

# PRENOMINAL AND POSTNOMINAL DEMONSTRATIVES IN SPANISH: A [ $\pm$ DEICTIC] APPROACH

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## Abstract<sup>1</sup>

In this paper I propose an explanation for the difference in meaning and in structure between the prenominal and the postnominal demonstratives in Spanish, and its complimentary distribution with the article in prenominal position. The literature had traditionally considered that there was a difference only in structure, although Bernstein (1997) points out that the postnominal one does not have a deictic meaning. I propose that it is the feature [+deictic] which triggers the raising of the demonstrative to D<sup>o</sup>, in order to check the [+Ref] feature present in this position. The postnominal demonstrative is marked [-deictic], what prevents it from moving, and forces the appearance of the expletive article in D<sup>o</sup>.

## 0. Introduction

As traditional grammars (R.A.E. 1973) claim, we do not know the meaning of *este* 'this' or *ese* 'that', their semantic meaning is vacuous; but, what we know is that they are used to point at something, either physically, this is deictically, it points out something we see or we remember, or anaphorically/cataphorically, it makes reference to something that has already been mentioned/or is going to be mentioned in the discourse. This difference in the structure is due to the presence of the feature [+deictic] in the prenominal one. In section 1, I try to determine the categorial status of the demonstrative, since it cannot be an article, nor an adjective; in section 2, I explore the analyses other authors have proposed to explain the different structures we can find; in section 3, I present my analysis, where I propose the existence of the feature [ $\pm$  deictic], the trigger of the demonstrative movement in Spanish.

## 1. The Categorial Status of the Demonstrative

Demonstratives have traditionally been considered to share several properties with articles, if not to be the same type of element. Roca (1996b) mentions some of these common properties:

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- (i) prenominal position
- (ii) complementary distribution always present in English, and in some Romance languages in prenominal position
- (iii) the definiteness value
- (iv) both can appear in argument position (Longobardi 1994)
- (v) coincidences in their semantic representation according to Diesing (1992), who makes a difference between indefinites and the other determiners.

Nevertheless, in recent years these similarities have been left aside, since it is important to make clear that determiners and demonstratives cannot be the same type of animal. Bernstein (1997) gives three reasons for this. Her first reason is that in some languages they can cooccur, as we can see in Spanish in example (6) and in Rumanian in example (9):

- (1) *The* students went to the bar
- (2) *These* students went to the bar
- (3) \**The these* students went to the bar
- (4) *Los* estudiantes fueron al bar (Spanish)
- (5) *Esos* estudiantes fueron al bar
- (6) *Los* estudiantes *esos* fueron al bar
- (7) Băiat-*ul* frumos (Rumanian)  
boy-the nice
- (8) *Acest* (frumos) băiat (frumos)  
this (nice) boy (nice)
- (9) Băiat-*ul acesta* frumos  
boy-the this nice

Bernstein (1997) gives examples of Hungarian and Javanese, languages where these elements can cooccur even in prenominal position, as we can see in examples (10-11):

- (10) *ez a* haz (Hungarian)  
this the house
- (11) *ika n* anak (Javanese)  
this the child

The second reason Bernstein (1997) proposes is that the demonstrative may stay alone, becoming a pronoun, but not the definite article, although the indefinite one can stay alone in some languages, as we can see in examples (12-14):

- (12) This is the one I want
- (13) *Éste* es el que yo quiero (Spanish)  
this is the that I want
- (14) *Este* e o que eu quero (Galician)

And Bernstein's last reason is that in many languages the demonstrative is adjectival in nature, exhibiting a full range of adjectival inflection and often occupying the position typical of adjectives. Nevertheless, there is a lot of discussion about the categorial status of the demonstrative. Panagiotidis (2000) claims that the categorial status of the demonstrative cannot be the same as that of the adjective. He finds diachronic and synchronic evidence. As Greenberg (1978, 1991) had already stated, the shift from demonstrative to article is well attested in quite a few languages: demonstrative > definite article > non generic article > noun marker. According to Panagiotidis (2000), if demonstratives were adjectives or adjective-like elements, perhaps possessives could have undergone the same categorial shift into Determiner heads. Synchronically, if, as Brugè (1996) claims, demonstratives carry an interpretable [Referential] feature, they cannot possibly be adjectives; therefore, Panagiotidis assumes that demonstratives are DPs cross-linguistically, as demonstrative heads are Determiners.

