

Scope and partitivity of plural indefinite noun phrases in Spanish

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It has been argued that European Spanish plural indefinite noun phrases including *algunos* convey a partitive effect because the restrictor *alg-* provides additional properties. The reason that *algunos* implicates a “non-all-things” effect is because it refers only to an indeterminate part of the whole. The scope of bare plurals and *unos*, in contrast, does not exhibit this characteristic. This article argues that, contrarily to this claim, the scope of bare plurals and *unos* also induces partitivity because occurrences of these words include unarticulated constituents. Therefore, European Spanish indefinite noun phrases pragmatically presuppose the relevant part of what the speaker intends to refer, which is also shared by the audience since it is part of the common ground both occupy. Hence, bare plurals and *unos* are always contextually restricted, since a covert (optional) variable present in the logical form cannot capture this contextual restriction.

Keywords: partitivity, scope, implicature, presupposition, unarticulated constituents, indefinites, *algunos*, European Spanish

Introduction

The debate about the proper treatment of Spanish plural indefinites has been intense during the last decade. Scholars such as Gutiérrez-Rexach (2001, 2010), Alonso-Ovalle and Menéndez-Benito (2011, 2013a, 2013b), and Martí (2007, 2008, 2009) have contributed different perspectives on the issue. In a number of influential papers that grapple with this important controversy, Martí argues for a novel decompositional analysis of three kinds of plural indefinites in European Spanish (ESpanish) and Brazilian Portuguese (BPortuguese): bare plurals, *unos/uns*, and *algunos/alguns*.

This decompositional analysis, as explicitly spelled out in Martí (2007, 2008, 2009), proposes an “indefinite hierarchy” in which any natural language should build its indefinites. Martí’s analysis follows the logic of compositionality: because of the addition of morphemes and other syntactic elements, words of natural language acquire additional semantic properties. In other words, since *unos/uns* and bare plurals do not contain the contextual domain restrictor *alg-*, it follows that all the semantic properties specific to *algunos/alguns* should be associated with the possession of *alg-*.

According to Martí, therefore, ESpanish and BPortuguese plural indefinite nouns show the following semantic properties:

1. Whereas bare plurals are semantically singular, *unos/uns* and *algunos/alguns* are semantically plural.
2. Unlike bare plurals, *unos/uns* and *algunos/alguns* have positive polarity.
3. Bare plurals and *algunos/alguns* are event-distributive. *Unos/uns* are not.
4. *Algunos/alguns* include a partitive implicature, but *unos/uns* and bare plurals do not have this partitive effect.¹
5. Semantic context-sensitivity is a property available only with *algunos/alguns*. *Unos/uns* and bare plurals are context-independent.
6. Only bare plurals show semantic genericity. *Unos/uns* and *algunos/alguns* do not.
7. All of them induce existence semantically.

Independently of my acceptance or rejection of the other semantic properties claimed by Martí, this paper focuses on property 4: the supposed partitivity effect induced in ESpanish by *algunos* but not by bare plurals and *unos*. To be explicit, this article challenges Martí’s conclusion that the partitivity of *algunos* is semantically embedded. This paper holds that bare plurals and *unos* also distinguish between partitive and non-partitive scenarios because occurrences of these words include unarticulated constituents, which Martí (2006) rejects. As I shall argue, an approach to ESpanish indefinite noun phrases pragmatically presupposes the relevant part of individuals to which the speaker refers, and which the audience also knows. To determine this presupposition will always require the individuation of unarticulated constituents to complete the meaning of the sentence where they appear. Additionally, this article will demonstrate that bare plural and *unos*

1. What Martí actually says is that bare plurals and *unos* do not distinguish between partitive and non-partitive scenarios. Martí (2009: 117) explicitly claims that this property, empirically analyzed in ESpanish, can be generalized to either language. Then, according to Martí, *algunos* induces a partitive implicature and bare plurals and *unos* do not in either language. I will only analyze this conclusion for ESpanish here.

are also non-semantically context-sensitive. However, to avoid the illusion that all three forms conform a unique and unitary category, I shall point out how the differences within the three indefinites depend on the level of epistemic control the speaker has over the information she shares with the audience, and the precision of the partition that the presupposition carries.

Of course, Martí should not be criticized for evaluating and comparing the semantic differences between ESpanish bare plurals, *unos*, and *algunos*. One can say that it is correct to figure out what is in the logical form first, and from here to move on. Since there are three different forms, it seems adequate to find substantial differences at the semantic level between all of them. Nonetheless, what this article shall highlight is the inadequacy of understanding meaning as reducible to logical form. Put differently, semantic resources are the first step to get to the literal meaning of words, but not the only step. Briefly, semantics is necessary but not sufficient to determine meaning, and other elements (pragmatic elements) are always required to anchor the content of our utterances.

Martí's position defends the existence of semantic differences between these words due to the possession of a syntactical particle that induces a partitive implicature. Since it is not the purpose of this article to repeat the classical criticism directed against Gricean mechanisms (such as the well-known critic identified by Austin (1962), who spoke against "the philosopher's favorite pastime of counting meanings"), I am not going to say much about this here. It is one of this article's purposes, however, to help in the necessary task of clarifying the vague boundary line between semantics and pragmatics by problematizing a particularly narrow case in ESpanish linguistic studies on indefinites.

The structure of the article is as follows. After I assess some issues in Martí's position in Section 1, Section 2 introduces Martí's argument for partitivity. Section 3 shows that Martí's compositional thesis about indefinites is motivated by her rejection of unarticulated constituents. Section 4 proposes my alternative view to implicatures as causing partitivity in plural indefinite noun phrases in ESpanish. Unlike Martí, I advocate for the existence of a pragmatic presupposition which in plural indefinite noun phrases in ESpanish with bare plural, *unos*, and *algunos* always reveals the relevant domain of quantification. Therefore, in order to complete the meaning of these sentences, we need to know the unarticulated constituents that restrict what the speaker says since we, as users of natural language, are the ones who mean things with words, making our natural languages psychologically and epistemically relevant.

