On the Accusative 'A' in Spanish.

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0. Introduction.

In this paper we discuss the syntax and semantics of the Accusative particle a in Spanish.

In section 1 we propose that the Spanish Direct Object is dominated by a functional projection whose head can be filled by the particle a. We will show that its realization is obligatory when this functional projection receives Accusative Case and is marked with the feature [+Animate]. Moreover, discussing the behavior of a with respect to simple Bare Plurals we will show that this category cannot function as a proper governor for the empty D° immediately dominated by it.

In section 2, comparing the behavior of a with that of the other prepositions with respect to simple and modified Bare Plurals, we show that prepositions too are unable to properly govern the empty D°. Furthermore, we will show that the impossibility of realizing a with the wh-movement of genitive phrases modifying the Bare Plural is due to the fact that this type of modifier is unable to license the empty D°. At the same time we will try to give an explanation for some cases in which the realization of the Accusative a is incompatible with the presence of a Dative Phrase in the sentence.

In section 3, we discuss the semantic constraints for the realization of a, showing, in particular, that the distribution of a cannot be accounted for by a binary feature like [±Specific].

Finally, in section 4 we compare the distribution of a with the Turkish morphological Accusative and Partitive Case. We will assume that [+Animate] Direct Objects which are not introduced by a realize Partitive Case, and we will show that the Spanish Accusative Case, unlike the Turkish Accusative Case is compatible with existential nominal expressions.

1. The Hypothesis.

1.1. The feature [+Animate].

Spanish has the property of realizing the particle a immediately before Direct

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1. A previous version of this paper was presented at the 1° Workshop on Spanish Grammar held at the Università di Venezia in May 1993. We are indebted to the audience of this conference for their helpful and constructive comments, and in particular to Guglielmo Cinque, Violeta Demonte, Giuseppe Longobardi and Marla Luisa Zubizarreta. We are also grateful to Anna Cardinaletti, Carmen Dobrovie-Sorin, M. Victoria Escandell, Manuel Leonetti and especially to Luis García, Giuliana Giusti, Roberto Dolci and Alberto Zamboni, who provided us with a relevant piece of bibliographical material of historical and typological interest. Finally, special thanks to Ignacio Bosque and Luis Sánchez for the patience and the valid suggestions they made during Brugè's stay in Madrid. However, responsibility for any errors or misunderstandings is ours and ours alone.

2. This entire work must be considered as the result of a constant collaboration of both authors. Nevertheless, sections 1 and 2 must be attributed to Laura Brugè, and sections 3 and 4 to Gerhard Brugger.
Objects.  

However, the presence of this element cannot be considered as a generalized phenomenon inside the language. In fact, the realization of a is subject to a series of restrictions related to the semantic properties of the nominal expression which occupies the Direct Object position.

Jaeggli (1982) proposes that one of these restrictions is represented by the animacy feature: the Direct Object must be specified for the feature [+Animate].

According to Jaeggli, we will also consider the feature [+Animate] on Direct Objects fundamental for the realization of a.

Therefore, with this property in mind, a in Spanish is obligatorily required in sentences such as (1a) and (1b), where the Direct Object is [+Animate], but it is completely impossible in sentences such as (1c), with an inanimate Direct Object:

\[
\text{(1) \quad a. \quad Esta mañana he visto *(a) Juan / la hermana de María.}
\]

\[
\text{This morning I saw Juan / Maria's sister.}
\]

3. In Historical Linguistics there exist many works which propose interesting hypotheses about the way in which this particle has developed from common Proto-Romance to the different Romance Languages, given that this phenomenon affects, in a more or less extended way, vast areas of the Romance domain, in particular, Portuguese, Castilian, Catalan, Franco-Provençal, Engandinese, Corsican, Sardinian, Southern Italian and Rumanian. Starting with Meyer-Lübke (1899) and other authors, the explanation for the origin of the "Prepositional Direct Object", in those Romance Languages which display it, would reside in a morpho-syntactic strategy to differentiate the Direct Object itself from the Subject in cases of ambiguity, namely in the domain of Animate Nouns. On the other hand, other authors such as Pușcariu (1921), Rohlfis (1971) and others, try to justify the appearance of this 'preposition' preceding the Direct Object on syntactic grounds: originally, still due to the loss of Case morphemes, it would have had the function of making the Direct Object recognizable when it was realized, in the sentence, in a different position from the basic post-verbal one, thus pointing out its emphatic function. An interesting explanation for the origin of the 'Prepositional Direct Object', which can be considered new with regard to the traditional one, was proposed by Carmen Pensado (1985). She shows that in Late Latin, namely before the loss of the inflectional system, the prepositional form AD+Dative (i.e. AD MIHI, etc.) developed inside the system of personal pronouns, and that this form was also extended to the the Direct Object in those areas of 'Romania' which use the form AD+Dative for the Indirect Object - Sardinian, Ibero-Romance and Southern Italian -. She proposes, then, that the appearance of the Prepositional Direct Object must not be considered an isolated phenomenon in the syntax of Early Romance, but a general tendency of Common Romance to express topicalization and to distinguish 'high transitivity' from 'low transitivity', always using the form which corresponds with the Romance expression of the Indirect Object. As for the other areas of 'Romania' which use in a more or less partial way the Prepositional Direct Object - Rumanian, Engandinese, Franco-Provençal-, she proposes that this use has been acquired independently and later, but that its origin would in any case reside in topicalization and in the tendency to mark 'high transitivity'.

As many languages - not necessarily related to each other from the general point of view, as we will comment on later in the text - display a Direct Object marked with various morphological means, studies on this phenomenon have also been carried out in Typological Linguistics, where this phenomenon is considered an Empiric Universal - cf. Lazard (1984), which will be refer to later, and Nocentini (1987), where the author proposes the existence of four types with evolutive implications which are differentiated on the base of the markedness of the Subject and the Object. -

4. A second restriction that Jaeggli (1982) proposes for the realization of the particle a has to do with the Specificity feature, instead of the feature [+Definite] defended by the previous literature. This second aspect of the Jaeggli's analysis will be amply discussed in section 3 of our work.
b. Esta mañana he visto *(a) mi perro.
   This morning I saw my dog.
c. Esta mañana he visto *(a) la nueva iglesia.
   This morning I saw the new church.

1.1.2. **Definite Objects [+Animate] without 'a'.**

Examining the cases presented in (1) with reference to the Animacy requirement, it is necessary to say that Spanish displays some counterexamples to this property, which we consider a general property; these were noticed by Jaeggli himself.

Let us observe in this respect the following sentence:

(2) Llevaron (a) los heridos a un hospital cercano. (Jaeggli, 1982)
   They took the wounded to a nearby hospital.

As we can see, in (2) the Direct Object can appear without a even if the Noun is apparently [+Animate].

In order to give an explanation for these problematic cases, Jaeggli suggests that the feature [+Animate] is relevant for the realization or the omission of a, but not necessary (see footnote 15).

Our hypothesis, however, is to assume that the feature [+Animate] is always obligatory for the realization of the particle a.

Now, how could we explain the case in (2) and consequently justify that a is always associated with the feature [+Animate]?

According to native speakers' judgements, the presence or absence of the particle a in contexts such as those we are examining produces a difference in interpretation.

Jaeggli, in his attempt to explain cases like this, proposes that in the case in which a is omitted 'the sentence is understood with the Direct Object having almost an inanimate reading, as if 'the wounded' were nothing more than objects to be carried' (p.24). However, this explanation does not seem to solve the problem in the following sentences:

(3) a. Ayer a las cinco de la tarde llevaron a los heridos a un hospital cercano.
   Yesterday at 5 in the evening they took the wounded to a nearby hospital.
b. Llevaron a los heridos que empezaban a amontonarse en el campamento a un hospital cercano.
   They took the wounded who began to accumulate in the camp to a nearby hospital.

In fact, if Jaeggli's proposal was correct, we would expect to find also in these sentences the same optionality of a as in the example in (2), because in principle in these cases nothing prevents the Direct Object from being interpreted as an inanimate object. Nevertheless, here, the presence of the temporal constituent a las cinco de la tarde in (3a), which forces the specific time reference, and the presence of a modifier of the Direct Object which contains the verb *amontonarse* in (3b) make the realization of a obligatory. The optionality of a in (2) and its obligatory presence in (3) show that the presence or absence of a in (2a) must be explained in a different way with respect to what Jaeggli proposed.

What we suggest to account for the behavior of a in (2) and in (3) is that the presence or absence of a with animate Direct Object is due to the **Object / Kind** distinction, which we propose to associate with the features [+Animate] and [-Animate].

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5. See Carlson (1977a) for an exhaustive explanation of the distinction between **Kind** and **Object**
So, we formulate the following generalization:

(4) Associate the Kind interpretation of an animate Nominal Expression either with the feature [+Animate] or with the feature [-Animate]; associate the Object interpretation of an animate Nominal Expression only with the feature [+Animate].

Now, returning to the sentences in (3), we can explain why in these cases a must occur obligatorily.

In (3a) the presence of a temporal modifier prevents the predicate to express an activity; in this case it can only express an event. As the Kind interpretation is impossible when the verb which is not a Kind-level predicate expresses an event, the only possible interpretation for the Direct Object is the Object interpretation. By (4), the Object interpretation is always associated with the feature [+Animate]. So, the presence of a, which, as we said, is sensitive to this feature, will be obligatory.

In (3b), on the other hand, the presence of a must be due to the verb amontonarse which appears in the relative clause. In fact, the property of accumulating cannot be considered as an intrinsic property of heridos, thus preventing the Direct Object from receiving a Kind interpretation. In this case, again, the only possible interpretation for the Direct Object is the Object interpretation, associated, by (4), only with the feature [+Animate], making a obligatory.

To support our proposal and the generalization we expressed in (4), consider the following examples:

(5) a. Antoñito buscaba la mujer rica.  
   (P. Baroja, El árbol de la ciencia, p.91)  
   Antoñito was looking for the rich woman.

b. . . . . . . . . . . una fuente de vida nueva que purifica el hombre moral.  
   (M. Menéndez Pelayo, Ideas estéticas, VII, p.227)  
   . . . . a source of new life which purifies the moral man.

c. . . . . Las enfermedades y la guerra han exterminado el hombre.  
   Illnesses and war exterminated man.

interpretations for nominals.

6. Another argument which proves that this assumption is correct is given by the contrast we can observe in (1):

   i. a. Durante la guerra mis padres escondían (a) los heridos en el sótano.  
      During the war my parents hid (Imperfect) the wounded in the basement.

   b. Mis padres acaban de esconder *(a) los heridos en el sótano.  
      My parents have just hidden the wounded in the basement.

Here, esconder, such as llevar, is not a Kind level predicate. So, when this predicate appears expressing an activity, as in (ia) -note the presence of the temporal constituent Durante la guerra and the use of the Imperfect tense escondían-, the Direct Object can receive either the Object interpretation, which realizes through the presence of a, or the Kind interpretation, which disallows a (cf. (4)). This case can be compared with the one in (2). On the other hand, if the same predicate expresses an event, as in (ib) -note the use of the verbal periphrasis acabar de-, the presence of a preceding the Direct Object is obligatory. This shows that the only possible reading is the Object one.

7. The examples in (5a) and (5b) are taken from Fernández Ramírez (1986), which we refer the reader to for a discussion of a large number of cases of this type.
In all of them, we have for the Direct Object nominals a Kind reading: *la mujer rica, el hombre moral y el hombre* are interpreted as types rather than as syntactic elements with a specific reference, and this characteristic is particularly evident in the first case, (5a). 8

However, in all of the three sentences the same Direct Objects can be preceded by a giving grammatical results, as (6) shows:

(6)  
   a. Antoñito buscaba a la mujer rica.  
      *Antoñito was looking for the rich woman.*
   b. ...una fuente de vida nueva que purifica al hombre moral.  
      ...a source of new life which purifies the moral man.
   c. Las enfermedades y la guerra han exterminado al hombre.  
      Illnesses and war exterminated the man.

but this possibility yields different results.

In fact, while in (5a), where a is omitted, the Direct Object can only receive the Kind interpretation, as we showed, in (6a), where a appears, the Object interpretation becomes obligatory: here, *la mujer rica* is always associated with a specific referent, namely it always denotes an individual.

