

The problem of translatability of sad-related adjectives in Spanish and English

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to address translatability issues of the three sad-related adjectives in Spanish and English through the lens of Natural Semantic Metalanguage framework: a) *triste/sad*; b) *abatido/dejected, depressed*, and c) *apesadumbrado/distressed, afflicted*. Systematic corpus inquiry and semantic analysis was the methodology used to elaborate semantic explications of these adjectives in Spanish, which were contrasted to their English counterparts (Wierzbicka, 1972, 1992b). The findings point to the complexity of direct translation of these adjectives due to the following reasons. Firstly, in comparison to their English semi-equivalents, the explications of the Spanish adjectives proposed here are more meaning-specific and recognize more than one meaning for the same adjective (the cases of *triste* and *abatido*). The second problem derives from the combinatory with the two allolexes of *to be* in Spanish (*ser*, be permanently, and *estar*, be temporally). While in Spanish there is a distinction between feeling, attitude, and character trait for *triste* (sad), in English this distinction has not been described for *sad*. Finally, the explanations proposed here for the Spanish adjectives are richer in semantic features than the explanations of their English semi-equivalents. Although this prevents a direct comparison between both languages, the analysis led to some suggestions to lexicographers related to the definitions of emotions in bilingual dictionaries.

Keywords: lexical semantics; sad-related adjectives; bilingual lexicography; Natural Semantic Metalanguage.

1. Introduction

The definition of emotions has always been a desideratum by cognitive psychologists. However, there have been a lot of critical voices who put in doubt the possibility of providing an uncontroversial definition of emotion on the interdisciplinary arena of research (Mulligan and Scherer, 2012) due to their linguistic, historical, and cultural complexity. From a cognitive psychology vantage point, it seems that language was the major caveat in defining emotions (Mulligan and Scherer, 2012). While there have been innumerable attempts to write definitions of emotion terms, they are not truly explanatory due to obscure language, technical terms and circularity. Therefore, natural language comprehensible to all is required to gain an insight into emotional concepts with which different societies operate.

There is still an assumption that some emotions have the same meaning in all the languages because of their universal nature. Based on facial expressions, six emotions were claimed basic: happiness, surprise, fear, sadness, anger, and disgust (Ekman, 1992, 1999). However, this assumption was challenged by semantic research within Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach which proved that some emotions, *sadness* among them, can be culture-specific or simply do not have direct equivalents in other languages (Angkapanichkit and others, 2022; Bułat Silva, 2020; Fenyvesi and others, 2022; Goddard, 2018; Wierzbicka, 1998, 2004; Ye, 2019).

Within the NSM approach sad-related adjectives have been compared through different languages, such as Danish and German (Fenyvesi and others, 2022), English and Chinese (Ye, 2001; Zhang, 2014), English and Russian (Wierzbicka, 1999a), English and Balinese (Sudipa, 2022). In the major bulk of cross-linguistic research the target language of comparison is English, thus an Anglo perspective pervades in the interpretation of these words. The findings revealed that, albeit there were obvious commonalities between languages, certain conceptual differences were also found: e.g., there is no exact equivalent of the word *sad* in Russian, which is represented by two words: *грустный* and *печальный* (Wierzbicka, 1998). While *грустный* is a state of mood, normally not associated with something serious and lasting, *печальный* is related to the feeling of melancholy or nostalgia, being a more profound and lasting feeling. Paradoxically, when it comes to consulting the translation of this word from English into Russian, some dictionaries present one word or another as an equivalent of the English *sad*. Hence, the controversy of translating emotions from one language to another due to cultural bias came to the fore (Ogarkova and others, 2009). In the same vein, Wierzbicka (2006, 2009) averred that emotion words in different languages can be conceptually different from their English equivalents. As such the neutrality of the English language was put in the spotlight.

Following this line of research, the objective of this study is to address the issues of translatability of three sad-related adjectives in European Spanish¹ through the lens of the NSM framework: a) *triste/sad*; b) *abatido/dejected, depressed*, and c) *apesadumbrado/distressed, afflicted*. These three adjectives were selected from a set of seven Spanish adjectives close to *sad*, which we are working with (within the UCM project, Barrios Rodríguez and others, 2023): *triste, abatido, apesadumbrado, lánguido, melancólico, nostálgico, resignado*. Due to the lack of space, we were compelled to choose only some of these adjectives for the purpose of this paper.

While emotion words in the Spanish language have been an understudied area of NSM research, there are NSM semantic explications of some of the English semi-equivalent words, such as *sad, distressed, depressed, dejected* (Goddard, 2010b; Wierzbicka, 1992a). Therefore, the choice of sad-related adjectives in Spanish was dictated by these existing semantic explications in the English language.

To check if the above-mentioned sad-related adjectives in Spanish coincide with their equivalents in English, the Spanish adjectives (*triste, abatido, apesadumbrado*) were compared with their English semi-equivalents by means of four bilingual dictionaries: Collins², Vox³, Wordreference.com⁴ and Cambridge⁵. These dictionaries were chosen according to the criteria of frequency of use and ease of access (all of them are free dictionaries online). Table 1 shows the results taken from Spanish-English dictionaries and table 2 for the English-Spanish ones. The second column of table 1 combines the results from Collins and Vox due to their similarity; the same is true for the last column of table 2 for Cambridge and Vox.

As both tables show, in most cases there is no agreement between the four dictionaries. From our perspective, it stems from the difficulty of finding pure equivalents for this type of adjectives. Even for *triste*, which is a primary emotion, some dictionaries propose not only *sad* but other adjectives as well. Likewise, the native speakers of these languages can have problems with understanding the small semantic nuances that distinguish some adjectives related to *sadness*.

1 Due to the didactic complexity, only adjectives in Spanish from Spain were analysed. Therefore, the usage of these adjectives in other Spanish speaking countries was not studied. However, some corpus data coming from South America, if it coincides with the European Spanish, are included in our project.

2 <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english-spanish>.

3 <https://www.diccionarios.com/diccionario>.

