

Semantics of *el...este*: Reduced demonstratives in Spanish

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INTRODUCTION. This presentation provides a novel account of the post-nominal demonstrative in Spanish (postN DEM, see (1)), that exists alongside the canonical prenominal demonstrative (preN DEM) in this language (see (2)).

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|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) el libro ese
the book that | (2) ese libro
that book |
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While previous papers approach the construction from a syntactic (Roca 1996, Brugé 1996, Taboada 2007) or discourse (Alexander 2007) perspective, this presentation provides the first formal semantic analysis of the construction. The main proposal is that, semantically, postN demonstratives are very similar to their preN kin. However, they differ from them in that they are leaners – reduced material that does not interact with focus – leading to their particular syntactic/semantic distribution.

BACKGROUND: PRE-N DEMS. The adopted analysis of preN DEMs consists of two components. First, I adopt a widely assumed entry for the DEM following Elbourne (2008)/Schwarz (2009):

- (3) $\llbracket \textit{ese} \rrbracket = \lambda P.\lambda y: !\exists x [P(x) \wedge x = y]. \iota x [P(x) \wedge x = y] .$
 (4) Structure: $[_{\text{DemP}} 1 [_{\text{DP}} \iota [_{\text{NP}} N]]]$

The definition incorporates a referential index, i.e. a covert pronoun, making the DEM a directly referential expression with wide scope. Additionally, it presupposes an antecedent. The consequence is that the DEM can be used in anaphora – were there is an *anaphoric antecedent*, (5) –, or in deixis – where there is a “*deictic antecedent*” in the immediate surroundings, (6) – but not out-of-the blue when the entity in question is not immediately perceptible, as in (7).

- (5) Ana conoció a *un chico*. **Este chico / El chico este** era simpático.
 Ana met DOM a guy this guy / the guy this was nice
 (6) There are several books on the table. B asks: “Which book did Ana buy?”
 Ha comprado a) $[_F \textit{ese}]$ **libro** b) ?? **el libro** $[_F \textit{ese}]$. [a/b: pointing at ‘*El Quijote*’]
 has bought that book the book that
 (7) **#Ese presidente / # El presidente ese / El presidente** ha dimitido.
 that president / the president that / the president has resigned

The second component of the analysis accounts for the interaction of DEMs with pointing. A widely recognized property of DEMs is that they require a pointing gesture when used non-anaphorically. Ebert (2016) couches this phenomenon in a more general theory of co-speech gestures that may accompany various linguistic expressions. When used with adjectives/(in)definite expressions, the meaning conveyed by the gesture is not at issue (given, uncontroversial, parenthetical information), see (8). On the other hand, with demonstratives this meaning is part of the *at-issue content* (see (9)), i.e. regular semantic content that can be openly denied or asked after – and also a more perceptually prominent phenomenon. In all cases, the meaning contribution of the gesture is a proposition.

- (8) $\llbracket \text{Ana bought the book [+ pointing]} \rrbracket \approx$
 1. Verbal meaning: *Ana bought the unique book.* (At issue)
 2. Gesture meaning: The gesture referent is identical to the book. (Not at issue)
 (9) $\llbracket \text{Ana bought that book [+ pointing]} \rrbracket \approx$
 1. Verbal meaning: *Ana bought the book that is uniquely being pointed at.* (At issue)
 2. Gesture meaning: *The gesture referent is identical to that book.* (At issue)

PROPOSAL: POSTN DEMS AS REDUCED DEMS. In what respects the first component of the analysis, the postN DEM construction is semantically equivalent to the preN one, see (10). The only difference lies in the spell-out and the compositional order in which the elements of the definition are introduced: the definite article spells out ι , while the DEM is introduced adjectivally via predicate modification, and introduces the referential index, see (11):

- (10) $\lambda P. \iota x [P(x)]$ *el* DP $\iota x[\text{book}(x) \ \& \ x=y]$ NP $\lambda x.\text{book}(x) \ \& \ x=y$
 $\lambda x.\text{book}(x)$ *libro* *ese* $\lambda x.x=y$
- (11) Structure: $[\text{DP } \iota \ [\text{NP } N \ [\text{DemP } 1]]]$
 Spell-out: *the book that*

This captures the aspects in which postN DEM resembles the preN one: wide scope, an antecedent requirement, and the ban from out-of-the blue contexts (see (5), (7)). The difference between the two lies in the second component of the analysis: the postN DEM is a leaner – a phonologically reduced element that does not interact with focus. As a consequence, its interplay with pointing is less straightforward. This provides a unified analysis of some previously identified, yet hitherto unexplained properties of the postN DEM. First, unlike the preN DEM and other postnominal modifiers, it cannot act as remnant under Noun Phrase Ellipsis (NPE):

- (12) *el libro rojo / suyo / # ese.* (13) *ese libro*
 the book red / his / that that book

Remnants of definite DPs in Spanish have to be restrictive (Saab 2007:531): simplifying somewhat, they have to address the Question Under Discussion (QUD, see Martin 2013). If the postN DEM is a reduced element that cannot be focused, it cannot address the QUD, explaining the unacceptability of (12). Second, it appears that the postN DEM cannot straightforwardly be used in combination with pointing (Taboada 2007, see (6b)). This is apparently at odds with examples where the construction is used non-anaphorically:

- (14) ¿Quiere **la bata** **esta**? Se va a enfriar.
 you.want the dressing.gown this? REFL go to get.cold
 ‘Do you want this dressing gown? You are going to get cold.’ (RAE 2010:338)

I agree with Taboada’s judgements, and explain the contrast as follows. Prototypical cases of deixis/pointing involve narrow focus on the DEM: the QUD in (6) is *Which book did Ana buy?*. The preN DEM is able to answer this question, with the combination of the verbal meaning and the gesture meaning in (9). However, the postN DEM is a leaner. As such, it is by definition unfocused, and thus the information provided by it (verbally and gesturally) cannot answer the QUD. The prediction is that the postN DEM with pointing will become more acceptable in a context where what is being asked is *What did Ana buy?* (focus on entire DP, presumably also in (14)) rather than *Which book did Ana buy?* (focus only on the DEM).

FURTHER SUPPORT. The contrast of full vs reduced DEMs has parallels with the pronominal domain: it has long been assumed that there are different ‘strengths’ to personal pronouns (Cardinaletty & Starke 1996), that range from full pronouns to clitics. The parallelism is appealing: in the present analysis, the DEM is treated as a sort of complex pronoun (the referential index in (3)/(10)). In addition, the proposed link between pointing and full vs. reduced elements is also supported in the pronominal domain: reduced pronouns also cannot be used in combination with pointing, whereas full forms can:

- (15) *Le he visto # (a Él)* (16) *Ana abita LÍ / #ci abita* [Italian]
 3SG.DAT= have seen DOM 3SG Ana lives there / there= lives
 ‘I have seen him’ [pointing at Juan] [pointing at one of many houses]