

A typology of evaluative nouns*

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Abstract Evaluative nouns (ENs, *idiota* ‘idiot’, *matasanos* ‘quack’) do not only assign a property, but also express a value judgment. A degree analysis (Bolinger 1972, Matushansky 2002, Morzycki 2009) encounters some problems, such as the controversial status of nominal gradability and the relation between gradability and value judgment. By focusing on Spanish data, this study shows that the defining element for ENs is an expressive component of meaning and that these nouns may vary on their gradability and the target of their expressive meaning. Based on this, a typology of ENs is established. In doing so, this paper contributes to the understanding of evaluativity and the connection between gradability and subjectivity in the nominal domain.

Keywords: evaluative nouns, nominal gradability, expressive meaning, subjectivity.

1. Introduction

Nouns like *idiota* ‘idiot’ or *matasanos* ‘quack’ are interesting because they do not only assign a property, but also express a value judgment. In (1), the neighbor is assigned the properties of being an idiot, a doctor, and a socialist, respectively. In addition, in all the cases, the speaker is conveying a negative attitude towards the referent by means of the evaluative noun.

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(1) *La vecina es una {idiota / matasanos / sociata}*.¹

the neighbor is a idiot quack socialist.PEJ

This paper argues that expressivity, that is, having a contribution to the expressive dimension of meaning as in Potts (2005), is the defining feature of the class of evaluative nouns (henceforth, ENs). It also shows that ENs can vary with respect to their gradability and the target of the attitude of the speaker they convey. Based on these data, I propose a typology of ENs that accounts for their heterogenic behavior in different contexts.

The class of ENs has been analyzed as either including an affective feature (Milner 1978; Suñer Gratacós 1990; Hernanz 2001; cf. Ruwet 1982) or lexicalizing a degree argument (Bolinger 1972; Matushansky 2002; Espinal 2013). However, most of the approaches focus on epithets like *idiot*. This paper, by taking into account a broader range of ENs, including those derived by affective suffixes and contextual ENs, contributes a wider perspective to the understanding of the relation between gradability and expressive meaning in the nominal domain, as well as their connection to subjectivity.

This paper is organized as follows. First, I delimit the class of ENs through a battery of tests. Then, two possible defining features for ENs are discussed

¹ The glosses used are the following: AUG = augmentative suffix; DAT = dative; DIM = diminutive suffix; DOM = direct object marker; NEG = negation; PEJ = pejorative suffix.

in §3 and §4. The former shows that not all ENs are gradable and puts forward an analysis of gradable ENs as denoting extreme degrees of properties. In §4, I argue that all ENs include an expressive component and that they vary with respect to the target of this component. The connection between evaluativity and subjectivity is discussed in §5. Finally, §6 concludes.

2. The class of evaluative nouns

Intuitively, evaluativity has to do with expressing some kind of value judgment. As a consequence, it is subjective and involves some emotional state of the speaker. Nouns that express some subjective evaluation, either inherently or in a particular context, conform with the class of ENs and have a distribution different from that of non-evaluative nouns. This section uses contexts such as qualitative nominal constructions as tests to tease apart the class of ENs.²

ENs appear in the first position of the *N₁/A of a N₂* construction (Bolinger 1972; Suñer Gratacós 1990, 1999; Doetjes and Rooryck 2003; Villalba and Bartra-Kaufmann 2010; a.o.). The nouns in (2a-d) are all acceptable as N₁, as

² The term *evaluative* is used to refer to predicates that express some sort of value judgment, as in Bierwisch 1989; Eckardt 1998; Cinque 2010; a.o. ENs have been also referred to as *degree nouns* (Bolinger 1972) or *quality nouns* (Milner 1978; Ruwet 1982).

opposed to those in (2e). Note that (2b-c) contain expressive variants (either a lexical (2b) or one derived via an affective suffix (2c)) of the nouns in (2e).

