

Notes on the syntax of deadjectival nouns

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1. Introduction

Work in progress for a few years, on and off.

Focus of the paper:

- Elements, structure and formation process of derived categories.
- Account and origin of the properties of deadjectival nominalizations;
- More in particular: nominalizations from (dispositional) evaluative adjectives: *cruel*.

We will show that

- Nominalizations from evaluative adjectives are a distinct group of deadjectival nominalizations not traditionally identified.
- Their analysis contributes to the understanding of the properties of the root (evaluative adjectives), whose semantic and syntactic properties are still under debate.
- This group raises critical questions as for the categories (functional categories) involved in the derivation process.

The nominalizations in point. Description

(1) *crueldad* ‘cruelty’, *estupidez* ‘stupidity’, *grosería* ‘rudeness’, *imprudencia* ‘imprudence’, *indiscreción* ‘indiscretion’, *infidelidad* ‘unfaithfulness’, *injusticia* ‘injustice’, *insolencia* ‘insolence’, *memez* ‘nonsense’, *necedad* ‘stupidity’, *ordinariedad* ‘vulgarity’, *osadía* ‘daring’, *sandez* ‘nonsense’, *temeridad* ‘temerity’, *tontería* ‘silliness’, *travesura* ‘devilry’, *vulgaridad* ‘vulgarity’, *bobada* ‘nonsense’.

- **Come from evaluative adjectives**, which are known for yielding clauses with **unexpected properties** (e.g., non stative) since Lackoff 1966. Stowell 1991, Arche 2006, Fábregas et al 2013....
- **Form a group different from** the two traditionally distinguished:
 - (i) those that refer to **States** an individual may be in, S-nominalizations (e.g. *sadness*, *perplexity*),
 - (ii) and those that refer to **Qualities** an individual may possess, Q-nominalizations (e.g. *wisdom*, *beauty*).

- Although the three of them share that they can prove the point that nominalization process is possible only if coming from gradable adjectives.

Relational adjectives, e.g. *presidencial* ‘presidential’, which cannot take degree modifiers (1a), cannot occur prenominally (1b), cannot have a predicative use (2c) and, as observed by Schmidt (1972) and Bache (1978), **are never the base for nominalizations** (3):

- (2) a. *una reunión muy presidencial
 a meeting very presidential
 b. *la presidencial reunion vs. la reunión presidencial
 the presidential meeting vs. the meeting presidential
 c. *la reunion fue presidencial
 the meeting was presidential
- (3) *la presidencialidad de la reunión
 the presidentiality of the meeting

Q-nominalizations are also possible only if coming from degree adjectives.

- We take the compatibility with the so-called genitive of Quality (4) and with verbs such as *dar muestras de* ‘give signs of’ (5) as structures diagnosing qualities:

- (4) *Juan es de una gran presidencialidad.
 Juan is of a great presidentiality
- (5) *Juan dio muestras de presidencialidad.
 Juan gave signs of presidentiality

However, nominalizations coming from evaluatives such as those in (1) behave differently from S-nominalizations and Q-nominalizations in a number of respects:

2. Towards a finer-grained distinction of deadjectival nominalizations

2.1. Ability to pluralize and be counted

Just as other nouns denoting events (*discusión* ‘discussion’, *operación* ‘operation’), (6)a, the nominalizations in (1) are able to **pluralize**, (6)b, in clear contrast with deadjectival nouns denoting states (*tristeza* ‘sadness’, *perplejidad* ‘perplexity’), (6)c, or qualities (*belleza* ‘beauty’, *pesadez* ‘heaviness’), (6)d:

- (6) a. dos discusiones/ varias operaciones [deverbal eventive nouns]
 two discussions/ several operations
 b. dos imprudencias/ varias injusticias [occurential deadjectival nouns]
 two imprudencies/ several injustices
 c. *dos tristezas/ *tres perplejidades [state deadjectival nouns]
 two sadnessess/ three perplexities
 d. *dos bellezas/ *dos sabidurías [quality deadjectival nouns]
 two beauties/ two wisdoms

2.2. As a complement of action denoting verbs, take place and perception verbs

The following tests on nominal eventivity (Godard and Jayez 1996) show that ODNs behave like eventive nominals in most respects and contrast with S-nominals and Q-nominals.

Complements of action-denoting verbs such as *hacer* ‘do’ or *cometer* ‘commit’:

- (7) a. Juan hizo dos operaciones/ llevó a cabo dos discusiones.
Juan made two operations/ conducted two discussions
b. Juan cometió dos imprudencias/ varias crueldades.
Juan carried out two imprudencies/ several cruelties
c. *Juan cometió dos tristezas/ varias perplejidades.
Juan carried out two sadnessess/ several perplexities
d. *Juan cometió dos bellezas/ sabidurías.
Juan carried out two beauties/ wisdoms

Complements of *tener lugar* ‘take place’:

