

Prolegomena to a syntactic-semantic characterization of adjectives in Spanish

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Este trabajo se propone abordar el complejo fenómeno del adjetivo en castellano. Aunque una serie de textos pedagógicos tratan del adjetivo —sobre todo de su colocación en la cadena sintáctica ante el sustantivo—, no abundan los estudios basados en criterios de la lingüística científica. De ahí que se pretenda abordar al adjetivo castellano mediante una serie de temas nucleares que deben ser examinados, a la luz de la gramática transformacional y la semántica generativa, en mayor detalle. Los temas perfilados en este estudio son los siguientes 1) la identificación taxonómica del adjetivo; 2) la distinción entre adjetivos y "preadjetivos"; 3) la colocación examinada desde la perspectiva de la semántica generativa; 4) adjetivos de base y derivados; 5) adjetivos compuestos exocéntricos; 6) la clasificación semántica de los adjetivos; 7) la jerarquía sintáctica de los adjetivos ante el sustantivo y cuestiones semánticas.

0. The purpose of this paper is to inquire into certain aspects of the syntax and the semantics of adjectives in Spanish. Although no attempt will be made to provide a complete discussion of the pertinent phenomena noted, it is hoped that criteria will be established that could lead to the sort of thorough treatment the subject deserves. Curiously enough, and despite the complexities of the topic, the bibliography on the Spanish adjectives is very scant - - Serís (1964) lists only four entries, and none deal with significant syntactic or semantic issues. Zierer's study (1974), the only recent monographic

treatment, is quite limited in scope¹ and revealing for the virtual absence of bibliographic references to other studies on the subject. It is for this reason that a prolegomena is of first importance: it is the attempt at a statement of the questions that adequate studies on the subject must address if statements are to be made of serious descriptive and analytical usefulness.

I perceive seven major topics for such a study; of course, they are interrelated². But to whatever degree each one involves independently motivated concerns, they can be articulated separately.

1. The distinction, in terms more syntactic than morphologic, between —Adj and Adj (or, more properly, between M Adj and U Adj, with M Adj → —Adj). Although there is a clear image in Spanish of morphologically identified, or identifiable, adjectives, there are a number of structures in which lexical, morphologically non-adjective units used with nouns are commutable with adjectives and have, from a semantic point of view, an adjectival function (and, to be sure, there exists also the perennial trisection-of-the-angle pro-

¹ ZIERER does not deal directly with the issues raised in this study. As in LUJÁN GOUGH's dissertation (1972), the syntactic behavior of adjectives is examined within the framework of CHOMSKY's *Aspects* model, with particular emphasis on the derivation of attributive adjectives from predicate ones, on adjective behavior with *ser* and *estar*, and some miscellaneous questions of syntactic differentiation CRESSEY (1969) provided essentially pedagogical comments.

² This paper does not study the question of *ser*, *estar* Adj, which is complex enough to deserve a separate investigation; indeed, the bibliography on it is voluminous (along with that on *se*, it is the most extensive in Spanish linguistics). Of particular interest is the relationship between these predicate constructions and adjective placement in derived noun phrases. It is clear that there is no one-to-one relationship between *ser* vs. *estar* predication and appositive vs. limiting adjective position. ZIERER (1974: Ch. iv) offers the following basic examples:

La muchacha es rica =>
 La muchacha rica
 La muchacha está rica =>
 La rica muchacha.

But:

La casa es nueva =>
 La nueva casa
 La casa está nueva ≠>
 La casa nueva.

In the case of the latter example, it appears that three separate semantic structures are involved. ZIERER gives an extensive number of examples of such adjective structures; of interest are those that involve attributive adjectives that can be shown not to have derived from predicate structures. Unfortunately, his study attempts no descriptive adequacy beyond broad syntactic classifications.

blem of distinguishing morphosyntactically between nouns and adjectives; see, in this regard, Stevens (1966)³. I have in mind traditional phrases like

- 1) carta de amor

which involve adjectival prepositional phrases that may or may not alternate semantically with adjectives derived from the object-of-the-preposition noun:

- 2) carta de amor => carta amorosa

but

- 3) libro de texto ≠ > libro textual.

I also have in mind less traditional and more trendy—and therefore only marginally acceptable academically—phrases such as:

- 4) año luz, punto base, estudiante tipo, etc.

The occurrence of plural agreement with some items is highly suggestive of full adjetivalization, with a ϕ derivational morpheme:

- 5) edición príncipe vs. ediciones príncipes

- 6) faro piloto vs. faros pilotos.

However, agreement occurs with very few of the numerous items described in Foster (1976):

- 7) años luz, puntos base, estudiantes tipo.

Note, at the same time, that there is a semantic non-equivalence between the noun-as-adjective and its morphologically derived adjective partner, at least in conjunction with the head noun:

- 8) punto base ≠ punto básico.

- 9) estudiante tipo ≠ estudiante típico.

This would suggest the following constituent structure, where a ϕ morpheme of adjective derivation possesses a true contrastive function, in the sense that it distinguishes between two separate orders of adjectives:

³ ZIERER (1974) devotes a little over one page (pp. 16-17) to noting the use of nouns as adjectivals in attributive constructions, but no syntactic or semantic analysis is given.

Color adjectives that are composed of one or more nouns constitute one interesting subset of nouns as adjectives. Note the following examples, particularly plural agreements:

una corbata gris

dos corbatas grises

una corbata naranja (= anaranjada)

dos corbatas naranja (= anaranjadas)

una corbata gris perla

dos corbatas gris perla.

Presumably, one possible interpretation of *gris perla* would be $\text{Adj}[N N]$; perhaps even $\text{Adj}[N \text{ Adj}[N]]$ would be appropriate.

- 10) estudiante tipo NP[N[estudiante] ADJ[N[tipo]]
 A-DER [ϕ]]]
 11) estudiante típico NP[N[estudiante] Adj[N[tipo]]
 A-DER [ico]]]

In this understanding of the syntax-semantics of these combinations, compound nouns are not at issue, but rather noun phrases consisting of a noun plus a modifying (restrictive, presumably) adjective. Compare *estudiante tipo*, where both lexical items preserve their independent meaning, with exocentric compounds like *día sandwich*, *hombre orquesta*, *coche escuela*.

Of considerable interest is the fact that the head/non-head order in these combinations is always fixed: it is always head/non-head, while in exocentric noun compounds either order is permissible -- head/non-head in the items just given; non-head/head in items like *narcotraficante*, *radioescucha*, and *bocacalle*. (One notes the distinguishing role of orthographic representation, although both *boca mina* and *bocamina* are found). Thus, combinations like **base punto* and **tipo estudiante* are considered non-occurring. Or, if they are found it is *punto* and *estudiante* that have become derived adjectives serving to restrictively modify *base* and *tipo*, now NP head nouns. What this means is that, to whatever extent we can cogently argue for seeing certain NN combinations as in reality NAdj phrases (keeping these phrases separate from independently determined NN exocentric compound nouns), we must at the same time recognize that this order of (derived) adjectives differs fundamentally from traditionally recognizable base and morphologically marked derived adjectives in Spanish (i.e., with no- ϕ derivational affixes): syntactically the former are restricted to a postnominal position and, as a related consequence (see, however, topic 4. below), appear to be restricted semantically to conveying only qualifying or restrictive meaning.

In the case of phrases like:

- 12) carta de amor NP[N[carta] ADJ[A-DER[de] N[amor]]], while the postnominal position is "traditional" and occurs with much greater frequency, a prenominal position is not impossible, either syntactically or in terms of actual usage:

- 13) una cuestión de decidida estupidez ~ una de decidida estupidez cuestión.

Nevertheless, the latter is unquestionably stylistically marked (as other prenominal positions of base adjectives often are: *un azul cielo*). Moreover, whatever the position it seems safe to say that the

ADJ[PREP N] phrase serves only to modify restrictively, which in part is what is meant by assigning to pre- vs. postnominal positions a stylistic rather than a semantic value (assuming, as is probably not really or consistently the case, the clear differentiation between semantic and stylistic functions, especially since they tend to merge completely in all affective of foregrounded discourse, from facetious utterances all the way on up to the best of poetic expression). In any case, these are clearly questions that must be taken into consideration in analyzing the syntactic behavior of these phrases and the underlying semantic structures to which they can be attributed.

