose *es soltera*. With regard to the expression of date in sentence 3, the participants' opinion was again divided right down the middle: half of the assistants chose the expression *estamos a...*, and the other half circled *hoy es...* Much like the students, none of the assistants opted for the third translation involving the verb *tener*.



Figure 3. Passive voice formation (language assistants)

Examples with adjectives that are exclusively used either with *ser* or with *estar* presented a far greater problem for language assistants than they did for the Spanish students. When talking about somebody's awareness (sentence 4), the only possible option is *está consciente*. However, only three language assistants (30%) circled this answer. Five (50%) circled *es consciente* and two (20%) chose *tiene consciencia*. As for sentence 5, eight assistants (80%) opted for the expression *está muerto* and two of them (20%) made a mistake and circled *es muerto*. The expression *to be or not to be* in sentence 6 was correctly translated as 'ser o no ser' by eight participants (80%), while two assistants (20%) circled the wrong translation 'estar o no estar'. In sentence 7, eight participants (80%) would express distance with *está a...*, which is most commonly used, although the version with the verb *haber* is also acceptable, and one assistant (10%) actually chose it. The expression *es a...* does not exist in Spanish but one of the assistants circled this option as well. The correct translation of the last sentence is *está claro*, and half of the assistants chose this expression, while the other half circled the wrong translation *es claro*.

Fixed expression with <i>ser</i> ( <i>es consciente, ser o no ser</i> )	Fixed expression with <i>estar</i> ( <i>está soltera, está muerto, está claro</i> )	Fixed expression with <i>tener</i> ( <i>tener razón</i> )
7	5	2

Table 8. Mistakes in the *ser/estar* use with fixed expressions – language assistants

#### 5.4. Discussion

In the questionnaire for this study, the most basic uses of the auxiliary verbs *ser* and *estar* were taken into account, in order to illustrate the most common uses of the two Spanish copulas and how they relate to the use of the English copula *be*. The results of Spanish students for the translation part were not surprising. Even though this seemed to be a fairly easy task at first glance, because the three verbs – *ser*, *estar* and *tener* (which we also added in this task) – in most cases translate as 'to be', the tendency for literal translation at this stage of learning English as a second language proved to be very strong. The most striking examples of literal

translation were expressions that are actually very frequent in use: 'I will have 25 years' instead of 'I will be 25', 'I had thirst' instead of 'I am thirsty', and 'You had reason' instead of 'You were right'.

In the second part the students had to state the change in meaning that occurs when a particular adjective is used with *ser* or *estar*. The results of this task did not coincide with our hypothesis, namely that 14- and 15-year-old native speakers of Spanish should not have any problems with this part since all the pairs we used, except one, are those that non-native learners come across in the first two years of learning Spanish as a foreign language. However, apart from the first and last pair (see Appendix, the task with adjective pairs), which are widely used in everyday conversation, most students had problems with at least one pair. As the results show, the most difficult pair was *ser/(no) estar católico* because the phrase is somewhat out-dated. All the students protested that the expression *(no) estar católico* did not exist in Spanish at all, though the teachers assured them that it did. This, however, is almost certainly related to their age, since older people tend to be familiar with it. The results might have been better if the students had been given this sentence in a wider context but then the meaning would be inferred from the context rather than from the actual expression.

In the last task, the students had to choose the most acceptable Spanish translation for eight English sentences. The most curious ones were those that involved the passive voice, and sentences where both *ser* and *estar* were acceptable to some degree. With regard to the sentence with the passive voice, the dilemma was between the passive voice with the verb *ser* and an active sentence. Most of the students chose the option with *ser*, but some of them chose the active sentence, which sounds more natural in Spanish.

Another interesting case was the sentence that contained an expression of date *Es/estamos a/tenemos 14 de Mayo*, in which the first two options are correct. The first one is a general rule, and the second one is more common in everyday use. With such examples, our aim was to see whether the tendency would be to use strictly grammatically correct sentences or those that are more frequent in everyday conversation. Interestingly, the results were in favor of grammar rules, even though the assignment clearly stated the participants should choose the answer they considered most acceptable and not the one that is considered to be grammatically correct (since these two things often do not coincide).