- (8) a. Esta mañana han tenido lugar varias discusiones/ operaciones.
This morning have taken place several discussions/ operations
b. Esta mañana han tenido lugar varias imprudencias/ injusticias.
This morning have taken place several imprudencies/ injusticies
c. *Esta mañana han tenido lugar varias tristezas/ perplejidades.
This morning have taken place several sadnessess/ perplexities
d. *Esta mañana han tenido lugar varias bellezas/ sabidurías.
This morning have taken place several beauties/ wisdoms

Complements of perception verbs such as *presenciar* ‘be a witness of’:

- (9) a. He presenciado las discusiones/ operaciones del jefe.
I.have witnessed the discussions/ operations by.the boss
b. He presenciado las imprudencias/ injusticias del presidente.
I.have witnessed the imprudencies/injusticies of.the president
c. ??*He presenciado las tristezas/ perplejidades del presidente.
I.have witnessed the sadnessess/ perplexities of.the president
d. *He presenciado las bellezas/ sabidurías del presidente.
I.have witnessed the beauties/ wisdoms of.the president

2.3. Fully-fledged Argument Structure

ODNs have a fully-fledged AS (i.e. the subject is not understood as a mere possessor). Contrasting with S-Nominals, where the subject is commonly understood to hold the theta role of experiencer, **the subject of ODNs is interpreted as an agent.**

Examples in (10) make explicit the theta-role of the subject

- (10) a. las operaciones de Juan [las que Juan *realiza* vs. *las que Juan tiene]
the operations of Juan [which Juan makes vs. *which Juan has]
b. las imprudencias de Juan [las que Juan *hace* vs. *las que Juan tiene]
the imprudencies of Juan [which Juan makes vs. which Juan has]
c. la tristeza de Juan [la que Juan *experimenta* vs. *la que Juan hace]
the sadness of Juan [which Juan experiences vs. *which Juan makes]
d. la sabiduría de Inés [la que Inés *tiene* vs. *la que Inés hace]
the wisdom of Inés [which Inés has vs. *which Inés has]

Only ODNs have an **agentive interpretation**, in contrast with the rest of nominalizations.

- (11) a. la deliberada operación/ discusión
the deliberate operation/ discussion
b. la deliberada imprudencia/ crueldad
the deliberate imprudence/ cruelty

- c. *la deliberada perplejidad/ tristeza
the deliberate perplexity/ sadness
- d. *la deliberada belleza/ sabiduría
the deliberate beauty/ wisdom

2.4. ODNs do not have duration

ODNs do not have duration themselves; even if they are referring to an event with duration (i.e., operate someone without any prior testing can be conceived as an imprudence).
While operating someone has duration, the noun “imprudence” does not.)

- (12) a. Durante la operación/ discusión
during the operation/ discussion
- b. Una operación/ discusión de dos horas.
an operation/ discussion of two hours
- (13) a. *Durante la crueldad/ imprudencia.
during the cruelty/ imprudence
- b. *una crueldad/ imprudencia de dos horas.
a cruelty/ imprudence of two hours

3. Three groups of ODNs

Claim: ODNs derive from (dispositional) evaluative adjectives.

We argue that the deadjectival nominalizations that can refer to occurrences or instantiations of eventualities are those deriving from Evaluative Adjectives (EAs) since they can be predicated not only of a sentient individual but of an event as well.

- (14) Juan fue cruel al humillar a su colega.
Juan was cruel to humiliate to his colleague
- (15) Fue cruel por parte de Juan humillar a su colega.
It was cruel by part of Juan to humiliate to his colleague
'It was cruel of Juan to humiliate his colleague'

First, **most ODNs also have a quality reading**, as their compatibility with the genitive of quality manifest:

- (16) una persona de una gran imprudencia/ crueldad
a person of a great imprudence/ cruelty

That is, some nominals are ambiguous between the two readings, ODN and quality.

Following Arche and Marín (2011), we analyze this **dichotomy** as **structurally due**:

- ODNs come from a structure **containing an event** (17),
- Q-nominalizations, from a structure where the **event is absent** (18).

(This is in accordance with the idea advanced in Stowell (1991) and Arche (2006) that EAs have two different structures.)

The structures below include the functional projection Pred, justified for the reasons given above:

- (17) PredP [Subject [Event [Pred [A
- (18) PredP [Subject [Pred [A

Second, **not all ODNs allow for a quality reading**. Some can refer to instantiations of eventualities (eventualities carried out) but cannot refer to the quality:

- (19) *una persona de una gran fanfarronada/ travesura
 a person of a great boast devilry

Third, although all ODNs derive from evaluative adjectives, **not all nouns built on evaluative adjectives can have a plural occurrential realization**.

The nominals in (20) have a quality reading (21) but fail to refer to an instantiation of an eventuality (22).

This leaves what seem gaps in the derivation that are not explained by the absence of an event in the structure, as all the adjectives of their stems can be predicated of an event (23).

- (20) *amabilidad* ‘kindness’, *arrogancia* ‘arrogance’, *astucia* ‘cunningness’, *audacia* ‘audacity’, *cautela* ‘caution’, *cobardía* ‘cowardice’, *cortesía* ‘courtesy’, *egoísmo* ‘selfishness’, *fidelidad* ‘faithfulness’, *generosidad* ‘generosity’, *honradez* ‘decency’, *humildad* ‘humbleness’, *modestia* ‘modesty’, *prudencia* ‘prudence’, *soberbia* ‘arrogance’, *valentía* ‘braveness’.

