

Negation and participant deverbal nominalisations in Spanish

Laura Ros García

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

laura.ros@uam.es

 0000-0001-6395-4256



© the author

Reception: October 1, 2025

Acceptance: January 15, 2026

Advanced publication: May 11, 2026

Recommended citation: Ros García, Laura. 2026. Negation and participant deverbal nominalisations in Spanish. *Catalan Journal of Linguistics*, forthcoming: 1-29. <<https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/catjl.572>>

Abstract

In this article the behaviour of participant deverbal nominalisations preceded by the negative particle *no* in Spanish is addressed. It is concluded that these nouns are compatible with *no* and that, in this context, two interpretations can arise: the (non-)belonging to a group reading and the non-prototypicality reading. With the former the presence of negation entails the creation of two opposed sets of entities, so that a participant that falls into one set is necessarily excluded from the other set; with the latter, the participant is evaluated as a bad exemplar of the class it belongs to, given that it lacks (some of) the properties considered prototypical. Finally, a syntactic analysis that accounts for the availability of these two readings is proposed. This analysis is primarily based on the interaction of negation with certain nominal projections that make up the syntactic configuration of nouns.

Keywords: negation; nominal domain; participant deverbal nominalisations

Resum. *La negació i les nominalitzacions deverbals de participant en castellà*

En aquest article s'aborda el comportament de les nominalitzacions deverbals de participant precedides per la partícula negativa *no* en castellà. Es conclou que aquests substantius són compatibles amb la partícula *no* i que, en aquest context, poden sorgir dues interpretacions: la lectura de (no-)pertinença a un grup i la lectura de no-prototipicitat. Amb la primera, la presència de la negació implica la creació de dos conjunts oposats d'entitats, de manera que un participant que pertany a un conjunt es necessàriament exclòs de l'altre conjunt; amb la segona, el participant és avaluat com un mal exemple de la classe a la qual pertany, atès que està mancat d'(algunes de) les propietats considerades prototípiques. Finalment, es proposa una anàlisi sintàctica que explica la disponibilitat d'aquestes dues lectures. Aquesta anàlisi es basa principalment en la interacció de la negació amb certes projeccions nominals que formen la configuració sintàctica dels substantius.

Paraules clau: negació; domini nominal; nominalitzacions deverbals de participant

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 2. Some issues on the nature of nominal negation 3. Participant deverbal nominalisations: grammatical properties	4. <No + participant deverbal nominalisation>: two readings 5. A proposal of syntactic analysis 6. Conclusions References
--	---

1. Introduction

Whereas the interaction of the negative particle *no* with verbal predicates (1) has drawn the attention of many linguists (Stockwell et al. 1973; Higginbotham 1983, 2000; Horn 1989; Cooper 1998; Przepiórkowski 1999; Arkadiev 2015; Fábregas & González Rodríguez 2020; Bernard & Champollion 2023, a. o.), its interaction with the nominal domain has been explored to a lesser extent. In the Spanish language, which is addressed in this paper, some authors have pointed out that negation can also precede a noun (2) (Seco 1964: s.v. *no*; Lang 1990: 227; Sánchez López 1999: 2566-2567; González Rodríguez 2009: §2.2.3; Esquivel 2021; RAE-ASALE 2025: ch. 48, a. o.).

- (1) a. El comité no presentó la propuesta.
 the committee NEG presented the proposal
 ‘The committee did not present the proposal.’
 b. Los civiles no poseen armas.
 the civilians NEG possess weapons
 ‘Civilians do not possess weapons.’
- (2) a. la no presentación de la propuesta por parte del comité
 the NEG presentation of the proposal by part of the committee
 ‘The non-presentation of the proposal by the committee.’
 b. la no posesión de armas por parte de los civiles
 the NEG possession of weapons by part of the civilians
 ‘The non-possession of weapons by the civilians.’
 c. la no veracidad de su testimonio ante el juez
 the NEG truthfulness of his testimony before the judge
 ‘The non-truthfulness of his testimony before the judge.’
 d. Esto que has comprado es un no florero: no tiene espacio
 this that have bought is a NEG vase NEG has space
 para colocar bien las flores.
 for to.place well the flowers
 ‘This thing you bought is a non-vase: there is not enough space to arrange
 the flowers.’

- e. Por mucho que digan los diseñadores, esto de aquí es una no
 for much that say the designers this of here is a NEG
 silla: no tiene un buen respaldo ni es cómoda.
 chair NEG has a good backrest nor is comfortable
 ‘No matter what designers say, this is a non-chair: it has no proper backrest
 and it is not comfortable.’

To the best of our knowledge, no systematic study has yet examined which types of Spanish nouns can co-occur with the negative particle *no*. The examples provided in (2) show that, at first sight, different types of morphosyntactic nouns are compatible with this particle. Sequences in (2a-d) introduce nominalisations derived from different word classes. Those in (2a) and (2b) are deverbal (*presentar* ‘(to) present’ > *presenta-ción* ‘presentation’, *poseer* ‘(to) possess’ > *pose-sión* ‘possession’). (2c) exemplifies a deadjectival nominalisation (*veraz* ‘truthfull’ > *verac-idad* ‘truthfulness (ll > l)’), while that of (2d) is denominal (*flor* ‘flower’ > *flor-ero* ‘vase’). In contrast, *silla* ‘chair’ in (2e) constitutes an example of an underived noun.

The existing link between verbs and their corresponding nominalisations has led to recent scrutiny of the behaviour of this specific type of nominals in the literature. In a nutshell, it has been concluded that those deverbal nominals that denote an eventuality,¹ such as the ones provided in (2a,b), are compatible with *no*, and their interpretation and grammatical properties in this context have been described in detail. However, there are other types of deverbal nominalisations which have not been addressed when it comes to their compatibility with this negative particle; namely, participant deverbal nominalisations. In this article we will address the phenomenon of the interaction of *no* with the nominal domain by solely focusing on the behaviour of this class of nominals.

Participant deverbal nominalisations denote an entity that takes part in the eventuality that the verbal base refers to. Depending on the thematic relation between the entity and the verbal base, different types of participants are obtained (3) (Laca 1986, 1993; Lieber 2004; Baker & Vinorukova 2009; Alexiadou & Schäfer 2010; Fábregas 2012, 2016; Roy & Soare 2014, 2020; McIntyre 2014; Marvin 2016; Lieber & Andreou 2018; Alexiadou 2022, a. o.).²

- (3) a. Agents: comerciante ‘trader’, fumador ‘smoker’, traductor ‘translator’...
 b. Experiencers: creyente ‘believer’, pensador ‘thinker’, sufridor ‘sufferer’...

1. The term *eventuality* is used in the sense of Bach (1986), i.e. it encompasses both dynamic and non-dynamic predicates. The term *event* is saved for dynamic predicates, whereas *state* is assigned to the non-dynamic ones.
2. In this paper we will follow Fábregas (2016) and use the term *participant deverbal nominalisation* in a broad sense to refer to this group of nominals. This is such that, as it will be shown in section 3, these items display the same grammatical behaviour regardless of the type of participant denoted. However, the literature has traditionally used specific terms for the three most studied participants: *agent*, *effect or result* and *instrument nominalisations* (cf. RAE-ASALE 2025: ch. 6, 12).

- c. Recipients: destinatario ‘recipient’...
- d. Result objects: construcción ‘construction’, recaudación ‘takings’, traducción ‘translation’...
- e. Instruments: aspiradora ‘hoover’, grabadora ‘recorder’, lavadora ‘washing machine’...
- f. Places: comedor ‘dining room’, dormitorio ‘bedroom’, mirador ‘view-point’...

The grammaticality of the sequences in (4) lays bare that these nominals are compatible with the negative particle *no*.

- (4) a. Ante la nueva ley aprobada, los no fumadores han protestado
before the new law approved the NEG smokers have protested
en el Ministerio de Sanidad.
in the Ministry of Health
‘In response to the newly approved law, non-smokers have protested at the
Ministry of Health.’
- b. Luis es un no simpatizante del presidente.
Luis is a NEG supporter of the president
‘Luis is a non-supporter of the president.’
- c. Esto es una no traducción de *Hamlet*: está plagada de
this is a NEG translation of *Hamlet* is riddled with of
calcos del inglés al español.
calques of the English to the Spanish
‘This is a non-translation of *Hamlet*: it is riddled with English-to-Spanish
calques.’

