

No duermo lo suficiente: spanish *lo* on degree phrases

Mayra Gabriela García Rodríguez

Spanish Linguistics Master
National Autonomous University of Mexico

-
68th Studentische Tagung Sprachwissenschaft

November 20th 2020

- 1 About *lo* in Spanish
 - 1.1 Definite article
 - 1.2 2 Uses
 - 1.3 Degree *lo*
2. Morphosyntax
 - 2.1 Syntactic combinatory
 - 2.2 Distribution
 - 2.3 Phrase type
- 3 Semantics
 - 3.1 Degree *lo* phrases: interpretation
 - 3.2 Lexical semantics of its components
 - 3.3 *Lo* on its own: input

About *lo* in Spanish

Definite articles in Spanish

- ▶ 3 definite articles: *el, la, lo*.
- ▶ **El, la**: gender-agreeing
- ▶ **Lo**:
 - ▶ Spanish has no neuter nouns
 - ▶ No reference to individuals

The *lo* particle

- ▶ Referential (RAE/ASALE 2009; García Rodríguez 2018)
- ▶ Degree (Bosque y Moreno Cabrera 1990)

- (1)
- Trae para acá **lo de madera**.
Bring **what is made of wood** over here.
 - Para alguien que ama dormir, no duermo **lo suficiente**.
For someone that loves sleeping, I don't sleep **enough**.

Degree *lo*

- ▶ Denotes quantities (Bosque & Moreno Cabrera 1990)
- ▶ Different from the referential form:
 - ▶ Syntactic combinatory
 - ▶ It does not reference individuals, but sets of degrees.
- ▶ I propose a morphosyntactic-semantic characterization for this particle:
 - ▶ Compositional semantics: Frege's Principle of Compositionality
 - ▶ Twitter-based Corpus

Morphosyntax

Combinatory

► *lo* + adjectival phrases

These AdjP can be build by a single head adjective as in (2a, 2b), or by adjectives modified by an adverb, as in (2c).

- (2) a. No duermo **lo suficiente** para amanecer descansada.
I don't sleep **enough** to wake up rested.
- b. Se separó **lo necesario** para mirarle.
He pulled apart **enough** to look at her.
- c. La vida te golpea **lo bastante fuerte** para que cambies.
Life hits you **hard enough** for you to change.

Distribution

- ▶ Quantity related adjuncts (3a)
- ▶ Predicative adjective (3b): agreement
- ▶ Attributive adjective (3c): agreement

- (3) a. Aquí nunca nieva **lo necesario** como para que cancelen clases.
Here, it never snows **enough** for them to cancel classes.
- b. Alicia siempre sale **lo bastante abrigada** de su casa.
Alicia leaves her house **covered enough**.
- c. Creo que nosotros no estamos siendo **lo necesariamente agradecidos con la vida**.
I think we are not being **grateful enough** with life.

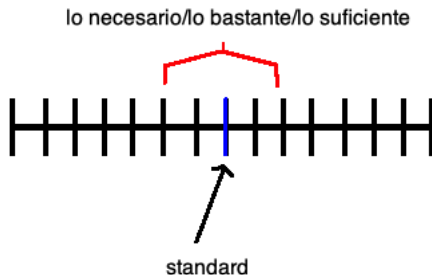
Phrase type

- ▶ Determiner phrases
 - ▶ Determiner head: *lo*
 - ▶ Distribution of a Spanish DP: adjunct, predicative adjective, attribute adjective

Semantics

Interpretation

- ▶ These phrases denote an interval that comprehends a set of degrees, constituted by points on a scale that go from before an standard and until after such standard.



(4) *If exercising 2 hours a day is the standard:*

- a. Jorge se ejercita **lo suficiente**.
Jorge exercises enough.
- b. Jorge se ejercita 20 minutos al día. (F)
Jorge exercises 20 minutes a day.
- c. Jorge se ejercita una hora al día. (T)
Jorge exercises 1 hour a day.
- d. Jorge se ejercita dos horas al día. (T)
Jorge exercises 2 hours a day.
- e. Jorge se ejercita 3 horas al día. (T)
Jorge exercises 3 hours a day.
- f. Jorge se ejercita 15 horas al día. (F)
Jorge exercises 15 hours a day.