- (2) a. *la {idiota / desastre} de la vecina*
 the idiot mess of the neighbor
 ‘that {idiot / mess} of a neighbor’
- b. *la {matasanos / chupatintas} de la vecina*
 the quack pen.pusher of the neighbor
 ‘that {quack / pen pusher} of a neighbor’
- c. *la {sociata / abuelaza} de la vecina*
 the socialist.PEJ grandmother.AUG of the neighbor
 ‘that {socialist / great grandmother} of a neighbor’
- d. *la {comunista / generativista} de la vecina*
 the communist generativist of the neighbor
 ‘that {communist / generativist} of a neighbor’
- e. *#la {médica / abuela} de la vecina*
 the doctor grandmother of the neighbor

ENs also appear in attributive constructions with the indefinite article (3). In this predicative construction, traditionally known as *emphatic ‘un’* (Fernández Lagunilla 1983; Portolés 1994; di Tullio and Suñer Gratacós 2008; a.o.), the noun requires the presence of the indefinite article (3a-c). Note that some nouns (3c) are acceptable without the determiner, but in that

case, they have a descriptive, non-pejorative, meaning (this is marked by #). This behavior differs from nouns expressing a specific role in society in Spanish and other Romance languages, which appear bare (3d) (Matushansky and Spector 2005; Déprez 2005; de Swart, Winter, and Zwarts 2007; a.o.).

- (3) a. *María es *(un) {genio / desastre}.*
 María is a genius mess
 ‘María is {an idiot / a mess}.’
- b. *Es *(una) {matasanos / sociata / abuelaza}.*
 is a quack socialist.PEJ grandmother.AUG
 ‘She is a {quack / socialist / great grandmother}.’
- c. *Es #(una) {comunista / generativista}.*
 is a communist generativist
 ‘She is a {communist / generativist}.’
- d. *Es (*una) {médica / abuela}.*
 is a doctor grandmother
 ‘She is a {doctor / grandmother}.’

ENs can also be found in verbless exclamatives, where the predicative complement precedes the subject and the missing verb is interpreted as a silent copula (4a-c) (cf. (4d)) (Vinet 1991; Hernanz 2001; Munaro 2006).

- (4) a. *¡{Una idiota / Un desastre}, María!*
 a idiot a mess María
 ‘María is such {an idiot / a mess}!’
- b. *¡Una {matasanos /sociata / abuelaza}, María!*
 a quack socialist.PEJ grandmother.AUG María
 ‘María is such a {quack / socialist / great grandmother}!’
- c. *¡Una {comunista / generativista}, María!*
 a communist generativist María
 ‘María such a {communist / generativist}!’
- d. **¡Una {médica / abuela}, María!*
 a doctor grandmother María
 Int: ‘María is such a {doctor / grandmother}!’

The tests presented above isolate the class of ENs, formed by underived nouns like *idiota* ‘idiot’, *matasanos* ‘quack’ or *comunista* ‘communist’ and derived nouns like *sociata* ‘socialist.PEJ’. In the following sections, I address two possibilities to explain their particular behavior, gradability and expressivity, and argue that only the latter is present in all the members of the class.

3. Gradability of evaluative nouns

3.1 Not all ENs are gradable

It has been argued that gradability is the defining feature of ENs (Bolinger 1972; Matushansky 2002; Espinal 2013). In particular, the possibility of ENs to appear in contexts such as the *N₁ of a N₂* construction has been attributed to the presence of a degree argument in the lexical semantics of the noun (Bolinger 1972; Matushansky 2002). Although being evaluative and being gradable overlap for some nouns, in this section I show that only some ENs pass the tests for nominal gradability.

First, gradable predicates obtain degree readings with downward-entailing modifiers such as *unbelievable* and size adjectives (Morzycki 2009; de Vries 2010, 2018; Nouwen 2011; Sassoon 2013). Only ENs such as *idiota* ‘idiot’ display a degree reading with these modifiers (5), by which the individual is said to possess the property (e.g. of being an idiot) to a high degree. By contrast, the other members of the class are not interpreted in a degree sense (6) (This is marked by #). For instance, saying that María is an unbelievable or a huge quack does not mean that she is a (bad) doctor to a high degree, but rather that is, respectively, very good or amazing as a doctor or physically big. This parallels the behavior of nouns like *doctor* (7).