1. Assumptions in Martí's compositional strategy for the semantic context-sensitivity of indefinites

Martí (2007) argues against traditional accounts according to which indefinite noun phrases inside syntactic islands can take their scope outside of them. Thus, she argues, we cannot use syntactic mechanisms to account for their wide scope. The scope of the ESpanish plural indefinite determiner *algunos*, she concludes, is syntactically constrained. In other words, she claims that *algunos*' wide scope is sensitive to islands in a way that other solutions that interpret indefinites like choice functions (Reinhart 1997; Winter 1997) or singleton indefinites (Schwarzschild 2002) cannot explain. According to her analysis, *algunos* is sensitive to its syntactic environment and, therefore, cannot freely take wide scope.² In other words, since indefinites cannot be used in free variation, it seems correct to ask which differences exist between them.

Additionally, Martí (2009) seems to extend her claim from ESpanish and BPortuguese plural indefinites also to the usage of these plural indefinites in other Romance languages such as Catalan, the language spoken in the autonomous region of Catalonia. If this is the case, in the same way that I have empirical reasons to believe that plural indefinites should not be analyzed in a semantic, compositional way in ESpanish, I also have empirical reasons to claim the same about their usage in Catalan. Some of these reasons are based on intensional logic (cf. Montague 1970). Other concerns are based on facts from a non-Romance language, one of the most compositional languages I know: Basque (the language spoken in the Basque Country, a region that straddles the westernmost Pyrenees in adjacent parts of northern Spain and southwestern France (from *Wikipedia*)).

Basque speakers have three different kinds of weak quantifiers to refer to an indefinite quantity of something: *zenbait*, *hainbat*, and *batzuk* (cf. Etxeberria 2009: 88 for examples). All of them could be translated to English as *some*. Three different kinds of empirical data are available to negate the thesis of the semantically embedded contextuality of these Basque weak quantifiers. First, even though only *batzuk* can refer to a set of two individuals as well as to a bigger plurality, all

2. I have intentionally left aside Martí's (2007) second general conclusion: the scope properties of *algunos* are just like the scope properties of other linguistic items that *move* (such as *if*-clauses, relative clauses, and focused items) and, then, it does not belong to any special scope category. Since she does not distinguish between the different kinds of conditionals, this conclusion raises, according to my view, some additional problems, but I have no space for developing those arguments here. See Martí (2005) for a specific criticism of the singleton solution of indefinites wide scope. Additionally, it is supposed that bare nouns do not occur in subject position in Spanish (cf. Longobardi 1994), but see Sessarego (2014: Ch. 5) for an analysis of bare nouns in an Afro-Hispanic dialect in Bolivia.

three quantifiers can indistinctly be translated into Spanish as *unos* and *algunos*. Second, in the same way that the semantic context-sensitivity in ESpanish and BPortuguese *algunos/alguns* depends on the domain restrictor *alg-*, we should also affirm that the context-sensitivity of Basque quantifiers would depend on the particles *-bait*, *-bat*, and *-zuk*, respectively. However, *-zuk* does not have independent meaning, *-bat* refers to unity (to only one individual), and *-bait* can be translated to English as *because*. This empirical fact compromises both Martí's thesis of the semantic compositionality for this kind of indefinite and the thesis about the semantic plurality showed by indefinites (see Martí's semantic property 1). Third, as Etxeberria (2009: 101–106) demonstrates, unlike strong quantifiers, Basque weak quantifiers are contextually unrestricted. Basque is not a Romance language, though, and one could argue that these conclusions cannot be extended to ESpanish and BPortuguese analysis of plural indefinites. For this reason, this article will only deal with ESpanish uses of indefinites. (However, see Vidal 2013.)

2. Martí's argument for partitivity

Based on conclusions from Gutiérrez-Rexach (2001: 117–120), Martí claims that because of the addition of the syntactic domain restrictor *alg-* to *unos*, ESpanish plural indefinite *algunos* induces a partitive effect that other indefinites do not (Martí 2007: 7–8; 2008: 17–21; 2009: 117–124). In other words, Martí claims that *algunos* necessarily implicates a partitive scenario, which refers to a part of the total extension of what the noun *algunos* denotes. In contrast, bare plurals and *unos* do not differentiate between partitive and non-partitive scenarios, conserving the ambiguity about how to interpret the extension of the noun that they denote.³ To demonstrate this argument, Martí attends to some controversial sentences to identify three different characteristics that phrases including *algunos* accomplish but that those with bare plurals and *unos* do not.

The first characteristic is that *algunos* only conveys a part of the extension of the noun that an indefinite determines in accomplishing what the sentence claims, whereas it does not convey the other part. In other words, while the sentence where *algunos* appears establishes a clear distinction between those individuals that have

3. As Gutiérrez-Rexach (2001: 120) claims, it seems that partitivity is only induced in categorical statements. In other words, only when speakers utter sentences that include nouns expressing definite classes does it seem possible to claim that they express discourse-linked scenarios in which a concrete set of objects is always embedded. These sentences always include *algunos*. In a different way, sentences including *unos* cannot combine with individual-level predicates; they lack a partitive reading because they always become ambiguous.

the property claimed by the sentence and the individual that does not, the sentence with *unos* does not distinguish between the two. Consider the following sentences:

- (1) a. *Algunos* alumnos míos de Historia vinieron ayer a verme al despacho.
 b. *Unos* alumnos míos de Historia vinieron ayer a verme al despacho.
 c. *Alumnos míos* de Historia vinieron ayer a verme al despacho.
 [(*Algunos/unos*) History students of mine came to the office to see me yesterday]

A partitive interpretation of (1a), Martí says, is most adequate given that it is appropriate to think that, in addition to those students who did come to the office to see me yesterday, there could be students who did not come. In contrast, (1b) and (1c) do not discriminate between partitive and non-partitive scenarios because, according to Martí, the fact of the existence of students that did not come to the office to see me yesterday has nothing to do with the meaning of these sentences. As she says, it “is somehow not important” (Martí 2008: 18).

