

Brazilian Portuguese Bare Singulars and Discourse Referents

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Bare Singulars in Brazilian Portuguese

- (1) Maria leu revista no consultório médico.
Maria read magazine at-the office doctor
'Mary read (one or more) magazines at her doctor's office'.

- (2) Cachorro come gato.
dog eats cat
'Dogs eat cats'.

Morphology vs. Semantics

- A common intuition: BP bare singulars are morpho-syntactically singular but semantically neuter.
- (3) Tem **amigo** meu que **está** desempregado.
 has friend my that is unemployed
 ‘There is (at least one) friend of mine who is unemployed’.
- (4) Maria comprou **CD** na Fnac. **Ele(s)** estão no carro.
 Mary bought CD at Fnac it/they are in-the car
 ‘Mary bought a CD/CDs at Fnac. It/they are in the car’.

Morphology vs. Semantics

- A common intuition: BP bare singulars are morpho-syntactically singular but semantically neuter.

(5) Maria comprou **CD** na Fnac. **Ele/Eles** ...
 Mary bought CD at Fnac it/they ...

(6) Maria comprou **um CD** na Fnac. **Ele/*Eles** ...
 Mary bought a CD at Fnac it/they ...

(7) Maria comprou **CDs** na Fnac. ***Ele/Eles** ...
 Mary bought CDs at Fnac it/they ...

However ...

- Plural discourse anaphora is possible even in the absence of a plural antecedent.
- (8) Todo menino comeu uma maçã. Elas estavam ótimas.
 every boy ate an apple they were great
- Thus, it is not obvious that the bare singular in (9) should be semantically neuter/plural to license the plural pronoun.
- (9) Maria comprou CD. Ele(s) ...
 Mary bought CD it/they ...
 'Mary bought CD/CDs. It/they ...'.

Moreover ...

- Semantic neutrality is not enough to legitimate morphological mismatches in discourse anaphora.

(10) Tem criança na sala. Ela/*Ele está chorando.
 has child in-the room she/he is crying
 'There is a child in the room. She/he is crying'.

- Why then is (11) fine?

(11) Tem criança na sala. Elas estão chorando.
 has child in-the room they are crying
 'There are children in the room. They are crying'.

Questions

- Do BP bare singulars introduce a discourse referent?

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- Do BP bare singulars introduce a discourse referent?
- What is the link between bare singulars and discourse anaphora?

Ferreira (2010)

- Ferreira (2010) presents some sentence-internal evidence that BP bare singulars are not always number neutral. Sometimes, they are semantically singular.

Anaphoric se

- When its antecedent is a plural definite, se triggers both reflexive and reciprocal interpretations.
- When the antecedent is a singular definite, only a reflexive interpretation arises.

(12) Os alunos se elogiaram.
 The-masc/pl students SE praised-3pl
 'the students praised themselves/each other'

(13) O aluno se elogiou.
 The-masc-sg student SE praised-3sg
 'the student praised himself/*each other'

Ferreira (2010): Anaphoric *se* and bare NPs

- (14) Eu vi alunos se cumprimentando.
 I saw students SE greeting
 'I saw students greeting themselves/each other'.
- (15) Eu vi aluno se cumprimentando.
 I saw student SE greeting
 'I saw student(s) greeting themselves/each other'.
- Both sentences can have reciprocal interpretations.

Ferreira (2010): Anaphoric *se* and bare NPs

- (16) Eu vi alunos que estavam se cumprimentando.
 I saw students that were SE greeting
 'I saw students who were greeting themselves/each other.'
- (17) Eu vi aluno que estava se cumprimentando.
 I saw student that was SE geeting
 'I saw (a) student(s) who was greeting
 himself/themselves.'
- Only (16) has a reciprocal interpretation. (17) only has a (weird) reflexive interpretation.

Anaphoric se and bare NPs

- (18) *Tinha alunos se abraçando.*
 had-3sg students SE hugging
 ‘There were students hugging themselves/each other.’
- (19) *Tinha aluno se abraçando.*
 had-3sg student SE hugging
 ‘There was/were a student/students hugging
 himself/themselves/each other.’
- Both sentences can have reciprocal interpretations.

Anaphoric se and bare NPs

- (20) Tinha alunos que estavam se abraçando.
 had-3sg students that were SE hugging
 'There were students who were hugging themselves/each other.'
- (21) Tinha aluno que estava se abraçando.
 had-3sg student that was SE hugging
 'There was a student/students who was hugging himself/themselves.'
- Only (20) has a reciprocal interpretation. (21) only has a (weird) reflexive interpretation.