On the other hand, in (6b) and (6c), where a appears, the interpretation of the resulting nominals is still the Kind one, just as in the cases (5b) and (5c). The only possibility for the Direct Objects of these last two pairs of sentences to be interpreted as Kind, independently of the presence or absence of a, is due in the first case to the nature of the Direct Object *el hombre moral*, which can never denote an individual, and in the second case to the nature of the predicate *exterminar*, which is a predicate that can select only Kind nominal expressions. 9 So, since a is possible in these cases without any change in the interpretation of the Direct Object nominal expressions, we have to assume that Kinds can be associated either with the feature [+Animate], which requires the presence of a, or with the feature [-Animate] which, on the other hand, prevents its realization, as the generalization (4) states.

A piece of empirical evidence which proves that Kind interpretation can be associated with the feature [-Animate] is given by the fact that if we wh-move the Kind Direct Object, we can choose, besides the pronoun *quién*, also the pronoun *qué*, which bears in Spanish the feature [-Animate], as the examples in (7) show:

(7)  
   a. - ¿Qué purifica un fuente de vida nueva?  
      *What does a source of new life purify?*

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8. Note that in (5a) one could propose that the Direct Object *la mujer rica* is not interpreted as a Kind but as 'nonspecific Object'. However, this does not seem to be the case because, when a Nominal Expression in Direct Object position receives the 'non-specific Object' interpretation, the realization of a is always obligatory in Spanish, as the following sentence shows:

   i. Antoñito buscaba *(a) la mujer más alta del mundo.*  
      *Antoñito was looking for the tallest woman in the world.*

9. The fact that the verb *exterminar* is a Kind level Predicate is confirmed by (i):

   i. *Las enfermedades y la guerra han exterminado a Juan.*  
      *Illness and war exterminated Juan.*

whose ungrammaticality depends on the presence of the Noun *Juan* as Direct Object; in fact, a Proper Name, can never be interpreted as a Kind.
- El hombre moral.
  *The moral man.*

b. ¿Qué han exterminado las enfermedades y la guerra?
  *What did illnesses and war exterminate?*

- El hombre.
  *Man.*

With these considerations in mind, let us return to the case in (2). We proposed that here the realization of a and its absence corresponds to the Object interpretation and to the Kind interpretation: when the Direct Object *los heridos* receives the Object interpretation, it denotes individuals and is analysed as [+Animate], hence a must realize obligatorily. On the other hand, when the same Direct Object is assigned the Kind interpretation, it does not denote individuals but a type of person and can be categorized as [-Animate], hence a cannot appear. 10, 11

10. As we showed in the cases (6b-c) and as the generalization (4) expresses, namely that the Kind interpretation can be associated also with the feature [+Animate], we should expect that in (2), when a appears, the interpretation of the Direct Object is ambiguous between a Kind and an Object reading. Nevertheless, according to native speakers' judgments, we propose that here the presence of a is associated only with the Object interpretation.

How could we explain, thus, that in cases such as those in (2) and (6a) the presence of a implies only the Object interpretation for the Direct Object?

We suggest that the Conversational Implicature - a Discourse Principle which states: "Be informative", namely not ambiguous-operates in cases like these. So, given that the Kind interpretation for the Direct Object is expressed in (2) and in (5a) through the absence of a, by the Conversational Implicature, the presence of a specializes here for the Object interpretation, excluding the other reading.

11. Other data which appears problematic for the hypothesis proposed by Jaeggli (1982 and 1986), and which the author himself discusses, are represented by those cases in which a basically inanimate Direct Object is preceded by the Accusative a, as the following examples show:

i. a. Las aves saludan a la aurora.
  *Birds greet the dawn.*

b. El entusiasmo vence a la dificultad.
  *Enthusiasm wins over difficulty.*

c. Los ácidos atacan a los metales.
  *Acids attack metals.*

(Jaeglgi, 1986)

To give an account of these cases, maintaining the proposal that a occurs when the Direct Object is [+Animate], we suggest that here la aurora, la dificultad and los metales, even if basically inanimate, are categorized as [+Animate] through a personification process, and that for this reason a appears. As for the personification process, we say that its application depends on a series of different linguistic and extralinguistic factors.

One of these is represented by the nature of the verbs themselves. In fact, saludar, vencer y atacar, such as ayudar, asesinar, despedir, seguir -with the meaning of perseguir-, etc., are verbs which primarily select [+Human] internal arguments.

However, inanimate Direct Objects can appear preceded by a in certain literary or metaphorical contexts also with verbs which do not belong to the class of the verbs we have just mentioned, as (ii) shows:

ii. a. Los niños vieron al sol.
  *The children saw the sun.*

b. Sus amigos vieron a la tristeza en sus ojos.
  *His friends saw the sadness in her eyes.*

So, we say that another factor which makes possible the personification process is due to the class of the Noun it belongs to: atmosferical Nouns and abstract Nouns are more sensitive to this process than other Nouns, as (iii) shows:
1.2. Bare Plurals and the accusative 'a'.

Let us observe, now, the behaviour of Bare Plurals in Direct Object position with respect to the semantic property we have enunciated.

We can notice, as did Torrego (1984) and Lois (1989), that they are completely incompatible with a in those environments in which the Bare Plural appears specified for the feature [+Animate], as the grammaticality of the sentence in (8a) and the ungrammaticality of the sentence in (8b) show:

(8)  

a. Esta mañana he visto hombres en la calle.  
_This morning I saw men in the street._

b. * Esta mañana he visto a hombres en la calle.  

A way to justify this strange behavior was proposed by Jaeggli (1982 and 1986). According to Jaeggli's hypothesis, the particle a couldn't appear in these contexts because a Bare Plural is always specified for the feature [-Specific], while the realization of a implies for the Direct Object also the [+Specific] feature (see footnote 4).

However, we will not adopt his hypothesis, because, as we will see in section 3, there exists a large number of significant data which proves that his hypothesis cannot be considered entirely correct.

What we propose, instead, is to assume that the ungrammaticality of the sentence in (8b) depends on an ECP violation, and hence, that in general, the presence or absence of a in Spanish is due to syntactic reasons.

This syntactic hypothesis, which we will defend here, is in line with the one proposed by Contrasrs (1986), but especially with the proposal suggested by Longobardi (1991), who, studying the behavior of Proper Nouns in Italian and in other languages among which Spanish, adopts the "DP Hypothesis" proposed by Abney (1987). According to Longobardi's proposal, we will assume that Bare

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iii. a. * Los niños vieron al suelo.  
_The children saw the floor._

b. * Sus amigos vieron al polvo en sus ojos.  
_His friends saw the dust in her eyes._

In (ii) sol and tristeza can easily undergo the process of personification, and a can appear. In (iii), on the other hand, this possibility seems not to be feasible, and for this reason a cannot appear, even if in principle, and probably under stronger constraints than in (ii), we would expect that also in these cases the personification process can apply.

12. It is interesting to notice here that constructions like (8b) can appear completely grammatical to some native speakers, as Luis Sáez has pointed out to us. We must say, that the well-formedness of these sentences is due to the fact that they can have another structure; to make the judgements concordantly ungrammatical it is necessary to specify that the locative PP en la calle must be interpreted as a phrase modifying the whole sentence, and not as a modification of the nominal expression, which, as we will see later, gives the possibility to make the Bare Plural compatible with the particle a. In fact, the following sentence is considered by every native speaker ungrammatical:

i. * En la calle he visto a hombres.  
_In the street I saw men._

13. Contrasrs, in his article also provides an account of the possibility or impossibility of the Bare Singulairs and the Bare Plurals in the different positions inside the sentences based on the Empty Category Principle. The difference between his proposal and the one we adopt here depends on the
Plurals have an empty $D_\circ$, and that a DP can appear in an $A$-position with an empty $D_\circ$ only if there exists some lexical element in the structure that can lexically govern this empty head $D$. Longobardi in his work assumes for Bare Plurals the structure in (9a) and the universal principle in (9b):

(9) a. $[\text{DP} \ [D [D_\circ e] [\text{NP} \ [N \ \text{Bare Plural}]]]]$ (cf. p.11)
   b. An empty head must be lexically governed. (p.39)

In this way, it is possible to explain the grammaticality and at the same time the ungrammaticality of the following sentences:

(10) a. *BOMBONES están en la cocina.

   There are chocolates in the kitchen.

b. *Profesores hablaron en el congreso.

   Professors spoke at the congress.

c. Los niños han comido bombones.

   Children ate chocolates.

In (10a-b) the empty determiner of the preverbal subject is not lexically governed: the ungrammaticality of the two sentences is determined by a violation of the principle (9b); on the contrary, (10c) does not violate (9b) because here the empty determiner is lexically governed. So, with these theoretical assumptions in mind, we say that also in cases like (8a), in which the Bare Plural is specified for the feature [+Human] and hence [+Animate], it can appear because the Verb can properly govern the empty $D_\circ$.

Let us return, now, to the sentence in (8b). What we would like to propose is that the ungrammaticality of such a construction is due to the fact that the head $D$ appears in a configuration which violates ECP: this empty category is not properly governed by any element which can lexically govern it, exactly as in the cases in (11):

(11) a. *El director ha devuelto los documentos a empleados.

   The director gave back the documents to clerks.


   Last month Mercedes thought of Arabians.

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structural position of the empty category with the value of existential Quantifier that must be properly governed. In Contreras (1986) it occupies the position of Spec. NP: $[\text{NP} \ [Q \ E \ [N]]]$. Moreover, we consider our account, as well as Contreras's under a previous theoretical framework, superior, from empirical and theoretical point of view, than the 'Naked Noun Constraint' proposed by Suetter (1982a), which states: "* $[\text{NP} \ Nu] \ V$ ...... unless Nu is a contrastive focus.".

Another analysis to explain the behavior of the Bare Plurals was proposed by Torrego (1984). This proposal differs from Contreras's and ours since it is not based on ECP but on the Case Theory. In fact, Torrego, in her work, proposes for these Nouns a structure in which no Determiner node is projected. As these NPs appear lacking in a Determiner and at the same time do not have an adjectival determination, they must receive their Case directly, namely through strict adjacency, by the Verb or by AGR. For an interesting comment on Torrego's hypothesis, we refer the reader to Lois (1989).

Lois (1989) puts forth a different proposal to explain the cases we are treating. According to Abney (1987), Lois proposes that in Spanish the NPs without Determiner must be incorporated to an $X_\circ$ element, $P_\circ$ or $V_\circ$ in these cases, to satisfy functional selection, because the NP, lacking the Determiner which naturally selects it, would remain unlicensed. So, Incorporation is considered to be the only possibility to escape the Case Filter. With these considerations in mind, the realization of the particle $a$ in these cases is impossible because the NP, whose head N has been incorporated, will receive Case twice at PF: by Incorporation and from the Accusative marker $a$.

In the present paper, for reasons we will not discuss, we will not adopt the Incorporation approach for the phenomena we are studying.
According to Contreras and Longobardi, the ungrammaticality of the sentence in (10b), a case of Bare Plural in preverbal Subject position specified for the feature [+Human] and consequently [+Animate], is due to the fact that the Bare Plural appears in an ungoverned position, as we pointed out before. The same explanation we would like to propose for the cases in (11a) and (11b), namely for those cases in which a Bare Plural appears as the complement of a Preposition, as we will discuss in the next section.

The similar behavior of (10b), (11) and (8b), combined with the grammaticality of sentences such as (8a), leads us to propose that a is incapable of properly governing the empty category in D°; moreover, the same comparison suggests that the presence of a prevents the Verb from properly governing the empty head D.

1.3. The Structure.

Keeping these considerations in mind, and following Jaeggli (1982 and 1986) and Demonte (1987), who demonstate that a is a dummy preposition, namely that it is the realization of the Accusative Case assignment by the Verb to its internal argument, we propose that a occupies the head of a Functional Projection, FP, conceived of as a Case Projection, which can select a DP.

So, the structure we propose for the Direct Objects in Spanish is the one presented in (12):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{(12)}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\vdots \text{VP} \\
\mid
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{V'} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{V°} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{FP} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{F'} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{F°} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{(a)} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{D'} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{D°} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{NP} \\
\end{array}
\]

What could we say about this Functional Projection?

We propose that this Functional Projection is always projected in Syntax as the realization of the Case assignment by the Verb to its internal argument. 14

We assume, moreover, that this Projection has to be conceived of as an extension of the Noun itself, and that, for this reason, the head F contains some Nominal features, such as [±Accusative] and [±Animate], underspecified for its positive or negative values (cf. Grimshaw (1991)).

