

On the aspect of space: The case of PLACE in Italian and Spanish*

Christina Tortora

CUNY (College of Staten Island and The Graduate Center)

0. Introduction

Based on a subtle interpretive difference between semantically related pairs of locative prepositional phrases in Romance, I argue that space, much like entities and events, are linguistically conceptualizable as either bounded or unbounded. This work follows up on Tortora (2005) (which began to look at this phenomenon in Italian) by examining some data from Spanish and providing a cross-linguistic comparison with Italian. The paper is organized as follows: in section 1, I give a brief overview of the Jackendovian conceptual categories PATH and PLACE (as subcategories of the supercategory SPACE), the notion of (un)boundedness of PATH, and the idea that (un)boundedness is also relevant to the category PLACE. In section 2, I give an overview of PP data from Italian, examined in Tortora (2005), which confirm that PLACE (which represents regions of any dimensionality (including 2D and 3D)), much like PATH (1D), is linguistically conceptualizable as either bounded or unbounded, and that this aspect of PLACE is encoded syntactically. In this part, I sketch a possible syntactic analysis for the data under investigation. Then, in section 3, I consider similar PP data from Spanish, and discuss semantic and syntactic similarities and differences with their Italian counterparts. In section 4 I conclude.

1. Bounded PATH, bounded PLACE

Here I review the idea that PATH is linguistically conceptualizable as bounded or unbounded (Jackendoff 1983). Given this possibility for PATH, I introduce the question of whether boundedness is also relevant to the category PLACE (despite the fact that it differs from PATH in that the latter represents linear space, while the former represents two- or three-dimensional space). Preliminary linguistic data from Italian suggests that PLACE is in fact conceptualizable as such.

* I am indebted to so many wonderful people for taking the time to discuss data with me, including Paola Benincà, José Camacho, Federico Damonte, Federico Ghegin, Roberta Maschi, Jairo Nunes, Rafael Nuñez-Cedeño, Francisco Ordóñez, Andrea Padovan, Nicoletta Penello, Acrisio Pires, Jean-Yves Pollock, Cecilia Poletto, Liliana Sanchez, Cristina Schmitt, Laura Sgarioto, Marina Tortora, and Raffaella Zanuttini. I also thank Paola Benincà and Marcel den Dikken for reading and (very helpfully) commenting on previous versions of this work.

To put the discussion in context, consider Jackendoff's proposal that the conceptual categories PATH and PLACE underlie locative PPs (where (1a) contains both PATH and PLACE categories, while (1b) contains the PLACE category (examples from Jackendoff)):

- (1) a. *The mouse ran into the room.*
 [Path TO ([Place IN ([Thing ROOM])])]
 b. *The mouse is under the table.*
 [Place UNDER ([Thing TABLE])]

The idea that PATH and PLACE are two different categories has most recently been pursued (and executed in elaborate syntactic structures) by Koopman (1997) and den Dikken (2003), who argue that the syntax of locative PPs in Dutch can only be understood if such PPs involve PATH and/or PLACE as projecting syntactic categories (see section 2).

Now, for the present purposes, we must consider Jackendoff's (1983) observation that the representation of PATH does not necessarily involve motion, or 'traversal' of the path. Contrast, for example, (2a) with (2b) (from Jackendoff 1983:168):

- (2) a. *John ran into the house.*
 b. *The highway extends from Denver to Indianapolis.*

While both (2a) and (2b) involve a path, only the former denotes an eventuality that involves any temporal succession (i.e., (2b) is a state, and not an event, in Bach's 1986 terms). Crucially, however, it is important to note that paths which participate in states (i.e., non-motion eventualities) are still conceptualized as either bounded or unbounded. Compare the stative sentence in (2b), which contains a bounded path, with the stative example in (3b), which involves an unbounded path (much like the event example in (3a); examples from Jackendoff):

- (3) a. *The train rambled along the river (for an hour).*
 b. *The sidewalk goes around the tree.*

Sentences such as those in (2b) and (3b) thus illustrate that the linguistic concept of *path*, which is a kind of space, does not have to be associated with any temporal succession. These examples further illustrate, though, that even such non-temporally organized paths are treated

as either bounded or unbounded (regardless of the fact that they denote states). Thus, we have evidence that PATH, a kind of space, is conceptualized as bounded or unbounded (independent of whether the eventuality that it is a part of is stative or not).

A question which arises, then, is whether the category PLACE (which is the other type of linguistic space) is likewise conceptualizable as bounded or unbounded. If so, this would mean that any PLACE specified in a stative eventuality (such as (1b), for example) is either bounded or unbounded, much like PATH (which is bounded in (2b) and unbounded in (3b)). If this idea is on the right track, what we would find is that boundedness is relevant not only to *entities* (mass vs. count) and *events* (undelimited/delimited), but to a third category, *space* (in the spirit of Jackendoff 1991), which encompasses both PATH and PLACE. Before I discuss PP data from Italian (and Spanish) which indicate this idea is right, I would like to briefly introduce some Italian data from Cinque (1971) (and subsequently found in Vanelli 1995) which already point in this direction.

