

Beyond code-mixing: preliminary findings on bare nouns distribution in a contact situation

Ohanna Severo
University of Toronto

Bilingual speakers make use of two linguistic systems that do not operate individually but, instead, undergo cross-linguistic influence (Paradis and Genesee 1996, Müller and Hulk 2001, Kupish 2008, Carvalho 2016, a. o.). The impact of one language on another can vary depending on different factors, such as the bilingual identity with both languages or the possibility of an asymmetry or dominance of one language over the other. Impacts may also depend on the grammaticality and interpretation of a particular construction in the two languages. In this case, the bilingual speaker could produce in both of their two languages a grammatical construction that is grammatical in one of their languages and ungrammatical in the other one. For example, Carvalho (2006) found that Spanish-Portuguese bilinguals were applying a Portuguese morphological rule in their Spanish, indicating that there was an influence from the Portuguese linguistic system on the Spanish linguistic system of bilingual speakers from Rivera, Uruguay. Perhaps, there are other cross-linguistic influences from Portuguese to Spanish, or vice-versa that can be observed in other areas, such as the syntactic distribution and semantic interpretation of bare nouns.

This project investigates the cross-linguistic 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 Rivera, a city located at the border in northern Uruguay and south of Brazil. Specifically, this project investigates bare nouns (such as bare singulars, which are nouns without articles and a plural marking, such as ‘*livro*’ *book* in example (1a) in Brazilian Portuguese, and bare plurals, which are plural nouns without articles, such as ‘*livros*’ *books* in example (1b) in Brazilian Portuguese), which pattern differently in the two languages under study.

- (1) a. Comprei **livro** ontem.
buy.PST.1SG book yesterday
I bought a book/ some books yesterday.
- b. Comprei **livros** ontem.
buy.PST.1SG books yesterday
I bought books yesterday.

While bare nouns in Spanish are allowed just on the object position, and the use of bare singulars is restricted to have-predicates, such as in (2) (Espinal 2010, Oggiani 2011), bare nouns in Brazilian Portuguese are grammatical on subject and object positions and do not present any verbal restrictions, such as in (3) and (1), respectively (Schmitt and Munn 1999, 2002, Munn and Schmitt 2005, Cyrino and Espinal 2015, a. o.).

- (2) a. Juan tiene **auto**.
Juan have.PRS.3SG car
Juan has a car/ some cars.
- b. Juan lleva **sombrero**.
Juan carry.PRS.3SG hat
Juan carries a hat/ some hats.
- (3) a. **Cachorro(s)** late(m).
Dog(s) bark.PRS.3SG(3PL)
Dog(s) barks/bark.

By looking at the results of an experimental task carried out in Spanish and Portuguese by 40 bilingual speakers from Rivera, this ongoing project focuses on the grammaticality of bare nouns in distinct syntactic contexts and investigates the distribution (and possible syntactic analysis) of these nominals in these two languages. According to the preliminary findings, bare nouns in Spanish and Portuguese from Rivera are restricted to the object position as bare nouns in Spanish for monolingual speakers. However, unlike bare nouns in Spanish and in parallel to bare

nouns in Brazilian Portuguese, bare nouns in Spanish and Portuguese from Rivera do not seem to present a verbal restriction. This investigation seeks to 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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