

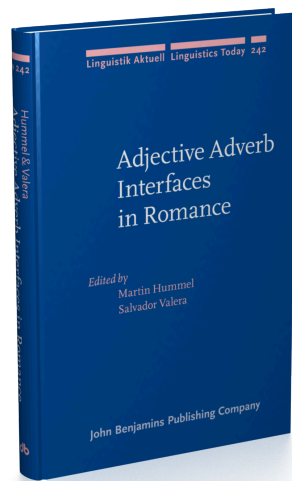
Descriptive and functional analysis of the *solo-solamente* adverbial pair in spoken Mexican Spanish

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 <https://doi.org/10.1075/la.242.11med>

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Pages 287–303 of

Adjective Adverb Interfaces in Romance

Edited by Martin Hummel and Salvador Valera

[Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today, 242]

2017. vi, 374 pp.

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Descriptive and functional analysis of the *solo-solamente* adverbial pair in spoken Mexican Spanish

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This study analyzes the *solo-solamente* adverbial pair's syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic distribution and frequency. The data stem from two sociolinguistic corpora of spoken Spanish, the *Corpus Sociolingüístico de la Ciudad de México* (CSCM) and the *Corpus del Habla de Monterrey* (CHDM). The objective is to determine the different meanings that this adverbial pair has regarding to information structure and pragmatic implications. It is shown that both units are used as focus operators. Both units come close to synonymy, but *solo* tends to mark exclusion, while *solamente* is more often used for simply nuancing.

1. Introduction

The Spanish language often disposes of apparently synonymous and thus competing adverbs with the same stem, such as *rápido-rápidamente* as seen in (1) and (2). The first is an adverbialized adjective or short adverb (*rápido*), and the second is a deadjectival adverb by affixation of *-mente* or long adverb (*rápidamente*).

- (1) La mujer corre *rápido*.
'The woman runs *quickly*.'
- (2) La mujer corre *rápidamente*.
'The woman runs *quickly*.'

Throughout this text, the terms *long adverb* and *short adverb* will be used to refer to the derivative adverb and the simple adverb, respectively. The existence of two such forms has been attested in a variety of languages, for example in English: *slow-slowly, quick-quickly*. This phenomenon is especially evident in Romance languages, as seen in the following examples: *lento-lentamente* ('slow'-'slowly') and

rápido-rapidamente ('quick'-'quickly'), in Portuguese; *lent-lentement* and *rapide-rapidement*, in French; *lento-lentamente* and *rápido-rápidamente*, in Spanish.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the behavior of *solo-solamente* in order to assess whether these two forms fulfill the same discursive function and whether these two forms tend to appear in specific contexts according to semantic, syntactic, functional and pragmatic criteria. For Hummel (2013: 12–14) adverbialized adjectives are the standard option in informal oral communication in the Spanish speaking regions of America, whereas the *-mente* forms are standard for correct writing (see also Karlsson 1981: 35; De Mello 1992: 239; Hummel 2001: 34; 2002: 17; Medina & Alarcón 2013: 65). However, in Mexican Spanish it has been observed that the long adverb *solamente* is unexpectedly recurrent in oral discourse. The extensive use of the long adverb *solamente* in oral register, in contrast to the relatively limited use of other long adverbs in this register, creates a desire to more closely observe the behavior of this element to determine if linguistic factors (i.e. semantic, syntactic, functional and pragmatic) influence its appearance, as it seems that each adverbial form appears under certain conditions or circumstances that have yet to be studied. It is also of interest to investigate if the short adverb *solo* appears in interface with the adjective *solo*, as recent research studies (Hummel 2008: 130; Hummel 2012: 3) have found occurrences of this phenomenon of interface with other short adverbs and adjectives, particularly in Romance languages.

Specifically, the objectives of this paper are the following:

- I. To observe the semantic, syntactic, functional and pragmatic behavior of the two forms in the adverbial pair *solo-solamente* in the role of focus operator in order to corroborate if these forms have similar or different meanings in the linguistic structure.
- II. To observe the different syntactic positions in which the two forms in the adverbial pair *solo-solamente* appear in order to determine if position is a criterion that regulates the presence of one form or the other.
- III. To observe if an interface between the adverbial and the adjectival uses of *solo* is present, and if so, in which contexts and under which circumstances it appears.