As Cinque (1971) notes, Italian has two morphemes for “here” (and two for “there”): *qui* and *qua* “here” (and *lì* and *là* “there”). For the most part, *qui* and *qua* can be used in the same environment (the same holds for *lì* and *là*). So, if one wishes to express something like “Put the book here” either morpheme (*qui* or *qua*) would be appropriate:

- (4) a. *Metti il libro qui.*
 b. *Metti il libro qua.*

Despite the grammaticality of both (4a) and (4b), however, Cinque notes that *qui* (like *lì*) denotes a space which is ‘punctual’ while *qua* (like *là*) denotes a general, ‘uncircumscribed’ region. As such, there are certain circumstances where use of *qui* (and *lì*) will yield ungrammaticality, as in (5b) (data from Cinque 1971):

- (5) a. *Girava **qua e là** senza meta.*
 he/she roamed **qua** and **là** without any purpose
 b. **Girava **qui e lì** senza meta.*

The sentence in (5b) is unacceptable because roaming around requires open-ended (uncircumscribed) space, something which the morphemes *qui* and *lì* do not denote. And as mentioned above, while there are circumstances under which either (set of) morpheme(s) can be used, the choice of one (*qua / là*) over the other (*qui / lì*) yields entirely different spatial

(aspectual) interpretations. Consider in this regard another example from Cinque (1971):

- (6) a. *I libri erano sparsi **qua e là**.*
 the books were dispersed **qua** and **là**
- b. *I libri erano sparsi **qui e lì**.*
 the books were dispersed **qui** and **lì**

Specifically, the sentence in (6a) denotes that books were strewed all over the place, while the sentence in (6b) denotes that there were books in two defined, distinct points (perhaps two distinct piles of books).

The data from Cinque (1971) thus show us that language does encode two kinds of two- and three-dimensional (i.e., non-linear) space: one which we can characterize as punctual (or bounded), and another which we can encode as non-punctual (or unbounded).

In the following section, I will show that language does not restrict this distinction to single lexical items (so, the distinction is not merely encoded in the lexicon). Rather, this distinction shows up in PP syntax, suggesting that aspect (i.e., (un)boundedness) is found among the extended projections of lexical prepositions as well.

2. Prepositions in Italian

As observed by Rizzi (1988), there are certain (what I will term here ‘lexical’) prepositions in Italian (e.g., *dietro* “behind” or *dentro* “inside”) that may occur with or without the grammatical preposition *a*. This can be seen in (7a) vs. (7b), respectively (examples from Rizzi 1988:522):¹

- (7) a. *Gianni era nascosto **dietro** all' albero.*
 G. was hidden **behind** at the tree
- b. *Gianni era nascosto **dietro** l' albero.*
 G. was hidden **behind** the tree

¹ For convenience, I gloss the Italian preposition *a* as “at” (in spite of the fact that, depending on its use, it can be translated into English either as “at” (*essere a scuola* “be at school”), as “to” (*andare a scuola* “go to school”), as “in” (*abitare a Londra* “live in London”), or as a prepositional complementizer (*prova a cantare* “try to sing”). Thus, the translation “at” is by no means intended to suggest that in the particular constructions under investigation in the text, *a* actually means what *at* means in English.

I have not provided glosses for this set of examples, because their subtle difference in meaning requires some discussion, which I engage in to some extent here (for issues not touched upon here, including a discussion of the question of which lexical prepositions may occur optionally with the grammatical preposition *a*, see Tortora 2005).

P. Benincà notes (p.c.) that (7a) can refer to an event that takes place in a ‘wider’ space, while (7b) can only refer to an event taking place in a ‘punctual’ space. In what follows, I present and discuss various pairs of examples with different lexical prepositions which allow us to isolate this semantic difference more precisely.²

2.1 *The lexical preposition dietro*

The examples in (8) isolate the semantic difference between (7a) and (7b) more precisely:

- (8) a. *Vai a giocare/correre dietro a quell'albero.*
 go.2SG at play/run **behind at** that tree
 “Go play/run behind that tree”
- b. **Vai a giocare/correre dietro quell'albero.*
 go.2SG at play/run **behind** that tree

The ungrammaticality of (8b) can be readily understood in light of the semantic difference noted for (7a) and (7b). That is, predicates such as “play” and “run” denote activities that require a wide, open-ended, unbounded space, which is something that the structure in (8a), with the grammatical preposition *a*, denotes. The *a*-less prepositional phrase in (8b), on the other hand, denotes a bounded (or punctual) space, and as such is incompatible with such predicates. Of course, the predicate in (7) (“be hidden”) denotes a state that is compatible either with a wide or a punctual space, which is why both prepositional phrases (with and without *a*) are possible.

Understanding the semantic difference between the two possibilities allows us to grasp another set of examples provided by Rizzi (1988:522) (the interpretation of which he does not discuss):

- (9) a. *Vai dietro al postino, che è appena passato.*
 go.2SG **behind at**.the postman, that is just passed

² Provision of the non-Rizzi examples and interpretations of all of the examples in this section are due to P. Benincà and C. Poletto, whom I thank.

“Go after the postman, he just passed by”

- b. **Vai **dietro** il postino, che è appena passato.*
 go.2SG **behind** the postman, that is just passed

As can be seen by the translation, the salient interpretation of (9a) is that the hearer should pursue the postman; this is highlighted by the phrase “he just passed by” (which explicitly suggests that the postman is moving along). It is precisely the presence of *a*, which denotes an unbounded space (i.e., a space that is allowed to flexibly expand and change shape, size, or dimension), that suggests the postman’s onward movement. The example in (9b), on the other hand, cannot be interpreted as “follow the postman”; that is, the absence of *a* forces an interpretation in which the space behind the postman is bounded (and hence not allowed to expand or change shape or size). This is why adjunction of the phrase “he just passed by” is nonsensical, yielding ungrammaticality.

In this regard, it is worth considering the grammaticality of the *a*-less PP in (9b) without adjunction of the phrase ‘he just passed by’:

- (10) *Vai **dietro** il postino.*
 go.2SG **behind** the postman
 “Go behind the postman”

The sentence in (10) is interpretable (and grammatical) in, say, a picture-taking event, where the hearer is being asked to place himself directly behind the postman in the photo line-up. Again, here we see that the *a*-less PP is compatible with an event (or state) that takes place in a bounded (circumscribed) space.