Anaphoric se and bare NPs

- (22) Eu li livros que se completam.
 I read books that SE complete-3pl
 'I read books that complete each other/themselves.'
- (23) Eu li livro que se completa.
 I read book that SE complete-3sg
 'I read a book/books that complete itself/themselves.'
- Only (22) has a reciprocal interpretation. (23) only has a (weird) reflexive interpretation.

mesmo ('same')

- Anaphoric and group-internal readings

- (24) Maria trabalha em um projeto. João trabalha no
 Mary works in a project John works in-the
 mesmo projeto.
 same project
 'Mary works in a project. John works on the same project.'
- (25) João e Maria trabalham no mesmo projeto.
 John and Mary work in-the same project
 'John and Mary work on the same project.'

mesmo ('same') and bare NPs

- (26) Eu vi alunos trabalhando no mesmo projeto.
 I saw students working on-the same project
 'I saw students working on the same project'.
- (27) Eu vi aluno trabalhando no mesmo projeto.
 I saw student working on-the same project
 'I saw at least one student working on the same project.'
- In both sentences, *mesmo* has a anaphoric and a group-internal reading.

mesmo ('same') and bare NPs

(28) Eu vi alunos que estavam trabalhando no
 I saw students that were working on-the
 mesmo projeto.
 same project

'I saw students who were working on the same project'.

(29) Eu vi aluno que estava trabalhando no mesmo
 i saw student that was working on-the same
 projeto.
 project

'I saw at least one student who was working on the same
 project'.

- Only in (28), *mesmo* has a group-internal reading.

mesmo ('same') and bare NPs

- (30) Tem convidados dormindo no mesmo quarto.
 has guests sleeping in-the same room
 'There are guests sleeping in the same room'.
- (31) Tem convidado dormindo no mesmo quarto.
 has guest sleeping in the same room
 'There is at least one guest sleeping in the same room'.
- In both sentences, *mesmo* has a group-internal reading (and, maybe, also an anaphoric reading).

mesmo ('same') and bare NPs

(32) Tem convidados que estão dormindo no mesmo
 has guests that are sleeping in-the same
 quarto.
 room

'There are guests who are sleeping in the same room'.

(33) Tem convidado que está dormindo no mesmo
 has guest that is sleeping in-the same
 quarto.
 room

'There is at least one guest who is sleeping in-the same room'.

- Only in (32), *mesmo* has a group-internal reading.

Ferreira's Point

- When argumental bare singulars are syntactically related to verbal forms carrying singular morphology, “plural” interpretations are blocked.

An Important Note

- Singular verbal morphology should not be blamed for the lack of plural interpretations.

(34) A criançada se abraçou
 the bunch-of-children SE hugged-3sg
 ‘The bunch of children hugged themselves/each other’

(35) A criançada dormiu no mesmo quarto
 the bunch-of-children slept-3sg in-the same room
 ‘The bunch of children slept in the same room’

- (34) has a reciprocal reading and (35) has a group-internal reading.

Ferreira's Conclusion

- BP bare singulars are sometimes specified for number (singular) and sometimes under-specified and this may have semantic consequences.

Number Specification and Discourse Anaphora

- (36) Eu vi criança brincando. Elas faziam muito barulho.
 I saw child playing they made much noise
 'I saw children playing. They made a lot of noise.'
- (37) Eu vi convidado que estava se cumprimentando.
 I saw guest that was SE greeting
 Eles pareciam malucos.
 They seemed crazy
 'I saw guest(s) that were greeting themselves. They looked like crazy'.
- Plural discourse anaphora does not depend on number neutrality.

Bare Singulars vs. Singular Indefinites

- (38) Eu vi **convidado** que estava se cumprimentando.
 I saw guest that was SE greeting
 Eles pareciam malucos.
 They seemed crazy
 'I saw guest(s) that were greeting themselves. They looked like crazy'.
- (39) Eu vi **um convidado** que estava se cumprimentando.
 I saw a guest that was SE greeting
 *Eles pareciam malucos.
 They seemed crazy
- The link between singular indefinites and discourse anaphora is different from the link between bare singulars and discourse anaphora.

Proposal

- Although the static, truth-conditional contributions of singular indefinites and bare singulars are the same, their dynamic, discourse-related contributions are different.

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- Singular indefinites introduce a (atomic) discourse referent, along the lines of Kamp (1981) and Heim (1982). Bare singulars do not.

