

SPANISH NOUN AND ADJECTIVE WORD ORDER AND THE UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE

Section 1. Introduction

The topic of descriptive adjective (A) and noun (N) word order in Spanish has received so much attention that researchers are beginning to apologize for saying anything more about the matter. There is no need for apology as long as the data remain unaccounted for. Previous analyses do account for most cases but they always leave behind a residue of recalcitrant counterexamples, or the distinctions they draw are too vague to be verified.

My analysis accounts for the following facts: for a given lexical item, one of the following is true for the sequences AN and NA: a. NA is well-formed, and *AN is not. Example: "ingeniero japonés" (Japanese engineer) "*japonés ingeniero". b. NA is well-formed, and ?AN is not totally bad but is highly marked semantically. Example: "brisa caliente" (hot breeze) "?caliente brisa". The boundary between (a) and (b) will vary from speaker to speaker. c. NA is not equal to AN. Both are well-formed but have very different meanings. Some speakers even call these homonyms. Example: "estudiante pobre" (penniless student) "pobre estudiante" (unfortunate student). d. NA=AN. The meaning of both orders is very close if not identical. Example: "brisa tibia" (mild breeze) and "tibia brisa" (Demonte, 1982, p.480) e. AN is well-formed and *NA is not. Example: "mero niño" (mere child), "*niño mero".

These data form a continuum. At one extreme, NA is well-formed and *AN is very bad, and at the other, the reverse is true. In between these poles, both word orders are acceptable and the meaning will be affected to various degrees, from no effect to drastic effect. In this paper, I will review how some recent proposals have handled this continuum. Since none of them have accounted for the whole spectrum of possibilities on the continuum, I have designed a proposal of my own to fill this need. This will be presented after I have critiqued the other proposals. Finally, I will discuss the fit between discourse analysis and semantics in connection with Spanish adjective and noun word order, as well as present the pedagogical implications.

Section 1. Klein-Andreu's Principle of Contrast

Flora Klein-Andreu (1983) proposes that "póst-position of A signals the meaning 'contrast'... whereas pre-position of A signals noncontrast". Her definition of "contrast" is that which "establishes difference" (p. 150). She claims that this dichotomy explains straightforward examples such as "vino dulce" (sweet wine) as well as the stylistic cases discussed below. The difficulty with this distinction is two-fold: first, the definition of the terms turns out to be vague, and second, Klein is forced into subdividing each term into unrelated

subcategories. That is, a contrastive A either distinguished (established difference) or serves as emphasis, while a noncontrastive A will either deemphasize, express opinion, or simply not establish difference. (pp. 150, 154, 157) Her motivation for this taxonomy is that different discourse contexts force out different implications of the two main categories. But as the reviewer Comrie said, her "account subsumes the various list of factors and exceptions of traditional analyses." (1986, p. 164) That is, she is just rearranging the traditional hodge-podge of unrelated categories.

As we walk Klein's proposal through her own data, problems with the contrastive-noncontrastive dichotomy come to the fore. The first problematic example is the following, from a romantic novel. A married couple has just witnessed a wedding which causes them to reflect on their own love: (Translations and emphases in all quotes are Klein's.)

El tránsito de una casa a otra era cortísimo; pero sin reflexionar le alargaron ellos... contemplando LA BOVEDA-INMENSA del firmamento...

'The walk from one house to the other was very short, but they prolonged it inadvertently...gazing at the INMENSE VAULT (NA) of the firmament...' (pp.154-155)

"Bóveda inmensa" is the main form in question. The problem is that even though the adjective is postposed, "its characterization as 'inmense' cannot be intended to distinguish it from other possible referents..." Rather, the contrastive use "forces us to consider the immensity of the sky as something worthy of notice..." (p.155) That is, the A is emphasized. This notion of "emphasis" is problematic to say the least. What if one wanted to both emphasize and distinguish? It seems that these are independent phenomena. More disturbing is that sometimes the order NA establishes difference and sometimes it does not. This makes the value of correlating contrast with word order questionable.

Here is another example of a noncontrastive postposed A, and "what is at issue is just, and only (purely and simply), the film-as-story".

Trata ante todo, del propio Malraux, hasta el punto de que *Espoir*, como película, como RELATO PURO Y SIMPLE, es...indisociable de la vida y personalidad del escritor francés. 'Above all it deals with Malraux himself, to the point that *Espoir*, as a film, as PURE AND SIMPLE NARRATION (NAA)... is inseparable from the life and personality of the French author.' (p.164)

As in English, and according to Klein's translation as well as the native speakers I have asked, "puro y simple" functions as an idiom chunk. Together, the two words mean "merely", "nothing but". As with any idiom, if broken into separate lexemes, each lexeme reverts to its literal meaning. In this case, if either "puro" or "simple" had been used, the "contrastive" meaning of purity or simplicity could have come across. If we accept that "puro y simple" is non-contrastive, it might not be a counterexample after all. It not only is an idiom, but is composed of two adjectives. Maybe there are syntactic constraints on idiomatic groupings of adjectives that only permit the postposed position.

