

INDEFINITES AND BARE NOUNS IN GENERIC CONTEXTS IN EUROPEAN PORTUGUESE

Fátima OLIVEIRA & Fátima SILVA

Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto

foliveir@netcabo.pt

mhenri@letras.up.pt

RÉSUMÉ

Le principal but de ce travail est de décrire le comportement des indéfinis sans modification adjectivale en position de sujet préverbal dans des contextes génériques et de montrer leur rapport avec les noms nus en portugais européen (PE).

Il est possible de signaler une différence dans la distribution des noms nus en position de sujet préverbal entre les langues germaniques et les langues romanes : l'emploi des noms comptables au pluriel et des noms massifs est grammatical en anglais, très restreint en italien, espagnol et PE, et agrammatical en français.

En nous fondant sur les critères établis par Dowty (1979) pour la distinction entre événements et états et sur la distinction proposée par Cunha (2004) entre les éventualités admettant des phases et les éventualités ne les admettant pas, nous établissons une corrélation entre la distribution des noms nus et des indéfinis en position sujet préverbal dans le PE et différents types de prédicats.

En synthétisant les étalons obtenus dans la description des données, nous combinons (suivant Duarte et al., 2002, et Oliveira et al., 2006) la valeur de chacun des prédicats considérés et la valeur respective du sujet, dans le but d'établir les propriétés des noms nus et des indéfinis en position de sujet préverbal dans le PE, notamment en ce qui concerne les contextes génériques qui les autorisent. Nous montrerons que soit les indéfinis soit les noms nus fonctionnent de façon différente dans cette position-là selon leur forme singulière ou plurielle.

ABSTRACT

The main goal of this work is to describe how singular and plural indefinites without modification in preverbal subject position behave in generic contexts and how they

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relate to bare nouns in European Portuguese (EP) in the same position and contexts.

In what concerns the distribution of bare nouns (BN) in subject preverbal position without modifiers, a contrast between Germanic and Romance languages has been noticed: plural count nouns and mass nouns are grammatical in English, but not in French and they are quite restricted in Italian, Spanish and EP.

Based on the criteria established by Dowty (1979) for distinguishing states from events and on the distinction proposed by Cunha (2004) between phase and non phase eventualities, we establish a correlation between the distribution of BN and indefinites in preverbal subject position in EP and different types of predicates.

Having summarized the patterns obtained by the data description, we combine (following Duarte et al., 2002, and Oliveira et al., 2006) the predicate value of each of the considered predicates and their corresponding subject value, in order to account for the properties of the BNs and indefinites preverbal subjects in EP, namely with respect to the generic contexts that allow them. It will be showed that both indefinites and BNs behave differently in such position depending on their singular or plural form.

INTRODUCTION

The main goal of this paper is to see how singular and plural indefinites without modification in preverbal subject position behave in generic contexts and how they relate to bare nouns (hereafter BN) in European Portuguese (hereafter EP).

As it is well known, Romance and Germanic languages accept singular indefinites in such position as seen in (1)-(3), but they differ in the case of plurals. English only accepts bare plural, French only accepts explicit plural indefinite (*des*) and EP accepts, in some restricted cases, a plural indefinite as the examples in (1')-(3') illustrate¹.

- (1) *A bird flies.*
- (2) *Un oiseau vole.*
- (3) *Um pássaro voa.*
- (1') *Birds fly.*
- (2') *Des oiseaux volent.*
- (3') *#Uns pássaros voam.*

In what concerns the distribution of bare nouns in subject preverbal position without modifiers, a contrast between Germanic and Romance languages has been noticed: plural count and mass nouns are grammatical in English as in (4), but not in French (see (5)) and they are quite restricted in Italian, Spanish and EP as shown in (6):

- (4) a. *Students are dancing in the rain.*
b. *Water is good for health.*
- (5) a. **Enfants jouent dans la rue.*
b. **Café se boit chaud.*

¹ It should be noted that EP and Spanish have a plural indefinite form (*uns, unos*), contrasting with other Romance languages in this respect.