(5) a. *María es un(a) {idiota / desastre} increíble.*

María is a idiot mess unbelievable

‘María is an unbelievable {idiot / mess}.’

- b. *Es un(a) {idiota / desastre} enorme.*
 is a idiot mess huge
 ‘She is a huge {idiot / mess}.’
- (6) a. *#Es una {sociata / matasanos / comunista} increíble.*
 Is a socialist.PEJ quack communist unbelievable
 ‘María is an unbelievable {socialist / quack / communist}.’
- b. *#Es una {sociata / matasanos / comunista} enorme.*
 is a socialist.PEJ quack communist huge
 ‘María is a huge {quack / socialist / communist}.’
- (7) a. *#María es una {médica / abuela} increíble.*
 María is a doctor grandmother unbelievable
 ‘María is an unbelievable {doctor / grandmother}.’
- b. *#María es una {médica / abuela} enorme.*
 María is a doctor grandmother huge
 ‘María is a huge {doctor / grandmother}.’

Second, only gradable ENs are expected to combine with nominal degree modifiers such as adjectives of completeness (Masià 2017). Example (8a) shows that nouns like *idiota* are compatible with *completo* ‘complete’ and *total* ‘total’, whereas the rest of ENs are not, to various degrees (8b-c).

- (8) a. *La vecina es un(a) {completa idiota / desastre total}.*
 the neighbor is a complete idiot mess total

- b. *??Es una completa {matasanos / abuelaza}.*
 is a complete quack grandmother.AUG
- c. *?Es una completa comunista.*
 is a complete communist

A third environment that tells apart gradable and non-gradable predicates is degree interrogatives with *cómo de* ‘(lit.) how of’ in Spanish (9). Just like gradable adjectives (9a), the ENs in (9b) can occur in this kind of interrogatives. By contrast, ENs in (9c), just like objective nouns (9d), are excluded.

- (9) a. *¿Cómo de {alta / guapa / ??rusa} es María?*
 how of tall beautiful Russian is María
 ‘How {tall / beautiful / ??Russian} is María?’
- b. *¿Cómo de {idiota / desastre} es María?*
 how of idiot mess is María
 ‘How much of {an idiot / a mess} is María?’
- c. *¿Cómo de {??matasanos / ??sociata / ?comunista}*
 how of quack socialist.PEJ communist
es María?
 is María
 Lit: ‘How much of a {quack / socialist / communist} is María?’

d. ??¿Cómo de {médica / abuela} es María?

how of doctor grandmother is María

Lit. ‘How much of a {doctor / grandmother} is María?’

These tests showed that only a subset of ENs is gradable. In particular, only nouns such as *idiota* ‘idiot’ and *desastre* ‘mess’ (henceforth, *gradable ENs*) occur in degree environments, while ENs denoting professions or roles in a society do not seem to include a degree argument in their semantics. The latter may be *non-derived*, either inherently evaluative (*matasanos* ‘quack’) or acquiring their evaluation in a specific context (*comunista* ‘communist’, which, like the members of its class, has a non-evaluative reading ‘member or advocate of the Communist Party’) (henceforth, *contextual ENs*)³, or *derived ENs* (*sociata* ‘socialist.PEJ’). This section provided evidence against gradability being the defining feature of ENs. Next, I argue that the key feature is expressivity. Before, however, I address the denotation gradable ENs.

3.2 Gradable ENs denote extreme degrees of properties

This subsection explores the properties of gradable ENs by comparing them to the gradable adjectives that are allowed in the constructions presented in §2. It

³ The difference between lexical and contextual ENs has a correlate in lexical extreme adjectives (*wonderful*) and contextual extreme adjectives (*rich*) (see Morzycki 2012).

first shows that being gradable is not enough for an adjective to appear in those contexts, but it is rather extremeness what is required. Extending the observation to nouns, I argue that gradable ENs denote extreme degrees of properties.