4 <https://www.wordreference.com/>.

5 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.

TABLE 1

Equivalents for the three Spanish adjectives taken from Spanish-English dictionaries

ADJECTIVE (SPANISH)	COLLINS, VOX	WORDREFERENCE.COM	CAMBRIDGE
<i>Triste</i>	Sad (Collins) Sad, unhappy (Vox)	Sad, distressed, melancholic, sorrowful, mournful, gloomy	Sad
<i>Abatido</i>	Depressed, dejected (Collins, Vox)	Crestfallen, dejected, despondent, dispirited, downcast, downhearted	Dejected, downhearted
<i>Apesadumbrado</i>	Sad, distressed (Collins, Vox)	Distressed, afflicted, troubled, anxious	Sad, saddened, grief-stricken

TABLE 2

Equivalents for the three Spanish adjectives taken from English-Spanish dictionaries

ADJECTIVE (ENGLISH)	COLLINS	WORDREFERENCE.COM	CAMBRIDGE, VOX
Sad	<i>Triste, lamentable, penoso, malo</i>	<i>Triste, lamentable</i>	<i>Triste</i> (Cambridge, Vox)
Dejected	<i>Desanimado, abatido</i>	<i>Alicaído, desalentado, abatido</i>	<i>Abatido</i> (Cambridge) <i>Desanimado, abatido, desalentado</i> (Vox)
Distressed	<i>Afligido, angustiado</i>	<i>Angustiado, consternado</i>	<i>Afligido, consternado</i> (Cambridge, Vox)

This paper is organized as follows. In the section 2, literature review, the NSM approach is delved into. In section 3, the NSM-explications of sad-related words are presented. In section 4, the methodology is explained. In section 5, semantic explications of *triste*, *abatido* and *apesadumbrado* are elaborated to tackle conceptual and lexical differences with their English equivalents. Section 6 presents contrastive analyses of these three sad-related adjectives in Spanish to their English counterparts. In Section 7, the concluding remarks are drawn.

2. Natural Semantic Metalanguage: primes and molecules

Drawing away from truth-conditional semantics which use formal language to describe meaning, Wierzbicka (1972) put forward the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) as a feasible approach to explore lexicons and lexicological phenomena in any language. In order to grasp the elusive concept of meaning, Wierzbicka (1972: 12-13) proposed “to search for those expressions in natural language which themselves are impossible to satisfactorily explicate, but in terms of which all other expressions (utterances) can be explicated”. As a

result of intensive empirical and analytical research, sixty-five *universal semantic primitives* called *primes* were proposed to explain meaning in a transparent language (Goddard, 1994; Goddard and Peeters, 2006; Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2002).

Hereinafter, the list of semantic primes in English (Goddard, 2018; Wierzbicka, 2009) and Spanish (Fernández, 2020; Fernández and Goddard, 2020) grouped under fifteen categories (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2002) is presented in table 3.

TABLE 3

Anglo semantic primes and their Spanish counterparts (Fernández and Goddard, 2020)

CATEGORY	ENGLISH	SPANISH
1. Substantives	I-ME, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING-THING, PEOPLE, BODY	YO, TÚ-USTED, ALGUIEN, ALGO~COSA, GENTE
2. Relational substantives	KIND (OF), PART (OF)	TIPO (DE), PARTE (DE)
3. Determiners	THIS, THE SAME, OTHER-ELSE-ANOTHER	ESTO~ESO, MISMO, OTRO
4. Quantifiers	ONE, TWO, SOME, ALL, MUCH~MANY, LITTLE~FEW	UNO, DOS, ALGUNOS, TODO, MUCHO, POCO
5. Evaluators	GOOD, BAD	BUENO, MALO
6. Descriptors	BIG, SMALL	GRANDE, PEQUEÑO
7. Mental predicates	KNOW, THINK, WANT, DON'T WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR	SABER, PENSAR, QUERER, NO QUERER, SENTIR, VER, OÍR
8. Speech	SAY, WORDS, TRUE	DECIR, PALABRAS, VERDAD
9. Actions, event, and movement	DO, HAPPEN, MOVE, TOUCH	HACER, PASAR, MOVERSE, TOCAR
10. Location, existence, possession, specification	BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS, HAVE, BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING), (IS) MINE	ESTAR (EN UN SITIO), HABER, SER (ALGO/ALGUIEN), (ES) MÍO
11. Life and death	LIVE, DIE	VIVIR, MORIR
12. Time	WHEN~TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	CUÁNDO~CUANDO-TIEMPO, AHORA, ANTES, DESPUÉS, MUCHO TIEMPO, POCO TIEMPO, POR UN TIEMPO, MOMENTO
13. Space	WHERE~PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE	DÓNDE~DONDE-SITIO, AQUÍ, ARRIBA (DE), DEBAJO (DE), LEJOS (DE), CERCA (DE), A (UN)LADO, DENTRO (DE)
14. Logical concepts	NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF	NO, TAL VEZ, PODER, PORQUE~POR, SI
15. Intensifier, augmentor	VERY, MORE	MUY, MÁS
16. Similarity	LIKE	COMO

All words from table 3 are common to all languages, cross-translatable and form a potential nucleus of any semantic explication. Depending on the language analyzed, semantic primes may have different morphological or syntactic combinatorial variants (Peeters, 2006), called *allolexes*, which are marked with ~ (e.g., I~ME; TÚ~USTED). Furthermore, to solve the problem of polysemy in semantic explications only one meaning of the words, which was found universal, was taken (Goddard, 2012; Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2014): e.g., the word MOVE – physical displacement in space.

Notwithstanding the fact that NSM linguists recognized that all semantic explications were based on primes, it was proved that some complex concepts were semantically hinged on other less complex ones, which were not considered primitive, and were called *semantic molecules* and marked with [m] (Goddard, 1998, 2010a, 2010b, 2012; Wierzbicka, 2007). Molecules, unlike the primes, can be semantically decomposed. Thus, to explicate the meanings of *swan* and *nightingale*, the molecule *bird*_[m] was used. Not only semantic explications of both words depend on this molecule, but it also expresses a taxonomic relation between *swan* and *nightingale*: “birds_[m] of one kind”. Using a metaphor of a Russian doll, *matreshka*, Goddard illustrated how semantic molecules contribute to compression of semantic complexity “by its being encapsulated and telescoped into lexical units embedded one in the other” (2014: 67).