In the literature, demonstratives had usually been considered to be generated in a specifier position, [Spec, AgrP] for Giusti (1997, 2002), being this a high position above the Functional Projections containing the Adjectival Phrases; [Spec, AgrP] for Brugè (1996, 2002), being this a low FP, right above the NP. However, Roca (1996a) proposes that the demonstrative is a head projecting its own phrase, the Demonstrative Phrase (DemP), at least in the case of Spanish, although we might find some languages in which it can be a specifier. Roca follows Cornilescu's (1992) work, who in her study of the different determiners in Rumanian concludes that there must exist a DetP below the DP, headed by a definite article; thus, if the D° position is occupied by the definite article, Det° might be filled by different determiners, such as demonstratives, indefinite, or quantifiers.

## 2. Prenominal vs. Postnominal Demonstratives

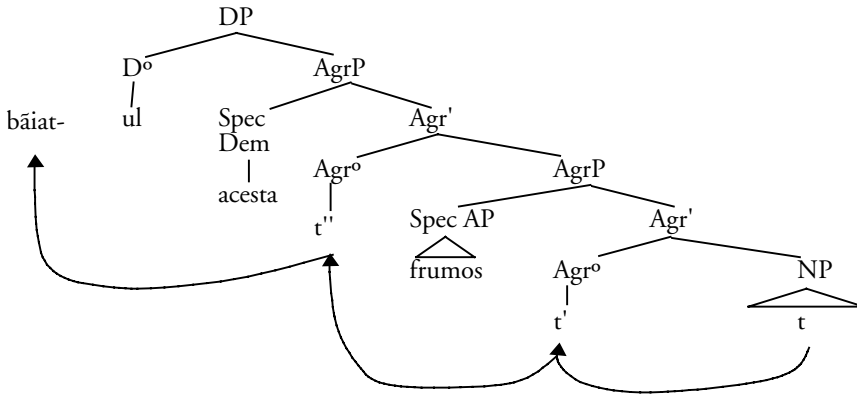
As we have seen in examples (6) and (9), in both Spanish and Rumanian, demonstratives can cooccur with a definite article which show that they cannot occupy the same position.

- (15) a. băiat-ul acest frumos                      b. acest (frumos) băiat (frumos)  
           boy-the this    nice    this (nice)    boy (nice)

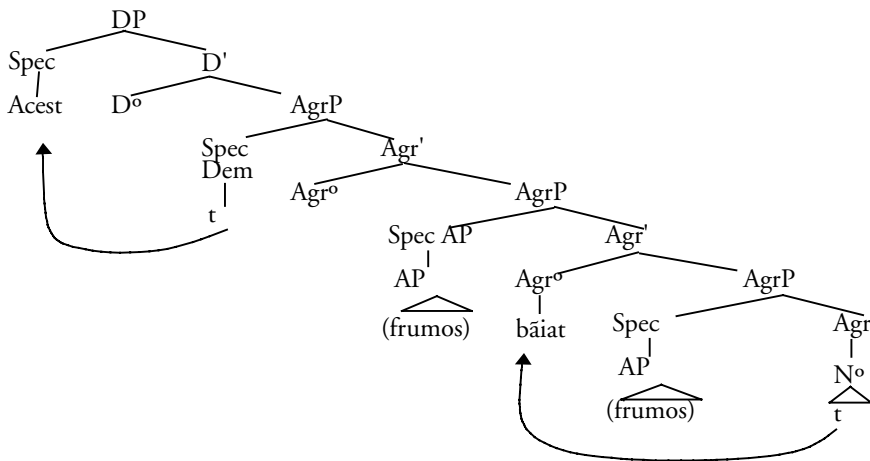
Giusti (1997) proposes two different structures for DPs, depending if they are headed by an article, or by a demonstrative, as we can see in (16) and (17):

As we can see in (16), N-movement crosses over both the demonstrative and the adjective, and once the noun has raised to D° and the article is present, the demonstrative does not need to move. However, in (17) we see that the demonstrative raises to [Spec, DP], and once this position is filled by an element able to check the [Ref] feature present in D°, there is no need for the article to appear.