This article is structured as follows. Given the connection between nominalisations and their verbal bases, in section 2 we briefly discuss the nature of nominal and verbal negations. In section 3 we present a series of grammatical tests which shows that participant deverbal nominalisations possess a uniform behaviour regardless of both the type of participant denoted and the affix attached to the verbal base. In section 4 we address their co-occurrence with the negative particle *no* and the readings that arise in this context. In section 5 we introduce a proposal of syntactic analysis that accounts for how these interpretations arise. Section 6 is devoted to conclusions.

2. Some issues on the nature of nominal negation

As it has been claimed by linguists such as Zeijlstra (2007) or De Clercq (2020a), most works addressing the expression of negation have focused on the cases where it has scope over a sentence (Jespersen 1917; Klima 1964; Pollock 1989; Laka 1990; Zanuttini 1997, to mention a few). By contrast, there are far fewer studies

devoted to the interaction of negation with sub-sentential units (Hamawand 2009; Gibert Sotelo 2017; Etxepare & Uribe-Etxebarria 2018; De Clercq 2020a, a. o.). Thus, examining the co-occurrence of negation with nominals sheds light on a comparatively underexplored area of negation. In Spanish, authors such as Sánchez López (1999), González Rodríguez (2009) or RAE-ASALE (2025: §48.2t) have taken the traditional scope-based classification of negation to address those cases in which *no* precedes a nominalisation. Before the arguments provided by them are discussed, we succinctly introduce this classification.

Taking Klima's (1964) work as a point of departure, three types of negation have been distinguished: sentential, constituent and morphological negation. Examples in (5) illustrate each of these. (5a) constitutes a case of sentential negation: the negative particle *no* has wide scope over the verbal predicate. Thus, a sentence such as the one in (5a) can be paraphrased as 'What María did was not attend class last week'. Contrary to sentential negation, with constituent negation *no* scopes over a phrase. In (5b) *no* scopes over the AdvP *muy alto* 'very high'. As for the morphological negation, it is expressed by means of a negative prefix—such as *in-* 'un-, in-', *des-* 'dis-, un-' or *a-* 'a'—that attaches to a word (5c).

- (5) a. María no vino a clase la semana pasada.
 María NEG came to class the week previous
 'María did not come to class last week.'
- b. Ese avión vuela no muy alto.
 that plane flies NEG very high
 'That plane flies not very high.'
- c. in-justicia, des-equilibrado, a-simétrico
 in-justice un-balanced a-symmetric

This classification has been applied by Sánchez López (1999), González Rodríguez (2009) or RAE-ASALE (2025: §48.2t) to the negative particle *no* when it precedes a nominalisation in Spanish. We now discuss the arguments provided by these authors. On the one side, González Rodríguez (2009: 43) points out that <*no* + deverbal nominalisation> is a case of morphological negation: *no* works as a negative separable prefix that targets only the head of the NP. According to this linguist, in (6) *no* does not affect the NP *lectores de novela histórica* 'readers of historic novel', but only the content of its head, i.e. *lectores* 'readers'.

- (6) El estudio demuestra que los no lectores de novela histórica
 the study shows that the NEG readers of novel historical
 muestran una actitud distinta ante los hechos del pasado.
 show an attitude different before the facts of the past
 'The study shows that non-readers of historical novel display a different attitude towards past events.'

On this issue, RAE-ASALE (2025: §48.2t) makes a similar claim and holds that *no* is similar to a negative prefix. However, it has been shown that <*no* +

deverbal nominalisation> differs from morphological negation in that the former (7), but not the latter (8), licenses negative polarity items (NPIs). According to the results obtained, *no* does not only affect the NP head, but also its complements, since a NPI can be introduced in the NP—in (7), *no* licenses the presence of the NPIs *ninguno* ‘any’ and *ningún* ‘any’, respectively—, contrary to what happens with morphological negation—in (8), the prefixes *des-* ‘dis-’ and *in-* ‘in-’ do not license the NPIs *ningún* ‘any’ and *nadie* ‘anybody’.

- (7) a. la no destrucción de ninguno de esos documentos
 the NEG destruction of any of those documents
 ‘The non-destruction of any of those documents.’
 b. los no creyentes en ninguna religión
 the NEG believers in any religion
 ‘Non-believers in any religion.’
- (8) a. *la desobediencia de ningún alumno
 the disobedience of any student
 b. *la injusticia de nadie
 the injustice of anybody

The ill-formedness of the examples in (8) brings to light that morphological negation rejects NPIs. Given that <*no* + deverbal nominalisation> is compatible with them, according to RAE-ASALE (2025: §48.2t), this would support the fact that this negation is not morphological. In addition to this, RAE-ASALE (2025: §48.2t) highlights how the negative particle does not scope over the NP. This is what explains the contrast in (9). (9a) is grammatical because the NPI *ningún* ‘any’ is under the scope of the negative particle *no*, whereas (9b) is not because the NPI *nadie* ‘anybody’ is outside the NP and, therefore, out of scope of the negative particle, so it cannot be licensed.³

- (9) a. La no intervención en ningún conflicto preocupaba a todos.
 the NEG intervention in any conflict worried DOM everyone
 ‘The non-intervention in any conflict worried everyone.’
 b. *La no intervención en aquel conflicto preocupaba a nadie.
 the NEG intervention in that conflict worried DOM anybody

Despite this, the (non-)licensing of NPIs is not a reliable diagnostic. RAE-ASALE (2025: §48.2m, t) provides other cases in which a negative prefix can

3. However, Sánchez López (1999) argues that both the fact that *no* affects the NP head and its complements, and the fact that the nominalisation derives from a verb are arguments in favour of considering this type of negation similar to the sentential type. Nevertheless, this author does not delve into these similarities nor introduces any tests that support this claim.

indeed license a NPI (10). Additionally, the sequences in (11) bring to light that both constituent and sentential negation also accept these items.⁴

- (10) a. Juan es incapaz de nada.
 Juan is incapable of anything
 ‘Juan is incapable of anything.’
- b. El paciente es insensible a ningún estímulo.
 the patient is insensitive to any stimulus
 ‘The patient is insensitive to any stimulus.’
- (11) a. María se alojó no en casa de ningún amigo, sino en el
 María SE stayed NEG in house of any friend but in the
 hotel familiar.
 hotel familiar
 ‘María stayed not at any friend’s house, but at the family hotel.’
- b. No vino nadie a la fiesta.
 NEG came anybody to the party
 ‘Nobody came to the party.’

Although this issue is beyond the scope of this paper, what seems crucial is that the diagnoses offered by the literature are not strong enough to determine whether this nominal negation should be classified as sentential, constituent or morphological negation, or even whether it can be fully assigned to any of these classes. Additionally, the validity of this classification for languages other than English has been discussed (see De Clercq 2020b and references therein) and, importantly, the boundaries between the three types of negation become blurred when this phenomenon is examined from a neoconstructionist perspective. This is the perspective adopted by authors such as De Clercq (2020a) and the one that will be followed in this paper. In line with this linguist, the different types of negation emerge from the different positions negation can occupy in the syntactic structure and the scope it has over the other projections. Specifically, in this paper we will introduce a proposal that accounts for the nature of <*no* + participant deverbal nominalisation> based on the negative particle’s position within the configuration of these nominals. First, however, in the following section it is shown how these nouns exhibit the same grammatical behaviour regardless of the type of participant they denote.

3. Participant deverbal nominalisations: grammatical properties

The tests gathered in this section have been used by the literature to show how participant (12) and eventuality (13) deverbal nominalisations differ regarding their syntactic and semantic behaviour.

