6

N-Ellipsis

6.0. Introduction

This chapter is a survey of N-ellipsis phenomena in standard Spanish (stSp) and Afro-Bolivian Spanish (ABS); the examples provided here were collected through formal elicitations since spontaneous speech was unlikely to provide the grammatical accuracy required in the judgments for the analysis of the syntactic configurations under investigation.

The generative literature on Spanish N-ellipsis is particularly rich, so that different frameworks have been designed to account for the processes responsible for its distribution in the standard variety. Some scholars have indicated that Spanish richness in inflectional morphology and the presence of pro in this language are the reasons making N-ellipses possible (Torrenga 1988); some accounts have explained the nature of Spanish N-drop by recurring to N movement to DP-internal Agreement Projections to check nominal phi-features (Kester & Sleeman 2002; Ticio 2003, 2005); others have ascribed nominal properties to the preposition de ‘of’ to explain cliticization of the article to the preposition after the ellipsis operation has taken place (Brucart 1987, 1999; Brucart & Gràcia 1986). Interestingly, a comparison between the stSp (67) and the ABS (68) data indicates that although ABS is not inflectionally rich and does not have pro, it allows all the elliptical configurations encountered in stSp. Moreover, ABS nouns can also be frequently
elided in constructions that would be ungrammatical in stSp, namely when the elided noun is followed by *cun* ‘with.’

(67) stSp
a. La camisa roja y la [e] de manchas.
the shirt red and the [e] of spots
b. *La camisa roja y la [e] con manchas.
the shirt red and the [e] with spots
‘The red shirt and the spotted one.’

(68) ABS
a. La camisa rojo y la [e] de mancha.
the shirt red and the [e] of spot
b. La camisa rojo y la [e] cun mancha.
the shirt red and the [e] with spot
‘The red shirt and the spotted one.’

All of this represents problems for previous explanations and will be addressed in the current chapter by adopting a microparametric minimalist perspective (see van Craenenbroeck 2010 for a complementary perspective).

6.1. Data

In stSp, where gender and number agreement operates across the DP, a switch in number features across clauses allows nominal elision to obtain (sloppy identity), while differences in gender specification on N block the elliptical process (Depiante & Masullo 2001; Saab 2004) (69).

(69) stSp
a. El chico alto y los [e] bajos.
the-M.SG boy-M.SG tall-M.SG and the-M.PL [e] short-M.PL
‘The tall boy and the short ones.’
b. *El chico alto y la [e] baja.
the-M.SG boy-M.SG tall-M.SG and the-F.SG. [e] short-F.SG
‘The tall boy and the short girl.’

The same exact configurations are encountered in traditional ABS, where nouns and adjectives do not inflect for gender and number.
In both languages, if a DP is headed by a demonstrative, a cardinal, or a quantifier, the empty nominal can stay by itself and does not have to be followed by any modifier (71–72). Conversely, if the D element is a definite article, [e] cannot stand by itself; rather, it has to be followed by an AP, a PP, or a CP (73–74).

(70) ABS
a. El chico alto y el [e] bajo.
‘The tall boy and the short ones.’
b. *El chico alto y la [e] bajo.
‘The tall boy and the short girl.’

(71) stSp
a. No quiero dos gatos, quiero tres [e].
no want two cats want three
‘I do not want two cats, I want three.’
b. No quiero estos gatos, quiero aquellos [e].
no want these cats want those
‘I do not want these cats, I want those.’

(72) ABS
a. Yo no quele doh gato, yo quele treh [e].
I no want two cats I want three
‘I do not want two cats, I want three.’
b. Yo no quele estos gato, yo quele aquellos [e].
I no want these cats I want those
‘I do not want these cats, I want those.’

(73) stSp
a. El gato negro y el [e] blanco.
the cat black and the [e] white
b. El gato negro y el [e] de color blanco.
the cat black and the [e] of color white
c. El gato negro y el [e] que es de color blanco.
the cat black and the [e] that is of color white
‘The black cat and the white one.’
d. *El gato negro y el [e]
the cat black and the [e]
(74) ABS
   a. El gato negro y el [e] blanco.
      the cat black and the [e] white
   b. El gato negro y el [e] di color blanco.
      the cat black and the [e] of color white
   c. El gato negro y el [e] que es di color blanco.
      the cat black and the [e] that is of color white
      ‘The black cat and the white one.’
   d. *El gato negro y el [e].
      the cat black and the [e]

It must be acknowledged that not all adjectives behave in the same way; while post-nominal adjectives allow nominal ellipses, pre-nominal ones block them (75–76).

(75) stSp
      the true friend tall and the supposed [e] short
      ‘The true tall friend and the supposed short one.’
   b. El amigo alto y el [e] bajo.
      the friend tall and the [e] short
      ‘The tall friend and the short one.’

(76) ABS
      the true friend tall and the supposed [e] short
      ‘The true tall friend and the supposed short one.’
   b. El amigo alto y el [e] bajo.
      the friend tall and the [e] short
      ‘The tall friend and the short one.’

It should also be pointed out that D + [e] + PP constructions (see 67b, 68b) are subject to certain grammatical constraints since not all Ps can be used in these sentences. In stSp, the only P capable of following [e] in such a configuration is de ‘of’ (77); while in ABS, N-drop can occur when the elided N is followed by di ‘of’ and cun ‘with’ (78).