The above discussion should allow us to grasp the difference in interpretation between the examples in (11a) and (11b) as well, also provided by Rizzi (1988:522):

- (11) a. *Vai **dietro** **a** quella macchina.*
 go.2SG **behind at** that car
 “Get behind that car” (can mean “Follow that car”)
- b. *Vai **dietro** quella macchina.*
 go.2SG **behind** that car
 “Get behind that car”

According to Rizzi, the sentence in (11a) favors an interpretation in which the car is moving (hence the translation “Follow that car”), while that in (11b) favors an interpretation in which the car is stopped. Under the terms being discussed here, this makes sense: if the ‘behind-space’ associated with the complement is interpreted as punctual with the *a*-less PP (11b), then such an event does not lend itself to an interpretation in which the car is moving (which would involve an ever-widening and changing of the space behind the car). The PP with *a*, however, does allow for an interpretation of the behind-space as flexible, or expandable and contractible (unbounded), which is why the event can be interpreted as a ‘following’ event.

To conclude this section on *dietro*: we have seen that the absence of *a* in the PP headed by *dietro* yields an unbounded interpretation, much like we saw with the morphemes *qua* and *là*. Thus, unboundedness of space not only has a lexical realization, but a syntactic reflex as well. As we will see in the following subsection, this phenomenon is not restricted to the lexical preposition *dietro*.

2.2 The lexical preposition *dentro*

The semantic difference between (12a) and (12b) is subtle but discernable:

- (12) a. *Vai **dentro alla** stanza.*
 go.2SG **inside at**.the room
 “Go inside the room”
- b. *Vai **dentro la** stanza.*
 go.2SG **inside** the room

The use of *a* with *dentro* “inside” is preferred if one wishes to refer to the entire internal space of the container (considering all points of the contained space); thus, (12b) is preferred in describing an event in which there is a simple passage from the outside to the inside of the room, without any reference to the internal space of the room (this intuition on the part of the speaker is replicated with similar Spanish data; see section 3 below, discussion of example (25)).

Let us consider some more examples involving *dentro* which highlight which kind of circumstance calls for the presence of *a*, and which kind of circumstance calls for its absence:

- (13) a. *Mettilo **dentro la** scatola.*
 put.2SG.it **inside** the box

“Put it inside the box”

- b. *Guarda bene dentro alla scatola.*

look.2SG well inside at the box

“Take a good look inside the box” (“...maybe you’ll find it in there”)

- c. *Dentro alla mia stanza ci sono delle piante.*

inside at the my room there are of the plants

“Inside my room there are plants around”

Consider (13b) and its translation. Here we have a situation in which the hearer is being asked to consider the box’s entire inner area (which may be obstructed by other objects in it), as the object being looked for could be in any part of that space. In this case, the lexical preposition requires presence of *a* (which allows us to flexibly consider all the space inside the box). This is similar to the case in (13c), where the room is being described as having plants all around in it; thus, the entire inner area of the room is being considered (hence the use of *a*).³ This contrasts with the example in (13a), which does not contain *a*; here instead we have a situation in which the hearer, being asked to place an object inside a box, will naturally have to choose a specific, ‘punctual’ spot inside the box’s inner area.

Before moving on, I would like to consider one final set of examples with *dentro* not considered in Tortora (2005) (and which I owe to C. Poletto, p.c.). Note that the verb *correre* “run” can occur with a PP, yielding either a goal of motion interpretation, or a location of motion interpretation. Here I would like to consider both, beginning with the former. In this regard, consider the examples in (14):

GOAL OF MOTION:

- (14) a. *Corri **dentro al** parco.* (with *a*)

run.2sg inside at the park

“Get into the park”

[NO SPECIFIC POINT IS CONCEPTUALIZED]

³ I would like to tentatively suggest (pending further fieldwork) that the use of *a* in (13c) is facilitated by the plural indefinite ‘figure’ *delle piante* “some plants” (something not noted in Tortora 2005). That is, it may turn out that the nature of ‘figure’ or the ‘ground’ (in the sense of Talmy, e.g., 1983) has an effect on the aspectual interpretation of the space (much like the nature of a complement can affect the aspectual interpretation of an event, such that bare plural arguments, for example, can yield events interpreted as undelimited (cf. *Sue ate apples for hours* vs. *Sue ate the apple in an hour*). In other words, much like (the nature of) a complement may contribute to the aspectual interpretation of an event, so might (the nature of) an argument of a lexical preposition contribute to the aspectual interpretation of space (where a plural (or mass) argument selected by a lexical P may force an interpretation of the space denoted by the lexical P as unbounded, thus forcing the presence of the grammatical P *a*). In this regard, see 2.3 and ex. (16) below.

- b. *Corri dentro il parco.* (without *a*)
 run.2sg inside at.the park
 “Get into the park” [TO A SPECIFIC POINT, EITHER TO THE MIDDLE OF
 IT OR JUST INSIDE, CLOSE TO THE ENTRANCE]

What is noteworthy here is the following: while both (14a) and (14b) denote “Run into the park”, the former (with *a*) is interpreted with no specific point in mind. In contrast, (14b) (without *a*) is interpreted with a specific point in mind (e.g., either the running has to culminate in the middle of the park, or perhaps at a point close to the entrance). Once again, the absence of *a* forces the conceptualization of a point in space, while the presence of *a* allows for an interpretation of the space as uncircumscribed. Note that this distinction is replicated even when this sentence has a location of motion interpretation. In this regard, consider (15):

LOCATED MOTION:

- (15) a. *Corri dentro al parco.* (with *a*)
 “Engage in the activity of running inside the park”
 [WHEREVER YOU WANT]
- b. *Corri dentro il parco.* (without *a*)
 “Engage in the activity of running inside the park”
 [BUT IN A SPECIFIC PLACE, LIKE A TRACK, OR ALONG THE PARK’S PERIMETER]

Thus, while *corri dentro il/al parco* can also mean “engage in the activity of running around inside the park”, (15a) (with *a*) is again interpreted with no specific point in mind (the listener can run around wherever he/she likes). In contrast, (15b) (without *a*) is interpreted with a specific point in mind (e.g., a track, or along the park’s perimeter). Here we again see the absence of *a* forcing the conceptualization of punctual space, where the presence of *a* allows for an interpretation of the space as uncircumscribed.