We should note, in this context, one important aspect of Spanish syntax that lends additional credence to the possibility of seeing the second item in a phrase like *estudiante tipo* as a ϕ -marked derived adjective that is invariable in terms of gender and number agreement with the head noun that it modifies. I refer to the growing number of adjectives in Spanish —adjectives from at least a syntactic-functional point of view, if not from a morphological one— that behave exactly like *tipo* in the example given and are derived from noun bases. Of course, Spanish has always had a modest list of adjectives that do not reflect person/number agreement. *Alerta* is one, despite the fact that *alerto* and its agreement-reflecting forms exist historically in the language (and while there are a large number of so-called third-declension adjectives in Spanish that are ϕ -marked for masculine and feminine, there are very few that are so marked for number, and this is equally the case for the absence of both gender and number marking). Some of these items appear actually to be the reflex of ellipsis:

- 14) un niño bien <= un niño bien nacido, acomodado, conectado, etc.

Furthermore, adjectives taken into Spanish from English are likely to belong to this group (more likely than in Mexican-American Spanish, where they seemed to be calqued and converted into morphologically “typical” adjectives [i.e., because they are now carrying gender/number morpheme markers they are morphosyntactically unmarked from the point of view of feature classification]):

- 15) profesores full, mujeres snob.

However, Argentine Spanish illustrates how nouns typical to that dialect (whether of Castilian or Genoese, etc., stock originally) regularly yield ADJ[N ϕ] items:

- 16) tenemos [mucha] fiaca => estamos [muy] fiaca.

Although there is a less clear non-phrase/adjective-phrase pairing

like *fiaca* evident, the noun *piola* regularly yields at least a predicate adjective:

- 17) Me quedé piola.

And perhaps we should also mention at the same time a Mexican usage like *coche padre*, although there does tend to be number agreement: *coches padres*. Nevertheless, *padre* here, if it can be considered an adjective, has clearly been derived with a ϕ derivation marker. I suspect many more examples of this sort could be adduced to demonstrate one common issue: there are many items in Spanish that 1) seem to be nouns morphologically, but that enter into either (restrictive modifying adjective or predicate adjective combinations with head nouns, that 2) typically have no gender agreement and only sporadic –indeed, rare– number agreement with the head noun, that 3) “compete” with adjectives bearing typical morphological markers that have been derived from the very nouns with which they appear to be homologous:



or, better semantically, since ADJ[típico] and ADJ[tipo], it has been insisted, are not synonymous:

$$19) \text{ N[tipos]} \Rightarrow \text{ADJ[típico].}$$

$$20) \text{ N[tipos]} \Rightarrow \text{ADJ[tipo].}$$

This sort of pattern, where two items, homologous in one morphological class, are represented in another by two morphologically distinct items, is rather common in Spanish. Cf.:

$$21) \text{ V[esperar}_1\text{]} \Rightarrow \text{N[espera].}$$

$$22) \text{ V[esperar}_2\text{]} \Rightarrow \text{N[esperanza].}$$

In sum, it should be clear that one issue in any analysis of adjectives in contemporary Spanish should be the identity of these items, and the relatively greater importance of an assessment based on functional grounds, both syntactic and semantic, than on morphological ones⁴. At the same time, there is no question that these items are

⁴ An excellent example to demonstrate the possibility of considering certain nouns as yielding ϕ marked adjectives is the following phrases, found in Benito PÉREZ GALDÓS's *El amigo Manso* (1882; Ch. xli):

Mi procedimiento de confesión interrogatorio y deductiva no podría ser empleado delicadamente en lo que aún restaba por declarar.

The fact that *interrogatorio* lacks a suffix-marked derived adjective and the fact that *interrogatorio* and *deductiva* clearly enjoy a balanced, conjoined func-

restricted in being limited exclusively to post-nominal position vis-à-vis the head noun. Whether or not that means they are only restrictive semantically will be taken up again in section 4. below.

2. One of the most challenging aspects of current semantic theory and case grammar (whether syntactically focused, as in the case of early Fillmore (1969), or semantically-based, as in the case of Nilsen (1972) has been the demonstration of 1) how surface syntactic irregularity often marks abstract, underlying semantic regularity, 2) how there may be a sharp distinction between the behavior of surface phenomena and their semantic configuration, and 3) how the notion "part of speech" has no semantic value: it is a morphosyntactic notion reflecting the organization of semantic information —arguments and predicates— into conventional but fluid syntactic structures. There is a relatively free interchange between parts of speech (save questions of focus and style), and evidence can be easily adduced to show that: 1) there is no "basic" part of speech, although verbs may often appear to be so because of their more regular representation of semantic predicates, and 2) there is a bidirectionality in derivation transformations, such that it is often difficult to determine (other than historically) which is the base form and which is the derived one (does *enfoque* yield *enfocar*, or viceversa?).

These considerations can be brought to bear on a major issue associated with Spanish adjectives: the distinction between "true" adjectives, both modifying and predicate⁵, and other items associated with nominal phrases: the latter might be called preadjectives or noun-phrase markers (in the sense that they introduce NPs). Clearly, articles, which rarely have been accorded the status of adjectives (despite their "limiting" function and their agreement in number and gender with the head noun), are among these items; also too are demonstratives, often called "demonstrative adjectives". Numerals, both ordinal and cardinal, fall likewise into this category. So far so good. But what about items like *cierto*, *propio*, *mismo*, *dicho*, *último*, etc.? Certainly there is a semantic distinction between these

tion vis-à-vis the head noun *confesión* lend evidence to the following analysis, where *interrogatorio* is treated as a ϕ -marked noun-base derived adjective:

NP[N[confesión] Adj [N[interrogatorio]] Conj[y] Adj [V [deducir] tivo]].

⁵ Various problems related to the hypothesis that attributive adjectives are derived from underlying relative, predicate adjective clauses are discussed by LUJÁN (1974); in particular she records the differing behavior of [+ stative] as opposed to [- stative] adjectives.

items when they occur prenominally and their postnominal counterparts:

- 23) Un cierto hombre.
- 24) Un hombre cierto.
- 25) (*¿la?*) dicha frase.
- 26) La frase dicha.
- 27) Mi propio libro.
- 28) Mi libro propio, etc.

The difference is usually so pronounced and definable (often by immediate synonymous paraphrases) that it is natural to propose that we are dealing with two separate lexical items:

- 29) *cierto₁*, limited to prenominal position;
- 30) *cierto₂*, limited to postnominal position.

Of course, there are problems with such a neat characterization. It is not always clear that *último* is semantically different in the two positions. Thus,

- 31) El último número de la revista
tends to be synonymous with
- 32) El número último de la revista,
while
- 33) La última poesía de Neruda
is not be seen as semantically identical with
- 34) La poesía última de Neruda.

Nuevo also seems to behave like *último* in this regard. Moreover, some items appear only prenominally (*otro*), while numerals seem normally to fall into a prenominal position, with postnominal collocation possible, however. Or, Demonstrative N alternates with Article N Demon., with synonymy vs. stylistic variation being an open question. Finally, while *grande* is apparently like *cierto* in being two sharply separate lexical items with complementary distribution, somehow it appears to be more a case of two "true" adjectives, despite the fact that *cierto* only deserves such a label in its postnominal position. Such a distinction is most likely based principally on the behavior of the prenominal item with degree words and phrases —*grande₁* takes them, while *cierto₁* does not:

- 35) Un según la aclamación de todos gran hombre;
- 36) ° Un según la aclamación de todos cierto hombre.

But note:

- 37) Un hombre incuestionablemente grande;
- 38) Un hombre incuestionablemente cierto.

From another point of view, the presence of preadjectives does not affect the behavior of the NP core: the NAdj or the AdjN structure. Whereas the prepositioning of an adjective does affect the behavior of inner NAdj and AdjN combinations (i.e., NP[Adj[N Adj]] or NP[Adj[Adj N]]), preadjectives do not; more on this below. Suffice it to say that criteria need to be defined from the points of view of distribution and syntagmatic behavior (e.g., combination or non-combination with degree constituents), that can effectively isolate preadjectives from adjectives, toward stipulating the syntax and the semantics of the latter in a clearer fashion: the lack of such a distinction is one common complication of traditional textbook presentations of the subject.