Consider now the following instances:

- (2) a. La Mafia soborna a *algunos* políticos.
 b. La Mafia soborna a *unos* políticos.
 c. La Mafia soborna a *políticos*.
 [The Mafia bribes (*algunos/unos*) politicians]
- (3) a. La universidad tiene *algunas* instalaciones muy modernas.
 b. La universidad tiene *unas* instalaciones muy modernas.
 c. La universidad tiene *instalaciones* muy modernas.
 [The university has (*algunas/unas*) very modern facilities]

As before, according to Martí, we have to say that (2a) and (3a) induce a partitive scenario because of the existence of some politicians that the Mafia does not bribe and of some facilities which are not very modern, respectively. So, the existence of some bribed politicians and some very modern facilities is implicated, respectively. But, there are other politicians that are not bribed and other facilities that are not very modern. By contrast, in (2b)–(3c), where *algunos* is not included, the existence of other politicians or other non-modern facilities is not relevant for the interpretation of the sentences.⁴ Therefore, in Martí’s interpretation, sentences with bare plurals and *unos* do not differentiate between partitive and non-partitive scenarios.

The second characteristic illustrated by Martí in phrases with *algunos* is that they can be followed by sentences including *otros*. In other words, the existence of the partition determined by *algunos* is made explicit. Consider the following examples:

4. Gender neither is syntactically relevant nor modifies the examples here.

- (4) a. *Algunos* alumnos vinieron a verme, otros no.
 b. *Unos* alumnos vinieron a verme, otros no.
 c. ??*Alumnos* vinieron a verme, otros no.
 [(*Algunos/unos*) Students came to see me. Others did not]

Unlike (4a), (4b) and (4c) are odd. Neither (4b) nor (4c) allow an explicit partition of the noun extension. Bare plurals and *unos* then do not discriminate between partitive and non-partitive scenarios.⁵

The third characteristic affirms that, whereas *algunos* is possible in existential covert partitive constructions, overt partitives are not allowed. Consider the following sentences:

- (5) a. Hay *algunos* libros encima de la mesa.
 b. Hay *unos* libros encima de la mesa.
 c. Hay *libros* encima de la mesa.
 [There are (*Algunos/Unos*) books on the table]
- (6) a. ??Hay *algunos* de los libros encima de la mesa.
 b. ??Hay *unos* de los libros encima de la mesa.
 c. ??Hay de los *libros* encima de la mesa.
 [There are (*algunos/unos*) of the books on the table]

Martí asserts that constructions (6a)–(6c) are not possible in ESpanish. And only (5a) induces a partitive effect because, as she says, (5b) and (5c) do not suppose the existence of additional tokens that complete the extension of the noun determined by the indefinite.

To reiterate, Martí says that the partitive meaning component of *algunos* is presented as independent of the issue of the context dependency of its domain restriction. In other words, the syntactic domain restrictor *alg-* of *algunos* includes a “not-all-things” component that induces partitive implicatures in situations where sentences including *algunos* are uttered (Martí 2008: 19). Hence, Martí is simply relying on an empirical generalization: *algunos*, but neither *unos* nor bare plurals, triggers a scalar implicature.

5. Martí seems to say that *algunos* and *unos* share this characteristic that explicitly discriminates partitive scenarios. Nevertheless, Martí denies this possibility, for two reasons. First, according to her, the sentence-continuation with *otros* is not incompatible with the lack of partitivity that she claimed in sentences including *unos*. Second, as Gutiérrez-Rexach (2001: 119) claims, the combination *unos-otros* has its own semantic properties, and these are different from the semantic characteristics of *unos*. Then, according to these authors, it is possible that the binomials *algunos-otros* and *unos-otros* share some semantic features, but this does not entail that *unos* and *algunos* should behave alike in regard to partitivity. So, even though it sounds odd, (4b) is correct.

Two questions arise. The first refers to this (supposedly well-established) empirical generalization, which will be analyzed in the following sections. The second question is: why does Martí affirm that this partitive depends on an implicature and not on an entailment or a semantic presupposition, for instance? Because, she says, sentences with *algunos* accomplish the main characteristic of implicatures: the partitive effect induced can be cancelled (Martí 2008: 19; 2009: 113–117). Consider the following sentences:

- (7) a. Both girls have three A's. ??In fact, there is only one girl.
 b. Both girls have three A's. ??In fact, Mary, one of the girls, has just two A's.
- (8) a. *Algunos* estudiantes vinieron a verme ayer. De hecho, *todos* vinieron.
 b. *Unos* estudiantes vinieron a verme ayer. De hecho, *todos* vinieron.
 c. *Estudiantes* vinieron a verme ayer. De hecho, *todos* vinieron.
 [(*Algunos/unos*) Students came to see me yesterday. In fact, they all came]
- (9) a. No están *algunos* libros encima de la mesa, están *todos*.
 b. ??No están *unos* libros encima de la mesa, están *todos*.
 c. ??No están *libros* encima de la mesa, están *todos*.
 [It is not the case that there are (*algunos/unos*) books on the table, it is that they are all on the table]

