

The structure of deverbal adjectives in Spanish: a Nanosyntactic approach

This study looks in detail at Spanish deverbal adjectives and how these are represented in the grammar. Examples are presented below:

- (1) a. una chica enamora-diza
a girl fall.in.love-DIZO
'a girl who falls in love easily'
- b. un vaso quebra-dizo
a glass break-DIZO
'a fragile glass' ('a glass that can be broken easily')
- c. una silla plega-diza
a chair fold-DIZO
'a folding chair' ('a chair that can be folded')

These cases illustrate three different readings of Spanish deverbal adjectives: habituality (1a), dispositionality (1b) and potentiality (1c). If a girl falls in love easily, one understands that falling in love must be something she does often; it is a part of her typical behaviour. A glass that can be easily broken, on the other hand, has not been broken in the past, nor is it implied that it ever will participate in the given event; it only expresses that that the glass, because of its internal properties, is disposed to breaking. Finally, a chair that can be folded has not necessarily been folded in the past, but it is constructed in such a way that makes this event possible.

The present study focuses on how these three readings are obtained, and claims that the differences are not only semantic, but also syntactic. I make use of the framework of Nanosyntax (Starke 2009, 2011), and claim that the different readings can be accounted for once syntax is made sufficiently fine-grained. I adopt the approach of Caha (2013), and suggest that the three identified readings should be analysed as 'cumulative decomposition' (cf. Caha 2009, 2013): the different readings of the AP are specified with a certain set of features. The number of these features grows consistently, depending on the desired reading, in a cumulative manner, and the combination of these features determines the reading of the adjective. I propose the following specification of the three identified readings:

- (2) a. Potentiality = [X]
b. Dispositionality = [X, Y]
c. Habituality = [X, Y, Z]

These features corresponds to heads of their own functional projections in a binary branching tree, which are projected hierarchically in the following way:

- (3) [_{HABITUAL} Z [_{DISPOSICIONAL} Y [_{POTENCIAL} X AP]]]

According to this hypothesis, a potential AP is a type of a constituent in which the verbal base is the complement of the feature [X]. A dispositional reading is obtained in a similar manner, by the addition of [Y] on top of the potential [X], so that DISPOSICIONALITY = [X, Y]. Likewise, HABITUALITY arises when the [Z] feature is Merged on top of the dispositional AP, creating the set [X, Y, Z]. The

crucial point of this hypothesis is that the feature [Z] is not HABITUAL in itself; [Z] is the name of the constituent that arises when the entire compilation of features has been Merged on top of the verbal base, and is the result of the hierarchical combination of these functional projections.

References

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