5.0. Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of bare nouns in Afro-Bolivian Spanish (ABS), whose nominal domain does not fit the typological categorization sketched by Chierchia’s (1998) Nominal Mapping Parameter. After considering the mass/count, kind, and indefinite/definite readings of ABS bare nouns, it is suggested that these categories are not structurally bare; rather, they are embedded in a DP, headed by an empty D nucleus (in line with Longobardi 1994). Data suggest that cover determiners encode a variety of type-shifting operators, which are conditioned by several pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic factors. Given the nature of the phenomenon under study in this chapter, the use of sociolinguistic techniques and quantitative analyses did not appear to be the most appropriate. All the examples reported are the result of elicitations and grammaticality judgments.

As reported in chapter 4, it is generally accepted that NPs (Noun Phrases) are predicates while DPs (Determiner Phrases) are arguments (Longobardi 1994; McNally 2004), at least in Romance languages. A great deal of research has been carried out recently to refine Chierchia’s proposal, which would account for the distribution of bare plurals and full DPs cross-linguistically. As indicated in section 4.3.2, Chierchia divides human languages into three...
main groups, whose nominal domains can be schematically represented as follows: (A) [+arg, –pred] (e.g., Chinese/Japanese): generalized bare arguments, every (lexical) noun is mass, lack of plural morphology, generalized classifier system; (B) [–arg, +pred] (e.g., Romance Languages): count/mass distinction, lack of bare NPs in argument position, plural morphology; (C) [+arg, +pred] (e.g., Germanic/Slavic Languages) count/mass distinction, bare mass nouns and plurals in argument position, lack of bare singular count nouns, plural morphology. Chierchia also predicts that languages lacking an overt definite article would recur to a silent iota operator, a semantic operator acting as a definite article. On the other hand, if a language has an overt definite article, iota will not be available.

Such a proposal has been empirically challenged by Déprez (2001) for Haitian French, Schmitt & Munn (2003) for Brazilian Portuguese, Baptista (2007) for Cape Verdian Portuguese, and Kester & Schmitt (2007) for Papiamentu, among others. Another language that does not fit Chierchia’s Nominal Mapping Parameter is Afro-Bolivian Spanish (ABS), where bare nouns—deprived of plural morphology—can appear in both subject and object positions and are subject to a variety of interpretations depending on the context in which they are found.

5.1. ABS Nouns and Chierchia’s Nominal Mapping Parameter

The typological classification provided by Chierchia’s (1998) Nominal Mapping Parameter does not seem to be able to account for the ABS nominal configuration. In fact, ABS is endowed with definite articles and plural morphology, nouns are specified for count and mass at the lexical level, and bare singular nouns can appear in both subject and object positions.

Let us start with an analysis of plural morphology. Number (plural/singular) is usually conveyed by the determiner heading the DP, which can be inherently plural (e.g., lu, see 39), or can carry the inflectional plural marker—s (40).

(39)

a. Lu chico boliviano.
   the-PL guy-SG bolivian-SG
   ‘The Bolivian guys.’
b. El chico boliviano.
the-SG guy-SG bolivian-SG
‘The old good friend.’

(40)

a. Sus caramelo bonito.
his-PL candy-SG good-SG
‘His good candies.’
b. Su caramelo bonito.
his-SG candy-SG good-SG
‘His good candy.’

As can be observed, the nominal and the adjectival stems remain bare, so that plural marking appears only on determiners (see Delicado-Cantero & Sessarego 2011). Moreover, ABS Ns are specified for count and mass at the lexical level. This point is clearly shown in (41), where, given the same context—and the same quantifier, mucho ‘much/many’—two different nouns take on different readings: vino ‘wine’ as mass, vaso ‘glass’ as count.

(41)

a. Mucho vino tomó Pablo a la boda.
much-PL wine-SG drunk Pablo to the-SG wedding-SG
‘Pablo drunk so much wine at the wedding.’
b. Mucho vaso tomó Pablo a la boda.
much-PL glass-SG drunk Pablo to the-SG wedding-SG
‘Pablo drunk so many glasses at the wedding.’