But even if we ignore that argument of neutralization of position, it would seem that "puro y simple" does contrast in some sense. The film is being

contrasted with itself so to speak as mere narration as opposed to an embellished version of the author's life. This raises the problem of vagueness in the term "contrastive". My analysis below will surmount this vexing difficulty.

In her discussion of preposed position communicating opinion, she includes examples such as the ironic "valiente amigo" (a 'fine' friend), "malditas moscas" (damned flies) and "mero" (mere). (p. 158) But as I pointed out before, this is no improvement over the list of tendencies Klein herself gathered from previous research, including "subjective, short epithets, nondistinguishing", and so on. (p. 146)

Her most perplexing example is of a preposed adjective that is contrastive; it fails to fulfill the expected noncontrastive function.

Lo que a él le importaba era que SU PURA Y HERMOSA HIJA no disfrutase de nada que no fuese suyo.

What mattered to him was that HIS INNOCENT AND LOVELY DAUGHTER (AAN) should not enjoy wealth that was not rightfully hers.' (p.164)

"Here, "pura" is noncontrastive (preposed), yet it is understood in the sense usually associated with its contrastive use...as 'innocent' or 'chaste.' (p.164) Klein then explains that "pura" is nondistinguishing in relation to "su hija" and does not imply a comparison with any other daughters since the man only has one. In other words the context forces one to follow a chain of implications that finally ends up with noncontrastive meaning. My analysis will circumvent this roundabout characterization of contrastive nouns which ultimately turn up as noncontrastive. "Pura" is noncontrastive (what I will call nonrestrictive) from the start, as will be clear in Section 4. This vagueness and sensation of no real progress in Klein's model led me to consider proposals that antedate hers in the following two sections.

Section 2. Semantic Dependency between Noun and Adjective

Waugh (1977), dealing with the same issue of noun and adjective word order in French, offers a very different analysis. At first it has intuitive appeal, but upon examination it does not seem to explain much. She differentiates the two word orders as follows: For the NA sequence, the A presupposes just that the N is substantive; it is not sensitive to its semantic content. (p.94) There is "a certain independence of N and A" (p 84) For the AN sequence, however, the A does propose the semantic identity of N, "that a particular lexical item is there." (p.95) That is, you must know the lexical content of the N in order to understand the A, because there is more dependence between them. (p.84) In her exact words, "pre-position of the adjective assumes (minimally) the deictic recognition of the lexical morpheme of the substantive". (pp. 132-133)

In other words, her position (pun intended) is that in the preposed case, the meaning of the A is fully understood in relation to the N, whereas in postposition, the A retains the same absolute meaning no matter what noun happens to be around. I do not see how this can be true, and her example below makes this no clearer:

Waugh translates the French, "un furieux menteur" as "a compulsive liar", "un furieux mangeur" as a "compulsive eater", "un menteur furieux" as "an angry liar", and "un x furieux" would be "an angry so-and-so", (e.g. an angry cook). (pp. 96,98) Waugh asserts that the meaning of "compulsive" depends on the noun; that being compulsive as a liar involves behavior peculiar to a liar, while being compulsive as an eater involves behavior applicable to an eater. Of course compulsive lying is different from compulsive eating. But it seems one could just as easily look at it from the other point of view namely that "compulsive" is independent from the lexical content of the substantive. In both cases, whether eating or lying, "compulsive" refers to uncontrolled behavior, to repeating an action obsessively. The meaning of "compulsive" seems to be just as independent from the meaning of "liars" and "eaters" as "angry" is. The claim, remember, is that "angry" is independent from the noun because it is postposed. But the again, anger could be just as dependent on the noun as compulsion. An eater may manifest his anger by throwing food around, and a liar may manifest it by telling especially malicious lies. The point is that there is no principled way to use the distinction of independence and dependence, of deictic recognition of a N as a part of speech versus a particular lexeme. Or at least the distinction is too vaguely drawn to be useful.

Even if we assume the distinction itself were perfectly clear, it still fails to explain the function of preposed A's in cases like "terrible catastrophe" and "malditas moscas". How do the meaning of those A's depend upon the N? It would seem that in "un terrible escándalo" or "terrible música", the A means the same thing as in "terrible catástrofe"; namely, that whatever the event, it is viewed as extremely awful. Similarly, one can have the attitude expressed by "maldito" toward anything, such as toward the "malditas cámaras" that people keep sneaking into concerts. "Maldito" expresses dislike or undesirability of an item or event, no matter what it happens to be.