First, it has been put forth that the first position in the qualitative nominal construction (or *N₁/A of a N₂*) must be gradable (Bolinger 1972; a.o.). However, not all gradable adjectives are allowed in this position. The Spanish examples in (10a) show that some of them are actually banned. The acceptable adjectives in (10b) include an affective, especially pejorative, meaning, in addition to their gradability (see also Constantinescu 2011).

- (10) a. ??*la {alta / delgada / vieja} de la vecina*
 the tall thin old of the neighbor
 ‘that {tall / thin / old} neighbor’
- b. *la {gorda / ingrata / estúpida} de la vecina*
 the fat ungrateful stupid of the neighbor
 ‘that {fat / ungrateful / stupid} neighbor’

Second, the same restriction applies to exclamatives. When the main predicate is an adjective, being gradable is not enough (11). Gradable adjectives such as *small* are excluded (11a). Only adjectives expressing a subjective evaluation are possible (11c) (Vinet 1991; Hernanz 2001; Munaro 2006).

- (11) a. **¡Pequeñas, las iglesias de Segovia!*
 small the churches of Segovia
 ‘Small, the churches of Segovia!’
- b. **¡Limpias, las copas!*
 clean the glasses
- c. *¡{Fantásticas / Maravillosas}, las iglesias de Segovia!*
 Awesome wonderful the churches of Segovia
 ‘{Awesome / wonderful}, the churches of Segovia!’

(examples from Hernanz 2001)

In neither construction being gradable is enough for an adjective to occur. Generalizing to nouns, this means that gradability is not the required feature to appear in evaluative environments such as verbless exclamatives. Rather, extremeness and expression of a value judgment seem to be relevant as well. Extreme adjectives encode extremeness as part of their lexical semantics (Cruse 1986; Paradis 1997, 2001; Morzycki 2012). Adjectives like *gorgeous* or *gigantic* convey a meaning close to superlatives, that is, a very high or the highest degree of a property. Extremeness is not a property exclusive of adjectives, and I argue that gradable ENs actually belong to the class of extreme degree predicates (see Morzycki 2012). Intuitively, the idea is that for someone to qualify as a genius, just some degree of intelligence is not enough, she needs to be remarkably intelligent.

There are several properties that characterize extreme degree predicates. To begin with, extreme degree predicates have their own specialized modifiers (Cruse 1986; Paradis 1997; Hernanz 2001; Morzycki 2012). As shown in (12a-b), *sencillamente* ‘simply’ does not occur with non-extreme adjectives, and regular degree modifiers are only possible with these adjectives. Gradable extreme nouns appear with adnominal extreme degree modifiers (12c).

- (12) a. *Tu falda es sencillamente {preciosa / ??bonita}.*
 your skirt is simply gorgeous pretty
 ‘Your skirt is simply {gorgeous / ??beautiful}.’
- b. *Tu falda es muy {??preciosa / bonita}.*
 your skirt is very gorgeous pretty
 ‘Your skirt is very {??gorgeous / beautiful}.’
- c. *María es un sencillo {genio / desastre}.*
 María is a simple genius mess
 ‘María is a simple {genius / mess}.’

Related to this, extreme degree predicates are not very natural in comparatives (13), with different degrees of acceptability among speakers, but are acceptable in equatives (14) (Cruse 1986; Paradis 1997; Morzycki 2012).

- (13) a. *?Tu falda es más {preciosa / gigantesca} que esa.*
 your skirt is more gorgeous gigantic than that
 '??Your skirt is more {gorgeous / gigantic} than that one.'
- b. *?María es más {genio / desastre} que Juan.*
 María is more genius mess than Juan
 'María es more of a {genius / mess} than Juan.'
- (14) a. *Tu falda es tan {preciosa / gigantesca} como esa.*
 Your skirt is as gorgeous gigantic as that
 'Your skirt is as {gorgeous / gigantic} as that one.'
- b. *María es tan {genio / desastre} como Juan.*
 María is as genius mess as Juan
 'María is as much of a {genius / mess} as Juan.'

In addition, extreme degree predicates, including gradable ENs, can be intensified via prosodic prominence (15) (Cruse 1986; Bolinger 1972; Morzycki 2012), but not non-degree nouns such as *doctor* (15b).