The value [+Accusative] in F° will be chosen when the Verb will assign the Accusative Case to its internal argument. The value [+Animate] will instead be chosen when the head Noun appears specified for this feature, assuming that every feature of the N° is projected through all the functional heads which dominate the N° itself, in order to make them compatible with it.

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14. For a different proposal, see Giusti (1992 and 1993), who assumes, that the DP itself must be considered as a Case projection in which the article in D° represents the abstract realization of Case, bringing the possible morphological manifestations of Case as it occurs in Rumanian.
Keeping this proposal in mind, \(a\), which we assume is specified for the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate], will obligatorily occur in \(F^0\) if and only if this position chooses the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate] simultaneously. 15 Moreover, we propose that \(a\) is not a [+V] element, according to the definition of ECP given in Cinque (1990):

\[(13) \quad \text{Definition of ECP:}\]

\[\text{"A nonpronominal empty category must be properly head-governed by} \]

\[\text{a head nondistinct from [+V].} \quad \text{" (p.49)}\]

At the same time, in order to make \(a\) compatible with the Nominal Projection, we propose that it is an element unspecified for the feature [N].

We will make, then, the following assumptions:

\[(14) \quad \begin{align*}
\text{a. Realize } a & \text{ in } F^0 \text{ iff } F^0 \text{ carries the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate].} \\
\text{b. } a & \text{ is a [-V] [UN] element.}
\end{align*}\]

Now, the ungrammaticality of sentences such as (8b) can be explained: \(a\) in \(F^0\), whose presence is expected because this position is specified for the feature [+Animate], cannot properly govern the empty \(D^0\) of \(hombres\), because it is distinct from a [+V] element. At the same time, the presence of \(a\) prevents the Verb from properly governing the empty \(D^0\) for the Minimality Condition, and the direct result is an ECP violation.

On the contrary, in cases such as those in (8a) it seems that the Verb is able to properly govern the empty category in \(D^0\) because no lexical head intervenes between the Verb and the \(D^0\).

Looking at the structure proposed in (12), how is it that the Verb can properly govern the empty head \(D\)?

What we propose is that the empty category in \(D^0\) moves to the \(F^0\) position, which is also empty, and that in this position it can be properly governed by the Verb which

---

15. In a previous theoretical framework, Jaeggli (1982) doesn't consider the possibility for the particle \(a\) to occupy the head of an independent functional projection; he proposes the following rule of 'Insertion of \(a\)' , particular to Spanish:

\[i. \quad \phi \rightarrow a / \_ \quad [\text{NP, + accusative}] \quad \text{(p.24)}\]

and assumes that it applies freely after D-Structure. Moreover, to maintain an autonomous view of Syntax, Jaeggli avoids mentioning the features [+Animate] and [+Specific] in the rule, because in some cases it seems that it is the meaning of the verb, or of a whole complex of semantic aspects which require the presence of \(a\), (cf.(2)). It seems that the realization of \(a\) in those cases in which it appears takes place at PF, and occupies a structural position that Jaeggli does not specify.

An attempt to give an independent position to the particle \(a\) in Deep Structure was proposed by Schachter (1972). The different hypothesis he defended was that \(a\) in the cases we are examining was not an Accusative assigner but a Dative assigner. However, it is not difficult to prove the inadequacy of this proposal. The more consistent argument against it is represented by the fact that the presence of \(a\) is, in general, obligatory in Spanish even when a dative phrase appears in the structure:

\[\text{ii.} \quad \begin{align*}
\text{a. } \text{Mi madre presentó a su hermana a María.} \\
& \quad \text{My mother introduced her sister to María.} \\
\text{b. } \text{Los padres entregaron a sus hijos a buenos profesores.} \\
& \quad \text{The parents entrusted their sons to capable professors.}
\end{align*}\]

We will discuss these particular structures in relation with the presence or absence of the Accusative \(a\) in section 2.3.
governs the FP projection.

But how is the movement of the empty category in $D^o$ to the $F^o$ position justified? There seem to be two different ways.

The first possibility is to assume the existence of some requirement in the Grammar which states that if in $F^o$ no unbound Case morpheme appears, then the category $X^o$ subjacent to $F^o$ must move to this position in order to absorb and make visible its features in some way.

We consider this as a proposal which we would like to defend, but which cannot be justified through empirical data, because, as we know, Spanish doesn't have a system of morphological Case visible on the Determiner, unlike other languages such as Rumanian. 16

The second possibility to justify the movement of the empty category in $D^o$ to the $F^o$ position is that the empty $D^o$ must move only in this case, in order to be properly governed by the Verb.

1.4. Empirical consequences.

At this point, we can justify the presence or absence of a in all the sentences in (15):

\[(15)\]

a. Juan saludó a la dueña del piso.
   *Juan greeted the landlady.*

b. La madre llamó a María desde la ventana.
   *Her mother called Maria from the window.*

c. Pilar y Francisco vieron a muchos extranjeros en Sevilla.
   *Pilar and Francisco saw many strangers in Seville.*

d. El médico buscaba a su mujer.
   *The doctor was looking for his wife.*

e. Nunca he visto a ese profesor.
   *I have never seen this professor.*

f. Mi hermano compró (*a*) el viejo coche de nuestro tío.
   *My brother bought our uncle's old car.*

In (15a) $D^o$ is not empty because the Definite Article *la* appears in this position. So it doesn't have to be properly governed by the Verb. Moreover, the $F^o$ position is specified for the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate] and, by (14a), the presence of $a$ is obligatory.

In (15b), the presence of $a$ is necessary for the same reasons we have seen above, namely that the $F^o$ is specified for the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate].

16. In Rumanian, we have only a morphological Case represented by the bound element *-ui* which is always realized on the Determiner, and which expresses both the Genitive and Dative Case, as the following example shows:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{i.} & \text{portretul} \quad \text{regelui} \\
       & \text{'portrait-the-} \phi \text{ king-the-ui'} \\
       & \text{NOM/ACC.} \quad \text{GEN.} \\
\end{array}
\]

*The portrait of the King.*

According to our proposal, we could assume that in these cases the morpheme *-ui* occupies the $F^o$ position of the FP projection (12). So, the form *regelui* can be considered as the result of two different movements, perhaps applying in LF: the first one is the movement of the Noun *reg* to $D^o$ position to be incorporated to the article *-ul*; the second one is the movement of the resulting form *regel* to $F^o$, to be incorporated to *-ui* which is, differently from the Spanish a, a Case bound morpheme.
Moreover, we say that even in this case the D° is not empty, because, following Longobardi (1991), we propose that this position is occupied in Syntax by the Proper Noun Maria, which, in Spanish too, moves to D°. In (15c) the presence of a is possible 17 because the existential Quantifier muchos occupies the D° position, if we assume Longobardi's (1991) hypothesis. So, this functional position appears filled, and consequently does not need to be properly governed. F° in this case too is specified for the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate], and as a result of the application of (14a), we will have the realization of a. 18

With a possessive pronoun, moreover, the presence of a is always obligatory in Spanish when the Direct Object is [+Animate]. Consider in this respect the example in (15d). If we assume the proposal suggested by Giorgi and Longobardi (1991), which says that the determiner-like possessive pronoun occupies the Spec. of DP, we can account for the realization of a in the context we are examining. According to these two authors, in this case the possessive pronoun transmits its own features to D° by Spec.-Head agreement, licensing a definite interpretation on D° and so giving it the possibility of escaping the effect of any proper government requirement. Therefore in (15d), as F° receives the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate], a must appear. If, on the other hand, we adopt the hypothesis suggested by Picallo (1992 and 1993), who proposes that in Spanish, possessive pronouns move to D° position, in cases such as those we are commenting on D° will not be empty, and a, by (14a), must occur because F° is marked with the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate].

In (15e), however, the presence of a is necessary because the F° position is marked with the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate]; in this case, moreover, D° does not need to be properly governed because, adopting Giusti's (1992 and 1993) proposal about the position of Demonstratives, ese in Spec. of DP can license the empty D°.

Finally, in (15f) we can say that the impossibility of realizing a in the F° position is due to the fact that this position, in this particular case, is specified for the features [+Accusative] and [-Animate]. Thus, (14a) cannot apply. Moreover, according to one of the proposals we suggested earlier, the Determiner el possibly moves to F° to absorb and to make the abstract features of the Case 'visible'. 19

Now, if, as we proposed, a has not the capacity of properly governing the empty

17. Note that in this case, namely when an existential Quantifier appears modifying the Direct Object, the presence of a is optional. We refer the reader to section 4 of our work for an explanation of this optional variation.

18. Cardinaletti e Giusti (1991) propose a different analysis for quantified nominals. They assume that Q is a functional head which selects the maximal projection NP, as the following structural representation shows:

\[ [QP [Q' [Q° [NP]]]] \]

We will not discuss here the theoretical validity of this proposal. The only thing we want to note here is that it does not interfere with our hypothesis. In fact, here, as the sentence (15c) shows, the head Q of the QP projection selected by our functional category of Case would not be empty either; hence, no ECP violation would occur, and the realization of a would be possible.

19. Note that under this proposal a movement of this sort extends also to cases in which an inanimate Direct Object is preceded by a Quantifier, a possessive pronoun and a demonstrative. In the first two cases it will be the Quantifier in Q° and the possessive Pronoun in D° - assuming Picallo's hypothesis - to move to F°; while in the last case, given that the Demonstrative occupies, as we propose, the Spec.DP position, it will be the empty D° to move to F°.
D° and at the same time its realization functions as a blocking head for the proper
government by the Verb, we have to add that its presence doesn't prevent a genitive
complement of the NP from moving to higher positions. In fact, sentences such as
(16) are fully grammatical in Spanish:

(16) ¿ De quién has encontrado a la hija ___?
    'Of whom did you meet the daughter?'

To explain this possibility we will propose that the functional category a is inert for
the Spec. to Spec. movement of those maximal projections that can be extracted from
the NP.

In fact, we can say that our FP has a Spec. position which functions as a landing
site for the trace of the genitive, and that in this position the trace can be head-
governed by the Verb.

Then, following Rizzi's (1990) hypothesis for the extraction from NP, this trace in
the Spec. of the FP could trigger abstract agreement on the head, namely a, turning it
into an appropriate governor for the trace in the Spec. of DP.

2. Some apparent counterexamples to our hypothesis.

2.1. The presence of the Accusative 'a' with Bare Plurals and the case
of Prepositions.

Earlier in the paper we said that Bare Plurals are incompatible with the particle a
when they appear in Direct Object position. However, there exist some cases in which
they may be preceded by a. This possibility occurs in the following cases:

a. When they are modified, as shown in (17a).
b. When they enter a Coordination Relation with another Bare Plural, as in (17b).
c. When they are focalized, as (17c) shows:

(17) a. ¿ Sabes que Juan ha conocido (a) hombres que tenían menos de 40
años?
    Do you know that Juan met men who were less than 40 years old?

b. Han conocido (a) hombres y mujeres. (Lois, 1989)
    They met men and women.

c. María ha conocido (a) HOMBRES (y no a mujeres). (Lois, 1989)
    Maria met MEN (and not women).

It is important to note that the same sentences without a are correct in Spanish, but
the interesting point here is that a can appear in these contexts, as Torrego (1984) and
Lois (1989) point out. 20

If, according to our hypothesis, the realization of a causes an ECP violation when
the D° is empty, how can we explain these phenomena?

Earlier, we saw that Bare Plurals can appear neither in preverbal Subject position nor
in the complement position of a Preposition (cf. (10a-b) and (11) ).

Following Contreras and Longobardi, we said that the ungrammaticality of the
sentences in (10a-b) is due to the fact that the preverbal Subject position is not
governed.

At the same time, observing the data in (11), it seems that the complement position
of a Preposition is also ungoverned.

20. As we said before, an explanation for the possibility of the absence of a in all these cases will
be given in section 4 of the text.
Is it possible to consider this hypothesis to be true?

The fact that, in general, in Spanish, Prepositions are not proper governors for $D^o$ is confirmed by the ungrammaticality of the sentences in (18):

(18) a. * El profesor ha entregado su último artículo a estudiantes.
   *The professor gave back his latest work to students.*

b. * Para terminar su trabajo, Carlos ha confiado en arquitectos.
   *In order to finish his work, Carlos trusted in architects.*

c. * Juan ha comido sin colegas. 21
   *Juan ate without colleagues.

  g. * La tía María se ha sentado entre mujeres. 22
   *Aunt María sat down among women.*

h. * Victoria tiene mucho dinero porque se casó dos veces con viudos.
   *Victoria has a lot of money because she twice married widowers.*

However, it is important to notice that the judgments of native speakers are fairly controversial for the cases in (18b) and (18d), which are not considered completely ungrammatical. In our opinion, these judgments could be connected with the fact that in the two sentences the Preposition is strictly selected by the Verb: confiar en and contar con.