4. See De Clercq (2020a: 4) for a similar observation for English.

- (12) a. fumar_V ‘(to) smoke’ > fuma-dor_N ‘smoker’
 b. creer_V ‘(to) believe’ > creye-nte_N ‘believer’
 c. destinar_V ‘(to) allocate’ > destina-tario_N ‘recipient’
- (13) a. invadir_V ‘(to) invade’ > inva-sión_N ‘invasion’
 b. conocer_V ‘(to) know’ > conoci-miento_N ‘knowledge’

Furthermore, as Fábregas (2016: 159) explains, and crucially to our purposes here, the results obtained are uniform when these tests are applied to nominals like the ones in (12), regardless of both the thematic relationship between the participant and the verbal base and the affix adjoined to the base (*-(d)or*, *-nte*, *-torio*...).⁵ We now introduce a selection of the tests that support this generalization. The first one has to do with the co-occurrence with modifiers related to time and aspect headed by *durante* ‘for’ and *en* ‘in’. Participant nominalisations reject this kind of adjuncts (14), whereas eventive (15a) and stative (15b) deverbal nominalisations are compatible with them. This is such that the former refer to entities which possess physical, but not temporal boundaries, contrary to what happens with nominalisations that denote eventualities.⁶

- (14) a. *un fumador durante varios años [AGENT]
 a smoker for several years
 b. *un creyente durante varios años [EXPERIENCER]
 a believer for several years
 c. *una destinataria en dos segundos [RECIPIENT]
 a recipient in two seconds
 d. *una traducción en varios días [RESULT OBJECT]
 a translation in several days
 e. *una grabadora durante varios meses [INSTRUMENT]
 a recorder for several months
 f. *un dormitorio en tres meses [PLACE]
 a bedroom in three months
- (15) a. la aceptación de la propuesta en dos minutos
 the acceptance of the proposal in two minutes
 ‘the acceptance of the proposal in two minutes’

5. For a descriptive study about the combination of suffixes with the different verbal bases and the type of participant obtained in each case, see RAE-ASALE (2025: §6.6-6.10).

6. The conceptual distinction between participants as entities with physical boundaries and eventualities as entities with temporal boundaries can be traced back to Lyons (1977).

- b. la posesión de armas durante varios siglos
 the possession of weapons for several centuries
 ‘the possession of weapons for several centuries’

A second diagnosis has to do with pluralisation. Both participant and eventual-ity nominalisations accept plural morphemes. However, different interpretations arise. When pluralised, the former refer to several entities or objects with physical boundaries (16), whereas the latter denote a plural of entities with temporal boundaries (cf. footnote 6) and, more specifically, as Fábregas (2016: 102) explains, a consecutive ordered sequence of eventualities repeated along time (17a) or simultaneous eventualities which are carried out by different entities (17b).

- (16) a. Los traductores están en huelga. [AGENT]
 the translators are in strike
 ‘Translators are on strike.’
- b. Los creyentes han ido al acto. [EXPERIENCER]
 the believers have gone to the event
 ‘Believers have attended the event.’
- c. los destinatarios de la ayuda [RECIPIENT]
 the recipients of the help
 ‘The recipients of the aid.’
- d. Estas traducciones están muy mal hechas. [RESULT OBJECT]
 these translations are very badly done
 ‘These translations are very poorly done.’
- e. Las aspiradoras están rotas. [INSTRUMENT]
 the hoovers are broken
 ‘The hoovers are broken.’
- f. Los comedores nuevos son muy amplios. [PLACE]
 the dining rooms new are very spacious
 ‘The new dining rooms are very spacious.’
- (17) a. Las repetidas invasiones de la ciudad están agotando a
 the repeated invasions of the city are exhausting DOM
 la población.
 the population
 ‘The repeated invasions of the city are wearing down the population.’
- b. las explicaciones simultáneas por parte del presidente y
 the explanations simultaneous by part of the president and
 del ministro
 of the minister
 ‘the simultaneous explanations given by the president and the minister’

Another test for differentiating participant nominalisations from eventive and stative ones is related to the co-occurrence with modifiers that refer to physical properties, such as length, weight, width or the constitutive material (Fábregas 2016: 106). As participant nominalisations denote entities with physical boundaries, they are compatible with this type of modifiers (18). On the contrary, from the ill-formedness of the examples in (19) it follows that deverbal nominalisations that refer to eventualities reject this type of adjuncts.

- (18) a. un traductor alto [AGENT]
 a tradlator tall
 ‘a tall translator’
- b. ese creyente de dos metros [EXPERIENCER]
 that believer of two meters
 ‘that two-meter-tall believer’
- c. esa destinataria de la ayuda tan alta [RECIPIENT]
 that recipient of the help so tall
 ‘that very tall recipient of the aid’
- d. la traducción de cincuenta páginas [RESULT OBJECT]
 the translation of fifty pages
 ‘the fifty-page translation’
- e. la aspiradora pequeña [INSTRUMENT]
 the hoover small
 ‘the small hoover’
- f. un dormitorio de cuarenta metros cuadrados [PLACE]
 a bedroom of forty metres squared
 ‘a forty-squared-metre bedroom’
- (19) a. *una invasión de varios metros cuadrados
 an invasion of several metres squared
- b. *una posesión de varios kilómetros
 a possession of several kilometres

The results yielded by the tests show that participant deverbal nominalisations, regardless of the type of participant denoted, exhibit a uniform, but different grammatical behaviour from the one displayed by eventive and stative nominals. In the following section we move on to their co-occurrence with the negative particle *no*.

4. <No + participant deverbal nominalisation>: two readings

In this section, the co-occurrence of participant deverbal nominalisations with *no* is scrutinised. As it was claimed in section 1, these nominalisations are compatible with this particle. On this matter, observe the examples provided in (20) and (21).

- (20) a. Los no fumadores han protestado ante la nueva ley.
 the NEG smokers have protested before the new law
 ‘Non-smokers have protested against the new law.’
- b. Los no destinatarios de la ayuda económica son todas aquellas
 the NEG recipients of the help economic are all those
 personas cuyo salario está por encima de los dos mil euros
 people whose salary is per above of the two thousand euros
 mensuales.
 monthly
 ‘The non-recipients of the financial aid are all those whose salary is above
 two thousand euros per month.’
- c. En aquella sección de la tienda se encuentra todo lo
 in that section of the store SE finds everything that
 relativo a los no dormitorios.
 related to the NEG bedrooms
 ‘In that section of the store, everything related to non-bedrooms can be
 found.’
- (21) a. Luis es un no fumador: no sabe ni coger el cigarro.
 Luis is a NEG smoker NEG knows not.even to.hold the cigarette
 ‘Luis is a non-smoker: he does not even know how to hold a cigarette.’
- b. Su traducción o, mejor dicho, su no traducción de *Hamlet*,
 his translation or better said his NEG translation of *Hamlet*
 porque eso que he leído no se puede llamar traducción...
 because that that have read NEG SE can to.call translation
 ‘His translation, or rather, his non-translation of *Hamlet*, because what I
 have read cannot be called a translation...’
- c. Esto que me has dado es una no aspiradora: ensucia más
 this that me have given is a NEG hoover dirties more
 que limpia.
 than cleans
 ‘What you have given me is a non-hoover: it dirties more than it cleans.’

The sequences in (20) and (21) do not give rise to the same interpretation. In this article it is proposed that, with the former, the interpretation that emerges is the *(non-)belonging to a group reading*, whereas with the latter the interpretation obtained is the *non-prototypicality reading*. In line with the claim made by authors such as Dugas (2017: 150-151) or Andreou (2017: 5), which reading emerges will be generally determined by the context in which <no + participant deverbal nominalisation> occurs. We delve into these readings in the two following subsections.

4.1. *The (non-)belonging to a group reading*

We propose that the interpretation that arises with *<no + participant deverbal nominalisation>* in examples such as the ones provided in (22) is the non-belonging to a group reading.

- (22) a. Los no fumadores han protestado ante la nueva ley.
 the NEG smokers have protested before the new law
 ‘Non-smokers have protested against the new law.’
- b. Los no destinatarios de la ayuda económica son todas aquellas
 the NEG recipients of the help economic are all those
 personas cuyo salario está por encima de los dos mil euros
 people whose salary is per above of the two thousand euros
 mensuales.
 monthly
 ‘The non-recipients of the financial aid are all those whose salary is above
 two thousand euros per month.’
- c. En aquella sección de la tienda se encuentra todo lo
 in that section of the store SE finds everything that
 relativo a los no dormitorios.
 related to the NEG bedrooms
 ‘In that section of the store, everything related to non-bedrooms can be
 found.’