Yet, this may be fundamentally a syntactic distinction. Semantically, preadjectives, despite their "irregular" behavior vis-à-vis "true" adjectives, can be shown to have the same underlying configuration as the former:

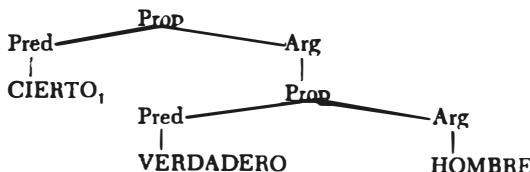
- 39) cierto hombre



- 40) un verdadero hombre



- 41) cierto verdadero hombre



Although the latter structure is not easily paraphrased in terms of a right-branching structure (*¿un hombre que es verdadero que es cierto₁?*), *tres lindas doncellas*, which has the same semantic representation, is more so:

42) Muchachas que son lindas que son tres ~ Muchachas que son lindas, (y) siendo tres en número.

Of course, one should bear in mind that these are noun phrases that would be followed by verb phrases in colloquial discourse. In any case, the point is that true adjectives and putative preadjectives may only be distinguishable on syntactic grounds (i.e., *cierto* and *tres* do not lend themselves to predicate adjective constructions), being accorded equivalent status in terms of semantic description: both are underlain by predicates whose argument is the surface noun they modify. To be sure, semantic representation must and can make the distinction between restrictive and nonrestrictive adjectives: preadjectives are perhaps all restrictive despite their uniform prenominal position, in the same way that derived adjectives like *tipo* are also restrictive despite their uniform postnominal position. And, in turn, this despite fact that the neat equations prenominal = nonrestrictive, postnominal = restrictive are highly debatable and only work for elementary characterizations of the language and then only really for noun phrases containing only one adjective. In pursuing this issue, one must, therefore, be cautious in identifying adjectives vs. preadjectives, and be prepared possibly to have to distinguish between syntactic and semantic behavior, despite the customary axiom in current theory that irregularities in syntactic behavior are likely to signal different semantic structures (cf. a paper like that of Lakoff (1971)).

3. We come now to the true heart of any discussion of adjectives in Spanish or the Romance languages: position vis-à-vis the head noun of a noun phrase⁶. It has been traditional to assume in Ro-

⁶ The most thorough discussion of adjective position in Spanish is CONWAY (1964). However, her specific goal is to undertake a study based on the *exclusion* of semantic criteria: "...no study has been undertaken to organize the order classes of adjectives purely in terms of their total behavior in the spoken language, that is, without the meaning involved being considered as the primary criterion of their grouping..." (p. 1). This I feel to be fundamentally wrong, for although Conway's study may be descriptively complete, it is not explanatorily adequate because it is predicated on the assumption that adjective position and adjective order are syntactically arbitrary, a premise that is linguistically counterintuitive as well as contradictory of prevailing beliefs concerning the relationship between logical semantics and syntactic conventions: the latter are, rather than completely arbitrary, circumscribed by the basic structures of the former. Conway is also hampered by being corpus-biased, which limits her description to what is found in the corpus, rather than to what can be projected as possible. Some of the earliest work done on Spanish adjectives, both in terms of position and order classes, is that of WALLS and BULL (1950) and BULL (1950).

mance philology and in descriptive-prescriptive analyses of Spanish that the variation in adjective position must necessarily signify a semantic difference. Indeed, such a position —typically maintained with little in the way of a direct, empirical test of its validity other than imprecise appeals to native-speaker intuition— receives support from generative-semantic theory, which recognizes as axiomatic the idea that rarely are alternate syntactic structures a matter of style or free-variation. It is more likely than not that they signal a semantic difference. Since there are fewer syntactic structures than the semantic structures that demand representation, it is only reasonable to begin with the hypothesis that those discrete syntactic structures represent discrete semantic differences; however, of course, it is often the case that variant syntactic structures are, in fact semantically synonymous. Thus, in Spanish a variation such as

43) Juan viene.

44) Viene Juan.

is not merely stylistic: there is a fundamental semantic difference between the two possible orders. Yet, a variation such as

45) Lo voy a hacer.

46) Voy a hacerlo.

is probably simply stylistic. Many structures, nevertheless, do not belong clearly to one assessment or the other. Are

47) Lo digo en serio.

48) Lo estoy diciendo en serio.

synonymous, or are they semantically different? There would seem to be semantic differences between *V* and *estar Vndo* structures, but not always; the determination of this “not always” and the proper semantic classification of syntactic structures is a major task facing a semantically-based description of any language.

All of which brings us to the matter of NP[N Adj] vs. NP[Adj N]. When is adjective position semantically important and when is it a question of syntactic variations or irregularity and when is it sty-

and 1954); although these essays should be noted for their historical value, they are essentially based on descriptivist principles (the term “order classes” is from Bloomfield). See also Fish (1961). Conway's bibliography should be consulted for other references of a historical nature that reflect the theories and methodologies of descriptive linguistics. Note also should be taken of two recent descriptive grammars of Spanish: ALCINA FRANCH and BLECUA (1975) and MARCOS MARÍN (1972). Alcina Franch and Blecua, although it could, at least in terms of its scope, have been a Spanish equivalent of the QUIRK *et al.* (1972) for English is disappointing in its summary treatment of complex structural problems; Marcos Marín's work is more modest and is at best a useful textbook with no pretensions to original analyses.

listic? We have already seen that it is likely necessary to recognize a class of adjectives in Spanish that contain sets of items that are homophonous, but whose syntax (and often morphology) reflect semantic differences between them. These items are familiar to any user of a standard Spanish textbook: prenominal *viejo* vs. postnominal *viejo*, prenominal *nuevo* vs. postnominal *nuevo*, prenominal *grande* (which may be apocopated to *gran*) vs. postnominal *grande* (which may not be so apocopated), etc. Here we can speak of one hypothesis of adjective position in Spanish:

- 1) Homophonous Adj₁ and Adj₂ are different semantically. Syntactically, Adj₁ always occurs in a prenominal position; Adj₂ in a postnominal one.⁷

There is another fundamental hypothesis for Spanish adjectives:

- 2) For adjectives that admit either prenominal and postnominal positioning and are not examples of items described by hypothesis 1) and are not assignable to a category of preadjectives, position is semantic: prenominal adjectives are appositive and nonrestrictive, while postnominal adjectives are limiting and restrictive.

The bases of this distinction, which Waugh (1976) has described for French, holds true for Spanish. (Waugh, however, seems not to accept the validity of hypothesis 1): all such apparent items are, upon examination, examples of 2): thus, there is no *viejo*₁ vs. *viejo*₂: only *viejo* exists, with a semantic difference based on prenominal apposition and postnominal limitation. It is probably the fact that English has two adjectives, one for prenominal *viejo* and one for postnominal *viejo*, that leads us to posit *viejo*₁ and *viejo*₂, according to Waugh's line of thinking. Although I disagree with her, the confrontation between the two positions provides valuable test hypotheses for further research.)⁸.

⁷ French seems to have developed this pattern more extensively than Spanish: where ALCINA FRANCH and BLECUA (1975) list only nineteen such items, WAUGH (1976) discusses several dozen. Spanish may indeed have others, but it is possible that the greater prescriptivist tradition of French has served to identify more in a concrete manner.

⁸ Waugh writes: "To generalize from these examples, one may say that the specific lexical connotation of the adjective in pre-position is equal to that contextual variant of its invariant meaning which is determined by the 'presupposition' of the lexical meaning of the noun it is to modify. Such 'presupposition'

Hypothesis 2) leads naturally to a further one:

3) For adjectives described under 1), the semantic distinction pertinent to positions described under 2) is inoperant: position does not distinguish between restrictive and nonrestrictive semantic meanings. This leads to two subhypotheses:

3a) Since adjectives described by 1) are "locked" into one of two positions, prenominal or postnominal, position cannot signal restrictive vs. nonrestrictive meanings. Hence these adjectives are all basically ambiguous as regards this semantic feature in a way that the items covered by 2) are not.

3b) The adjectives described by 1) are all restrictive, are all nonrestrictive, or the semantic feature is "suspended" or "neutralized" in the cases. I suggest that, if this hypothesis is more valid than 3a), all such adjectives are restrictive.

Of course, it is entirely possible that both subhypotheses are correct, under the following circumstances: adjectives "locked" into postnominal position are ambiguous and may be either restrictive or nonrestrictive. The reverse arrangement of these circumstances is possible, but does not seem to me to be likely. Furthermore, 3a) has two subhypotheses of its own:

of the lexical meaning of the noun is not necessarily the case in post-position of the adjective. If we return now to the modification situation, then it seems that, while the adjective deictically modifies the noun as a noun in post-position (the unmarked word order), the adjective deictically modifies (= 'presupposes') not only the noun but also the lexical meaning of the noun in pre-position.