The next section will provide a review of the related literature, followed by a description of the methodology of the study. Then the results of the study are presented and analyzed. Finally, concluding remarks are given in response to the findings of this research study. In this research paper we omit the diacritical mark on *sólo* according to the RAE (2010); for this reason diacritical marks given in transcriptions and in the examples from other authors have also been left out.

2. Literature review

2.1 *Solo-solamente* as focus operators

Some authors argue that the adverbial pair *solo-solamente* expresses *exclusivity* (Ferrari Giammatteo & Albano 2011: 30), *restriction* (Martínez 2006: 1438; Hummel 2012: 143) or *uniqueness* (Seco 2002: 417; Lara 2011: 1524), as in (3).

- (3) Juan *solo miró*. (Gutiérrez 2010: 626)
 ‘Juan *only* saw.’
 (Juan *only* sees, and does nothing else)

These adverbs have also been classified as “focus operators” by Gutiérrez Bravo (2008: 378), “evaluation focus markers” by Hummel (2012: 145) or “focus markers” by Gutiérrez (2010: 628). The term *focus operator* will be used henceforth. The function of these focus operators is to highlight, emphasize, or make an entity prominent within a discourse structure. “The adverb *only*, [...] is called a focus adverb, because it requires a focus constituent in its environment” (Hoeksema & Zwarts 1991: 52). The element under focus is labeled the “focus”, and syntactically it is located under the domain or scope of the focus operator. From here on out the “focus” in example sentences will appear in bold italics.

Ladd (1979, *apud* in Veliz 2010: 61) classifies the focus as either wide or narrow, while Face (2002: 31) and Gutiérrez Bravo (2008: 380) categorize the focus as either informative/presentational or contrastive. The terms *wide* and *narrow* will be used throughout this study. A wide focus distinguishes new information from previously given information (cf. Gutierrez Bravo 2008: 377) while a narrow focus indicates and highlights a specific entity among a set of possible alternatives (cf. Gutierrez Bravo 2008: 376). Moreover, one of the qualities of a narrow focus seems to be related to the usage patterns of *solo-solamente* to signal exclusivity: “Los focos contrastivos [...] tienen la propiedad de aparecer con un ‘operador de foco’, que típicamente es un elemento adverbial que implica exclusividad o exhaustividad”¹ (4 and 5) (Gutiérrez Bravo 2008: 378).

- (4) *Solo Pedro* se rindió. (Gutiérrez Bravo 2008)
 ‘*Only Pedro* gave up.’
 (Nobody else gave up. The narrow focus is Pedro.)

1. “A contrastive focus [...] has the property of appearing with a ‘focus operator’, which typically is an adverbial element that implies exclusivity or exhaustivity”.

- (5) Pedro *solo se rindió*. (Gutiérrez Bravo 2008)
 ‘Pedro *only gave up*.’
 (He did nothing else; he didn’t struggle or escape. The narrow focus is the act.)

2.2 Syntactic and pragmatic aspects of *solo-solamente*

From a syntactic perspective, these focus operator adverbs can place any element in a clause under focus; for this reason, these adverbs have positional liberty. As it can be observed below, *solo* is not restricted to the subject, the predicate, or the direct object position; in fact, it is compatible with any one of these positions (6 to 8).

- (6) *Solo María* escucha discos de música clásica.
 ‘*Only María* listens to classical music discs.’
 (and no one else) (Ferrari et al. 2011: 33)
- (7) *María solo escucha* discos de música clásica.
 ‘*María only listens* to classical music discs.’
 (and does nothing else) (Ferrari et al. 2011: 33)
- (8) *María escucha solo* discos de música clásica.
 ‘*María listens only* to classical music discs.’
 (and no other kind of discs) (Ferrari et al. 2011: 33)

In addition, in the majority of communicative interactions, the speaker does not openly manifest his/her agreement or disagreement with a situation, but instead makes use of tools or strategies so that the interlocutor may infer or interpret his/her intention. In this sense, pragmatically, the adverbial pair *solo-solamente* is used strategically by the speakers with the purpose of exteriorizing their attitude or value judgment (9) (Barrenechea 1977: 313; Di Tullio 2010: 141; RAE & ASALE 2010: 593; Hummel 2012: 145). Moreover:

En lenguas entonativas, como las lenguas románicas, las variaciones melódicas no se usan para distinguir palabras [...] sino para manifestar una serie de sentidos pragmáticos que afectan generalmente a todo el enunciado.² (Prieto 2003: 13)

Thus, these adverbs are used in conjunction with melodic variations in order to further clarify the pragmatic meaning of the utterance.