To avoid dictionary circularity, a semantic explication was based on sentence-like expressions in ordinary language (Boguslawski, 1970; Wierzbicka, 1972), which “cannot belong to any kind of scientific or elitist jargon, but rather must be known to everyone, including children” (Wierzbicka, 1972: 15). Hence, these definitions must represent the cognitive reality of ordinary language users avoiding technical words. As semantic primes possess universal combinatorial properties (valency, complementation, patterns of combination) in all languages (Goddard, 2012; Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2002; Peeters, 2006; Wierzbicka, 1972), they must be considered universals of syntax (Goddard, 2010b: 473). For example, as for combinatory qualities substantive primes combine with determiners to form semantic units: e.g., THIS THING, SOMEONE ELSE. Therefore, specific properties of the primes lay foundations for the proposal of definitions in NSM.

For more than forty years this approach has been tested in semantic investigation and cross-cultural research in a wide range of languages (e.g., Aragón, 2017; Aznárez Mauleón and González Ruiz, 2006; Barrios Rodríguez and Goddard, 2013; Bartens and Sandström, 2006; Bułat Silva, 2020; Goddard and Peeters, 2006; Travis, 2003, 2004; Vanhatalo and Torkki, 2018) and was proved effective not only in the field of lexical semantics, sentential semantics and pragmatics but also in behavioral studies, e.g., facial expressions (Wierzbicka, 1995a, 1999b, 2000).

3. Semantic explications of sad-related adjectives in English

Within the NSM approach, a considerable body of definitions of emotions in a large variety of languages has been produced, which unraveled the systematic organization of this cog-

nitive domain (Briggs, 1976, 2000; Farese, 2016; Fenyvesi and others, 2022; Wierzbicka, 1973, 1988, 1990, 1992a, 1992b, 1995b, 1999a, 2009; Ye, 2019). To provide a transparent non-circular definition of an emotion the technique of *reductive paraphrase* is used. It consists of writing by means of universal semantic primes to create semantic explications. Any semantic explication usually includes a *prototypical cognitive scenario* (Goddard, 2012; Wierzbicka, 1972, 2009), a structural pattern which represents a hypothetical situation when this emotion occurs (Wierzbicka, 1972). Goddard (2012) proposed two semantic templates for defining emotions: (1) with the verb BE, which referred to state of mind; (2) with the verb FEEL, which concerned the situation of experiencing an emotion.

Although *sad* was considered a basic emotion, it corresponded to a complex concept, thus it did not constitute a semantic prime (Wierzbicka, 1999a: 61). The reason is that there were languages which did not have corresponding concepts, e.g., Tahitian (Wierzbicka, 2009), while there were others which had various words to describe it, such as Russian, as we mentioned in section 1 (Wierzbicka, 1998). Furthermore, *sad* is related to other words which express sadness, such as *distressed*, *dejected*, *depressed*, etc. To tackle possible differences between these closely related concepts Wierzbicka (1992a) and Goddard (2010a) each proposed one semantic explication of *sad* (see table 4):

TABLE 4Semantic explications of the adjective *sad*

<i>Sad</i> (e.g., X feels sad)	X felt sad:
X feels something	someone X felt bad
sometimes a person thinks something like this:	someone can feel something like this
something bad happened	when this someone thinks like this:
I would want: this didn't happen	"I know that something bad happened
[i.e., I wish it hadn't happened]	I don't want things like this to happen
If I could I would want to do	I can't think like this: I will do
something because of this	something because of it now
I can't do anything	I know that I can't do anything"
because of this, this person feels something bad	
X feels like this	
Wierzbicka, 1992b: 558	Goddard, 2010b: 466

To avoid stating the reason of sadness (BECAUSE), which may be different depending on the context or simply non-existent, the focus was placed on particular thoughts which any person can experience while being sad (FEEL). Thus, these semantic definitions were made comprehensible by people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The semantic explication of sad-related words, such as *distressed* (see table 5), *depressed*, *dejected* (see table 6), incorporated the general semantic dimensions of *sad*: a) 'bad things', b) unacceptability, and c) an intention or non-intention to do something about this emo-

tion. However, certain differences, further analyzed, would help the reader to see the variances in the Wierzbicka's (1972) proposals:

TABLE 5

Semantic explication of the adjective *distressed*

Distressed (e.g., X feels distressed)
 X feels something
 sometimes a person thinks something like this:
 something bad is happening to me now
 I don't want this
 because of this, I would want to do something
 I don't know what I can do
 I want someone to do something
 because of this, this person feels something bad
 X feels like this

Wierzbicka, 1972: 559

In comparison to *sad* (see table 4), when something bad happened to a person in the past, *distressed* was anchored in the present moment, thus, accounting for a short period of duration (Wierzbicka, 1972: 560). According to facial analysis of this emotion (Ekman, 1973), *distressed* referred to small children crying, while *sad* did not necessarily imply 'shedding tears' and was more attributed to adults. Moreover, with the absence of the resigned component 'I can't do anything', the focus was placed on uncertainty of what to do and on the person's wish for someone to help them ('I want someone to do something'), while in the semantic explication of *sad* there was an element of hopelessness and absence of any possibility of help from other people. Therefore, *sad* is a passive emotion, whilst *distressed* is more active. Wierzbicka illustrated it with such common phrases as 'distress signals' (1972: 560), which is used as a call for help in ships, or 'damsel in distress', a young woman in danger who needs help (Wierzbicka, 2009: 65).