(77) stSp
   a. El bocadillo de jamón y el [e] de chocolate.
The prepositions *de/di* in stSp and ABS can take on a variety of functions. They can introduce several phrases marked with different theta-roles: possessors (79a, 80a), agents (79b, 80b), objects (79c, 80c), as well as a variety of non-thematic PPs, which provide a description of the N they modify, e.g., color adjectives. A restriction that applies to stSp and ABS N-ellipses is the need for thematic role correspondence between the coordinated clauses (compare: 79a, b, c vs. 79d, e and 80a, b, c vs. 80d, e).

(79) stSp
a.  El libro suyo_{poss} y el [e] tuy_{poss}.
   the book his and the [e] your
   'His book and yours.'

b.  El libro de Cervantes_{agent} y el [e] de Juan_{agent}.
   the book of Cervantes and the [e] of Juan
   'Cervantes' book and Juan's one.'

c.  El libro de física_{object} y el [e] de sintaxis_{object}.
   the book of physics and the [e] of syntax
   'The physics book and syntax one'

d.  El libro de María_{agent/poss} y el [e] de física_{theme}.
   the book of María and the [e] of physics
   'María's book and the physics one'
e. *El libro de física\textsubscript{object} y el [e] de María\textsubscript{agent/poss.}
the book of physics and the [e] of María
‘The physics book and María’s one.’

\begin{equation}
\text{(80) ABS}
\end{equation}

\begin{enumerate}
\item El libro suyo\textsubscript{poss} y el [e] tuy\textsubscript{poss}.
the book his and the [e] your
‘His book and your book.’
\item El libro di Cervantes\textsubscript{agent} y el [e] di Juan\textsubscript{agent}.
the book of Cervantes and the [e] of Juan
‘Cervantes’ book and Juan’s one.’
\item El libro di física\textsubscript{object} y el [e] di sintaxis\textsubscript{object}.
the book of physics and the [e] of syntax
‘The physics book and syntax one.’
\item *El libro di María\textsubscript{agent/poss} y el [e] di física\textsubscript{theme}.
The book of María and the [e] of physics
‘María’s book and the physics one.’
\item *El libro di física\textsubscript{object} y el [e] di María\textsubscript{agent/poss.}
the book of physics and the [e] of María
‘The physics book and María’s one.’
\end{enumerate}

While theta-marked PPs must obey the thematic restrictions on coordination as exemplified in (79–80), PPs free from theta-assignment behave more freely (81).\textsuperscript{1}

\begin{equation}
\text{(81) stSp/ABS}
\end{equation}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Dame el libro de/di Juan\textsubscript{agent/poss} y el [e] de/di color rojo.
give-me the book of Juan and the [e] of color red
‘Give me Juan’s book and the red one.’
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{1} As it is well known in the literature, different arrays of theta-roles have been proposed (Belletti & Rizzi 1988; Grimshaw 1990; Jackendorff 1990; Speas 1990; etc.). Dowty (1991) suggests that we should probably focus more on the prototypicality of theta-roles, rather than enumerate the potentially endless lists of them. This idea may very well also apply in this case. However, for the sake of simplicity and conformity, here we will provide an account that considers the nominal theta-roles that have usually been treated in the literature on nominalization—namely, possessor, agent, and object (Giorgi & Longobardi 1991; Valois 1991; among others). Grammaticality judgments may vary when certain APs and \textit{de}-PP constructions (potentially thematic) are introduced into the picture. However, the main point here is that there is a clear structural distinction between thematic-PPs/APs and non-thematic-ones. Thematic coordination between nominal arguments has also been pointed out by Brucart & Gràcia (1986: n. 9); however, the authors did not develop a theory to account for it.
b. Dame el libro de/di Petrarca\textsubscript{agent} y el [e] de/di color rojo.
   give-me the book of Petrarca and the [e] of color red
   ‘Give me Petrarca’s book and the red one.’

c. Dame el libro de/di fisica\textsubscript{theme} y el [e] de/di color rojo.
   give-me the book of physics and the [e] of color red
   ‘Give me the physics book and the red one.’

Finally, only CPs introduced by que (‘that’) are licit relative clause remnants; other Cs result in ungrammatical constructions (82).

\[(82)\text{ stSp/ABS}\
\]
\[a. \text{ El boliche que es caro y el [e] que es barato.} \]
\[\text{the shop that is expensive and the [e] that is cheap} \]
\[\text{‘The shop that is expensive and the one that is cheap.’} \]
\[b. *\text{El boliche donde ella compra pan y el [e] donde ella compra vino.} \]
\[\text{the shop where she buy bread and the [e] where she buy wine} \]
\[\text{‘The shop where she buys bread and the one where she buys wine.’} \]

This section has shown that N-drop phenomena in ABS parallel, for the most part, the instances of nominal ellipsis encountered in stSp. The only exception to this rule is the case of constructions consisting of a definite article plus [e] followed by a PP headed by cun ‘with.’ In fact, while in stSp an ellipsis followed by a con-PP yields an ungrammatical construction, in ABS cun-PP allows N-drop to obtain. While stSp and ABS converge quite closely in several aspects of their grammar (see Lipski 2008; Sessarego 2011 for an account), one aspect of these languages that is significantly divergent is the use of prepositions. The following section will briefly summarize the main differences between stSp and ABS in this respect.