(7a) is an entailment; (7b) is a semantic presupposition. These sentences cannot be cancelled because adding some cancellation clause would make them inconsistent. Comparing these sentences with (8a)–(8c), we can be tempted to say that these examples include a “non-all-things” component that splits the extension of “students that came to see me yesterday,” which can be cancelled. The sentences explicitly say that all of the students came to see me yesterday and, then, the partition makes no sense. As Martí says, such sentences cannot positively identify this articulated component as an implicature because the sentences do not clearly discriminate between, on the one hand, the scope of *algunos* and, on the other, the scope of *unos* and bare plurals. Martí appeals to the fact that (8b) has two different uses: either it can be used as a marker of implicature denial or it can also be used to add information absent in the first sentence. This means that (8a)–(8c), independently of the fact that they include bare plurals, *unos*, and *algunos*, can both add new information to the preceding sentence and then induce an implicature or negate that implicature. In the best scenario, Martí states, we can only clearly reject that this kind of sentence including indefinites are entailments or semantic presuppositions because one of the uses allows cancellation. Neither entailments nor semantic presupposition can be cancelled, but in doing so, we would not distinguish which of the two different uses has been effectively employed.

In contrast, (9b) and (9c) are not allowed constructions because the “non-all-things” component is unavailable. (9a) cancels the “non-all-things” factor through metalinguistic negation. Thus, only an interpretation that considers (9a) as inducing a partitive implicature is possible, because the second sentence precisely blocks this induced effect. Consequently, plural indefinite noun phrases that include *algunos* induce a partitive effect because they implicate a “non-all-things” articulated constituent that semantically completes the truth-conditions of the sentence, determining the proposition for that context. Hence, I assume that the scope of bare plurals and *unos* includes a totality of things denoted. In other words, I assume that the reason why Martí claims that the truth-value of sentences including bare plurals and *unos* is invariant has to do with the fact that they implicate an “all-things” articulated constituent across contexts.

3. Unarticulated constituents reconsidered

Martí defends a purely semantic identification of variables at the logical/syntactic level. Consequently, the meaning of some of the sentences of our natural languages, including also those with plural noun indefinites, can be completed if those variables are determined. However, I argue that the meaning of our natural language loses its psychological and epistemic relevance if we only refer to a semantically context-sensitive analysis, since speakers, not the languages themselves, are the ones who mean things with words. To remedy this undesirable consequence, first, this section shows how Martí’s semantic context-sensitive compositional analysis is based on her rejection of the existence of unarticulated constituents. Second, it argues for the existence of unarticulated constituents in natural language, since unarticulated constituents pragmatically presuppose the domain of quantification (the restriction) the speaker refers to when plural indefinite noun phrases are involved.

Martí (2006) claims that the truth-conditional effects of extra-linguistic context should be only traced throughout a contextual variable placed in the syntax/logical form of natural languages, and that this contextualization is optional. In other words, these variables can be or cannot be available. In contrast, the thesis in favor of unarticulated constituents says that, independently of the syntactic and semantic assumptions made in order to establish the truth-conditions of sentences with covert variables, any possible interpretation of this kind of sentence should take place in a purely pragmatic and non-optional process of free enrichment (cf. Recanati 2002). By definition, this process cannot be linguistically controlled. What we have here are three possible scenarios of interpretation that are always

going to take a covert element as relevant to interpret the sentence.⁶ First, a preceding context can make salient the covert specification of the variable. Second, sentences can have a meaning with some existential relevance, even if the specification of the variable is covert in the context. Third, sentences with a covert specification may include a bound variable.

In contrast, Martí (2006) opts for an analysis without any pragmatic process of propositional truth-value completion. This approach takes semantics as a separate module from pragmatics, insisting that sentences including variables can be explained using only syntactic and semantic characteristics. According to Martí (2006: 139), sentences with covert variables can have free variable-like and bound variable-like readings (scenarios 1 and 3 seen above, respectively), since these readings are optional. In other words, since silent variables are adjuncts but not arguments, they can (but do not have to) be necessarily generated in the sentence's syntax. When generated, we should appeal to a weak reading of the (articulated) variable. When not generated, we should appeal to a strong metaphysical reading. And, according to Martí, both phenomena can be explained by simply appealing to Gricean mechanisms.

However, the differences between the scenarios described above and Martí's theories become clear when we account for the sentence's epistemic scope and the rigidity of its truth-values. First, Martí claims that Gricean mechanisms are always operating here, and an implicature will always induce a metaphysical requirement. Therefore, since variables are optional in the syntax of sentences, we can only interpret existentially the sentence in which they are not present (by Russellian suggestions). Thus, the proposition uttered is unavailable to the speaker and the audience. This interpretation, according to Martí, is forbidden in pragmatic readings because the context determines the derivation of the variable. But, as Recanati argues, pragmatics does not trigger a variable in the logical form of the sentence. Unlike Recanati's, Martí's theory requires that an implicature, which substitutes the articulated variable in the syntax/logic level, would always provide the different values.

6. In other words, according to Recanati, there is a metaphysical necessity behind the existence of these unarticulated constituents, which will avoid its occurrence in free variation because it is metaphysically necessary that, for instance, every time that it rains, it does rain somewhere. However, independently of the necessity of this fact, we can also say that although we refer to a particular state of affairs when we say that it is raining, which is bound to involve a place, this place is not articulated in the sentence. Then, the bound place should be interpreted as a metaphysical unarticulated constituent of the interpretation of the sentence (Recanati 2002: 306). Nevertheless, the particular place where it rains should be epistemically relevant to the speaker (as advocated for his Availability Principle. See Recanati (2004).