2.3 *Some speculations on the Italian PP data*

Thus, the presence of *a* in all of the cases above has the effect of allowing for an unbounded interpretation of PLACE. Before proceeding to a syntactic analysis of these data, I would like to note here that this section’s discussion obviously raises a number of questions that remain a matter for future research. One question in particular is what the facts are

concerning other lexical prepositions that optionally take *a*, which I have not discussed (*contro*, *lungo*, *oltre*, *rasente*, *sopra*, *sotto*). If the idea being pursued here is on the right track, then it is predicted that the presence of *a* will affect the aspectual interpretation of the location. Some preliminary data I have collected on *sopra* “over, above” and *sotto* “under” are complex enough to require a thorough (future) investigation; however, I will take advantage of this brief moment to note one interesting fact regarding *sopra*. Consider the following data (not considered in Tortora 2005), provided by N. Penello (p.c.):

- (16) a. *Ho messo la tovaglia sopra al tavolo.* (with *a*)
 put.1sg the tablecloth **over a**.the table
 [THE TABLECLOTH IS SPREAD OUT OVER THE TABLE]
- b. *Ho messo la tovaglia sopra il tavolo.* (without *a*)
 put.1sg the tablecloth **over** the table
 [THE TABLECLOTH IS FOLDED UP ON THE TABLE]

Penello notes that while (16a) (with *a*) indicates that the tablecloth is spread out over the table (which is the canonical state of a tablecloth), the sentence in (16b) (without *a*) indicates, in contrast, that the tablecloth is sitting on the table, all folded up.⁴ It is tempting to align this contrast with all of the others we have seen until now (with *dentro* and *dietro*). That is, we could take these facts to indicate that the presence of *a* in (16a) allows for the interpretation of the table’s space as unbounded, which in turn favors an interpretation of the tablecloth as spread out; the absence of *a*, in contrast, forces an interpretation whereby the table’s space contains a specific point on it, like the park’s inside in (15b), which in turn favors an interpretation of the tablecloth as located in this point (so it is conceptualized in its point-like, folded-up state).⁵ The problem with aligning these facts with those discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2, however, is that not all native speakers share Penello’s interpretation of (16) (but

⁴ I find that the presence vs. absence of the English prepositional modifier *right* yields an identical semantic distinction; consider (i) and (ii), as possible answers to “Where is the tablecloth?”:

- (i) The tablecloth is on the table.
 (ii) The tablecloth is right on the table.

For me, (i) can mean that the tablecloth is spread out on the table (analogously to Penello’s (16a)), while (ii) strongly suggests that the tablecloth is folded up, resting on top of the table, analogously to Penello’s (16b). That the presence of *right* in English PPs might serve the same semantic/syntactic function that the absence of *a* does in Italian PPs is a matter for future investigation.

⁵ Alternatively, the facts could be viewed the other way around, whereby it is the nature of the tablecloth itself (as the ‘figure’), which can be either spread out (unbounded) or folded up (bounded), which facilitates one interpretation (or the other), thus yielding (or not) the presence of *a*. On this idea, see footnote 3 above.

instead (curiously) volunteer the mirror image judgments of (16), and other sentences involving *sopra* and *sotto*).⁶ I do not take this as a discouragement, but rather as an indication that the phenomenon is rich enough to merit a much more complex investigation.

Another question which remains is what the facts are concerning lexical prepositions which take *a* obligatorily (see Rizzi 1988; Tortora 2005). Does the obligatoriness of this *a* mean that these lexical prepositions can never refer to spaces that are strictly bounded? If so, this would suggest that the lexical semantics of these prepositions are such that they inflexibly denote unbounded space.⁷ Again, answers to these questions remain a matter for further research.

2.4 *A Syntactic Analysis*

The data examined until now suggest that the aspectual concept of *boundedness* be extended to the spatial domain. In this section, I provide an analysis (developed in Tortora 2005) which instantiates this idea syntactically, and which allows us to account for the data in sections 2.1-2.3.

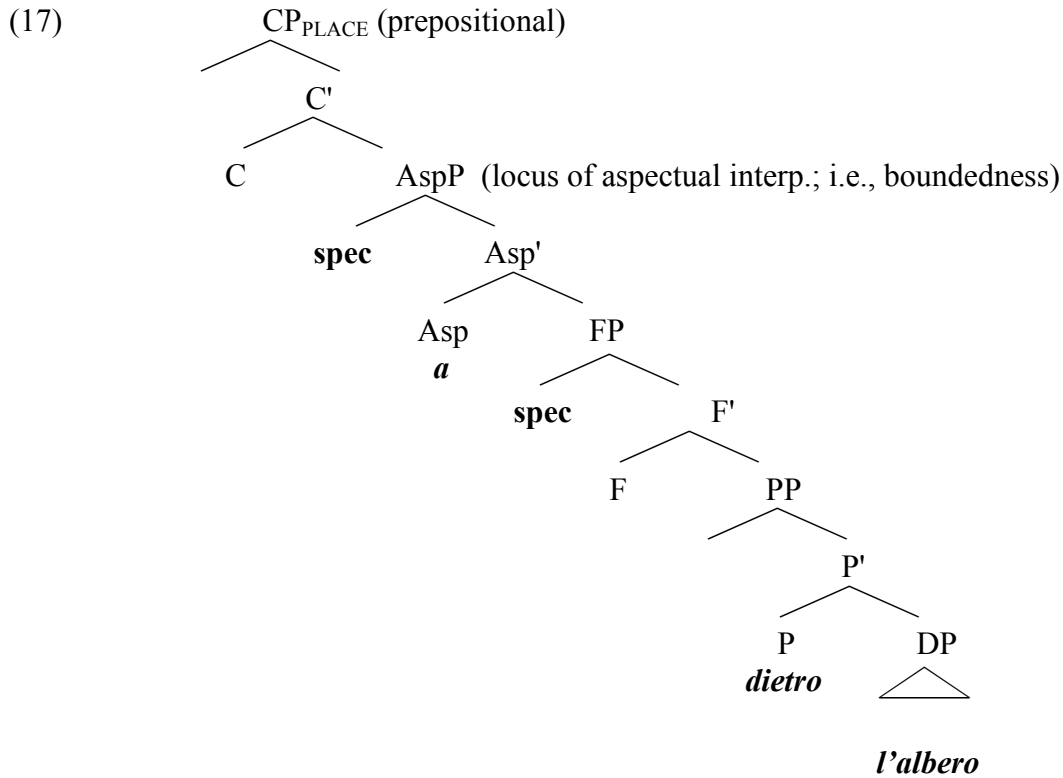
In particular, I adopt the idea, developed by Koopman (1997) and den Dikken (2003) (following work by van Riemsdijk 1990) that locative prepositions, like verbs, nouns, and adjectives, are dominated by a series of functional projections. As argued by these authors, whose goal is to explain the complex semantic and syntactic behaviors of prepositions, postpositions, and circumpositions in Dutch, these extended projections of the preposition parallel (at least loosely) the functional structure of DP and CP.⁸