It is from this that one gets the impression that there are more objectively definable criteria for establishing the sense of the adjective in post-position. Thus the sense of *heureux* in *poète HEUREUX* does not differ significantly (or systematically) from its sense in *homme HEUREUX* 'happy man'; likewise *furieux* in both *mangeur FURIEUX* and *menteur FURIEUX* has essentially the same interpretation. The adjective in post-position attributes its quality to the noun as to ANY noun: a *poète HEUREUX* is 'happy' as any person might be 'happy'; a *menteur FURIEUX* and a *mangeur FURIEUX* are 'angry' as any person might be 'angry'; an *horne PAUVRE* 'a poor, impecunious man' and an *église PAUVRE* 'a poor, impecunious church' are both 'poor, impecunious' in basically the same way. In pre-position, however, the criteria for establishing the sense of the adjective are those specific lexical attributes of the noun to which the adjective refers: they seem to be more subjective, or less objective, because they depend in much larger measure on the specific lexical context. Thus *un PAUVRE homme* 'a poor, wretched man' and *une PAUVRE église* 'a poor, sorry church' may be 'poor' ('sorry, wretched, miserable') in entirely different ways, but these ways depend systematically on the particular noun modified" (p. 90).

3aa) While position may not serve to distinguish semantic restrictiveness from nonrestrictiveness, the latter is realized in other ways, perhaps through phonology:

$\overset{3}{\text{NP}}[\overset{1}{\text{Adj}} \overset{2}{\text{N}}]$ contains a nonrestrictive, obligatorily prenominal, adjective; $[\overset{1}{\text{Adj}} \overset{2-3}{\text{N}}]$ contains a restrictive obligatorily prenominal adjective. This is, of course, the manner in which English and other Germanic languages distinguish restrictive from nonrestrictive adjectives, since all are obligatorily prenominal, and care should be taken to ensure that the analyst not project English phonology on to Spanish. Yet, Wallis-Bull (1950) in their research had already recognized the role of phonology⁹.

3ab) There are not alternate structural mechanisms for distinguishing restrictive from nonrestrictive meaning.

There are a number of other hypotheses that follow from 1) - 3), that are fundamental to an investigation of the subject:

4) The circumstance described in 2) is radically altered when NPs contain more than one adjective; this means only NPs with embedded NPs, not NPs containing compound adjectives, with or without explicit conjuctions.

5) The circumstances described in 2) is one of *competence*, not of *performance*. Thus, we may encounter in (normally colloquial) discourse, or in casual written style, adjective collocations that, by virtue of information present elsewhere in the discourse, would seem to violate 2). They are perhaps neither exceptions to 2) nor examples of another class, but represent lapses of performance. Affective, foregrounded, stylistically selfconscious texts may, certainly, be expected to present examples of performance that deviate from the competence standards of colloquial discourse.

6) There is a category of adjectives covered neither by 1) or 2). These adjectives are "locked" into one of the two possible positions, but do not have semantically different but phonologically identical partners locked into the other position. Color adjectives would seem to be of this nature: they appear to be locked into postnominal position, may be either ambiguous as concerns restrictiveness vs. nonrestrictiveness, or may be either restrictive or nonrestrictive irrespective of their position.

⁹ Stress patterns of Spanish noun phrases are discussed in passing by Luján Gough (1972) in her Ch. III on attributive adjectives.

Thus,

- 49) el pasto verde

seems to involve a nonrestrictive adjective;

- 50) la corbata azul

a restrictive one; and

- 51) la nube blanca

an ambiguous one. For these items, prenominal collocation does not serve to distinguish between restrictive and nonrestrictive meanings, but to involve a redundancy phenomenon that copies in a foregrounded fashion a feature of the noun onto the adjective: this is the so-called "inherency" redundancy that is often confused with nonrestrictiveness (that redundancies are all redundantly (*pace* the *admiratio*) inherently nonrestrictive does not mean that only one phenomenon is involved: (49) is nonrestrictive in a different way than

- 52) Mi letrado colega

is. Waugh (1967), however, fails to make this distinction). This hypotheses (i.e., 6), in addition to proposing a potentially independent group of adjectives that deserve study, also suggests the need to study the relationship between redundant and nonrestrictive.

7) There are adjectives that may take either position, but are inherently marked as either restrictive or nonrestrictive, regardless of the position they take vis-à-vis the head noun. This is likely the case with *último* in

- 53) El *último* número de la revista ~ El número *último* de la revista.

That is, the adjective is restrictive in both positions and the synonymous variation must, therefore, be seen as essentially stylistic.

8) With adjectives covered by hypotheses 6), deviation from the norm produces at least a stylistically marked construction and at most an incidence of semantic contrast other than one based on restrictive vs. nonrestrictive. In the case of hypotheses 7), one of the two free positions will tend to be stylistically marked (e.g., foregrounded); with *último*, it is the postnominal position. Of course, the circumstance covered by 5) can result, consciously or not, in stylistically marking or foregrounding.

4. Related to the problem of discovering adjective categories based on a restrictive vs. nonrestrictive semantic feature and on prenominal vs. postnominal syntactic position is the question of derived

vs. base adjectives. Clearly, the identification of base adjective depends entirely on morphological and lexical criteria and not at all upon a semantic definition of adjective. And, since, with the exception of adjectives calqued from the other languages and a very few items historically Spanish (i.e., derived from Vulgar Latin), very few adjectives in Spanish cannot be shown to be derivationally related, either synchronically or diachronically, to lexical items assigned to other parts of speech, the decision as to what constitutes a base adjective as opposed to a derived one is difficult indeed. To be sure, one can establish a series of derivational suffixes:

54) -tico, -ero, -dor, -oso; ϕ may or may not be included.
But often these suffixes are assignable to other parts of speech as well (e.g., *-dor* is the paradigmatic agentive case marker). Is *traidor* in

55) un acto traidor
the root of *traidor* plus an adj ectivizing suffix, or is it a noun (derived from the verb via the addition of a nominalizing [agentive] suffix) “functioning” as an adjective—which is tantamount formally to saying that it is a noun (derived from a nominalized verb) adj ectivized by the addition of a ϕ suffix? These questions, however, are only indirectly semantic, and essentially involve the positing of descriptively adequate morphosyntactic criteria for purpose of lexical classification.

Where semantics becomes an issue is in whether there are restrictions—syntactic or semantic, or a combination of the two—in the behavior of derived adjectives (a circumstance that, with the circularity of description and verification that often characterizes linguistic analysis, may serve to determine which adjectives are derived). While base adjectives, especially those assignable to the category described by hypothesis 2) above, characteristically take either prenominal or postnominal positioning, derived adjectives typically belong to the category described by hypothesis 6); moreover, derived adjectives are locked into postnominal position. Related to this matter is the behavior of base and derived adjectives with *ser* and *estar*: with few exceptions, either type may take either copulative (*pace* the exceptions like *lleno* and *vacío* that take only *estar*, and adjectives of nationality that take only *ser* (although at least Argentine Spanish permits *estar* with such adjectives, with a meaning of “acting/behaving/looking like”)). However, some derived adjectives that are limited to postnominal position only take *estar*; if they take either position, they may also take either *ser* or *estar*. Generally, these

adjectives are verb-based past participles that are used as or have been transformed into adjectives.

For example, a past participle like *abierto* enjoys two separate roles in Spanish. On the one hand, it is a derived adjective whose nature as a verb is directly preserved semantically. Thus—and like the bulk of past participles—it may be used with *ser* to express a passive and with *estar* to express the result of that passive. In the first case, the aspectual meaning is inchoative (=active), while in the second case it is noninchoative (=stative): other aspects may also be involved: a *ser*-passive in the present tense is also typically imperfective. Either a *ser* or an *estar* structure may be gapped, to give an NP where the head noun is the subject of the copulative and the adjective is the complement of that verb:

- 56) La puerta es abierta por Juan. =>
- 57) La puerta abierta por Juan . . .
- 58) La puerta está (ya, etc.) abierta. =>
- 59) La puerta (ya, etc.) abierta.

In the first case, the verbal nature of the noun modified is clearly preserved, particularly where the *por* agentive phrase is retained; this is also true of the structure with *estar*, again particularly where the temporal/aspectual adverb is present. In the case of the structure derived from *ser* PP, the past participle/adjective is locked in the postnominal position; with the *estar* example, however, it is possible for the past participle/adjective to occur prenominally:

- 60) La (ya, etc.) abierta puerta.

