

The syntactic properties of bare nouns in a Spanish-Portuguese contact situation

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Mutual influence has been observed between the two languages of a bilingual speaker. The impact of one language on another can vary with the type of bilingualism: whether one looks at simultaneous bilinguals (who start acquiring both languages before three years of age) or sequential bilinguals (who acquire only one language, L1, until three years of age, and then acquires a second language, L2). The L2 of sequential bilinguals may incorporate syntactic and semantic properties of their first language (Alarcón 2011, Howkins 2009, a. o.). Impacts may also depend on the grammaticality and interpretation of a certain construction in the two languages. This project investigates the crosslinguistic influence between the two languages of bilinguals by focusing on the distribution (syntax) of noun phrases in Spanish and Portuguese for Spanish-Portuguese bilingual speakers that live in a contact situation in Uruguay. Specifically, this project investigates bare nouns (such as bare singulars, which are nouns without articles and a plural marking, as ‘livro’ *book* in Brazilian Portuguese ‘Comprei **livro** ontem’ literally: *I bought **book** yesterday*, and bare plurals, which are plural nouns without articles, as ‘livros’ *books* in Brazilian Portuguese ‘Comprei **livros** ontem’ *I bought **books** yesterday*), which pattern differently in the two languages under study.

Bare nouns in Brazilian Portuguese are grammatical on subject and object positions and do not present any verbal restrictions (such as in ‘**Cachorro(s)** late(m)’ *Dog(s) barks/bark* and ‘Comprei **livro(s)** ontem’ *I bought **book(s)** yesterday*, respectively). In Spanish, bare nouns are allowed just on the object position and the use of bare singulars is restricted to have-predicates (such as in ‘Juan tiene **auto**’ *Juan has **car*** and ‘Juan lleva **sombrero**’ *Juan carries **hat***). In both languages, bare singulars can be interpreted as one or more than one (such as ‘Compraré **coche**’ *I will buy a car/some cars*) (Espinal 2010, Ferreira 2010). Because bare nouns in Brazilian Portuguese present the same distribution of full DPs (as *the dog* and *a dog*) and can appear under certain specific contexts in this language, some authors claim that bare nouns project a null determiner (null D) (Schmitt and Munn 1999, 2002, Munn and Schmitt 2005, Cyrino and Espinal 2015, a. o.). While these authors analyze the syntactic structure of bare plurals with a Number Phrase projection and a Determiner Phrase projection (with a null D), bare singulars are analyzed only with a Determiner Phrase projection (with a null D) because they are number neutral. The syntactic analysis of bare nouns in Spanish is distinct from the one presented for Brazilian Portuguese. Bare singulars in Spanish are analyzed as Noun Phrases (without a null D and as number neutrals), and bare plurals are analyzed with only a Number Phrase projection (Espinal 2010, Oggiani 2011, a. o.).

Given the different syntactic analyses of bare nouns in Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese, this project investigates the syntactic distribution (and possible syntactic analysis) of bare nouns in Spanish and Portuguese for bilingual speakers from Rivera, Uruguay. By looking at the acceptability of bare nouns in different positions in both languages, it might be possible to understand if there is a crosslinguistic influence between Spanish and Portuguese related to the syntax of bare nouns in these languages. Many researchers have already shown the existent crosslinguistic influence in Spanish from Portuguese and vice-versa in other areas (Carvalho 2006, 2016, Kerswill 2010, Waltermire 2012, a. o.). This investigation includes an experimental study with bilingual speakers from Rivera that focuses on the grammaticality of bare nouns in distinct syntactic contexts. This ongoing project will contribute to the area of the crosslinguistic

variation of bare nouns in Romance languages and the understudied area of crosslinguistic influence in Spanish and Portuguese from Rivera.

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