

Determined Proper Names in Spanish

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Spanish is a language that has a determiner system with definite and indefinite articles, but it also allows for the presence of nominals without determiners. Common nouns in argument position are usually not allowed and therefore a determiner is necessary (1) (Laca 1999). As for proper nouns (PN), they tend to occur bare in argument position (2):

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|-----|--|-----|--|
| (1) | El hombre / * Hombre fue a trabajar.
def. man man went to work
'The man went to work.' | (2) | Carlos fue a trabajar.
Carlos went to work
'Carlos went to work.' |
|-----|--|-----|--|

However, in Rioplatense Spanish (RS) —a variety spoken in Montevideo, Buenos Aires, and its surroundings—, proper personal names preceded by a definite article (*DefArt+PropNames*) can occur in informal registers, as the following examples obtained from Twitter show:¹

- (3) a. 'Es increíble lo que está gastando **la Carolina** en la Intendencia de Montevideo.
is incredible the what is spending the Carolina in the Mayor of Montevideo
'It is incredible how much **def.Carolina** is spending on the Mayor of Montevideo.'
- b. 'After quería **el Juan**, y no puede caminar.
after-party wanted the Juan and not can walk.
'**def.Juan** wanted to have an afterparty but he can't even walk.'

In this presentation, we study this phenomena from a semantic and syntactic point of view. In the first part, we propose that *DefArt+PropNames* convey an expressive meaning, namely interpersonal proximity between the speaker and the referent holding the proper name; so, for instance, (4) implies that the speaker feels a close bond towards Maria:

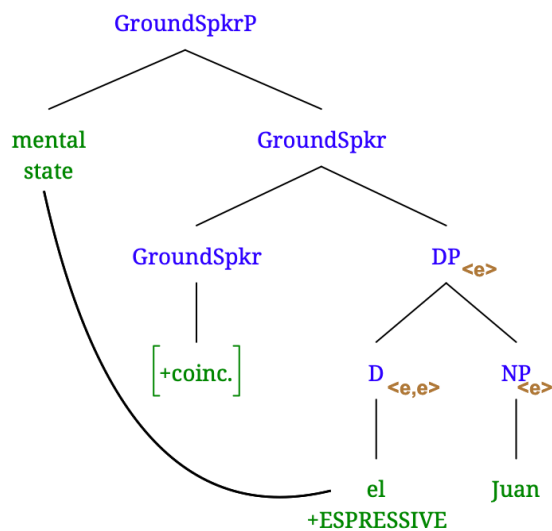
- (4) **La María** vino a mi fiesta
def. Maria came to my party
'**def.María** (with whom I feel close) came to my party.'

¹ Definite articles preceding proper names have been identified in languages of several families (Caro Reina & Helmbrecht, 2022). In Romance languages, it is a widespread phenomena (Brugger 1993; Longobardi 1994; 2008; Gomeishi & Massam, 2009; Camacho, 2019; Bernstein, Ordóñez & Roca, 2018; Saab, 2021; Espinal to appear). In this presentation we only focus on RS, although we are aware that (at least some of) the properties described here are also present in other languages.

We also show that interpersonal proximity, as an expressive content, passes the tests usually used in the literature to identify expressivity, such as *at-issueness*, *projection*, *descriptive ineffability*, *perspective dependence* and *non-displaceability* (Potts, 2005; Tonhauser, 2011; Gutzman, 2019).

In the second part of our presentation, we offer a formal analysis for DefArt+PropNames. Assuming a contemporary approach to expletives (Longobardi 1994, Saab 2021; Tsiakmakis & Espinal, 2022), we propose that the definite article is a semantic expletive marked with an expressive feature, which denotes an identity function and combines with an entity-referring proper name. Then, based on Wiltschko (2021), we propose that DefArt+PropNames are so-called *big nominals*, that is they contain interactional structure above the DP. Within this structure, interpersonal proximity arises by virtue of DefArt+PropNames interplaying with the interactional spine, in particular, by means of relating the speaker's mental state with the propositional content of the construction throughout the positive valuing of the [ucoin] heading the $Ground_{Spkr}P$. The following tree represents this idea:

(5)



Overall, our analysis not only accounts for the behavior of DefArt+PropNames, but it could also be extended to other cases of expressiveness-meaning determination combined with proper names.

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