As for language assistants, they did not have many problems with the translation part. Most problems were caused by some fixed expressions such as *son de/estar hecho de* 'to be made of', and with expressing different types of location correctly. As stated in (21), the auxiliary *estar* is used to express the physical location of an entity, e.g. *Zagreb está en Croacia* 'Zagreb is in Croatia', however sentence 6 in the translation part (see Appendix) conveyed the meaning of 'to be held' or 'to take place' and therefore required the verb *ser*.

As expected, the most demanding task was the one that involved a change in meaning. Based on their answers it is clear that the participants were strongly guided by the permanent vs. temporary dichotomy in their choice of auxiliary. For them too the *estar* + adjective construction was more difficult to explain.

The multiple choice task showed they were not familiar with some fixed expressions, i.e. with the tendency of certain adjectives to be used with one verb exclusively (e.g. *está claro*, *está muerto*). We see this as a possible consequence of learning the language in interaction with other people and relying on the utterances of native speakers, thus being able to maintain a conversation but failing to produce a correct expression in isolation.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to illustrate the similarities and differences in use between Spanish auxiliaries *ser* and *estar*, and their English counterpart *be*. An overview of the auxiliary verb systems in these two languages has shown that their description in various grammars and textbooks is quite similar. As Silva-Corvalán (2014: 220) points out,

*“Ser and estar overlap with English be in many of their uses, and their choice in predicate adjectives depends upon lexico-syntactic and pragmatic factors.”*

We therefore wanted to see how well native speakers of Spanish would cope with the translation of auxiliaries into English, as well as with the differences in meaning that stem from the use of either *ser* or *estar*. To see how this process works in the opposite direction, we also included in our research a group of native speakers of English who have been learning Spanish for at least five years.

The results we obtained for the two groups may be considered as indicative and most certainly highlight the complexity of use of the two Spanish auxiliaries: in using *ser* and *estar* most native speakers said they weren't able to explain the difference between them through grammatical rules; the choice of one verb over another was simply a matter of intuition. Hence, one would expect that this part of Spanish syntax would be one of the most difficult parts to grasp for non-native speakers, but not for native ones, or as Crespo (1946: 45) stated:

*“El caso es que los mismos nativos españoles cometen errores garrafales en otros puntos de su propio idioma, pero nunca tienen dificultades en estos verbos.”<sup>8</sup>*

However, our results indicate that even native speakers of Spanish sometimes have trouble in deciding which of the two auxiliaries they should use, and in doing so they mostly rely on their intuition. This may be due to the fact that their choice depends on pragmatic factors, namely assessing the actual conversational situation and a wider context. Non-native speakers on the other hand tend to rely more on the existing grammatical rules about the use of auxiliaries, primarily on the basic (semantically grounded) distinction between permanent and temporary features. For instance, in expressions of age, 60% of language assistants correctly

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<sup>8</sup> *“The native Spanish speakers make tremendous errors in other instances of their language yet they never fail with the use of *ser* and *estar*.”*



used the verb *tener* in their translation, probably relying on their knowledge of the appropriate grammar rule; at the same time, 56% of Spanish students opted for the non-target verb *have* in the same type of construction, i.e. applied a copy mechanism from the source language.

We may conclude that the two groups of Spanish students, even though involved in a Spanish-English immersion program for two and three years respectively, still do not show any marked influence of English in their use of *ser* and *estar*. They had minor problems with adjectives which may occur with both copulas, especially when in combination with *estar*, but they exhibited no such problems with adjectives which occur with only one of the copulas. The reason for this may simply be the length of their exposure to English in the bilingual program, which may still be too short for any significant influence to occur.

English native speakers, as expected, had most problems with adjectives which may appear with both *ser* and *estar*, as well as with those which appear in fixed expressions with only of the auxiliaries.

It would be interesting to repeat this research in the final year of the immersion program to see if the results would be comparable to those in this study – which would imply that English remains weaker in its influence over dominant Spanish – or if the influence of English would be visible e.g. in the stronger tendency of one auxiliary to be used over the other.

