Null exclamative Nominalizers in "Quality" deadjectival Nominalizations (Romance)

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1. Data. Romance exc(lamative)s like (1a) ((Sp)anish), (1b) (French; see [6]) or (1c) (Italian) must exhibit the sort of constituents listed/described in (2) (the linear order is mandatory):

(1) a. Esas   casas   son **de un   feo *(increíble)**.
        those houses are of a   ugly amazing   'Those houses are amazingly ugly.'

   b. Les   dialogues sont **d'un vulgaire *(incroyable)**.
        the   dialogues are of a vulgar   amazing 'The dialogues are amazingly vulgar.'

   c. Sono   **di un carino   *(incredibile).**
        they.are of a   beautiful   amazing   'They are amazingly handsome.'

(2)   a P (*de*) + a [-def(inite)][-fem] article *un* + an A (A1: *feo/vulgaire*) with "extreme" degree + a [+exc] A (A2: *increíble*) as the predicate of A1 ([7] shows Advs derived from such A2s, the "remarkably" Advs, are exclamative -"widening-of-a-scale" in Zanuttini&Portner 2001-, forcing an extreme degree for the As they modify)

(3) shows that non-exc A2s are ruled out: (3)*Esas casas son de un feo **relativo** ('relatively'). This construction, almost all but ignored in the Literature, poses several interesting puzzles:

A) A1 in (1a) (I illustrate with Sp) shows *[-fem][-pl]* agreement, but its DP subject *esas casas* is [+fem][+pl], an impossible mismatch ((4); see [6] for such mismatches in French):

(4)   Es-**a-s** casas-**s** son fe-**a-s**/***o**   'Those-fem-pl houses are ugly-fem-pl/masc.sg'

B) A2 modifies A1 yet Sp As cannot modify As ((5)):   (5) *Esas casas son **feas increíble(s)**.

C) *un* can only introduce As referred to humans ((6)), but (1a) does not involve humans:

(6)   Compré un *(coche) feo.   I.bought a car ugly   'I bought an ugly car.'

2. Proposal. PART I: *Un feo* in (1a) is a DP (DP2) predicating a property of its subject *esas casas* (DP1). It is a quality deadjectival nominalization resulting from the insertion of a null nominalizer ("R") meaning "quality" in D2 ((7)) as I assume the proposal by [1] for deadjectival nominals and [5] for infinitive ones according to which D (no only n) may be the locus for nominalization. As *un feo* is a nominal predicate, it is headed by a [-def] article *un*, which is [-fem] as R in D2 is [-fem]. R is not [-gender] ([8]'s reinterpretation of the non-existent "neuter" in Sp) as [8] shows that Sp [-gender] implies [-num], and D2 in (8) is [-pl]: A2 shows *[+pl] -s* in (8) as its goal is a coordination of two [-pl] DP2s (so the goal is [+pl] by "set union"; Link 1983); it shows *[-fem]* inflectional *-o* as D2 is *[-fem]*. As usual, a DegP provides the degree argument for the AP in (7); as there is no n, A1 *feo* may spuriously be inflected as *feísimo* 'extremelyy ugly' (same meaning as in (1a)), where *-ísimo* is in Deg ((7)).

(7) [$_{DP2}$ D2: **un**+**R** [$_{DegP}$ Deg: (-**ísimo**) [AP: *feo*]]]

(8)   [Matt Damon.]...me resulta de un soso y un descafeinado tremend-**o-s**,
                to.me results of a bland and a decaffeinated tremendous-masc-pl
    'I find MD incredibly bland & decaffeinated.'
    https://www.nosolohd.com/xf/threads/saga-bourne.8311/   (May/20/2025)

Fealdad 'ugliness', an N derived from *feo* by a [+fem] affix *-dad* meaning "quality" may replace *feo* in (1a) (same meaning); here, *-dad* is inserted in n; the article is [+fem] *una* ((9)) (I assume [4]'s proposal according to which a DegP is located between nP and AP here).

(9) Esas casas son de [$_{DP2}$ D2: [+fem] **una** [$_{nP}$ n: [+fem]-**dad** [$_{DegP}$ Deg [AP: *feal-*]]]] increíble.

PART II: An extreme degree. As shown in (10) for (1a), Spec-D2 hosts an anaphoric Op$_i$ binding a variable "$_i$" in Deg and obtaining an exc interpretation from AP2 (which is exc: [7]) by predication: Pred2 relates the subject DP2 to its predicate AP2 (which explains AP2 is required: see the asterisks in (1)). As a result, D2 becomes [+exc] by Spec-head agreement and the Deg bound by Op becomes [+exc] too and is interpreted as extreme due to [7]'s semantics for "remarkably" items. Assuming DM, rule (11) inserts a null exponent "0" for [-fem]R only when [-fem]R follows a [+exc]D (the insertion is indicated by an arrow in (10)):

(10) $[_{PredP2} [_{DP2} [+exc]Op_i [_{D2'} D2: \textbf{un[+exc]} + \{ [-fem]R \} \rightarrow \textbf{0} [_{DegP} [_{Deg} [+exc] _i] [_{AP} \textbf{feo}]]]]$
        $[_{Pred2'} Pred2 [+exc]AP2:\textbf{increíble}]]$ (11) $[-fem]R \leftrightarrow \textbf{0} / [+exc]D\_\_\_$

PART III: *de*. *de* in (1a) heads a Pred1 relating DP1 (which gets its Case from T and raises to Spec-TP) to its predicate PredP2. *de* assigns genitive Case to DP2. As said, DP2 is a nominal predicate, so it must be [-def] (hence the article *un/una*).

