

Teaching bare plurals in Spanish language classrooms

Ningxian Li 

Department of Romance Languages, University of Georgia, Athens, United States

Received: May 12, 2024 / Accepted: June 3, 2024 / Published Online: June 5, 2024

© Pioneer Publications LTD 2024

Abstract

Language instruction has shifted towards communication, often neglecting detailed grammar explanations based on linguistic research. This article examines the interpretation of bare plurals in Spanish, arguing for the integration of theoretical linguistics into classroom practices to enhance grammar instruction. The discussion highlights the differences between Spanish and English bare plurals and underscores the necessity of teaching these distinctions to prevent negative transfer and improve language acquisition. By analyzing recent linguistic findings, the article proposes practical approaches for incorporating these insights into teaching strategies, ultimately aiming to improve learners' comprehension and usage of Spanish bare plurals.

Keywords Spanish bare plurals, language instruction, grammar teaching, linguistic research, negative transfer

1. Introduction

Language teaching has evolved significantly, shifting its focus toward communication while de-emphasizing grammar explanations in the classroom. Despite changes in textbook formats and classroom activities, grammar explanations have lagged behind, often lacking insight from linguistic research (Gregory & Lunn, 2012). This article, by looking at the interpretation of bare plurals in Spanish, supports the claim that applying theoretical linguistics could enhance grammar explanations (Gregory & Lunn, 2012). The article critiques the lack of instruction of the Spanish bare plurals, highlighting the necessity of including the instruction of Spanish bare plurals based on linguistic findings. It suggests integrating these findings into classroom practices to better equip students and teachers with effective tools for understanding and using the language authentically.

This article is organized as follows. Section 2 begins by addressing the notable absence of instructions on Spanish bare plurals in textbooks and challenges the common assumption that Spanish bare plurals align directly with their English counterparts. In Section 3, I look at the recent advancements in linguistic research, providing a summary of how Spanish bare plurals function within the language. Section 4 marks a transition to practical applications, discussing how the instruction of Spanish bare plurals can be effectively integrated into teaching practices. Section 5 offers some suggestions as to how to make bare plural instruction accessible to students. Section 6 is the part of conclusion.

2. Is it really necessary to teach bare plurals in Spanish class?

In both Spanish and English, articles are divided into definite and indefinite categories. Each language allows for a noun or noun phrase to be modified by these articles, and in some cases, bare nouns (nouns without articles) are permitted. Typically, Spanish language textbooks for English L1 learners equate Spanish definite articles with the English *the*, and Spanish indefinite articles with *a/an* or *some*. This alignment provides an initial familiar framework for students, but it also introduces potential errors. For example, to express the generic meaning, English uses bare nouns, or nouns without articles, while Spanish uses definite articles, as can be observed in the contrast of the two sentences below.^{1,2}

- (1) **Elephants** are mammals.
- (2) **Los elefantes** son mamíferos.
the elephants be.3PL mammals
'Elephants are mammals.'

¹ Throughout this article, I will use bold form to indicate the relevant noun phrases in English and in Spanish examples.

² The following abbreviations are used in examples: 3 = third person, SG = singular, PL = plural, PST = past tense, PP = past participle, GEN=Gerund, SBJV = subjunctive.

In the English example given as sentence (1), no article is used, and *elephants* is a bare plural noun. This grammatical structure allows for the expression of a generic truth that applies universally to all elephants. In contrast, to express the same universal concept in Spanish, as demonstrated in sentence (2), the definite article *los* is necessary. This highlights a key linguistic divergence: in English, bare nouns can be used to denote generic meanings, whereas in Spanish, bare nouns are not licensed for this function.

Even though textbooks of Spanish draw students' attention to the different linguistic forms, they fail to explain the differences in function or meaning as observed in textbook or in language teaching classrooms. This oversight can lead to negative transfer, (Lado, 1957; Whitley, 2002) where learners apply English grammatical conventions to Spanish, resulting in incorrect expressions, as represented by sentence (3).