Finally one more issue that Waugh raises with her analysis is that of mixing levels. It postposed nouns are only sensitive to what part of speech the preceding word is, and if preposed nouns are sensitive to the lexical content of the following word, then we have a syntactic for the former and a semantic criterion for the latter. Now is she simply saying that in the postposed environment the semantic value of the N is irrelevant, then what is added to her proposal by mentioning a syntactic criterion? Alas, we are no closer to "capturing the adjective" (the name of Siegel's dissertation on this matter).

Section 3. NA, AN, and N Copula A: Demonte's Perspective

Demonte (1982) seeks to dissolve the "falso problema" of N and A word order by comparing both orders with the form "N es A". She asserts that AN and N es A are each poles of a semantic dichotomy, and that NA occupies an intermediate place somewhere, keeping the values of both poles. (p. 483) This means that AN and N es A are marked, and possibly NA is unmarked. She only leaves us with "el problema... no [es] definitivamente resuelto" (resolved)

(p. 483) However, her article is worth critiquing for the sake of some useful concepts and some clarification of the issues.

After reviewing several classifications of A types, Demonte boils them down into three groups: modals like “mero” and “mejor”, relationals like “elétrica” and “italiano”, and qualitatives like “larga” and “tibia”. She generalizes that the relational ones tend to postpose except when affective or evaluative: “los sauces babilónicos” “*babilónicos sauces” but the affective, “la memoria polvorienta” (dusty memory) can just as well be “la polvorienta memoria”. (pp. 467-468)

The modals though, tend to precede the noun: “un mero resbalón (a mere slip) “*un resbalón mero-- (p.468) Finally, the qualitative ones tend to be well-formed either way: “la brisa tibia” (the mild breeze) “la tibia brisa”, “las ramas espesas” (the thick branches) “las espesas ramas”. The difference, Demonte claims, is between RESTRICTIVE (NA) and NONRESTRICTIVE (AN), but not if the definite article is changed to an indefinite one. (p.469) Setting aside for now the problem of defining these terms, one can still see that one cannot correlate each pole of the dichotomy with position, just as the constrictive and nonconstrictive poles cannot. Thus, not all preposed A’s are nonrestrictive and not all postposed A’s restrictive, and there is no neat correspondence between a semantic criterion and position. (To make things into even more of a nuddle, she at one point- possibly through the fault of a proofreader?--implies that the opposite is the norm, namely, AN is usually restrictive and NA nonrestrictive: “la posición marcada de la no-restricción sea la anteposición.) “(The marked position of nonrestriction would be pre-position.) (p.470) And then again, “no hay adjetivos restrictivos antepuestos, pero si se encuentran adjetivos non-restrictivos pospuestos.” (p. 470)

Finding that the restrictivity dichotomy is an unreliable indicator of position, Demonte goes on to examine another distinction which Siegel (1980) utilizes in a Montague framework. Siegel says an A is NONINTERSECTIVE when the meaning of N must be known in order to determine whether the application of that A to that N is true. (p. 475) An A is INTERSECTIVE when the N need not be known and the A is absolute. (p. 45) This sounds just like Waugh’s discussion about A’s being sensitive to the lexical content of the N, versus A’s which are only sensitive to the N as a part of speech. However, as the word “intersective” suggests, Siegel does contribute the valuable insight that the relevant semantic parameter for analyzing noun and adjective word order is the intersection of sets. This helped me to shape the definition of restrictivity in my own analysis below.

Demonte’s explanation of intersectivity is that for example, a “green tree” is the intersection between the set of trees and the set of green things, while “la expresión no-intersectiva... denota un conjunto de conceptos individuales” (denotes a group of individual concepts) (p. 476). The latter definition is not terribly clear, but at least it implies that no sets are intersecting; rather, all the qualities denoted by the A applies to that particular noun without reference to any other entities.

If this definition of intersectivity is not very satisfying, then the discovery procedure for distinguishing between intersective and nonintersective is even less so. The following examples, as adapted by Demonte from Siegel are argued to be nonintersective and intersective respectively: in “excelente músico”, the A is nonintersective because “un excelente músico” is not necessarily “un excelente marido” (husband). But the A in “el árbol verde” is intersective because “un árbol verde” cannot simultaneously be “un objeto no verde”. (pp. 475-476)