The main consequence of this thesis is that no intuitive or cognitive availability is required to determine what is said by these sentences. This conclusion is psychologically unrealistic, because the speaker and the addressee have no role here in the determination of meaning. Since truth-conditions can be determined only from the syntax/logical level, the speaker and the addressee become irrelevant and are not necessary at all in determining the truth-value and meaning of their utterances.

In the same way, when the variable is available, different derivations are possible until one is successful, a success that depends on the existence of an articulated variable, binding the elements of the sentence at the syntactic/logic level. The appeal to variables is simply a technology that pragmatics does not need, since such an appeal will require some cognitive/epistemic relevance. As Martí asserts, because of the implausibility of this epistemic requirement, “there is no process of free enrichment” (Martí 2006: 150). Or, in other words, because of the rigidity of the syntactic/logical level of our natural language and the mechanisms that govern Gricean implicature, truth-value becomes semantically invariant across contexts. Even if we claim the existence of some variable terms, once we establish the truth-value for the sentence (by the concrete implicature involved), the speaker’s utterance would only mean what is implicated (by the non-detachability principle). According to this argument, we establish the meaning that the variable refers to. In Martí’s analysis then, I propose, we lose an intuitively important aspect for context-sensitivity: the possibility that the speaker expresses her intention differently since she has no epistemic control of her utterances.

To reiterate, empirical generalization is not enough to capture the metaphysical necessity that the previous scenarios illustrate. Hence, Martí’s analysis fails to capture this overt character of a previous context for some of our utterances. What Martí seems to overlook is that to determine the meaning of our sentences, their content must be manifest to both speaker and audience, and the determination of this content is something that cannot be reduced to an implicature.

4. Partitive implicature and the consequences of rejecting unarticulated constituents

As we saw, some important and undesirable consequences appear in Martí’s analysis of sentences with indefinites. One of them is that a generalist interpretation is only allowed when (supposedly) a relevant quantifier reading is also allowed, but not an existential one. Additionally, since it does not appeal to anything besides the logical/syntactic level when determining the meaning of our utterances, Martí’s interpretation is also psychologically irrelevant. If this is true, this analysis has

troubles determining the meaning of these sentences because, as I have demonstrated, if we assert that an implicature always linguistically induces the specification of a variable, the speaker loses control of what she means. If, as Martí claims, the truth-value of these sentences is determined this way, we cannot simply linguistically specify the constituents that complete the proposition uttered. And this is psychologically irrelevant because neither the speaker nor the addressee have a role at all in the meaning determination process.

As I said before, we should also have the possibility to establish in an overtly epistemic way (manifestly and explicitly) what this specification is. This is simply not allowed by an implicature because by definition, what it conveys is something else than what is explicitly and literally said. I propose that we can infer meaning through a pragmatic process based on a common ground, which is usually identified as a context set from the particular domain that the speaker has in mind when she utters the sentence. Therefore, the kind of sentences including variables can be disambiguated through the pragmatic presupposition of what the speaker intends to express in every occurrence and context, which is the kind of presupposed knowledge that the speaker can reasonably assume she and the addressee share.

More importantly for the argument of this article, the consequences of Martí's analysis can also be extended to the case of plural indefinite noun phrases with bare plurals, *unos*, and *algunos* in ESpanish. Consider again sentences (1), (2), and (3):

- (1) a. *Algunos* alumnos míos de Historia vinieron ayer a verme al despacho.
 b. *Unos* alumnos míos de Historia vinieron ayer a verme al despacho.
 c. *Alumnos míos* de Historia vinieron ayer a verme al despacho.
 [(*Algunos/unos*) History students of mine came to the office to see me yesterday]
- (2) a. La Mafia soborna a *algunos* políticos.
 b. La Mafia soborna a *unos* políticos.
 c. La Mafia soborna a *políticos*.
 [The Mafia bribes (*algunos/unos*) politicians]
- (3) a. La universidad tiene *algunas* instalaciones muy modernas.
 b. La universidad tiene *unas* instalaciones muy modernas.
 c. La universidad tiene *instalaciones* muy modernas.
 [The university has (*algunas/unas*) very modern facilities]

According to Martí, the only interpretation of (1) should be an existential reading, because we can understand (1a) as referring only to the History students that came to see me at the office yesterday (and this is the relevant fact here), whoever they were. And, because of the semantic contextual-dependence of *algunos*, it also induces the partitive effect that implicates the existence of some other number of

History students that did not come to see me at the office yesterday. By contrast, (1b) and (1c) would mean that all History students came to see me at the office yesterday, whatever their number. In the same way, according to Martí, (2a) means that the Mafia bribes some politicians (whoever they are) but not others, or only a part of the totality of politicians (and this is the relevant fact). In fact, (2b) and (2c) should be interpreted as saying that the Mafia bribes all the politicians in the territory, the totality of them (whatever their number), usually understood as a collective interpretation of the plural. In the same fashion, (3a) implicates that the university has some facilities that are modern and others that are not. Instead, (3b) and (3c) mean that all the facilities are necessarily modern.

Nonetheless, this interpretation is not an existential reading but simply an empirical generalization. According to my view, what the speaker means when she utters (1b) and (1c) is that, like in (1a), some of the History students (the relevant number of the students that the speaker is talking about) came to see me at the office yesterday, and we can perfectly say who they were. We can even list all of them. As I argued in Section 2, the scope of these plural indefinite noun phrases in Spanish (and also in other Romance languages like Catalan) only refers to the relevant number of the History students as (in this case) uttered by the speaker. Because these plural indefinite noun phrases share some characteristics that are relevant for the speaker, this makes the complete context relevant, allowing a pragmatic presupposition:⁷ they are History students, they are my History students, and they came to see me at the office yesterday. And since what individualizes these particular cases is the fact that all of them represent all characteristics for the speaker, this relevant part of knowledge should be intuitively and cognitively available to everyone involved in the context of the conversation.