- (21) a. una persona de gran amabilidad/ modestia
 a person of great kindness/ modesty
 b. Dio muestras de amabilidad/ modestia.
 s/he.gave signs of kindness/ modesty
 c. Actuó con amabilidad/ modestia.
 s/he.acted with kindness/ modesty

- (22) a. *Juan ha cometido dos arrogancias/ cautelas.
 Juan has committed two arrogancies/ cautions
 b. *Esta mañana han tenido lugar varias arrogancias/ cautelas.
 this morning have taken place several arrogancies/ cautions
 c. *Las arrogancias/ cautelas de Juan hacia su tío.
 the arrogancies/ cautions of Juan towards his uncle

- (23) a. Juan fue arrogante/ cauto al hacer esa pregunta.
 Juan was arrogant/ cautious to make that question
 b. Hacer esa pregunta fue arrogante/ cauto.
 to make that question was arrogant/ cautious
 c. Fue arrogante/ cauto por parte de Juan hacer esa pregunta.
 it.was arrogant/ cautious by part of Juan to make that question

This seems to indicate that **there are three groups of nominalizations coming from evaluative adjectives**:

- (i) those of the type of *imprudencia* ‘imprudence’, having **both** an occurrential and a quality reading (24),
 (ii) those that behave like *modestia* ‘modesty’, which **only** have a **quality** reading (25), and
 (iii) those that behave like *travesura* ‘devilry’, which **only** have the **occurrential** reading (26):

- (24) Both
crueldad ‘cruelty’, *estupidez* ‘stupidity’, *grosería* ‘rudeness’, *imprudencia* ‘imprudence’, *indiscreción* ‘indiscretion’, *injusticia* ‘injustice’, *infidelidad* ‘unfaithfulness’, *insolencia* ‘insolence’, *necedad* ‘stupidity’, *ordinariedad* ‘vulgarity’, *osadía* ‘daring’, *temeridad* ‘temerity’, *tontería* ‘silliness’, *vulgaridad* ‘vulgarity’.

- (25) Occurrential only
bobada ‘nonsense’, *bravuconada* ‘piece of bravado’, *cabazonada* ‘stubbornness’, *cursilada* ‘tawdriness’, *fanfarronada* ‘boast’, *memez* ‘nonsense’, *sandez* ‘nonsense’, *tontada* ‘silliness’, *travesura*¹ ‘devilry’.
- (26) Quality only (? –to be discussed below)
amabilidad ‘kindness’, *arrogancia* ‘arrogance’, *astucia* ‘cunningness’, *audacia* ‘audacity’, *cautela* ‘caution’, *cobardía* ‘cowardice’, *cortesía* ‘courtesy’, *egoísmo* ‘selfishness’, *fidelidad* ‘faithfulness’, *generosidad* ‘generosity’, *honradez* ‘decency’, *humildad* ‘humbleness’, *modestia* ‘modesty’, *prudencia* ‘prudence’, *soberbia* ‘arrogance’, *valentía* ‘braveness’.

3. Analysis

- There is **no consensus** as for the **locus** and **source** of the peculiar properties found in the clauses where the adjectives appear.
- Where do the eventive-like properties come from?
- **Some** have **claimed** that they are **linked to the copula itself** (e.g., Partee’s 1977 be3). This idea looks in principle tenable by looking at the properties of these adjectives in some structures (*make x be cruel* vs. *make x cruel*) (Rothstein 1999).
- However, we argue that if this were the case or the whole story, the **properties** in question would **not** be **observed in nominalizations** at all, since they are the result of a **derivation process from the adjective alone**.
- The properties of nominalizations suggest some sort of event may be included in the structure of the adjective itself.
- But how exactly?
- The precise nature and encoding of the covert event in the structure is under debate:

Partee 1977: eventive Be. There is a higher ordinate predicate DO in verb Be.
 If that is the case, we expect to see agentive properties only in the presence of the copula.

Some cases seem to support this idea. Consider the following cases:

- (27)
- *Cruel con Juan a propósito, Pedro hizo la vida difícil a todos.
 Cruel to Juan on purpose, Pedro made life difficult to everyone
 - ??/*Considero a Pedro cruel con Juan.
 I consider Pedro cruel to Juan.
 - ??He visto a Pedro cruel con Juan a propósito.
 I have seen Pedro cruel to John on purpose
 - Martha made her daughter be polite.
 - Martha made her daughter polite.

However, nominalizations, where the copula is absent, allow for agentive and aspectual modification as seen above. If this is the case, then the event must be associated with the adjective itself and present in the nominalization process.

- And what other functional structure might be in place?