- (15) a. *Kevin Spacey is {fantaaastic / ??good}!* (Morzycki 2012)
- b. *La vecina es {una idioooota / ??méeeedica}.*
 the neighbor is a idiot doctor

Finally, extreme degree predicates license monotonicity inferences. For instance, if something is gorgeous, it is necessarily pretty, *pretty* being the

weaker form of *gorgeous*. Likewise, if someone is a genius, she is necessarily smart. This shows that extreme degree predicates use the same scale as their neutral counterpart, and just a different set of degrees from that scale.

To sum up, gradable ENs such as *idiota* ‘idiot’ belong to the class of extreme degree predicates. This means that the degrees they use are extreme or, in other words, are at the higher end of the scale they lexicalize (see Masià 2017, 2018 for a formal implementation). I now turn to expressivity.

4. The expressive component of evaluative nouns

4.1 All evaluative nouns include an expressive component

Being evaluative, that is, expressing a value judgment is related to having an expressive component, in the sense of Potts (2005); McCready (2010); Gutzmann (2013); a.o. Expressive meaning is not truth-conditional and can be found across all levels of language. Common examples of expressive items are expressions such as *damn*, which manifest an emotional attitude with a high level of affectedness and have no truth-conditional contribution. For instance, the meaning of (16) includes an expressive component, namely communicating that the speaker has a negative emotional involvement in the situation, which is contributed by *damn*.

(16) *I hear your damn dog barking.* (Potts 2005:18)

In addition to pure expressives like *damn*, there are mixed expressives. That is, expressions that have both a descriptive and an expressive contribution (Frege 1897; McCready 2010; Gutzmann 2013). For instance, a term like *cur* has a truth-conditional denotation (‘dog’) and, besides, it contributes a negative attitude from the speaker towards the individual being described (compare (17) to (16)).

(17) *This cur howled the whole night.* (Gutzmann 2013:6)

In this section I apply several of Potts’s (2005, 2007) tests to ENs and argue that all ENs have an expressive component of meaning that is dependent on their descriptive content. That is, that ENs are mixed expressives. The picture that arises is illustrated in (18). This picture reframes the idea in Milner 1978; Suñer Gratacós 1990; Hernanz 2001; a.o., that ENs include an affective feature into a multidimensional semantics. The difference between the expressive component of (18a) and (18b) is explored in §4.2.

(18) a. *La vecina es una idiota.*
‘The neighbor is an idiot’
DESC: The neighbor is dumb to an extreme degree.

EXPR: Speaker holds a negative attitude towards her.

- b. *La vecina es una matasanos.*

‘The neighbor is a quack’

DESC: The neighbor is a doctor.

EXPR: Speaker holds a negative attitude towards doctors.

Expressive content conforms a dimension of meaning different from descriptive content and thus displays a series of characteristics that sets it apart (Potts 2007; Gutzmann 2013). A first property of expressive content is its non-displaceability. That is, expressives say something about the utterance situation and, as such, cannot be used to report on past events or attitudes, or express possibilities (Potts 2007). This is manifested in their impossibility to be embedded under some semantic operators such as negation. ENs behave accordingly. The examples in (19) are odd out of the blue, and have a strong echo reading (Milner 1978; Hernanz 2001). The speaker seems to disagree with a previous utterance in which the property of being an idiot, a quack, and so on, has been assigned to the referent.

- (19) a. *María no es una {idiota / comunista}.*

María NEG is a idiot communist

‘María is not {an idiot / a communist}.’

- b. *María no es una {matasanos / sociata}.*

María NEG is a quack socialist.PEJ

‘María is not a {quack / socialist}.

The projection through negation is also manifested in dialog (Jayez and Rossari 2004; Gutzmann 2013). The dialogs in (20) show that the emotional state of the speaker conveyed by an EN cannot be negated. For instance, it is only possible to negate the descriptive meaning of *matasanos* (20b), that is, ‘doctor’, but not the negative attitude towards people from this profession.