The semantic explanation of *dejected* was elaborated based on the analysis of *depressed*, which is "its closest relative" (Wierzbicka, 1972: 565). Depression as such was linked to bad feelings because of unhealthy mental state and was described as "the failure to engage in the pursuit of happiness or the love of self that is considered to be the basic and normal goal of persons" (Lutz, 1985: 70), however *dejected* does not imply any diagnosis of mental health by a psychiatrist.

In comparison to *depressed* which was related to the future dimension of time ('something bad will happen to me'), *dejected* implied something bad that happened to a person in the past (Wierzbicka, 1972: 565), a feature it shares with *sad*. Like in *sad*, both *dejected* and *depressed* had a passive component, since no help is asked for or expected from other people.

In the Spanish language one of the semi-equivalents for *depressed* is *deprimido*, which is a polysemic word: 1) depressed because of an unhealthy mental state (Lutz, 1985), and 2) the emotion of feeling blue (Wierzbicka, 1972: 565).

Table 6 presents the semantic explications of *depressed* and *dejected*.

TABLE 6

Semantic explications of the adjectives *depressed* and *dejected*

<i>Depressed</i>	<i>Dejected</i>
X feels something	X feels something
sometimes a person thinks something like this:	sometimes a person thinks something like this:
I can think: something bad will happen to me	I can think: something bad happened to me
I can't think: something good will happen to me	I can't think: something good will happen to me
I can't think: I will do something good	I can't think: I will do something good
because of this, this person feels bad	because of this, this person feels bad
X feels like this	X feels like this

Wierzbicka, 1972: 565

4. Methodology

The analysis of the Spanish words *triste* (sad), *apesadumbrado* (distressed, afflicted) and *abatido* (dejected, depressed) was developed with the data from the Spanish historical corpus (<https://www.rae.es/banco-de-datos/cdh>), which contains excerpts from literary texts. We selected this corpus because this kind of texts eases the selection of a *prototypical cognitive scenario* for emotions (Wierzbicka, 1972), as mentioned in section 3.

On the other hand, this corpus allows the users to select texts from specific historical periods (years): in this study we worked with the texts from 1875 to 2000, which do not demand any diachronic analysis. Furthermore, this historical corpus facilitates the access to collocations and some other grammatical information. For instance, if we search for *triste*₃ (sad), the corpus offers information related to bibliographic data of the author, title, year of publishing, etc. (see the examples 1-3):

(1) **2000** QUESADA, ROBERTO, *Big Banana* [Honduras] [Barcelona, Seix Barral]. Ha de ser triste ser profesor —dijo él⁶.

(2) **1997** FIGUERAS, JOSEFINA, *La moda, sus secretos y su poder* [Madrid, Albacore]. Sí. Soy latino y me siento fascinado por los colores fuertes, los barroquismos y las joyas

6 “It must be sad to be a teacher, he said” (From now on, the translation of these corpus data is ours).

recargadas; además, creo que el mal gusto tiene sus derechos. La calle y los acontecimientos a menudo son tristes, sombríos⁷.

(3) **1998** GAMBOA, SANTIAGO, *Páginas de vuelta* [Colombia] [Barcelona, Mondadori]. ¿Feliz el final? Para mí fue triste, yo lloré y todo⁸.

Thus, some of the most significant excerpts, avoiding repetition of ideas, were collected. Furthermore, the data were reflected upon, and finally semantic explications were written (for more details on each one of the steps on the thinking process, see Goddard, 2018). Summarizing our methodology: a) we study the use of writers (particularly regarding the collocations) and search for real examples of use; b) we write semantic explications with primes by means of cognitive scenarios written with primes, as usual in NSM; c) to facilitate the future task of a potential lexicographer, we resort to something that is not usual in NSM literature: to write a typical scenario, described not only with primes but also with molecules (therefore, it is a more concrete scenario in comparison to the prototypical cognitive scenario); d) we add examples of use (in natural language) inspired by the data of the corpus (which is normally not done in NSM), because it can be helpful for didactic purposes (for more details related to the methodology, see the chapter of Barrios in this volume).

5. Analysis of three equivalent Spanish adjectives related to sadness

As a result, multiple differences were found with respect to the explications for the English equivalents (see tables 2-4), as we attempt to summarize in the following sections.

5.1. *Triste* (sad)

According to Goddard (2018), the NSM technique can be used to distinguish between different meanings of a word; each meaning must be explicated separately. That was the case of the Spanish adjective *triste*. Although one might think that the difference between *ser* and *estar* is merely grammatical, being both equivalents of *to be*, the use of *ser* or *estar* with the adjective *triste* (sad) entails a change in meaning (the same applies to many other Spanish adjectives). Indeed, *triste* demands three explications attached to different uses of the Spanish word: a) someone *está* ('is temporally') *triste* (sad), which is a feeling (see table 7); b) someone *es* (is) *triste* (sad), which is an attitude (see table 8), and c) something *es* (is) *triste* (sad), which is a state (see table 9).

7 "Yes, I am Latin, and I am fascinated by strong colours, baroque and ornate jewellery; besides, I believe that bad taste has its rights. The street and the events are often sad, sombre, and gloomy".

8 "Happy ending? For me it was sad, I even cried".

Evidence from the corpus proves this polysemy as well as the semantic features, which we will show hereinafter. Lack of space prevents us from presenting all the evidence for all the meanings from the corpus (see footnote 9 for some evidence for *triste*₁ and *triste*₂ and (1-3) for *triste*₃).

The first two meanings of the Spanish word for *sad* share some semantic features: “Someone is *triste* when this someone feels something bad. Maybe something bad is happening. Maybe this person sees something bad”. However, *triste*₁ (sad), as a feeling, is attached to a temporary feeling (see table 7, line 4: “This person is like that for some time”), while *triste*₂ (sad) is an attitude (see table 8, line 4: “This person is like that for a long time”). Both similarities and differences are, respectively, analysed in the sections “Shared semantic features” and “Specific semantic features” (see tables 7 and 8). Table 7 is a semantic explication for such constructions as *María es triste* (Mary is sad (always)), and table 8 is a semantic explication for such constructions as *María está triste* (Mary is sad (now)).

