Adjectives of veracity as vagueness regulators[1]

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Abstract. This paper discusses adjectives of veracity in Spanish (*verdadero* 'true' or *auténtico* 'authentic'), which are intensifiers in prenominal position. I will argue that AVs are sensitive to the vagueness of the predicate and propose an analysis of AVs as domain restrictors that builds on Sassoon (2013).

Keywords: adjectives of veracity, vagueness, nominal gradability, prenominal position.

1. Introduction

Adjectives of veracity (AVs) such as Spanish *verdadero* 'true' or *auténtico* 'authentic', in prenominal position, signal that the referent of the subject (in (1), Paloma) is an outstanding exemplar of the category denoted by the noun (*artist*).

(1) a. Paloma es una auténtica artista.
     Paloma is a   authentic artist
     'Paloma is a real artist.'

The intensification they perform involves some sort of ordering, so these modifiers raise questions regarding nominal gradability — whether (some) nouns have a degree argument or their scalarity is better captured in a non-degree framework — and the contributions of vagueness, typicality, and subjectivity.

In this paper I will argue that AVs are sensitive to the vagueness of the predicate they combine with. In particular, assuming a supervaluation framework (Sassoon 2013), I will propose that AVs are context manipulators that reduce the vagueness of the predicate by restricting the domain in which the noun's standard is calculated, similarly to the modification of *very* in the adjectival domain. In this way,

the standard rises and the denotation is shrunk to the best exemplars. Roughly, Paloma would be a true artist if she is an artist among artists.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 AVs' distribution and interpretation is characterized. Section 3 discusses two previous analyses based on degree and prototypicality. In section 4, I provide an analysis based on vagueness regulation and discuss the similarities with degree modifiers and possible extensions to adverbial counterparts of AVs. Section 5 concludes.

2. Distribution

Like most Romance adjectives, AVs can appear either in prenominal or postnominal position in Spanish, with a difference in meaning. In postnominal position, AVs show their expected, literal senses 'not fake or false', as shown in (2). In (2a), the pain Esther felt was real, not imaginary or pretended, and the same applies to the adventure in (2b). This is also the only meaning available in predicative position.

(2) a. Esther sintió dolor auténtico. / El dolor era auténtico.
       Esther felt   pain authentic / the pain was authentic
       'Esther felt real pain.' / 'The pain was real.' (not fake)
    b. Vivieron una aventura verdadera en Zambia. / La aventura es verdadera.
       lived.3PL a   adventure true   in Zambia / the adventure is true
       'They had a true adventure in Zambia.' / 'The adventure is true.'(not false)

In prenominal position, however, the readings are no longer the literal ones. Instead, AVs become intensifiers: they signal that the referent is an outstanding individual in the denotation of the noun. Thus, in (3a), the pain felt by Esther is an intense one, not simple discomfort, and the adventure in (3b) is one that included all the elements expected in an adventure: challenges, exoticism, danger.

(3) a. Esther sintió auténtico dolor.
       Esther felt   authentic pain
       'Esther felt real pain.'

    b. Vivieron   una verdadera aventura   en Zambia.
       lived.3PL a   true   adventure in Zambia
       'They had a true adventure in Zambia.'

In addition to their position, interaction with the determiner and the type of noun causes a difference in meaning as well. The intensifier reading of AVs seems to be only possible with an indefinite determiner in the case of relative nouns such as *father* or *identity*, as illustrated in (4). With these nouns and in combination with the definite article, AVs receive a literal interpretation (see (4a); cf. (5), where the AV is an intensifier). In (4a), Carlos is Ana's actual father, so *verdadero* is interpreted in its literal sense; in contrast, in (4b), Carlos is said to be remarkably fatherly, regardless of whether he actually has a child.

(4) a. Carlos es el   verdadero padre de Ana.
       Carlos is the true   father of Ana
       'Carlos is Ana's true father.'
    b. Carlos es un verdadero padre.
       Carlos is a   true   father
       'Carlos is a true father.'

(5) La verdadera aventura   es la   que vivieron   en Zambia.
    the true   adventure is the that lived.3PL in Zambia
    'The true adventure is the one they had in Zambia.'