- (20) a. A: *La vecina es una idiota.*
‘The neighbor is an idiot.’
B1: #*No, la vecina te cae bien.*
‘No, you like her.’
B2: *No, en realidad (solo) es un desastre.*
‘No, she’s actually (just) a mess.’
- b. A: *La vecina es una {matasanos / sociata}.*
‘The neighbor is a {quack / socialist}.’
B1: #*No, te gustan los {médicos / socialistas}.*
‘No, you like {doctors / socialists}.’
B2: *No, es periodista.*
‘No, she’s a journalist.’

Another instance of non-displaceability is the fact that the expressive content of these expressions cannot be shifted to a nonactual context by

attitude reporting verbs (21) or modal operators (22) (Cruse 1986; Potts 2007; Gutzmann 2013). For example, in (21a), the expressive content of *idiota* is ascribed to the speaker and cannot be shifted to the subject (Inma), so it is contradictory for the speaker to add afterwards that, contrary to what Inma feels, she actually likes the neighbor.

- (21) a. *Inma cree que la idiota de la vecina se ha dejado la puerta abierta otra vez. #A mí me cae bien.*

 DAT.1SG falls well

 ‘Inma thinks that that idiot of the neighbor has left the door open again. #I like her.’

- b. *Inma cree que la vecina es una {matasanos / sociata}. #Amí me gustan los {médicos / socialista}. #Amí me gustan los {médicos / socialistas}.*

 socialists

 ‘Inma thinks that the neighbor is a {quack / socialist}. #I like {doctors / socialists}.’

- (22) a. *??Quizás la vecina es una {idiota / comunista}.*

maybe the neighbor is a idiot communist

‘The neighbor may be {an idiot / a communist}.’

b. ??*Quizás la vecina es una {matasanos/ sociata}*.

maybe the neighbor is a quack socialist.PEJ

‘The neighbor may be a {quack / socialist}.’

Third, expressives are close to performatives in their immediacy. In particular, expressives achieve their intended act simply by being uttered (Potts 2007). The expressive component of ENs also performs a change in the actual context that cannot be taken back (23).

(23) a. *La vecina fue una idiota anoche (#Pero no*

the neighbor was a idiot last.night but NEG

he expresado ninguna actitud negativa hacia

have.1SG expressed any attitude negative towards

ella ahora).

her now

‘The neighbor was an idiot last night. (#But I haven’t

expressed any negative attitude towards her now.)

b. *Conocí a un matasanos en la fiesta. (#Pero ahora*

met.1SG DOM a quack in the party but now

me gustan los médicos).

dat.1SG like the doctors

‘I met a quack at the party. (#But I like doctors now).’

To sum up, the tests above show that all ENs include an expressive component. In particular, all of them express a positive or negative attitude from the speaker that belongs to the non-truth-conditional dimension of meaning, in addition to their descriptive meaning. The next section explores the differences between the expressive component of the subclasses of ENs.

4.2 *ENs differ with respect to the target of the expressive component*

Although all ENs express an attitude of the speaker, they may differ with respect to the target of this attitude. There seem to be two possibilities: The positive or negative attitude may be directed towards a particular individual or towards a group of individuals (McCready 2010). In this section I show that the different subclasses of ENs differ across this criterion.

Gradable ENs like *idiota* ‘idiot’ include an expressive component consisting in an attitude towards the referent of the noun. For instance, if the speaker says (24a), she is expressing a negative emotion towards the neighbor, but she is not conveying any attitude towards the class of idiots. Note that there is a contradiction in asserting that the speaker likes the individual being described as an idiot (24b) (the effect is stronger for other pejoratives, the reader may substitute *idiot* for any other). In this sense, they are close to other *colored* nouns like *cur* (Frege 1897; Horn 2007; McCready 2010).

- (24) a. *La vecina es una idiota.*
 the neighbor is an idiot
- b. *#Me cae bien la idiota de la vecina.*
 DAT.1SG falls well the idiot of the neighbor
 ‘I like that idiot of a neighbor.’