Furthermore, ABS Ns can appear bare, in both subject and object positions (42). As we will see, they can take on a variety of readings, as a function of their syntactic environment and pragmatic context.

(42) Chancho come papa.
pig-SG eat potato-SG
‘Pigs eat potatoes.’

However, in contrast to other languages in which argumental plural bare nouns are found (e.g., Brazilian Portuguese [BP]), in ABS, as we have seen, nouns never inflect for number in the traditional dialect, and therefore, they cannot carry plural morphology. These data indicate that, again, contrary
to Chierchia's predictions, there are languages in which singular count bare nouns can be arguments, while plural ones are not allowed. Lastly, ABS is endowed with definite articles: masculine singular (el), feminine singular (la), and a plural article that does not inflect for gender (lu) \(43\).\(^1\)

\(43\)

\begin{itemize}
  \item a. El perro blanco.
  the-M.SG dog-M.SG white-M.SG
  'The white male dog.'
  
  \item b. La perra blanco.
  the-F.SG dog-F.SG white-M.SG
  'The white female dog.'
  
  \item c. Lu perro blanco.
  the-M.PL dog-M.SG white-M.SG
  'The white male dogs.'
  
  \item d. Lu perra blanco.
  the-M.PL dog-F.SG white-M.SG
  'The white female dog.'
\end{itemize}

In summary, the ABS nominal domain has the following characteristics: singular bare nouns in argument position, count/mass distinction, morphological plural, lack of a generalized classifier system, and presence of definite articles. These features make ABS a language that does not fit into Chierchia's Nominal Parameter typology. In the next section, we will take a closer look at ABS bare singular nouns in order to understand which semantic and syntactic principles regulate their properties.

### 5.2. Number and Mass Interpretation

ABS bare nouns appear to not be specified for number and are able to take on either a mass or a count reading (plural or singular) depending on the context in which they appear. The nature of these nouns will be exempli-

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1. Lipski (2008: 82) hypothesized that ABS lu might have been the only definite article in the early stages of ABS formation. This would be suggested by the fact that lu is not only used as a plural article; rather, in his recordings the author could find sporadic instances in which lu takes on a singular reading (e.g. lu juamia 'the family'). I am not in the position of either confirming or rejecting this statement, since none of my informants were aware of the singular use of lu and my recordings do not report cases in which it acts as a singular definite article.
fied by presenting several grammatical tests, also used by Kester & Schmitt (2007: 127–29) to illustrate similar phenomena in Brazilian Portuguese and Papiamentu. ABS bare singulars are interpreted as plural when they are objects of verbs imposing a non-atomicity entailment on their internal argument (44).

(44) Pedro colecciona película.
    Pedro collects movie-SG
    ‘Pedro collects movies.’

Ns take on a singular reading when they occur in the same position, but with verbs that impose an atomicity entailment on their internal argument (45).

(45) Ana quele ti casar con boliviano.
    Ana wants you marry with Bolivian-SG
    ‘Ana wants you to marry a Bolivian.’ (any Bolivian)

Discourse anaphora provides further evidence for the systematic ambiguity between a singular and a plural reading of bare nouns. In fact, in ABS they can be referred back to with either a plural or a singular pronoun, as illustrated in (46).

(46) Yo tiene hijo. Ele/Eyu vive a Mururata.
    I have child-SG He/They live to Mururata
    ‘I have a child/children. He/They live in Mururata.’

Moving now to the mass/count distinction, ABS mass nouns may appear bare in argument position, where they can take on either an existential reading (47a) or a generic one (47b).

(47)
   a. Agua ta friu.
      water is cold
      ‘The water is cold.’
   b. Oro ta caro.
      gold is expensive
      ‘Gold is expensive.’
These data indicate that bare singulars allow mass and count readings. With respect to the latter, they can be interpreted as atomic or non-atomic individuals, and they can be linked to singular or plural pronouns.