AVs combine with abstract nouns such as *pain* in (3a), nouns denoting individuals based on a property such as *father* in (4b), event nouns such as *adventure* in (3b), as well as with some concrete nouns such as *city* in (6). The only restriction is that they not combine with nouns that denote natural kinds or concrete objects, such as the ones in (7).

(6) Troya era   una auténtica ciudad en el   sentido clásico del   término.[2]
    Troy   was a   authentic city   in the sense   classic of-the term
    'Troy was a real city, in the classic sense of the word.'

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[2]http://www.historialago.com/leg_troy_01015_comoera_01.htm

(7) a. ?? Vimos   un verdadero pájaro / auténtica agua.
          saw.3PL a   true   bird   / authentic water

     'We saw a true bird / real water.'

     b. ?? Tengo   una verdadera mesa / una auténtica pistola en mi despacho.
          have.1SG a   true   table / a   authentic gun   in my office

     'I have a true table / a real gun in my office.'

Intensifier AVs occur only in prenominal position and combine with almost any kind of noun, except for those denoting natural categories or concrete objects. Before moving to the analysis, I will first discuss two previous accounts of AVs in the literature and some additional empirical facts.

3. Ways of being an outstanding individual

There are different possibilities for characterizing an outstanding individual. In this section I will discuss two proposals in the literature, namely the degree analysis in Morzycki (2009) and the prototypical one in Morzycki (2011).

One way of formalizing the outstanding exemplar would be to understand it as an individual with a high degree of the property denoted by the noun. Morzycki (2009) implements this idea by assuming that some nouns lexicalize a degree argument, in the same fashion that adjectives do (e.g. Kennedy 1997). Gradable nouns would denote a measure function from individuals to their degree of the relevant property. For instance, *idiot* would denote a function from individuals to their degree of idiocy (8).

(8) $[\![idiot]\!] = \lambda x.\iota d[x \text{ is } d\text{-idiotic}]$ (Morzycki 2009)

Tests of nominal gradability are based on modification by degree *such*, degree readings of size adjectives (*big*), and so-called adnominal degree morphemes (*real*, *complete*, *utter*) (Bolinger 1972; Morzycki 2009; Constantinescu 2011). Nouns that pass these tests are the most adjective-like ones, such as *idiot* or *courage* (9). With non-gradable nouns, *such* is interpreted in a kind sense, and *big* and *complete* receive their literal readings (big in size, and having all its parts, respectively) (10).

(9) a. He is such an idiot / a big idiot / a complete idiot.

    b. Lucía showed such courage / huge courage / utter courage.

(10) a. # He's such a basketball player / a big basketball player / a complete basketball player.

    b. # Chicago is such a city / a huge city / an utter city.

Being gradable, however, does not seem to be the feature relevant to being modified by AVs. The distribution of these modifiers contains gradable nouns like the ones in (11) but is not restricted to them, as they combine with nouns such as *city* (see (6), cf. (10b)), *father* (see (4b), cf. (12a)), and *bird* (see (16), cf. (12b)), in some contexts that will be discussed below.

(11) un auténtico idiota / verdadera valentía
    a authentic idiot / true   courage
    'a real idiot / true courage'

(12) a. ?? a big / complete / utter father

    b. # a big / complete / utter bird

A second option is that the outstanding individual referred to by *AV P* is an individual close to the prototype of the category denoted by the predicate P, so that AVs would manipulate scales of typicality (Morzycki 2011). Formally, an individual x would be a real P iff it is sufficiently similar to the prototype of the category, given by the **prototype** function, in a particular context c.

(13) $[\![\text{real}]\!]^c = \lambda P_{\langle e,t\rangle}\lambda x.P(x) \wedge \textbf{large}_c(\textbf{similar}_c(x, \textbf{prototype}(P)))$

In some cases, the individual denoted by *AV P* seems to be a prototypical exemplar, such as for *adventure* in (3b). However, this is not always true: In (14), it is felicitous to say that Paloma is a true artist, even if she is not a prototypical one (a painter who has her studio in an attic in Paris) but someone who crochets beautiful accessories.