Nevertheless, there seem to exist some cases in Spanish, with certain Prepositions, in which a Bare Plural can appear as its complement.

21. It is interesting to say that if in this sentence we replace the Bare Plural colegas with amigos, producing the following sentence:

   i. ?? Juan ha comido sin amigos.
      *Juan ate without friends.*

   the acceptability improves. A tentative explanation for such an improvement will be given in footnote 23.

22. Let's observe that this sentence is not considered completely ungrammatical by a certain number of native speakers. This judgment, as Bosque suggested to us - p.c. -, should be determined by the fact that Bare Plurals immediately dominated by the Preposition entre are interpreted with the value of 'a (certain) type of persons'. In fact, if we replace mujeres with abogados, for example, the sentence improves:

   i. Decidif sentarme entre abogados.  (= Decidif sentarme entre este tipo de personas: los abogados.)
      *I decided to sit down among lawyers.*  (= I decided to sit down among this type of person: lawyers.)

But, if we realize in the same contexts a nominal expression which cannot be interpreted as a Predication, as it is the case with personal pronominals, the corresponding sentence is always ungrammatical:

ii. * Decidif sentarme entre ellos.
    *I decided to sit down between them.*
Let us observe in this respect the sentences in (19):

(19)  a. Ayer salí con amigos.  
  *Yesterday I went out with friends.*  
  (Lois, 1989)

  b. Expuso su programa ante multitudes.  
  *He exposed his program before multitudes.*  
  (Lois, 1989)

  c. La cosecha fue destruida por langostas.  
  *The harvest was destroyed by locusts.*  
  (Suñer, 1982)

The well-formedness of these sentences led Lois (1989) to propose that Bare Plurals could be incorporated also to Prepositions (see footnote 13). However, what we should do here, mainly to render our hypothesis plausible, is to demonstrate that the cases in (19) are special cases, and that not even in these contexts are Prepositions able to properly govern the empty D0.

Crucial evidence in favour of our hypothesis comes from replacing the Direct Object head Noun with another one. The same sentences become ungrammatical for every native speaker, as (20) shows:

(20)  a. Ayer salí con * porteros / * pobres / * marineros.  
  *Yesterday I went out with door-keepers / (the) poor / sailors.*

---

23. To explain the well-formedness of the example in (19a) compared with the ungrammaticality of (20a), Bosque suggested to us -p.c.- that the Preposition con in the first case probably should not be considered as a real Preposition. In Spanish, strings such as con amigos / parientes, con suerte, etc., seem to behave for some reason, more like adjectival-type forms rather than PPs. In fact, they can coordinate with APs, as the contrast in (i) shows:

i. a. * ¿ Saliste solo o con amigos ?  
   *Did you go out alone or with friends?*

   b. * ¿ Saliste solo o con jueces?  
   *Did you go out alone or with judges?*

Moreover, when such strings appear as modifiers of a Noun, the plural Noun can never appear preceded by Demonstratives or Determiners nor can it be modified:

ii. a. .... gente con amigos ...
   ... people with friends...

   b. * .... gente con estos amigos ...
   ... people with these friends...

   c. * .... gente con amigos del 5° piso ...
   ... people with friends from the 5th floor...

   d. * .... gente con amigos enfadados ...
   ... people with angry friends...

This proposal can explain the ungrammaticality of the sentence (20a) and also the one of (18b). Furthermore Bosque suggests the same explanation for some cases with the Preposition sin, as (iii) shows:

iii. .... gente sin dinero ...
    ... people without money...
b. Expuso su programa ante * jueces / * estudiantes / * trabajadores.  
_He exposed his program before judges / students / workers._

c. La cosecha fue destruida por * mujeres / * enemigos / * terroristas.  
_The harvest was destroyed by women / enemies / terrorists._

So, it seems that also these latter Prepositions show, in general, the same behavior of those presented in (18).

Let us return, now, to the cases of preverbal Subject position and to the cases of complement position of Prepositions such as those given in (18).

We can observe that if, in these contexts, the same plural nominal element is modified, appears in a coordinate construction or receives Focus, all the resulting sentences are fully grammatical in the case of the preverbal Subject position and in the case of the Dative Preposition, as the examples in (21) and (22) show:

(21) a. Estudiantes que no vea desde hacía mucho tiempo han venido a visitar al profesor.  
_Students I hadn't seen for a long time came to visit the professor._

b. Niños y mujeres no fueron aceptados.  
_Children and women were not accepted._

c. ESTUDIANTES ( y no profesores) fueron a hablar con el director.  
_STUDENTS ( and not professors ) came to speak with the director._

(22) a. Mi padre ha regalado todos sus libros a amigos que nunca le hacen caso.  
_My father gave all his books away to friends who never take care of him._

b. La editorial Taurus ha enviado una copia del libro a estudiantes y profesores.  
_The publishing house Taurus sent a copy of the book to students and professors._

c. Juan ha dado su dinero a INVÁLIDOS ( y no a ciegos).  
_Juan gave his money to INVALIDS ( and not to blind men )._

The well formedness of the cases in (22) compared with the cases in (17), moreover, leads us to conclude that the Dative a and the Accusative a show the same behavior in this respect.

Conversely, as for the other cases in (18), we have to say that, if we apply the same tests, we can observe a different behaviour pattern.

In fact, in those sentences in which Bare Plurals appear as a complement of prepositions strictly selected by the verb, the resulting constructions improve greatly, and can be considered grammatical, as (23) shows:

(23) a. Para terminar este trabajo, Carlos ha confiado en arquitectos que habían estudiado en Estados Unidos.  
(cf. (18b))
_In order to finish his work, Carlos trusted in architects who had studied in the U.S.A._

24. To justify the contrast between (19b) and (20b) better, Sáez makes us notice that ante multitudes can be considered in Spanish as an idiomatic string with certain adverbial-type connotations, as the coordination in the following sentence shows:

i. Se presentó en público y ante multitudes.  
_He presented himself in public and before multitudes._
b. Para terminar este trabajo, Carlos ha confiado en arquitectos e ingenieros.
   * In order to finish his work, Carlos trusted in architects and engineers.

c. Para terminar este trabajo, Carlos ha confiado en ARQUITECTOS (y no en ingenieros).
   * In order to finish his work, Carlos trusted in ARCHITECTS (and not in engineers).

On the contrary, in the complement of all other Prepositions, the resulting sentences are always ungrammatical, as the examples in (24) illustrate:

(24) a. * Juan ha comido sin colegas que trabajan en su misma planta.  
    (cf. (18c))
   
    Juan ate without colleagues who work in his own floor.

b. * Juan ha comido sin colegas simpáticos.
   Juan ate without nice colleagues.

c. * Juan ha comido sin colegas ni padres.
   Juan ate with neither colleagues nor parents.

d. * Juan ha comido sin COLEGAS (y no sin padres).
   Juan ate without COLLEAGUES (and not without parents).

e. * Durante el pasado gobierno no hicieron nada por campesinos que viven cerca de Sevilla.
    (cf. (18f))
   During the last government they did nothing for farmers who live near Sevilla.

f. * Durante el pasado gobierno no hicieron nada por campesinos enfermos.
   During the last government they did nothing for sick farmers.

g. * Durante el pasado gobierno no hicieron nada por campesinos ni obreros.
   During the last government they did nothing for farmers nor workers.

h. * Durante el pasado gobierno no hicieron nada por CAMPESINOS (y no por obreros).
   During the last government they did nothing for FARMERS (and not for workers).

i. * La tía María se ha sentado entre mujeres que llevaban sombreros.
   (cf. (18g))
   Aunt Maria sat down among women who were wearing hats.

j. * La tía María se ha sentado entre mujeres jóvenes.
   Aunt Maria sat down among young women.

k. * La tía María se ha sentado entre mujeres y niños.
   Aunt Maria sat down among women and children.

l. * La tía María se ha sentado entre MUJERES (y no entre niños).
   Aunt Maria sat down among WOMEN (and not children).

m. * Victoria tiene mucho dinero porque se casó dos veces con viudos que eran abogados.
   (cf. (18h))
   Victoria has a lot of money because she twice married widowers who were lawyers.

n. * Victoria tiene mucho dinero porque se casó dos veces con viudos alemanes.
   Victoria has a lot of money because she twice married German widowers.
o. * Victoria tiene mucho dinero porque se casó dos veces con viud os y abogados.

   * Victoria has a lot of money because she twice married widowers and lawyers.

p. * Victoria tiene mucho dinero porque se casó dos veces con VIUDOS (y no con abogados).

   * Victoria has a lot of money because she twice married WIDOWERS (and not lawyers).

Putting aside the cases in (23) and (24), whose grammaticality and ungrammaticality we are unable to explain at this point of our investigation, we can observe, again, that the behaviour we can notice in (21) - the preverbal Subject case - and in (22) - the Dative case - is the same as the one we notice in the Accusative a environments, as (17) shows.

To give an explanation for the modified Plural Nouns in (17a) and in (22a) we can mention what Longobardi (1991) suggested for cases such as (21a), namely that the grammaticality of these constructions could be due to the fact that here, the D⁰ is not considered an empty category, because the presence of a modification of the head Noun could supply some abstract features into the same empty D⁰ position, making it possible for the D⁰ itself to escape from the proper government requirement. ⁲⁵

As for the cases in (17b-c) and in (22b-c) we can offer no interesting explanation, such as occurs in the literature for the cases in (21b-c).

So, as we have tried to illustrate, the examples in (17), where a can appear, must not be considered as real counterexamples to our hypothesis, but simply cases in which for some syntactic reasons ECP is not violated, as happens in (21). Moreover, regarding the cases of Bare Plurals as complements of Prepositions, we showed that in Spanish, Prepositions cannot be considered as proper governors for the empty D⁰, and, at the same time, that in the same environments neither modification, nor coordination, nor Focus render Bare Plurals possible. The only exceptional cases in this respect are those in (22) - Dative examples - and in (23), which should be treated by the Grammar like the cases in (17) and in (21).

2.2. The Accusative 'a' and the wh-movement of genitive phrases.

Let us now return to the case of wh-movement we presented in (16), here repeated as (25):

(25) ¿ De quién ha encontrado a la hija _ ?

   'Of whom did you meet the daughter?'

Observing the grammaticality of sentences such as (25), we proposed that the presence of a does not block the extraction of a genitive phrase modifying the Direct Object.

Given this assumption, we would expect that in contexts with Bare Plurals it is possible for a genitive phrase modifying them to be extracted, and at the same time, that it is possible for a to occur in F⁰, because the empty D⁰ in this case would be licensed by the genitive modifier itself.

However, this does not seem to be the case, as the ungrammaticality of the sentences in (26) shows:

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25 Another possibility is to appeal to the hypothesis proposed by Delfitto and Schroten in (1991), according to which the modification makes it possible for the head Noun to move to D⁰ at LF, escaping from ECP.
(26)  a. *¿De quién has visto a admiradores? \
    'Of whom did you see fans?' \
    parientes? \
    'parents?' \
    b. *¿De quién has conocido a enemigos? \
    'Of whom did you meet enemies?' \
    hermanos? \
    'brothers?' 

How can we explain this fact? 
First of all we have to notice that the extraction of a genitive phrase in sentences with Bare Plurals Direct Objects is always possible if a does not appear. In fact, the same sentences with the absence of a are totally well-formed, as shown in (27):

(27)  a. ¿De quién has visto admiradores? \
    'Of whom did you see fans?' \
    parientes? \
    'parents?' \
    b. ¿De quién has conocido enemigos? \
    'Of whom did you meet enemies?' \
    hermanos? \
    'brothers?'

Given these contrasts, however, we cannot say that a is not transparent for the Spec. to Spec. movement of a genitive maximal projection, since (25) is perfectly correct.

One way of solving this problem is to assume that in general a genitive phrase does not have the capability in Spanish of licensing an empty D°, following the role that in Longobardi's (1991) proposal modifiers have in DPs with Bare Plurals (see paragraph 2.1).

Therefore, the only [+V] element which in these structures could properly govern the empty head D would be, again, the verb itself, which in (26) can not because of the presence of a, thus giving rise to an ECP violation.