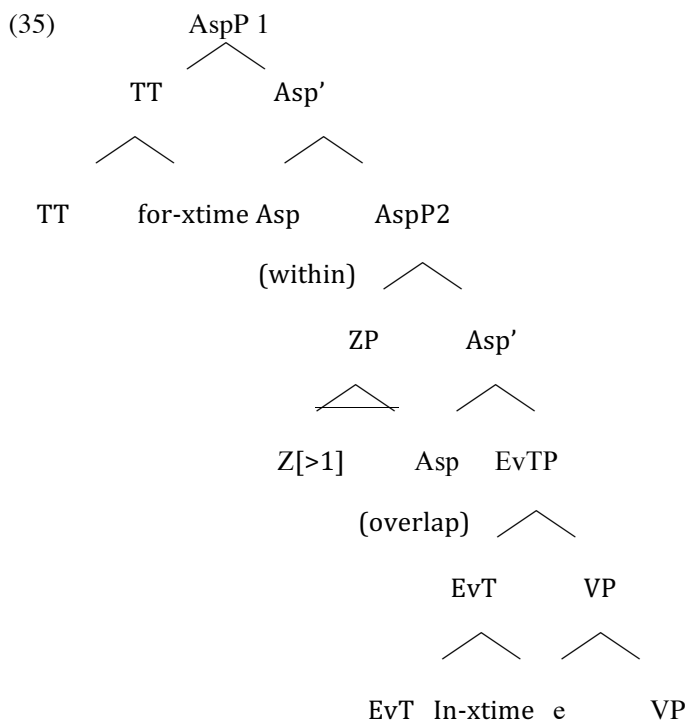
- (28) Fiesta ‘party’: underived eventive noun
 (29) Enfado ‘anger’: underived stative noun
 (30) Imprudencia ‘imprudence’: derived eventive noun
- Eventive
 - Agentive
 - Countable

¹ This suffix can also attach to nouns and give the same meaning: e.g. *diablura* ‘devilry’ (from *diablo* ‘devil’).

- d. No temporal duration
- e. But seem to be aspectually modifiable (constant, frequent)

- (31) *Las fiestas voluntarias/ las imprudencias voluntarias
the parties voluntary/ the imprudences voluntary
- (32) Una fiesta de dos horas/ *una imprudencia de dos horas ≠ una imprudencia de varios años
A party of two hours/ an imprudence of two hours ≠ an imprudence of several years
- (33) Una infidelidad de una hora ≠ una infidelidad de varios meses (unfaithful with the same person)
An infidelity of an hour ≠ an infidelity of several months
- (34) Las frecuentes fiestas/ las frecuentes imprudencias
the frequent parties/ the frequent imprudences

- How fully fledged is the event structure that is present if there is one at all?
- Is Aspect involved at all?
- Can we have an eventive structure that does not allow for Aspect structure (recall inability to measure duration)? Defective (event) structure?
- Does the pluralization come from pure nominal properties rather than aspectual properties?
 - Mourelatos 1978; Bach 1086, a.o., NumP ≈ AspP (perfective/telic)
- How do they interact? How does the event get bounded and quantified/counted?
- A possible answer is that just as other nouns are: through ClassP and NumP.
- What can we say about the acceptance of what seem to be aspectual adjectives, such as *frequent*? (and also agentive adjectives) –how to recognise the event?
- We seem unable to measure internal duration of the event, but able to quantify number of occasions → kind of proportional quantifiers argued for outer Aspect (Arche 2006, 2014).
- **Proposal:** defective aspectual structure associated with these nouns.
 - Aspect:
 - interval ordering predicate → seems missing; no ZPs; no modifiers possible
 - quantifier over occasions → seems in place



Structure for habituality (Arche 2014)

- Imperfective predicate
- Plurality of occasions
- Perfective individual instantiations
- Different temp modifiers (in-time; for-time) are size modifiers of the ZPs (intervals).

- **Are** the quantifier over occasions and NumP in complementary distribution? That is, do we have to choose; NumP or ZP?
- Wee seem to need both:
 - 1) “Frequent” is not only plurality but distance in time, distribution in time, between what must be instantiations of the event in time. So the event must be bound by the Aspectual Q.
 - 2) We can have aspectual modification without plurality:

(36) La frecuente/constante imprudencia de Juan.
The frequent/constant imprudence of John

- (36) suggests a mass interpretation, lacking a Classifier; but still modifiable aspectually and still referring to an event/events.
- Num and ZP may co-occur.