- (3) ***Elefantes** son mamíferos.
elephants be.3PL mammals
Intended: 'Elephants are mammals.'

Example (3) directly mimics the English structure without the necessary definite article, making it grammatically incorrect in Spanish.

Despite the above-mentioned different behaviors of bare nouns in Spanish and English, most textbooks in Spanish do not sufficiently address the concept of bare nouns. Laca (1999) highlights that the omission of the definite article is more commonly permitted with plurals than with singular countable nouns in Spanish, evidenced by sentences (4) and (5).

- (4) Han llegado **chicos**.
have.3PL arrive.PP boys
'Boys have arrived.'
- (5) *Ha llegado **chico**.
have.3SG arrive.PP boy
*'Boy has arrived.'

In addition, research in second language acquisition (SLA), such as that by Slabakova (2006) and Cuza et al. (2012), suggests that understanding the semantic interpretations of bare plurals in Spanish is notably more challenging for learners than grasping their syntactic distributions. Based on this, this article primarily focuses on these interpretations and the instructional approaches for teaching bare plurals to English speakers learning Spanish.

3. A linguistic description of Spanish bare plurals

Despite the crucial role of Spanish bare plurals in the syntax and semantics of the language, their explicit explanation is often notably absent from language classrooms. This omission is particularly surprising given the extensive research dedicated to this topic within the formal linguistic field. The discussions surrounding Spanish bare plurals, as highlighted by Bosque (1996), offer a profound insight into their complexities. Moreover, the scholarly work by Dobrovie-Sorin and Laca over several years (1996, 1997, 1998), and a particularly comprehensive analysis in Dobrovie-Sorin and Laca (2003), has laid a foundational understanding of not only Spanish but Romance languages more broadly. These studies delve into both descriptive and theoretical aspects of bare plurals, providing a rich bibliography that further enhances their academic value. The discourse on Spanish bare plurals intersects with broader debates within the linguistic field, where scholars offer differing perspectives. Chierchia (1999) argues that in Romance languages, bare plurals denote kinds, whereas McNally (2004) suggests they represent properties. This debate is enriched by additional analyses from Van Geenhoven (2000), Chung (2000), and Krifka (2003), who propose a compromise between these viewpoints.

In drawing parallels with Carlson's seminal work on English bare plurals, it becomes evident that Spanish bare plurals share many similarities with their English counterparts. However, a significant divergence is their inability to denote kinds, as argued by Laca (2014). This difference underscores the distinct nature of Spanish bare plurals and justifies the need for their formal instruction in the language curriculum.

To articulate the disparities between Spanish and English bare plurals more clearly, I will outline three specific differences that have been noticed in formal linguistic research. These comparisons not only reinforce the argument that bare plurals do not behave identically across these two languages but also highlight the necessity for language educators to integrate a more formal and detailed instruction of Spanish bare plurals into their teaching frameworks.

The first distinction, as previously mentioned, lies in the ability of bare plurals to denote kinds. English bare plurals can represent a kind, as in sentence (6).

- (6) **Tigers** are becoming extinct in India.

(McNally, 2004, p.118)

In (6), the bare plural noun *tigers* denotes the species as a whole. In other words, it expresses the generic interpretation, referring to the totality of all the tigers. Conversely, Spanish requires the use of definite articles to express the same concept,

as seen in the contrast between (a) and (b) in (7).

- (7) a. En la India se están extinguiendo **los tigres.**
 in the India SE be.3PL extinguish.GEN the tigers
 ‘Tigers are becoming extinct in India.’
 b. *En la India se están extinguiendo **tigres.**
 in the India SE be.3PL extinguish.GEN tigers
 Intended: ‘Tigers are becoming extinct in India.’

(McNally, 2004, p.118)

This demonstrates that Spanish bare plurals do not inherently convey the generic kind meaning that their English counterparts do.

The second major difference involves the ‘functional’ interpretation of bare plurals, which is well-discussed in English but absent in Spanish. Condoravdi (1994) illustrates this with English examples where the bare plural has a universal, yet non-generic interpretation.