Clearly, past participles associated with *estar* structures derive as adjectives covered by hypothesis 2). Note, however, that passives with *quedar*, *venir*, etc., derive NPs only marginally like *ser* passives:

- 61) Juan viene acompañado por María. =>
- 62) Juan, acompañado por María, . . .

But the force of such a structure is appositive, nonrestrictive. *Ser*-passives, however, seem to derive combinations that, despite the fixed postnominal position, may be restrictive or nonrestrictive:

- 63) La puerta abierta por Juan . . . =>
- 64) La puerta, abierta por Juan, . . .

Passives with *estar*, finally, derive NPs that behave exactly like *ser*:

- 65) La compañía está representada por la agencia. =>
- 66) La compañía (,) representada por la agencia (,) . . .

Of course, the commas that orthographically represent nonrestrictive, appositional structures are not optional: they are obligatorily present or not depending on the underlying semantic structure of the ambiguous utterance containing the *ser/estar*-passive.

Abierto, nevertheless, has another role in Spanish: it exists independently as a "full-fledged" adjective (i.e., *abierto*₂) that behaves like *bueno* and other items covered by hypothesis 2). It is, thus, related to *abrir* (and its *abierto*₁) only 1) as an item whose morphology is that of a past participle, 2) as an item historically but not synchronically related to the base-verb form, and 3) as an item whose semantics bear only a metaphoric relationship to those of the base-verb form. As such, *abierto* functions identically to, say, *bueno*, and may be used with *ser* or *estar* and in prenominal position:

- 67) Juan, como persona, es muy abierto.
- 68) El Gobierno ahora está más abierto en sus trampas.
- 69) Las personas abiertas me gustan.
- 70) Concurrieron los más abiertos defensores del plan.

There is a growing number of such adjectives in Spanish: *considerado*, *degenerado*, *cumplido*, *cerrado*, *volado*, *distinguido*, etc.

Although they have been widely commented on, mention should be made of those adjectives that are morphologically and diachronically past participles, but behave differently with *ser* and *estar*. That is, while they may occur both prenominally and postnominally, in fact they constitute sets of homologous items, one member of which, with its independent semantic meaning, occurring copulatively with *ser*, and the other, with its independent semantic meaning, with *estar*. Items like *cansado*, *aburrido*, *(des)interesado*, etc. are customarily cited as examples. Thus, the question of homology is fundamentally different from that of the items covered by hypothesis 1), since these items occur in both positions. They are, in fact, items covered by hypothesis 2), where many examples of homology are to be found that involve more than just the items cited that bear a morphological resemblance to past participles of verbs. It is interesting to note that, in some dialects of Spanish (e.g., *porteño* Spanish), there exists a morphological distinction between items with *ser* and items with *estar* in some cases. That is to say, the homology has been resolved by a suffix differentiation. Thus, while

- 71) El hombre está cansado/aburrido
remains,
- 72) El hombre es cansado/aburrido
becomes
- 73) El hombre es cansador/aburridor.

What has happened is that the adjectives have acquired an agentive suffix (or instrumental, in the case of occurrences with [-animate] nouns), reflecting their semantic relationship with the head noun:

- 74) El hombre aburre. =>

75) El hombre es aburridor.

This sort of relationship, to be sure, only reinforces the semantic interpretation whereby morphosyntactic categories are nonsemantically definable, the same semantic structure underlying forms from different categories that are mutually derivable from each other.

One last note: while items like *cansado* and *interesado* may appear to belong to the same syntactically-defined class, semantically they must be differentiated (they are morphologically differentiated in a dialect like Buenos Aires Spanish, where

76) *ser cansado* => *ser cansador*,
but

77) *ser interesado* ≠ > * *ser interesador*).

This is because in a structure with *ser cansado(r)*, the head noun is the agentive of the predicate underlying *cansador(r)*. With *estar*, the head noun is the experiencer of the underlying predicate:

78) Algo cansa el hombre. =>

79) El hombre está cansado.

But in the case of an adjective like *interesado*, the head noun is the experiencer in both cases:

80) El hombre está interesado. <=

81) El hombre tiene interés/Algo le interesa al hombre.

82) El hombre es interesado. <=

83) El hombre tiene intereses / El hombre es socio, etc.

5. Although there have been studies on compound exocentric nouns in Spanish, they have focused almost exclusively on N[N N] and N[V N] structures, with some interest in other possibilities (e.g. N[N Suffix], N[Prep N], etc.). The purpose of this section is to suggest some guidelines for the study of N[N Adj] and N[Adj N] compounds and their differentiation from NP[N Adj] and NP[Adj N] strings ¹⁰.

¹⁰ Concerning Spanish exocentric nouns and exocentric lexical items in general, see FOSTER (1976). There has been very little work on Spanish lexical compounds (with the exception of LLOYD (1968) on the very common pattern of verb-object combinations), and it is an undoubtedly fertile field for research investigation. Compounding has been studied for English most recently by MEYS (1975), and many of his points of departure are valid for Spanish, particularly in terms of the theoretical questions concerning lexical identity of compound items. Items in Spanish like *pequeñoburgués* (pl.: *pequeño-burgueses*), *tercermundista* (pl.: *terciermundistas*), etc. need also to be studied; they may be either adjective or φ-suffix derived nouns. Note also such pairs as *el carigordo* vs. *El Cara Gorda*, the latter being a productive pattern of epithet nicknaming in *porteño* Spanish.

The first point to be made —and here is the tie-in with the preceding section— is that the former often involve derived nouns:

- 84) N[N[lápiz] Adj[labial]].

To be sure, the most immediate problem is not the formal identification of compounds, although it is certainly reasonable to assume that we can safely count lexical items written as one word but composed of morphemes that have a separate, independent or quasi-independent status elsewhere in the lexicon:

- 85) tirabuzón vs. tira(r), buzón
- 86) también vs. tan, bien
- 87) autopista vs. auto, pista
- 88) maniatar vs. mano, atar.

Although a formal identification based on phonology is more immediate in English (e.g., 13 stress, noun-noun compounds), it may be equally possible in Spanish (cf the phonology of *El abre latas* vs. *el abrelatas*, of *tan bien* vs. *también*). Rather, the problem is more directly a semantic one. What criteria are implied by the statement that *lápiz pequeño* is not an exocentric compound, but *lápiz labial* is?

True, there are certain syntactic criteria that can be adduced in support of such an assertion; such criteria bear directly on the question of the syntax and the semantics of adjectives in Spanish. For example, *lápiz pequeño* contrasts with *pequeño lápiz*, while *lápiz labial* does not contrast with **labial lápiz*; the latter structure is virtually ungrammatical. While one could argue that this ungrammaticality is the result of an inherent positional restriction of *labial*, either as a single lexical item or as the member of a specific class of adjectives, whether defined semantically (?) or morphologically (i.e., Adj[N al]), I suggest that what is at issue is more pertinently the fact that *lápiz labial* is an exocentric compound whose constituents are fixed in a specific order. For example, in *maniatar*, *mano* and *atar* are fixed in the NV order, despite the fact that in a non-compound paraphrase, either constituent may come first:

- 89) Lo maniataron.
- 90) Le ataron las manos.
- 91) Las manos se las ataron.
- 92) Las manos le fueron atadas.

Thus, I am proposing that there are N[N Adj] compounds in Spanish whose constituents, although rarely written as one word (cf., however, *carigordo*, *cariparejo*, *carirraido* and similar items), are as fixed in their relative order as though they were. There are also

N[Adj N] items, although they are fewer in number; some of these are also written as one word, although such is not the typical pattern: cf. the colloquial noun

- 93) *buenamoza* (=ictericia)
or the noun/adjective

- 94) *buenmozo* (=guapo).

Of course, to the extent that many nouns and adjectives in Spanish are not formally distinguished from each other, lexical items that exemplify N[N Adj] structures may also be examples of Adj[N Adj]).

Furthermore, when *lápiz pequeño* and *lápiz labial* combine with other adjectives, the fact that they are structurally different again becomes manifest. Thus, any adjective that may combine semantically with *lápiz* (and also with *pequeño*) can be positioned in any one of the grammatical slots around *lápiz* (of course, there are syntactic unitary compound lexical item) as a whole or after it, but not between its fixed constituent members, which may not be clefted:

- 95) *delicado lápiz pequeño*
96) *lápiz delicado pequeño*
97) *lápiz pequeño delicado*.