The fallacy behind this test for intersectivity is that the two cases are not comparable. In the former, the adjective “excelente” is being applied to two unrelated groups, musicians and cooks. In the latter, the noun “árbol” is being applied to two groups that are related, namely, as opposites. So of course, the same object cannot simultaneously be green and non-green; but a husband and a musician can both be excellent, or both less than excellent, or one excellent and one not. Moreover, Siegel herself says these tests for intersectivity are not always reliable. Even a negative result for nonintersectivity does not constitute definitive proof (pp.4-7, (1980) This is not a criticism of Siegel’s work; she is using the distinction for other purposes, namely, a demonstration of Montague grammar. At any rate, the distinction of intersectivity, as defined by Siegel, does not capture the distinction that I will assert is relevant, namely, proper and non-proper subsets. However, Demonte does make the valuable contribution of comparing the meaning of $N \text{ es } A$ to both AN and NA . It is interesting, for example, that some postposed adjectives will mean the same as $N \text{ es } A$ if they are intersective. “Mi amigo es pobre” and “mi amigo pobre” both mean the friend is indigent. (p.482) In contrast, some postposed adjectives as well as preposed modals cannot be well-formed in the predicate. “*El ingeniero es civil”. (p.483) However, why she gives this as an example of nonintersection is unclear. There are civil engineers, mechanical engineers, electrical, and so on. Is not a civil engineer a subset of all engineers?

Exactly here lies one source of confusion: between a subset and the intersection of two sets. As Guzmán has pointed out (personal communication), a subset is a kind of intersection as well. For example, a red house is the subset of all houses, but it is also the intersection between all red entities and all entities which are houses. Civil engineers form a subset of all engineers, but are also the intersection between all those entities connected with city-planning (let us say) and all entities which are engineers. In other words there are non-engineers and non-civil (ian) matters. Thus this is no different from saying a green tree is the subset of all trees, or is the intersection between all green entities and all entities which are trees. Like the optical trick in a design where the shapes first charge out toward you and then retreat behind the canvas, the same data can be viewed as either intersective or nonintersective, contrastive or noncontrastive. The next section is devoted to escaping from these dilemmas, and to accounting for the continuum discussed in the introduction.

Section 4. Restrictive Meaning and the Universe of Discourse

We saw that Klein's contrastive versus noncontrastive distinction was inadequate, or at least vague. On the one hand, a contrastive A can either distinguish or emphasize, and a noncontrastive or just express opinion. On the other hand, some data like "pura y hermosa hija" do not match position with contrastive function. Thus the distinction must be broken down into disparate subcategories, and even then, the assignment of each category to an adjective remains unprincipled.

This perplexing situation arises from the fact that the word "contrastive" is ambiguous in the worst way, just the one most crucial to explaining the case where NA seems to be noncontrastive, and sometimes, the difference between NA an AN when both are acceptable but differ in meaning.

One kind of contrast has to do with the members within one set. Member x has a given quality that the other members do not. Thus if painting w is a "Picasso auténtico" and painting y is a fake; of the set of all paintings thought to be picassos, w (and possibly some others) has the quality of being genuine while the rest do not.

The other kind of contrast has to do with just one member (or entire group of members) itself. In other words, one can distinguish between what quality a member--the referent of some N--has opposed to what other quality it could have had or what quality it has at other times. For example, many investigators find data like "Dios misericordioso" perplexing. If only one god is assumed, then "misericordioso" cannot be referring to one god as the subset of a set of various gods some of whom are not so "misericordioso" (merciful). The set, in our monotheistic context, contains only one member. Then why is a noncontrastive A postposed here? The answer is that this one god is merciful, not cruel, or that at this moment God is showing His merciful side as opposed to the more judging side shown at other times. Thus, so to speak, God is being contrasted with Himself. At time t, he exhibits quality x, not quality y.

These two kinds of contrast, then, have to do with sets. The first kind describes a PROPER SUBSET. In other words, a set smaller than the initial set under discussion. For example, in "cantante español", "español" refers not to all singers but to just those who are Spaniards. If we lived in a world where only Spaniards were singers, then "español" would not refer to a proper subset, but to the entire set of singers. When an A does refer to an entire set, a NON-PROPER SUBSET, this is what the second kind of contrast is about. So for example, suppose three flies are buzzing away right by the window where you habitually meditate in total silence. You refer to the flies as "malditas moscas". "Damned" refers to all three members of the set, and no larger set, e.g. other flies in the city, are under discussion. Other flies in this set have the quality of undesirability, as opposed to being otherwise. In fact, this second kind of "contrast" might not really have to do with contrast at all in the usual sense of the word.. I use it as a point of departure from the previous analyses.

Let us dub the first kind of contrast, which picks out proper subsets, as RESTRICTIVE, and other distinction, which refers to the entire set, as NONRESTRICTIVE. Although this choice of terminology may seem inappropriate given its syntactic connotations (see Crystal, 1985, p.265), the face value of these terms best describes the distinction I am after without burdening the literature with yet more jargon. For my purpose, this dichotomy is purely semantic.

In discussing this restrictive and nonrestrictive distinction, I have been implicitly assuming a UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE. For example, the members of the set of flies referred to above are not all the flies in the world, or in the city, but just those few at a particular window at a particular time. Expressions like, "those under discussion", "those in question", are informal assumptions of a universe of discourse. So in speaking of Spanish singers, the universe of discourse may be as small as all the singers in a certain program in Carnegie Hall next September 5, with a subset of two singers with the quality Spanish, or as broad as all the singers in the world. The subset for the first would have two members, and the subset for the second would have whatever thousands of members there were.