Regarding the typical scenario, for *triste*₁ we wrote the following: “Like when someone wants to be with some other person. Something bad happened. Because of that, this person cannot be with this other person”. This scenario is different from the one of for *triste*₂: “Like when someone thinks many times about bad things. Like when someone talks a lot of times about bad things”. Both typical scenarios were inspired by the data from the Spanish corpus⁹.

Finally, the examples of use in natural language were written, also based on the data extracted from the Spanish historical corpus. These examples may be used for didactic purposes in the future. In order to strengthen the previous ideas of the semantic explication, sometimes the example is just a paraphrase of the typical scenario without the restriction of primes and molecules, such as in *triste*₂. In this case the typical scenario corresponds to the concepts attached to the example of use (*She is a sad and bitter-hearted woman, proud and miserly*), as shown in the table 8:

9 Particularly for *triste*₁, some of the examples from corpus, which were considered, are: a) Rubén Darío, 1986. *Prosas profanas y otros poemas*: “La princesa está triste, ¿qué tendrá la princesa? (The princess is sad, what is wrong with the princess?”; b) 1998, Fresán Rodríguez. *La velocidad de las cosas*: “No tenía que tener miedo ni estar triste porque la abuela se había ido al cielo” (She did not have to be afraid or sad because the grandma had gone to heaven). Regarding the meaning of *triste*₂, data from the corpora corresponds, among others, to: a) 1995, Sánchez Ostiz, Miguel. *Un infierno en el jardín*: “un hombre afable y triste, no un triunfador dicharachero, sino una persona de apariencia gris” (an affable and sad man, not a happy-go-lucky achiever, but a person of a gray appearance); b) Álvaro Cunqueiro, *Las mocedades de Ulises*: “mujer triste y amarga de corazón, y soberbia y avara” (a sad and bitter-hearted woman, proud and miserly).

TABLE 7(Alguien está) triste₁/(Someone is triste₁/sad)

	SPANISH ANALYSIS/SEMANTIC EXPLICATION IN SPANISH	ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE EXPLICATION OF THE SPANISH WORD
Feeling	Alguien está triste	Someone is <i>triste</i>
Shared semantic features	cuando siente algo malo. Quizás ocurre algo malo. Quizás ve algo malo.	when this someone feels something bad. Maybe something bad is happening. Maybe this person sees something bad.
Specific semantic features	Esa persona está así durante algún tiempo.	This person is like that for some time.
Typical scenario	Como cuando alguien quiere estar con otra persona. Algo malo ocurrió. Por eso, esa persona no puede estar con esa otra persona.	Like when someone wants to be with some other person. Something bad happened. Because of that, this person cannot be with this other person. This person cannot do anything.
Example of use	<i>No quería estar triste porque la abuela se había ido al cielo.</i>	<i>I did not want to be sad because my grandmother had gone to heaven/passed away.</i>

TABLE 8(Alguien es) triste₂/(Someone is triste₂/sad)

	SPANISH ANALYSIS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE EXPLICATION OF THE SPANISH WORD
Attitude	Alguien es triste	Someone is <i>triste</i>
Shared semantic features	cuando siente algo malo. Quizás ocurre algo malo.	when this someone feels something bad. Maybe something bad is happening.
Specific semantic features	Esa persona está así durante mucho tiempo.	This person is like that for a long time.
Typical scenario	Como cuando alguien piensa muchas veces en cosas malas.	Like when someone thinks many times about bad things.
Example of use	<i>Es mujer triste y amarga de corazón, y soberbia y avara.</i>	<i>She is a sad and bitter-hearted woman, proud and miserly.</i>

With respect to *triste*₃, due to the grammatical conditions (the subject is inanimate: something), multiple differences were found with *triste*₁ and *triste*₂, starting with the nuclear semantic feature, which does not correspond to the shared semantic features of the previous two meanings: “When someone sees this something, this someone is *triste*. When someone thinks about this something, this someone is *triste*. Because of this, someone can say something like this: this something is *triste*”.

In this case, the typical scenario presents one of the multiple situations of the potential uses of this meaning: “Like when someone sees a sick_[m] person, this someone says something like this: this is *triste_[m]*”. And the example of use presents one of the uses of *triste₃* in the context of an attributive sentence: *la vejez es triste* (old age is sad). Table 9 summarizes the proposal:

TABLE 9(Algo es) *triste₃*/(Something is *triste₃*/sad)

	SPANISH ANALYSIS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE EXPLICATION OF THE SPANISH WORD
State	Algo es <i>triste_[m]</i> .	Something is <i>triste_[m]</i> .
Nuclear semantic features	Cuando alguien ve ese algo, esa persona está <i>triste_[m]</i> . Cuando alguien piensa en ese algo, esa persona está <i>triste_[m]</i> . Por eso alguien puede decir algo así: ese algo es <i>triste_[m]</i> .	When someone sees this something, this someone is <i>triste_[m]</i> . When someone thinks about this something, this someone is <i>triste_[m]</i> . Because of this, someone can say something like this: this something is <i>triste_[m]</i> .
Typical scenario	Como cuando alguien ve una persona enferma _[m] , ese alguien dice algo así: eso es <i>triste_[m]</i> .	Like when someone sees a sick person, this someone says something like this: this is <i>triste_[m]</i> .
Example of use	<i>Piensen que la vejez es triste.</i>	<i>They think that old age is sad.</i>

5.2. Apesadumbrado (distressed, afflicted)

In relation to *apesadumbrado* (distressed, afflicted), having analysed 189 cases of use in the database, the evidence from the corpus proves only one meaning (see examples 4-6):

(4) **1875** PÉREZ GALDÓS, BENITO, *Napoleón en Chamartín* [España] [Biblioteca virtual Miguel de Cervantes, Alicante, Universidad de Alicante, 2002]. Novela. Calló el oficial, y todos los que le oíamos estábamos tan apesadumbrados y tristes con su relato, que nada le contestamos. Tampoco él habló más, y así silenciosos y taciturnos llegamos a Madrid¹⁰.