- ▶ The standard in question depends on the context: *evaluativity* (Rett 2016)

- (5) a. Yolanda no sale **lo suficientemente abrigada**.
Yolanda doesn't leave her house **covered enough**.

Interpretation

► Quantitative & qualitative denotation

- (6) a. Jorge se ejercita **lo necesario**.
Jorge exercises enough.
- b. Yolanda no sale **lo suficientemente abrigada** de su casa.
Yolanda doesn't leave her house **covered enough**.

Interpretation

- ▶ Range over events and objects.

(7) a. Jocelyn es **lo bastante rápida**.

Jocelyn is **fast enough**.

b. Jocelyn perdió la carrera porque no corrió **lo suficientemente rápido**.

Jocelyn lost the race because she did not run **fast enough**.

Lexical semantics: *suficiente, necesario, bastante*

- ▶ *lo + suficiente, necesario, bastante*
- ▶ *lo + suficientemente, bastante, necesariamente*
+ adjective

Lexical semantics: *suficiente, necesario, bastante*

- ▶ Denotation: a quantity or degree of a property such as it is, at least, the minimal amount or minimal degree required or suitable for something, according to a standard.

- (8)
- a. Pues el niño se ve **suficientemente limpio**.
Well, the kid looks **clean enough**.
 - b. Como estudiante, no duermo **lo necesario**.
As a student, I don't sleep **enough**.

Lo on its own

- ▶ A pre-established scalar measurement: whilst the quantity phrase without *lo* just expresses a point or interval on an scale, if *lo* is involved this scale is expressed as pre-existent.

(9) a. Me ejercito **suficiente**.

b. Me ejercito **lo suficiente**.

(10) a. I exercise **enough**.

b. I exercise **what is (known as) enough**.

► Purpose phrases with preposition *para*

- (11) a. Soy **suficientemente bueno** para ser tu novio
I am **too good** to be your boyfriend.
- b. Soy **lo suficientemente bueno** para ser tu novio.
I am **what is good enough** to be your boyfriend.

- ▶ Phrases without *lo* are infelicitous in contexts with clear and preestablished scales.
- ▶ *Anaphoric use*

- (12) a. Le dije que se alejara al menos 3 metros, pero no retrocedió **lo suficiente**. Por eso lo atacé.
I told him to back off at least 3 meters, but he didn't back off **what is enough (at least 3 meters)**. That's why I attacked him.
- b. ? Le dije que se alejara al menos 3 metros, pero no retrocedió **suficiente**. Por eso lo atacé.
I told him to back off at least 3 meters, but he didn't do it **enough**. That's why I attacked him.

Conclusions

- ▶ *Lo* phrases of degree denote a set of degrees surrounding a pre-stated standard.
- ▶ Its denotation is the measurement of the size of a set of degrees
- ▶ The particle *lo* by itself contributes the meaning of *existence presupposition* of a scale.
 - ▶ This adds to the previous hypothesis about *lo* branching out to different types of reference since Spanish does not have neuter gendered nouns.

References

- Bosque, I., & Demonte, V. (1999). *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española* (Vols. 1–3). Madrid, España: Espasa.
- Bosque, I., & Moreno, J. C. (1990). Las construcciones con lo y la denotación del neutro. *Lingüística*, (2), 5–50.
- Cresswell, M. J. (1976). The semantics of degree. In *Montague Grammar*.
- Doetjes, J. (2004). Degree Quantifiers. In *Handbook of French Semantics*. 83-98.
- García Rodríguez, M. G. (2018). *Morfosintaxis y semántica del presunto artículo definido neutro lo* (Licenciatura en Lengua y Literaturas Hispánicas). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México.
- Hawkins, J. A. (1978). *Definiteness and Indefiniteness: A Study in Reference and Grammaticality Prediction* (Vol. 2). New York, Estados Unidos: Routledge.
- Kennedy, C. & McNally, L. (2005) Scale Structure and the Semantic Typology of Gradable Predicates. En *Language*.] 1-44.
- Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (Ed.). (2009). *Nueva gramática de la lengua española*. Madrid: Espasa.
- Rett, J. (2016). The semantics of many, much, few, and little. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 12(1).
- Schwarz, F. (2009). *Two Types of Definites in Natural Language* (PhD). University of Massachusetts, Massachusetts.
- Schwarz, F. (2013). Two Kinds of Definites Cross-linguistically: Two Kinds of Definites. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 7(10), 534–559.