When a quality refers to all the members in a universe of discourse, then the A is nonrestrictive. "Malditas" refers to every member in the universe of discourse, which is the set of three, so the A is nonrestrictive. Moreover, even though other flies do exist outside of that universe of discourse, they are irrelevant if one's ire is directed to just those three flies currently making noise.

But when a quality refers to less than all the members in a universe of discourse, such as the set of all singers in Italy, then the A is restrictive. "Español" does not refer to every member in the universe of discourse of all singers in Italy. To recapitulate, a universe of discourse refers to all the sets and subsets under discussion. (Crystal, p.96, essentially defines it the same way.) It describes the context to which restrictive and nonrestrictive adjectives refer. This means that the semantic principle of restrictivity and the pragmatic one of the universe of discourse operate simultaneously as we read off the meaning of an A before or after the noun.

Depending on the semantic nature of an A and depending upon the nature of the world as we know it, a given A will be found in restrictive context more often than another. In other words for one adjective, most of the universes of discourse will result in restrictive meaning, while for another, most of the universes of discourse will result in nonrestrictive meaning. As we will see, this accounts for the continuum from NA and *AN, to AN and *NA. (And the extremes of the continuum may exist only in theory.)

Before closing in on my final analysis, it is important to realize that the weakness of prior analyses sprang from the attempt to make restrictivity or other dichotomies semantic absolutes in reference to an adjective. For example, "innocent" might seem to be inherently restrictive: "Stephanie is innocent and Carla is not". However, if the A is being applied to only one person and all others are irrelevant, then the meaning could be nonrestrictive,

even though this would not happen in many universes of discourse. As we saw above, Klein does make this point about "puro". But she does not generalize from this with a consistent concept such as the universe of discourse. In other words, she correctly asserts that discourse analysis plays a role in unraveling the adjective noun question in Spanish, but she does not directly specify how and under what conditions.

Let us apply the two concepts of restrictivity and the universe of discourse to the troublesome data discussed in the previous sections. The first example of interest discussed above was Klein's "su pura y hermosa hija". The difficulty was that a contrastive A was preposed, but after applying some rule of implication derived from the context, it could be interpreted as ultimately noncontrastive. This extra "transformational" step can be avoided by applying restrictivity as determined by the universe of discourse. As Klein says, "the man in question has only one daughter." (p.164), thus the relevant set has one member, and no proper subset is or can be referred to. The two adjectives are nonrestrictive, and no intermediate step is needed to arrive at that conclusion.

Another example of more interest is "bóveda inmensa". Klein's dilemma is to explain why a postposed A is not contrastive. It is not establishing difference. Her answer is that by some discourse rule of implication the function of postposition in this context is emphasis. But "emphasis" can be called upon arbitrarily. "Inmensa bóveda" could be emphatic too. And suppose the author had wanted to both distinguish and be emphatic. It seems that emphasis and contrastiveness (in my terms, restrictivity) are independent phenomena.

The context of the entire quote cited above makes clear that "bóveda inmensa" does not contrast this particular view of the heavens with any other, or that the heavens could be otherwise than immense. Just one sky or one view is referred to, and so the set of relevant views has just one member, and the A is nonrestrictive. Or at least, restrictive interpretations would be irrelevant. But then this is exactly the sort of example that has troubled Klein, Lujan (1980) and others about the plus or minus restrictive dichotomy. Well-behaved data consists of preposed nonrestrictive A's, and postposed restrictive A's. For example, "ingeniero japonés" is restrictive, since the universe of discourse (if not specified further) is the set of all engineers in the world, and Japanese ones are a subset of all of those engineers. "*japonés ingeniero" is out because restrictive A's ought not to precede the noun. "Son meros niños" (They are mere children.) on the other hand is nonrestrictive, since the A applies to the set of all children, and all possess the low status implied by "mere". There is no way to talk about mere and non-mere children! "*Son niños meros" is unacceptable, presumably because nonrestrictive A's cannot be postposed.

"Bóveda inmensa" (and many examples like this is Fish (1961)) are not so easy to account for. This is a case of a nonrestrictive postposed A, and this cannot be fudged over with concepts like "emphasis". Furthermore, "emphasis" does not explain why "inmensa" can prepose but "japonés" almost

always cannot. In other words, the data behave differently and this remains unexplained.