(16) Headed by a determiner:



(17) Headed by a demonstrative:



## 2.1. Complementary distribution in prenominal position

A question widely discussed in the literature is why in some languages an element in [Spec, DP], the demonstrative is in complementary distribution with an article in D°. Both Giusti (1997, 2002) and Brugè (1996, 2002) point out that this complementary distribution is similar to the doubly-filled COMP filter' (Chomsky and Lasnik 1977), which is not universal. As Giusti (1997, 2002) and Brugè (1996, 2002) point out, two assumptions must be taken into account at this point. First, a functional projection is instantiated in order to realize some feature  $\phi$ , and this feature must be visible in order to be properly interpreted at LF; and second, the relevant relation

for the satisfaction of the visibility condition imposed on functional features is universally the Spec-Head relation: if the specifier position is empty or does not have strong specification for the relevant feature, the head must be filled. Otherwise, the head can be abstract. Variation across languages can be reduced to variation across (inflectional) morphological systems. If an element in Spec makes the relevant features (morphologically) visible, the corresponding head in agreement with it will be empty. If the relevant features are not morphologically visible, or if the specifier position is empty, the relevant head must be inserted in order for the projection to be properly interpreted at LF. Languages vary with respect to the level at which the demonstrative moves to [Spec, DP], its final destination.

However, Bernstein (1997) proposes what I consider to be a more elegant solution to the question, not based on a stipulation, as the Doubly-Filled DP Filter was. Bernstein assumes that the  $X^0$  corresponding to the demonstrative head in [Spec, AgrP] raises and substitutes into the  $D^0$  position. This claim automatically accounts for the absence of a prenominal demonstrative cooccurring with a definite article in Romance and Germanic languages.

## 2.2. Different analyses

Roca (1996a; 1996b) claims that the Spanish demonstrative is a functional head projecting an XP (his DemP) situated below the DP. Nonetheless, the demonstrative is not syntactically homogenous crosslinguistically. We can find different base positions in different languages.

Both Giusti (2002) and Campos (2005) propose that the appearance of the article in prenominal position in languages such as Rumanian or Arvantovlaxica are last resort operations. Giusti (2002) claims that in Rumanian the determiner bears a set of  $\phi$ -features, which includes Case, Gender and Number, the strong features, which must be checked (Chomsky 1995b, 1998, 1999). They can be checked in two different ways, moving an element to [Spec, DP] or, by default, by spelling out the definite article, which can be considered the morphological realization of these  $\phi$ -features:

- (18) a. [<sub>DP</sub> [+ $\phi$ F\*] [<sub>FP</sub> frumos F [<sub>NP</sub> băiat ]]]  
 b. [<sub>DP</sub> [+ $\phi$ F\*] [<sub>FP</sub> frumos băiat F [<sub>NP</sub> băiat ]]]  
 c. [<sub>DP</sub> băiat-ul [<sub>FP</sub> frumos băiat F [<sub>NP</sub> băiat ]]]

In example (18) we see that the adjective is generated in the specifier position of an intermediate functional category FP, between the DP and the NP. The Noun raises to check agreement features on the adjective in (18b). However, since nothing has checked [+ $\phi$ F\*], the definite article must spell-out. Since the article is an enclitic element, the noun has to raise for phonological reasons (Dobrovie-Sorin 1987).

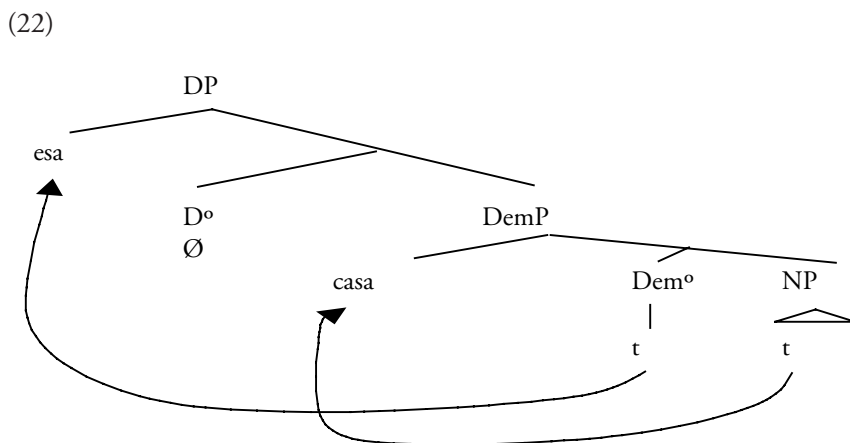
As we have already said, in Spanish and Rumanian we can find two different positions for the demonstrative. However, we find that in Spanish there is a clear difference in meaning: the prenominal demonstrative possesses two different features [+ deictic,  $\pm$  anaphoric], while the postnominal one is [- deictic, + anaphoric], as we can see in examples (19) and (20):

- (19) —¿Qué has leído?  
 what have-you read  
 —Este libro (while pointing at it)  
 this book  
 —\*El libro este (while pointing at it)  
 the book this
- (20) ¿dónde está la casa esa de la que hablas?  
 where is the house that of the that you-talk  
 ‘Where’s the house you’re talking about?’