Following these authors, I propose for Italian that it is the lexical preposition that projects the PP, while the grammatical preposition, when present, heads an AspP which is among the extended projections of the PP. This is sketched in (17), which is the underlying structure for the PP *dietro all'albero* in (7a):

⁶ Note that I do not provide my informants with any possible meanings for these data; I simply ask each speaker what each sentence means. As for the differing judgments (which do not seem to be random, given the fact that when they differ, they do so in a consistent (opposite) way), I speculate for now that a speaker's interpretation of the Italian data may be influenced by 'the grammar of *a*' in the speaker's native dialect. In this regard, consider the fact that in Penello's dialect (Carmignano di Brenta), the grammatical preposition *a* is missing in many constructions where Standard Italian requires it. The influence of a speaker's native (dialect) grammar (of *a*) on the interpretation of this preposition in Italian constructions is something that needs to be explored.

⁷ This might be similar to the fact that certain abstract nouns are (arbitrarily) lexically specified as being either mass or count, despite the fact that there is nothing concrete that would determine this classification (cf. mass *advice* (**advices*) vs. count *threat* (*threats*)).

⁸ In what follows, I simplify their proposals a great deal for the sake of argument. The structures den Dikken (2003) proposes for directional PPs, for example, are highly articulated and involve two types of preposition, P_{loc} and P_{dir}, each projecting its own functional architecture (ending in CP_{place} and CP_{path}, respectively; in this regard, his proposal is an extension of Jackendoff's 1983 idea that PATH embeds PLACE in directional PPs).

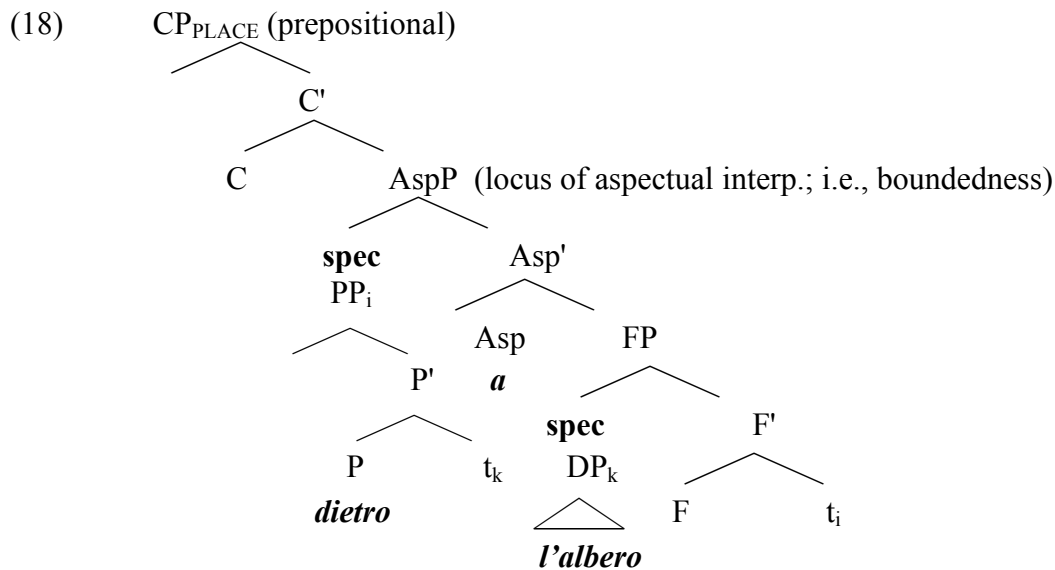


I would like to suggest that the Aspectual Phrase is the locus of the aspectual feature [bounded]. To account for the data discussed in sections 2.1-2.3, I propose that the presence of *a* reflects the presence of the underspecified feature [bounded], which, when applied to a lexical preposition that denotes *place* (such as *dietro* “behind”), yields the interpretation of the location (e.g., in (7a)) either as spatially unbounded or bounded. The absence of *a*, however, reflects the presence of the (positively valued) [+ bounded] feature; this, in turn, accounts for the interpretation of the location (in e.g. (7b)) as necessarily spatially bounded.

It is worth noting that this previously unexplored semantic difference between pairs like (7a) and (7b) reveals that the grammatical preposition *a* is arguably merged to the left of the lexical preposition, despite surface indications to the contrary (the proposal offered here is reminiscent of Kayne’s (1999; 2001) recent interpretation of *a* (and *di*) as an infinitival complementizer; see Tortora 2005). A question which arises of course is how the surface order exhibited in (8a) is derived.