### 6.2. Preposition Uses in ABS and stSp

Prepositions in ABS are used in ways that significantly deviate from their use in stSp. In fact, as Lipski (2008: chap. 5) points out, they are often omitted in the traditional dialect (83–86).
Moreover, ABS *a* ‘to’ is often used as stSp *en* ‘in,’ with a locative function (87–89).  

2. By comparing cases like (83) and (87) we can observe that the locative preposition *a* is used variably. When faced with grammaticality judgments on the presence/absence of this element, the majority of the ABS speakers I interviewed indicated that lack of *a* has to do with a performance error, likely due to rapid speech. Nevertheless, such an intuition was not shared by everyone. Some speakers, in fact, indicated that constructions lacking *a* sounded perfectly grammatical to them, thus suggesting that, similarly to gender agreement (see chapter 7), different informants might have slightly different grammatical configurations, and variation is widespread in the community. More research is definitely needed to get a better understanding of the aforementioned phenomena.
a. ABS: Mi hijo vive a Mururata.
   my son live to Mururata
b. stSp: Mi hijo vive en Mururata.
   my son live in Mururata
   ‘My son lives in Mururata.’

(88)
a. ABS: Juan nació a La Paz.
   Juan was-born to La Paz
b. stSp: Juan nació en La Paz.
   Juan was-born in La Paz
   ‘Juan was born in La Paz.’

(89)
a. ABS: Mis hijo vive a la Argentina.
   my son live to the Argentina
b. stSp: Mis hijos viven en Argentina.
   my son live in Argentina
   ‘My sons live in Argentina.’

Also, *cun* is used in different ways. It can replace stSp *y* ‘and’ (90–92) (see Lipski 2008: 132).

(90)
a. ABS: Naranja cun cajué.
   orange with coffee
b. stSp: Naranjas y café.
   orange and coffee
   ‘Oranges and coffee.’

(91)
a. ABS: Mi tatá cun mi mamá nació Mururata.
   my dad with my mom was-born Mururata
b. stSp: Mi papá y mi mamá nacieron en Mururata.
   my dad and my mom were-born in Mururata
   ‘My father and my mother were born in Mururata.’
(92)

a. ABS: Mururata cun Chijchipa, nojotro siempre fue uno nomá.
Mururata with Chijchipa we always was one no more
b. stSp: Mururata y Chijchipa, nosotros siempre fuimos uno no más.
Mururata and Chijchipa we always were one no more
‘Mururata and Chijchipa, we have always been a single thing.’

Most interestingly, ABS *cun* is used in many instances in which *de* would be the preferred preposition in stSp (93–97).

(93)

a. ABS: Wawa cun eje edad pesa 20 kilo.
kid with this age weight 20 kilo
b. stSp: Un niño de esta edad pesa 20 kilos.
a kid of this age weight 20 kilos
‘A kid of this age weights 20 kilos.’

(94)

a. ABS: El hombre cun cabeza blanco.
the man with head white
b. stSp: El hombre de pelo blanco.
the man of hair white
‘The white-hair man.’

(95)

a. ABS: Yo ta cun pelo blanco.
I is with hair white
b. stSp: Yo soy de pelo blanco / Yo tengo pelo blanco.
I am of hair white / I have hair white
‘I have white hair.’

(96)

a. ABS: Eyu ta cun treinta año.
they is with thirdy year
b. stSp: Ellos son de treinta años / Ellos tienen treinta años.
they are of thirty years / They have thirty years
‘They are thirty years old.’
In summary, there are several differences in the use of prepositions in ABS and stSp. An interesting peculiarity of ABS, which might explain why *cun*-PP can licitly survive nominal ellipsis in this vernacular, is that *cun* is often used where *de* would be preferred in stSp. As all elliptical patterns are the same in ABS and stSp with the exception of *cun/con* constructions, it may be the case that this contrast has to do with the nature of such a preposition. This statement is justified as *con/cun* presents different grammatical behaviors in the two languages. In the next section, I will describe some of the main analyses that have been proposed to account for the data in stSp.

### 6.3. Previous Analyses

This section will provide an overview of the main proposals concerning Spanish N-drop. These models and their predictions will be assessed with respect to the data presented in the previous section.

#### 6.3.1. BRUCART & GRÀCIA (1986)

Brucart & Gràcia (1986) provide an analysis of ellipsis phenomena in Italian and Spanish and postulate the existence of empty N, [e], in both languages, even though parametric differences do not allow for the same exact constructions in these two Romance varieties.

In regard to Spanish, the authors argue that definite articles cannot survive ellipsis operations unless they cliticize to [+N] elements (adjectives and nouns). This would be possible with *de*-PPs, since *de* is a dummy preposition, but not with other PPs (98–99).
In their view, also *que ‘that’ would carry [+N] features so that (100) is a licit structure, where F stands for an intermediate functional projection within DP.

The fact that intervening adverbials do not affect the grammaticality of these constructions can be explained in two alternative ways. First, adverbials could be seen as ‘logic operators’ (Guéron 1981), and, for this reason, they would be ‘transparent’ to cliticization processes (Brucart & Gràcia 1986: 19). Second, the article could cliticize on any element (including adverbials) if
the first maximal category dominating such element is a category containing a [+N] feature in its head. An example would be (101) where il 'the' cliticizes on the adverbial piú 'more,' in the SPEC of an AP preceding the noun.