- (6) a. *Baleias são mamíferos de grandes dimensões.*
Whales are mammals of big size.
 b. **Baleias são inteligentes.*
Whales are intelligent.
 c. *Água é uma substância essencial à vida.*
Water is a substance essential to life.
 d. *?Água é rara no deserto.*
Water is rare in the desert.

Hence, in general, Romance languages deal with the absence or limited distribution of BNs by resorting (i) to plural indefinite in Spanish and EP (see (7)) or partitive determiners in the case of French (see (8)) for existential readings, and (ii) to the singular or plural definite determiners for generic values, as seen in (9)². In generic contexts plural indefinites seem to be possible in some cases in French (Kleiber, 1981, 2001; Corblin, 1997; Heyd, 2006; Dobrovie-Sorin & Beyssade, 2004), they also seem to be acceptable in some cases in Spanish, having a group interpretation (Laca & Tasmowski-De Ryck, 1996)³ and EP accepts plural bare nouns in some generic contexts (see (10)).

- (7) *Umas crianças bateram à porta.*
'Some' children knocked at the door.
 (8) *Des élèves étaient malades.*
'Some' students be-imp sick.
 (9) a. *A(s) baleia(s) é/são mamífero(s).*
The whale(s) is/are mammal(s).
 b. *La(s) ballena(s) es/son mamífero(s).*
 c. *La/les baleine(s) est/sont un/des mammifère(s).*
 (10) *Turistas adoram viajar.*
Tourists love travelling.

In these languages, except for mass nouns, bare singular arguments are very rare and lexically restricted as seen in (11)-(12)⁴.

- (11) a. **Baleia é mamífero.*
Whale is mammal.
 b. **Ballena es mamífero.*
 c. **Baleine est mammifère.*
 d. **Balena è mamífero.*
 (12) a. **Vimos baleia.*
(We) saw whale.

2 In these contexts Romance languages are distinct from English only in the case of plural definite determiners, as the singular definite determiner is also available for generic readings in English.

3 It should be noted that all but one of the examples suggested by the authors exhibit modified nouns.

4 Brazilian Portuguese is an exception to this generalization (see Müller, 2002; Müller & Oliveira, 2004; Oliveira, 2007; Schmitt & Munn, 1999; Schmitt & Munn, 2002).

- b. **Hemos visto ballena.*
- c. **Nous avons vu baleine.*
- d. **Abbiamo visto balena.*

Carlson (1977), in his seminal work, has shown the importance of predicates for the interpretation of subject DPs and sentences and since then it is rather common to consider their interrelation as elaborated by Chierchia, 1995; Kratzer, 1995; Krifka et al., 1995; Kiss, 1998, among others. So it has been pointed out that the nature of the predicate, that is Individual-level or Stage-level or even Kind-level, and its aspectual value (stative / eventive) (Oliveira & Cunha, 2003) are crucial factors for the distinctions specific / non-specific and generic / existential or habitual readings.

In this paper we will present some of the analogies and discrepancies between indefinites and bare nouns in EP. To do so we first present some main criteria for the distinction of the semantic predications, we then continue with types of predicates and distribution of Indefinites and BNs in EP to conclude with the data analysis allowing us to put forward some conclusions.

1. CRITERIA FOR THE SEMANTIC DISTINCTION OF THE PREDICATIONS

As pointed out previously, the semantic nature of the predicates is relevant for understanding the different behaviour of Indefinites and BNs in subject position. In order to make it clear, we will present briefly in this section some of the most significant criteria to differentiate not only Individual-level and Stage-level predicates but also phase eventualities from non-phase eventualities.

1.1. Individual-level predicates and Stage-level predicates

In EP the distinction between these predicates can be observed in the context of a) durative and locative temporal adverbials; b) quantification over situations; c) the scope of the aspectual operator *passar a*⁵; and d) the contrast between *ser* / *estar*.