In (27), on the other hand, it could do that, precisely as occurs in the cases of simple Bare Plurals we saw in section 1. This proposal, however, if correct, would imply that even in those contexts in which genitive PPs occur 'in situ', the corresponding sentences should be excluded by the Grammar. This seems to be the case, as the examples in (28) show:

(28)  a. He visto (* a) admiradores de Madonna. \
    I saw Madonna's fans. \
    parientes de Madonna. \
    Madonna's parents.
b. He conocido (* a) enemigos de González. 26
I met González's enemies.
hermanos de González. 26
González's brothers.

Nevertheless, modifiers of different types for Bare Plural Direct Objects seem to allow the presence of a in the same contexts without creating problems. Let us observe, in this respect, the sentences in (29):

(29) a. He visto (a) admiradores
   I saw fans
delirantes. 27
'wild'.
con ropas informales.
with informal clothes.
que venían de todas partes de España.
who came from all parts of Spain.

b. He conocido (a) enemigos
   I met enemies
cruel.
con complejos de inferioridad.
with inferiority complexes.
que deseaban su muerte.
who wanted his death.

Given these facts, we formulate for Spanish the following Generalization:

(30) In Spanish the arguments of the Noun are unable to license an empty D. 9
Modifiers, on the other hand, are able to do so.

If the Generalization in (30) is correct, it would predict two types of behaviour. The first one would be that Bare Plurals modified by a genitive PP could not appear in preverbal Subject position either, while Bare Plurals modified by any other constituent of the type presented in (29) could.

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26. If in these contexts the Direct Object constituent receives an intonational stress, the particle a can appear:

   i. a. He visto (a) ADMIRADORES DE MADONNA.
       I saw MADONNA'S FANS.
   b. He conocido (a) ENEMIGOS DE MARÍA.
       I met MARÍA'S ENEMIES.

In these cases, however, the presence of a genitive phrase is irrelevant for the realization of a because, as we saw in (17c), a can appear even without it. Moreover, we have to say that the same behaviour we are examining with respect to Bare Plurals modified by a genitive PP and the impossibility of the presence of a takes place, as expected, also in those contexts with Prepositions which allow the realization of modified Bare Plurals:

   ii. * La editorial envió un libro a hermanos de González.  (cf. (18a) and (22) )
       The publishing house sent a book to González's brothers.

27. Notice, moreover, that a can also appear in those cases in which an AP that modifies the Bare Plural occurs in prenominal position:

   i. El director contrató (a) vulgares empleados.
       The director engaged vulgar clerks.
This prediction holds, as the ungrammaticality of (31) and the well-formedness of (32) show:

(31) a. *Admiradores de Madonna arrojaron un clavel al escenario.
   *Madonna's fans threw a carnation onto the stage.
      *González's enemies beat the policeman.

(32) a. Admiradores [que venían de toda España arrojaron un clavel al escenario. 
   Fans who came from all over Spain threw a carnation onto the stage.
   con ropas informales
   with informal clothes
   delirantes
   'wild'

b. Enemigos [que deseaban la muerte del presidente pegaron al policía. 
   Enemies who wanted the president's death beat the policeman.
   con complejos de inferioridad
   with inferiority complexes
   crueles
   'cruel'

The second one would be that if Bare Plurals appeared modified by a genitive PP and simultaneously by another modifier of the type presented in (29), we would expect that a may occur either when this complex Direct Object appears 'in situ', or in the case in which the genitive PP is subject to wh-movement.

Also this prediction seems to be satisfied, as we can notice in (33) and (34) respectively:

(33) a. He visto (a) admiradores delirantes de Madonna.
   *I saw Madonna's wild fans.
   b. He conocido (a) enemigos crueles de González.
   *I met González's cruel enemies.

(34) a. ¿De qué cantante / De quién has visto (a) admiradores delirantes ?
   'Of which singer / Of whom did you see wild fans?'
   b. ¿De qué policía / De quién has conocido (a) enemigos que no paraban de acusarle?
      'Of which policeman / Of whom did you meet enemies who didn't stop to accusing him?'

Nevertheless there exist in Spanish cases of PPs introduced by the preposition de which allow the realization of a when they appear modifying a [+Animate] Bare Plural in Direct Object position, and that, for this reason, they seem invalidate, at a first look, the Generalization proposed in (30).

One of these cases is represented by examples such as those in (35):

(35) Hemos conocido (a) [estudiantes de medicina. 
   We met medical students.
   escritores de Ibiza. 
   writers from Ibiza.
   niños de sangre azul.
   children of blue blood.]
As for these cases, we say that they cannot be considered counterexamples to the Generalization (30), because all of these PPs can be conceived only as modifiers of the Noun, rather than arguments of it.

In fact, as (36) shows, Bare Plurals modified by this type of PPs can appear in the preverbal subject position, contrary to what happens with Bare Plurals modified by argumental genitive PPs (31):

(36) a. Estudiantes de medicina ocuparon la Universidad.
    *Medical students occupied the University.*

   b. Escritores de Ibiza se reunieron en casa de Cela.
    *Writers from Ibiza gathered at Cela's.*

   c. Niños de sangre azul fueron recibidos por el rey.
    *Children of blue blood were received by the king.*

A second case which could be considered a counterexample to (30) is represented by the sentences in (37), in which the PPs seem to be arguments of the Noun and in which a can occur:

(37) a. He visto (a) defensores del orden público.
    *I saw defenders of the public order.*

   b. He conocido (a) ganadores del premio Nobel.
    *I met Nobel prize-winners.*

As for these examples, however, we have to say that the PPs del orden público and del premio Nobel are interpreted, again, as modifiers, rather than arguments of the Nouns defensores and ganadores. Note, in fact, that if in the same contexts we replace them with PPs of the same type but with a referential content, the presence of a is always excluded, as (38) shows:

(38) a. He visto (* a) defensores de esta mujer.
    *I saw defenders of this woman.*

   b. He conocido (* a) ganadores de este último premio literario.
    *I met winners of this last literary award.*

We propose that in these cases the impossibility of realizing a has to be due to the fact that its presence gives rise to an ECP violation, because the genitive PPs are interpreted here as arguments of the Noun, just as in (28), thus confirming the correctness of (30).

This proposal is also supported by the contrast we can observe in (39), which has to be compared with (32) and (31) respectively:

(39) a. Defensores del orden público
    *Defenders of the public order*
    *Defensores de esta mujer
    *Defenders of this woman*
    se presentaron en la comisaría.
    *reported at the police station.*
Taking into consideration all the contrasts we have presented so far, we can thus conclude that in Spanish a genitive PP is unable to license an empty D° via transmission of its own features freeing it from any proper government requirement.

This property, as (30) indicates, can be satisfied only by other types of modifiers, which, with their presence, prevent ECP from being violated; in these contexts - (29), (35) and (37) - a will occur obligatorily by (14a), in the case in which F° appears marked with the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate] simultaneously.

Therefore, the data in (26), and in (28) and (38) when a is present, compared with the data in (27), and in (28) and (38) when a is absent, show that the empty D° in these cases must find its proper governor outside the DP and for this reason a cannot appear, as in the cases with simple Bare Plurals (8), which we commented on in section 1.2. 30

On the other hand, as for the case in (25), the presence of the genitive PP is irrelevant for the realization of a: here a is always necessary because the D° is not empty, and the F° is specified for the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate].

28. It is interesting to observe, moreover, that in those cases in which the PP[de DP] modifying a Bare Plural gives the possibility of realizing a when it appears 'in situ' and has the property to be extracted from the DP, a can never occur when the PP itself is subject to wh-movement, as the following contrasts show:

i. a. Hemos visto (a) estudiantes del profesor Hernández.  
   We saw professor Hernández's students.  

b. Hemos conocido (a) estudiosos de la obra de Cervantes.  
   We met scholars of Cervantes's work.

ii. a. ¿De qué profesor habéis visto (* a) estudiantes?  
   'Of which professor did you see students?'

b. ¿De qué obra habéis visto (* a) estudiosos?  
   'Of which work did you see scholars?'

To account for these phenomena, at first glance problematic for the proposal we are defending, we suggest that here PPs can receive two different interpretations: as modifiers, which allow the presence of a, and as arguments, which does not. In this way, the impossibility of realizing a in (ii) is rendered clear: in fact, if only arguments can be extracted from DPs, and arguments cannot license an empty D° in the case of Bare Plurals -as (30) proposes-, we expect that a can never appear.

29. We would like to suggest that in Spanish the impossibility for a genitive PP argument of the Noun to license an empty D° has to do with the different position it occupies in the structure with respect to modifiers. Nevertheless, we will leave the question open here.

30. It is interesting to note that we encounter the same effect with cleft-sentences and relative clauses:

i. a. Es de Madonna de quien ayer vimos (* a) admiradores.  
   'It is of Madonna that yesterday we saw fans'.

b. Parece que Madonna, de quien ayer vimos (* a) admiradores, está embarazada.  
   'It seems that Madonna, of whom yesterday we saw fans, is pregnant'.
2.3. **Definite Nouns without the Accusative 'a': the case of the possessive relationship.**

In contrast to what was proposed by Schroten (1972), (see footnote 15), in Spanish, at least in the Peninsular Spanish, with those verbs which also select a Dative argument, the Direct Object must be preceded by a if all the conditions on its realization discussed in section 1 are met:

(40) a. Los profesores dieron (* a) el último artículo de Chomsky a los estudiantes de doctorado.

*The professors gave Chomsky’s latest paper to the post-graduate students.*

b. La señora del 5º piso (le) presentó *(a) su hija al portero. 31*

*The lady from the 5th floor (le -clit.doubl.) introduced her daughter to the door-keeper.*

In (40a) a cannot appear because the condition (14a) would be violated; in fact, F⁰ in this case is specified for the features [+Accusative] and [-Animate].

In (40b), on the other hand, the presence of a is obligatory because the F⁰ is specified for the features [+Accusative] and [+Animate]. ECP is respected. In fact, according to Giorgi and Longobardi (1991), the head D, even if empty, would be licensed by Spec.-Head agreement with the possessive pronoun, whereas according to Picallo (1992 and 1993), the D⁰ position would not be empty, because it is occupied by the possessive pronoun itself.

Nevertheless, there do exist some cases in which the presence of a in Peninsular Spanish is impossible even if all the conditions imposed on its realization are respected.

These cases are presented in (41):

(41) a. El portero le violó (* a) la hija / la hermana a María.

*The door-keeper le (clit.doubl.) violated Maria's daughter / Maria's sister.*

b. Juan le robó (* a) la novia / el hijo a Paco.

*Juan le (clit.doubl.) stole Paco's girl-friend / Paco's son.*

How can we justify the obligatory absence of a in these contexts?

If we compare case (40b) with cases (41), we are able to establish a substantial difference concerning the interpretation of the Dative complement in relation to the Direct Object. In the sentences in (41), in contrast with what occurs in (40b), we are dealing with a structure in which the Dative complement is interpreted as a Dative of

31. Demonte notes (p.c.) that in sentences such as (40b), when we have the dative clitic doubling, optional in this case, the sentence becomes ungrammatical if a appears, and she suggests that the presence or absence of a is sensitive to the doubled dative clitic. Nevertheless, this judgment does not seem to be shared by peninsular native speakers, who tend to consider a obligatory in these contexts. However, it is important to add that in Argentinian Spanish the absence of a with a Dative complement seems preferable and even obligatory for the majority of native speakers, independently of the presence of the doubled clitic le. Moreover, they do not admit the presence of a even in those cases in which the Direct Object is a Proper Noun:

i. Juan (le) presentó (?a) María al portero.

*Juan (le -clit.doubl.) introduced Maria to the door-keeper.*

(= Argentinian)

For Peninsular Spanish native speakers, however, a is always obligatory in cases such as (i). Here we will leave the question about this variation open.
inalienable possession.

Adopting the suggestion given to us by Bosque (p.c.), namely that a Dative of possession always implies that the Object, with which this type of relationship is established, is interpreted as "a part of the whole", we can easily account for the absence of a inside our hypothesis. In fact, through this interpretation, we can propose that in those cases in which the Direct Object establishes a relationship of inalienable possession with a Dative constituent, the Direct Object itself must be specified for the feature [-Animate].

A piece of empirical data, which proves that this proposal is correct, is given by the fact that if, in these environments, we wh-move the Direct Object, the pronominal category which is chosen is Quién, which bears the feature [-Animate] in Spanish, and never Quién, which is the pronominal form corresponding to human, and therefore, animate nominal expressions.