- (8) Last week Nissan announced that it would lay off one-third of its employees at its Barcelona factory. **Union representatives** have protested vehemently.

(McNally, 2004, p.119)

In this sentence, the bare plural *union representatives* refers universally to all union representatives at a specific location (the Nissan factory in Barcelona) rather than union representatives in general. In Spanish, to express this same specific, universal scope, a definite plural noun phrase must be employed, as shown by the contrast between (9) and (10).

- (9) (La semana pasada Nissan anunció que despediría un tercio de sus empleados en Barcelona.)
Los representantes sindicales han protestado enérgicamente
 the representatives unión be.3PL protest.PP vehemently
 ‘(Last week Nissan announced that it would lay off one-third of its employees at its Barcelona factory.)
 Union representatives have protested vehemently.’

- (10) ...?? **Representantes sindicales** han protestado enérgicamente.
 representatives union be.3PL protest.PP vehemently
 Intended: ‘...Union representatives have protested vehemently.’

(McNally, 2004, p.119)

McNally (2004) claims that attempting to use a bare plural in Spanish, such as *representantes sindicales* in (10) results in an awkward sentence that, if acceptable at all, only yields a weak existential reading, indicating some representatives, but not universally all at the factory.³

The third distinction regarding the use of bare plurals in Spanish compared to English, as discussed by McNally (2004), involves the limitations of Spanish bare plurals in adverbial quantification, particularly over individuals. Adverbial quantification over individuals refers to statements that apply universally to all members of a group, irrespective of the context or situation. In contrast, quantification over situations applies a statement to a set of contextually determined conditions, but not necessarily universally to all instances of the subject. Consider the following Spanish example.

- (11) **Un miembro del parlamento** trabaja normalmente ocho horas al día.
 a member of.the parliament work.3SG normally eight hours to.the day
 ‘A member of parliament normally works eight hours a day.’

(McNally, 2004, p.120-121)

This sentence uses an indefinite noun phrase *un miembro del parlamento* and makes a generalized statement about

³ Laca (2014), in one footnote, also notices that the acceptability of bare plurals in Spanish carrying an existential interpretation improves with the addition of a postnominal modifier, as can be seen by examples below.

- (i) **Individuos de aspecto siniestro** jugaban al billar en la trastienda.
 individuals of aspect sinister play.3PL to.the billiards in the backroom
 ‘Sinister-looking individuals were playing pool in the back room’
 (ii) **Eléctricas letras verdes intermitentes** anunciaron la llegada del vuelo.
 electric letters green intermittent announce.PST.3PL the arrival of.the flight
 ‘Electric flashing green letters announced the arrival of the flight.’

(Laca, 2013, p. 97)

The bare plurals ‘*individuals*’ and ‘*letters*’ are modified to specify a particular aspect or feature, enhancing the contextual clarity of the sentences.

the work habits of parliament members. It suggests that it is normal for any member of the parliament to work eight hours a day, abstracting the statement across all individuals in that group, not tied to specific situations.

However, bare plurals can only express quantification over some set of contextually determined situations, and not over members of parliament.

- (12) **Miembros del parlamento** comen a menudo en La Panadella.
 members of the parliament eat.3PL to often at the Panedella
 ‘Members of parliament often eat at La Panadella.’

(McNally, 2004, p.120-121)

In this example, we have a bare plural *miembros del parlamento*. The adverb *often* is not implying that all members always eat there. Instead, it implies that within certain situations defined by the contextual restriction (such as during legislative sessions in the area, during certain events, etc.), it is common for some members of parliament to eat there. This aligns with McNally’s point that the sentence would be misleading if interpreted to mean that all or most members regularly eat at La Panadella as a routine habit.

In contrast, English bare plurals behave differently.

- (13) **Well-trained dogs** always sit quietly

(McNally, 2004, p.121)

Despite using bare plurals *well-trained dogs*, this English sentence makes a broad, generalized statement applicable to all well-trained dogs. It asserts a habitual behavior expected of any well-trained dog, thereby applying a universal quantification over individuals.