5.3. Bare Nouns as Names of Kinds

In his Ph.D. dissertation, Carlson (1977) proposed a set of semantic tests to show that in English bare plurals in argument position are interpreted as names of kinds. The same hypothesis has been adopted recently by Kester & Schmitt (2007) to account for Brazilian Portuguese and Papiamentu data. In the present section, I provide some of these tests to describe the nature of ABS bare nouns. Carlson (1977) and Kester & Schmitt (2007) illustrate their point by showing that in these languages bare plurals yield to a grammatical interpretation when they co-occur with predicates that can describe only kinds; the authors also demonstrate that the interpretation of bare nouns is sensitive to the context in which they appear, and that they cannot take wide scope over negation, intensional verbs, and durative adverbials. In this respect, ABS singular bare nouns appear to parallel bare plurals in English, Brazilian Portuguese, and Papiamentu.

Example (48) illustrates how ABS bare nouns combine with predicates that apply only to kinds.

(48) Chancho es muy común a Tocaña
    pig-SG is very common to Tocaña
    ‘Pigs are very common in Tocaña.’

The generic and existential readings of bare nouns are conditioned by well-known factors such as the lexical requirements of the predicate, tense/aspect, episodicity, etc. For example, the bare singular in (49) is interpreted generically, whereas the one in (50) is existential:

(49) A mí me gusta gato.
    to me to-me like cat-SG
    ‘I like cats.’

(50) Tiene gallina en la casa.
    have chicken-SG in the-SG house-SG
    ‘There is a chicken/chickens in the house.’
Finally, when co-occurring with negation (51a), intensional verbs (51b), and durative adverbials (51c), bare singulars allow only narrow-scope readings.

(51)

a. Oté no vió mancha en la ventana. (neg > object; *object > neg)
   you no saw spot-SG in the-SG window-SG
   ‘You did not see the spot on the window.’

b. Juana quele ti casar con boliviano. (want > object; *object > want)
   Juana want you marry with Bolivian-SG
   ‘Juana wants you to marry a Bolivian.’ (any Bolivian)

c. o mató iguana por dos hora. (adv > object; *object > adv)
   I killed iguana-SG for two hour-SG
   ‘I killed iguanas for two hours.’

This section has shown that ABS singular bare nouns can receive a kind reading when occurring in argument position. This is their default reading; however, such an interpretation is not the only one they have. As we will see in the following sections, depending on the pragmatic context in which they appear, these Ns can receive either a definite or an indefinite reading.

5.4. The Semantics of (In)definiteness

This section provides a description of ABS article system with respect to the semantic notions of definiteness and specificity. The article system of contact languages has generated much interest in creole linguistics, especially after Bickerton’s (1981) stipulations on its nature in creole languages. According to Bickerton, creole languages are endowed with an article system with “a definite article for presupposed-specific NP; an indefinite article for asserted-specific NP; and zero for nonspecific NP” (1981: 56). As we will see in more detail, this description does not capture the features of ABS article system. In this vernacular, in fact, there are three overt definite articles (el, la, lu) and two indefinite ones (un, unos). Moreover, I claim that null articles are present, but they are not restricted to non-specific NPs. The distribution of articles in ABS resembles that of standard Spanish with the exception that bare nouns can take on plural/singular, definite/indefinite, specific/non-specific readings, given the appropriate syntactic and pragmatic environment.
5.4.1. BARE NOUNS AND INDEFINITENESS

I begin this section analyzing the distributional properties and uses of the indefinite *un/unos*. Indefinite articles in ABS can refer to both specific and non-specific entities where, from a pragmatic point of view, an entity is specific if it is known by the speaker, by the hearer, or by both (see Gutiérrez-Rexach 2004). Examples (52a, b) clarify this distinction between specific and non-specific uses. In (52a) the speaker knows which chocolate cake(s) he acquired yesterday; in (52b) he does not know exactly which cake(s) he will buy tomorrow; he knows only that he will be looking for a/some chocolate one(s).

\[(52)\]
\[a. \quad \text{Ayer yo compró un/unos tarta de chocolate.} \quad \text{yesterday I bought a/some cake of chocolate} \quad \text{‘Yesterday I bought a/some chocolate cake(s).’}\]
\[b. \quad \text{Mañana yo va comprar un/unos tarta de chocolate.} \quad \text{tomorrow I go buy a/some cake of chocolate} \quad \text{‘Tomorrow I will buy a/some chocolate cake(s).’}\]