(5) **1911** BENAVENTE, JACINTO, *La losa de los sueños. Comedia en dos actos en prosa* [España] [Madrid, Librería Sucesores Hernando, 1914]. Teatro. La familia de Enrique es una familia muy decente, la madre es una señora muy cristiana. Yo sé que está muy

10 “The officer fell silent, and all of us who heard him were so distressed and saddened by his story that we did not say anything to him. Neither did he speak any more. And, thus, silent and taciturn, we arrived at Madrid”.

apesadumbrada por la conducta de su hijo. Lo que dijeron de que Enrique estaba para casarse con una muchacha muy rica, no es verdad¹¹.

(6) **1995** MORENA, JOSÉ RAMÓN DE LA, *Los silencios de El Larguero* [España] [Madrid, El País-Aguilar, 1996]. Deportes. Me cuentan que Gaspar Rosety se vio obligado a entregarle esa cinta a *su amo* y que estuvo dolido y apesadumbrado por ello, pero así se escribe la historia¹².

As table 10 shows, the meaning of this adjective is attached to its etymology: *pesadumbre* means 'heavy weight'. It thereby represents the feeling of sadness which is close to a physical emotion (like when someone carries something very heavy on his body). This idea is present in the lemma of the dictionary of Moliner (2016). As far as we know, this semantic feature is neither present in *distressed* nor in *afflicted*. Since this word is monosemic, we propose the following cognitive scenario: "Someone is *apesadumbrado* when someone knows something very bad happened. Maybe this someone did something very bad. Maybe other someone did something very bad. Because of this, this someone feels very sad".

Table 10 illustrates our proposal:

TABLE 10

(Alguien está) *apesadumbrado*/(Someone is *apesadumbrado*/distressed, afflicted)

SPANISH ANALYSIS		ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE EXPLICATION OF THE SPANISH WORD
Feeling	Alguien está apesadumbrado	Someone is <i>apesadumbrado</i>
Nuclear semantic features	cuando sabe que ha ocurrido algo muy malo. Quizás hizo algo muy malo. Quizás otra persona hizo algo muy malo. Ese alguien se siente muy triste por eso.	when someone knows something very bad happened. Maybe this someone did something very bad. Maybe other someone did something very bad. Because of this this someone feels very sad.
Typical scenario	Alguien está muy triste durante algún tiempo porque ocurrió algo muy malo. Piensa algo así: "eso malo es como una piedra _[m] pesada _[m] ". Siente algo así: "esa piedra _[m] pesada _[m] está sobre mi cuerpo".	This someone is very sad for a long time because this something very bad happened. This someone thinks something like this, "this bad thing is like a heavy _[m] stone _[m] ". This someone thinks something like this: "this heavy _[m] stone _[m] is on my body".
Example of use	<i>Está muy apesadumbrada por la conducta de su hijo.</i>	<i>She is very afflicted by her son's behavior.</i>

11 "Enrique's family is a very decent family, the mother is a very Christian lady. I know that she is deeply saddened by her son's behaviour. What they said that Enrique was about to marry a very rich girl is not true".

12 "I am told that Gaspar Rosety was forced to give that tape to his master and that he was hurt and deeply saddened by it, but that is the way history is written".

As in section 4.2, the part of the explication called “Specific Semantic Features” attempts to elaborate a more concrete typical scenario than the previous one, and it is written with primes and molecules: “Someone is very sad for a long time because something very bad happened. This someone thinks something like this, this bad thing is like a heavy_[m] stone_[m]. This someone thinks something like this: this heavy_[m] stone_[m] is on my body”. Finally, we wrote the example of use in natural language, inspired by one of the examples from the Spanish historical corpus data: “*She is very apesadumbrada by her son's behavior*”.

5.3. Abatido (dejected, depressed)

In relation to *abatido* (dejected, depressed), having analysed 440 cases of use in the database, the evidence from the corpus shows three different meanings (see examples 7-9):

(7) **1910** VAZ FERREIRA, CARLOS, *Lógica viva* [Uruguay] [Manuel Claps, Caracas, Ayacucho]. Ética más para él que el estilo. Cuando una madre llora a su primer hijo, que ha sucumbido a consecuencia de la escarlatina, y un médico sincero le dice lo que ella sospecha ya, que su niño se hubiera curado si su constitución no hubiera sido de antemano debilitada por el abuso del estudio; cuando está abatida por el doble peso del dolor y remordimiento, es un bien débil consuelo para ella el poder leer a Dante en el original¹³.

(8) **1888** PÉREZ GALDÓS, BENITO, *Miau* [España] [Alicante, Universidad de Alicante]. Es preciso que te hagas cargo de las cosas —añadió por fin el Padre, accionando con la mano cuajada de sortijas. —¿Cómo quieres que yo coloque a tu abuelo si tú no estudias? Ya ves cuán abatido está el pobre señor, esperando como pan bendito su credencial. Se le puede ahogar con un cabello. Pues tú tienes la culpa, porque si estudiaras...¹⁴.

(9) **1922** CASTELLÓN, JOSÉ, *Lo que tenemos cerca* [España] [Madrid, Imprenta de Alrededor del Mundo]. Teatro. “Levanta”. (*La ayuda a levantarse y la retiene entre sus brazos, como un padre. Ella está abatida, desgarrada y llorando como una niña.*)

13 “When a mother mourns for her first child, who has succumbed in consequence of scarlet fever, and an honest physician tells her what she already suspects, that her child would have been cured if his constitution had not been beforehand weakened by the abuse of study; when she is cast down by the double weight of grief and remorse, it is a good weak consolation to her to be able to read Dante in the original”.

14 “‘You have to take charge of things’, added Father, finally, with his hand full of rings. - How do you want me to place your grandfather if you don't study? You can see how dejected the poor gentleman is, waiting like blessed bread for his credential. You can choke him with a hair. Well, it's your fault, because if you had studied...”

"Pasamos por las cosas que nos están cercanas, como los que andan a oscuras, tropezando en lo mismo"¹⁵.