As an interim summary, the above findings in linguistic research indicate that while English bare plurals can flexibly denote kinds, offer universal readings, and participate in adverbial quantification, Spanish bare plurals are restricted in these functions. This difference is crucial for language learners and educators, as it necessitates specific instructional strategies to accurately convey the unique properties of Spanish grammar. In the next section, I will switch to the instruction of Spanish bare plurals in language classrooms.

4. The instruction of bare plurals to L1 English speakers

The analysis so far clearly demonstrates that bare plurals behave differently in Spanish and English, which can lead to challenges for native English speakers learning Spanish as a second language. One frequent issue arises when these learners, influenced by their native grammar, produce sentences such as (14).

- (14) *Me gustan **manzanas**.
 to.me please.3PL apples.
 ‘I like apples.’

In English, *I like apples* is grammatically correct and the phrase *apples* carries a generic interpretation. However, the direct translation into Spanish results in ungrammaticality because Spanish bare plurals do not typically express generic meanings. This discrepancy likely stems from negative transfer, where English speakers apply English grammatical patterns to Spanish, resulting in errors. This challenge is compounded by the fact that many Spanish textbooks, designed for English speakers, fail to address the use of bare plurals adequately, an oversight that can significantly hinder the learning process (Cuza et al., 2012).

In this section, I propose how to explain to the students the use of bare plurals in Spanish.

Before presenting my proposal on teaching bare plurals in Spanish, it's essential to make two clarifications based on the analysis so far. First, one might be tempted to simplify the rule to state that bare plurals in Spanish cannot function as the subject of a sentence. This simplification could explain the ungrammaticality of sentence (3), repeated as (15).

- (15) ***Elefantes** son mamíferos.
 elephants be.3PL mammals
 Intended: ‘Elephants are mammals.’

However, Spanish syntax allows for a flexible order between the verb and its subject, challenging this oversimplified rule. For instance, while a preverbal subject cannot be a bare plural as seen in the incorrect sentence (16), a postverbal subject can indeed be a bare plural, demonstrated by the grammatical example (17).

- (16) ***Estudiantes** llegaron.
 students arrive.PST.3PL
 (17) Llegaron **estudiantes**.

arrive.PST.3PL students
'Students arrived.'

One could further refine this rule to stipulate that bare plurals may only serve as subjects in postverbal positions. This adjustment helps explain why sentence (17) is acceptable while (16) is not. However, it does not cover all instances, as there are cases where even postverbal bare plurals result in ungrammatical constructions as in (18) and (19).⁴

- (18) *Me gustan **manzanas**.
to.me please.3PL apples.
'I like apples.'
- (19) Me gustan **las manzanas**.
to.me please.3PL the apples.
'I like apples.'

The second clarification involves the unique attributes of Spanish bare nominals, as discussed in various studies. De Mello (1980) posits that bare nominals in Spanish are used to convey the essence of what is being discussed, while Alonso (1967) suggests that they express quality. These two ideas are closely related, both aiming to describe the inherent characteristics or fundamental nature of the subjects they refer to. However, these concepts, 'essence' or 'quality', while insightful, present a challenge in educational settings due to their abstract nature. For students, the idea of 'essence' may not be immediately graspable in practical language use. In the classroom, when we teach that bare nominals in Spanish are employed to express 'essence' or 'quality', it may be difficult for students to conceptualize and apply these abstract ideas effectively in their language practice.

To facilitate students' acquisition of the interpretation of Spanish bare plurals, I propose an alternative explanation, as suggested by Laca (1996, 1999). This explanation posits that Spanish bare plurals have two main features. It cannot refer to specific entities and cannot be quantified. Let's examine how to convey these concepts effectively.

First, Spanish bare plurals cannot refer to specific entities, a property they share with English bare plurals. Carlson (1977) introduced the term 'indefinite plural' to describe bare plurals with an existential interpretation. In both languages, indefinite plurals cannot refer to specific entities previously mentioned in the discourse. Consider the following English examples:

- (20) Kelly is seeking **a unicorn**, and Miller is seeking *it* too.
(21) Queenie is seeking **unicorns**, and Phil is seeking *them* too.

