

Viewpointed morphology:

Spanish verb-complement compounds as fictive interaction constructions

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Nominal compounds can involve/underlie complex morphological and semantic processes far beyond the establishment of a straight-forward signifier-signified relation. Semantically opaque compounds like *butterfly* or *skyscraper* pose a challenge for compositional accounts of meaning. Particularly complex are compounds involving a multi-word specifier, which share formal and functional characteristics with clauses or even utterances, as in ‘*forget-me-not(s)*’, ‘*gofer(s)*’/‘*wanna-be(s)*’// ‘*must-see/have(s)*’, or ‘*to poor-thing somebody*’ (e.g. Pascual, 2006, 2014). Such complex nominal compounds are productive and relatively frequent in Germanic languages, whereas they are much more marginal in Romance languages, in which they generally appear as phrases or clauses modifying the head noun (Pascual & Królak, 2018).

Despite undeniable morphological constraints, we claim that Spanish verb-complement compounds (henceforth ‘VC’), one of the most productive patterns of compound formation in most Romance languages, involve a similarly complex semantic and grammatical structure. Examples are ‘*limpiabotas*’ ([cleans+boots], ‘boot polisher’), ‘*rascacielos*’ ([scraps+skies], ‘skyscraper’), or ‘*pintalabios*’ ([paints+lips], ‘lipstick’). Based on a self-compiled glossary of about 300 compounds, extended from Marqueta (2019), we argue that the skeletal meaning of all such compounds invariably involves the same viewpointed construction as in the aforementioned English multi-word compounds. Indeed, Spanish VC compounds are not formed by a phonetically reduced infinitive or verbal stem, but rather prototypically contain a verb in the third person singular of the present indicative tense (Menéndez Pidal, 1940; Val, 1999). This is clearly seen in compounds created from verbs whose third person indicative form is phonetically different from the corresponding infinitive or verbal stem:

- (1) a. *abrebotellas* [opens+bottle], ‘bottle opener’ vs. **abribotellas* (infinitive: *abrir*)
b. *cuentagotas* [counts+drops], ‘dropper’ vs. **contagotas* (infinitive: *contar*)

The vast literature on Spanish VC compounds mostly acknowledges that the verbal part is conjugated, and thus carries viewpoint information as an utterance does, but largely treats them as lexical and morphological anomalies (Val Álvaro, 1999; Moyna, 2011). We show that all Spanish VC compounds can be parsimoniously accounted for as involving a grammaticalized fictive interaction construction, that is, a non-actual, ontologically conceptual enunciation (Pascual, 2006, 2014). We show that, whereas the prototypical VC compound constitutes a verb in the third person indicative, compounds involving a verb may occur in different persons and illocutionary forces:

- (2) a. Indicative: *metomentodo* [I+meddle+me+into+everything], ‘meddler’; *bienteveo* [well+I see+you], ‘passerine bird’
b. Imperative: *tentempié* [hold+yourself+on+foot/standing], ‘snack’; *hazmerreír* [make+me+laugh], ‘laughingstock’
c. Interrogative: *el quédirán* [the+what+will+they+say]; ‘what people may say’; *los quehaceres* [the+what+to-do+s], ‘chores’
d. Exclamative: *vivalavida* [long-live+the+life] or *vivalavirgen* [long-live+the+virgin], ‘overly laid back person’

Spanish compounds may even involve coordinate or subordinate structures, as in:

- (3) a. *correveidile* [run+go+and+say(it)+to him/her], ‘gossiper’; *quitaipón*
[remove+and+put(on)], ‘removable’
b. *matalascallando* [kill+them+shutting up], ‘hypocrite’; *lavatiquevoy*
[wash+yourself+that+I +come(to you)], ‘go-getter’

We present an account of such Spanish nominal compounds that does not result from the sum of the meanings of their parts, but is instead embedded in a dialogic theory of linguistic meaning as emergent from situated interaction (Sandler, 2016, Sandler & Pascual, 2019). Indeed, we view intersubjectivity as central to referential semantics.

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