

Context sensitivity and adjective interpretation in Spanish
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This study examines adult and child intuitions about adjective position in Spanish. Like other Romance languages, Spanish allows pre- and post-nominal adjectives, although the use of the prenominal position is reduced compared to other Romance languages (Scarano, 2005; Rizzi et al., 2013). A small set of adjectives can appear pre- or post-nominally, under certain discourse conditions, or with a lexical shift in meaning linked to non-subjective/subjective (cf. *mi antiguo carro* ‘my previous car’ / *mi carro antiguo* ‘my antique car’) or non-intersective/intersective (cf. *mi viejo amigo* ‘my longtime friend’ / *mi amigo viejo* ‘my elderly friend’) interpretations. Most analyses derive meaning contrasts via the syntax as purely lexical semantic approaches require additional claims to account for the ordering facts. For other variable adjectives the pre- or post-nominal position is said to associate with restrictivity. Prenominal adjectives are said to be licensed in non-restrictive contexts. However, many examples in the literature reflect high registers (*las aburridas clases de Elena* ‘Elena’s classes which are all boring’) (Fábregas, 2017:28). Authors argue whether the postnominal position is limited to restrictive interpretations (see Cinque 2010, Martín 2009; cf. Alexiadou 2001, Bernstein 1993, Demonte 2008, Ticio 2010). A few examples are agreed to be ambiguous (*las clases aburridas de Elena* ‘Elena’s classes, which are all boring/ the classes taught by Elena that are boring’).

We propose an alternative characterization of the Spanish facts: beyond high registers, the prenominal position is mostly used in contexts with a highly affective/evaluative load, such as in mirative contexts (*¡Mira los lindos perritos!* ‘Look at the pretty little dogs’). If this is correct non-restrictivity is a by-product of this property, either because subjective judgements are not used to restrict a set, or because subjectively judged referents are already identified in a domain (see Demonte, 2008; Martin, 2013; Umbach, 2006; 2016). Under this approach, (non)-restrictivity is outside the syntax of adjectives, remaining, like it is in languages with a single position, such as English, and simply a matter of the general interaction between domain restriction and context.

We present data on 102 children aged 3-9 and 41 adults from Bogotá, Colombia, on a 3-point acceptability rating task of prenominal and postnominal uses of 10 descriptive adjectives. Participants were randomly assigned to two story conditions (neutral/ evaluative). Evaluativity was implemented as the presence/absence of: exclamation marks, diminutives, and use of speaker attitude verbs (see Traugott & Dasher, 2002). Restrictivity was implemented as the presence/absence of a contrast set, reinforced by a quantifier (all/some). Each participant saw each adjectives twice, first in prenominal, then in postnominal position, with context (restrictive/non-restrictive) counterbalanced for adjectives across participants.

We predicted a possible overall bias for rating postnominal adjectives higher, given the highly marked nature of prenominal adjectives, and a potential effect of context, but only in the evaluative story condition (because of the intuition that prenominal adjectives are only felicitous in situations with high evaluative content). A preliminary frequency analysis on adult responses reveal the following distributional asymmetries are significant or highly significant. Prenominal adjectives in evaluative stories elicited more negative ratings and less positive ratings in restrictive contexts. In the Neutral story conditions, they received more positive ratings in the non-restrictive conditions (less mid and negative ratings, conversely). Postnominal adjectives appeared less sensitive to context and condition: we only observed a surplus of negative ratings given to postnominals in the evaluative condition (which only reached significant when restrictive).