The same specific/non-specific reading of indefinites can be taken on by the noun when it is preceded by a null determiner (53a, b).

\[(53)\]
\[a. \quad \text{Ayer yo compró tarta de chocolate.} \quad \text{yesterday I bought cake of chocolate} \quad \text{‘Yesterday I bought a/some chocolate cake(s).’}\]
\[b. \quad \text{Mañana yo va comprar tarta de chocolate.} \quad \text{tomorrow I go buy cake of chocolate} \quad \text{‘Tomorrow I will buy a/some chocolate cake(s).’}\]

The only distinction between the sentences in (52) and those in (53) is that in the first case the number (singular/plural) is conveyed by the overt determiner, while in the second set of sentences it is not. In fact, a strategy commonly used in ABS to distinguish between single and plural readings consists of recurring to indefinite articles, as illustrated below (54).

\[(54)\]
\[\text{Oté tiene caramelo? Sí, yo tiene caramelo/un caramelo.} \quad \text{you have candy yes I have candy/a candy} \quad \text{‘Do you have candies? Yes, I have candies/a candy.’}\]
Indefinite singulars can also have wide and narrow scope with respect to other operators, such as negation and intensional verbs.

(55)

a. Yo no vió un mancha en el suelo. (un > ¬ and ¬ > un)
   I not see a spot on the floor
   ‘I didn’t see a spot on the floor.’

b. Juana quele ti casar con un italiano. (want > un and un > want)
   Juana want you marry with un Italian
   ‘Juana wants you to marry an Italian.’

Moreover, indefinites in ABS can have a generic reading, which should not be confused with the kind-denoting reading. In fact, indefinites can appear with quantificational generics (56a), but cannot occur with predicates that can only be true of a kind (56b) (see also Kester & Schmitt 2007: 122–23) or with one-event-only episodic predicates (56c).

(56)

a. Un inglés habla inglés.
   an Englishman speaks English
   ‘An Englishman speaks English.’

b. *Un gallinazo/gallinazo ta en peligro de extinción.
   a black-buzzard/black buzzard is in danger of extinction
   ‘Black buzzards are on the verge of extinction.’

c. *Un negro/negro votó por primera vez después Reforma Agraria.
   a black/black voted for first time after reform agricultural
   ‘Black people voted for the first time after the Land Reform.’

Therefore, singular bare nouns can be kind-referring expressions while nouns preceded by indefinite articles cannot. Müller (2003: 78–81) showed a variety of differences and commonalities between indefinites and bare singulars in Brazilian Portuguese. A similar scenario is also true for ABS. In fact, in this contact dialect, both indefinites and bare singulars take on a generic reading when they are subjects of episodic predicates. Nevertheless, in sentences like (57), the indefinite subject can also have a specific interpretation—“A certain Bolivian eats lechón today”—while such a reading is not available for the bare noun, which is always understood as existential/
generic, when uttered out of the blue—“Bolivians in general eat lechón today.”

(57)

a. Un boliviano come lechón hoy.
A Bolivian eats lechón today
‘A Bolivian eats lechón today.’
b. Boliviano come lechón hoy.
Bolivian eats lechón today
‘Bolivians eats lechón today.’

Moreover, in (58), a generic reading obtains for both sentences; this effect is highly dependent on the essential properties of the noun. In fact, a defining, essential property of ‘being a sonnet’ consists of ‘having four strophes’ (see Gutiérrez-Rexach 2006 for a characterization of essential properties). On the other hand, in (59a), it is not possible to ascribe to ‘a romantic song’ the essential property of ‘being popular,’ so that un canción romántico cannot be interpreted generically. Conversely, the construction in (59b) yields to a grammatical reading because it has a descriptive or inductive flavor (Greenberg 2003).

(58)

a. Un soneto tiene cuatro estrofa.
a sonnet has four strophes
‘A sonnet has four strophes.’
b. Soneto tiene cuatro estrofa.
sonnet has four strophes
‘Sonnets have four strophes.’

(59)

a. #Un canción romántico es popular.
a song romantic is popular
‘A romantic song is popular.’
b. Canción romántico es popular.
song romantic is popular
‘Love songs are popular.’