(101) Italian

Brucart & Gràcia’s (1986) account is valuable in that it recognizes the existence of empty Ns as heads of noun phrases. Nevertheless, it presents some drawbacks: it does not acknowledge the contrast in grammaticality due to variation in gender and number features, it does not provide an account for thematic correspondences between pronounced and elided Ns, and the differences between prenominal and postnominal adjectives are not addressed.

6.3.2. BRUCART (1987)

Brucart (1987: 221) presents the cases in which empty nouns are grammatical and the instances in which they are not: he provides grammatical examples (102) in which the definite article is followed by an AP (102a), a de-PP (102b), or a CP (102c), and ungrammatical constructions (103), lacking an overt determiner (103a), a remnant complement (103b), or presenting a PP complement headed by a preposition other than de (103c).

(102)

a. Mi cuñado utiliza el coche antiguo para ir a trabajar y el [e] nuevo para trasladarse los fines de semana a su casa de campo.
‘My brother-in-law uses the old car to go to work and the new one to go to his country house during the weekend.’

b. El hijo de Luis y el [e] de Antonio se han hecho muy amigos.  
‘Luis’s son and Antonio’s became good friends.’

c. La casa que visitaste ayer y la [e] que has visto esta mañana pertenecieron a un mismo dueño.  
‘The house that you visited yesterday and the one that you have visited this morning used to belong to the same owner.’

(103)

‘Luis’s son and Antonio’s became good friends.’

b. *El hijo de Luis y el [e] se han hecho muy amigos.  
‘Luis’s son and Antonio’s became good friends.’

c. *El tren a Barcelona y el [e] a Madrid ha salido con retraso.  
‘The train for Barcelona and the one for Madrid left late.’

Brucart argues that the examples in (102) should be classified as constructions containing an empty N, rather than as structures in which the definite articles behave as pronouns (contra Bello 1847). In fact, these articles are unstressed—as the rest of the Spanish definite articles. On the other hand, all pronouns bearing nominative case are stressed; for this reason, considering these elements as pronouns would also imply doubling the number of personal pronouns, a solution highly non-economical and counterintuitive (Brucart 1987: 225, 1999: 2856). Brucart also disagrees with other approaches that fail to identify an empty N as the nucleus of the aforementioned nominal constructions. For example, Alarcos-Llorach (1973) indicates that, in cases like (104), the nucleus would be the element following the definite article. Brucart disagrees with such an analysis since it violates the principles of X’-Theory. X’-Theory, in fact, states that projections and nuclei must belong to the same category. Nevertheless, as we can observe, in (104) what follows the definite article is neither a N nor a nominal projection, but rather a PP (Brucart 1987: 227–228).

(104) El de filosofía.  
‘The one of philosophy.’

Brucart considers (104) and similar cases as instances of empty nouns acting as nominal nuclei. Such elements are not bound and should be inter-
interpreted as pronominal anaphoras PRO. In this way, it is possible to explain why a pronominal element can be understood as a previously mentioned NP. This would also explain why the empty category, if not preceded by another NP, takes on an arbitrary reading (see 105), in line with Control Theory (Chomsky 1981).

(105) El PRO que quiera asistir al concierto deberá pagar la entrada con diez días de antelación.
'The one who is interested in attending the concert will have to pay ten days in advance.'

In Brucart’s view, one of the crucial components of these constructions is the presence of an overt determiner preceding the empty N; this follows from the principle of recoverability. In fact, the adoption of an overt D forces the interpretation of the remnants as complements of the elided N; on the other hand, the lack of such a restriction in natural languages could allow the interpretation of similar APs, PPs, and CPs as modifiers of other maximal projections, thus not leading to a clear and univocal reading (Brucart 1987: 231). It follows from X’-theory that the nucleus must always be present in the structure, while its complements and determiners can be optional. However, if the nucleus is an empty element, its semantic content can be recovered only if the non-nuclear categories are pronounced. For this reason, the presence of an overt D element is required (Brucart 1987: 232). Such a requirement is also related to D’s referential feature and therefore to its capability of turning NPs into arguments.

The author indicates that the presence of an obligatory complement in phrases containing definite articles seems to be due to superficial factors. In fact, definite articles are clitic elements that need a host to avoid the generation of unstressed phrases. Brucart (1987: 245) attributes the grammaticality of de-PP remnants and the ungrammaticality of other PPs to the fact that de is not a ‘true’ preposition. As suggested for English of (Chomsky 1981), de would be inserted at PF. Differently from ‘true’ prepositions, de ‘of’ would simply act as a case marker and would not play a role in theta-role assignment.

Brucart (1987: 245) also points out that because of their unstressed nature, definite articles differ from other determiners in that they are the only category requiring a following complement in elliptical constructions (106).
(106)  
  a.  *Buscaba el [e].
      sought the
  b.  Buscaba uno [e].
      sought a
      ‘I was seeking one.’
  c.  Buscaba éste [e].
      sought this
      ‘I was looking for this.’
  d.  Buscaba alguno [e].
      sought some
      ‘I was seeking some.’
  e.  Buscaba tres [e].
      sought three
      ‘I was looking for three.’