(12) $[_{TP} [_{DP1} \textbf{esas casas}] [_{T'} \textbf{son} [_{PredP1} \overline{_{DP1} \text{ esas casas}} [_{Pred1'} [_{Pred1} \textbf{de}] [_{PredP2} ...(10)....]]]]]$

Fealdad (with n and no R) can be inserted in (10) ((9)) but allows the simpler structure (13b) for (13a) (same meaning), where Pred *de* relates DP1 to its predicate DP2 (there is no PredP2): a "remarkably" A bindng Deg is inserted lower than D2; this is impossible in (1) as it lacks n, and even "remarkably" Advs (*increíblemente*) lower than D2 would fail as a [+exc] Op interpreted by an AP2 is needed so as to provide D2 with [+exc] for insertion of 0 in R:

(13) a. Esas casas   son de una increíble fealdad   'Those houses are amazingly ugly.'

    b. $[_{PredP} DP1 [_{Pred'} \textbf{de} [_{DP2} D2:\textbf{una} [_{XP} [+exc]\textbf{increíble} [_{nP} n:\textbf{-dad} [_{DegP} [_{Deg}[+exc]_i] AP: \textit{feal-}]]]]]]$

3. Extensions. Excs like (I4) (in bold type; [3]/[2]), where *feo* behaves as in (1), are explained.

(14) Sorprende **l-o**   **fe-o**   **de l-a casa**. 'It is amazing how ugly the house is.'
        surprises the-masc.sg   ugly-masc.sg of the-fem house

They are introduced by Vs with a "remarkably" root ([7]) selecting [+fac(tive][+exc] CPs (*It's surprising **how ugly it is***; [3]), but here they select a YP with its own Left Periphery ((15)). Y selects a PredP like the one in (13b): Pred *de* relates DP1 *la casa* to its predicate DP2 *lo feo*; *de* raises to Y and assigns genitive Case to DP1 (Romanian genitive in DP1 shows DP1 is an argument -subject- of DP2 here; [1]). Spec-DP2 hosts the above-mentioned anaphoric Op. As Op must be interpreted, DP2 raises to the Spec of [+exc]YP (where it gets nominative from T; unlike CP, YP is transparent for Case), so Op and D2 by Spec-head agreement become [+exc] (and its bound Deg becomes extreme; [3]). Thus, R can be inserted in D2 and spelled-out as 0 by rule (11). As there is no n here, Advs can modify *feo* ((16a)) (impossible when *fealdad* replaces *feo* ((16b)) as *-dad* requires n for insertion). As R is [-fem], *l-* is realized as *lo*, with the *-o* shown by the Sp [+def]*[-fem][+pl]* article *los* (*los chicos* 'the boys'). D2 is [+def] as DP2 is the Spec of [+fac]Y (the [+def] article *l-* conveys a "familiar" reading akin to [+fac]).

(15) $[_{CP}..T..[_{VP} \textbf{sorprende} [_{YP} [_{DP2(NOM CASE)} [+exc]Op_i [_{D2'} [_{D2} \{[_{D2} [+def]\textit{[-fem][+exc]}] \} \rightarrow \textbf{lo} +$
        $\{[-fem]R \} \rightarrow \textbf{0}] [_{DegP} [_{Deg} [+exc] _i] AP: \textbf{feo}]]] [_{Y'} [_Y [_{Pred} \textbf{de}] + [_Y [+exc][+fac]]] [_{PredP}$
        $[_{DP1(GEN CASE)} \textbf{la casa}][_{Pred'} \overline{[_{Pred} \text{de}]} \overline{[_{DP2} \text{Op}_i [_{D2'} [_{D2} [+def]] [_{DegP} [+exc][_{Deg} _i] \text{AP: feo-}]]}]]]]]]]$

(16)   a. Sorprende lo **increíblemente** ('incredibly') feo/fe-**ísimo** de la casa
        b. Sorprende la **increíble/*increíblemente** fealdad de la casa

That *lo* in (14) is [-fem], not [-gender] ([8]), is shown by the [+pl] of V in (17) (recall (8)):

(17) Sorprendiero-**n** tanto **l-o repentin-o** de la decisión como la solemnidad de la declaración.
surprised-**pl** both the-[-fem] sudden-[-fem] of the decision & the solemnity of the declaration
    'Both the suddenness of the decision and the solemnity of the declaration were surprising.'
        https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=4168940 (May/20/2025)

4. Nano. A Nano account is possible with no "0": ***un*** covers [-def]D2 and [+exc]Deg in (10); ***lo*** covers [+def]D2 and [+exc]Deg in (15); Anchoring requires [+exc]Deg is part of *un/lo*. A possible problem: spurious affix *-ísimo*('extremely') may independently realize Deg ((7/16a)).

References: [1]Alexiadou, A & G. Ioardachioaia 2014, 'Two strategies to derive deadjectival nominals',*Anglica Wratislaviensia* 52:67–85.**[2]**Bartra, A. & X. Villalba 2006, 'Non Agreeing Quantified Nominal Embedded Clauses in Spanish', *RLLT 2004:*23-41, John Benjamins. **[3]** Bosque, I & J. C. Moreno 1990,'Las construcciones con *lo* y la denotación del neutro', *Lingüística* 2: 5-50 **[4]** Fábregas, A. 2016, *Las nominalizaciones*, Visor. **[5]**Iordachioaia, G. 2020, 'D and N are different nominalizers', *Glossa* 5:1-25**[6]** Kerleroux, F. 1996, *La Coupure Invisible*, Septentrion. **[7]** Morzycki, M. 2008, 'Adverbial modification of Adjectives: Evaluatives and a little beyond', *Event Structures in Linguistic Form and Interpretation*: 103-126, W. Gruyter **[8]** Picallo, C. 2002, 'Abstract Agreement and Clausal Arguments', *Syntax* 5.