According to my interpretation of this pragmatic presuppositional view, plural indefinite noun phrases in ESpanish with bare plurals, *unos*, and *algunos* include unarticulated constituents; they should be analyzed as denoting the relevant part of individuals to whom the speaker intends to refer: the quantificational domain (the restriction) pragmatically presupposed by the speaker's utterance. Sentences such as (1a)–(3c), then, pragmatically presuppose a partitive effect that only refers

7. Stalnaker (1974) suggests that a pragmatic notion of presupposition is needed in language, so that the proper object of study is not what words or sentences presuppose, but what people presuppose when they speak. A pragmatic presupposition associated with a sentence then is a condition that a speaker would normally expect to hold in the common ground (the epistemic and relevant information shared by speaker and audience) when that sentence is uttered. As Stalnaker observed, whenever something is semantically presupposed, we should expect it to be pragmatically presupposed as well. Thus, if an indefinite description semantically presupposes the existence of a suitable referent, then it follows that speakers using indefinites will pragmatically presuppose the existence of such referents, though not vice versa (cf. Beaver & Geurts 2011).

to those History students of mine that actually came to see me at the office yesterday, to the politicians that are really bribed by the mafia, and to the facilities that are really modern. My conclusion, therefore, is that these kinds of words behave as quantifiers. They presuppose the range of characteristics relevant for the speaker, and they should be analyzed differently relative to the speaker, which determines the utterance context. If this is correct, and if I have demonstrated that plural indefinite noun phrases containing bare plurals and *unos* also are context-sensitive in a pragmatic way, the semantic characteristic 5 in Martí's analysis becomes untenable.

Consider again sentences (1a)–(3c). If one asserts that any time that a speaker utters (1a), a partitive effect is induced that refers to a “not-all-History-students-of-mine” as an articulated constituent, one should also assert that the concrete part of History students is not necessarily available to the speaker. The indefinite *algunos* restricts at the syntactic/logical level the extension of History students of mine, but says nothing about the particular characteristic that becomes salient with the relevant part of these individuals. What the partitive implicature supposes, in this case, is psychologically irrelevant to the speaker referring to the group of History students, making non-salient the characteristics that those History students share. In the same way, if one supposes that (1b) and (1c) do not discriminate between partitive and non-partitive scenarios because they induce an implicature that includes an “all-History-students-of-mine” articulated component, one should also suppose that the salient properties of the concrete group of individuals the speaker denotes are not available, becoming again cognitively irrelevant by the way that the speaker refers to them.

If one analyzes (2a) according to Martí's view, one should assert that the speaker induces an implicature including a partition that refers to a “not-all-the-politicians” articulated constituent. Analyzed this way, (2a) becomes psychologically irrelevant because the salient characteristics to establish this partition are not available to the speaker. Similarly, (2b) and (2c) do not discriminate between different scenarios because one should say that what makes relevant the particular group of individuals is not available to speaker and audience. As before, one obtains untenable readings of these sentences. To further substantiate these odd readings, consider again sentences (5a)–(5c). If one interprets (5a) using Martí's analysis, it means that some of the books are on the table (what kind?), but there are more books that are not on the table because the sentence includes an implicature that induces the partition between all the books (on the face of the Earth?). And (5b)–(5c) implicate that there are books (all the books on the face on the Earth?) on the table, because they induce a “not-all-the-books” articulated constituent that is metaphysically mandatory, which offers an existential reading. This fact and the

data analyzed in Section 2, then, raise some doubts about the accuracy of semantic characteristic 7 highlighted in Martí's analysis.⁸

Because the speaker refers to the relevant part of individuals sharing these properties, the salient properties are necessarily and epistemically relevant to determine the partition she denotes. Then, these characteristics should be always present in a manifest way in the speaker's intention. And this is what determines the scope of the indefinite in plural noun phrases in ESpanish (and other Romance languages). Because of its epistemic availability, meaning is pragmatically presupposed in the context that is unarticulated in the sentence itself.

One could reject this claim by arguing that the partitive reading flourishes only under categorical statements. That is to say, only when referring to a definite class can one say that the speaker expresses a discourse-linked scenario with a definite set of objects and characteristics (as Gutiérrez-Rexach 2001: 120 suggests). Then, when the scope of the speaker's intention is presupposed, an individual-level predicate will be always involved. Nonetheless, this makes the complete scenario ambiguous because the object and the characteristics denoted cannot be specified under any concrete category. This interpretation is, however, too facile. To think that, when a speaker expresses her own understanding of the domain of quantification, what she conveys is only her own opinion about something fails to account for the complexity of the epistemology that the speaker's intention implies.

So, in contrast to the problems in Martí's account, the pragmatic presupposition induced by plural indefinite noun phrases in ESpanish is more useful if we rewrite these sentences making explicit the restriction they denote. By articulating the constituents that specify the sentence's quantificational domain, what the speaker really refers to, what is presupposed and shared with the audience, is made explicit, as are its relevant and manifest characteristics. Let's take a look at our previous examples, this time interpreting them as inducing a pragmatic presupposition:

- (10) a. *Algunos* alumnos míos de Historia vinieron ayer a verme al despacho (sólo aquellos que vinieron a verme).
 b. *Unos* alumnos míos de Historia vinieron ayer a verme al despacho (sólo aquellos que vinieron a verme).

8. One additional difficulty I want to point out in Martí's analysis has to do with what she understands by ESpanish. Even though, a priori, the examples contained in (6) are odd, (6a) sounds good for somebody that speaks the Spanish variety in contact with Catalan; and even examples such as (6c) can be perfectly valid. So, the question now is: can Martí's approach be extended to every ESpanish variety, or does it only applies to a very standardized variety? To say it differently, the ESpanish that Martí has in mind, as well as the majority of examples she employs, look highly artificial. See also Appendix 2.

c. *Alumnos míos* de Historia vinieron ayer a verme al despacho (sólo aquellos que vinieron a verme).