He also indicates that definite articles do not accept PPs different from
*de*-PPs, while other determiners do (107–108).

(107) Compré el/éste/alguno/unotres [e] de matemáticas.
      bought the/ this/ some/one/three [e] of mathematics
      ‘I bought the/ this/ some/one/three of mathematics.’

(108) Compré *el/éste/alguno/unotres [e] con lazo.
      bought the/ this/ some/one/three [e] with lace
      ‘I bought the/ this/ some/one/three with lace.’

The grammaticality of all constructions in (107–108), in contrast with the
ungrammaticality of the structure with *el* ‘the’ in (108), would be due to the
fact that all the determiners but the definite articles allow the recovery of
their antecedent, so that they enable PRO to participate in the assignment
of thematic roles across ‘true’ (*con*) and ‘false’ (*de*) prepositions. On the
other hand, the definite article does not trigger such an operation and the
following constituent would be able to receive thematic assignment only if
preceded by a ‘false’ preposition like *de* (Brucart 1987: 245).

Brucart (1987) builds on Brucart & Gràcia (1986) and provides a more
detailed account of Spanish N-drop. However, it does not solve the issues
left unaccounted for in the previous paper: the status of gender and number
features in DP, pre/post nominal adjective contrast, and theta-role corre-
spondences between clauses.
6.3.3. KESTER & SLEEMAN (2002)

Kester & Sleeman (2002) elaborate on Torrego’s (1988) proposal, which claimed that demonstratives and quantifiers are rich enough in phi-features (gender, number, person features) to license an empty N, while definite articles must co-occur with a modifier following [e] because they are semantically weak and they lack person features, which have to be supplied by the remnant element. The modifiers allowed in this specific configuration are APs, que-CPs and de-PPs, all of which would be classified by Torrego as [+N] categories. After summarizing Torrego’s generalization as (109), Kester & Sleeman (2002) provide a novel account for stSp N-drop by recurring to Kayne’s (1994) Antisymmetry framework.

(109) Torrego’s (1988) generalization

N-ellipsis in Spanish is licensed by the definite article when supplied with person features by a [+N] category: a de-modifier, a que-relative clause, or an adjective.

Kester & Sleeman follow Torrego’s intuition that the definite article is a weak element, which must co-occur with a modifier; however, they do not agree with the generalization in (109). In fact, they suggest that the Spanish definite article is a weaker element in a semantic sense, not because of the lack of person features, but rather because it cannot be interpreted in isolation in its D° position; in fact, in order to yield a semantically interpretable construction, it has to co-occur with a predicate (Kester & Sleeman 2002: 111).

Kester and Sleeman suggest that the empty N should be analyzed as part of a CP acting as the complement of the definite article. The authors claim that “within this clausal constituent the null noun has to enter in a checking relation, at some point of the derivation, with the highest overt functional head in order to be licensed” (2002: 116). They represent the grammatical remnants stated in (109) as the structures in (110), and contrast them with examples like (111), where N-drop does not obtain.

(110)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>el [D/PP pro₁ [D/P° de [IP Juan [I [e₁] . . . ]]]]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>el [CP pro₁ [C° que [IP nos regaló [e₁] tu padre]]]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>la [CP pro₁ [C° [IP [ei] [I° [amarilla]]]]]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(111) *el [CP [pro₁] [C° [IP [e₁] [I° [PP e₁ para Jaime]]]]]
By applying Kayne’s (1994) Antisymmetry framework to the Spanish data, Kester and Sleeman state that the definite article has a clausal complement corresponding to either CP or D/PP (see 110); in this way, the empty N moves to the specifier position of such a clause and instantiates a Spec-Head relation. In (110a) and (111) the PP is analyzed as the predicate of a reduced relative clause. Pro is base-generated in SPEC-PP and moves to SPEC-CP. The reason why (110a) is grammatical while (111) is not comes from the fact that de ‘of’ is analyzed as a prepositional complementizer and, therefore, as a functional head, while para ‘for’ is analyzed as a lexical head. Since checking occurs in functional projections only (Chomsky 1995), de can enter in a Spec-head relation with pro, while para cannot. Kester and Sleeman apply the same analysis to the case of que ‘that’ (110b), which contrasts in grammaticality with other complementizers. The authors proceed also to explain cases like (110c). Indeed, they claim that the Spec-Head checking in this case is possible because pro would enter in a relation with a functional head, namely the one contained in the functional projection AgreementAP. In their view, by applying Chomsky’s (1995) analysis of adjectival agreement (see 112), it is possible to reformulate (110c) as (113), where the adjective would be analyzed as the predicate of a reduced relative clause, which is contained in the functional projection AgrAP.