2. “In intonational languages, like Romance languages, melodic variations are not used to distinguish words [...] but to manifest a series of pragmatic meanings that generally affect the entire utterance”.

- (9) Beatriz *solo* trabaja cuarenta horas semanales.
 'Beatriz *only* works forty hours a week.'
 (In their opinion, that amount is scant or insufficient)

2.3 The adjective-adverb interface of *solo-solamente*

Regarding the phenomenon of interface between adverb and adjective (Hummel 2008: 130; 2012: 3), it has been found that a word acquires distinct meanings according to the position that it occupies within a linguistic group. Cárdenas (2010: 241–89) performs an analysis of the order of the discourse and the meaning of the units and the relation between them, while Costa (2008: 13–25) makes a distributional proposal of adverb use according to the domains of semantics, prosody and categorical studies. Given that the research on this phenomenon is recent, no studies were uncovered that address interface between adverb and adjective.

3. Methodology

The examples were collected from two representative Mexican Spanish corpora, comprised of samples of spontaneous oral speech: the *Corpus Sociolingüístico de la Ciudad de México* (CSCM) (*Sociolinguistic Corpus of Mexico City*) (Lastra & Butragueño 2011), and the *Corpus del Habla de Monterrey* (CHDM) (*Corpus of Speech in Monterrey*) (Rodríguez, Flores & Pérez 2012). Both corpora, the CSCM and the CHDM, were compiled in response to the need for an oral, urban, local, contemporary Spanish Mexican language corpus.

Each corpus contains 108 interviews with the same characteristics (i.e. same number of participants, same number of men and women, similar ages and similar educational level). Furthermore, the corpora's sizes are comparable as the CSCM has 1,377,133 words and the CHDM has 1,416,540 words. All language samples in the corpora were collected from interviews conducted in natural contexts: the participants were at home, at work or at school for a freer, more natural and authentic production. The focus of the interviews is everyday life, including topics such as childhood, school, work, stress, relationships, money, free-time activities, customs, television, books, food, etc.

These two corpora were selected because both represent the spoken language patterns of two of the largest and most important cities of the Mexican Republic and because the materials have discursive variety as they include expository, narrative, argumentative, descriptive and conversational fragments. This discursive variety allows an observation of the behavior of the *solo-solamente* adverbial pair in the

Spanish spoken in these two important Mexican cities. Currently, the material of the CSCM is available on the webpage <<http://lef.colmex.mx>> and the CHDM is available on the webpage <<http://www.filosofia.uanl.mx/posgrado/hablamty/index.html>>.

In order to corroborate the results, all of the following variables were submitted to the chi-squared statistical test: the semantic function (exclusivity value vs. the nuancing values of attenuation and intensification); the type of focus (narrow or wide focus) and function of the focus (functional characteristics: argument, adjunct, phrase); and the syntactic position (location of the focus operator with respect to the focus element: adjacent, to the left or to the right).

4. Results

4.1 Frequency of the *solo-solamente* adverbial pair

In order to properly analyze the usage patterns of the *solo-solamente* adverbial pair in spoken language, all clauses or phrases in which these adverbs appeared in the corpora were considered. A total of 416 examples were found. Of these, 133 were discarded because they were reformulations, false beginnings, crystallized phrases or formed part of other combinations, such as *tan solo* 'only', *no tan solo* 'not only', *no solo... sino* 'not only... but also', *no solo que... sino* 'not only that... but also', *solo que* 'only that', *no solo... también* 'not only... but also'. These collocations with *solo* could be considered in a wider study, since they cross-reference another kind of information: inclusion, condition, explanation, etc. The final database for this study was made up of 283 examples of both forms of the adverbial pair: 177 (63%) instances of the short form and 106 (37%) instances of the long form.

4.2 Semantic function of *solo-solamente*

The results of the semantic analysis are consistent with what other authors have observed before, that the *solo-solamente* adverbial pair expresses exclusivity, uniqueness, limitation or restriction ((10) and (11)) (Ferrari, Giammatteo & Albano 2011:30).