(Carlson, 1977, p. 425)

In sentence (11), the indefinite article *a* before unicorn allows the noun to refer to a specific entity, enabling the pronoun *it* in the second clause to refer to the same unicorn. However, in sentence (12), the bare plural *unicorns* does not refer to specific entities. Consequently, *them* in the second clause refers not to specific unicorns but to the concept of unicorns in general. This distinction is further illustrated by example (22).

- (22) **Buildings** will collapse in Berlin tomorrow, and will burn in Boston the day after.

(Carlson, 1977, p. 427)

Here, the reasonable interpretation is that different buildings will collapse in Berlin and burn in Boston. The bare plural *buildings* refers to the general concept of buildings rather than specific ones.

This phenomenon is also evident in Spanish, where bare plurals cannot refer to specific entities but only to the concept of those entities. Consider these examples.

- (23) En esta ciudad nacieron y murieron **hombres célebres**.
in this city born.PST.3PL and die.PST.3PL men famous
'Famous men were born and died in this city.'
- (24) (Pedro ha visto **cucarachas** en la cocina),
y María *las* ha visto también en la despensa.
and María them have.3SG see.PP also in the pantry
'(Pedro has seen cockroaches in the kitchen), and María has also seen them in the pantry.'

(Laca, 1999, p. 900-902)

In these sentences, 'famous men' and 'cockroaches' are bare plurals that do not refer to specific famous men or cockroaches but rather to the general concept of such entities. This parallelism with English suggests that students should grasp the first feature of Spanish bare plurals—namely, their inability to refer to specific entities—without significant difficulty.

⁴ See Mayoral Hernández (2012) about the how to teach the subject position in Spanish.

The second significant feature of Spanish bare plurals is their inability to be quantified, which stands in contrast to English. In English, bare plurals can express the totality of entities, effectively conveying generic meaning as in (25).

(25) **Elephants** are mammals.

The bare noun *elephants* denotes all elephants, or the entirety of the species. This sentence implies a universal truth about elephants. However, in Spanish, bare plurals do not function this way. According to Laca (1996), Spanish bare plurals are anumeric, meaning they cannot express totality or genericity. This explains why the following sentence, which attempts to convey the same idea, is incorrect in Spanish.

(26) ***Elefantes** son mamíferos.
elephants be.3PL mammals
'Elephants are mammals.'

To express that all elephants are mammals in Spanish, one must use the definite article, resulting in (27).

(27) **Los elefantes** son mamíferos.
the elephants be.3PL mammals
'Elephants are mammals.'

The inability of Spanish bare plurals to convey totality is further evident in sentences involving psychological verbs, where English bare plurals naturally express a sense of totality. Consider the English sentences.

(28) I like **apples**.
(29) I don't like **oranges**.

In these examples, the bare plurals *apples* and *oranges* imply that the speaker likes all apples or dislikes all oranges, respectively. This use of bare plurals effectively conveys a general or total preference.

In contrast, Spanish cannot use bare plurals to convey these meanings. Attempting to translate these sentences directly into Spanish without the definite article results in ungrammatical constructions.

(30) *Me gustan **manzanas**.
to.me please.3PL apples.
'I like apples.'
(31) *No me gustan **naranjas**.
no to.me please.3PL oranges.
'I don't like oranges.'

To correctly express these ideas in Spanish, one must use the definite articles.

(32) Me gustan **las manzanas**.
to.me please.3PL the apples.
'I like apples.'
(33) No me gustan **las naranjas**.
no to.me please.3PL the oranges.
'I don't like oranges.'

Therefore, it is crucial for educators to emphasize the anumeric nature of Spanish bare plurals and their correct usage. By providing clear explanations and examples, teachers can help students avoid these common pitfalls. This instruction should include contrasting examples from both languages to illustrate how bare plurals function differently in terms of quantification and totality.