Nouns like *matasanos* ‘quack’, and also ethnic slurs (Williamson 2009; McCready 2010; a.m.o.), do not convey a negative attitude towards the particular individual directly. Rather, they display an attitude towards a whole group of individuals characterized by the property in the descriptive dimension of the noun. For instance, in (25a), the speaker is not directly expressing a negative attitude towards the neighbor, but to doctors. The meaning that the speaker does not like the neighbor comes from the inference that, by virtue of being a member of the group of doctors, the neighbor is bad. However, this inference can be cancelled (25b), cf. (20b).

- (25) a. *La vecina es una matasanos.*
 the neighbor is a quack
- b. *Me cae bien la matasanos de la vecina.*
 DAT.1SG falls well the quack of the neighbor
 ‘I like that quack of a neighbor.’

Derived ENs show a mixed behavior depending on the derivative suffix. For instance, nouns derived by the affective suffix *-azo*, *-ucho*, or *-ito* convey an attitude toward the individual that is the referent of the noun (26a). By contrast, in nouns derived by *-ata* or *-ute* (also maybe *-tingo* and *-ales*, as in *viejales* lit. ‘old.PEJ’), the target of the attitude is the class of individuals denoted by the noun, to which the referent belongs (26b). A minimal pair is provided in (27), where there is a contradiction in asserting that the speaker considers herself a socialist (and thus has a positive attitude towards this ideology) and referring to someone as *sociata* (which conveys a negative attitude towards socialists) (27a), but not as *socialucho* (which conveys a negative attitude towards the specific referent) (27b).

(26) a. *abuelaza; medicucho; pajarito*
 grandmother.AUG doctor.PEJ bird.DIM

b. *sociata; franchute; señoritingo*
 socialist.PEJ French.PEJ lord.PEJ

(27) a. *Me considero socialista, pero ese es un socialucho.*
 ACC.1SG consider socialist but that is a socialist.PEJ
 ‘I consider myself a socialist, but that guy is a bad socialist.’

b. *??Me considero socialista, pero ese es un sociata.*
 ACC.1SG consider socialist but that is a socialist.PEJ

‘I consider myself a socialist, but that guy is a damn socialist.’

Finally, contextual ENs like *comunista* ‘communist’ seem to have their expressive component directed towards the class, although the data is not as clear-cut. There is a slight contradiction in asserting that I like the neighbor and, at the same time, referring to her as a communist (in the evaluative sense, the only possible in the *N of a N* construction) (28). However, it seems that the reason of the negative attitude of the speaker lies in the properties associated with the class of communists that the neighbor displays.

- (28) ?#Me cae bien la comunista de la vecina.
DAT.1SG falls well the communist of the neighbor
‘I like that communist of a neighbor.’

This subsection has shown that the expressive component of ENs may differ with respect to its target. In the case of gradable and some derived ENs, the attitude of the speaker is directed toward the individual being described, whereas non-gradable underived ENs like *matasanos* ‘quack’ and contextual ENs convey an attitude toward the class of individuals the referent of the noun is a member of. Next section discusses subjectivity and evaluativity in the domain of nouns.

5. Subjectivity

Subjective predicates are those for which their truth is relativized to the perspective of a judge (Lasersohn 2005; Stephenson 2007; Stojanovic 2007; Bylinina 2014; Kennedy 2016). For instance, a sentence like *Broccoli is tasty* may be true for one speaker, but not for another one, and they can both be right at the same time.

Subjectivity is related to evaluativity, but cannot be conflated with it. In particular, subjective predicates are perspective dependent, but do not necessarily include an expressive component (cf. Gutzmann 2016). In this section, I show that there is a correlation between having the expressive component directed towards the particular individual and being subjective.

Subjective predicates can be embedded under subjective predicate verbs such as English *find* (Stephenson 2007; Sæbø 2009; Bouchard 2012) or Spanish *parecer* ‘seem’ with a dative complement (29a). Gradable and some derived ENs pass these tests for subjectivity, while non-gradable non-derived, some derived and contextual ENs do not (29b).

- (29) a. *I find broccoli {tasty / ??green}.*
- b. *La vecina me parece una {idiota / ??matasanos /*
the neighbor DAT.1sg seems a idiot quack

??sociata / abuelaza / #comunista}.

socialist.PEJ grandmother.AUG communist

‘I find the neighbor a(n) {idiot / quack / socialist / great grandmother / communist}.’