As we can see in example (19), the postnominal use of the demonstrative is banned if we are physically pointing at the object we are talking about. As Bernstein (1997) points out, the postnominal construction in Spanish cannot be deictic, since we always need an adverb in order to express the deictic meaning:

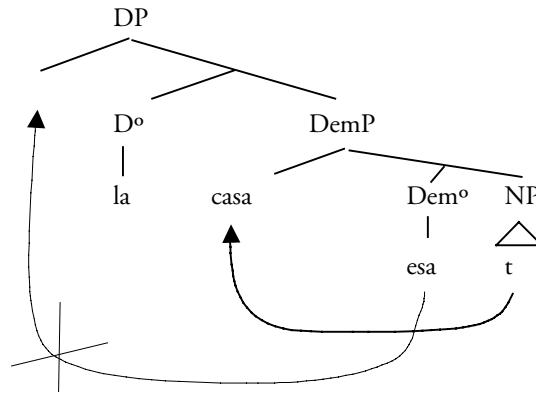
- (21) —¿Qué has leído?                      —El libro ese de ahí  
 what have-you read                      the book that of there  
 ‘What have you read?’                      ‘That book there’

Roca (1996) proposes the same structure for both the prenominal and the postnominal order in (22) and (23):



As we can see in (22), we obtain the prenominal order by moving the noun *casa* ‘house’ to [Spec, DemP], and Dem° to [Spec, DP], while we find in (23) that the movement of the Dem° to [Spec, DP] is blocked because D° is filled by the article. Therefore, according to Roca (1996b) the prenominal order crucially depends on the movement of Dem° to D°.

(23)

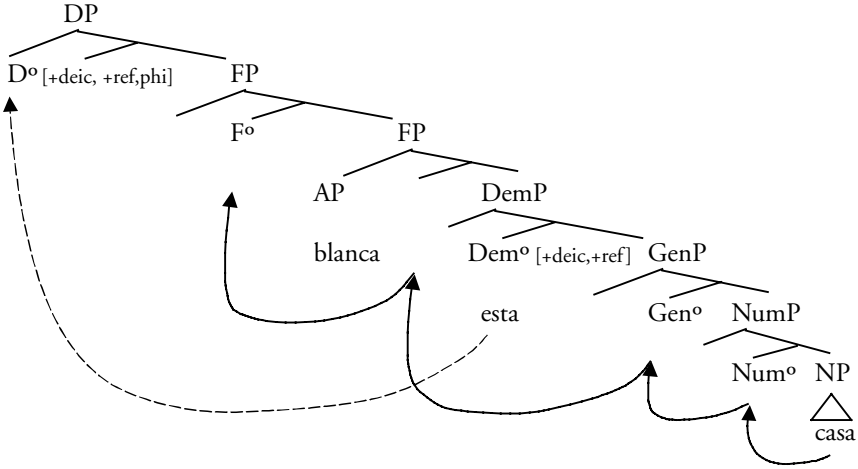


Brugè (1996) determines that the demonstrative must always raise to [Spec, DP] at some point through the derivation, optionally before Spell-Out, but obligatorily at LF. For her, demonstratives generate in a unique position in all languages, but they differ as to their power to allow, oblige or prevent the movement of the demonstrative to [Spec, DP] before Spell-Out. A good question at this point could be why do we need the article if the demonstrative always moves to [Spec, DP] at LF? Brugè says that if the demonstrative does not move to [Spec, DP] before Spell-Out, the definite article must be realized in D° in order to show at PF that this position contains some feature [+Ref] which prevents the DP from being interpreted as existential.