We described the three different meanings attached to *abatido*, albeit only two of them correspond to a feeling. The first meaning is derived from the verb *abatir*, which means 'to cause someone or something fall to the ground'; this meaning is related to physical discomfort. Thus, *abatido*₁ does not comply to the scope of our research, however it is useful when trying to understand the other meanings of this adjective, as table 11 shows:

TABLE 11

(Alguien está) abatido₁/(Someone is *abatido*₁/dejected, depressed)

	SPANISH ANALYSIS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE EXPLICATION OF THE SPANISH WORD
Feeling	Alguien está abatido	Someone is <i>abatido</i>
Shared semantic features	cuando siente algo muy malo. Su cuerpo se siente muy mal.	when this someone feels something very bad. This someone's body feels very bad.
Specific semantic features	Cuando esa persona quiere moverse, no puede moverse. Esa persona quiere estar tumbada _[m] .	When this someone wants to move, this someone cannot move. This someone wants to lie down _[m] .
Typical scenario	Como cuando un médico _[m] dice que una persona debe estar en la cama _[m] .	Like when a doctor _[m] says that a person must be in bed _[m] .
Example of use	<i>El enfermo está abatido, con tanta mayor pérdida de fuerzas cuanto más intensa ha sido la diarrea.</i>	<i>The sick person is depressed, more intense the diarrhea, the greater the loss of strength.</i>

The two meanings related to feelings are *abatido*₂, which is a fusion of the physical state of being ill and the emotion of sadness, and *abatido*₃, which incorporates a degree of intensity of the emotion of sadness, 'deep sadness'. As tables 12-13 show, none of the semantic features found in *abatido* coincide with the semantic explications of either *depressed* or *dejected* (see table 4) even though in the dictionaries (see tables 1-2) this adjective is used as their equivalent.

Actually, *abatido*₂ means that "someone feels something very bad. This someone's body feels very bad. Because of that, this someone is very sad", while *abatido*₃ is more fo-

15 "Up you get!" (He helps her up and holds her in his arms, like a father. She is dejected, torn, and crying like a child). "We go through the things that are close to us, like those who walk in the dark, stumbling over the same thing".

cused on the feeling without any reference to the feeling of the body. Collocations of *abatido*₃ show that there is some corporal evidence, probably inherited from *abatido*₁ and *abatido*₂. We attempted to include this information in the “typical scenario”: “This someone moves legs_[m] slowly_[m], this someone's eyes_[m] do not see the sky_[m], this someone's eyes see the floor_[m]”.

Tables 12 and 13 present our proposals:

TABLE 12

(Alguien está) *abatido*₂ / (Someone is *abatido*₂ / dejected, depressed)

	SPANISH ANALYSIS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE EXPLICATION OF THE SPANISH WORD
Feeling	Alguien está abatido	Someone is <i>abatido</i>
Shared semantic features	cuando siente algo muy malo. Su cuerpo se siente muy mal. Cuando esa persona quiere moverse, se siente como se siente alguien cuando no puede moverse. Por eso esa persona está muy triste.	when someone feels something very bad. This someone's body feels very bad. When this someone wants to move, this someone feels like other someone who cannot move. Because of that, this someone is very sad.
Typical scenario	Como cuando alguien quiere bailar _[m] rápidamente _[m] y no puede.	Like when this someone wants to dance _[m] quickly _[m] and cannot.
Example of use	<i>Hasta la pasada temporada, en la que comenzó a dar la sensación de estar abatida, cansada de jugar al tenis.</i>	<i>Until last season, when the sensation of feeling depressed started, she felt tired of playing tennis.</i>

TABLE 13

(Alguien está) *abatido*₃ / (Someone is *abatido*₃ / dejected, depressed)

	SPANISH ANALYSIS	ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE EXPLICATION OF THE SPANISH WORD
Feeling	Alguien está abatido	Someone is <i>abatido</i>
Shared semantic features	cuando está muy triste.	when this someone is very sad.
Typical scenario	Mueve las piernas _[m] lentamente _[m] , sus ojos _[m] no ven el cielo _[m] , sus ojos ven el suelo _[m] .	This someone moves legs _[m] slowly _[m] , this someone's eyes _[m] do not see the sky _[m] , this someone's eyes see the floor _[m] .
Example of use	<i>Solo estaba abatido cuando ella, por razón de sus quehaceres, se apartaba de su lado.</i>	<i>He was only dejected when she, because of her duties, left his side.</i>

6. Contrastive analyses of sad-related adjectives to their English counterparts

The aim of this section is to compare the explications from § 3 with § 5. The structure of the explications of the Spanish adjectives differs from the English ones, written by Goddard and Wierzbicka (that means, following the NSM criteria). The explications of the Spanish adjectives, written by us, follow the criteria exposed in § 4. However, both proposals are comparable to analyze the nuances of meaning.

In the case of *sad/triste*₁, the components of meaning share certain commonalities: someone feels bad, something bad happened, this someone cannot do anything. The major differences focus on the perspective of the causes of the feeling: while in the English word the causes are viewed as something that a sad person thinks, in the Spanish word they are presented as something that happens, which involves an apparently more objective view of the causes of sadness. On the other hand, while Goddard and Wierzbicka (2010b) described *sad* using the past tense, in their explanations for *distressed* and *depressed*, *dejected*, present tense is used. As it will be seen in this and the following comparative tables, we have chosen the present (not the past tense) for all our explanations. Table 14 shows the comparison:

TABLE 14

Sad (by Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2010b, see table 4)/*triste*₁ (our proposal; see table 7)