- (10) la Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León es una institución educativa que no persigue fines de lucro, dedicado *solamente* a la investigación (CHDM)
 'The Autonomous University of Nuevo León is an educational institution that does not pursue financial gains, dedicated *only* to research'
 (The University is dedicated only to X, where X = to the research, and nothing more than to X [it shall not obtain financial gains, etc.])

- (11) los oyes hablando en un dialecto que *solamente* ellos entienden (CHDM)
 'You hear them speaking in a dialect *only* they understand'
 (they *only* X, where X = understand, and nobody else than X)

In all of the examples found, *solo-solamente* carries a semantic value of exclusivity; nevertheless, in many of these examples this meaning is diluted or blurred, and another unspoken, nuanced meaning arises which is understood from the context (12) (Barrenechea 1977: 313; Di Tullio 2010: 141; RAE & ASALE 2010: 593; Hummel 2012: 145). This pragmatic meaning is deliberately promoted by the speaker with the purpose of revealing his/her point of view and of including the interlocutor in the communicative interaction.

- (12) es que *solo* falta que esté ahí/ en la plaza (CSCM)
 'All we need now is that he/she is there/ in the square'
 (In their opinion, it would be unbelievable that he/she is there; he/she would not be ashamed to be/go there)

Moreover, it is observed that with the use of these adverbs, the information can be attenuated ((13) to (15)) or it can be intensified ((16) to (17)); that is to say, it is possible to increase or decrease the importance of what is enunciated. In such cases, Hummel (2012: 145) identifies these adverbs as elements with subjective and pragmatic effects.

- (13) si yo te hubiera, dejado sin revisar, la respuesta, por una falta ortográfica, critica mi trabajo, pero si *solamente*, estoy diciendo, aquí va una uve aquí es ese ce o aquí va con hache, tómalo como un valor agregado a mi trabajo (CHDM)
 'if I had decided not to check your answer because of spelling mistakes, that criticizes my work, but if I'm *only* saying a "u" goes here, this is a "c", and this goes with an "h", take it as added value of my work'
 (X thinks it is not bad show writing mistakes)
- (14) E: pero yo *solo* le conté a Concepción (CSCM)
 'But I *only* told Concepción'
 I: pero ya lo sabe todo el mundo
 'But the whole world already knows'
 (X thinks it is not that bad, he/she did not tell everyone, he/she only told one person)
- (15) I: de ellos sí dejamos a dos tres, un poco golpeados y ellos nomás un, amigo de nosotros porque, *solo* se resbaló y se cortó contra el suelo (CHDM)
 'Of them we left two or three, a little beaten and only them a, friend of ours because, *only/alone* he slipped and cut himself against the ground'
 (X thinks nothing serious happened to his friend; he turned out to be injured because he slipped, not because he was beaten)

- (16) Y ahora ni el litro ¡chin!, ahora *solo* un litro de leche cuesta más de lo que costaba una caja anteriormente (CHDM)
 ‘And now not even a liter, damn!, now *only* a liter of milk costs more than what a box cost previously’
 (X thinks it is inadmissible that now it is paid more for a litter tan before for a box)
- (17) me acuerdo qué me enfermé, y me recetaron un antibiótico bastante fuerte, y venían *solo* ¡dos pastillas! en la cajita y costaba trescientos pesos, la medicina, mmhh, dije “híjole” (CSCM)
 ‘I remember I got sick, and I was prescribed a very powerful antibiotic, and *only* two pills were in the small box; it cost three hundred pesos, the medicine, mmh, I said “oh, boy”’
 (X thinks the price paid for two pills was excessive)

It is important to mention that when the enunciation acquires a nuancing value, the exclusivity value is not lost, only weakened; the quality of exclusivity is always latent and can be easily recuperated. In many occasions, the semantic load of these elements depends on the context of the communicative interaction and the interpretation will be inherent to the idiosyncrasies and the culture of the interlocutors.

The results (Table 1) show that 93 examples, in addition to carrying a meaning of exclusivity, carry the nuancing value, either to attenuate or to intensify. Furthermore, the data reveal that when there is an exclusivity value, it is more likely that the short adverb *solo* is used ($X^2 = 7.4218$, g.l. = 2, $p \leq 0.02$) and when there is a nuancing value it is more likely that the long adverb *solamente* is used ($X^2 = 5.3349$, g.l. = 1, $p \leq 0.02$), as is confirmed by statistical analysis.

