Towards a syntactic account of affix combinations: deadjectival nouns and denominal adjectives
Antonio Fábregas, University of Tromsø
antonio.fabregas@uit.no

Since Fabb (1988), it is a well-known fact that the number of attested affix combinations in a language is much lower than the logical combinatorial possibilities (from 1849 to 50 in his study). In this talk, we present data from adjectival and nominal derivation in Spanish, using corpora and native intuitions (1). Some affixes are root-adjacent (e.g., -iano, ‘ian’); one affix is terminal (-ista, ‘ist’); some affixes can follow all (-oso, ‘ous’) or virtually all (-idad, ‘ity’) affixes of the opposite category. We show that accounts based on templates (Inkelas 1993) or complexity (Hay & Plag 2004) cannot deal with these data; the first fails because some affixes have free order with respect to others, the second because some strongly lexicalised affixes (-(d)umbre) cannot be followed by most compositional and regular affixes. Two alternatives remain: a morphological-based account, where affixes are lexically stored with statements about their combinations, or a syntactic-based account, where the combinations are restricted by the combinatorial possibilities of the heads inside a functional sequence. We provide preliminary evidence for this second account. We argue that:

(a) Part of the restrictions derive from the contrast between lexical and functional functors (Borer 2005)–lexical functors can follow other affixes because they change the category of their complement (2a); functional functors cannot do this, and thus must be adjacent to roots (2b). This captures the difference between root-adjacent suffixes and the rest.

(b) The other restrictions derive from the existence of a functional sequence (3) that forbids that a head of level X dominates a head of level X+n. If an affix spells out a head X, it can only follow affixes of level X-n and be followed by affixes of level X+n.

(c) Affixes that define a quale (Pustejovsky 1995)–expressing constituency, agency or purpose– are in the outer layers, like -idad or -ismo. The reason is that they spell out QuaP, which dominates aP–arguments in favour of Qua being a syntactic head are presented, and taken from the domain of type coercion and the existence of sentences like I know the menu–, and as such cannot be followed by affixes that spell out a/AP or n/NP.

(d) Affixes that spell out Qua can be followed by those that spell out p/P, because P dominates Qua. We provide arguments that the affix -oso is actually the spell out of P, not a, and as such can follow any nominalizer.

(e) -ista is terminal because it materializes Qua and cannot be selected by P because of its adjectival nature.

The study of these combinations will also allow us to look deeper into the internal structure of each one of these domains. Fine grained contrasts such as alt-itud ‘altitude’, alt-ura ‘height’ and alt-eza ‘highness’, matched with the combinatorial restrictions of each affix, argue in favour of a decomposition of adjectives in at least three layers: a root, a scale and a positive degree structure. Each one of the three affixes attaches to one of these three levels.
Examples and data

(1) (Un)attested suffix combinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjectival suffix</th>
<th>nominal suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd affix</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st affix</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjectival suffix</td>
<td>al</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominal suffix</td>
<td>dad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not considered in the study

(2) a. AP ƎQ.R(Q,K)
   A
   -il
   N
   √
   ...NP ƎK.R(K, √)
   a
   √
   -iano

b. aP

(3) pP
   p
   P
   QuaP
   Qua
   aP
   a
   AP
   A
   nP
   n
   NP
   N
   √