[(*Algunos/unos*) History students of mine came to the office to see me yesterday (only those that actually came to see me)]

(11) a. La Mafia soborna a *algunos* políticos (sólo aquellos que son corruptos).

b. La Mafia soborna a *unos* políticos (sólo aquellos que son corruptos).

c. La mafia soborna a *políticos* (sólo aquellos que son corruptos).

[The Mafia bribes to (*algunos/unos*) politicians (only those that actually are corrupt)]

(12) a. La universidad tiene *algunas* instalaciones muy modernas (sólo las que lo son).

b. La universidad tiene *unas* instalaciones muy modernas (sólo las que lo son).

c. La universidad tiene *instalaciones* muy modernas (sólo las que lo son).

[The university has (*algunas/unas*) very modern facilities (only those that actually are modern)]

Intuitively, one can see that (10a)–(10c) are easily interpreted as pragmatically presupposing that only those History students of mine that came to see me, actually came yesterday to see me. (11a)–(11c) pragmatically presuppose that the salient group of people the speaker denotes is the group of politicians that effectively have been bribed by the Mafia. And (12a)–(12c) denote only those facilities that actually are modern (maybe only those that the speaker has seen), but not others. All these sentences pragmatically presuppose the restricted quantificational domain of individuals possessing the property predicated, which is implicit in the common epistemic ground that speaker and audience share. One does not require an implicature that induces a partition between the History students of mine that came to see me and those that did not in (10), the politicians that have been bribed and those who do not in (11), and the facilities that are modern and those that are not in (12). One does not require a “non-all-things” articulated constituent that distinguishes between those individuals that do qualify for the property predicated and those that do not. What one requires is to pragmatically complete the proposition uttered through a process that satisfies the particular characteristics that become salient in the concrete restricted quantificational domain the speaker denotes and is also shared by the audience, since this is what informs and molds the view both have.

An additional concern that may arise from my account of plural indefinite noun phrases in ESpanish is that it seems to imply that the three indefinite forms (bare plurals, *unos*, and *algunos*) form a unique, homogeneous category. In other words, all three forms seem to be used to convey some presupposed partitive

information shared by speaker and audience (independently of the degree of control over the presupposed information), which will give the false impression that the speaker could use any of the three forms indiscriminately. However, since the three forms cannot be used in free variation, this is a conclusion that we must reject.

Above, I said that all three indefinite forms convey some presupposition about a partition of the individuals the sentence refers to, and this information is shared between speaker and audience. But instead of saying that all three forms can be used interchangeably, one should claim that there is a difference between them that will determine the form that the speaker shall employ. To say it explicitly, the differences between the three forms have to do not only with the degree or level of control over the shared information, but also with the precision of that information. When the speaker has not that much control over the information she and her audience share, but the partition includes more than only a few individuals, the speaker most likely will use the bare plurals. When the speaker has a more accurate control over the information shared, she will employ *unos* and *algunos*. However, the difference depends on the number of individuals the partition refers to. The speaker will employ *unos* to refer to some known individuals, which even can be listed. In contrast, *algunos* will be used to refer to a few unknown individuals, whose identity is irrelevant for the precision of the information. (Realize that the level of control over the information is also different. See also Appendix 1.)

An additional consequence of Martí's position should be pointed out. The main reason for Martí's appeal to implicatures was the fact that her examples could be cancelled. Martí insisted that if we interpret these examples under a presuppositional component, then they cannot be cancelled. As I have demonstrated, when the presupposition is made explicit, the induced quantificational domain shows up. Since a pragmatic presupposition can be cancelled when made explicit, we can conclude that a pragmatic presupposition can also perfectly have been inarticulately functioning in plural indefinite noun phrases in ESpanish without necessarily requiring an implicature.

5. Conclusions

To summarize, the aim of this article has been to propose an alternative to Martí's semantically covert partitivity thesis regarding to plural indefinite noun phrases in ESpanish, and to demonstrate that bare plurals and *unos*, in contrast with Martí's conclusions, are also always contextually restricted. By doing so, the article has also demonstrated that there is no semantic constraint in natural language that cannot also be met by a pragmatic presupposition. This broad thesis about the semantics/pragmatics boundary has allowed me to conclude that what carries the

weight of the proof when specifying the value of a variable is nothing else than the speaker's intention to refer to a certain part of the things denoted, which is the presupposed information that both speaker and audience share. However, this article has said nothing about Martí's idiosyncratic conception of implicature.⁹ Nor did it say much about why cancellation is the best test for proving implicature as the preferred mechanism to explain context-sensitivity.

As we have seen throughout this article, Martí argues that sentences including *algunos* implicate a "non-all-things" component that establishes a partition of the things referred by the speaker. Additionally, as the article has shown, because of the absence of the restrictor *alg-*, bare plurals and *unos* do not convey the partitive implicature that *algunos* does, bestowing its semantic properties. The article further has shown how Martí's partitivity thesis is founded on her rejection of unarticulated constituents. Since Martí's analysis only provides empirical generalization, but neither existential nor metaphysical readings, her analysis of plural indefinite noun phrases in ESpanish and her semantic solution to context-sensitivity appears to be untenable, as also demonstrated in the article.