Following authors such as Bauer et al. (2013: ch. 17), Andreou (2017), Dugas (2017: sct. II, ch. 3), De Clercq (2020a) or Meinschäfer (2024), the presence of negation in these cases is related to the possibility of establishing two opposed sets of entities: the one made up by those individuals who take part in the eventuality denoted by the verbal base (N), and the one formed by those entities that do not participate in the corresponding eventuality (non-N). Thus, for instance, in (22b) *no destinatarios de la ayuda económica* ‘non-recipients of the financial aid’ is defined as the set of entities opposed to *destinatarios de la ayuda económica* ‘recipients of the financial aid’, this is, as the set of individuals who have not received the financial aid. Crucially, as Bauer et al. (2013: 370-371), Andreou (2017: 5) or Dugas (2017: 158) highlight, the entities that belong to the set of individuals that do not take part in the eventuality denoted by the verbal base are excluded from the corresponding positive set, and vice versa. For instance, if someone falls into the set of *no destinatarios de la ayuda económica* ‘non-recipients of the financial aid’, they cannot be members of the set of *destinatarios de la ayuda económica* ‘recipients of the financial aid’, i.e. a non-recipient of the financial aid is not a recipient of the financial aid. This is a pivotal issue that, as it will be explained in subsection 4.2, differentiates this interpretation from the non-prototypicality reading.

Moreover, in line with the observations made by Dugas (2017: 146) and Meinschäfer (2024: 16), although this reading can arise with participant deverbal

nominalisations that denote different types of participants—for instance, in (22c), *dormitorio* ‘bedroom’, derived from the verb *dormir* ‘(to) sleep’, denotes a place—, it seems that the more natural cases are found with nominalisations that introduce a human entity (22a,b). The reason might be due to the way in which individuals are classified by the speakers. They are arranged in different classes according to notions such as habits, professions, behaviours, attitudes... (cf. Meinschäfer 2024: §5.1). This also aligns with the claim made in RAE-ASALE (2025: §48.2r), where it is stated that *no* precedes “nouns referring to people, especially those denoting professions, which constitute natural classes of individuals”.

Additionally, for this interpretation to arise, both sets of entities must be sufficiently informative and restrictive to allow the identification of two relevant groups within the discourse. We propose that there are two ways to achieve this requirement. The first of them is related to the presence of a complement. Observe the sentence in (23). Its acceptability differs in the presence/omission of the PP *del manifiesto* ‘of the manifesto’. Whereas the division between those individuals who have signed and those who have not is not informative and restrictive enough, the division between those who have signed the manifesto and those ones who have not is indeed. Therefore, (23) is acceptable when the complement is made explicit.

- (23) Los (no) firmantes ^{??}(del manifiesto) han sido recibidos en
 the NEG signatories of.the manifesto have been received in
 el ayuntamiento.
 the town hall
 ‘The (non-)signatories (of the manifesto) were welcomed at the town hall.’

However, the presence of a complement is not always required. This is illustrated in (24). Note that in this sentence a participant nominalisation without a complement is provided and it is still acceptable. The reason is the following. The action of smoking, contrary to what happens with that of signing, constitutes an example of typified action. In other words, due to extralinguistic knowledge, this activity is conceived as a signature habit. Thus, there is no need to specify what is smoked—cigarettes, rolling tobacco, cigars...

- (24) Los (no) fumadores han celebrado la nueva ley.
 the NEG smokers have celebrated the new law
 ‘(Non-)smokers have welcomed the new law.’

Nevertheless, this does not rule out the possibility of making the complement explicit in the appropriate communicative context, as illustrated by the sentences in (25).

- (25) a. Los fumadores de puros tendrán que pagar una cuota adicional.
 the smokers of cigars will.have that to.pay a fee additional
 ‘Cigar smokers will have to pay an additional fee.’

- b. Los no fumadores de puros quedarán exentos de pagar
 the NEG smokers of cigars will remain exempt from to pay
 una cuota adicional.
 a fee additional
 ‘Non-cigar smokers will be exempt from paying an additional fee.’

Moreover, although this paper focuses on participant deverbal nominalisations, note that the (non-)belonging to a group reading is not only available with this class of morphosyntactic nominals, but with other types of nouns as well. For instance, examples in (26) bring to light that this interpretation emerges also with nominalisations that are derived from a noun (26a), such as *animal* ‘animal’ > *animalista* ‘animal rights activist’, or with structurally simple nouns (26b), like *médico* ‘doctor’. In these cases, the presence of negation is related to the existence of two opposed complementary sets, one made up by those entities ascribed to the set of properties defined by the nominal expression and one formed by those entities not ascribed to this set of properties.⁷

- (26) a. Los no animalistas han bloqueado la última ley
 the NEG animal.rights.activists have blocked the last law
 de protección animal.
 of protection animal
 ‘Non-animal rights activists have blocked the latest animal protection law.’
- b. En el hospital únicamente los no médicos doblaron las guardias.
 in the hospital only the NEG doctors doubled the shifts
 ‘At the hospital only non-medical staff doubled shifts.’

Dugas (2017: 113-114) proposes a battery of tests that provide evidence for the emergence of this interpretation. We now apply a selection of them to Spanish. The first diagnosis has to do with the construction *Un no N no es un N* ‘A non-N is not an N’. Given that the entities that belong to the non-N set are excluded from the N set, and vice versa, <no + participant deverbal nominalisation> can enter this construction (27).

- (27) a. Un no fumador no es un fumador.
 a NEG smoker NEG is a smoker
 ‘A non-smoker is not a smoker.’
- b. #Un no fumador es un fumador.
 a NEG smoker is a smoker

The relation between the individuals that fall into the N and non-N sets is of contradictory nature, i.e. two opposed sets are established and there are no sets

7. An exhaustive study that focuses on the different types of morphosyntactic nominals that give rise to this reading in Spanish is yet to be carried out. For French, see Dugas (2017).

in-between: an entity either belongs to one set or the other. Therefore, <*no* + participant deverbal nominalisation> is compatible with the paraphrase *X es o bien un N, o bien un no N* ‘X is either an N or a non-N’ (28).

- (28) Juan es o bien un fumador, o bien un no fumador.
 Juan is or good a smoker or good a NEG smoker
 ‘Juan is either a smoker or a non-smoker.’

Finally, given this relation of contradiction, <*no* + participant deverbal nominalisation> cannot be paraphrased as *X es a la vez un N y un no N* ‘X is at the same time an N and a non-N’ (29).

- (29) #Juan es a la vez un destinatario de la ayuda y un no
 Juan is at the time a recipient of the aid and a NEG
 destinatario de la ayuda.
 recipient of the aid

After describing the nature and properties of the non-belonging to a group reading, in the following section the non-prototypicality reading is addressed.

4.2. The non-prototypicality reading

The examples in (30) illustrate cases in which <*no* + participant deverbal nominalisation> gives rise to the non-prototypicality reading. The nominalisations in (30) introduce an agent (30a), an experiencer (30b), a result object (30c), an instrument (30d) and a place (30e), respectively.

- (30) a. Luis es un no fumador: no sabe ni coger el cigarro.
 Luis is a NEG smoker NEG knows not.even to.hold the cigarette
 ‘Luis is a non-smoker: he does not even know how to hold the cigarette.’
- b. Su familia considera a Luis un no creyente.
 his family considers DOM Luis a NEG believer
 ‘His family considers Luis a non-believer.’
- c. Su traducción o, mejor dicho, su no traducción de *Hamlet*,
 his translation or better said his NEG translation of *Hamlet*
 porque eso que he leído no se puede llamar traducción...
 because that that have read NEG SE can to.call translation
 ‘His translation, or rather, his non-translation of *Hamlet*, because what I have read cannot be called a translation...’
- d. Esto que me has dado es una no aspiradora: ensucia más que
 this that me have given is a NEG hoover dirties more than
 limpia.
 cleans
 ‘What you have given me is a non-hoover: it dirties more than it cleans.’

- e. Esta estancia de la casa es un no dormitorio: no hay
 this room of the house is a NEG bedroom NEG there.is
 hueco ni para una cama en condiciones.
 space not.even for a bed in conditions
 ‘This room in the house is a non-bedroom: there is not even enough space
 for a proper bed.’

