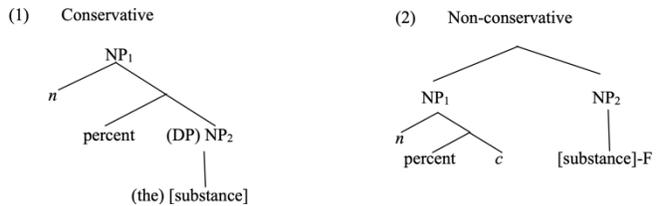


Relative measures in Brazilian Portuguese

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Relative measures are structures that ‘express the proportional relation of one substance quantity to another quantity’ (Ahn and Sauerland 2017: 215), as in *the company hired 55% of (the) women*. In some languages, the presence or absence of the definite determiner gives rise to different interpretations: when the definite determiner is inserted (**conservative interpretation**), the sentence is interpreted as referring to the ‘*ratio of the company’s female hires to all women*’ (Ahn and Sauerland 2017: 215) while when the definite determiner is not inserted (**non-conservative interpretation**), the sentence is interpreted as referring to the ‘*ratio of the company’s female hires to all the company’s hires*’ (Ahn and Sauerland 2017: 215). Ahn and Sauerland (2017: 221) propose that the conservative and the non-conservative interpretations are associated with different syntactic construals. In conservative construals, a measure noun such as *percent* forms a constituent with the substance noun (1). In non-conservative construals, the measure noun forms a constituent with ‘a contextually determined variable *c*.’ (2).



As in other Romance languages, in Brazilian Portuguese (henceforth **BP**), the availability of conservative and non-conservative interpretations can be predicted by the presence of a definite article in the genitive complement of the relative measure (4).

(3) Conservative

A empresa contratou 55% **das mulheres**
 ‘The company hired 55% of the women.’

(4) Non-conservative

A empresa contratou 55% **de mulheres**
 ‘55% of the people the company hired were women.’

Differently of other Romance languages, BP has a fully-fledged determiner system and is simultaneously characterized by the generalized availability of bare singulars (bare singular count nouns) in a wide range of contexts, including with a definite interpretation (Wall 2017). Some authors have claimed that a null D is projected in constructions with bare singular arguments in BP. For example, Cyrino and Espinal (2015: 478) argue that a determiner is required (either overt or covert) ‘as a bearer of definiteness.’ Under this analysis, bare arguments in BP are only allowed as arguments of *have*-predicates. In other argument positions, bare singulars ‘are DPs specified for Number and an entity-type denotation’ (Cyrino and Espinal 2015: 513). Ahn and Sauerland’s proposal predicts that in languages with definite determiners, a conservative interpretation arises when a definite determiner is projected. If a null D were projected in relative measure constructions with bare singulars in BP, a conservative reading would be available. Instead, only a non-conservative interpretation is allowed in relative measures whose substance-noun is a bare singular (5). We will argue that in these constructions the bare singular projects an NP without null D.

(5) Non-conservative [example from Twitter]:

A propaganda de uma festa da PB, diz que vai ter **70% de mulher e 30% de homem**.

‘The ad of a party in PB says that 70% of the people in the party will be women and 30% men’.

The incompatibility of bare singulars with a conservative reading will be discussed in light of Pires de Oliveira and Rothstein’s (2011) analysis of bare singulars in BP. Under their proposal, bare singulars allow for both a count and a mass interpretation; when a bare singular is interpreted as a mass noun, its denotation is derived by applying an abstract operation MASS, which maps a set denoting root to a kind denoting mass noun. We will argue that a non-conservative interpretation is available because in such constructions bare singulars are kind-denoting terms derived by the

operation MASS. Following Pires de Oliveira (2011), Pires de Oliveira and de Swart (2015), we will argue that in such constructions, bare singulars project an NP.

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