However, the purpose of this article has not been only to criticize Martí's semantic position. The article also proposes that pragmatic presupposition articulates the missing semantic elements from the available components in the context. Therefore, some elements picked up from the context using a pragmatic presupposition (elements at hand in the common ground shared by both speaker and audience) will complete, in a better way than implicature does, the meaning of the sentence uttered by the speaker. Additionally, the article has shown that the differences between the three indefinite forms depend on the level of epistemic control the speaker and her audience has over the shared information, and the quantificational precision the information carries. Clearly, this is a pragmatic solution.

So presupposition accounts for unarticulated constituents as part of the extra-semantic context of utterance, although they are not articulated at the syntactic/logical level, without necessity to appeal to Gricean mechanisms. As my arguments and the accompanying empirical reasons demonstrate, semantics and pragmatics are not such clearly separated modules after all.

9. The Gricean tradition accounts for implicature as the violation of one of the communicational maxims identified by Grice. Therefore, Martí owes us an explanation of the way that plural indefinite noun phrases in ESpanish violate one or more of these maxims.

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Appendix 1

Martí (2009) introduces the following sentences:

- (2) {Teachers A and B are on an excursion with a group of children, of whom they are in charge. Teacher A comes running to teacher B:}
- Teacher A: ¿Te has enterado? *Algunos* niños se han perdido en el bosque.
 - Teacher A: ¿Te has enterado? *Unos* niños se han perdido en el bosque.
[Did you hear? (*Algunos/unos*) children have got lost in the forest]

Martí's interpretation is that "in (2a), teacher A says that some of the children he and teacher B are in charge of got lost in the forest. (2b) says something different: teacher A says that some children got lost in the forest, but he doesn't mean the children he and teacher B are in charge of" (2009: 110). For her, the proof is that a sentence as (3)

- (3) {After a few hours, teachers A and B discover that none of the children from their group had actually got lost; it was children from a neighboring village:}
- Teacher A: We are so fortunate that what I said turned to be false – we don't have to give bad news to any parent!

will be a felicitous continuation for (2a) but not for (2b). Contrarily, a sentence as (4)

- (4) Teacher A: But at least all our kids are back.

will be a felicitous continuation for (2b), but not for (2a). For Martí, what this indicates is that the behavior of *algunos* is context-sensitive to the salient group of children the teachers are in charge of. By contrast, *unos* is not context-sensitive to that, which indicates that in (2b) *unos niños* does not establish a relationship with a previous established discourse entity" (Martí 2009: 111).

The problem with Martí's interpretation is, first of all, the artificiality of her examples. The way she constructed the examples is far away from a naturally occurring conversation between teacher A and teacher B, which forces the context-sensitivity conclusion for (2a) but not for (2b). As the present article asserts, all of the three indefinite forms in ESpanish are context-sensitive.

Second, there is nothing in the examples that cannot be also interpreted under a pragmatic presupposition approach. (2a) simply says that some children got lost in the forest, as (2b) does. To which children they refer, will depend on the information teacher A and teacher B share, but not on the semantic behavior of *algunos* and *unos*. As the present article argues, the speaker's choice between *algunos* and *unos* depends on the number of individuals the partition refers to. So, both (3) and (4) are perfectly valid continuations of both sentences (2a) and (2b), depending on the partition of individuals the shared information between teacher A and teacher B refers to and the level of epistemic control both speaker and audience have on the shared information. In other words, the completion of the meaning depends on the level of epistemic control the interlocutors have over the shared information, and how accurate that information is. It has nothing to do with the semantic content of the indefinite forms *algunos* and *unos*.

Appendix 2

Frege's point is that "a proposition may occur in discourse now asserted, now unasserted, and yet be recognizably the same proposition" (Geach 1965: 449). According to Geach, what Frege meant is that one can predicate an expression of something without necessarily asserting that it is true of that thing. Assertion as such, on the other hand, is only one of the many speech acts one can perform by uttering a sentence. More generally, Frege's point is that there is a distinction between the meaning of a sentence and the speech acts that a sentence can be used to perform, and one cannot infer that properties of the latter are properties of the former. In other words, the same proposition must be the content of a sentence independently of the way it is formulated, whether it is a negation, a question, or even a subordinate sentence.

Martí's examples (6) violate this principle. As pointed out in footnote 11, (6a) sounds good for a Spanish speaker of the variety in contact with Catalan (or for a speaker of some of the US Spanish variants). In Catalan, for instance, a sentence such as

- (6) a'. Hi ha *alguns* dels llibres sobre la taula
[There are (*alguns*) of the books on the table]

is possible. So, for a Spanish speaker of the variety in contact with Catalan, a sentence such as

- (6) a. Hay *algunos* de los libros encima de la mesa
[There are (*algunos*) of the books on the table]

is a perfectly well-constructed and meaningful sentence, even though for Martí it looks grammatically incorrect, and thus meaningless. (Recall that in Italian, also a Romance language, it is perfectly possible to find sentences such as "*Vorrei del pane*", literally 'I would like [some of the] bread').

According to Frege's point, the same proposition must be the content of whatever speech act the sentence attempts to perform. Since Martí's example (6) simply denies the sentences any content at all, this possibility is not available for her. Now, the point is that (6a) is a perfectly meaningful sentence. It says that some of the books, the books that the information shared by speaker and audience refers to, are on the table. This is the content of the sentence, the expressed proposition that Martí's approach denies to (6a), and it will be the same independently of the way the sentence is expressed, or of the speech act the sentence performs, but only if we understand the meaning as having been completed by a presupposition.

- (6) d. No hay algunos de los libros encima de la mesa. (Negation)
[There are not (*algunos*) of the books on the table]
- e. ¿Hay algunos de los libros encima de la mesa? (Question)
[Are there (*algunos*) of the books on the table?]
- f. Nicole cree que hay algunos de los libros encima de la mesa. (Belief Ascription)
[Nicole believes that there are (*algunos*) of the books on the table]

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