Table 1. Semantic value frequency of *solo-solamente*

Semantic value	Short <i>solo</i>	Long <i>solamente</i>
Exclusivity	110 (62%)	80 (75%)
Attenuation	46 (26%)	22 (21%)
Intensification	21 (12%)	4 (4%)
Total	177 (100%)	106 (100%)

4.3 Type of focus and syntactic function of the focus

Due to the fact that the two forms in the adverbial pair *solo-solamente* function as focus operators, they require a focus (Hoeksema & Zwarts 1991:52) that is always under the control of the operator. In relation to this, it has been observed that the focus is not always narrow as Gutierrez Bravo (2008:378) claims. The data in this

analysis also show focus elements that are wide. Out of 283 examples (Table 2), 159 present a narrow focus ((18)), while 124 present a wide focus ((19) and (20)); thus, it is clear that the narrow focus is indeed prominent.

- (18) ¿Qué fiestas acostumbra celebrar?
 ‘Which holidays do you usually celebrate?’
Pos solo Navidad (CHDM)
 ‘Well *only Christmas*’
 (and they do not celebrate anything else)
- (19) normalmente cada quien escribe por separado, el baterista no escribe [...] (CSHM) de hecho, *solamente tiene una canción*, o al menos, una letra, que él aportó
 ‘usually each one writes separately, the drummer does not write [...] (CSHM) in fact / he *only has one song*, or at least, one letter, that he contributed’
 (and he does not write anything else)
- (20) ¿No invitan ‘amigos?’
 ‘Don’t you invite friends?’
 ¡N’hombre tá muy caro!, no, *solo* nos, nos juntamos, por ejemplo..., *mis hermanas, sus esposos, sus hijos, mi mamá, y nosotros, mi esposo y yo* (CHDM)
 ‘No, man, it’s too expensive!, no, we *only*..., we get together, for example..., *my sisters, their husbands, their children, my mother, and us, my husband and I*’
 (and they invite no one else)

Table 2. Type of focus

Focus	Short <i>solo</i>	Long <i>solamente</i>
Narrow	102 (56%)	57 (54%)
Wide	75 (42%)	49 (46%)
Total	177 (100%)	106 (100%)

The results illustrate that the type of focus does not determine the presence of one or another operator (i.e. *solo* or *solamente*); this is confirmed in the statistical analysis ($X^2 = 0.3997$, g.l. = 1, $p = .81$).

Likewise, the data confirmed that the focus operators *solo-solamente* can focus on any element in a clause (Ferrari *et al.* 2011: 33); however, the elements in focus are not only arguments ((21) and (22)), but also adjuncts ((23) and (24)), phrases ((25)) or clauses ((26)) (García Miguel 1995: 20–1).

- (21) *Solamente mis tres hermanos*, ellos compran todo (CHDM)
 ‘*only my three brothers*, they buy everything’
 (Subject focuser)

- (22)

[...] ellas hablan *solamente el español* ¿verdad?
‘They speak *only Spanish*, right?’
(Object focuser)

(CHDM)
- (23)

¿ha vivido en otro lugar, aparte de Monterrey?
no, no, *solamente aquí*
Have you lived in anyother place, besides Monterrey?’
‘no, no, *only here*’
(Place adverbial complement focuser)

(CSHM)
- (24)

yo creo que *solamente así* nos pudo sacar adelante.
‘I think that *only like this* could he/she make us prosper’
(Manner adverb focuser)

(CSCM)
- (25)

puede parecer algo muy exclusivo, de algunos muy conocedores, *sólo para expertos*
‘it may seem rather exclusive, to people who *have knowledge about this, only for experts*’
(Phrase focuser)

(CSCM)
- (26)

solo estuvimos tu mamá y yo ¿no?
‘*Only your mother and I were there*, right?’
(Clause focuser)

(CSCM)

The data demonstrate that both focus operators have great frequency focusing on clauses; nonetheless, arguments and phrases are also quite frequent as objects of focus (Table 3). Even so, it is important to mention that the syntactic function of the focus does not determine the presence of the short or long focus operator according to the statistical analysis ($X^2 = 3.2711$, g.l. = 3, $p = 0.35$).