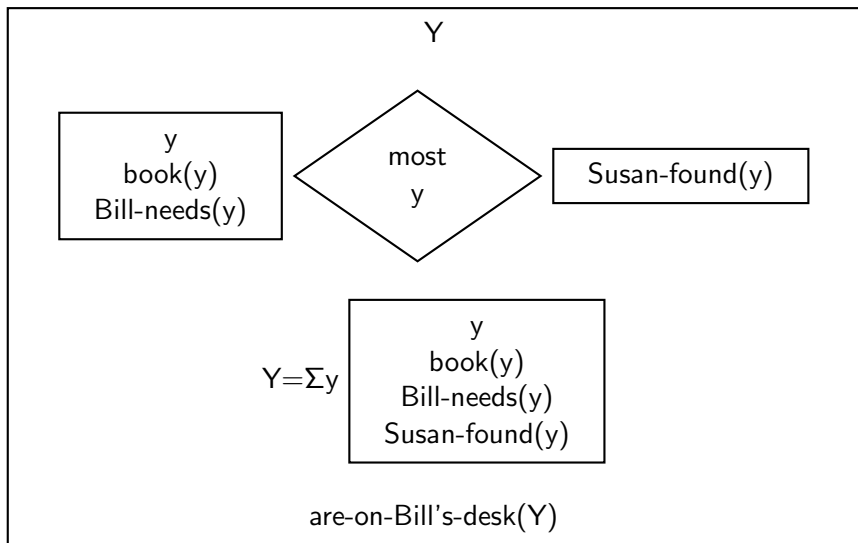
Proposal

- Although the static, truth-conditional contributions of singular indefinites and bare singulars are the same, their dynamic, discourse-related contributions are different.
- Singular indefinites introduce a (atomic) discourse referent, along the lines of Kamp (1981) and Heim (1982). Bare singulars do not.
- Bare singular's potential for serving as discourse antecedents comes from a different process, called abstraction in Kamp and Reyle (1993).

Kamp and Reyle's Abstraction

- (40) Susan has found most books which Bill needs. They are on his desk.
- THEY = the books that Bill needs and Susan has found.

Kamp and Reyle's Abstraction

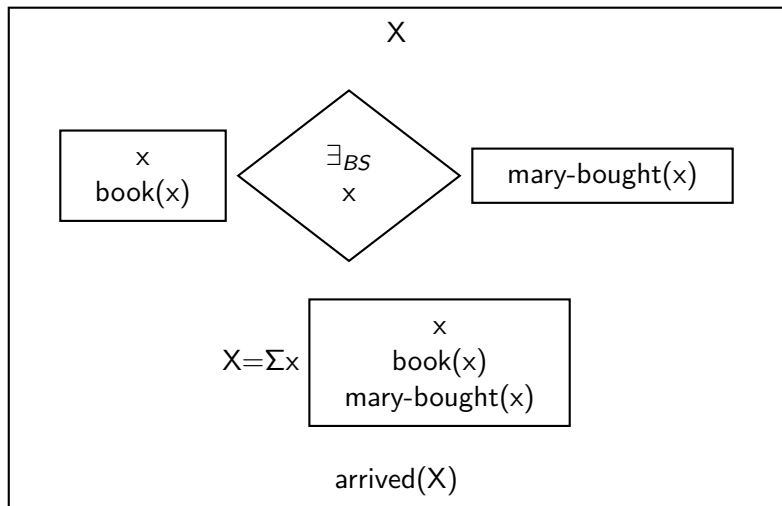


BP bare Singulars and Abstraction

- (41) A Maria comprou livro na Amazon. Eles já
 the Maria bought book at-the Amazon they already
 chegaram.
 arrived
 'Mary bought books at Amazon. They have already
 arrived'.

- ELES = the books bought by Mary at Amazon.

BP Bare Singulars and Abstraction



Gender vs Number Mismatches

(42) Eu vi criança brincando. Ela/*Ele fazia muito
 I saw child playing she/he made much
 barulho.
 noise

(43) Eu vi criança brincando. Eles faziam muito barulho.
 I saw child playing they made much noise

- There is nothing like abstraction related to gender.

Conclusion

- Even when bare singulars are morphologically specified for number and contributes to the static meaning of a sentence the way singular indefinites do, their dynamic, discourse potential is different, and through a process of set formation they can still (although indirectly) serve as antecedents to plural discourse anaphora.

Thank You!