Let us observe, in this respect, the contrasts in (42):

(42) a. - ¿Qué le robó a Paco?
    What did he le (clit.doubl.) steal from Paco?
    - La novia / El hijo.
    His girl-friend / his son.
b. - *¿ A quién le robó a Paco?
    Whom did he le (clit.doubl.) steal from Paco?
    - A la novia / Al hijo.
    His girl-friend / his son.

On the other hand, if the realization of the same type of possession is established in Spanish inside the DP itself, namely through the occurrence of a genitive PP which expresses the possessor, then a must appear in the same contexts:

(43) a. El portero violó *(a) la hija de María.
    The door-keeper violated Maria's daughter.
b. Juan robó *(a) el hijo de Paco.
    Juan stole Paco's son.

Now, bearing in mind the structure proposed in (12), what will happen in cases such as those in (41) is that the F0 position of FP will be marked with the features [+Accusative] and [-Animate]. Then, if a, which is marked [+Accusative] and [+Animate], occurs in this position, we would have a violation of the condition (14a), and the resulting sentences will always be ungrammatical, as the data demonstrate.

3. The interpretation of 'a'-Objects.

3.1. Specificity.

The Indefinite Object in (44a) is introduced by Accusative a and modified by a relative clause in the indicative. The Indefinite Object in (44b) on the other hand is not introduced by a and is modified by a relative clause this time in the subjunctive mood:

(44) a. Juan busca a un estudiante que habla francés.
    Juan is looking for a student who speaks French.
b. Juan busca un estudiante que hable francés.
    Juan is looking for a student who speaks French.

Jaeggli (1982) notes that the sentences in (44) differ in meaning. According to Jaeggli the Indefinite Object in (44a) has a specific interpretation: there is a specific
student Juan is looking for. The Indefinite Object in (44b) on the other hand, has a nonspecific interpretation. Jaeggli therefore proposes the following generalization on the distribution on Spanish Accusative a: a nominal expression which is specific must be introduced by a:

\[(45) \quad a \leftrightarrow [+\text{Specific}]\]

In the linguistic literature, the feature [+Specific] has sometimes been considered a semantic primitive (e.g. in Stockwell, Schachter and Partee (1973)). In this view, indefinites carry either the feature [+Specific] or the feature [-Specific]. But hardly any of the arguments that, at one time or the other, have been used to motivate the specific/nonspecific distinction have held up to closer scrutiny. Many of the contrasts that have been attributed to this distinction have a perfectly natural explanation in terms of scope ambiguities. In addition, there are plenty of arguments that show that a binary distinction is insufficient to account for the variety of ambiguities indefinites exhibit. For example, indefinites in an environment of more than one operator can have more than two scopal interpretations, i.e. widest scope, narrowest scope and intermediate scope. More commonly the notion of specificity is used as a descriptive term, rather than as a primitive. For instance, Hellan (1981) characterizes an NP as specific, when the speaker has an individual in mind as its referent. This view is similar to Kripke's (1977) proposal that indefinites can refer to a speaker referent. Interpreting (45) in this way, (44a) expresses that the speaker has a certain individual in mind that Juan is looking for. But this does not seem to be necessarily the case: the speaker, uttering (44a) may know that Juan is looking for a certain person without knowing who in particular. Saarinen (1981) equates specific readings with de re readings. Although this characterization of specificity may give the right result in (44a), we will see below (cf. (46)) that Accusative a can introduce indefinites that are de dicto. Many other assumptions have been made regarding the notion of specificity, some of which we will discuss in this section. But as we will see, none of them is sufficient to explain the distribution of Accusative a in Spanish.

3.2. \textit{D-linked} interpretation.

Let us return to the examples in (44). (44a) and (44b) differ with respect to two properties: the presence of Accusative a, and the mood of the relative clause. What is really responsible for the different interpretations of the indefinites: the presence of Accusative a or the indicative mood?

Following Russell (1919), we will treat indefinite nominal expressions as existential quantifiers. Quantificational expressions take scope in logical form. In this view, the ambiguity in (44) is a result of different positions of the indefinite in logical form. Indefinites can be interpreted with wide scope or with narrow scope with respect to intensional predicates such as \textit{buscar}. In (44a) the indefinite is interpreted in a position with wide scope over the intensional predicate, in (44b), with narrow scope. According to Brugger & D’Angelo (1994), we assume that an indefinite modified by a restrictive relative clause in the indicative mood cannot stay inside the scope of an intensional predicate like \textit{buscar} at logical form. Hence the indefinite in (44a) has to raise at LF taking scope over the intensional predicate. The indefinite in (44b), on the other hand, has to be interpreted in the scope of \textit{buscar} because of the subjunctive mood of the relative clause. In this view it is the nature of the relative clause that is responsible for the semantic contrast in (44), rather than the presence of Accusative a. Hence we may expect Accusative a to introduce indefinites in the scope of intensional predicates as well. This is correct, as shown in (46):

\[(46) \quad \text{Juan busca a un estudiante que hable francés.}
\]
\textit{Juan is looking for a student who speaks} (Subj.) French.
Because of the subjunctive mood, the indefinite in (46) is interpreted in the scope of *buscar*. Just like (44b), (46) does not express that Juan is looking for a specific student. Still, (44b) and (46) differ in meaning. The indefinite in (46) can have a presuppositional interpretation (Partee (1988), Enç (1992)), i.e. it is D-linked in the terms of Pesetsky (1987). (46) presupposes the existence of a contextually established set of students, e.g. 'the students of Linguistics 101'. The use of a in (46) is appropriate if Juan is looking for a student who speaks French among this set of students. (44b), on the other hand, does not presuppose the existence of such a set.

The same contrast shows up in (47), where no intensional predicate is present. The indefinite in (47a), which is introduced by Accusative a, but not the one in (47b), can be interpreted as D-linked. (47a) can be paraphrased as: *Juan saw many of the students*. (47b), on the other hand, simply asserts the existence of many students such that John saw them:

(47)  

a. Juan ha visto a muchas chicas.  
*Juan saw many girls.*  

b. Juan ha visto muchas chicas.

The interpretational contrasts between (44b) and (46), and between (47a) and (47b) lead to a first generalization regarding the distribution of Accusative a:

(48)  

A D-linked Direct Object must be introduced by Accusative a.

This fact is further illustrated with an overt Partitive. Overt Partitives, as *de estas chicas* in (49), are linked to a contextually established set. (48) correctly predicts that Direct Objects of this kind must be introduced by Accusative a:

(49)  

Juan ha visto *(a) muchas de estas chicas.  
*Juan saw many of these girls.*

Wh-elements like *Qué* (which), *Cuántos* (how many) can optionally be introduced by Accusative a (50):

(50)  

a. ¿(A) qué chicos has visto en casa de María?  
*Which boys did you see at Mary’s?*  

b. ¿(A) cuántos chicos has visto en casa de María?  
*How many boys did you see at Mary’s?*

The same holds for the wh-phrase in (51a), which, as the ones in (50) can reach its surface position by successive cyclic movement. (51b), on the other hand, being an instance of a weak island, namely a factive island, does not allow for the wh-phrase to move cyclically to its surface position. In this case the wh-phrase must be introduced by Accusative a: 32

(51)  

a. ¿(A) cuántos / qué chicos dicen que han visto?  
*How many/which boys did they say that they saw?*  

b. ¿*(A) cuántos / qué chicos lamenta Pedro que no haya visto María?  
*How many/which boys does Pedro regret that Mary did not see?*

The same holds for wh-phrases extracted from extraposed clauses (52a), negative islands (52b) and wh-islands (52c). In all these cases the wh-word must be

32. Note that Accusative a can be omitted if (51b) is interpreted as an echo question.
introduced by Accusative a:

(52)  
  a. ¿*(A) cuántos / qué chicos está claro que debemos ver?  
      *How many/which boys is it clear that we must see?  
  b. ¿*(A) cuántos / qué chicos no has visto?  
      *How many/which boys did you not see?  
  c. ¿*(A) cuántos / qué alpinistas sabe Pedro cómo ver?  
      *How many/which alpinists does Pedro know how to see?

According to Cinque (1990) only D-linked wh-phrases are allowed to move long distance, while the latter have to move cyclically and therefore cannot escape from weak islands. In this view, the wh-words in (51b) and (52) have to be analyzed as D-linked, because they have escaped from weak islands. Hence the obligatory presence of Accusative a in these contexts is predicted by (48). 33

3.3. Scope.

Let us now consider cases of scopal interaction between quantifiers and indefinite Direct Objects. (53a) is ambiguous, the indefinite can be interpreted with wide scope (53c) or with narrow scope (53b) with respect to the universally quantified Subject todos los chicos:

(53)  
  a. Todos los chicos han visto (a) una chica.  
     All the boys saw a girl.  
  b. For every boy there is a girl such that he saw her.  
  c. There is a girl such that every boy saw her.  
  d. Todos los chicos han visto *(a) una chica. Era hermosísima.  
     All the boys saw a girl. She was very pretty.

If the indefinite is interpreted with wide scope, it must be introduced by Accusative a. This is shown in the text (53d). The null subject of Era hermosísima can be anaphoric to the indefinite in the preceding sentence only if the latter is introduced by Accusative a. Hence, we generalize:

(54) A Direct Object with Wide Scope must be introduced by Accusative a.

(54) accounts for the obligatory presence of Accusative a in (44a), repeated below. Because of the indicative in the restrictive relative, the indefinite raises at logical form, taking wide scope over the intensional predicate buscar. 34

33. Dobrovie-Sorin (1993) assumes that it is not D-linking which allows an element to escape from a weak island, but rather the possibility of having wide scope. Since weak islands block the narrow scope interpretation of the extracted wh-phrase, a constituent can be extracted from a weak island only if it is able to have wide scope. In section 3.3 we will see that only Direct Objects which are introduced by Accusative a can take wide scope (see (54)). Hence the contrasts in (50), (51) and (52) can be accounted for also under Dobrovie-Sorin's proposal of long movement.

34. Fodor and Sag (1982), Rullmann (1989), a.o. assume that indefinite nominal expressions can be ambiguous between a quantificational and a referential expression. Therefore the sentences (53a), (55) and (56a) have an additional interpretation in which the indefinite is construed as referential (but see e.g. Neale (1990), who argues against this proposal). When they are construed as referential they must be introduced by Accusative a, just like referential nominal expressions such as proper names:

i. Juan ha visto (*a) Marla.  
   Juan saw Mary.
(55) Juan busca *(a) un estudiante que habla francés.  
Juan is looking for a student who speaks (Ind.) French.

Having wide scope must not be understood as having widest scope. Also, Indefinite Objects with intermediate scope, i.e. which have scope over one operator but not over all, realize obligatorily Accusative a. This is illustrated in (56). The indefinite in (56a), because of the indicative mood, takes wide scope over buscar, but it may either have narrow scope (56b) or wide scope (56c) with respect to the quantified subject.

(56) a. Todos los profesores buscan *(a) un estudiante que habla francés.  
All the professors are looking for a student who speaks (Ind.) French.

b. For every professor p there is a student who speaks French s such that p is looking for s.

c. There is a student who speaks French every professor is looking for.

3.4. Function interpretation.

The examples in (57) are identical to the ones in (53), except for the use of the universal quantifier cada instead of todos. Just as in (53a), also in (57a), Accusative a is optional. But differently from (53a), the Indefinite Object in (57a) cannot be interpreted with wide scope with respect to the quantified subject. (57a) can only be paraphrased with (53b), but not with (53c). This fact is further illustrated by the infelicity of the text in (57b). Since the indefinite cannot have wide scope, it cannot function as the antecedent of an anaphoric pronoun outside its scope:

(57) a. Cada chico ha visto (a) una chica.  
Each boy saw a girl.

Each boy saw a girl. She was very pretty.

The universal quantifier cada can only be used if a distributive interpretation is possible, i.e. there must be another operator it can take scope over. Since the sentences in (58) do not contain any other operator different from cada, they are ungrammatical exactly for this reason: 35

(58) a. * Cada chico es inteligente.  
Each boy is intelligent.

b. * Cada chico ha visto a Juan.  
Each boy saw Juan.