## Appendix

The following questionnaire was given to Spanish students and American and British language assistants. The translation part was different for the two groups in that native English speakers had to translate 19 sentences into Spanish, and native Spanish speakers had to translate them into English. The second and the third part were the same for both groups.

Personal data:

Age:

Native language:

Level of education:

Years of studying Spanish as foreign language:

Are you a simultaneous Spanish-English bilingual: YES/ NO

### Translate the following sentences into Spanish:

1. Inés is my best friend.
2. She is from Madrid.
3. Barcelona is the capital of Catalonia.
4. Next year I will be 25.
5. She is an English teacher.
6. The Basketball World Cup will be in Spain.
7. It is sunny today, so we can go to the beach.
8. The food is cold.

9. She is talking to the boss.
10. After running 10 kilometers, I was really thirsty.
11. These are my books.
12. Where is the library?
13. The windows are made from glass.
14. María is the tallest girl in the class.
15. I have two younger brothers.
16. When is your birthday?
17. We have a lot of homework for tomorrow.
18. You were right in the end.
19. There are 25 students in the class, but today there are only 14 students.

**Translate the following sentences into English:**

1. Inés es mi mejor amiga.
2. Ella es de Madrid.
3. Barcelona es la capital de Cataluña.
4. El próximo año voy a tener 25 años.
5. Ella es profesora de inglés.
6. El campeonato mundial de baloncesto será en España.
7. Hoy hace sol así que podemos ir a la playa.
8. La comida está fría.
9. Ella está hablando con el jefe.
10. Después de correr diez kilómetros tenía mucha sed.
11. Éstos son mis libros.
12. ¿Dónde está la biblioteca?
13. Las ventanas son de vidrio.
14. María es la chica más alta de toda la clase.
15. Tengo dos hermanos menores.
16. ¿Cuándo es tu cumpleaños?
17. Tenemos muchos deberes para mañana.
18. Al final tenías razón.
19. En la clase son 25 alumnos, pero hoy están sólo 14 alumnos.

**Look at the a) and b) sentences in each pair. If you think there is any difference in meaning between them, explain briefly what it is. If you think there is no difference in meaning, state so:**

- a) Ella es lista.
- b) Ella está lista.
- a) Juan está aburrido.
- b) Juan es aburrido.
- a) María es católica.
- b) Esta semana María no está católica.
- a) Luis es un chico malo.
- b) Luis estuvo malo durante dos semanas.

- a) Nicolás es muy atento con toda la gente.
  - b) Nicolás está atento en todas las clases.
- 
- a) Su padre es rico.
  - b) La paella está rica.

**For each English sentence circle the Spanish translation that you find most acceptable:**

1. The window was broken by the firemen.
  - a) La ventana fue rota por los bomberos.
  - b) La ventana estaba rota por los bomberos.
  - c) Los bomberos rompieron la ventana.
  
2. She is single.
  - a) Ella es soltera.
  - b) Ella está soltera.
  - c) Ella es sola.
  
3. Today is 14<sup>th</sup> May.
  - a) Hoy es 14 de Mayo.
  - b) Hoy estamos a 14 de Mayo.
  - c) Hoy tenemos 14 de Mayo.
  
4. She is aware of her mistakes.
  - a) Ella es consciente de sus errores.
  - b) Ella está consciente de sus errores.
  - c) Tiene consciencia de sus errores.
  
5. He is dead.
  - a) Él es muerto.
  - b) Él está muerto.
  - c) Él murió.
  
6. To be or not to be.
  - a) ser o no ser
  - b) ser o no estar
  - c) estar o no estar
  
7. Madrid is 534 kilometers from Seville.
  - a) Madrid está a 534 km de Sevilla.
  - b) Madrid es a 534 km de Sevilla.
  - c) Hay 534 km entre Madrid y Sevilla.
  
8. It is obvious that you don't understand the question.
  - a) Es claro que no entiendes la pregunta.
  - b) Está claro que no entiendes la pregunta.
  - c) Tengo claro que no entiendes la pregunta.