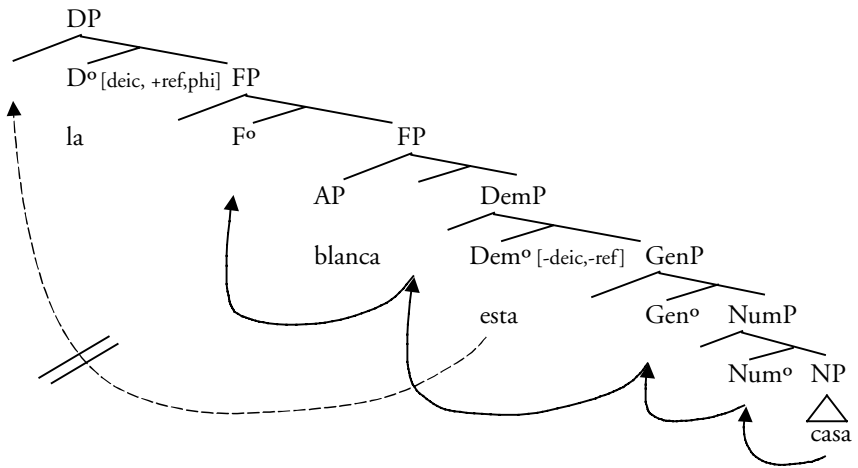
### 3. My proposal

Nonetheless, and according to the minimalist framework and Campos's (2005) analysis for AV, we can determine that, in Spanish, the prenominal demonstrative, the [+ deictic] one, can check the strong [+φ\*] features in D°, as well as its [+ referential] feature, and for that reason the demonstrative has to raise to that position, to check all the features present in D°. These two features, [deictic] and [Referential] must be somehow related, since we see that only the [+ deictic] demonstrative, this is the prenominal one, can check this [Ref] feature in D°. On the other hand, the postnominal demonstrative, the [- deictic] one, cannot check the [+ Referential] feature in D°; hence, the expletive article must appear in a last resort operation, just to check the strong [+φ\*] features, and the [Ref] feature of D°. The resulting structures we find are the one in (24) for prenominal demonstratives, and the one in (25) for postnominal ones.

(24) Prenominal:



(25) Postnominal:



In both examples we see that the noun moves head to head through all the FPs present in the structure in order to check its own  $\phi$ -features, and the ones belonging to the adjective, as shown by (Cinque 1994). As we have seen, in (24), the prenominal demonstrative has the feature [+deictic], therefore, it can check the [Ref] feature in  $D^\circ$  by entering into a Spec-head relation. However, in (25) we can see that the demonstrative does not have a deictic feature, therefore it cannot check the deictic/referential feature in the DP, triggering the appearance of the expletive article, in order to check the referential feature of the DP, and the  $\phi$ -features of the whole DP.



#### 4. Other constructions that support this analysis

Two other constructions that show this [ $\pm$  deictic] approach may be right, are the postnominal demonstrative that does not require an article, and the postnominal structure with the place adverb. Let us focus first in the former one. We can find examples such as the following one:

- (26) Bush ha decidido atacar otro país, *decisión esta* aplaudida por Blair  
 Bush has decided attack another country decision this applauded by Blair  
 ‘Bush has decided to attack another country, and this decision has been applauded by Blair’

This example does not pose a problem, since, following Longobardi (1994), bare NPs can appear in non-argument positions, and the structure  $N^{\circ}$ -demonstrative can never appear in argument position, they are always appositions; the feature [Ref] is not present in  $D^{\circ}$ , thus, although the [-deictic] demonstrative cannot check it, the expletive article does not need to be present.

The second construction, the one with the place adverb present can also be explained by this approach. Bernstein (1997) claims that *ese de ahí* ‘that of there’ must form a constituent. And this can explain the fact that the demonstrative always has to agree with the adverb, as we can see in examples (27) and (28):

- (27) *esta de aquí/esa de ahí/aquella de allí*      (28) \**esta de ahí/ \*aquella de aquí*  
 this of here/that of there/that of there

Then, if we have examples (29) and (30):

- (29) *la casa esa de ahí*                                      (30) *esa casa de ahí*  
 the house that of there                                      that house of there

either the article or the demonstrative must appear in prenominal position, since the [Ref] feature must be checked. Since it is the adverb the one that possesses the [+deictic] feature, and the demonstrative has inherited it, we can say that this feature percolates to the whole DemP, and now we can choose the mechanism to check the [Ref] of DP: either the demonstrative can raise, or the expletive article can appear.

#### 5. Conclusion

As we have seen, the presence of the [+ deictic] feature in  $Dem^{\circ}$ , triggers the movement of the demonstrative to  $D^{\circ}$ , in order to check the [+ Ref] feature in this position. These two features, [ $\pm$  deictic] and [ $\pm$  Referential], must be somehow related, since the presence of the [ $\pm$  deictic] one can check the [+ Ref] one, and it is decisive for the appearance of the expletive article or the movement of the demonstrative, and we have also seen that this analysis is able to explain other constructions containing a demonstrative.

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