Table 3. Syntactic function of the focus of *solo-solamente*

Focus	Short <i>solo</i>	Long <i>solamente</i>
Argument	57 (32%)	28 (26%)
Adjunct	13 (7%)	14 (13%)
Phrase	42 (24%)	27 (26%)
Clause	65 (37%)	37 (35%)
Total	177 (100%)	106 (100%)

4.4 Syntactic position of *solo-solamente*

With regard to the syntactic position of the focus operators, all examples were located adjacent to the focus ((21) to (26)).

It was noted that focus operators are usually located to the left of the focus ((21) to (26)). Although there were cases in which the focus operator appeared on the right of the focus ((27)) (Table 4), such cases were almost nonexistent as they represent a mere 1% of the sample.

- (27) [...] y ver pues, lo que pasaba *en la tele solamente* (CSCM)
 ‘and to see what was *on TV only*’

Table 4. Syntactic position of the focus operator as right or left

Position	Short <i>solo</i>	Long <i>solamente</i>
Left	177 (100%)	104 (98%)
Right	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
Total	177 (63%)	106 (100%)

As it can be seen, both operators (i.e. short and long) appear more prominently to the left of the focus. The long adverb *solamente* appears in 104 instances (37%) on the left and only 2 instances (1%) on the right ((28)) of the element under focus.

- (28) Tú has hecho *primaria solamente* ¿no? (CHDM)
 ‘You have studied *elementary school only*, right?’

The short adverb appears without exception on the left of the focus. It is important to mention that when *solo* occurs on the right of the focus, it functions as an adjective and not as an adverb ((29) to (31)). When comparing Example (29) with Examples (30) and (31), it can be noticed that the adjective *solo* (i.e. ‘alone’) must formally maintain concordance with the subject or object which it modifies, otherwise it is ungrammatical (as in (29)). When used as an adjective, *solo* can function as an attribute or as a depictive secondary predicate (cf. Schultze-Berndt & Himmelmann 2004: 59).

- (29) **María* escucha discos de música clásica *solo*
 ‘*María* listens to CDs of classical music *alone*’
 **Solo* is not in agreement with *María* (a feminine noun), so it is ungrammatical in Spanish.
- (30) y *cada quien* se atiende y se sirve *solo* (CHDM)
 ‘And *everyone* attends and serves themselves *alone*’
- (31) me da miedo dejar *lo solo* porque orita hay mucho peligro (CHDM)
 ‘It scares me to leave *him alone* because it’s too dangerous’

4.5 The adverb-adjective interface of *solo*

According to what was observed in some examples taken from the corpora, semantic ambiguity between the adverb and the adjective *solo* does occur in the corpora's transcriptions. While in some cases the double reading of this semantic ambiguity is disambiguated by the surrounding context of the utterance, in other cases it is not. It would be necessary to observe how such examples would be transcribed in the written register according to the application of the New Orthographic Reform of the RAE & ASALE (2010), in which the omission of the diacritical accent in the adverb *solo* could cause confusion in meaning. Thus, *solo* could easily be understood as an adjective instead of an adverb or *vice versa* if there is not enough context to clarify the message.

In Example (32), ambiguity can be perceived because *solo* could be considered either an attribute of the pronoun *uno* or a modifier of the subordinate clause *que trabaje*; both interpretations are possible.

- (32) la madre es para cuidar los hijos ¿verdad?, que aunque pos ya ahorita ya están cambiando mucho las cosas porque pos si, con *uno solo que trabaje* no le alcanza a uno (CHDM)
 'a mother is meant to take care of children, right?, and even though things are changing a lot because, well, when there's *one alone/only who works*, it's difficult to make ends meet'

This structural ambiguity has been called "interface", and it refers to the lack of a semantic, formal or functional distinction between two categories; that is, there is the possibility for one structure to be understood in two different ways. The existence of two possible interpretations is caused by the functional and morphological indistinctness inherent to certain elements in the sentence (cf. Rodríguez Díez 1997:97). Moreover, Hummel (2008:130) proposes the mono-categorical system, which identifies only one morphological category, without making a distinction between an adverb and adjective at the language level.

Furthermore, certain contexts exist in which an adverb-adjective interface is favored as seen in the following Examples ((33)–(35)).