Before concluding this section, I would like to discuss further empirical implications for the instruction of bare plurals in Spanish. The instruction of bare plurals is important because they play a significant role in Spanish grammar. Here, I will mention two key points.

First, syntactically, bare nominals are more widely licensed as direct objects or complements of prepositions. In these positions, bare nominals are relatively common and function smoothly within sentences, which is similar to bare nouns in English. However, their use in preverbal positions is highly restricted (Contreras, 1986; Casielles-Suárez, 2004; RAE, 2009). This restriction does not mean that bare nominals can never appear in preverbal positions, as demonstrated by the following example:

(34) **Niños**, vinieron a la función de la tarde.
children come.PST.3PL to the performance of the afternoon

‘(Speaking of) Children, they came to the afternoon performance.’

(Casielles-Suárez, 2004, p.111)

Regarding the preverbal position of bare nominals, Suñer (1982) proposed the Naked Noun Constraint, which argues that “An unmodified common noun in preverbal position cannot be the surface subject of a sentence under conditions of normal stress and intonation” (1982, p.209). This constraint highlights the limited contexts in which bare nominals can appear before the verb, often influenced by specific information structures such as topic or focus. This use should be introduced to students at a later stage of their learning, once they are familiar with the basic syntax and can appreciate the subtleties of information structure in Spanish.

Second, as mentioned earlier, bare nominals in Spanish convey non-specific readings. This is evident in their interaction with the subjunctive mood in relative clauses. Consider the following example.

- (35) Quiere consultar **libros** que *describan* la conquista de México.
want.3sg consult books that describe.SBJV.3PL the conquest of Mexico
‘(S)he wants to consult books that describe the conquest of Mexico’

(Laca, 1999, p. 899)

In this sentence, the bare nominal *libros* (‘books’) expresses a lack of specificity, which licenses the use of the subjunctive *describan*. This interaction underscores the importance of bare nominals in conveying non-specific or indefinite meanings, which in turn affects the choice of verb mood in complex sentences.

These observations suggest that the instruction of bare plurals should be an integral part of Spanish language education. By understanding the syntactic positions and semantic roles of bare nominals, students can better grasp the intricacies of Spanish grammar. This knowledge not only helps in avoiding common errors but also enriches their overall linguistic competence.

5. Classroom Strategies for Teaching Spanish Bare Plurals

To ensure that students grasp the use of Spanish bare plurals, it is essential to highlight their distinguishing feature: their inability to be quantified. Instructors should focus on the input process to establish a clear link between linguistic forms and their meanings. This approach aligns with the principles of Focus on Form (Long and Robinson, 1998; Doughty and Williams, 1998) and VanPatten’s Input Processing Model (2002, 2004). Given that one feature of Spanish bare plurals (their inability to refer to specific entities) is similar to their English counterparts, while the other feature (their inability to be quantified) distinguishes them from English, instructors should emphasize this second feature.

5.1. Using English Grammar as Scaffolding

Using English grammar as a scaffold can simplify the learning process for students. Instructors can begin by introducing English particle-verb phrases like *eat up* and *drink up*, which emphasize the completion of an action. The following sentences can be presented to the students and ask whether they sound correct:

- (36) *I ate up **oranges**.
(37) *I drank up **beers**.

Native English speakers will likely find these sentences awkward. The more acceptable forms would be in (38) and (39).

- (38) I ate up **(all) the oranges**.
(39) I drank up **(all) the beers**.

At this point, instructors can explain that verbs like *eat up* and *drink up* must be combined with nouns that can refer to quantities. If a noun phrase cannot express quantities, it cannot combine with these verbs in English.

5.2. Introducing the same phenomenon in Spanish

Next, we can introduce the same phenomenon in Spanish by explaining that Spanish bare plurals cannot be used in certain structures because they cannot be quantified, illustrated by the similar examples.⁵

- (40) *Me comí **naranjas**.
 *I ate up oranges.’
(41) Me comí **las naranjas**.