Observe that in (30) <no + participant deverbal nominalisation> is introduced in marked constructions, such as *{Esto/X/N} es un no N* ‘{This/X/N} is a non-N’ (30a,d,e), *X considera (a) {Y/N} un no N* ‘X considers {Y/N} a non-N’ (30b) or *El N, o mejor dicho, el no N, porque esto no se puede {llamar/considerar/...} un N* ‘The N, or rather, the non-N, because this... cannot be {called/considered/...} an N’ (30c). In these cases, the presence of *no* entails that the entity denoted by the nominalisation is evaluated as an item some of whose properties do not match those of the corresponding prototypical entity (Horn 2005; Bauer et al. 2013; Dugas 2017; Andreou 2017; Esquivel 2021; Meinschäfer 2024). It is the speakers who, by means of their world knowledge, decide which are the prototypical properties that define an entity (Garachana & Hilferty 2011: 56-57).⁸ As Horn (2005: 343) highlights, this entity is considered “a bad example of the category, lacking a functionally significant property” that the rest of entities defined by the nominal hold. This point is crucial, because unlike what happens with the (non-)belonging to a group reading, and as authors such as Bauer et al. (2013: 365), Andreou (2017: 3-4) or Dugas (2017: sct. II, ch. 4) argue, in these cases the individual the nominal expression refers to does still belong to the class denoted by the nominalisation, although as an entity that lacks some of the prototypical characteristics of this category.

Thus, for instance, in (30a), *no fumador* ‘non-smoker’ is defined in this context as a person whose behaviour does not match that expected of someone who smokes, because he does not possess some of the qualities prototypically associated with smokers: the entity the nominalisation refers to does not know how to properly hold a cigarette, as mentioned in the sentence. Despite this, this entity belongs to the class of smokers, but it is considered a bad exemplar of it. Similarly, in (30e) *no dormitorio* ‘non-bedroom’ refers to a bedroom, but one that is a bad example of the class, because it lacks several paradigmatic characteristics expected of such a room; namely, it does not even have enough space to place additional furniture.

Although a study delving into the different types of morphosyntactic nominals that yield this interpretation is still pending in Spanish⁹, the following examples illustrate that, similarly to what happens with the (non-)belonging to a group reading, the non-prototypicality interpretation is not exclusive of participant deverbal nominalisations. We now introduce examples of eventuality deverbal nominalisations, denominal nominalisations, simple event nouns and simple underived

8. In this paper the prototypical entity of a set is understood as the most representative entity among all those that constitute the set. This idea is linked to Rosch’s (1978) prototype theory and the cognitive idealized model by Lakoff (1987).

9. For French, see Dugas (2017).

nouns.¹⁰ For the case of deverbal nominalisations, in (31) we provide an example of deverbal nominalisation that denotes an eventuality. In this case, the event of *verificación* ‘verification’ is evaluated as an eventuality with some properties that are not aligned to a prototypical process of verification.

- (31) La verificación de los datos que está llevándose a cabo
 the verification of the data that is carrying.out.SE
 es una no verificación: carece de rigor.
 is a NEG verification lacks of rigour
 ‘The verification of the data being carried out is a non-verification: it lacks rigour.’

Another type of nominalisation is the one derived from nouns. An example is provided in (32): *florero* ‘vase’ derives from the noun *flor* ‘flower’. Again, the presence of negation entails the evaluation of the entity denoted by *florero* ‘vase’ as a bad exemplar of the class, given that some of its properties are not those displayed by prototypical vases, as it is made explicit in the information provided in the sentence.

- (32) Esto que has comprado es un no florero: no tiene espacio para
 this that have bought is a NEG vase NEG has space for
 colocar bien las flores.
 to.place well the flowers
 ‘This thing you bought is a non-vase: there is not enough space to arrange the flowers.’

In addition to deverbal and denominal nominalisations, with simple event nouns (Resnik 2011) (33) as well as with simple underived nouns (34) the same result is obtained: a *no fiesta* ‘non-party’ is conceived as an event some of whose characteristics do not match those of a prototypical party (33), whereas in (34) *no silla* ‘non-chair’ is evaluated as an object with some features that are not those expected of a prototypical chair.

- (33) Lo del otro día fue una no fiesta: la música apenas se oía,
 it of.the other day was a NEG party the music barely SE listened
 la gente estaba sentada...
 the people were sat
 ‘What we had the other day was a non-party: the music was barely audible, everyone was just seated...’

10. However, future studies should delve into this issue and, as it has been pointed out, scrutinise which types of nominals give rise to this reading. For instance, note that deadjectival nominalisations are also compatible with *no* (i). However, (i) can be hardly interpreted as meaning that the qualities of being pure are not possessed by the corresponding entity to a prototypical degree. In this case, the reading obtained is one according to which brass lacks the property of being pure.

(i) La no pureza del latón es lo que hace que este se oxide fácilmente.
 the NEG purity of.the brass is that what makes that it SE oxidises easily
 ‘The non-purity of brass is what causes it to oxidise easily.’

- (34) Por mucho que digan los diseñadores, esto de aquí es una no silla:
 for much that say the designers this of here is a NEG chair
 no tiene un buen respaldo ni es cómoda.
 NEG has a good backrest nor is comfortable
 ‘No matter what designers say, this is a non-chair: it has no proper backrest
 and it is not comfortable.’

After describing the nature of the non-prototypicality interpretation, we now apply a selection of the tests originally proposed for French nominals by Dugas (2017: 115-116) to identify this reading. Given that the participant denoted in these cases, although a bad example of the class, still belongs to it, <no + participant deverbal nominalisation> can co-occur in expressions such as *X es un no N, pero es un X al fin y al cabo* ‘X is a non-N, but it is an N despite all’ (35).

- (35) Esto es una no aspiradora, pero es una aspiradora al fin y al cabo.
 this is a NEG Hoover but is a Hoover to.the end and to.the tail.end.
 ‘This is a non-Hoover, but it is a Hoover despite all.’

Secondly, contrary to what happens with the (non-)belonging to a group reading, the relationship established between N and non-N is of contrary nature, i.e. between the most and the less representative entities of the class we can find entities that fall in the middle regarding their (non-)prototypical properties. Thus, in these cases, <no + participant deverbal nominalisation> rejects the paraphrasis *X es o bien un N, o bien un no N* ‘X is either an N or a non-N’ (36).

- (36) #Esto es o bien una traducción de cincuenta páginas o bien una no traducción de cincuenta páginas.
 this is or good a translation of fifty pages or good a NEG translation of fifty pages
 ‘This is either a fifty-page translation or a fifty-page non-translation.’

Additionally, according to their point of view, <no + participant deverbal nominalisation> is used by the speakers to evaluate an entity as a bad example of the category it falls into. Therefore, this construction can co-occur with predicates such as *considerar* ‘(to) consider’ (37a) or with constructions such as *Para X, Y es un no N* ‘To X, Y is a non-N’ (37b).

- (37) a. Su familia considera a Luis un no creyente.
 his family considers DOM Luis a NEG believer
 ‘His family considers Luis a non-believer.’
 b. Para su familia, Luis es un no creyente.
 to his family Luis is a NEG believer
 ‘To his family, Luis is a non-believer.’

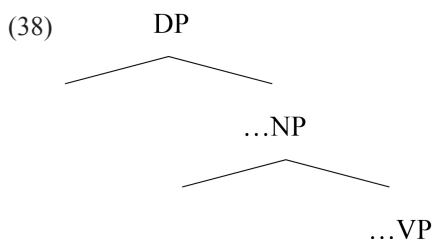
Once the properties of the (non-)belonging to a group and non-prototypicality readings have been described, in the following section we examine how these interpretations can arise syntactically.

5. A proposal of syntactic analysis

In this section we provide a syntactic account for the (non-)belonging to a group and the non-prototypicality interpretations. In §5.1 a succinct description of the general functional structure of nouns is presented. Then, in §5.2 and §5.3 the subsequent analysis is introduced.