(14) Paloma es una verdadera artista: hace   unas flores   de ganchillo preciosas.
    Paloma is a   true   artist: makes DET flowers of crochet   beautiful
    'Paloma is a true artist — she makes beautiful crochet flowers.'

Moreover, nouns that denote concepts with clear prototypes, such as *bird* or *fruit* (see e.g. Rosch 1973), do not usually combine with AVs (15). And even when they occur together, the phrase fails to point to that prototype: Example (16) is used to discuss the categorization of two types of Jurassic animals as birds, despite the fact that the animals are in fact not prototypical birds.

(15) * Vimos   una verdadera ave / fruta.
       saw.1PL a   true   bird / fruit
       'We saw a true bird / fruit.'

(16) El   Archaeopteryx y   el   Archaeornis no   son animales intermedios entre   estos dos
      The Archaeopteryx and the Archaeornis NEG are animals   intermediate between these two
      grupos [reptiles y   aves], sino auténticas aves.[3]
      groups [reptiles and birds], but   real   birds.
      'Archaeopteryx and Archaeornis are not transitional animals between these two groups (reptiles and birds), but true birds.'

In addition, AVs have a different behavior from that of real modifiers of typicality such as *(proto)típico*, 'prototypical'. The later mainly occurs in postnominal position in Spanish, as shown in (17), and thus receives a restrictive interpretation.[4] As such, the negation of the DP is compatible with the inference that the noun, but not the adjective, is predicated of the individual. This is not the case with AVs, where the attribution of the property denoted by the noun is also negated.

(17) a. Paloma es una artista (proto)típica.
        'Paloma is a typical artist.'
    b. ?? Paloma es una (proto)típica artista.
         'Paloma is a typical artist'

(18) a. Paloma no es una artista (proto)típica → Paloma es una artista
        'Paloma is not a typical artist' → 'Paloma is an artist'
    b. Paloma no es una verdadera artista ↛ Paloma es una artista
        'Paloma is not a true artist' ↛ 'Paloma is an artist'

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[3]http://statveritasblog.blogspot.com.es/2010/11/de-reptiles-aves.html

[4]A restrictive interpretation implies that there are individuals that satisfy N but not A (i). It is generally assumed that, in Romance, pre-head modifiers receive a nonrestrictive interpretation, while post-head modifiers are interpreted restrictively [*Complementary hypothesis*] (see e.g. Alexiadou 2001; cf. e.g. Cinque 2010; Martin 2014).

(i) A modifier M restrictively modifies a head H wrt an individual *x* and a situation *s* iff
    $M_s(x) \land H_s(x) \land \exists x'[H_s(x') \land \neg M_s(x')]$ (Martin 2014)

It has been shown that AVs are not restricted to alleged gradable nouns and that their intensification effect is not well captured in terms of prototype readings. However, the idea behind these analyses is right, and AVs require that there be some sort of ordering in the denotation of the modified noun. In the next section, these ideas are recast in a framework that uses supervaluations, and it is argued that an analysis based on domain restriction better explains modification by AVs. First, the empirical generalization will be made more precise.

4. AVs as vagueness regulators

4.1. AVs are sensitive to the vagueness of the predicate

What nouns such as *bird* or *table* from example (7) have in common is that they are discrete, i.e. categorization under them is not graded: something is either a bird or not a bird, or a table or not a table, and the criteria for determining that are objective, relatively constant across contexts, not dependent on opinion. On the other hand, whether something is to be considered an adventure is less easy to delimit and it is usually more subject to contextual or individual variation. In fact, other nouns denoting discrete concepts such as *father* or nationality nouns (*Russian*) can only combine with AVs if they are interpreted in a relative sense: Example (4b) cannot mean that Carlos is an outstanding individual in being a biological father.

The fact that AVs select non-discrete nouns (i.e., those for which there are not objective, completely established categorization criteria) or relative readings of discrete ones has implications in the subjectivity of the NP in which they appear. In particular, predicates that are usually objective, and thus are not allowed in the complement clause of a subjective attitude verb such as *find*, become felicitous in that position if an AV is inserted.

Subjective attitude verbs require that their complement clause express a subjective statement (Sæbø 2009; Bouchard 2012). Examples are English *find*, or Spanish *parecer* 'seem' when it takes a small clause complement and a dative argument that corresponds to the experiencer (see Fernández Leborans 1999). Examples in (19) show this contrast with adjectives and nouns, respectively.