Note that these three strings are not synonymous; what is at issue is the freedom of order between the two adjectives and the noun from a purely syntactic point of view. However, in the case of *lápiz labial*, another adjective may go only either before the phrase (i.e., unitary compound lexical item) as a whole or after it, but not between its fixed constituent members, which may not be clefted:

- 98) *grueso lápiz labial*
99) * *lápiz grueso labial*
100) *lápiz labial grueso*.

Thus, the first example demonstrates the pattern of a noun modified by a prepositional adjective, the third a noun modified by a postpositional adjective. The fact that the noun is compound becomes a matter of its internal structure, which an adjective may no more cleft than it can with other compound nouns like *abrelatas*, *autopista*, *malentendido*, *sobretodo*.

The constituent structures of such noun phrases, therefore, look like this:

- 101) *grueso lápiz labial* NP[Adj N] → NP[Adj[grueso]
N[N[lápiz] Adj[labial]]]
102) *lápiz labial grueso* NP[N Adj] → NP[N[N[lápiz]
Adj[labial]] Adj[grueso]].

And too, *labial* should properly be written as a derived adjective:

- 103) Adj[N[labio] al]

One final note of a formal nature: it needs to be seen to what extent such NAdj and AdjN compound nouns involve noun-derived adjectives like *labial*. I venture to guess that it is quite a high number. Nevertheless, there are many such items that involve so-called base adjectives, like *cabecita negra*, *medialuna* (or *media luna*) and *piel roja*, a fact that is even more important when we return to semantic criteria.

The usual definition of an exocentric compound stresses how its constituents, characteristically independent lexical items in the language, have an independent meaning that is lost or significantly altered when making up a compound. A paradigmatic example in English is *blackboard*. Nowadays, they are neither black nor boards. Or, in the case of *blackbird*, while the constituents have a more exact or primary meaning (as opposed to metaphorical meaning, as in *bookworm*, or “vocated” meaning, as in *blackboard*), together they signify a unitary phenomenon—a species—rather than any bird that is black. While advances in semantic theory may serve to refine such a definition, it is accurate, *grosso modo*, in that it is based on the idea that an exocentric compound refers to a unitary semantic concept independent from those referred to by its constituents “outside” the compound. English-language dictionaries observe this principle in determining what groups of lexical items constitute compounds and thereby deserve independent listing, definition, and, often, pictorial representation. Spanish-language dictionaries do so, unfortunately, only for items written as one word. Thus, *carigordo* is listed separately from *cara* and *gordo*, but *lápiz labial* is not (although *lipstick* is in a typical dictionary of English). Such a difference reflects the relative unsophistication, linguistically speaking, of the Academia Española, whose lexicographical and morphosyntactic norms are regrettably followed all too uncritically throughout the Spanish speaking world.

Turning to some further Spanish items that pose interesting syntactic-semantic considerations, let us examine *piel roja*, *cabecita negra* and *papafrita* (vs. *papa frita*). All three are N[N Adj] items (the last two are colloquial *porteño* items, but no less pertinent); the first two are written as two words, but the latter is written as one word (*papa frita*, written as two words, may also be a candidate for an independent compound item, depending on how it is viewed syntactically). The orthography is bound up with plural formation: *pieles rojas* and *cabecitas negras*, but *papafritas*. These compounds contrast with noun phrases, and thus it is possible to study differences in behavior between the compounds and the noun phrases.

For example, the noun phrases have the gender of the head noun, a fact reflected in agreement with other adjectives:

- 104) una porción de exquisitas papas fritas.

However, some compounds also have the gender of the head noun. Nevertheless, compound nouns that are [+ human] (and those that are in general [+ animate]) are masculine or feminine on the basis of their referents:

- 105) El es un papafrita.

- 106) Ella es una papafrita.

Further adjectives agree with this referent-determined gender:

- 107) El es un papafrita cuadrado.

- 108) Ellos son típicos cabecitas negras desgraciados.

One could even make the point with facetious exaggeration. *Frito* in *porteño* Spanish means "done for", while *rojo* in general Spanish means "Commie" (indeed, in some dialects there is even the minimal semantic contrast, in the realm of political classification, between normally synonymous *rojo* and *colorado*: the first is "red" in the sense of Communist or socialist, and the second is conservative after the symbolic name of a political party). Thus, we could have

- 109) un papafrita frito,

as opposend to the redundant

- 110) papa frita (bien) frita/refrita

or

- 111) un piel roja rojo.

Moreover, since *frita* and *roja* are part of the internal syntactic-semantic structure of *papafrita* and *piel roja* and are only remotely related to the adjectives *frito* (literal or slang-metaphoric) and *rojo*, the latter may even be used negatively without semantic malformmedness. While

- 112) *una milanesa frita no frita

would be contradictory and therefore ungrammatical,

- 113) un papafrita (todavía) no frito

is linguistically acceptable, as is

- 114) un piel roja no rojo (sino conservador).

These are particularly vivid, albeit rather colloquial and facetious examples that lend further support to the attempt to identify N[N Adj] and N[Adj N] compounds in Spanish.

Two other points should be noted here. One concerns the fact that the conversion of a *fem.* [-human] noun (or a *masc.* one for that matter) into a *masc./fem.* [+human] noun is very much a productive pattern in *porteño* Spanish and involves single-word lexical items in addition to items like *papafrita* and *cabecita negra*. Thus,

there is a clear semantic as well as morphosyntactic distinction between the following pairs (note that the third pair is exceptional in that there is a gender marker change in the lexical item itself; in most cases, homophonous pairs are involved, with the article and other agreeing segments marking the differentiating gender):

- 115) una zanahoria negra
- 116) un zanahoria negro
- 117) una bestia tremenda
- 118) un bestia tremendo
- 119) una momia vieja
- 120) un momio viejo.

Not surprisingly, such a pattern includes scatalogical pejoratives:

- 121) la mierda
- 122) el/la mierda.

While many masculine nouns simply acquire a feminine counterpart (*el tipo* vs. *la tipa*), feminine non-human nouns typically reflect their conversion into masculine human nouns only by the article and adjective agreement, without alternation of the gender morphemes suffixed to the stem. Note that this productive pattern is not quite the same as the (essentially) fossilized alternation between *la guía* and *el guía*, *la policía* and *el policía*. The masculine counterparts are [+profession] nouns (Stevens (1966) rightly recognizes the need for such a feature, if only for syntactic reasons), while the feminine counterparts are not; they are either [+mass], as in the case of *la policía*, or are the intrinsic object of the predicate underlying the [+profession] noun:

- 123) El guía es una guía que habla.

Or, alternately, it is the [+human] counterpart:

- 124) No me conformo con una guía —una cosa muerta—, pues son mucho más amenos los guías personales.

However, with the entrance of women into the professions, there is now more of a relationship of the sort *la guía* vs. *el/la guía*. Nevertheless, semantically the relationship between *guía* [-profession and *guía* [+profession] is more direct (i.e., it is metonymic) than that between *mierda* [-human] and *mierda* [+human], where we would expect to speak of a metaphoric, hypostatic process.

The other issue concerns the internal structure of derived Adj constituents of N[N Adj] items (N[Adj N] items are only marginally involved, since derived adjectives tend to be fixed in postnominal position). Our previous examples concerned only items of the configuration Adj[N al]. However, not all adjectives of this nature form compounds when used with nouns (*trabajo manual*, Adj[N[mano]

al], is not likely to be perceived as an exocentric compound), nor are all derived adjectives that form compounds with nouns of this nature. *Libro de texto*, N[N[libro] Adj[Prep[de] N[texto]]], is certainly a compound, while *análisis textual* is not: NP[N[análisis] Adj[N[texto] al]]. Thus, the types of derived adjectives, including prominently those that are prepositional phrases internally, must be studied in detail.

6. We now come in this and the following sections to what must rank as the most complex issues associated with Spanish adjectives: the semantic classification of adjectives and the effect of that classification of the relative ordering of two or more adjectives used with one head noun.

That a semantic classification of adjectives is necessary is evident from examining the following ungrammatical or questionably grammatical strings (many of my examples are drawn from the exercises in Neale-Silva and Nelson (1967); only strings involving postnominal modifiers will be discussed, although the issue of semantic classification affects prenominal modifiers and combinations of pre- and postnominal modifiers as well):

125) * la poesía contemporánea española (prefer: la poesía española contemporánea)

126) ? * una chaqueta vistosa roja (prefer: una chaqueta roja vistosa)

127) ? * la clase numerosa reaccionaria (prefer: la clase reaccionaria numerosa)

128) * una actitud abierta moral (prefer: una actitud moral abierta)

129) * una acción sostenida mecánica (prefer: una acción mecánica sostenida).