Let us go back to (57a). Since the indefinite can only be interpreted with narrow scope, the question arises whether the presence or absence of Accusative a makes a semantic difference. It is often assumed that in English, indefinite nominal expressions modified by certain, specific, and particular have wide scope (e.g. Hornstein (1984)). However, as shown by Hintikka (1986), this is not necessarily the case. (59a) is ambiguous. Obviously the indefinite a certain girl can be interpreted with wide scope over the quantified subject.

35. (58b) is grammatical when the event expressed by the predicate is interpreted as distributive with respect to the quantified Subject (M.L. Zubizarreta p.c.).
(59)  a. Every boy saw a certain girl.
       b. E(f) A(x) (x is a boy  x saw f(x)).
       c. Every boy saw a girl.

But there is also a second reading, where the indefinite is interpreted distributively: for every boy there is a certain girl such that he saw her. Hintikka (1986) suggests that NPs with certain can be interpreted with a function that relates them to other objects and argues that a sentence like (59a) can be represented as in (59b). In this example the function f assigns a value to the variable y according to some - pragmatically recoverable - relation between y and f(y): every boy is related to a particular girl by the function f. For instance a function of this type can be the relation girl-friend of. By this function, every boy is assigned a certain girl: his girlfriend. If we interpret (57a) with a function interpretation, Accusative a must be present. This fact is illustrated in (60). If we add to (57a) su hermana (his sister), which relates every boy to a particular girl, Accusative a cannot be omitted:

(60)  Cada chico ha visto *(a) una chica: su hermana.
      Each boy saw a girl: his sister.

This leads to the third generalization about the distribution of Accusative a:

(61)  A distributive Indefinite Object with the Function interpretation must be introduced by Accusative a.

We saw that there are three different interpretations of indefinite Direct Objects which require the presence of Accusative a: Indefinite Objects which are D-linked (48), which have wide scope (54) or which have the function interpretation (61) must be introduced by Accusative a. 36

(62)  A Direct Object preceded by a can have:
       a. D-linked interpretation.
       b. Wide Scope interpretation.
       c. Function interpretation.

Since it is sufficient for a Direct Object to have only one of the interpretations in (62) in order to be obligatorily preceded by Accusative a, no binary feature such as specificity can be appropriate to account for the distribution of Accusative a. In the following section we will see, whether there is any unitary notion that can account for it.

4. Partitive Case.

4.1. Existential nominal expressions.

English there-insertion constructions are characteristically used to assert the nonemptyness of a set. (63), for instance, asserts that the set of actors on the street is not empty:

(63)  a. There is an actor on the street.
       b. There are actors on the street.

36. Remember that also referential Direct Objects must be introduced by Accusative a.
As discussed by Milsark (1974), *there*-insertion constructions are sensitive to semantical properties of nominal expressions. Proper names, personal pronouns and definite nominal expressions are incompatible with *there*-insertion constructions (see (64)). Indefinites in the singular and Bare Plurals (63), as well as nominal expressions introduced by *many, few, numerals, some, no*, etc. (cf. (65)) can occur in these contexts:

(64)   * There is John / the man / he on the street.

(65)   a. There are many / few / two / some... men on the street.
       b. There is no man on the street.

The class of quantifier-like elements does not behave homogeneously. Contrary to the ones in (65), quantifiers like *every* and *all* are not compatible with *there*-insertion constructions:

(66)   a. * There is every man on the street.
       b. * There are all the actors on the street.

Various tests have been developed in order to characterize semantically the class of nominal expressions which can appear in this construction (Milsark (1974), Barwise & Cooper (1981), Keenan (1987), a.o.). Following Keenan (1987) we will refer to them as *existential nominal expressions*. 37

It is precisely the class of existential nominal expressions which can lack Accusative a in Object function: indefinites in the singular 38, Bare Plurals, and nominal expressions introduced by *muchos* (many), *pocos* (few) and numerals (67a), by *algún* (some) (67b), by *ningún* (no) (67c), and the plural article *unos* (some)(67d). Proper names, personal pronouns, definite nominal expressions, as well as quantifiers like *todos* and *cada*, on the other hand, must be introduced by Accusative a (68):

(67)   a. Ví a muchos / pocos / dos hombres en la calle.
       I saw many/few/two men in the street.
       b. Ví a algunos hombres en la calle.
       I saw some men in the street.
       c. No ví a ningún hombre en la calle.
       I saw no man in the street.
       d. Ví a unos hombres en la calle
       I saw some men in the street.

37. Keenan (1987) proposes the following test in order to determine whether a nominal expression is existential or not. A nominal expression of the form 'Det N' is existential only if the proposition 'Det N is P ↔ Det P N exists' is a tautology.
       So for instance the nominal expression *some children*, but not the nominal expression *every child*, can be existential because only (i), but not (ii), is a tautology:

   i. some children are cranky ↔ some cranky children exist.
   ii. every child is cranky ↔ every cranky child exists.

38. Indefinite Direct Objects with generic interpretation are incompatible with *there*-insertion and must be introduced by Accusative a. The same holds for indefinites that are bound by overt adverbial quantifiers such as *siempre* (always). As shown in (i) they must realize a:

   i. Siempre Pilar fotografía *(a) un chico cuando es guapo.
       Always Pilar takes a picture of a boy when he is handsome.
(68) a. Olga ha visto *(a) Juan / él / los niños.
   *Olga saw Juan/him/the children.

b. Olga ha visto *(a) todos los niños.
   *Olga saw all the children.

Nominal expressions in *there*-insertion constructions cannot have any of the interpretations listed in (62). Let us first consider the D-linked interpretation. (69a) is ambiguous (cf. e.g. Partee (1988)). It can be uttered to assert that the number of actors on the street is high. But it can also have a D-linked interpretation: Many actors of a contextually established set are on the street. In *there*-insertion constructions only the first, but not the D-linked interpretation is available (69b). This is further illustrated by the incompatibility of overt Partitive with these contexts (69c):

(69) a. Many actors are on the street.

b. There are many actors on the street.

c. *There are many of the actors in the street.

Second, nominal expressions in *there*-insertion constructions cannot have wide scope, nor intermediate scope. The indefinite in (70a) can be interpreted in three distinct scopal positions: first, with wide scope with respect to both operators, the quantified subject and the intensional predicate think; second, with narrow scope with respect to *every*, but with wide scope with respect to *think*; and third, with narrow scope with respect to both operators. The indefinite in the *there*-insertion construction in (70b), on the other hand, can only have the third reading. Third, the function interpretation is also excluded.

(70) a. Everybody thinks that an actor is on the street.

b. Everybody thinks that there is an actor on the street.

In this section we have seen that *there*-insertion constructions and the distribution of Spanish Accusative a have two properties in common. First the nominal expressions which are compatible with *there*-insertion constructions can lack Accusative a in Spanish. Second, both nominal expressions in *there*-insertion constructions and Direct Objects without Accusative a lack the interpretations in (62). Therefore we generalize:

(71) A Direct Object that lacks Accusative a is Existential.

Turkish marks nonexistent nominal expressions not by an Accusative preposition, but by a special Case morpheme. (Lazard (1984), Enç (1991)). Turkish Direct Objects can be realized in two ways: either by Accusative morphology, -i/-yi, or by zero morphology. All definites in Turkish carry Accusative Case in Object position. Proper names, pronouns, definite descriptions, and nominal expressions preceded by demonstratives which are not marked Accusative are ungrammatical (the Turkish examples are taken from Enç (1991)):

   Zeynep Ali-ACC / he-ACC / the-man-ACC / that table-ACC saw'.

b. Zeynep *Ali / *o / *adam / *o masa gördü.

Nominal expressions introduced by *many, few*, numerals, etc. have both options: they can be marked with the Accusative morpheme (73a) or by the zero-morpheme
(73b):

'Ali Zeyneb-DAT some book-ACC mailed'.
Ali mailed some of the books to Zeynep.
'Ali Zeyneb-DAT some book mailed'.
Ali mailed some books to Zeynep.

Enç notes that (73a) and (73b) differ in meaning. If the Direct Object is marked with Accusative Case it is interpreted as D-linked. The Direct Object some books in (73a) can be paraphrased with some of the books. The Direct Object in (73b), which is marked with f-Case cannot have this interpretation. Similarly overt Partitives must be marked with Accusative Case:

'Ali woman-Pl-GEN two-Agr-ACC knew'.
Ali knew two of the women.

Quantifiers like every have to be marked with Accusative morphology (75a). Zero morphology gives rise to ungrammaticality (75b):

(75) a. Ali her kitab-i okudu.
'Ali every book-ACC read'.
Ali read every book.
b. *Ali her kitap okudu.

The distribution of Accusative and Partitive Case in Turkish leads to the following generalization. Just as Spanish Direct Objects that are not introduced by Accusative a are interpreted as existential nominal expressions, so Turkish Direct Objects that do not realize Accusative Case are interpreted as existential nominal expressions:

(76) A Direct Object that lacks Accusative morphology is Existential.

We assume that Spanish Direct Objects can be marked either with Accusative Case, or with Partitive Case. In section 1 we assumed that nominal expressions which are marked with Accusative Case are dominated by a functional expression the head of which is filled by the particle a if the head Noun carries the feature [+Animate]. Direct Objects which are not introduced by a are either [-Animate] or marked with Partitive Case. Since the Direct Object in (77b) carries the feature [+Animate], the absence of a indicates that it is marked with Partitive Case. We further assume that, just as in Turkish, Partitive Case can only be realized by existential nominal expressions (77c) (cf. Belletti (1988) for Italian).

(77) a. encontrar a un albañil .......</b> Accusative Case.
to meet a bricklayer ...
b. encontrar un albañil .......</b> Partitive Case.
c. only existential nominal expressions can be marked with Partitive Case.

There is, however, an important difference between Turkish and Spanish regarding the use of Accusative Case. Turkish Accusative Case is incompatible with existential nominal expressions. But, as we will see in the following section, Spanish existential nominal expressions can be introduced by Accusative a.
4.2. Existential nominal expressions in the Accusative.

In sections 1 and 2 we saw that simple Bare Plurals differ from modified Bare Plurals in that only the latter can be introduced by Accusative a:

(78) a. * Juan ha buscado a hombres.
    Juan looked for men.
b. Juan ha buscado a hombres calvos.
    Juan looked for bald men.

Bare Plurals cannot have any or the interpretations listed in (62). They can not be interpreted as D-linked, they cannot have wide scope, nor can they have the function interpretation. They can only be existential, and therefore differ from indefinites in the singular in this respect. Assuming that Spanish Accusative Case is incompatible with existential nominal expressions, the ungrammaticality of (78a) follows. But (78b), with the modified Bare Plural, would be excluded, too.

Torrego (1984) suggests that modified Bare Plurals differ from simple Bare Plurals semantically. She claims that modified Bare Plurals are "more specific" than unmodified ones. Following Jaeggli's generalization (45), they can therefore be preceded by Accusative a. However, Torrego (1984) leaves the question of the exact nature of the semantic contrast between modified and simple Bare Plurals unexplained. Additionally, our informants did not detect any semantic difference between (78a) and (78b). Modified Bare Plurals do not differ from simple Bare Plurals regarding the interpretations in (62). Modified Bare Plurals can not be interpreted as D-linked, nor can they have wide scope. (79a) cannot be paraphrased with (79b) or (79c). Third, the function interpretation is also impossible (79d):

(79) a. Juan ha buscado a hombres calvos.
    Juan looked for bald men.
b. # Juan looked for some of the bald men.
c. # There are certain bald men such as Juan looked for them.
d. * Cada chico ha buscado a hombres calvos.
    Each boy was looking for a bald men.

We conclude therefore that modified Bare Plurals do not differ semantically from simple Bare Plurals, and assume that Spanish Accusative Case is compatible with existential nominal expressions, and that Spanish Partitive is not:

(80) Spanish Accusative Case is compatible with existential and nonexistent nominal expressions.
    Spanish Partitive Case is incompatible with nonexistent expressions.

If (80) is correct, we also expect existential nominal expressions, differently from modified Bare Plurals, to occur with Accusative a. This seems to be the case at least in certain contexts.

Let us first consider the examples in (81), which only differ in the presence of Accusative a. The indefinite introduced by a in (81b) must be interpreted with narrow scope with respect to Es muy dificil, which is used as an intensional predicate, because of the subjunctive in the relative clause. Second, it cannot have the function interpretation, since no quantifier is present. Hence, if Spanish Accusative Case were incompatible with existential nominal expressions, the only remaining interpretation for (81b) would be the D-linked interpretation. However, although it may have this interpretation, it can also be used in contexts where (81a) can be used, i.e. in
situations without any contextually established set:

(81) a. Es muy difícil encontrar un albañil que sepa arreglar este agujero.
   *It's very difficult to find a bricklayer who is able (Subj.) to repair this hole.

b. Es muy difícil encontrar a un albañil que sepa arreglar este agujero.
   *It's very difficult to find a bricklayer who is able (Subj.) to repair this hole.