(19) a. Esta tarta me   parece   rica / ??casera.
          this cake DAT.1S seem.3S tasty / homemade

          'I find this cake tasty / ??homemade.'

      b. Esther me   parece   un cielo / ??profesora / ??rusa.
          Esther DAT.1S seem.3S a   sky   / teacher   / Russian

          'I find Esther to be a sweetheart / a teacher / Russian.'

Adding an AV makes the nouns in (19b) acceptable under subjective attitude verbs, as shown in (20). This only happens if the AV is in prenominal position, cf. (21).[5]

(20) Esther me   parece un(a) verdadero/a cielo   / profesora / rusa.
      Esther DAT.1S seem.*3s* a   true   teacher / Russian

      'I find Esther to be a true teacher / Russian.'

(21) ?? Esther me   parece   una profesora / rusa   auténtica.
         Esther DAT.1S seem.3s a   teacher   / Russian authentic

         'I find Esther to be a real teacher / Russian.' (not fake)

Examples (15) and (16) show that AVs only occur with nouns that denote natural categories in some particular contexts, namely when the membership of the individual in the category is being discussed. The same applies to nouns denoting concrete objects, such as *table* from example (7b). Example (22) provides some more evidence.

(22) a. Ceres fue considerado demasiado pequeño para ser un verdadero planeta.
          Ceres was considered   too   small   to be a true   planet

          'Ceres was considered too small to be a real planet.'

      b. Tráeme   una verdadera mesa, no   esa cosa de IKEA que compraste.
          bring-DAT.1SG a   true   table, NEG that thing of IKEA that bought.2SG

          'Bring me a true table, not that IKEA thing you bought.'

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[5]A second test for subjectivity involves faultless disagreement (see e.g. Lasersohn 2005; Stephenson 2007). Subjective predicates such as predicates of personal taste (*tasty*, *fun*) give rise to disagreement (both speakers seem to be saying something true) rather than contradiction (only one speaker can be right). NPs with AVs behave as subjective predicates (i-ii).

(i) A: Esther es profesora.   (ii) A: Esther es una verdadera profesora.
         'Esther is a teacher.'   'Esther is a true teacher.'

     B: No, no lo es (es periodista).   B: No, no lo es (no motiva a sus alumnos).
         'No, she isn't (she's a journalist).'   'No, she isn't (she doesn't inspire her students).'

The relevant factor for combination with AVs is, then, that the cutoff point for the category denoted by the noun is not fixed, i.e. that the noun is vague. AVs would be able to reduce the vagueness of the predicate by shrinking the denotation to the best exemplars of the category — those for which there is no doubt that they belong to it. What we need then is a framework that relates vagueness to an ordering on the individuals in the extension of a predicate. Sassoon (2013) provides such a framework.

4.2. Nominal conceptual gradability

Sassoon (2013) proposes a full vagueness model M_c whose context structure consists of a set C of partial contexts c, a monotonic relation of information extension between contexts, and a set T of maximal contexts t. Each predicate P is associated, in each total context t, relative to an assignment g, with a degree function **deg**(P,t,g) that maps individuals to their degree in the weighted dimensions of the predicate P.

For each partial context c, an entity x's positive degree in P can be either unspecified or a real number (x's degree in the predicate P). A predicate is vague if, in a partial context c, there are entities in its domain for which the positive degree in the predicate is still unspecified (if it is still not clear whether they belong to the positive or the negative extension of P, that is, if they are borderline cases). In a total context t, all predicates are sharp, as all individuals in their domains have a value for **deg** and then belong either to the positive or the negative extension of P.

The membership standard represents the cutoff point between the positive and negative extensions of the predicate. It is given by a function **Standard** and it is determined based on a relevant set of entities for the predicate in a context, i.e., a domain. **Domain** is a function from a triple consisting of a context t, and assignment g and a predicate P, to a set of entities.