The following factors must be investigated:

1) Pre- or postnominal adjectives that are fixed in their respective positions, vs. those that may occupy either position, with or without semantic difference (see following section on the preposing of postnominal adjectives). For example, we may have.

130) una actitud moral abierta

or

131) una abierta actitud moral,
but not

132) la poesía española contemporánea
alternating with

133) * la contemporánea poesía española.

2) The distinction to be made between strings of $N \text{ Adj}^n_1, \text{Adj}^n_1 N, \text{Adj}^n_1 N \text{ Adj}^n_1$ that involve adjectives that are essentially conjoined and those that involve adjectives that modify (successively) internal NPs. For example, the string

- 134) la intensa luz brillante

could conceivably derive from the conjoining, with appropriate gapping and reordering, of

- 135) la luz intensa | =>
 136) la luz brillante

- 137) la luz intensa y brillante =>

- 138) la luz intensa, brillante =>

- 139) la intensa luz brillante.

However, the phrase

- 140) la clase reaccionaria numerosa

involves, not two conjoined adjectives that "equally" modify *clase*, but rather an NP consisting of a modified NP:

- 141) $\text{NP}[\text{NP}[N[\text{clase}]] \text{ Adj}[\text{reaccionaria}]] \text{ Adj}[\text{numerosa}]$.

That is,

- 142) la clase reaccionaria que es numerosa,

not

- 143) *la clase reaccionaria y numerosa.

It is with latter types of strings that questions of semantic ranking of adjectives are concerned. *Brillante* and *intensa* are interchangeable vis-à-vis *luz* because they are conjoined, and conjoining normally requires some sort of semantic identity of the conjoined element (which is why

- 144) Juan va y viene.

is grammatical, but

- 145) *Juan va y está triste.

is not). *Reaccionaria* and *numerosa* are, however, not interchangeable because they are neither conjoined nor are they semantically equal—i.e., they do not belong to the same semantic subset of adjectives. To be sure, *intensa luz brillante* could also be an example of $\text{NP}[\text{NP} \text{ Adj}]$ or $\text{NP}[\text{Adj} \text{ NP}]$, where *intensa* and *brillante* could or could not belong to the same semantic class—i.e., where class identity is necessary for conjoining, non-identity is *not* necessary for nested modification. Moreover, nested modification may or not involve prenominal transportation of the other modifier; more on this below.

- 3) Any attempt at semantic classification of adjectives must take

into account the questions raised previously of adjectives vs. non-- or preadjectives and of adjectives locked into specific positions relative to the nominals. For example,

- 146) *un viejo amigo íntimo*

could be an example of either conjoining or nested modification; in either case *viejo* (i.e., *viejo₁*) is locked into prenominal position in the string in which conjoining markers are deleted (cf. *un amigo viejo e íntimo*). On the other hand, either

- 147) *un amigo viejo íntimo* (prefer, however, *un íntimo viejo amigo*)

or

- 148) *un amigo íntimo viejo*

is permissible and both are examples of nested modification involving *viejo₂*, which is locked into a postnominal position. Note that, in this case, either order is possible, despite the fact that the adjectives do not belong to the same semantic subset. Clearly, some subsets must have a fixed order relative to each other, while others may occupy the same position and may, therefore, order themselves quite freely. What this means is that, in the first case, there is a semantically-based hierarchy, while in the second case there is not.

4) Modifiers that have past-participle morphology (i.e., one of the allomorphs of [DOJ]) may be either semantically defined adjectives only superficially, having been joined to an N or NP through syntactic pruning;

- 149) *La reunión importante que fue convocada por el jefe.* =>

- 150) *La reunión importante (,) convocada por el jefe.*

If the agentive phrase is deleted, the past participle functions like any true postnominal adjective; since it tends to be the outer adjective in the nested structure, it may also be preposed, although perhaps less freely (hence, an explicit sign of its different semantic and syntactic origins) than true adjectives (whether base or derived) like *intensa* and *íntimo* above:

- 151) *La reunión importante convocada* =>

- 152) *La convocada reunión importante.*

What complicates this issue is the difficulty in distinguishing between items whose suffix is an allomorph of [DO] that are past participles and those that have become true (albeit derived) adjectives in the language synchronically. Thus, in

- 153) *una abierta actitud moral,*

abierta is only etymologically related to *abrir* and its past participle, *abierto*, and has an independent lexical status in Spanish (as does *sostenido* in (129)).

What, then, might such a classification look like? Clearly, it would have to correlate four phenomena:

1) adjectives that are positionally fixed;

2) adjectives that are subcategorized in terms of their occurrence with *ser* and/or *estar*—this sort of subcategorization appears to affect both concatenation,

154) * un vaso verde y vacío,

as well as nesting,

155) un vaso verde vacío,

but not

156) * un vacío vaso verde;

3) adjectives whose semantic subclass is related to the semantic subclass of the noun (derivationally or otherwise; cf. tautologies and redundancies) and those that are not:

157) un texto literario

vs.

158) un texto llamativo;

however,

159) * un literario texto

vs.

160) un llamativo texto.

4) adjectives that order themselves hierarchically and those that do not. Another consideration may enter in:

5) adjectives that are semantically restrictive and those that are not vis-à-vis the head noun.

It would seem that adjectives that are directly or indirectly related to the head noun via semantic subclassification are closer to that noun:

161) un texto literario llamativo

vs.

162) * un texto llamativo literario;

or:

163) un ciudadano español reaccionario

vs.

164) ? * un ciudadano reaccionario español.

Adjectives dealing with color, size, extent, intensity, all tend to be farther removed from the noun and to order freely among themselves (keeping in mind that different orders do, however, represent different nested semantic structures):

165) una porcelana china blanca

166) una porcelana china enorme

- 167) una porcelana china chata, etc.

However, either

- 168) una porcelana china blanca

or

- 169) una porcelana blanca china

are permissible orders, since either *blanca* or *china* may be shown to belong to a semantic subset related to that of *porcelana* (i.e., typical colors or cultural origins). Other semantic classes may also be related to *porcelana*, like dimension (*delicada*) or quality (*fina*). Typically, adjectives that belong to the same subclass as the head noun are nonrestrictive and, hence, characteristically prenominal:

- 170) blanca porcelana

- 171) fina porcelana

- 172) delicada porcelana, etc.

But not, however,

- 173) *china porcelana.

The ungrammaticality of this last phrase would tend to indicate either 1) that, despite the nonrestrictive semantic subclass identity of *china* with *porcelana*, *china* may not be prepositioned; or 2) that, despite the semantic subclass identity of *china* with *porcelana*, *china* is always restrictive and must, therefore, be postpositioned. There would thus, seem to be a clear relationship between point 3) and a possible point 5) of the phenomena to be correlated listed above.

In sum, then, there are clear restrictions on the combination of adjectives in any language, not only in terms of noun-adjective co-occurrence and adjective-adjective co-occurrences, but in terms of the *order* of the several adjectives that can co-occur with a noun. In Spanish, the problems of charting such restrictions, which are more complicated than in English because of the added dimension of pre-vs. postnominal positioning, have been virtually unstudied. While there do exist vague generalizations concerning "intrinsic" vs. "extrinsic" modifiers (i.e., presumably modifiers that share a semantic subclass with the head noun and those that do not), the description of relative orders and hierarchies and the accounting for them in terms of position and semantic restrictiveness/nonrestrictiveness constitute one of the truly unexplored realms of Spanish structure.

7. The problem of the transposition of Spanish adjectives in nested structures is directly related to the questions of restrictiveness/

nonrestrictiveness and the semantic subclassification syntactic ordering of adjectives¹¹. Take, for example, a phrase like

174) una delicada porcelana china.