X felt <i>sad</i> : someone X felt bad someone can feel something like this when this someone thinks like this: “I know that something bad happened I don’t want things like this to happen I can’t think like this: I will do something because of it now I know that I can’t do anything”.	Someone is <i>triste</i> ₁ when this someone feels something bad. Maybe something bad is happening. Maybe this person sees something bad. This person is like that for some time. Like when someone wants to be with some other person. Something bad happened. Because of that, this person cannot be with this other person. This person cannot do anything.
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Regarding *distressed/apesadumbrado*, we found more differences in both meanings. The English word is focused on something bad which happens to a distressed person whilst the Spanish word incorporates another nuance of meaning: something bad could have happened to some other people. Moreover, the English adjective contains some nuances related to the desire of doing something or that someone does something about this feeling, which are not present in the Spanish adjective. The Spanish word is more concerned with the intensity and a prolonged in time sadness similar to the feeling of a heavy stone over the body, as shown in the table 15:

TABLE 15*Distressed* (see table 5)/*apesadumbrado* (see table 10)

<i>Distressed</i> (e.g., X feels distressed)	Someone is <i>apesadumbrado</i> .
X feels something	when someone knows something
sometimes a person thinks something like this:	very bad happened.
something bad is happening to me now	Maybe this someone did something very bad.
I don't want this	Maybe other someone did something very bad.
because of this, I would want to do something	Because of this this someone feels very sad.
I don't know what I can do	This someone is very sad for a long time
I want someone to do something	because this something very bad happened.
because of this, this person feels something bad	This someone thinks something like this:
X feels like this	this bad thing is like a heavy _[m] stone _[m] .
	This someone thinks something like this:
	this heavy _[m] stone _[m] is on my body.

With respect to *depressed*, *dejected*/*abatido*, both English words differ on the nuance of the time: according to Wierzbicka (1972: 565), a depressed person thinks that something bad will happen to him/her (in the future), while a dejected person thinks that something bad happened to him/her (in the past). The Spanish semi-equivalent does not contain any of these semantic components, but some features attached to a deep sadness and to physical postures that express this feeling, like a slow-movement and a bowed head, as table 16 shows for *depressed* (see table 6) and *abatido* (we have chosen the meaning of *abatido*₃ because it is the one that most closely approximates to the sense of depressed):

TABLE 16*Dejected, depressed* (see table 6)/*abatido*₃ (see table 13)

<i>Depressed</i>	Someone is <i>abatido</i> .
X feels something	When this someone is very sad.
sometimes a person thinks something like this:	This someone moves legs _[m] slowly _[m] , this
I can think: something bad will happen to me	someone's eyes _[m] do not see the sky _[m] ,
I can't think: something good will happen to me	this someone's eyes see the floor _[m] .
I can't think: I will do something good	
because of this, this person feels bad	
X feels like this	

7. Discussion and conclusions

Several problems arise when contrasting the semantic features associated with the adjectives analyzed in Spanish and English. The first problem is a consequence of the granularity of the analysis. While the explications of the English adjectives are general, the explications of their Spanish equivalents proposed in this study are more detailed and recognize more than one meaning for the same adjective (in the cases of *triste* and *abatido*).

The second problem is related to the differences derived from the combinatory with the two meanings of *to be*, the Spanish verbs *ser* ('be permanently') and *estar* ('be temporally') with the adjective *triste* (sad) and some other adjectives not analysed in this study. Even if both correspond to only one prime, BE (someone/something), the Spanish speakers distinguish between their two meanings. Therefore, there is a distinction between feeling, attitude, and character trait for *triste* ('sad'), being feeling something temporary; attitude, something usual, and character trait, something permanent (the two last are close to but do not correspond exactly to the so-called episodic and permanent states). This distinction has not been described so far for the English adjective *sad*. This corroborates the idea advocated by Wierzbicka (1998) that *sadness* does not correspond to any universal concept.

The last problem is associated with the meaning of the words: although the adjectives analyzed share the semantic feature of *sad*, each one is so rich in meaning that it does not seem coherent to accept the equivalences proposed by the dictionaries (see tables 1-2). As we have seen in the case of *apesadumbrado*, the etymology of this word is of extreme value to fully understand its meaning, which is related to "heavy emotional weight". This feeling may be accompanied by the feeling of repentance, but not necessarily, since the latter requires the feeling of guilt. We have also observed that, in the case of *abatido*, the primary importance of non-emotional meaning, which this adjective originated from, is to fall, as well as the state of physical immobility. Therefore, two emotional meanings arose: (1) sadness as a result of physical discomfort; (2) physical manifestation of sadness, like walk with one's head bound towards the ground. These two examples reveal the importance of etymology and cognitive associations between different meanings.

So, how can be addressed the problem of the Spanish-English apparent untranslatability of this set of adjectives? When working with complex words, such as the words analyzed here, our first suggestion to the lexicographers compiling bilingual dictionaries is to avoid searching any word equivalent in the target language but to write an explication of the meaning. This is a common practice applied only to monolingual dictionaries for advanced learners. Nevertheless, from our point of view, it is worthwhile considering this proposal for any bilingual dictionary. For instance, for *apesadumbrado*, we can write a definition with the components *deeply sad, feeling like a big stone over the body*, etc., but not with the words *distressed, afflicted, troubled, anxious, grief-stricken*, as the dictionaries analyzed propose (see table 1).

Our second recommendation would be to write an explication in simple words, with semantic primes and molecules, if possible, before writing the final definition. From our viewpoint, explications within the NSM have an enormous value when trying to understand the meaning of the words. Once all the nuances of meaning are tackled, if necessary, definition with more complex words can be written for receptive dictionaries, which help the user understand the meaning of a word. Not solution was proposed here, however, for productive

dictionaries, except for the use of the hyperon *deeply sad* although it could be also possible to suggest the above-mentioned semantic components (*feeling like a big stone over the body*) in this type of dictionaries.

It is true that many Spanish speakers may use these sad-related words with the sense of 'very sad', however, a more appropriate contextualized usage of these words can be found in literature. Thus, as a final consideration with respect to our proposal is that the writers' works should be what guides the lexicographer's research when working complex emotional words, and, perhaps, some other lexical fields. Further research in this area is required to offer possible solutions to the problems detected, as lack of space prevented us from doing so in this study. In any case, the preliminary findings may contribute to a better cultural understanding of these sad-related Spanish words compared to their supposed English equivalents.

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