When an indefinite noun expresses an unusual class, it tends to receive an existential reading, whereas bare nouns of the same type tend to take
on a generic interpretation. The bare nouns in (60) have a generic reading. The generic interpretation is possible not only for bare nouns denoting well-known or common classes, such as a “famous actor” in (60a); it is also available for bare nouns referring to very unusual ones, such as a “Bolivian musicians born on the fourth of August in Cochabamba” in (61a). On the other hand, both the generic and the existential interpretations are available for the indefinite noun in (61b); nevertheless, the existential specific reading is strongly favored.

(60)

a. Actor famoso gana mucho dinero.
   actor famous earns much money
   ‘Famous actors make a lot of money.’

b. Un actor famoso gana mucho dinero.
   an actor famous earns much money
   ‘A famous actor makes a lot of money.’

(61)

a. Músico boliviano nacido el 4 de agosto en Cochabamba
toma harto cerveza.
   musician Bolivian born the 4 of August in Cochabamba
drinks much beer
   ‘Bolivian musicians born on the fourth of August in Cochabamba drink a lot of beer.’

b. Un músico boliviano nacido el 4 de agosto en Cochabamba
toma harto cerveza.
   a musician Bolivian born the 4 of August in Cochabamba
drinks much beer
   ‘A Bolivian musician born on the fourth of August in Cochabamba drinks much beer.’

In summary, both bare nouns and indefinites can express genericity. Indefinites express only generalizations that are backed up by information shared in the common ground, whereas bare nouns express generalizations per se, not triggering supporting presuppositions (Greenberg 2003). With respect to existential/indefinite readings, bare nouns have an existential reading only if uttered out of the blue; indefinites have either a generic or an existential interpretation depending on the presence or absence of triggering presuppositions. In addition, bare nouns do not indicate number
information (singular/plural), while *un/unos* inherently convey this feature as a result of their morphological specification.

### 5.4.2. BARE NOUNS AND DEFINITENESS

ABS bare nouns can take on readings that are similar to those of DPs headed by definite determiners. Nevertheless, such interpretations are strongly dependent on the pragmatic context in which they occur. As an example, bare nouns cannot be interpreted as definite (indicating existence plus uniqueness) if uttered out of the blue—i.e., they have to satisfy a familiarity presupposition. Both definite descriptions and bare nouns can be associated to an antecedent in discourse via identity or a part-whole relation, satisfying a strong familiarity presupposition (Roberts 2003). An example of an identity relation between discourse referents is presented in (62), where the (b) sentence is a continuation of the (a) sentence (see Kester & Schmitt 2007: 117).

\[(62)\]
\begin{enumerate}
  \item a. Yo compró un tarta.
      I bought a cake
      ‘I bought a cake.’
  \item b. Tarta/la tarta sabe a fresa.
      cake/the cake taste like strawberry
      ‘The cake tastes like strawberry.’
\end{enumerate}

The above example shows that bare nouns can also refer back to discourse-familiar entities, and, not being specified for number, they can be linked to singular or plural discourse referents. Both definite articles and bare nouns can also refer back to weakly familiar entities (Roberts 2003). Instances of weak familiarity are represented by the so-called bridging or associative contexts (Asher & Lascarides 1998), which may be triggered by a part-whole relation between the entities in discourse (see Kester & Schmitt 2007: 118). In (63), *crema/la crema* ‘cream/the cream’ is understood as the cake’s cream.

\[(63)\]
\begin{enumerate}
  \item a. Yo compró un tarta.
      I bought a cake
      ‘I bought a cake.’
b. Crema/la crema sabe a fresa.
   cream/the cream taste like strawberry
   ‘The cream tastes like strawberry.’

Definite determiners and bare nouns allow attributive and referential interpretations of a nominal description. They differ in that attributive readings of bare nouns are possible only when such an attribute is salient in the common ground. Example (64a) allows for two different interpretations: one in which I know the teacher and I am looking for him, and another in which I am looking for the teacher without exactly knowing who this person is. Nevertheless, (64b) can be uttered only in a scenario (common ground) in which the relevant properties or attributes are salient—for example, a school. It would not be felicitous, for example, if uttered while addressing a server in a bar, unless the teacher were a well-known regular customer.