Given that the configuration proposed for the grammatical preposition in (17) is similar to the proposal offered by Kayne (1999; 2001) for grammatical prepositional complementizers, it would not be unreasonable to pursue a derivation for the surface word order found with the lexical PP (*dietro all'albero*) that is similar to the remnant movement derivation Kayne proposes for his prepositional complementizer cases. In particular, I propose that first, the DP

l'albero moves to the specifier of the FP in (17) (perhaps for reasons of Case), leaving t_k in (18). Then, subsequent movement of the remnant PP (headed by *dietro*) to the specifier of AspP obtains, leaving t_i . Thus, the surface order *dietro all'albero* is derived:



Perhaps PP movement obtains for interpretive reasons; i.e., the locative PP receives the unbounded interpretation by virtue of landing in the specifier of the aspectual head.

3. Prepositions in Spanish

The proposal that *a* is merged to the left of the lexical preposition (and that it is the reflex of the unspecified feature [bounded] in Asp) may find support from Spanish, an idea that I pursue in this section.

Plann (1988) discusses sets of Spanish examples which to me seem to exhibit a pattern whereby a monomorphemic lexical preposition (e.g., *dentro*) corresponds to a bimorphemic lexical postposition combined with the grammatical preposition *a* (e.g., *adentro*):

(19) *trás, atrás, detrás* “back, behind”

(20) *bajo, abajo, debajo* “below”

(21) *en, dentro, adentro* “in(side)”

(22) *fuera, afuera* “outside”

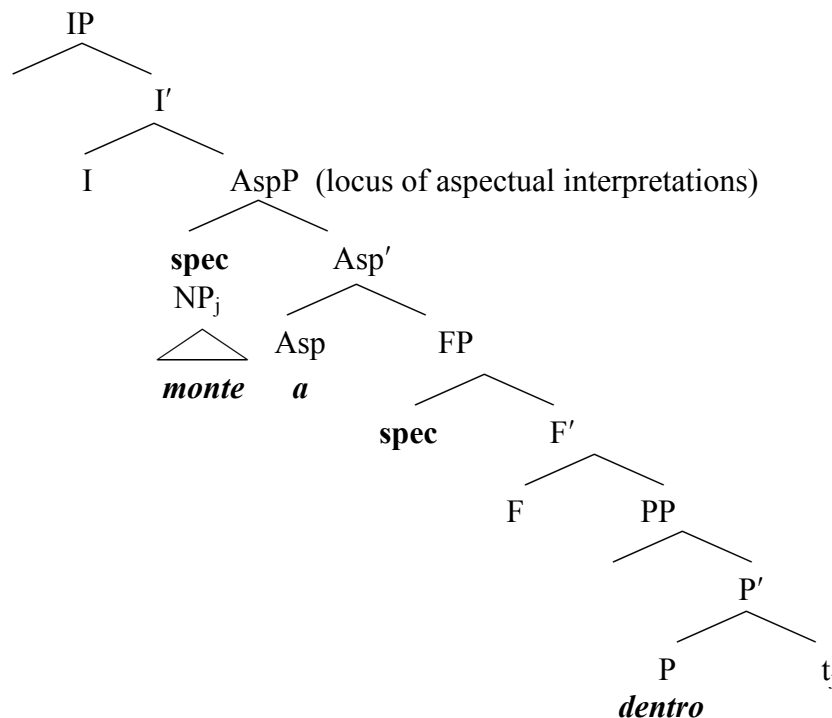
The bimorphemic examples could be taken simply to be cases where the grammatical preposition *a* precedes the lexical preposition (as in the d-structure for Italian *dentro a* “inside”, which is *a dentro*; see (17)). Interestingly, in the case of Spanish, the lexical

prepositions with *a* are syntactically postpositions (although see example (30) below), with the complement necessarily a bare noun; consider in this regard the following example:

- (23) *Los cazadores cazaban monte a dentro.*
 the hunters hunted wilderness **a**.inside
 “The hunters hunted inside the wilderness.”

Thus, if we consider the structure in (17), it seems that in Spanish, the (bare) NP moves to the left of *a* (in the specifier of AspP), in contrast with Italian (where it is the PP that moves). The PP remains in situ (in contrast with Italian), yielding the order grammaticalP+lexicalP:

- (24) Structure for Spanish *monte dentro* (cf. (23)):



Of course, this analysis would only make sense if it turned out to be the case that Spanish PPs with and without *a* semantically differed in the same way that the Italian complex (with *a*) and simplex (without *a*) PPs differ. In what follows, I will discuss a number of pairs of Spanish examples which indicate that there are some striking similarities with the pairs of Italian examples discussed in section 2.

Let us first (re-)consider the complex PP in (23) (with *a*), repeated here as (25a), together with its simplex counterpart (without *a*) in (25b):

- (25) a. *Los cazadores cazaban monte adentro.* (with *a*)
the hunters hunted wilderness a.inside
“The hunters hunted inside the wilderness”
[THE BOUNDARIES/PERIMETER OF THE WILDERNESS ARE NOT CONCEPTUALIZED IN
SPEAKER’S MIND; THE HUNTERS ARE TOWARD THE CENTER OF THE WILDERNESS]
- b. *Los cazadores cazaban dentro del monte.* (without *a*)
the hunters hunted inside of.the wilderness
“The hunters hunted inside the wilderness”
[THE BOUNDARIES/PERIMETER OF THE WILDERNESS ARE CONCEPTUALIZED IN
SPEAKER’S MIND; SIMPLE OPPOSITION TO ‘OUTSIDE’]