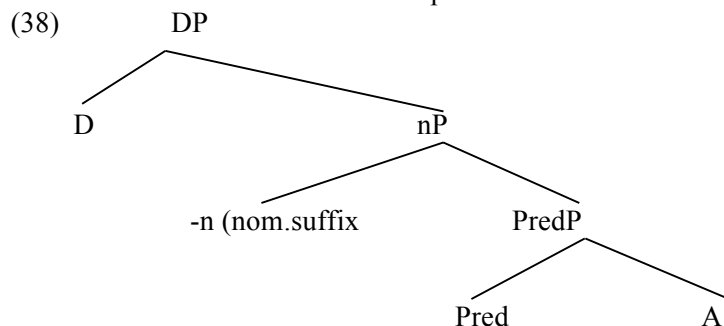
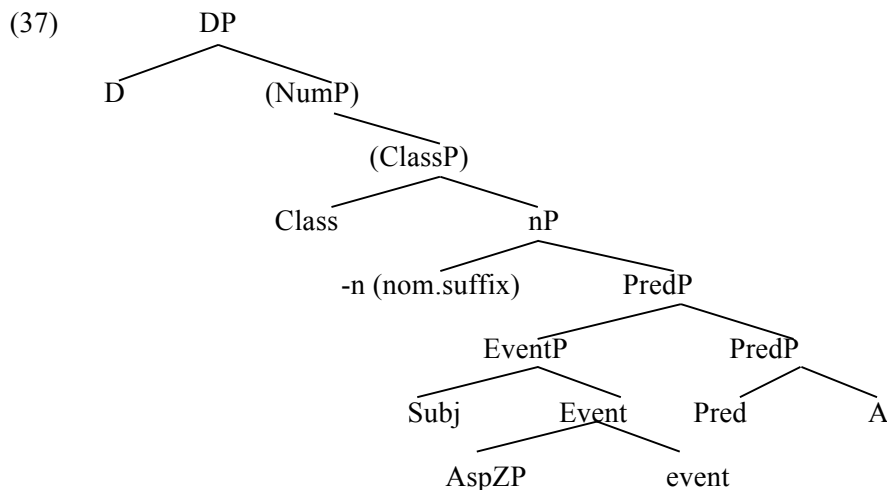
What about the other possible reading of the ODNs?

Recall that most ODNs have two readings, as the adjectives they are derived from: an eventive and a non-eventive reading (Q-nominals).

More specifically, we argue that the EAs that give rise to ODNs are those EAs that are predicated of an event in addition to the sentient individual; in Stowell’s (1991) terms, those that are dyadic.

Others lack the Q-reading, which suggest that the structure of (38) is not an option for them. Finally, the gaps represented by the third group suggest that the mere existence of a structure does not amount to the need of use it to produce derived new words. The eventive structure of adjectives corresponding to the nouns in the third group seems to be left unused.

The **tentative structures** giving rise to ODNs (25) and Q-nouns (26) are given below:



Structure in (37) captures the following facts: (i) the **root A merges with the functor Pred** that allows **the adjective** to be predicative and **have a subject**; (ii) **the subject of the adjective is an event**