(112) John\mi is [AgrAP e\mi [AgrA intelligent\mi [AP e\mi e\mi ]]]

(113) la [CP pro\mi [IP e\mi [AgrAP e\mi [AgrA amarilla\mi [AP e\mi e\mi ]]]]]

Kester and Sleeman’s analysis provides an interesting hypothesis for N-drop in stSp. The authors, in fact, are able to account for the differences in grammaticality between DPs headed by definite articles and other determiners by applying Kayne’s (1994) Antisymmetry framework; nevertheless, their model leaves several issues unresolved. First of all, this account does not take in consideration the theta-marking constraints exemplified in examples (79–80). Secondly, the postulation of an AgrP, to which N should move, appears counterintuitive since we know that sloppy identity across clauses is allowed for number but not for gender, thus suggesting that these two features should not be checked in the same syntactic position. Finally, also in this case, there is no mention of the ungrammaticality of N-drop with prenominal As.
6.3.4. Ticio (2003, 2005)

In line with Grohmann & Haegeman (2002), Ticio (2003, 2005) assumes a DP-internal structure subdivided into three prolific domains: a domain in which theta-roles are assigned; a domain devoted to phi-agreement and case relations; and a domain in which discourse information is encoded. Ticio also proposes different positions for adjectives according to their semantic properties: prenominal As would be located in SPEC-NP, postnominal As are adjoined to NP, and R(elational) As are generated in SPEC-nP.

Ticio accounts for the ungrammaticality of pronominal adjectives in elliptical construction by suggesting that the ellipsis operation targets only the lower NP node, and therefore, it does not affect the adjectives generated in higher projections (see 115; see Ticio 2005: 136).
Ticio (2005: 136–137) provides examples to show how this model accounts for Adjuncts (116a), Postnominal As (116b), Possessors (116c), Agents (116d), R-As (116e), and Prenominal As (116f); however, she admits that—at first glance—her proposal does not explain why Objects can survive ellipses (116g) even though they should not since they are base-generated in a position lower than the NP-node.

(116) stSp

a. Compramos bastantes libros para regalo y uno [e]
   [para consulta]adjunct.
   (we)bought several books to gift and a [e] to consult
   ‘We bought several books as gifts and one for our records.’

b. Compramos varios libros azules y uno [e] rojo.
   (we)bought several books blue and a [e] red
   ‘We bought several blue books and red one.’

c. Compramos varios libros de Luis y uno [e] [de María]poss.
   (we)bought several books of Luis and a [e] of Maria
   ‘We bought several blue books of Luis’ and one of María’s.’

d. Compramos varios libros de Cervantes y uno [e]
   [de Borges]ag.
   (we)bought several books of Cervantes and a [e] of Borges
   ‘We bought several blue books of Cervantes’ and one of Borges.”

e. Compramos varias novelas policíacas y una [e] romántica.
   (we)bought several novels police and a [e] romantic
   ‘We bought several police novels and a romantic one.’

f. *Ayer vi a la verdadera terrorista y a la supuesta [e].
   yesterday (I)saw to the true terrorist and to the alleged [e]
   ‘Yesterday, I saw the true terrorist and the alleged one.’

g. Compramos varios libros de Matemáticas y alguno [e]
   [de Física]obj.
   (we)bought several books of Math and some [e] of Physics
   ‘We bought several Math books and a Physics one.’

In order to solve this problem, Ticio proposes that a stylistic rule would be able to move the object from its original site to a higher position in the syntactic tree before the ellipsis operation applies, as shown in (117).
Finally, she provides an account for why, in the presence of definite articles, no other PPs can be found as remnants except those headed by *de*. In line with Brucart & Gràcia (1986) and Raposo (1999), Ticio highlights the clitic-like character of definite articles, which seem to be able to cliticize only on [+N] elements (adjectives and nouns). Ticio also assumes that cliticization processes cannot take place across phase boundaries since phases are conceived as spell-out units. In her view, two different types of PPs are found in Spanish: full PPs (which constitute phases), headed by Ps like *con* ‘with,’ and ‘false’ PPs (which do not constitute phases), headed by *de* ‘of’ (2005: 140). This would explain the ungrammaticality of (118) and the grammaticality of (119). In fact, in (118) the presence of *con* gives rise to a phase boundary at Spell-Out, which prevents article cliticization; on the other hand, in (119), the article can freely cliticize, since *de* is inserted after Spell-Out and does not introduce a new phase unit.

(118) stSp
a. [DP La [[NP chica] || [PP con gafas]]] Spell Out
b. [DP La [[NP e]] || [PP con gafas]]] NP-Ellipsis
   c. *[DP La [[NP e]] || [PP con gafas]]] Cliticization
(119) stSp
   a. [DP La [[NP chica] [NP gafas]]] Spell Out
   b. [DP La [[NP e] [NP gafas]]] NP-ellipsis
   c. [DP La [[NP e] DE-[NP gafas]]] DE(of)-insertion
   d. [DP La [[NP e] + DE-[NP gafas]]] Cliticization

This account also presents some drawbacks. First, the postulation of pre-nominal and post-nominal adjective base-generated positions is somehow problematic in that it goes against hypotheses assuming that all adjectives are originally pre-nominal and the overt distribution is just a result of N movement (Cinque 1990, 1993, 2004, 2005, 2007). Second, the postulation of an Agreement Projection in which all phi-features are checked cannot capture the grammaticality distinctions pointed out in (120–121), where number but not gender can survive to NP-ellipses. Moreover, it also goes against recent hypotheses arguing in favor of the elimination of Agreement Projections (Chomsky 2002).

(120) stSp
   a. Los gatos negros y el [e] blanco.
      the-M.PL cat-M.PL black-M.PL and the-M.SG [e] white-M.SG
      ‘The black cats and the white one.’
      the-M.SG cat-M.SG black-M.SG and the-F.PL [e] white-F.PL
      ‘The black cat and the white one.’