- (33) [focos] en la lavandería hay dos, son siete, aquí son dos, son nueve, bueno es *uno solo porque es el candil* pero vamos a ponerlo como nueve (CDHM)
 '[light bulbs] in the laundry room there are two, that's seven, here there are two, that's nine, well it's *one alone/only because it's the lamp*, but we're going to put like nine'
- (34) [yo] Estaré *solo hasta las tres* (CSCM)
 'I will be (here/there) *alone/only until three*'

- (35) pero *yo solo oí* dije ¡hijole! (CHDM)
 'but *I only/alone heard* and said "oh boy!"'

Similar to Example (32), in Example (33) the location of *solo* causes ambiguity, as *solo* can refer to *uno* or it can refer to the following subordinate clause. If it refers to the former, then it is an attribute; but if it refers to the latter, then it is focus operator. In Example (34) the copulative verb requires the presence of an attribute; however, *solo* has the capacity of projecting itself in order to modify the adverbial phrase *hasta las tres*, in which case it becomes a focus operator. A similar case can be seen in (35), where the presence of the pronoun *yo* could give adjectival semantics to *solo*; even so, *solo* can also project itself to the predicate and focalize the most prominent element, which in this case would be the verb *oír*.

In order to delve deeper into the topic of interface, the following example was manipulated and mapped out with the objective of better observing how certain syntactic positions and context elements produce cases of interface.

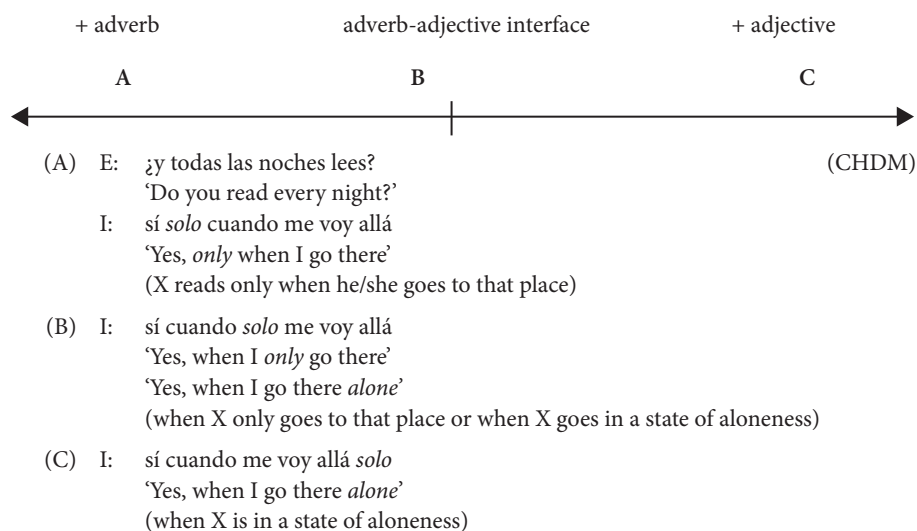


Figure 1. Interface adjective-adverb internal position

In Figure 1, it can be observed that when *solo* is at the extreme left (A), it conveys adverbial semantics, whereas if it is to the right of the phrase or clause, it acquires adjectival semantics (C). Thus, there is no doubt between (A) and (C) when *solo* has abandoned adverbial semantics and has acquired adjectival semantics. In contrast, in (B) there is ambiguity, as both interpretations are possible.

As it has been observed, in certain contexts and with certain surrounding grammatical elements, interface is produced. When this occurs, *solo* exhibits

ambivalence and is thus inclined to modify either the most restricted element or the most prominent element of a clause or enunciation.

The following examples, (36) and (37), are given in order to illustrate that an adjective with noun concordance appears in the same position in which interface normally occurs (as seen in Figures 1 to 3 above).

- (36) Yo *sola* tengo que aprender por mí misma. (CSCM)
 'I *alone* have to learn by myself.'
 (In this state of aloneness)
- (37) ¿Y usted *sola* empezó [algo]? (CSCM)
 'And did you start [something] *alone*?'
 (In this state of aloneness)

In these examples it is observed that a double predication is given which includes a principal predication and a secondary predication (Schultze-Berndt & Himmelmann 2004). In (36), the principal predication is *tengo que aprender por mí misma* ('I have to learn by myself') and the secondary predication is *tengo que hacerlo sola* ('I have to do it *alone*'). In (37), the principal predication is *usted empezó* ('you started') and the secondary predication is *lo hizo sola* ('you did it *alone*'). In these cases there is no ambiguity as the adjective with feminine noun concordance has no semantic ambiguity.