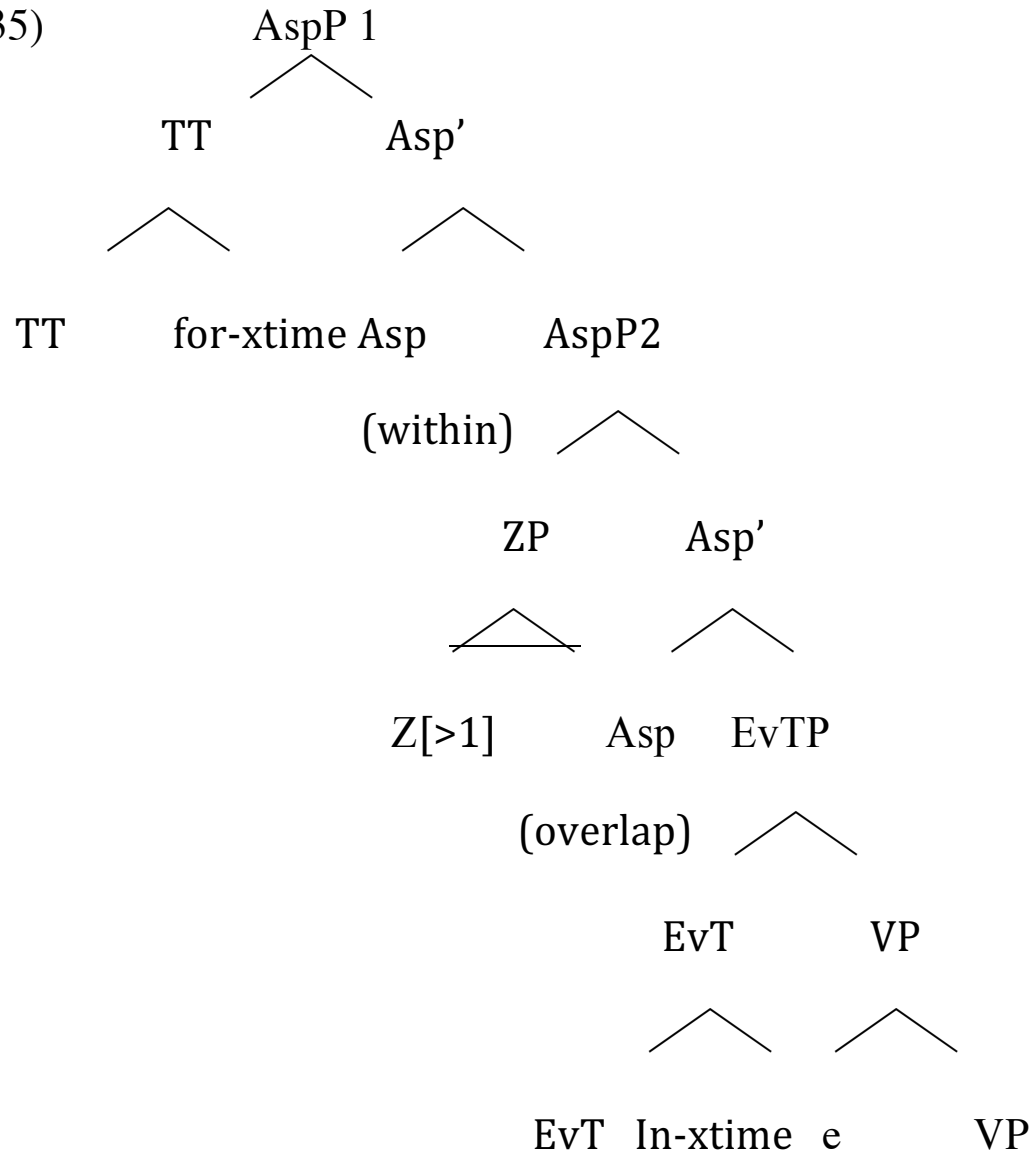
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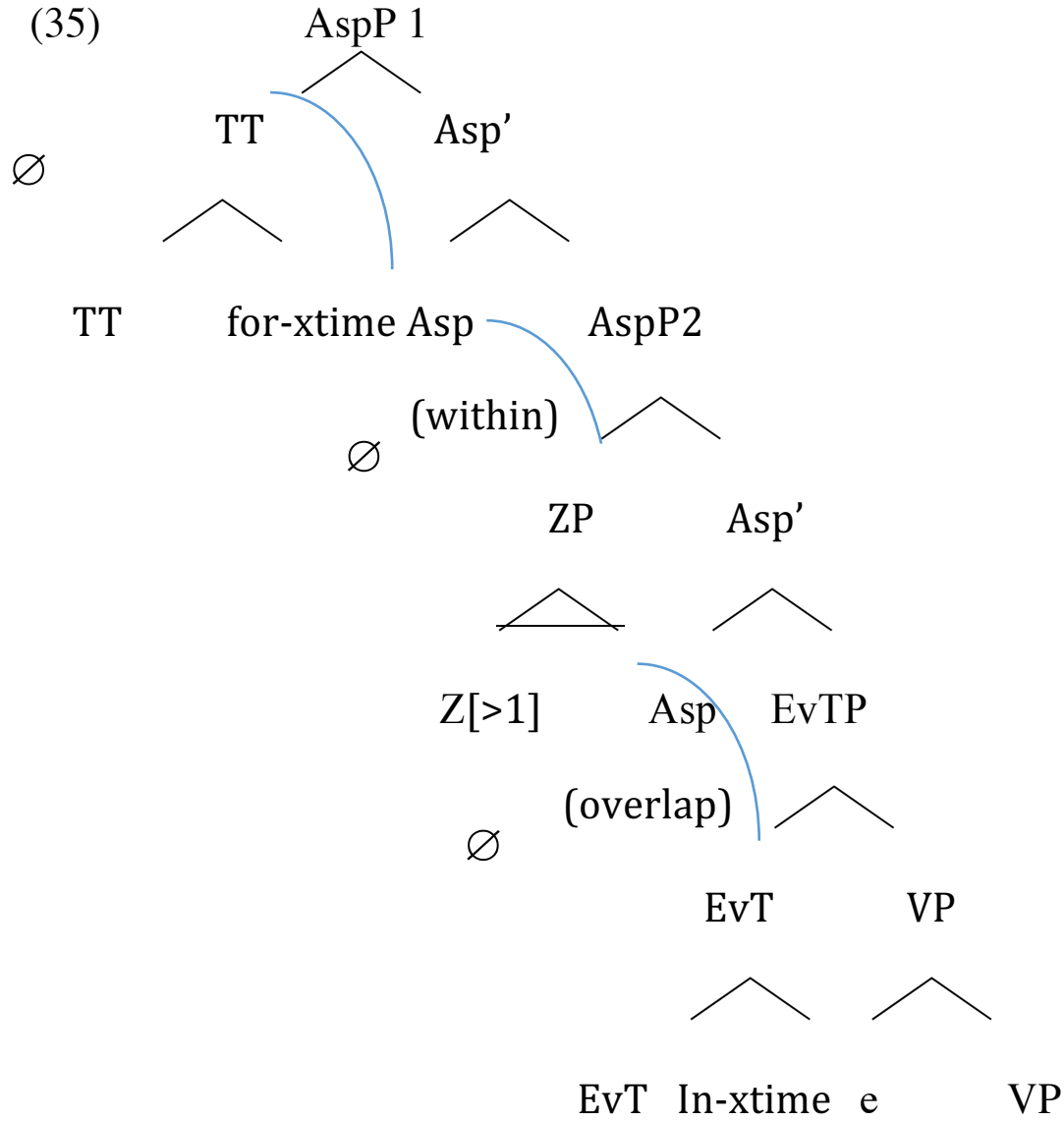
(35)



Structure for habituality (Arche 2014)