5.1. *The functional structure of nouns*

Linguists have posited different analyses to explain how the participant interpretation is derived from the verbal base of nominalisations (Lieber 2004; Baker & Vinorukova 2009; Alexiadou & Schäfer 2010; Fábregas 2012, 2016; Borer 2013; Roy & Soare 2014, 2020, a. o.). Nevertheless, these proposals are orthogonal to ours, since the verbal structure is not relevant for explaining how the (non-)belonging to a group reading and the non-prototypicality reading arise. For our purposes here we will follow authors such as Picallo (1991), Alexiadou (2001), Borer (2005, 2013) or Fábregas (2016) and broadly assume that deverbal nominalisations—regardless of whether they introduce a participant or an eventuality—are the result of the merge of N with the VP. The NP is merely in charge of changing the category of the structure it takes as a complement. Thus, the configuration is nominalised and recategorised as a noun (38).

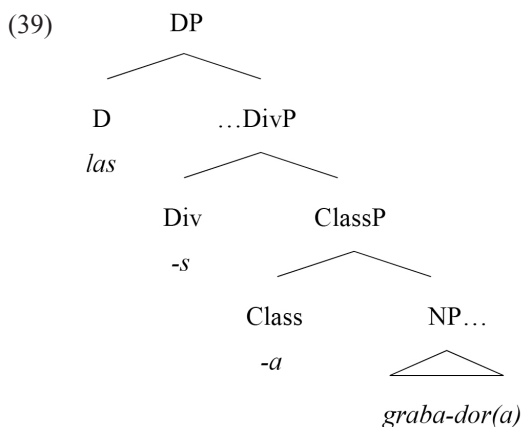


Crucially, in the following subsections we will argue that the (non-)belonging to a group reading and the non-prototypicality reading emerge from the interaction of negation with non-verbal projections, specifically with those above the NP, which are common to the configuration of different types of morphosyntactic nouns.

From a semantic point of view, linguists such as Baker (2003) hold that only nouns possess a *criterion of identity* (cf. Geach 1962; Gupta 1980; Larson & Segal 1995). Thanks to this criterion, they work as “standards of sameness” (Baker 2003: 95). Through it, speakers can determine which elements fall under a given concept, as well as set the standards to judge whether two distinct items are the same (Baker 2003: 101). Additionally, as this author claims, nouns allow speakers to establish

referential relations with entities from the extralinguistic world. For this, the item used by the speaker must always refer to the same entity, and it is precisely the criterion of identity that makes this possible.

As we have pointed out, once N has taken the VP as a complement, the verbal structure is nominalized. Thus, a noun, i.e. a category which bears the criterion of identity, is obtained. Then, the functional projections are assembled. The functional structure of nouns we now introduce draws essentially on Borer's (2005) and Picallo's (2008) works. We illustrate this with the example *las grabadoras* 'the recorders' (39).



Following Picallo (2008), once the NP has been projected, Classifier (Class) is merged. According to this linguist, this functional projection is obligatory within the nominal structure. It hosts the distinctive nominal features, i.e. the information related to the expression of gender, case inflection..., and it is lexicalised by the noun mark (*-a*, *-e*, *-o*). After Class, Divisor (Div) is projected. This node corresponds to the one Borer (2005: ch. 4) names as Classifier. However, we follow authors such as Fábregas (2016: 394-395, §IV.4.3) and use the term Divisor to avoid the confusion between this projection and the one in charge of introducing the noun mark in Picallo's (2008) account. As Borer (2005: ch. 4) explains, DivP is responsible for providing the division function and, thus, for the interpretation of the noun obtained as countable.¹¹ At the Class level the properties expressed by the noun predicate from a homogeneous set of entities. Div takes the nominal structure and acts as a divisor, namely, it adds a property to the noun through which it now predicates from a set of entities bounded as individuals. In a nutshell, thanks to DivP we move from a homogeneous set to a set of individualised entities. According to Borer (2005: 95-96), Div hosts the plural affix (39).

Therefore, at the NP level the property of individuals is described homogeneously. The merge of Div entails the instantiation of this property in a class of

11. In absence of this node, the structure will be interpreted as a mass nominal.

individualised and delimited entities. In the following subsections, we explain how the readings that are available with participant deverbal nominalisations arise from the interaction of negation with these nodes.

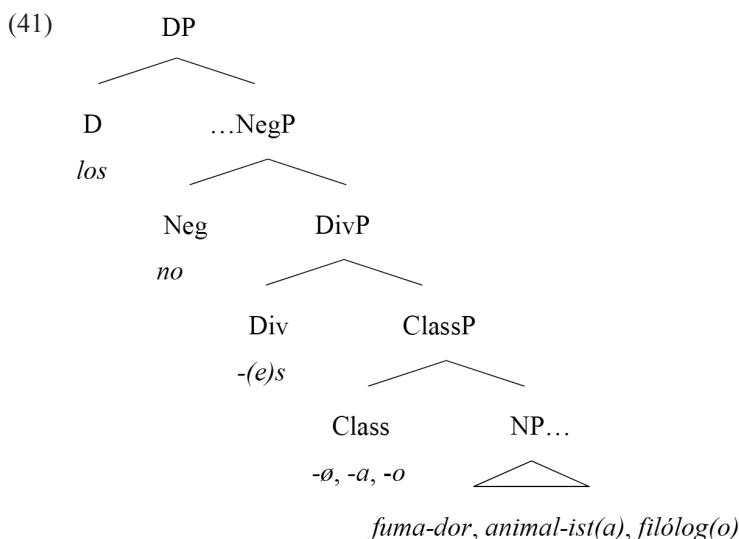
5.2. *A syntactic analysis for the (non-)belonging to a group reading*

In section 4, it was brought to light how the (non-)belonging to a group reading arises with participant deverbal nominalisations (40a), but also with other types of morphosyntactic nominals such as those derived from nouns (40b) and underived nouns (40c). Therefore, given these results, a verbal base is not required to obtain this interpretation.

- (40) a. Los no fumadores han protestado ante la nueva ley.
 the NEG smokers have protested before the new law
 ‘Non-smokers have protested against the new law.’
- b. Los no animalistas han bloqueado la última ley de
 the NEG animal.rights.activists have blocked the last law of
 protección animal.
 protection animal
 ‘Non-animal rights activists have blocked the latest animal protection law.’
- c. Transcribir un manuscrito es una labor compleja para los no
 to.transcribe a manuscript is a task hard for the NEG
 filólogos.
 philologists
 ‘To transcribe a manuscript is a hard task for non-philologists.’

For these cases, we argued that the presence of negation is related to the possibility of establishing two opposed sets. More specifically, with participant deverbal nominalisations (40a), co-occurrence with *no* is linked to the existence of a group of individuals that takes part in the eventuality denoted by the verbal base, and another group made up by those individuals who do not participate in it. As for denominal nominalisations (40b) or underived nouns (40c), this division is established between the group of entities that possesses the set of properties denoted by the noun and the one which does not.

From a syntactic point of view, the fact that this interpretation emerges with nominals that have different morphosyntactic configurations supports the idea that negation does not target verbal projections. If negation were merged with nodes located within the VP area, the availability of this reading with nominals lacking verbal projections would remain unexplained. Thus, we propose that the (non-) belonging to a group reading is obtained when negation interacts with nominal projections common to the different morphosyntactic types. Specifically, we claim that in these cases Neg is merged with DivP, that is, with the projection that takes the homogeneous set of entities defined by NP dividing it into a set of individualised and delimited entities (41).



This proposal is related to the one made by De Clercq (2020a). This linguist addresses the interpretation obtained with denominal adjectives like *professional* when *non-* is attached to them, concluding that *non-professional* denotes a group of entities defined as the opposed set made up by those entities that are professional. De Clercq (2020a: 49) syntactically implements this idea, proposing that this reading arises from the merge of negation with a ClassP of the Borer (2005) type—acting as a divisor and equivalent to DivP—, which is projected within the structure of these adjectives as well. Thus, the presence of *non-* entails the division of the countable set of entities defined as professional into two groups: P and non-P, the latter being the direct opposite of the former (De Clercq 2020a: §3.3.3, §3.5).

In line with De Clercq's (2020a) account, when Neg is merged with DivP in the case of nouns, the set of bounded entities defined by this projection is divided into two sets: one comprising the entities that participate in the eventuality or possess the set of properties defined by NP, and the other being its direct opposite. Thus, for instance, for *no fumador(es)* 'non-smokers', when negation is merged with DivP, the set of bounded and delimited entities defined by *fumador(es)* 'non-smokers' at the DivP level is now divided into two sets: the one that consists in those individuals who smoke, and the one made up by those who do not, so that entities that belong to one set are excluded from the other.