(23) **Standard**$(P, t, g) = \mathbf{S}(P, t, g, \mathbf{Domain}(P, t, g))$
      For any entity set X $\subseteq D$, $\mathbf{S}(P, t, g, X)$ is a salient degree of P, P's central tendency in X

This framework gives nouns the same interpretative pieces as adjectives, such as a standard, a domain from which the standard is calculated, and a dimension set. The difference between nouns and adjectives would lie not on their types of dimensions, but on how these dimensions are integrated. In the case of adjectives, dimensions are bound by logical operations such as conjunction or disjunction. By contrast, dimensions of nouns are integrated through similarity operations like weighted sums. Classification of entities under a noun is based on similarity to the prototype, understood as the ideal values on multiple dimensions. As a consequence of this dimension integration rule, nominal dimensions are not syntactically accessible. This accounts for the conceptual gradability of nouns (prototypicality effects) and their lack of morphological gradability (inability to occur with degree morphemes such as *very* or in degree constructions such as comparatives) (see e.g. Sassoon 2013).

My proposal is that AVs take a vague predicate and manipulate the context. But instead of affecting the global context, AVs only have an effect in the denotation of the noun. So I will propose that AVs restrict the domain in which the standard for the predicate is calculated. By doing so, the standard rises and the positive extension is shrunk to the closest exemplars to the ideal values.

4.3. AVs as domain restrictors

The way I propose AVs reduce the denotation of the noun to the best exemplars of the category is by restricting the domain to entities that are already in the positive extension of P in the context (24). The new standard for the predicate is thus calculated based on the set of entities that were already in its denotation in the context, i.e. the set of entities whose degrees in the dimensions of P already exceed the standard.

(24) **Standard**$(true(P), c, g) = \mathbf{S}(P, c, g, [\![P]\!]^{+})$

AV P then denotes the property of exceeding the standard for the predicate *P* based on a domain that only includes individuals which already have the property *P* in

the same context (25).

(25) $[\![true\ P]\!] = \lambda x.\mathbf{deg}(x, P, c, g) \succeq \mathbf{Standard}(true(P), c, g) =$
$= \lambda x.\mathbf{deg}(x, P, c, g) \succeq \mathbf{S}(P, c, g, [\![P]\!]^{+})$

Then, a sentence with an AV like the one in (14) would be true if the degree of Paloma in the predicate *artist* in context *c* is above the standard for *artist* in *c* taking only into account individuals who were already in the positive extension of *artist*, i.e. if Paloma is an artist among artists (26).

(26) $[\![$Paloma is a true artist$]\!] = 1$ iff
$\mathbf{deg}(\text{Paloma}, artist, c, g) \succeq \mathbf{S}(artist, c, g, [\![artist]\!]^{+})$

AVs raise the standard so the denotation is restricted to the best exemplars of the predicate, those entities ranking high in its ordered denotation. The intensification derives from the change of standard: individuals in the denotation of *AV P* have higher degrees in the dimensions associated with the noun.

The reason AVs do not combine with nouns denoting natural kinds or concrete objects (cf. (7)) is that these nouns have a fixed standard (usually specified by convention, especially with respect to natural classes such as *bird*), they are not vague, and restricting the domain does not change the cutoff point for the category. As was mentioned in section 4.1, when these nouns are used in a relative, metaphorical sense (i.e., categorization is based in non-objective dimensions), modification by AVs becomes possible again.

(27) Juan es un verdadero pájaro.
Juan is a true bird
Lit. 'Juan is a true bird.' (he's wily)

AVs seem to receive a literal interpretation in combination with the definite determiner, see (4a). However, this can be understood as an effect of the interaction of the semantics of AVs with the uniqueness requirement of the definite determiner.

In the denotation of the NP consisting of an AV and a noun there are only the outstanding individuals of the category. The definite determiner returns the unique individual for which the property denoted by *AV P* holds: the most outstanding individual, the only one that deserved to be considered *P* in that context. This applies to *adventure* in (5), where it is said that only what happened in Zambia should be considered an adventure, not any other event that might qualify as an adventure in more vague uses of the noun. The same can be said of (4a). In fact, a biological father is usually the referent of *el verdadero padre*, but it is not necessarily so: (28) can be said to an adoptive father.

(28) Tú eres   mi verdadero padre.
     You are.2SG my true   father

     'You are my true father.'