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## Međujezični utjecaj pomoćnih glagola u španjolskome i engleskome – *ser, estar* i *be*

U radu se donosi istraživanje mogućeg međujezičnog utjecaja pomoćnih glagola u španjolskome i engleskome kod učenika, izvornih govornika španjolskoga koji uče engleski kao drugi jezik. U prvom se dijelu daje pregled dvaju sustava pomoćnih glagola, kao i postojećih teorijskih pristupa distribuciji i uporabi španjolskih pomoćnih glagola *ser* i *estar* 'biti' te se utvrđuje kako se njihova uporaba u mnogim slučajevima preklapa s uporabom engleskog pomoćnog glagola *be*. Željelo se stoga ispitati pokazuju li izvorni govornici španjolskoga utjecaj engleskoga pri prevodenju rečenica s tim glagolima, a osobito s obzirom na izbor i razlike u značenju ondje gdje je moguća uporaba oba španjolska glagola. Također se želio ispitati i moguć utjecaj španjolskoga kod njihovih predavača, koji su svi odrasli izvorni govornici engleskoga.

U istraživanje su stoga bile uključene dvije skupine učenika, izvornih govornika španjolskoga, koji pohađaju drugu i treću godinu dvojezičnog španjolsko-engleskog programa u srednjoj školi Victor García de la Concha u Villaviciosa, Španjolska, te skupina od deset predavača, izvornih govornika engleskoga, koji španjolski uče od pet do deset godina. Učenici, njih ukupno 42, u dobi su od 14 i 15 godina te engleski uče između osam i deset godina. Istraživanje je provedeno putem anonimnog upitnika koji se sastoji od tri dijela. U prvom je dijelu bilo potrebno prevesti 19 rečenica sa španjolskog na engleski i obratno (ovisno o skupini), a rečenice su uključivale izraze kod kojih najčešće dolazi do međujezičnog utjecaja: izražavanje godina, lokacije, percepcije i sl. Drugi dio sastojao se od parova rečenica u kojima se isti pridjev pojavljuje sa *ser* ili s *estar* te se ovisno o tome mijenja značenje cijele rečenice. U trećem dijelu ispitanicima je bilo ponuđeno osam engleskih rečenica te po tri prijevoda na španjolski za svaku rečenicu, a ispitanici su trebali odabrati onaj prijevod koji im je najprihvatljiviji.

Dobiveni rezultati pokazuju da su čak i izvorni govornici španjolskoga u nekim slučajevima imali problema pri odabiru ispravnog pomoćnog glagola u španjolskome, osobito u situacijama kada je moguća uporaba oba glagola, te su se pritom uglavnom vodili intuicijom, a manje pravilima koje propisuju gramatike španjolskoga. S druge strane, izvorni govornici engleskoga pri odabiru španjolskih pomoćnih glagola vodili su se svojim znanjem određenog pravila, a prvenstveno semantički utemeljenom razlikom između izražavanja trajnih (*ser*) i privremenih svojstava (*estar*). Tako je primjerice, za izražavanje dobi 60% predavača ispravno upotrijebilo glagol *tener* u prijevodu s engleskog na španjolski (glagol *tener* bio je uključen u neke primjere upravo zbog mogućnosti njegova prevodenja i engleskim glagolom *be* 'biti' i glagolom *have* 'imati'); u isto je vrijeme 56% učenika odabralo engleski glagol *have* 'imati' u prijevodu iste konstrukcije sa španjolskog na engleski, što je negativni transfer.

Čini se stoga da učenici, iako uključeni u dvojezični španjolsko-engleski program, još uvijek ne pokazuju bitnijeg utjecaja engleskoga kada je riječ o uporabi pomoćnih glagola *ser* i *estar*. Moguće istraživanje provedeno na kraju njihova dvojezičnog školovanja pokazalo bi postoji li eventualni pomak po tom pitanju ili je takav međujezični utjecaj ograničen na simultane dvojezične govornike, najčešće u okružju engleskoga kao dominantnog jezika.

**Ključne riječi:** međujezični utjecaj, pomoćni glagoli, *ser, estar*, španjolski, engleski