⁵ It is very probable that student haven’t learned the different uses of *se* yet. Instructors can simply explain that this *se* indicates the consumption of totality, like the English particle *up*

*‘I ate up the oranges.’

The ungrammaticality of sentence (40) is due to the fact that bare plurals in Spanish cannot be quantified.

5.3. Emphasizing the distinction

Before moving on to activities, instructors should ensure that students understand this key distinction: Spanish bare plurals cannot refer to totality, unlike their English counterparts. Examples below can be provided to clarify this point.

(42) ***Pájaros** pueden volar.
birds can.3PL fly

‘Birds can fly.’

(43) Me gustan **gatos**.
to.me please.3PL cats

‘I like cats.’

We can either explain why these sentences are incorrect in Spanish or let students discuss why these sentences are not acceptable.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of bare plurals in Spanish and their instructional implications underscores a critical gap in current language teaching methodologies. The divergence between English and Spanish bare plurals, particularly in their syntactic and semantic functions, necessitates a more nuanced approach in the classroom. Spanish bare plurals do not denote kinds or participate in adverbial quantification over individuals as English bare plurals do. This distinction is pivotal for English speakers learning Spanish, as it directly impacts their ability to form grammatically correct and contextually appropriate sentences.

Therefore, the inclusion of detailed grammar explanations based on linguistic research in language teaching is not merely beneficial but essential. It bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, providing learners with the tools they need to navigate the complexities of Spanish grammar. Rethinking and refining grammar instruction to include these insights is a crucial step towards more meaningful language education.

Ningxian Li is a recent PhD graduate of the University of Georgia in the US. He teaches Spanish language classes as well as linguistic classes. His research interests are Spanish and Chinese syntax, pragmatics, applied linguistics, etc.

References

- Alonso, A. (1967). *Estudios lingüísticos: Temas hispanoamericanos* [Linguistic studies: Hispanic American themes]. Gredos.
- Bosque, I. (1996). *El sustantivo sin determinación: La ausencia de determinación en la lengua española* [The noun without determination: The absence of determination in the Spanish language]. Visor Libros.
- Carlson, G. (1977). *Reference to kinds in English* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts Amherst]. <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations/AAI7726414>
- Casielles-Suárez, E. (2004). *The syntax-information structure interface: Evidence from Spanish and English*. Routledge.
- Chierchia, G. (1998). Reference to kinds across languages. *Natural Language Semantics*, 6, 339-405. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1008324218506>
- Chung, S. (2000). On reference to kinds in Indonesian. *Natural Language Semantics*, 8, 157-171. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026527925514>
- Condoravdi, C. (1994). *Descriptions in context* [Doctoral dissertation, Yale University]. <https://ling.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/CONDORAVDI.pdf>
- Contreras, H. (1986). Spanish bare NPs and the ECP. In I. Bordelolís, H. Contreras & K. Zagana (Eds.), *Generative studies in Spanish syntax* (pp. 25-49). Foris.
- Cuza, A., Guijarro-Fuentes, P., Pires, A., & Rothman, J. (2012). The syntax-semantics of bare and definite plural subjects in the L2 Spanish of English natives. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 17(5), 634-652. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006911435594>
- DeMello, G. (1980). On the use of the article in Spanish. *Hispania*, 63(3), 557-560.
- Dobrovie-Sorin, C. (1997). Existential arguments and existential predicates. In A. Ithaca (Ed.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory VII* (pp. 117-134). CLS Publications.
- Dobrovie-Sorin, C., & Laca, B. (1998). La genericité entre la référence à l'espèce et la quantification générique [Genericity between the reference to the species and generic quantification]. In P. Sauzet (Ed.), *Actes de Langues et Grammaires III* [Proceedings of Languages and Grammars III] (pp. 163-177). Université Paris.
- Dobrovie-Sorin, C. & Laca, B. (2003). Les noms sans déterminant dans les langues romanes [Nouns without determiners

