1. Tropes and Spanish nominalizations

The denotation of nominalizations based on property-denoting adjectives has been a matter of much concern in formal semantics [2], but little interest has been aimed at the rich gamut of nominal constructions involved. One recent attempt to fill this gap is Friederike Moltmann’s work [5, 6], who resorts to tropes, a concept borrowed from descriptive metaphysics. For her, the deadjectival nominalization *John’s honesty* denotes a trope, defined as a concrete instantiation of a property (that of being honest) in an individual (John). In contrast, the universal *honesty* would be the abstract representation of all concrete instantiations of the property of being honest (i.e. a kind of tropes). This semantic difference captures the fact that tropes, as particular instantiations of abstract properties, can be placed on temporal and spatial axes and get involved in causal relations, in sharp contrast with properties:

(1) a. The redness of the apple made Mary buy it.
   b. *Redness made Mary buy the apple.

Yet, even though enlightening, Moltmann’s analysis fails at describing the rich gamut of Spanish nominalizations headed by the neuter article *lo* [1], which coexist with definite nominalizations:

(2) a. *lo honesto (de su respuesta)*
   b. *la honestidad (de su respuesta)*

As already noted by [1, n. 5], (2)a and (2)b are not synonymous, which suggests that an analysis of both nominalizations in terms of Moltmann’s tropes cannot be correct, and a finer-grained ontology of property-denoting entities is needed.

2. Properties and qualities

To account for the previous data, while retaining the basics of Moltmann’s insights, I will enrich our ontology introducing qualities. As Levinson [3] argues from a metaphysical point of view, properties and their particular instantiation (i.e. a trope) involve imposing a condition on the way an object is, and hence we create a new state of affairs: e.g. regarding John, that of being honest. In contrast, qualities in objects involve the possession of particular bits of an abstract substance, which can only be identified with respect to their possessors: e.g. John’s honesty.

Crucially, Levinson’s independent philosophical insights fit in with Spanish nominalization data. First, we can measure and compare the quality denoted by definite nominalizations, but not the property denoted by *lo*-nominalizations:

(3) a. La honestidad de los políticos aumenta día a día.
   ‘Politician’s honesty increases daily.’
   b. *Lo honesto de los políticos aumenta día a día.
   ‘The degree of honesty of politician’s increases daily.’

(4) a. La honestidad de los políticos es mayor que la honestidad del gobierno.
   ‘Politician’s honesty is bigger than government’s honesty.’
   b. *Lo honesto de los políticos es mayor que lo honesto del gobierno.
   ‘The degree of honesty of politician’s is bigger than the degree of honesty of the government.’
Second, definite nominalizations are perfect, whereas lo-nominalizations are quite infelicitous, in generic environments. If we consider nominalizations with an intrinsic generic value, like la inmortalidad del alma ‘soul’s immortality’, la solubilidad del gas ‘gas solubility’ or la credibilidad de los políticos ‘politicians trustworthiness’, a simple Google search will make the point clear enough (a higher scale quantitative study will be offered, which I must omit here due to space limitations):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>la [A+-idad]N de DP</th>
<th>lo A de DP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>immortal + soul</td>
<td>46000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trustworthy + politicians</td>
<td>4390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soluble + gas</td>
<td>1540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The resulting picture is the following. Adjectives denote properties (honest ‘honest’) and bare deadjectival nominalizations denote qualities (honestidad ‘honesty’). Lo-nominalizations, which are constructed over adjectives, denote property-tropes (lo honesto de su respuesta ‘the honest degree of his/her answer’) or kinds of tropes (lo honesto ‘the things that are honest’); whereas definite nominalizations are constructed over bare nominalizations, yielding quality-tropes (la honestidad de su respuesta ‘the honesty of his/her answer’) or kinds of qualities (la honestidad ‘honesty’).

3. Quality nominals: Between properties and individuals

Furthermore, besides offering a coherent solution for the complex system of Spanish deadjectival nominalizations, this finer-grained ontology offers a better prospect for explaining the puzzling behavior of bare abstract nominalizations: as properties (more exactly, qualities) with respect to scope (just as other bare nominals) (5)a, but as individuals regarding pronominal anaphora (just as definite nominals) (5)b.

(5) a. No demostró sensatez.
   Not showed sense
   ‘(S)he showed no sense.’

   b. No pretendía ofrecer resistencia1, pero la1 opuso.
      ‘(S)he didn’t mind to offer any resistance, but (s)he did offered resistance.’

The key feature is the fact pointed out by Levinson [3] that, unlike properties, “[q]uality-bits are identified by reference to their bearers, as are pains and sneezes.” Given this tight identity connection with the object, it makes perfect sense to take qualities as semantic objects suited to individualization tasks, while retaining basic features one could expect of property-denoting objects. Hence, the quality-trope analysis of standard nominalizations in Spanish may help us to understand the mixed behavior of quality nominalizations in (5).