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(35)

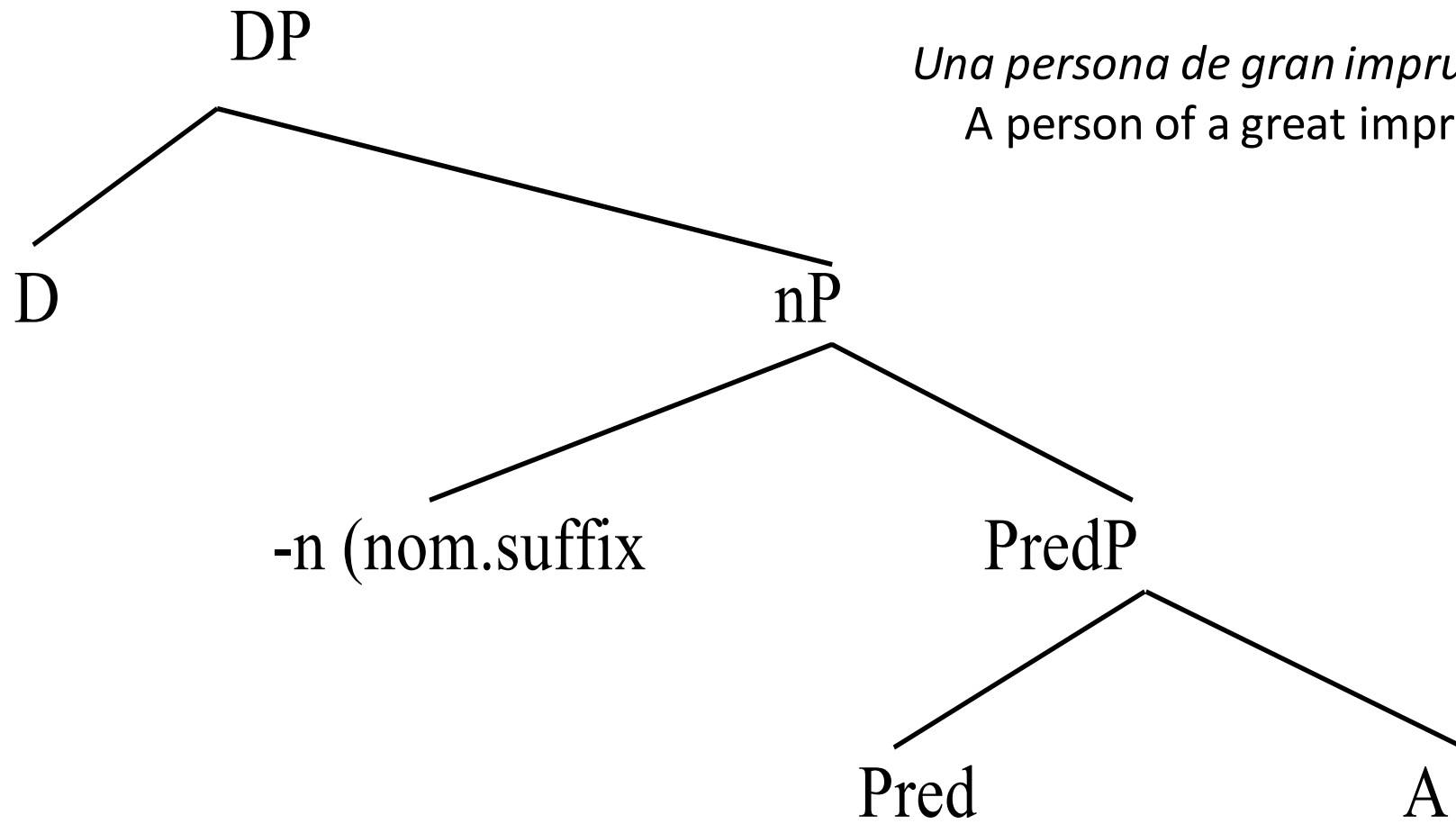


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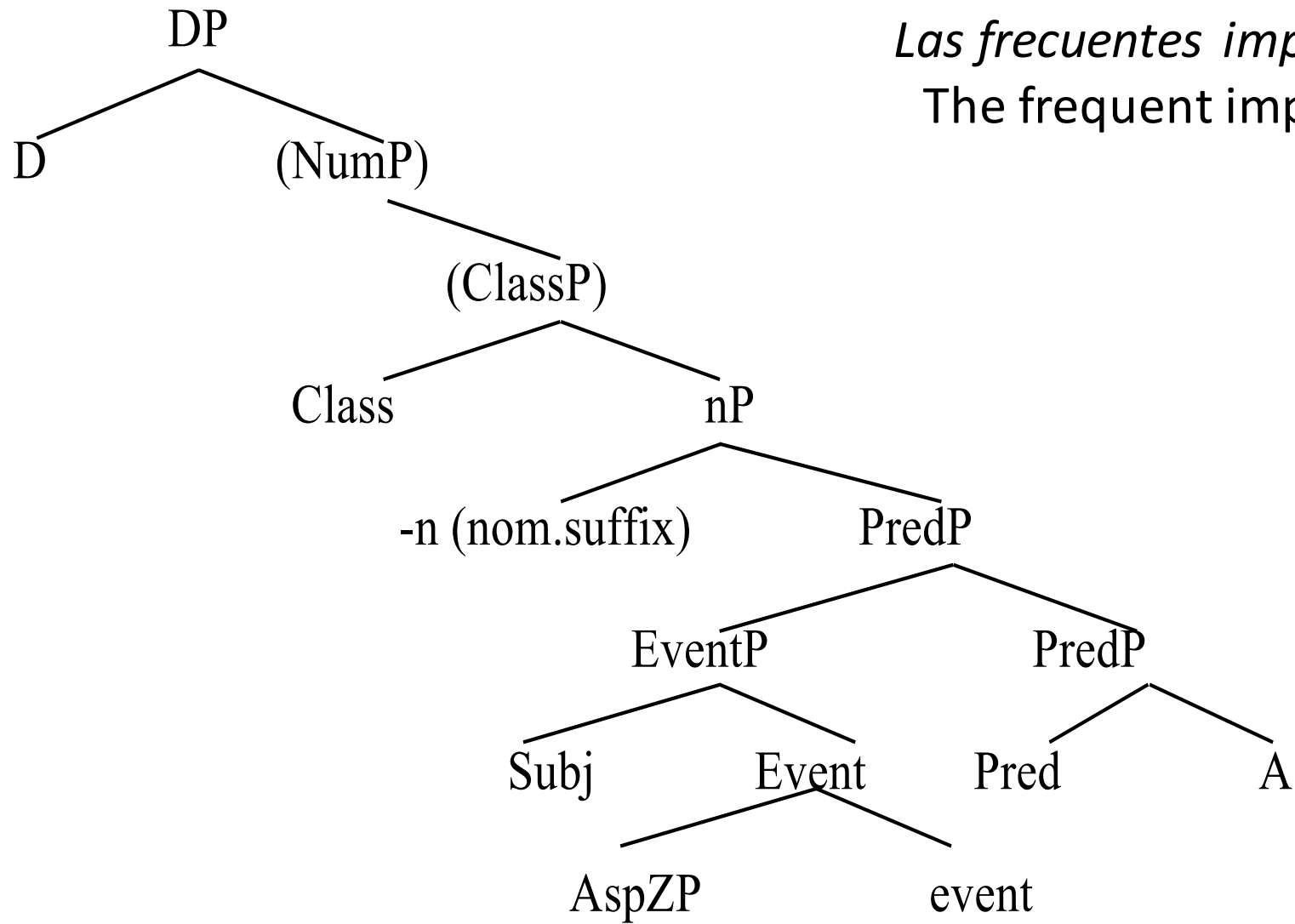
∅ = not there

(38)



Una persona de gran imprudencia
A person of a great imprudence

(37)



Las frecuentes imprudencias
The frequent imprudences

(Stowell 1991 and Arche & Stowell in progress); (iii) the covert event must consist of the essential structure to license purpose clauses and some defective Asp structure (ZP); (iv) the subject is proposed to be generated in the specifier of the event projection; (v) the nominalizer takes all this structure, which is next taken by **Classifier Phrase**, understood as in Borer 2005, that is, as **a syntactic functor that divides mass and makes it countable, allowing for the presence of Number**.

The presence of such projections is evidenced by the availability of plural and numerals, as shown above.

The essence of the contrast between ODNs and Q-Ns (38) lies, we hypothesize, in the lack of an event argument and the lack of the Classifier-Number structure.

4. Summary and conclusions

In this paper we have argued that the properties of nominalizations can be predicted from the properties of the stem (vs. affixes -- Alexiadou & Martin 2012).

In particular, we have provided a finer grained taxonomy of deadjectival nominalizations and have argued that a dichotomy between qualities and states does not exhaust the options.

We have shown the existence of deadjectival nominalizations that perform closer to deverbal nominalizations in a number of tests, referring to instantiations of events.

We have defended the idea that it can be predicted which nominalizations can give rise to such a reading: those deriving from an adjectival stem where an event is involved.

Such a group typically corresponds to evaluative adjectives, as these are predicated of an event, in addition to a sentient individual.

In the classification we have provided, we have shown that conceptual reference to an evaluative property is not enough to produce ODNs. Only the subset able to be predicated of an event at the same time than of a sentient individual produces ODNs.

We have also argued that the ambiguity exhibited by some nominals is explained by an ambiguity in the adjectival structure of origin.

We have proposed that the functional structure accompanying these cases is **defective** and, even if possibly involving an Asp head, this may not be a fully fledged **Aspect head**, but one crucially devoid of the elements that measure the understood event in time.

Furthermore, we have shown that being a dyadic adjective is not enough either to guarantee the production of the corresponding nominalization, as many of them seem incapable to refer to an eventuality.

Likewise, we have shown that not all ODNs have a corresponding quality noun. That is, the two cases seem attested: absence of derivation from one existing structure and absence of the corresponding base structure.

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