Because both *delicada* and *china* are related semantically to *porcelana* (in a way that the adjectives of

175) una esférica porcelana esquimal

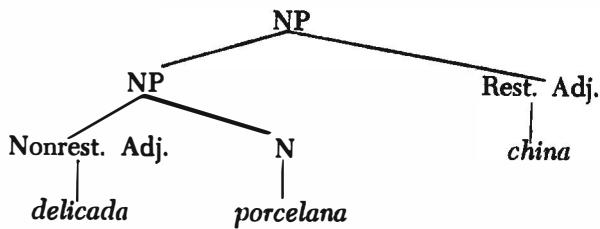
are not), the phrase is multiply ambiguous. The following structural descriptions indicate the principal semantic readings of this phrase:

¹¹ ZIERER (1974: 38-40) mentions the need to distinguish between gradable and ungradable adjectives; "gradation" is presumably a semantic feature. LJUNG (1970) provides interesting information on semantic classes of English adjectives, but no information on their rank-ordering. Basic information concerning adjective position and order in Spanish is provided by STOCKWELL *et al.* (1965: 87ff.), and for English by FRIES (1952: Ch. x). LUJÁN (1974) provides some information concerning adjective classes, at least as concerns the behavior of predicate adjectives. BRACAMONTE (1974) also notes some classificational features, but without any revealing analysis. Quirk *et al.* (1972) provides the most detailed semantic subclassification of English adjectives I have seen (sections 5.3775.41 and 13.65-13.76). The following chart is from p. 925:

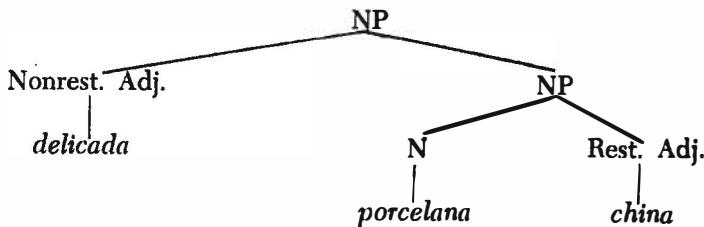
<i>determiners etc.</i>	<i>general</i>	<i>age</i>	<i>colour</i>	<i>participle</i>
the	hectic			
the	extravagant			
a				crumbling
a			grey	crumbling
some	intricate	old		interlocking
a	small		green	carved
his	heavy	new		

<i>provenance</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>denominal</i>	<i>head</i>
		social	life
	London	social	life
	church		tower
Gothic	church		tower
Chinese	jade		designs
		moral	idol
			responsabilities

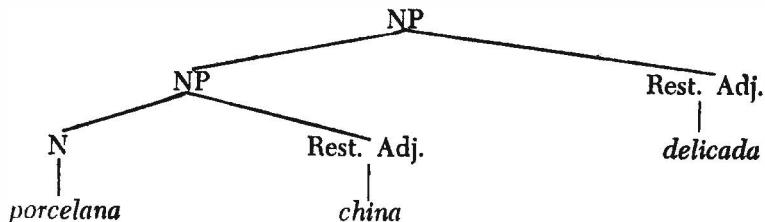
176) NP[NP[Adj N] Adj]



177) NP[Adj NP[N Adj]]



178) NP[NP[N Adj] Adj] => NP[Adj NP[N Adj]]



In principle, any one of these structures is a reasonable semantic interpretation of AdjNAdj strings; strings involving more than two adjectives simply become further multiples of these three possibilities. Readings (176-178) do not, however, take into account the following restrictions per foregoing discussions:

- 1) certain adjectives may be fixed in a pre- or postnominal position;

2) despite such a limitation, an adjective may be either restrictive or nonrestrictive; conversely, an adjective that positions freely may possibly be only restrictive or nonrestrictive;

3) questions of semantic hierarchy may prefer one of the three possible readings to the total or partial exclusion of the other three. By the same token, the number of readings can be increased if either the postnominal position within a simple NP can be shown to be also nonrestrictive or the prenominal position to be also restrictive; as it is, with the exception of the adjective-movement transformation at issue in reading (178), I am pursuing the cautious and traditional tack of assuming that, with the exception of adjectives like *viejo*₁ vs. *viejo*₂, all prenominal adjectives are attributive-nonrestrictive and all postnominal ones are qualifying-restrictive.

The salient feature of the three readings proposed is that, for a broad spectrum of adjectives, a restrictive, postnominal adjective used with an NP consisting, in turn, of an N and a restrictive, postnominal adjective (i.e., NP[NP[N Adj] Adj]) may be positioned prenominally with regard to the inner NP (i.e., => NP[Adj NP[N Adj]]); if such a transformation takes place, the adjective that has been moved does *not* cease to be restrictive, despite its new prenominal position, although it does become ambiguous, since it has the same surface-structure order as readings (176 and 177). Note that such a movement is quasi-obligatory, in the sense that the untransformed string is somehow stylistically unnatural, even if it is not strictly ungrammatical:

- 179) ?porcelana china delicada.

On the other hand, the adjective-movement transformation is not applicable to all adjectives, and account must be taken of the fact that, in the case of the following string, the transformed structure is marginally ungrammatical, while the *untransformed* string is colloquially and formally correct:

- 180) poesía española contemporánea =>

- 181) *contemporánea poesía española.

There are a number of possible explanations for this, such as the fact that *poesía española* may be a quasi-N rather than an NP, in which case the input structural index of the adjective-movement transformation would not be met and the transformation would not apply, as in the case of

- 182) papafrita frito ([NP[N[N Adj] Adj]) =>

- 183) *frito papafrita.

While such an interpretation has some merit, if only intuitively, it involves the vague notion of quasi-NPs (as opposed to NPs and

lexicalized NAdj/AdjN structures). Probably more persuasive is the notion that the blocking of the adjective-movement transformation is the result of semantic subclass membership of certain adjectives, of which *contemporánea* would be one example; adjectives transformationally derived from verbs might be another group of examples, but this time syntactically rather than semantically defined (note that *delicada* is not such an example, despite its apparent [DO] allomorph; there is no putative *delicar* base verb):

- 184) cartas diplomáticas firmadas =>

- 185) ? * firmadas cartas diplomáticas.

Note, too, that NP[NP[N Adj] Adj] => NP[Adj NP[N Adj]] phenomena also include inner adjectives of the configuration Adj [Prep N]:

- 186) cartas de amor sentimentales =>

- 187) sentimentales cartas de amor.

Yet, care must be taken to distinguish NPrepN strings that are examples of NP[N Adj[Prep N]] from those that are examples of N[N Adj[Prep N]]. *Cartas de amor* may be a noun phrase, although it comes close to being a fully lexicalized noun; *pata de cabra* (i.e., the idiom for "crowbar") is a fully lexicalized noun item. In the case of the latter type of strings, any adjective is pre—or postpositional in accord with normal semantic criteria. At the same time, Adj [Prep N] extrapolation is more likely to occur with NPs than with Ns whose primary adjective is of this configuration:

- 188) cartas de amor sentimentales =>

- 189) cartas sentimentales de amor.

That is, *de amor* has been (optionally) extrapolated outside the inner NP, leaving an ambiguous NAdjAdj[Prep N] string (i.e., either NP[NP[N Adj[Prep N]] Adj] or NP[NP[N Adj] Adj[Prep N]]). Such an extrapolation transformation is highly questionable for fully lexicalized strings:

- 190) pata de cabra maciza ≠>

- 191) * pata maciza de cabra.

Compare, of course, literal *pata maciza de cabra* ("hefty ewe's foot") with * *pata maciza de cabra* ("hefty crowbar"; prefer (190)). The applicability/non-applicability of the extrapolation transformation clearly offers one test to separate NPs from fully—and possibly partially—lexicalized Ns that derive diachronically from metaphorized (= idiomatized) NPs.

Another consideration concerns AdjAdjN strings. One must ask to what extent are these strings examples of

- 192) Adj N Conj Adj N => Adj Conj Adj N => Adj Adj N
- 193) NP[Adj NP[Adj N]]
- 194) NP[NP[Adj N] Adj] => NP[Adj NP[Adj N]].

Is it questionable whether the adjective-movement transformation applies to strings like that in (194):

- 195) delicada porcelana costosa =>
- 196) ? * costosa delicada porcelana
- 197) delicada porcelana china ≠>
- 198) * china delicada porcelana.

The latter example, of course, is ungrammatical, more by virtue of the positional restrictions on adjectives of the semantic subclass to which *china* belongs than to restrictions on the syntactic application of the adjective-movement transformation that have to do with surface constraints (in the sense of those studied by Perlmutter (1971) and Rivero (1971), and not with semantics.

In any case, we must recognize the fundamental ambiguity of AdjNAdj strings, to the extent that the first Adj may be restrictive or nonrestrictive and may have been or not syntactically repositioned by virtue of an adjective-movement transformation that operates on some strings containing two adjectives, one of which is postnominally restrictive vis-à-vis an inner NP.

8. Clearly, the issues raised in this paper can do no more than serve as suggestions for the sort of in-depth research inquiry that each one deserves. Although many examples of adjective structures have been given, and some of the directions such inquiries may take have been detailed, it should be evident that no more than a prolegomena to such research has been provided.

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