4.4. Privative adjectives

The basic idea of the analysis presented here is similar to that of Partee (2010) for privative adjectives such as *fake*. Partee (2010) argues that these adjectives do not entail the negation of the noun property, but they are a subtype of subsective adjectives that coerce the denotation of the noun to include fake entities.

The core idea is that, in the absence of *fake*, all referents of the predicate are understood to be real. *Fake* coerces the denotation of the noun into a looser interpretation so it includes fake entities. This applies to AVs: unless guns can be fake, it would be redundant to say that a gun is real. Note that, in this readings, these adjectives must occur postnominally in Spanish (30).

(29) Esta pistola es falsa.
     This gun   is false

     'This gun is fake.'

(30) una pistola falsa / auténtica
     a   gun   false / authentic

     'a fake / real gun'

In our analysis, prenominal AVs also divide up the denotation of the noun into real and fake entities, but without any coercion, so individuals that were in the denotation of the noun in the context are excluded from it.[6]

4.5. Comparison with *very*

The denotation I have presented for AVs parallels that of degree modifier *very*. *Very* manipulates the comparison class so that it is restricted to entities which are already in the denotation of the predicate so that a new (higher) standard is calculated. Specifically, it sets the comparison class argument for the function **standard** for a gradable adjective *G* to those entities that already have the property *G* in the context of utterance (31) (Klein 1980; Kennedy and McNally 2005, a.o.).

(31) $[\![very]\!]^c = \lambda G \lambda x. \exists d [\textbf{standard}(d)(G)(\lambda y. [\![pos(G)(y)]\!]^c) \wedge G(d)(x)]$

Just like English *very*, Spanish *muy* is a degree modifier of relative adjectives, see (32a). It also coerces non-gradable adjectives and even some particular nouns into gradable readings, as in (32b). The stereotypical readings of the nouns that arise in the last examples are in fact parallel to the effect AVs have in those nouns, cf. (33).

(32)   a. Marina es muy alta / ??muy desconocida.
          Marina is very tall / very   unknown

          'Marina is very tall / ??very unknown.'

       b. Juan es muy ruso   / muy payaso / muy niño.
          Juan is very Russian / very clown / very child

          'Juan is very Russian / very clownish / very childish.'

(33) Juan es un auténtico ruso   / un auténtico payaso / un auténtico niño.
      Juan is a   authentic Russian / a   authentic clown / a   authentic child

      'Juan is a real Russian / a real clown / a real baby.'

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[6]This difference in the way the denotation of the noun is divided up (a difference in domain) seems to be an effect of the syntactic position of the adjective. It might be worth to investigate if it can be associated with more Romance adjectives that change their meanings in prenominal and postnominal position, such as the equivalents of *complete*, *poor*, or *good*. I leave this for future work.

Very and AVs also have in common that they may be iterated, though they cannot precede other degree modifiers, as illustrated in (34) and (35) (for *very*, see e.g. Kennedy and McNally 2005). Although (35b) is slightly odd, there is a big contrast with (35a), which is not acceptable.

(34)   a. * I was {quite / really} very surprised.

      b. I was [[very very] surprised].

(35)   a. * Paloma es una {auténtica / realmente / muy} verdadera artista
         Paloma is a   authentic / really   / very   true   artist

         'Paloma is a {real / really / very} true artist.'

      b. ? Paloma es una verdadera verdadera artista
         Paloma is a   true   true   artist
         'Paloma is a true true artist.'

Their behavior with respect to negation is similar. There is an apparent contradiction in asserting that someone is tall but not very tall, as in (36a), with the intended meaning that she has a degree of tallness that lies between the standard for *tall* and the standard for *very tall*. This is even more odd in the case of *verdadero*, see (37a). Negation of *very* does not have this meaning, but it negates the predicate instead, see (36b) (unless *very* is stressed, see Bolinger 1972). The same effect happens when an AV is negated, cf. (37b).