(64)
   a. Yo ta buscando el maestro.
      I is looking for the teacher
      ‘I am looking for the teacher.’
   b. Yo ta buscando maestro.
      I is looking for teacher
      ‘I am looking for the teacher.’

Sometimes the use of bare nouns approximates that of demonstrative elements, in that not only the presuppositions associated with definiteness are satisfied (existence and uniqueness), but also a demonstration presupposition (Roberts 2001). The deictic content of bare nouns can also be derived by visual cues. In (65), if the mentioned entities are pointed out by the speaker, no definite or demonstrative article is required and the bare noun is understood as a demonstrative description:

(65) Nube ta bien rojo.
    cloud be good red
    ‘That cloud/those clouds is/are very red.’

Definite DPs in ABS, like bare nouns, can combine with predicates of kinds (66a) and with one-event-only episodic predicates (66b):
(66)

a. El gallinazo ta en peligro de extinción.
The black-buzzard is on-the-verge of extinction
‘Black buzzards are on the verge of extinction.’
b. El negro votó por primera vez después Reforma Agraria.
The black voted for first time after Reform Land
‘Black people voted for the first time after the Land Reform.’

In summary, this section shows that bare singular nouns can alternate with definite DPs in ABS. This is possible only when the relevant presuppositions are satisfied in the common ground. Said interpretation can be made explicit through an anaphoric identity relation, part-whole relation, common-ground cues, uniqueness presuppositions, or visual deixis.

5.5. Bare Nouns in ABS: A Unified Account

In this section, I provide a theoretical account of the attested patterns. First, it seems clear that the Nominal Mapping Parameter (Chierchia 1998) does not adequately explain the ABS data. As observed, ABS does not fit into Chierchia’s framework: ABS bare nouns occur in argument position, this language has plural morphology, and the count/mass distinction is instantiated at the lexical level. Following Longobardi (1994), we can assume that bare nouns are not structurally bare; rather, they are embedded into a DP, with an empty D category (see also Contreras 1986). DPs can act as arguments, while NPs are predicates; thus they need to combine with a D head to be referential. The nom (\(\cap\)) operation takes place in D to shift common nouns, which denote properties \(<s,<e,t>>\), into individuals \(<s,e>\).

Covert determiners in ABS encode a variety of functions, not only nom. Covert type-shifting operations can be seen as last resort mechanisms that provide “bare” DPs with kind and quantificational interpretations. Such operations are not allowed if there is an overt determiner performing the same function. In ABS we see that there are definite and indefinite determiners, but bare nouns can still receive indefinite or definite-like interpretations without the presence of those items, although the resulting interpretations are not identical.

ABS bare nouns lack number specification. Number and quantificational force are encoded at the D level (Delicado-Cantero & Sessarego 2011). This
particular configuration allows for a wider array of interpretive possibilities, depending on which operator is inserted. In the case of bare nouns in ABS, the evidence presented here suggests that a covert determiner may encode a variety of type-shifting functions (Partee & Rooth 1983): (i) nom: for the shift of predicates to kind readings in the default case; (ii) existential or definite (iota) operators: for existential and definite-like interpretations. In the case of the existential operator, pure existential readings are favored; for the definite readings, familiarity presuppositions have to be satisfied in the common ground. In general, ABS instantiates a very flexible system, where the absence of overt morphological marking on nouns allows for contextual parameters to determine the interpretation of bare DPs. This flexibility is required, given that not only morphological marking and semantic type determine the interpretation of the bare noun, but also contextual factors.

5.6. Conclusion

Far from postulating new revolutionary linguistic parameters, this study has shown that Chierchia’s proposal cannot account for the ABS data. This chapter provided a survey and analysis of the nature of bare nouns in ABS. It also compared the properties of definite and indefinite determiners with those of bare nouns.

ABS bare nouns have been analyzed as names of kinds subject to type-shifting operations determined by contextual factors. In turn, these elements obey certain semantic and pragmatic constraints, which ultimately determine the interpretation of their covert D-categories.