It is helpful to return to Demonte's point about NA occupying an intermediate position between N es A and AN. In other words, one possibility is that NA is unmarked for restrictivity. Accepting this for now, "bóveda inmensa" is unmarked; restrictivity is unimportant in this context. It "does not matter" if the reader contrast this scene with others or focuses on just this scene. The meaning of "inmensa" is not much affected either way. If the author had written "inmensa bóveda", the nuance of difference might have focused the reader a little more on just this scene, drawing more attention (emphasis?!) to it. "Bóveda inmensa" and "inmensa bóveda" are of the form AN = NA. Thus my claim that NA is unmarked applies only to such lexical items that can be shifted in a given universe of discourse without affecting the meaning. "Tibia brisa" and "brisa tibia" is another example, since native speakers say the order "makes no difference." Variation in such examples can be used just to avoid stylistic monotony.

But in other contexts, the postposed A is definitely marked as restrictive when AN does not have the same meaning as NA. One of the classic examples is "pobre hombre" versus "hombre pobre". Waugh spoke in terms of dependence of the A on the N in the first case, and independence in the second. And once again, Klein gives examples where the different meanings do not correlate with position in order to demonstrate the lack of fit between contrast and position. She gives a challenging example where "pobre" has both meanings:

Ossorio trató inmediatamente de salir... pero el gracioso... le invitó a tomar un poco de vino. Fernando dio las gracias.

—¿Nos va a usted a desairar porque somos UNOS POBRES COMICOS?

"Ossorio tried to leave at once...but the comic actor...invited him to a glass of wine. Fernando thanked him

'Are you going to snub us because we're (just) POOR ACTORS?' " (AN)(p.166)

Klein explains that these actors are small-town players who earn very little, and that Fernando "might regard them with commiseration or even contempt... precisely BECAUSE OF their low socioeconomic status." That is true, one can easily be both wretched and poor. The alternative, "unos pobres cómicos pobres" (as well as the English, "a poor POOR man") is possible but highly marked as, say, word play, and requires special intonation and/or juncture. Setting aside this alternative, the interesting question is why the double meanings of "pobre" were preposed and not postposed. The reason is because the author may want to make the "wretched" meaning more prominent. Otherwise, in "Somos unos cómicos pobres", the "indigent" meaning would overshadow if not wipe out the "wretched" meaning, or so it seems.

Returning to the author's actual phrase, let us examine adjective position in relation to the universe of discourse and restrictivity. The universe of discourse is the set of all actors in the room, all of whom have been snubbed directly or indirectly. Fernando probably thinks of every member in this set as

being "pobre", whether in one sense or both. So instead of saying that "pobres cómicos" is both contrastive and noncontrastive, I can simply say the phrase is nonrestrictive and leave it at that without any air of paradox. If the A had been postposed, presumably the author would have implied something like, "we are the poor kind of comics, not the more successful ones." The original implies more of a general statement about comic actors as a whole, a career you would not want your child to lead.

Even with such a complex example such as this one, the claim made below that proposed A is nonrestrictive appears to hold up. Moreover, for A's that change their meaning according to position, the postposed ones are restrictive except when overriding factors neutralize them. (See below.)

Let us now look at other cases where NA does not equal AN. Take "familias numerosas" (large in size), which is the subset, say, of all families at a picnic, and "numerosas familias" (many different families), which would refer to just however many families were in attendance and not to any subset of that number. The preposed A is nonrestrictive, and the postposed is restrictive.

A complicating factor about such examples is that sometimes the "different" meanings do not always correlate with position. Klein (p.163) and Fish (p.703) both give examples with "grande". This A usually means "great, famous" when preposed, and "physically large" when postposed. Fish's examples of "grande" postposed with the former meaning is, "...dos libros de un interés científico grande." And the reverse: "sin gran (mucha) dificultad." The significance of this is that if one wants to communicate "great" with restrictive meaning and "large" with restrictive meaning and "large" with nonrestrictive meaning, one can do so. Then again, syntactic constraints on multiple adjectives, or the idiomatic status of an example, may motivate the unpredicted word order. But even putting aside that excuse, this is not really such a complication; it is consistent with the idea that all postposed adjectives in such pairs are restrictive.

In a context where "grande" is both preposed and restrictive, this occurs to avoid misinterpreting the meaning as "physically large" instead of "famous". Take this invented example: "Hablo con el gran hombre, no con su asistente." Compare this with, "Hablo con el hombre grande, no con su asistente." This "counterexample" is just the result of a pragmatic constraint that wants to preserve the meaning of "famous" by preposing it, even though it is restrictive.

The next section is devoted to postulating claims for the NA-*AN to AN-*NA continuum.

Section 5. Claims that correlate position with restrictivity in a universe of discourse

Having looked at the most troublesome data, I want to present more straightforward and more common types of data. All of the data will be seen to support the following claims: In a given universe of discourse, 1. postposed A is restrictive if AN is impossible, or if AN is not semantically equal to NA. 2.

postposed A is restrictive or unmarked if $AN=NA$. The more identical a given pair is, the more likely the A will be unmarked. The closer to ?An, the more likely the A is marked, and the closer it is to the pole in the continuum in Claim One. 3. Preposed A is always nonrestrictive or at least unmarked.