The verbs in (82a) differ from verbs like ver, buscar, etc. in that nominal expressions introduced by muchos, pocos, etc. have also to be realized with Accusative a (82b) (cf. section 1):

(82) a. Asesinar, despedir, invitar, matar...
   *Murder, fire, invite, kill...

b. Han asesinado *(a) muchos / pocos / algunos / unos /... policías.
   *They murdered many/few/some/some... policemen.

In the following we will show that a-Objects of these predicates are compatible with the existential interpretation. Let us first consider the sentences in (83), which differ in meaning. As discussed in section 3.3, Direct Objects with wide scope must be introduced by Accusative a. Therefore only the a-Object in (83a), but not the Object without a in (83b) can be interpreted with wide scope with respect to negation:

(83) a. No vi a mucha gente.
   *I did not see many people.

b. No vi mucha gente.

Because of the predicate asesinar, the Direct Object in (84) must be introduced by a. Both the a-Objects in (83a) and (84) can be interpreted with narrow scope with respect to negation. But crucially, while in this case the Direct Object in (83a) must be interpreted as D-linked, this is not the case in (84):

(84) No han asesinado *(a) mucha gente.
   *They did not murder many people.

Different from mucho, nominal expressions introduced by poco tend to be interpreted with narrow scope with respect to negation (Bosque p.c.). Consequently we predict Accusative a to be absent in contexts like (85a).

Again, Direct Objects of predicates like asesinar behave differently. Although the Direct Object in (85b) tend to be interpreted with narrow scope, the presence of Accusative a is obligatory: 39

(85) a. No han visto *(??a) pocas personas.
   *They did not see few persons.

b. No han asesinado *(a) pocas personas.
   *They did not murder few persons.

In (86a) the Direct Object is modified by a relative clause in the subjunctive mood. Hence it must be interpreted in the scope of the intensional predicate querer (want).

39. The Direct Objects in (85) can be interpreted as D-linked if it is introduced by Accusative a. In the text, we do not consider this interpretation.
Because of the predicate *matar* the Object must be introduced by a. Nevertheless it need not to be interpreted as D-linked. Analogously in (86b). Although the element *cualquiera* does not favor the D-linked interpretation, the Direct Object must be introduced by Accusative a:

(86)  

a. María quiere matar *(a) un policía que tenga más de 60 años. 
<br> *Mary wants to kill a policeman who is over 60.*

b. Pepa quiere matar *(a) un policía cualquiera. 
<br> *Pepa wants to kill any policeman.*

These examples show that a-Objects of predicates like the ones in (82a) need not to be interpreted with wide scope or as being D-linked. Hence they constitute a further argument for generalization (80) that Spanish Accusative Case cannot be considered incompatible with existential nominal expressions. 40

Further examples in favor of generalization (80) are bare quantifiers such as *nadie* (nobody) and *alguien* (somebody). These expressions are typically existential. Nevertheless they must be introduced by Accusative a in Object position: 41, 42

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40. The question arises why the Direct Object of a predicate like *asesinar, despedir, invitar, matar,* etc. must be introduced by a. One could suppose that these predicates cannot assign Partitive Case. However, this assumption cannot be correct. First, Bare Plurals can lack Accusative a:

i.  
a. La SEAT despidió obreros. 
<br> *SEAT fired workers.*

b. Su padre asesinó policías. 
<br> *His father murdered policemen.*

c. El día de su cumpleaños Juan invitó chicas a la fiesta. 
<br> *At his birthday Juan invited girls to his birthday party.*

Second, in the following contexts, Accusative a is excluded for predicates like *ver,* as well as for predicates like *asesinar.*

ii.  
a. Mujeres, asesinasteis (*a) muchas, ¿ no ? 
<br> 'women (you) murdered many, no?' 
<br> *You murdered many women, didn't you?*

b. Pero, en París, extranjeros, visteis (*a) muchos, ¿ no ? 
<br> 'but in Paris foreigners (you) saw many, no?'.
<br> *But you saw many foreigners in Paris, didn't you?*

The impossibility of a in (ii.a) and (ii.b) is due to the presence of the Bare Nouns *mujeres* and *extranjeros* rather than to the absence of a phonetically realized head Noun in Object position. This is shown in the examples in (iii) in which Accusative a is possible:

iii.  
a. Asesinaron (a) muchos. 
<br> *They murdered many.*

b. Vieron (a) muchos. 
<br> *They saw many.*

---

For simplicity we will assume in the following that predicates like *asesinar* do not assign Partitive Case, although, as shown by these special contexts, this assumption is problematic.

41. Note that *ninguno* differs form *nadie.* Only (i) but not (87a) can be interpreted as D-linked:

i.  
No ha visto a ninguno. 
<br> *He saw nobody.*

42. Turkish Direct Objects differ in their syntactic distribution according to whether they are marked
(87)  a. No ha visto *(a) nadie.

    He saw nobody.

   b. Ha visto *(a) alguien.

    He saw somebody.

These bare quantifiers cannot precede head Nouns. Strings of the form *Nadie hombre* and *Alguien hombre* are ungrammatical. They differ from numerals, from *mucho, poco, ningún* and *algún*, which can precede head Nouns, in that they must be introduced by Accusative *a*. The particle *a* in the examples in (87) cannot be omitted. Hence we assume that these expressions cannot realize Partitive Case and must be introduced by Accusative *a*. 43 Although we do not have any explanation for this fact 44 we want to note that the Turkish equivalents to *nadie* and *alguien* behave in the same way. In contrast to *hic bir* (no) (88a) and *bir kaç* (some, litt: a few) (89a), which can be followed by a head Noun and which can be marked with both Accusative and Partitive morphology, the bare quantifiers *kimse* (nobody) (88b), *birisi* (somebody) (89b) and *biri* (somebody) (89c) can only be marked with Accusative Case. Just as *nadie* and *alguien*, these elements cannot realize Partitive Case. (We thank Murat Kural for these data.)

with Accusative Case or with Partitive Case. Direct Objects with Partitive morphology, but not the ones with Accusative morphology, are required to be adjacent to the verb (Enç (1991), fn.7). A similar effect can be observed e.g. in Mandarin Chinese. Non-specific Direct Objects are placed after the verb (ia), whereas specific ones are introduced by the preposition *ba* and precede the verb (ib):

i.  a. Ta diu le ge pibao.

    'he lost-ASP CLASS wallet'.

    He lost a wallet.

   b. Ta ba ge pibao diu le.

    'he PREP CLASS wallet lost-ASP'.

    He lost his wallet.

In Spanish no position can be detected which can only be occupied by Direct Objects which are not introduced by *a*. For instance the Direct Object in (ii.a) can (but need not to) be preceded by *a*. However, if the Direct Object is shifted to the right (ii.b), Accusative *a* becomes obligatory. This contrast indicates that the distribution of Direct Objects which are marked with Partitive Case is more restricted than the one of Accusative Direct Objects.

ii.  a. Juan ha cogido (a) un niño de la mano.

    Juan took a child at the hand.

   b. Juan ha cogido de la mano *(a) un niño.

In addition, while the Direct Object in (ii.a), if it is introduced by Accusative *a*, lacks the existential interpretation, the *a*-Object in (ii.b) is compatible with an existential interpretation. Hence, (ii.a) is a further example in favor of the generalization (80).

43. Bare wh-element like *quién*, just like the bare quantifiers *nadie* and *alguien*, must be introduced by Accusative *a*. Hence they differ from wh-elements like *cuztostos* and *qué*, which can lack *a* (cf. section 3.2):

i.  *(A) quién has visto en el cine ?

    Who did you see in the cinema?

(88) a. hiç bir kadın-i / kadın görmedim.  
   'no a woman-ACC/-PART see-Neg-Past-Agr'.  
   *I saw no woman.

b. kimse-yi / *kimse görmedim.  
   'nobody-ACC/-PART see-neg-past-agr'.  
   *I saw nobody.

   'Ali a few woman-ACC/-PART saw'.  
   Ali saw few women.

   'Ali somebody-ACC/-PART saw'.  
   *Ali saw somebody.

c. Ali biri-ni / biri gördü.  
   'Ali somebody-ACC/-PART saw'.  

5. Conclusions.

We assumed that Spanish Direct Objects can realize Accusative Case or Partitive Case.

If a Direct Object that is marked with the feature [+Animate] realizes Accusative Case it is introduced by Accusative a. Partitive Case, on the other hand, has no morphological realization.

Existential Direct Objects of predicates like the ones in (82a), the bare quantifiers nadie and alguien, and modified Bare Plurals can be introduced by Accusative a. Hence we assumed that Spanish differs from Turkish in that existential as well as nonexistential Direct Objects can be marked with Accusative Case in Spanish 45; whereas Partitive Case can only be assigned to existential Direct Objects.

Being nonexistential, the proper name in (90a) can only realize Accusative Case, therefore it must obligatorily be introduced by Accusative a. The Direct Object in (90b) can either realize Accusative Case or Partitive Case, since it can be construed as an existential nominal expression. While the Direct Object in (90b) can be construed as existential or as nonexistential, the modified Bare Plural in (90b) is necessarily existential. Since existential nominal expressions can realize both Accusative Case and Partitive Case in Spanish, Accusative a is optional in (90c). In principle the unmodified Bare Plural can also realize both Cases. But if it is assigned Accusative Case (14a), a violation of the ECP arises since the Accusative particle a in Fa does not properly govern the empty D°. Hence it can only realize Partitive Case (90d).

45. Spanish Accusative a behaves more like the Persian Accusative postposition -ra, than Turkish Accusative Case. As noted by Lazard (1982) Persian [+Animate] Direct Objects can be introduced by the postposition -ra, even if they are non-specific (i). Non-specific [-Animate] Direct Objects, on the other hand, are incompatible with -ra (ii):

i. 
   sa-e tork nazd-e emperatur-e rum qased-i-??(ra) ferestad ta ba u hamdasi savad.  
   ...messenger-INDEF-ra...

   The king of the Turks sent a messenger to the emperor of Rome in order to form an alliance with him.

   sah-e tork nazd-e emperatur-e rum payam-i (*ra) ferestad ta ba u hamdasi savad.  
   ...message-INDEF...

   The king of the Turks sent a message to the emperor of Rome in order to form an alliance with him.
(90) a. Ayer vimos *(a) Juan.
   *Yesterday we saw Juan.
b. Ayer vimos (a) muchos hombres.
   *Yesterday we saw many men.
c. Ayer vimos (a) hombres calvos.
   *Yesterday we saw bald men.
d. Ayer vimos (*a) hombres.
   *Yesterday we saw men.

Note that we predict Direct Objects that are introduced by Accusative a to be systematically ambiguous between an existential interpretation and a nonexistential interpretation. However, this ambiguity is not detectable in all cases. The possible range of the interpretations of a-Objects depends on the type of predicate. While a-Objects of predicates like asesinar can be interpreted as existential (91b), a nonexistential interpretation of a-Objects of predicates like ver is preferred (91a).

(91) a. Han visto a un policía.
   *They saw a policeman.
b. Han asesinado a un policía.
   *They murdered a policeman.

We suppose that this difference is due to the fact that these predicates differ with respect to their ability to assign Partitive Case to their Direct Object. The Direct Object of predicates like ver can be marked with Accusative Case or with Partitive Case. According to our assumptions, the Direct Object can be interpreted as existential in both cases. We suppose that the absence of the existential interpretation in (91a) is due to the fact that this interpretation can be expressed by using Partitive Case, which is specialized for the existential interpretation. Using Accusative Case the speaker conversationally implicates that he does not want the Object to be interpreted as existential. The Direct Object of predicates like asesinar, on the other hand, can only be marked with Accusative Case. Hence, the a-Object in (91b) can be interpreted as existential, since this interpretation cannot be expressed by Partitive Case. While the Direct Object in (91a), by conversational implicature (cf. Grice (1975)), is interpreted as nonexistential, the modified Bare Plural introduced by a in (90c) is interpreted as existential. This contrast is due to the fact that (modified) Bare Plurals can only be interpreted as existential nominal expressions. By the use of Accusative or Partitive Case no meaning difference can be expressed.
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