The second diagnostic for subjectivity is the absence of contradiction when denying a subjective predicate. Instead, they give rise to faultless disagreement (Kölbel 2002; Lasersohn 2005; Stephenson 2007; a.o.). In (30), speaker B is not contradicting speaker A, and both can actually be right at the same time. Although it is hard to pin down what is being denied with expressive items, the same seems to happen with gradable and derived ENs in (31). For instance, María may be a great grandmother for A but an awful one for B. However, with non-gradable non-derived, some derived and contextual ENs the opposite is true (32). It appears that in denying that María is a quack, B is contradicting an objective fact (whether she is a doctor or not).

(30) a. *Broccoli is tasty.*

b. *No, it's not.* FAULTLESS DISAGREEMENT

(31) a. *María es una {idiota / abuelaza}.*

‘María is a(n) {idiot / great grandmother}.’

b. *No, no lo es.*

‘No, she's not.’ FAULTLESS DISAGREEMENT

- (32) a. *María es una {matasanos / sociata / comunista}.*
 ‘María is a {quack / socialist / communist}.’
- b. *No, no lo es. (Es {periodista / liberal})*
 ‘No, she’s not. She’s a {journalist / liberal}.’

CONTRADICTION

In sum, at least in the nominal domain, being evaluative does not seem to correlate with being subjective. The tests in this section have shown that subjectivity is linked to the target of the attitude of the speaker displayed by ENs. In particular, subjectivity arises when this attitude is directed towards the specific individual that is the referent of the noun, and not towards the whole class the individual belongs to. As such, only gradable ENs and some derived ENs are subjective.

6. Conclusion

This paper has argued that all ENs have an expressive component. Variability comes from gradability and towards whom the speaker’s attitude is directed. Taking these two parameters and their derivative nature, a typology of ENs can be established. Gradable ENs such as *idiota* ‘idiot’ denote extreme degrees of properties and convey an attitude towards the individual. Non-gradable ENs denote properties of individuals and can be

divided into non-derived ENs (*matasanos* ‘quack’), derived ENs (*sociata* lit. socialist.PEJ), and contextual ENs (*comunista* ‘communist’). The target of the expressive component of the former is the class of individuals the referent belongs to. By contrast, derived ENs, which are formed by an affective suffix, may convey an attitude both towards the individual and the class. Finally, contextual ENs, which receive their evaluative meaning in specific contexts, seem to direct their expressive component towards the class of individuals. Table 1 summarizes the typology of evaluative nouns proposed. Only those ENs that have the class of individuals as the target of their expressive component appear to be subjective.

Taking a wide range of ENs into consideration, it has been argued that evaluativity does not correlate with gradability (cf. Bolinger 1972; Matushansky 2002; a.o.) and that subjectivity in ENs seems to be dependent on the target of the expressive component regardless of gradability. In doing so, this paper contributes to the understanding of scalarity and subjectivity in the nominal domain. However, evaluativity in the NP is still not fully understood. Exploring other instances, such as modification by evaluative adjectives, which qualify objective nouns to appear in evaluative contexts (*¡Una médica ??(estupenda), María!* ‘María is such a (great) doctor!’) (see, e.g., Suñer Gratacós 1990, 1999), would shed light in this direction, as well as in the understanding of the similarities between nouns and adjectives.

Table 1. Typology of evaluative nouns

| type | at issue | expressive | subjective | example |
|-------------|------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| gradable | x is P to an extreme d | pos / neg attitude towards x | yes | <i>idiota</i> <i>desastre</i> |
| non-derived | x is P | pos / neg attitude towards the class of x | no | <i>matasanos</i> <i>chupatintas</i> |
| derived | x is P | pos / neg attitude towards (the class of) x | <i>depends on the suffix</i> | <i>sociata</i> <i>abuelaza</i> |
| contextual | x is P | pos / neg attitude towards the class of x | no | <i>comunista</i> <i>generativista</i> |

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