5.3. A syntactic analysis for the non-prototypicality reading

Similar to what happens with the (non-)belonging to a group reading, in section 4 it was shown how the non-prototypicality interpretation arises not only with participant deverbal nominalisations (42a,b), but also with other types of nominals

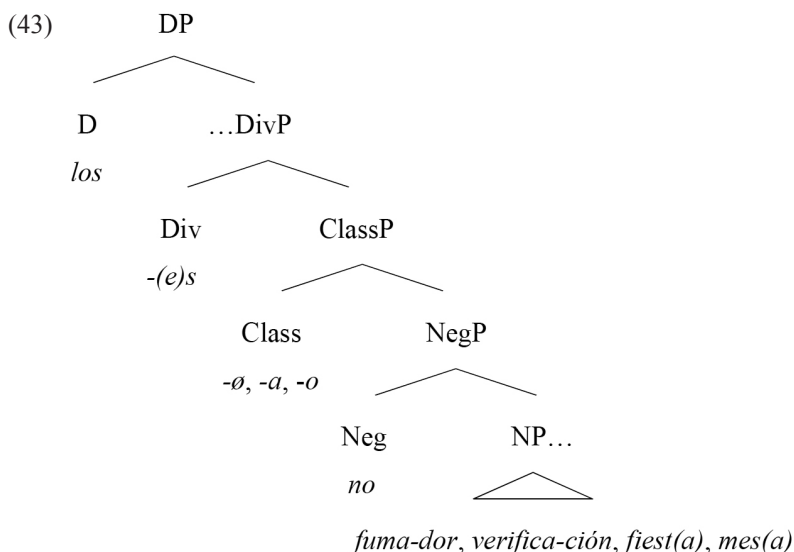
such as eventive deverbal nominalisations (42c), denominal nominalisations (42d), simple derived nouns (42e) or underived nouns (42f).

- (42) a. Esto es una no traducción de *Hamlet*: está plagada de calcos
 this is a NEG translation of *Hamlet* it.is riddled.with of calques
 del inglés al español.
 of.the English to.the Spanish
 ‘This is a non-translation of *Hamlet*: it is riddled with English-to-Spanish calques.’
- b. Por mucho que lo intente, Luis es un no fumador: no sabe
 for much that it tries Luis is a NEG smoker NEG knows
 ni coger el cigarro.
 not.even to.hold the cigarette
 ‘No matter how hard he tries, Luis is a non-smoker: he does not even know how to hold the cigarette.’
- c. La verificación de los datos por parte de ese científico es una
 the verification of the data by part of that scientist is a
 no verificación: carece de rigor.
 NEG verification lacks of rigour
 ‘The verification of the data by that scientist is a non-verification: it lacks rigour.’
- d. Esto es un no florero: no tiene espacio para colocar bien
 this is a NEG vase NEG it.has space for to.place well
 las flores.
 the flowers
 ‘This is a non-vase: there is not enough space to arrange the flowers.’
- e. Lo del otro día fue una no fiesta: la música apenas
 it of.the other day was a NEG party the music barely
 se oía, la gente estaba sentada...
 SE listened the people were sat
 ‘What we had the other day was a non-party: the music was barely audible, everyone was just seated...’
- f. Por mucho que digan los diseñadores de hoy en día, esto de
 for much that say the designers of today in day this of
 aquí es una no silla: no tiene un buen respaldo ni es cómoda.
 here is a NEG chair NEG has a good backrest nor is comfortable
 ‘No matter what today’s designers say, this is a non-chair: it has no proper backrest and it is not comfortable.’

Again, the fact that this interpretation is available with nouns of different morphosyntactic kinds provides evidence that this reading does not arise when negation is merged in the verbal domain. If this were the case, we would not be able to

explain why non-deverbal nominals also give rise to this reading when preceded by *no*.

We claim that the non-prototypicality reading results from the interaction of negation with projections within the structure of nouns, regardless of their morphosyntactic configuration. Specifically, we propose that negation is merged with NP in these cases (43).



The merge of negation with NP triggers its interaction with the criterion of identity. As explained in §5.1, this criterion allows speakers to determine which entities a certain concept can be applied to and to set the standards for deciding whether two entities are the same (Baker 2003). When negation interacts with this criterion, the entity, although a member of the class denoted by N, is evaluated by the speaker as a bad example of the set of elements to which the series of properties denoted by the noun applies. The entity is evaluated as an item that fails to meet the standards. In other words, the scope negation has over the NP entails that the properties the entity displays do not align with those of the corresponding prototypical entity. Thus, in a sequence such as *Su traducción o, mejor dicho, su no traducción de Hamlet, porque esto que estoy leyendo no se puede llamar traducción* ‘His translation, or rather, his non-translation of *Hamlet*, because what I am reading cannot be called a translation’ the presence of negation entails that the translation is evaluated as an entity that belongs to the class of translations but does not fit the corresponding prototypical item. This is because it lacks certain properties the speakers consider standard for translations.

6. Conclusions

In this paper the compatibility of the negative particle *no* with Spanish participant deverbal nominalisations has been addressed. First, it has been shown from a set of grammatical tests that these nominals display the same grammatical behaviour regardless of the type of participant denoted. Then, it has been concluded that these nouns accept being preceded by *no*, and the interpretations that arise in this case have been described. Specifically, we have proposed that <*no* + participant deverbal nominalisation> gives rise to two interpretations: the (non-)belonging to a group reading and the non-prototypicality reading. With the former, the presence of negation entails the creation of two opposed sets of entities, N and non-N, such that the participants that belong to one set are necessarily excluded from the other set, and vice versa. With the latter reading, the participant denoted by the nominalisation is evaluated as an item that, although it still belongs to the class defined by N, lacks some of the properties considered prototypical of the members that fall into that class. Additionally, it has been argued that these interpretations are not exclusive to this type of nominals but also emerge with other types of morphosyntactic nouns.

From a syntactic point of view, we have proposed that these readings are obtained as a result of the interaction of negation with certain nominal projections common to the configuration of the different types of nouns. Specifically, the (non-)belonging to a group reading arises when negation is merged with DivP, a projection that, according to Borer (2005), divides the homogeneous set of entities the NP predicates of into a set of individualised and bounded entities. In line with De Clercq's (2020a) proposal, the interaction of Neg with this projection is responsible for defining a set of entities opposed to another one comprising those that participate in the eventuality denoted by the verbal base of the nominalisation. As for the non-prototypicality reading, it arises from the merge of negation with the NP, the projection that defines the structure as a noun. Following Baker (2003), nouns are the only category that bears a criterion of identity. This criterion allows speakers to determine which entities fall under the set of properties defined by a noun, and to establish the standards for deciding whether two entities are the same. The merge of negation with NP entails its interaction with this criterion of identity, such that the properties defined at the NP level do not align with the prototypical or standard properties assumed for the corresponding noun.