However, as mentioned before, if the gender of the adjective is masculine, then another meaning can be understood, as seen in the following: *Yo solo tengo que aprender por mí mismo* ('I *only* have to learn by myself') or *¿Y usted solo empezó?* ('And you *only* started?'). These examples now present clear cases of interface because of the positioning of *solo* and because the masculine adjective *solo* has the same form as its short adverbial counterpart.

Out of the 373 total instances of the element *solo*, 177 examples have adverbial semantics (of which only six show this double reading) and 196 have adjectival semantics. The frequency of use of the adjective is similar to that of the adverb, 47% and 53% respectively. However, of the 177 instances of the adverb *solo*, only 6 (3%) presented ambiguity and were thus considered cases of interface.

5. Final considerations

The results of the present study corroborate what several authors have indicated regarding the use of the short adverb or the adverbialized adjective *solo*: that it exhibits a high frequency of use in oral register. On the other hand, it is important to highlight that the long adverb or deadjectival adverb *solamente* also had a high

frequency in the oral register corpora, which is not common for other long adverbs. The reason for the high frequency of *solamente* seems to be due to the fact that both forms of the adverbial pair *solo-solamente* belong to the classification of focus operators, and thus are more frequently used in the oral register because of their discursive function.

Semantically, all the examples of both forms of the adverbial pair have an exclusivity reading; however, in 93 examples this exclusivity value is diluted and another meaning is activated that nuances the information. Thus, the findings of this study confirm that these adverbial elements do indeed help clarify the speaker's communicative intention. It is noteworthy that the variable for semantic function of *solo-solamente* was the only statistically significant variable. The results show that when there is primarily an exclusivity value indicated, it is likely that the short focus operator *solo* is utilized, whereas when there is a nuancing value present, it is more likely that the long adverb *solamente* is employed.

It is important to highlight that the nuancing value is perceived in 33% of the examples, which was an unexpected tendency, particularly for the long form *solamente*. Perhaps this tendency is evidence that these elements are in the process of bleaching, in which they are converting themselves into discourse markers.

In relation to the analysis of syntactic function, it was confirmed that both forms of the adverbial pair *solo-solamente* function as focus operators and introduce narrow focuses. Nevertheless, the results show that wide focuses also occur. However, this variable was not statistically significant.

On the other hand, the results reveal that these focus operators place focus on arguments, adjuncts, phrases or clauses. Even so, neither focus operator (i.e. *solo* or *solamente*) exhibited preference for any of these particular types of focus. This variable was also not significant.

According to the syntactic position results of the *solo-solamente* adverbial pair, focus operators were found in the adjacent position and to left of the element in focus. In a few cases, the long adverb also appeared to the right of the focus. When the short adverb *solo* appeared to the right of the focus, its reading was not of an adverb, but of an adjective. However, when *solo* appeared in the middle position or on the border of a non-delimited phrase, then interface was present. With this, it is observed that interface between the adverb *solo* and the adjective *solo* occurs in the syntax, for that is where functional differences are indicated. Even so, the number of examples of interface in the data was scarce: of the 177 cases of the short adverb, only 6 cases were ambiguous, which barely represents 3%. Thus, it is necessary to continue searching for ambiguous cases in order to provide a wider and more decisive conclusion in this respect.

In accordance with this descriptive approach, it is observed that the two forms of the adverbial pair behave in a similar manner: both provide a meaning

of exclusivity and both appear with a nuancing value. Moreover, the two forms are interchangeable; that is, the meaning of the sentence does not change if one is substituted for the other, except for the case when the long adverb is at the end of the clause. With respect to syntactic position, both focus operators can head clauses or phrases; both can place focus on arguments, adjuncts or phrases; and both can appear with either a narrow or a wide focus.

Therefore, it has been determined that these two linguistic forms, *solo* and *solamente*, have the same discursive function. This conclusion suggests that a complementary distribution does not exist between the two forms since they compete in the same linguistic variables and consequently are synonyms. However, it is important to emphasize that it is more likely that the short form *solo* will appear if there is a semantic value of exclusivity, while it is more likely that the long form *solamente* will appear if there is a semantic nuancing value.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Mónica Sanaphre Villanueva and E. Haydee Carrazco Ortiz for their valuable comments and feedback. Any errors found within this paper are the sole responsibility of the authors.

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