The only time Claim 3 is not strictly true is when the context "forces" it to be otherwise, as in the example discussed above. Taken together, these claims say that the closer to *An a given A is, the more highly marked it is for +restrictive. The closer to *NA a given A is, the more highly marked it is for -restrictive. Since a postposed N cannot be MARKED nonrestrictive, that word order will be unacceptable when the A MUST be interpreted as nonrestrictive. The closer to the middle of the continuum, the more irrelevant restrictivity becomes, and so the more free the word order becomes. In theory, any data smack in the center would be unmarked for restrictivity in either position.

The condition, "in a given universe of discourse", accounts for all the supposed counterexamples discussed above and others to be discussed next. It also accounts for speaker to speaker variation as to what part of the continuum a given A falls on. For examples, one native speaker rejected "caliente brisa" altogether, another said it is somewhat unusual but not outright bad.

These claims account for why "ingeniero japonés" is fine but not "*japonés ingeniero". On the other hand, "la españolísima argentinita" (Fish, p.704) is fine. In the first case, "japonés" refers to a subset of the set of some number of engineers. Nationalities are typically postposed since almost by their semantic content alone, a subset is implied. Such examples lie at one pole of the continuum. At the same time, inclusion of the flexible principle of the universe of discourse dissolves the remorse that Fish's example must have caused to many a researcher. In this example, the meaning is nonrestrictive. The universe of discourse refers to just one person; other people are irrelevant. But as with other unusual examples, morphosyntactic principles may be complicating the matter. Here we have a superlative, which may itself trigger preposing. Thus this analysis of word order cannot really be complete until the discourse and semantic concepts developed here are related to the syntactic component. Other "odd" examples, such as "la británica Helen Higgins" (Fish, p.700) and "azúcar que ha perdido su blanco color" (sugar which has lost its white color) (P.704) can be explained the same way, namely that the context is not restrictive, and/or a syntactic phenomenon such as nominalization is intervening. The point is that while some semantic values such as color lend themselves more easily to restrictive interpretations, the semantic value itself does not determine restrictivity absolutely. That is why a purely semantic rule such as "colors and nationalities follow the noun" lays itself open to counterexamples. But what is true is that some lexemes will be restrictive in a larger range of universes of discourse than others, and those others will be restrictive in fewer if any universe of discourse.

This brings us to the other end of the continuum. We have seen examples such as "mero niño" and "malditas moscas". ("Moscas malditas" must almost always be very odd or out.) If an A is definitely nonrestrictive, then it cannot postpose, which means that a postposed A cannot be marked nonrestrictive. This means that some lexemes will be nonrestrictive in a larger range- if not all-universes of discourse, as implied in the last paragraph.

The discussion so far supports part of Claim 1 and Claim 3. Now we need to turn our attention to Claim 2, and to the meaning changing adjectives handled by Claim 1. Demonte's examples of the middle portion of the continuum, where AN=NA, include: "la brisa tibia", "la tibia brisa", "la memoria polvorienta", and "la polvorienta memoria" (dusty memory) (p.468)

The article "la" in her examples dictates that the universe of discourse include just one member or all members in the set: one memory and one breeze, or all memories and all breezes. Breezes and memories are typically thought of as mild and "dusty" (if old). These qualities are expected, are stereotypical, and if there are non-mild breezes and non-dusty memories, they are irrelevant if not ruled out by a given context. Thus a nonrestrictive interpretation is suggested. In other words, it seems the presence or lack of restrictive meaning has little effect on one's understanding of the noun phrase, whereas it has great effect on pairs farther away from the middle of the continuum. Stereotyped adjectives, or what researchers have called redundant, are preposed because by definition a stereotype refers to the set as a whole, to all of its members.

"Bóveda inmensa" is another example of "middle ground". the postposed A must be unmarked for restrictivity, because as argued above, no subset is referred to or is relevant. The following example shows that must be the case, or we would be forced to say that postposed A's could be MARKED nonrestrictive. And then the distinction of restrictivity as related to position would break down. "Unas tachas de sangre roja se destacaban sobre la nieve blanca". (Fish, p.701) Since no different colors of blood or snow are implied or assumed, the A is not restrictive.

To back up a little, a postposed A is either restrictive or unmarked, but never marked as nonrestrictive. There are two reasons for this: first, if postposed A's could be nonrestrictive, there would be no explanation for why certain lexemes favor the postposed position and even be odd or out in the other position. Second, it would not explain why certain lexemes are very bad in the postposed position, but fine in the preposed position.