(121) ABS
   a. Lu gato negro y el [e] blanco.
      the-M.PL cat-M.PL black-M.PL and the-M.SG [e] white-M.SG
      ‘The black cats and the white one.’
      the-M.SG cat-M.SG black-M.SG and the-F.SG [e] white-F.PL
      ‘The black cat and the white one.’

Third, postulating that articles can cliticize only to [+N] elements does not explain why examples like (122, 123) are grammatical.

(122) stSp
   a. El chico italiano y el [e] supuestamente italiano.
      the guy Italian and the [e] supposedly Italian
      ‘The Italian guy and the supposedly Italian one.’
b. Los chicos de Italia y los [e] supuestamente de Italia.
the guys of Italy and the [e] supposedly of Italy
‘The Italian guys and the supposedly Italian ones.’

(123) ABS
a. El chico italiano y el [e] supuestamente italiano.
the guy Italian and the [e] supposedly Italian
‘The Italian guy and the supposedly Italian one.’
The guys of Italy and the [e] supposedly of Italy
‘The Italian guys and the supposedly Italian ones.’

Examples such as (118, 119) clearly show that APs and PPs modified by adverbs [–N] are actually licit remnants. In order to account for these constructions, we should postulate that adverbs are inserted later in the derivation, after ellipsis applies, like de. This hypothesis does not seem feasible. Moreover, movement of objects before ellipsis and de insertion at PF seems to be a somewhat ad hoc solution rather than a theoretically motivated operation since it is not clear why objects would be targeted in such a fashion and not subjects or adjuncts. In addition, Ticio (2005) does not provide an account for the differences between relative clauses headed by que and those headed by other relativizers. Finally, this analysis assumes a right-branching structure with right-sided specifiers and rightward movement operations. Such syntactic machinery goes against standard assumptions on left branching and dislocation, and it would also violate the Linear Correspondence Axiom (see Kayne 1994).

6.4. Toward a New Proposal

This section provides a new model to explain the data so far presented. The proposal is based on several assumptions concerning the structure of DP, which account for the grammatical and ungrammatical cases of N-ellipsis. It does not recur to ad hoc insertion operations or constituent movement. It rather bases the observed differences on pure structural distinctions.

The difference between definite articles and the rest of the determiners is based on semantic principles. My proposal assumes that certain determiners (demonstratives, etc.) are encoded with a [+referential] feature, indicating

3. Even though they are context-dependent, demonstratives in Spanish may refer un-
referential independence. In other words, from a semantic standpoint, the
definite article is a restricted element (Higginbotham 1985). Indeed, it must
coccur with an overt predicate, since it cannot be interpreted alone in its
D° position (see Chierchia 1998; Kester & Sleeman 2002). The co-occurrence
of the article with such a predicate (e.g., [e] + overt remnant) leads to a
semantically interpretable object (to phase completion).

Syntactically, when demonstratives, cardinals, etc. are base-generated
under their respective projections or possibly moved to SPEC-DP to check
their referential feature, they essentially freeze the DP as it is (see Cardina-
letti & Giusti 1991; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez 2009; Ishane 2008; Zamparelli 2000
for a treatment of base-generation and movements of these elements within
the DP). The DP then acts as a pronoun-like element regardless of the exis-
tence of an overt N.⁴ This accounts for the following examples (124, 125).

(124) ABS
a. Ejes chica di Italia y aquellos [e].
   these girls of Italy and those [e]
   ‘These Italian girls and those.’
b. *Lu chica di Italia y lu [e].
   the girls of Italy and the [e]

(125) stSp
a. Estas chicas de Italia y aquellas [e].
   these girls of Italy and those [e]
   ‘These Italian girls and those.’
b. *Las chicas de Italia y las [e].
   The girls of Italy and the [e]

Additionally, my analysis, as Ticio’s, takes into consideration the well-
known existence of thematic layers in the DP, which have been shown to
hold across several languages with respect to certain phenomena such as
blocking effects in extraction.⁵ I assume the nominal theta-role hierarchy
suggested in Giorgi & Longobardi (1991) and Valois (1991) among others
(126).⁶

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⁴ See Leonetti (1990) for a more detailed account of this issue.
⁵ For a detailed account, see Giorgi & Longobardi (1991) for Italian, Valois (1991) for
⁶ I also acknowledge that much research has been done on theta-roles, many hypotheses
(126) Possessor>>Agent>>Object

I propose an account in which *de* ‘of’ is treated as a complementizer head without N features, in line with Kayne (1994). I consider stSp *de* and ABS *di* multifunctional prepositions. They not only have the capability of heading argumental PPs; additionally, *de/di* structures are the syntactic result of commonly used strategies to create adjective-like modifiers for nouns (den Dikken 2003). I argue that all adjectives are base-generated pre-nominally (Cinque 1993, 2005, 2007), merge to the left of NP, and are always phrasal (Bosque & Picallo 1996; Picallo 2010). Ellipses affect only the lower DP-internal layer, targeting N. This explains why cases of sloppy identity for number are allowed, while the same cannot occur with gender:

(127) stSp
   a. Los gatos negros y el [e] blanco.
      the-M.PL cat-M.PL black-M.PL. and the-M.SG [e] white-M.SG
      ‘The black cats and the white one.’
   b. *El gato negro y la [e] blanca
      the-M.SG. cat-M.SG black-M.SG and the-F.SG [e] white-F.SG

In fact, gender is analyzed here as an interpretable feature of N. Number interpretation is located in Num, in a higher projection, where it survives N-ellipsis (Depiante & Masullo 2001; Saab 2004). This account, therefore, does not postulate specific Agreement Projections to which N must move (contra Kester & Sleeman 2002; Ticio 2003, 2005) and is in line with the minimalist proposal to eliminate Agreement Projections (Chomsky 2002). Even though ABS does not present redundant number and gender agreement across DP, the constructions in (128) show a clear parallelism between ABS and stSp.