As can be seen by the translations, both (25a) (with *adentro*) and (25b) (with *dentro*) denote “The hunters hunted inside the wilderness”. However, there is a difference in the interpretation of the space. Specifically, in (25a) (with *a*), the speaker conceptualizes the hunters as being far inside the wilderness, with the boundaries or the perimeter of the wilderness not conceptualized. In contrast, with (25b) the speaker conceptualizes the boundaries or the perimeter of the wilderness, and the hunters could be taken to be close to the perimeter. Some speakers spontaneously report that (25b) can be used simply to indicate that the hunters are hunting inside the wilderness, as opposed to outside. This simple ‘opposition’ interpretation is reminiscent of that reported spontaneously by Italian speakers for example (12b) – without *a* (*Vai dentro la stanza* “Go inside the room”). The difference in interpretation between (25a) and (25b) is replicated with the following two sets of examples in (26) and (27):

- (26) a. *Se había escondido bosque adentro.*
se had hidden forest a.inside
“He hid inside the forest”
[FROM THE SPEAKER’S PERSPECTIVE, HE IS HIDING AWAY TOWARDS THE CENTER]
- b. *Se había escondido dentro del bosque.*
se had hidden inside of.the forest
“He hid inside the forest”
[THE BOUNDARIES OF THE FOREST ARE SALIENT IN SPEAKER’S MIND]

- (27) a. *Los barcos están mar **a**dentro.*
 the boats are sea **a**.inside
 “The boats were inside the sea”
 [FAR AWAY FROM THE SHORE, WHERE YOU DON’T SEE ANY LAND; THE BOUNDARIES OF THE SEA ARE NOT CONCEPTUALIZED IN SPEAKER’S MIND]
- b. *Los barcos están dentro el mar.*
 the boats are inside the sea
 “The boats were inside the sea”
 [CAN SEE LAND; IN THE SEA, AS OPPOSED TO BEING OUTSIDE OF THE SEA]

There are two properties exhibited by all three sets of examples above (25-27) that are worth discussing, especially since these properties do not seem to be exhibited in the Italian sets of complex/simplex examples. First, most Spanish speakers report that examples with *a* require a space that is sufficiently large. So, the lexical postposition (in this case *adentro*) is most felicitously used with a space like the sea, or the wilderness, or a forest; speakers tend to resist examples where the object of the preposition represents a smaller space, like a park, for example, so that sentences such as that in (28a) are not accepted by all speakers:

- (28) a. *%Los niños jugaban parque **a**dentro.*
 The kids played park **a**.inside
 “The kids played inside the park”
 [FROM THE SPEAKER’S PERSPECTIVE, THEY ARE PLAYING TOWARDS THE CENTER]
- b. *Los niños jugaban dentro del parque.*
 The kids played inside of.the park
 [THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PARK ARE CONCEPTUALIZED; THE LIMITS OF THE PARK ARE SALIENT]

Note that speakers who reject (28a) have no trouble accepting (28b) (thus, this requirement on the size of the space only holds when *a* is present in the structure). Note that this restriction does not exist in Italian (as can be seen, for example, by the grammaticality of (15a), *Corri dentro al parco* “Run around inside the park”).

Second, in contrast with the Italian examples with *a*, the Spanish examples with *a* in (25-27) involve an interpretation whereby the ‘figure’ is to be found someplace along a trajectory towards the inside of the ‘ground’ (from the speaker’s point of view). This is not the case with

the (b) examples (without *a*). In other words, in the Spanish complex PPs in (25-27), the presence of *a* forces the speaker to conceptualize a trajectory away from himself and toward the center of the ‘ground’.

Concerning this later property (not exhibited in Italian), I conjecture that this is related to the fact that Spanish (in contrast with Italian) does not use the preposition *a* statively (see, e.g., Torrego 2002):

- | | | | |
|------|----|-------------------------------|---------|
| (29) | a. | <i>Estamos en / *a Paris.</i> | Spanish |
| | b. | <i>Siamo a Parigi.</i> | Italian |

It could be, then, that the restriction responsible for the ungrammaticality of *a* in (29a) is the same restriction that disallows a “purely” stative reading of the (a) examples in (25-27); that is, although (26) and (27) are clearly stative, given the “grammar of *a*” in Spanish, the speaker is forced to conceptualize a trajectory in these examples.

Concerning the former property (namely, that Spanish speakers tend to require sufficiently large spaces – such as seas, or forests, or the wilderness – in order to be able to use the PP with *a*): I will leave this issue open for future research. One could imagine that this need might be driven by the fact that *a*, as the head of the [-bounded] AspP in these constructions, requires that the boundaries not be salient (and in order for this to obtain, the space must be large enough). It is not at all clear, though, why this is not exhibited in Italian.⁹

Despite these differences between Spanish and Italian (which of course need to be better understood), it is important to note that there are striking similarities between the two languages: both have a subset of lexical prepositions which may occur (optionally) with the grammatical preposition *a*, and the presence of *a* in both languages yields a semantic interpretation of the space denoted by the PP that is aspectually distinct from the semantic interpretation of the space denoted by the *a*-less PP. As such, we will tentatively maintain that the PPs with these particular lexical Ps in both languages have similar underlying structures (as in (17)), with different derivations ((18) vs. (24)) yielding different surface word orders.

⁹ A (perhaps related) problem is that in Italian, the presence of *a* does not require that the space be interpreted as unbounded (see discussion in section 2.4). So, (7a) for example can indicate either a bounded (punctual) or unbounded (non-punctual) space. In Spanish, on the other hand, the presence of *a* only yields one interpretation (unbounded). Another (again, perhaps related) problem is that in Italian, the boundedness of the space can be characterized in terms of ‘punctuality’ (so that in many of the examples discussed in section 2, the space in the examples without *a* is conceptualized as punctual (point-like)). It is not clear that this is the case for the Spanish examples.