(36)   a. ? Marina es alta pero no   muy alta.
         Marina is tall but NEG very tall

         'Marina is tall but not very tall.'

      b. Marina no   es muy alta.
         Marina NEG is very tall

         'Marina is not very tall.' (= she is rather short)

(37)   a. ?? Paloma es una artista, pero no   una verdadera artista.
          Paloma is an artist but NEG a   true   artist

         'Paloma is an artist, but not a true artist.'

      b. Paloma no   es una verdadera artista.
         Paloma NEG is a   true   artist

         'Paloma is not a true artist.' (= she is not an artist)

Although the facts about negation need to be analyzed in more detail,[7] the similarities between degree modifier *very* and AVs pointed out in this section indicate that the analysis presented here for AVs might be on the right track and might shed some light on the parallelisms between scale structures and intensification in the adjectival and nominal domain.

4.5.1. Adverbs of veracity

Our analysis for AVs could be extended to their adverbial correlates *verdaderamente* 'truly', *autenticamente* 'authentically', and *realmente* 'really'. If adverbs of veracity were sensitive to the vagueness of the predicate as well, it would be expected that they only occur with vague predicates, such as relative adjectives like the ones in (38), and not with non-vague predicates, such as total absolute adjectives, see (39) (gradable but not vague, see e.g. Kennedy 2007) or non-gradable adjectives (40). This prediction is borne out if the adjectives in (39) are interpreted in their relative, vague, sense (as in *The glass is very full*).

(38) a. Marina es verdaderamente alta / guapa.
       Marina is truly   tall / beautiful

       'Marina is trully tall / beautiful.'

(39) a. El vaso está verdaderamente lleno / vacío.
       the glass is   truly   full / empty

       'The glass is truly full / empty.'

     b. La ventana está realmente abierta / mojada.
        the window is   really   open   / wet

        'The window is really open / wet.'

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[7]In particular, the fact that once *x is a P* is asserted, *x is not a true P* is an infelicitous continuation (37a). This patterns with the behavior of imprecision regulators , in the sense that, once the standard of precision is set, it is not easy to lower it. For instance, in (i), once *the townspeople are asleep* is interpreted with some precision, it is odd to make it less precise, i.e. not referring to all the towns people, excluding some citizens who are awake. This would bring AVs closer to slack regulators (cf. Masià 2014 for an imprecision analysis of AVs).

(i) # Although the townspeople are asleep, some of them are awake.   (Lasersohn 1999)

(40) a. ?? Vanessa está verdaderamente embarazada.
          Vanessa is   truly   pregnant

          'Trully, Vanessa is pregnant.' (not 'in her last months of pregnancy')

      b. ? Este problema es realmente geopolítico.
          this problem is really   geopolitical

          'This problem is really geopolitical.'

Both in (38) and (39), adverbs of veracity have a standard boosting effect, similar to that of *very*. The question would be then why these modifiers have this effect in absolute adjectives, but are not able to coerce non-gradable adjectives such as *pregnant* into gradable ones, as *very* does in some cases (*Vanessa is very pregnant.*, but *?This problem is very geopolitical*). I leave this extension of the analysis for future work.[8]

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have provided an account of AVs based on domain restriction. Specifically, I have argued that these modifiers only combine with vague predicates and that they have a standard boosting effect similar to that of *very* in the adjectival domain. A higher standard for the noun is calculated based on entities that were already in its denotation.

I have assumed that nouns, like adjectives, have a standard or cutoff point between their positive and negative extensions that depends on a comparison class or domain in a supervaluation fashion, building on Sassoon's 2013 framework. The similarities between *very* and AVs pointed out show that this might be a fruitful option for a better understanding of the semantic parallels between adjectives and nouns.

The analysis, however, left some issues open, especially regarding the connection between vagueness and subjectivity and how AVs being vagueness regulators turn

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[8]Adverbs of veracity modify propositions as well (i) and have been analyzed as involving epistemic modality, in the sense that they express the commitment of the speaker towards the proposition (for an epistemic analysis of AVs, see Constantinescu 2011; cf. McNabb 2013, Masià 2014).

  (i) Really, that's quite good.   (Paradis 2003)

the noun into a subjective predicate. Another issue left for future research was the role of syntactic position in the type of modification an adjective performs in the noun. Other modifiers (e.g. *Completo* 'complete', whose adverbial counterpart (*completely*) is also a degree modifier) display a behavior similar to that of AVs with respect to position and could shed light on this topic.

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