Moreover, when AN and NA are fairly close but still a little different, it seems that AN favors the nonrestrictive interpretation, and NA the restrictive one, as in "conociendo los más íntimos detalles de su vida" (nonrestrictive-all of the intimate details, not some subset) versus "conociendo los detalles más íntimos" (restrictive-learning of all kinds of details, including intimate ones.) (quotes from Fish, p.704)

Although some NA and AN pairs may be virtually identical in terms of restrictivity, it might be true that the distinction between OLD and NEW INFORMATION is operative. Take this example from Fish: "Recibí ayer la triste noticia de su fallecimiento; la infeliz señora..." (p.702) When the woman is first introduced, this is new information. Once she is known to the reader, the A is preposed as old information. Although this is useful, the distinction does not seem to play a larger role in the whole question of the N and A continuum discussed in this paper. I failed to detect any revealing pattern that would correlate information status with position and/or restrictivity. I only found redundancies such as old information is often (always?) implied by nonrestrictive adjectives. It might often be true that N es A communicates new information, AN old information, and NA either. However, many examples I looked at could be new or old, depending on the context, while the kind of restrictivity remained constant. For example, "Esta es una sabrosa manzana" could be new or old, depending on what context you conjure up. A guest could be complimenting a host who had carefully selected tasty apples, or the host could be informing the guest that the apple will be delicious for sure. In both cases, though, the universe of discourse refers to one apple, and it seems that the A would have to be nonrestrictive. At any rate, I think such issues as scope, focus, and the precise meaning of new/old information need to be worked out before the distinction can be applied, if at all. Actually not having to add another concept such as old/new information to account for the continuum is a bonus. the more economical the theory, the easier a job the language learner has.

Section 6. Conclusions and Pedagogical Applications

To summarize, there is a continuum of preposed and postposed adjectives that are acceptable if they satisfy the universe of discourse as it applies to the lexical content of the A. For some lexemes given their lexical content, the A will postpose in more universes of discourse than other lexemes. At one theoretical pole, you have an A that always postposes in all universes of discourse. This A must be restrictive. At the other theoretical pole, you have an A that always preposes in all universes of discourse. (If this were true for all the data, there would be no need to refer to discourse but just to the semantic component of the grammar.) As in all dichotomies, the closer an A comes to the middle, the more likely that the A can be preposed or postposed. The universe of discourse itself may largely determine whether the particular A is taken as restrictive or nonrestrictive, or whether the distinction is suspended. (And if this were true for all the data; it seems that a purely discourse analytic approach would be needed without reference to semantics.)

In practice, placement along the continuum is not entirely a matter of semantics nor a matter of discourse. Both must be included in the analysis. Together, the universe of discourse and the lexical content of the A interact to determine whether a given A is restrictive or not, preposed or not.

The pedagogical implications are almost self-explanatory. I would first show students examples toward the extreme ends of the continuum,

illustrating the notion of sets and subsets. Suppose we are talking about, for example, 20 people in a club and 5 are Italian. A subset of the set are Italians. When referring to a subset, we want the A to follow, and so it does in "hombre italiano". This club would be the universe of discourse, but just the word "context" should be sufficient in the classroom. The key point is to explain that the extent of the set is determined by this context. If I simply say "hombre italiano" with no further clue, the context might be the whole world.

Now if an A refers to every member in the set, and not to any smaller group within that set, the A precedes the N. Take "meros niños" as an example and suppose we are talking about 200 children at a parade. "Mero" refers to all 200, not to some smaller group.

The meaning changing examples are easily explained too. In most contexts, there is only one woman in the set designated by "pobre mujer". When all members of the set are referred to, which in this case is just one, and any members outside of that set are irrelevant, no subset is involved. So the A is preposed. But in "mujer pobre", she is being compared with other women. Suppose forty women are marching at a rally and half are impoverished. "Pobre" refers to a subset of all forty. Of course there are the sophisticated examples such as "pobre cómico" discussed in Klein, but the time required to explain such cases, and the cost of introducing much more complexity, would not be worth it except in an extremely advanced class. These complex examples need not be understood for the language learner to fulfill ordinary communication needs.

With the general principle understood for both ends of the continuum, the instructor could then talk about the middle of the continuum. Here the word order is more free. If you want to refer to all members of a set, prepose it as you like. If the distinction does not seem important, or there is some doubt about whether a subset or the entire set is involved, postpose it. But if a subset is clearly impossible, prepose it.

For clarity, I would use Venn diagrams and specify the universe of discourse as x number of people. Thus for "meros niños", draw a circle and write "200 niños" in it, and then say there is no way to draw a smaller circle within that to refer to any subset. For the postposed example about the Italians, draw a circle for the whole club and write "20 personas", then draw a smaller circle within that and write "5 italianos".

Since postposition can be unmarked as well as marked for restrictivity, it might be useful to counsel a student to postpose when in doubt. Or if the student does not respond to the conceptual approach outlined here, they can always postpose and then memorize a list of the most common adjectives that obligatorily prepose. This can be done without much violence to the full truth since postposition can be unmarked. Or better yet, most students may respond to a combination of both approaches.

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