I would like to make one final observation here regarding the Spanish data, before concluding. Given that the presence of *a* seems to correlate with the post-positioning of the lexical preposition (and with the presence of a bare NP), one might wonder whether it is in fact the syntactic position of the postposition (or the presence of a bare NP, for that matter) which is responsible for the particular interpretation of the space (and not, as we have been asserting, the presence of *a* itself). In this regard, I would like to consider the following example, allowed by one of my informants:

- (30) a. %*Los niños corrían afuera del parque.* (with *a*)
 the kids ran a.outside of.the park
 “The kids ran around outside the park”
 [WHERE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PARK ARE NOT CONCEPTUALIZED IN THE
 SPEAKER’S MIND; THE RUNNING IS OUTSIDE THE PARK SOMEPLACE, BUT DOES
 NOT HAVE TO BE NEAR]
- b. *Los niños corrían fuera del parque.* (without *a*)
 the kids ran outside of.the park
 “The kids ran around outside the park”
 [PERIMETER OF PARK CONCEPTUALIZED IN THE SPEAKER’S MIND; CLOSE TO THE
 SURROUNDINGS OF THE PARK; RELATED TO THE PARK IN SOME WAY]

Not all speakers allow *afuera* “outside” (with *a*) to be used as a pre-position (with a full DP complement). However, my one informant who did allow (30a) also spontaneously reported a clear semantic distinction between (30a) and (30b) (without *a*). Specifically, (30a) was taken to denote that the running is outside the park someplace, but that the location is not necessarily related to the park (so that the boundaries of the park are not conceptualized). In contrast, (30b) was taken to denote that the running is taking place in a location close to the surroundings of the park, so that the space is taken to be related to the park in some way, with the perimeter of the park conceptualized as part of the space.

What these data show us (for the grammar of this informant at least) is that it is the presence of *a* (and not the position of the preposition, or the presence of a bare NP) that is responsible for the unbounded interpretation of the space.

4. Conclusion

To summarize the discussion in this paper: The PP data from Italian suggest that PLACE, like PATH, can be conceptualized as bounded or unbounded, and that this has a reflex in the grammar. This extension of the ‘boundedness’ feature to PLACE allows for the more general claim that SPACE (the supercategory that subsumes PATH and PLACE; Jackendoff 1991) can be conceptualized as bounded or unbounded. This in turn reveals that boundedness is relevant to not only *events* and *entities*, but to *space* as well, suggesting that these three supercategories themselves are all potentially treatable, in the abstract, in a similar way (whatever the general linguistic and specific syntactic analyses of boundedness ultimately ends up being). This itself is consistent with the tradition, initiated by Bach (1986) (among others), and expanded upon by Jackendoff (1991), of unifying major linguistic categories under one abstract semantic system.

Furthermore, the particular details regarding the behavior of the Italian PPs (i.e., presence vs. absence of the grammatical preposition *a*) suggest that PPs are unified with NPs and VPs in terms of clausal architecture (i.e., functional syntax). That is, the data discussed in this paper supports the claim (proposed by e.g. van Riemsdijk 1990) that Ps are syntactically like Vs and Ns (projecting similar types of functional categories). This similarity across categories is further corroborated by the discussion in 2.3 (and footnote 3), where we see preliminary evidence that the nature of the argument of the preposition (e.g., plural vs. singular) can affect the aspectual interpretation of the entire PP. And finally, this view opens a line of thought regarding the proper syntactic (and semantic) treatment of PPs that apparently contain a grammatical P in Spanish. Although there are a number of differences between Italian PPs with *a* and Spanish PPs with *a*, the similarities between the two languages warrant exploring a unified analysis.

References

- Bach, E. (1986) *The algebra of events*, “Linguistics and philosophy” 9, 5-16.
- Cinque, G. (1971) *Analisi semantica della deissi in italiano*, Tesi di laurea, University of Padova.
- Den Dikken, M. (2003) *On the syntax of locative and directional adpositional phrases*, Ms., CUNY Graduate Center.
- Jackendoff, R. (1983) *Semantics and cognition*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.
- Jackendoff, R. (1991) *Parts and boundaries*, “Cognition” 41, 9-45.

- Kayne, R. (1999) *Prepositional complementizers as attractors*, "Probus" 11, 39-73.
- Kayne, R. (2001) *Prepositions as probes*, Ms., NYU.
- Koopman, H. (1997) *Prepositions, postpositions, circumpositions and particles*, Ms., UCLA.
- Penello, N. (2003) *Capitoli di morfologia e sintassi del dialetto di Carmignano di Brenta*, Tesi di Dottorato, University of Padova.
- Plann, S. (1988) *Prepositions, postpositions, and substantives*, "Hispania" 71, 920-926.
- Rizzi, L. (1988) *Il sintagma preposizionale*, in L. Renzi (ed.) *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione*, vol. 1, Il Mulino, Bologna, 508-531.
- Talmy, L. (1983) *How language structures space*, in H. Pick & L. Acredolo (eds.) *Spatial orientation: Theory, research, and application*, Plenum Press, New York, 225-282.
- Torrego, E. (2002) *Aspect in the prepositional system of Romance*, in T. Satterfield, C. Tortora, & D. Cresti (eds.) *Current Issues in Romance Languages*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 337-357.
- Tortora, C. (2005) *The preposition's preposition in Italian: Evidence for boundedness of space*, in R. Gess & E. Rubin (eds.) *Theoretical and Experimental Approaches to Romance Linguistics*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 307-327.
- Vanelli, L. (1995) *La deissi spaziale*, in L. Renzi, G. Salvi, & Anna Cardinaletti (eds.) *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione*, vol. 3, Il Mulino, Bologna, 269-283.
- Van Riemsdijk, H. (1990) *Functional prepositions*, in H. Pinkster & I. Genee (eds.) *Unity in diversity*, Foris, Dordrecht, 229-241.