(128) ABS
   a. Lu gato negro y el [e] blanco.
      the-M.PL cat-M.SG black-M.SG and the-M.SG [e] white-M.SG
      ‘The black cats and the white one.’
   b. *El gato negro y la [e] blanco
      the-M.SG cat-M.SG black-M.SG and the-F.SG [e] white-M.SG

have been made, but the precise nature of these thematic relations is still not completely clear. See Dowty (1991) for a more detailed account.
In ABS, as well as in stSp, gender, differently from number, is a feature of the noun, which gets deleted in the process of ellipsis. This fact strongly undermines approaches postulating a unique projection for number and gender (e.g., Ritter 1991, 1993), and partially those that argue in favor of two separate projections NumP and a GenP as well (e.g., Picallo 1991; Bernstein 1993). In fact, masculine and feminine nouns in ABS do not seem to be derivable from the same lexical entry. Data support a framework in which lexical entries are clearly different in gender specification before entering the syntactic numeration. Therefore, only NumP is a licit projection, while ‘gender’ represents an interpretable feature of N.

In line with Carstens (2000), I assume that thematic roles are assigned under nP. Adjectives and de-phrases carrying Θ-assignment are initially merged within the nP shells. Other adjectives and de-phrases free from Θ-assignment (i.e., La camisa roja ‘the red shirt,’ La camisa de color rojo ‘the shirt of red color’) are merged higher in the structure, and, for this reason, they are able to survive universal ellipsis operations (Merchant 2001). A strict correspondence between the thematic roles of the parallel constituents (Lobeck 1995) is required in both varieties (129).

(129) stSp/ABS
a. El libro de/di física_theme y el [e] de/di historia_theme.
the book of physics and the [e] of history
‘The physics book and his one.’
the book of physics and the [e] of Maria
‘The physics book and María’s.’

This suggests that the thematic properties under nP are spelled out in the nominal phase requiring both thematic configurations to match. Differences in grammaticality between ABS and stSp are reduced to elliptical constructions involving the preposition cun ‘with,’ which in ABS shows striking similarities to stSp de in a variety of contexts (130–131).

(130) ABS
a. El hombre cun pelo blanco toma agua.
the man with hair white drink water
‘The white-hair man drinks water.’
b. Wawa cun eje edad pesa veinte kilo.
kid with this age weight twenty kilo
‘A kid of this age weighs twenty kilos.’
The fact that a strict correspondence between thematic roles is required between the pronounced and the elided constituents suggests that the information generated under nP gets frozen. The speaker expects it to match with the thematic configuration of the elided N. For this reason, I postulate that As and PPs—when free from any potential theta-role assignment—are generated higher in the structure, in a projection different from the one stipulated for the rest of post-nominal non-thematic adjectives.

Note that the present proposal does not need to stipulate ad hoc object movements or procrastinated de insertion at PF (Ticio 2003, 2005); nor does it need to assign special [+N] features to de and que (see Torrego 1988). The syntactic process involved in N-ellipsis seems to be capable of recovering only the N information, freezing the structure projected from the lower thematic nP (object) up to the higher nP (possessor) Such a process allows variability for the information contained in higher projections (NumP, non-thematic-APs/de-PPs).

To account for the differences in grammaticality between stSp con and ABS cun, I propose that cun in ABS shares structural properties with stSp de as suggested by cross-linguistic data; in fact, as we noticed in section 6.2, prepositions are used differently in the two varieties, and ABS cun appears in many contexts in which in stSp de would be employed rather than con. As a consequence, constructions like (132) in stSp are ungrammatical while cases like (133) in ABS allow N-drop.

(132) stSp
*... y la [e] con gafas
  ... and the [e] with glasses
  ‘... the one with glasses’

(133) ABS
  ... y la [e] cun gafa
  ... and the [e] with glasses
  ‘... the one with glasses’
Thus, both *di* and *cun* in ABS can be treated as functional prepositions. In this respect, they both head complementizer-like structures and are generated higher in the DP shell so that they become independent from the ellipsis process.

6.5. Conclusion

A comprehensive analysis of ABS and stSp N-drop phenomena has led us to a unified model that not only accounts for the data but also sheds light on internal DP structures; in particular, on the locus of phi-features interpretation and theta-role assignments.

Ellipsis operations are claimed to be universal and to apply uniformly across languages. What changes is the feature-specification of lexical and functional items (see also Borer 1984). In the cases under consideration, the features of determiners and prepositions seem to play a critical role in allowing or blocking N-drop.