- in Romance languages]. In D. Godard (Ed.), *Les langues romanes: problèmes de la phrase simple* [Romance languages: simple sentence problems] (pp. 235-281). Editions du CNRS.
- Doughty, C. & Williams, J. (1998). Pedagogical choices in focus on form. In C. Doughty and J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 197-261). Cambridge University Press.
- Gregory, A. & Lunn, P. (2012). A concept-based approach to the subjunctive. *Hispania*, 95(2), 333-343. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23266216>
- Krifka, M. (2003, October). Bare plurals: Kind-referring, indefinites, both, or neither? Paper presented at the Fifth Paris Syntax and Semantics Colloquium.
- Laca, B. (1996). Acerca de la semántica de los ‘plurales escuetos’ del español” [About the semantics of the ‘bare plurals’ of Spanish]. In I. Bosque (Ed.), *El sustantivo sin determinación: La ausencia de determinante en la lengua española* [The noun without determiner: The lack of determiners in the Spanish] (pp. 241-268). Visor Libros.
- Laca, B. (1999). Presencia y ausencia de determinante [Presence and absence of determiners]. In I. Bosque and V. Demonte (Eds.), *Gramática descriptiva de español* [Descriptive grammar of Spanish] (pp. 891-929). Espasa Calpe.
- Laca, B. (2013). Spanish bare plurals and topicalization. In W. Abraham and E. van Gelderen (Eds.), *New perspectives on bare noun phrases in Romance and Beyond* (pp. 95-120). John Benjamins Publishing.
- Lado, R. (1957). *Language across cultures*. University of Michigan Press.
- Long, M. & Robinson, P. (1998). Focus on form: theory, research, and practice. In C. Doughty and J. Williams (Eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition* (pp. 15-63). Cambridge University Press.
- Mayoral Hernández, R. (2012). Teaching subject position in Spanish: Gustar verbs, unaccusatives and the impersonal passive. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 3(2), 321-330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006911435594>
- McNally, L. (2004). Bare plurals in Spanish are interpreted as properties. *Catalan Journal of Linguistics*, 3, 115-133. <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/catjl.107>
- Real Academia Española. (2009). *Manual de la Nueva Gramática de la Lengua Española* [Manual of new grammar in Spanish]. Espasa Calpe.
- Slabakova, R. (2006). Learnability in the second language acquisition of semantics: a bidirectional study of a semantic parameter. *Second Language Research*, 22(4), 498-523. <https://doi.org/10.1191/0267658306sr2770a>
- Suñer, M. (1982). *Syntax and semantics of Spanish presentational sentence-types*. Georgetown University Press.
- Whitley, M. S. (2002). *Spanish-English contrasts: A course in Spanish linguistics*. Georgetown University Press.
- Whitley, M. S & González, L. (2007). *Gramática para la composición* [Grammar for composition]. Georgetown University Press.
- Van Geenhoven, V. (2000). Pro properties, contra generalized kinds. In B. Jackson and T. Matthews (Eds.), *Proceedings from semantics and linguistic theory X* (pp. 221-238). CLC Publications.
- VanPatten, B. (2002). Processing instruction: An update. *Language Learning*, 52(4), 755-803. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9922.00203>
- VanPatten, B. (2004). Input processing in second language acquisition. In B. VanPatten (Ed.), *Processing instruction: Theory, research, and commentary* (pp. 5-31). Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Copyright © 2024 Li. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.

Call for Papers

Submit via <https://jlt.ac/>

Areas of Interest:

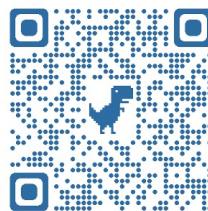
Language teaching intervention and experiments; Curriculum development; Language teacher education; Bilingual education; New technologies in language teaching; Testing, assessment, and evaluation; Educational psychology, and more.

We accept the following types of submission:

1. Research article: (6,000 to 8,000 words)
2. Review: (3,000 to 8,000 words)
3. Book review: (up to 3,000 words)
4. Features: (3,000 to 8,000 words)

Scan to submit your articles* & read more articles for free.

*Article Processing Charges Apply.



Contact: editor@jlt.ac