References

- Alexiadou, Artemis. 2001. *Functional structure in nominals. Nominalization and ergativity*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1075/la.42>>
- Alexiadou, Artemis. 2022. Two puzzles with agentive nominalizations. In Linnaea Stockwall et al. (eds.), *For Hagit: A celebration. QMUL Occasional Papers in Linguistics* 47, 1-22. London: Queen Mary University of London.
- Alexiadou, Artemis & Schäfer, Florian. 2010. On the syntax of episodic vs. dispositional *-er* nominals. In Artemis Alexiadou & Monika Rathert (eds.), *The syntax*

- of nominalizations across languages and frameworks*, 9-38. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110245875.9>>
- Andreou, Marios. 2017. Stereotype negation in Frame Semantics. *Glossa* 2(1): 1-30.
 <<https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.293>>
- Arkadiev, Peter. 2015. Negative events: Evidence from Lithuanian. In Peter Arkadiev et al. (eds.). *Donum semanticum: Opera linguistica et logica in honorem Barbarae Partee a discipulis amicisque Rossicis oblata*, 7-20. Moscow: LRC Publishing.
- Bach, Emmon. 1986. The algebra of events. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 9: 5-16.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00627432>>
- Baker, Mark C. 2003. *Lexical categories. Verbs, nouns and adjectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511615047>>
- Baker, Mark C. & Vinorukova, Nadya. 2009. On agent nominalizations and why they are not like event nominalizations. *Language* 85: 517-556.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.0.0144>>
- Bauer, Laurie & Lieber, Rochelle & Plag, Ingo. 2013. *The Oxford reference guide to English morphology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198747062.001.0001>>
- Bernard, Timothée & Champollion, Lucas. 2023. Negative events and compositional semantics. *Journal of Semantics* 40(4): 585-620.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/jos/ffad018>>
- Borer, Hagit. 2005. *Structuring sense. Volume 1: In name only*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199263905.001.0001>>
- Borer, Hagit. 2013. *Structuring sense. Volume 3: Taking form*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199263936.001.0001>>
- Cooper, Robin. 1998. Austinian propositions, Davidsonian events and perception complements. In J. Ginzburg et al. (eds.). *The Tbilisi symposium on language, logic and computation. Selected papers*, 19-34. Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- De Clercq, Karen. 2020a. *The morphosyntax of negative markers. A nanosyntactic account*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501513756>>
- De Clercq, Karen. 2020b. Types of negation. In Viviane Déprez & M. Teresa Espinal (eds.). *The Oxford handbook of negation*, 58-74. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dugas, Edwige. 2017. *Non- dans le paradigme des préfixes de négation en français : étude synchronique et diachronique*. Doctoral dissertation, Université Charles de Gaulle – Lille III.
- Esquivel, Shaila. 2021. La forma *no* como prefijo de negación. *RILEX* 5(1): 79-118.
 <<https://doi.org/10.17561/rilex.5.1.6617>>
- Ettxepare, Ricardo & Uribe-Etxebarria, Myriam. 2018. Context sensitive aspects of constituent negation. In Ángel J. Gallego & Roger Martin (eds.). *Language, syntax and the natural sciences*, 77-98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Fábregas, Antonio. 2012. Evidence for multidominance in Spanish agentive nominalizations. In Myriam Uribe-Etxebarria & Vidal Valmala (eds.). *Ways of structuring building*, 66-92. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199644933.003.0004>>
- Fábregas, Antonio. 2016. *Las nominalizaciones*. Madrid: Visor Libros.
- Fábregas, Antonio & González Rodríguez, Raquel. 2020. On inhibited eventualities. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 38(3): 729-773.
<<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11049-019-09461-y>>
- Garachana, Mar & Hilferty, Joseph. 2011. Semàntica. In Salvador Climent & Jaume Mateu (coords.). *Gramàtica y cognició. Una aproximació cognitiva a l'anàlisi lingüística*, 51-96. Barcelona: Editorial UOC.
- Geach, Peter T. 1962. *Reference and generality*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Gibet Sotelo, Elisabeth. 2017. *Source and negative prefixes. On the syntax-lexicon interface and the encoding of spatial relations*. Doctoral dissertation, Universitat de Girona.
- González Rodríguez, Raquel. 2009. *La expresión de la afirmación y la negación*. Madrid: Arco/Libros.
- Gupta, Anil. 1980. *The logic of common nouns. An investigation in quantified modal logic*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hamawand, Zeiki. 2009. *The semantics of English negative prefixes*. London: Equinox.
- Higginbotham, James. 1983. The logic of perceptual reports. An extensional alternative to situation semantics. *Journal of Philosophy* 80(2): 100-127.
<<https://doi.org/10.2307/2026237>>
- Higginbotham, James. 2000. On events in linguistic semantics. In James Higginbotham et al. (eds.). *Speaking of events*, 49-79. New York: Oxford University Press.
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195128079.003.0002>>
- Horn, Laurence E. 1989. *A natural history of negation*. Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- Horn, Laurence E. 2005. An un- paper for the unsyntactian. In Salikoko S. Mufwene et al. (eds.). *Polymorphous linguistics: Jim McCawley's legacy*, 329-365. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Jespersen, Otto. 1917. *Negation in English and other languages*. Copenhagen: A. F. Høst & Søn.
- Klima, Edward. 1964. Negation in English. In Jerry A. Fodor & Jerrold Katz (eds.). *The structure of language*, 246-323. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Laca, Brenda. 1986. *Die Wortbildung als Grammatik des Wortschatzes. Untersuchungen zur spanischen Subjektbominalisierung*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Laca, Brenda. 1993. Las nominalizaciones orientadas y los derivados españoles en -dor y -nte". In Soledad Varela (ed.). *La formación de palabras*, 180-203. Madrid: Taurus.
- Laka, Itziar. 1990. *Negation in syntax. On the nature of functional categories and projections*. Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Lakoff, George. 1987. *Women, fire and dangerous things. What categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
<<https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226471013.001.0001>>
- Lang, Mervyn F. 1990. *Formación de palabras en español. Morfología derivativa productiva en el léxico moderno*. Madrid: Cátedra.

- Larson, Richard & Gabriel Segal. 1995. *Knowledge of meaning. An introduction to semantic theory*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
 <<https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/4076.001.0001>>
- Lieber, Rochelle. 2004. *Morphology and lexical semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lieber, Rochelle & Andreou, Marios. 2018. Aspect and modality in the interpretation of deverbal *-er* nominals in English. *Morphology* 28: 187-217.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11525-018-9321-7>>
- Lyons, John. 1977. *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marvin, Tatjana. 2016. On agentive and instrumental deverbal nominalizations in Slovenian. *Jezikoslovje* 17: 321-337.
- McIntyre, Andrew. 2014. Constraining argument structure in nominalizations. The case of English *-er*. *Lingua* 141: 121-138.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2014.02.005>>
- Meinschäfer, Judith. 2024. Semantic and distributional patterns of Spanish negation with nouns and adjectives: A Lexical-Realizational Functional Grammar approach. *Glossa* 9(1): 1-41.
 <<https://doi.org/10.16995/glossa.16315>>
- Picallo, Carme. 1991. Nominals and nominalizations in Catalan. *Probus* 3(3): 279-316.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1515/prbs.1991.3.3.279>>
- Picallo, Carme. 2008. Gender and number in Romance. *Lingua e Linguaggio* 7: 47-66.
- Pollock, Jean-Yves. 1989. Verb movement, Universal Grammar, and the structure of IP. *Linguistic Inquiry* 28: 365-424.
- Przepiórkowski, Adam. 1999. On negative eventualities, negative concord and negative *yes/no* questions. In Tanya Matthews & Devon Strolovitch (eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory 9*, 237-254. Ithaca: CLC Publications.
 <<https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v9i0.2828>>
- RAE-ASALE. 2025. *Nueva gramática de la lengua española*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe.
- Resnik, Gabriela. 2011. *Los nombres eventivos no deverbales en español*. Doctoral dissertation, Universitat Pompeu Fabra.
- Rosch, Eleanor. 1978. Principles of categorization. In Eleanor Rosch & Barbara B. Lloyd (eds.), *Cognition and categorization*, 27-48. Hillsdale, Lawrence Erlbaum.
 <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032633275-4>>
- Roy, Isabelle & Elena Soare. 2014. On the internal event properties of *-er* nominals. *Lingua* 141: 139-156.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2013.11.006>>
- Roy, Isabelle & Soare, Elena. 2020. Agent and other function nominals in a neoconstructionist approach to nominalizations. In Artemis Alexiadou & Hagit Borer (eds.), *Nominalization. 50 years on from Chomsky's Remarks*, 309-335. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198865544.003.0013>>
- Sánchez López, Cristina. 1999. La negación. In Ignacio Bosque & Violeta Demonte (dirs.), *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*, 2561-2634. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe.
- Seco, Manuel. 1964. *Diccionario de dudas y dificultades de la lengua española*. Madrid: Aguilar.

- Stockwell, Robert P., Schachter, Paul & Partee, Barbara H. 1973. *The major syntactic structures of English*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Zanuttini, Raffaella. 1997. *Negation and clausal structure. A comparative study of Romance languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195080544.001.0001>>
- Zeijlstra, Hedde. 2007. Negation in natural language. On the form and meaning of negative elements. *Language and Linguistic Compass* 1(5): 498-518.
<<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2007.00027.x>>