Based on these criteria it is possible to distinguish an Individual-level predicate like *ser alto* (*to be tall*) from a Stage-level predicate like *estar doente* (*to be ill*). Although Portuguese, similarly to Spanish, also uses the distinction *ser* / *estar* for this purpose, this is only relevant in the cases the predicates are built with such verbs. Therefore, it is worthwhile to use such criteria in order to see that Individual-level predicates are not acceptable with durative and locative temporal adverbials, as in (13)-(14), whereas Stage-level predicates are adequate in such contexts as shown in (17)-(18). Moreover, Individual-level predicates do not admit quantification over situations, as example (15) illustrate, where it is under the scope of expressions like *sempre que* (*every time*). In this case, Stage-level predicates are perfectly appro-

5 The translation of *passar a* is not easy in English. The most approximate is *to become*.

priate, as seen in (19). The two types of predicates behave also differently in another context but with the opposite relation: Individual-level predicates accept to be under the scope of the aspectual verb *passar a* while Stage-level predicates do not accept such context, as the comparison between (16) and (20) shows. *Passar a* involves a transition to a basic or derived state which, in the latter case, is typically a habitual one.

- (13) **O João foi alto na semana passada.*
[The] John was tall last week.
- (14) **O João foi/era alto às duas da tarde.*
[The] John was/be-Imp tall at 2 o'clock of afternoon.
- (15) **Sempre que o João é alto, joga na equipa de basquetebol.*
Every time [the] John is tall, (he) plays in the team of basketball.
- (16) *O João passou a ser alto (desde que foi para a praia todos os Verões).*
[The] João has become tall (since (he) went to the beach every summer).
- (17) *A Maria esteve doente na semana passada.*
[The] Mary was sick last week.
- (18) *A Maria esteve/estava doente às duas da manhã.*
[The] Mary was/ be-Imp sick at 2 o'clock in the morning.
- (19) *Sempre que a Maria está doente, toma chá de limão com mel.*
Every time [the] Mary is sick, (she) takes lemon tea with honey.
- (20) **A Maria passou a estar doente. (non-habitual reading)*⁶.
[The] Mary has become sick.

1.2. Phase states and non-phase states

According to Cunha (1998, 2004), EP exhibits an interesting distinction between states. This means that some states are always stative, the 'non-phase states', whereas others can occur in contexts that reveal they are close to events, the 'phase states'. This can be shown using criteria based in Dowty (1979) for distinguishing states from events. So, in what follows we present such criteria applying it only to states in order to confirm the above mentioned distinction.

The relevant criteria we use are the following: progressive construction, imperative, agent-oriented adverbials, complement clauses of verbs like *persuadir* (to persuade), habitual reading of present tense and finally the possibility of occurrence in the main sentence of embedded temporal sentences.

It is usually assumed that states do not occur in progressive constructions. But, as the contrast between (21) and (22) shows, some states, the phase ones, may occur in such construction:

⁶ This sentence would be accepted if it was added an expression that would confirm the habitual reading:

A Maria passou a estar doente todos os meses.
Mary has become sick every month.

(21) **O Rui está a ser português.*
 [*The*] *Rui is being portuguese.*

(22) *O Rui está a ser simpático.*
 [*The*] *Rui is being nice.*

In what concerns Imperative, normally only used with events, some states do occur in that construction as seen in (24), in contrast with (23):

(23) **Rui, sê português!*
Rui, be portuguese!

(24) *Rui, sê simpático!*
Rui, be nice!

Agent-oriented adverbials are supposed to combine only with events and they are precluded for states. Nevertheless, such adverbials are allowed in (26) with a phase state:

(25) **O Rui foi propositadamente português.*
 [*The*] *Rui was deliberately portuguese.*

(26) *O Rui foi propositadamente simpático.*
 [*The*] *Rui was deliberately nice.*

Another test usually used for the distinction events / states is the possibility, for events but not for states, of occurrence in complement clauses of verbs like *pedir* (to ask) / *persuadir* (to persuade). As example (28) illustrates, the phase state *ser simpático* (be nice) is allowed in this context whereas the non-phase state *ser português* (be portuguese) is not:

(27) **A Maria pediu ao Rui para ser português.*
 [*The*] *Mary asked [to] Rui to be Portuguese.*

(28) *A Maria pediu ao Rui para ser simpático.*
 [*The*] *Mary asked [to] Rui to be nice.*

The habitual reading of Present tense only takes place with events. Using the co-occurrence with *habitualmente* (habitually) as a way to test such generalization, we see that a phase state (see (30)) is possible in such context:

(29) **O Rui é habitualmente português.*
 [*The*] *Rui is usually portuguese.*

(30) *O Rui é habitualmente simpático.*
 [*The*] *Rui is usually nice.*

Finally, only phase states, like events, can occur in the main sentence of embedded temporal sentences. Here, again, the example (32) shows that a phase state is perfectly accepted:

(31) **Quando nasceu, o Rui foi português.*
When (he) was born, [the] Rui was Portuguese.

(32) *Quando encontrou a Maria, o Rui foi simpático.*
When (he) met Maria, [the] Rui was nice.

The above distinction between phase and non-phase states based on criteria used to distinguish events from states fully demonstrates such distinction is justifiable. Moreover, it also shows that phase states do behave, in some contexts, closer to events than to states.

2. TYPES OF PREDICATES AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF INDEFINITES IN EP

In this section we combine the different predicates and the aspectual distinction between events, phase states and non-phase states with indefinites in subject position in order to establish what are the fundamental possibilities and restrictions of co-occurrence.

2.1. Kind-level predicates

In the context of Kind-level predicates, singular and plural indefinites are only allowed in a taxonomic reading as shown in (33a, b). A definition context is also possible but only for singular indefinite as the contrast (33c)-(33d) shows:

- (33) a. *Uma baleia está extinta.*
A whale is extinct.
b. *Umas baleias estão extintas.*
'Some' whales are extinct.
c. *Uma baleia é uma espécie em vias de extinção.*
A whale is a species about to be extinct.
d. **Umas baleias são uma espécie em vias de extinção.*
'Some' whales are a species about to be extinct.

2.2. Non-phase Individual-level predicates

Combined with these predicates, singular and plural indefinites are only allowed in existential reading for the singular indefinite or group reading for the plural one admitting, in the latter case, a possible contrast with another group (see (34a-b)). Interestingly, a singular indefinite is possible in a generic context as in (34c), but not a plural indefinite (34d).

- (34) a. (?) *Uma criança é alta.*
A child is tall.
b. (?) *Umas crianças são altas.*
'Some' children are tall.
c. *Uma criança é alta quando / se os pais são altos.*
A child is tall whenever / if the parents are tall.
d. **Umas crianças são altas quando os pais são altos.*
'Some' children are tall when the parents are tall.

2.3. Phase Individual-level predicates

In this context, singular and plural indefinites are allowed in existential or group reading as in (35a-b). But in generic contexts singular and plural indefinites behave differently: the singular is allowed (see (35c-d)) but not the plural (see (35e-f)). Nevertheless even in the case of singular indefinites, (35c) and (35d) do not have the same interpretation. In the first case we get a generic reading based on a restriction to some situations and in the second case, we get another reading on the basis of a phase predicate like *ser sim-*

pático (be nice) which can be paraphrased by “every time a child behaves in a nice way”:

- (35) a. *Uma criança é simpática.*
A child is nice.
 b. *Umas crianças são simpáticas.*
‘Some’ children are nice.
 c. *Uma criança é simpática quando/se está feliz.*
A child is nice when / if (she) is happy.
 d. *Sempre que uma criança é simpática os pais ficam felizes.*
Every time a child is nice (her) parents are happy.
 e. *??Umas crianças são simpáticas quando estão felizes.*
‘Some’ children are nice when (they) are happy.
 f. *??Sempre que umas crianças são simpáticas os pais ficam felizes.*
Every time ‘some’ children are nice their parents are happy.

2.4. Stage-level predicates

These predicates can be stative or eventive. The stative ones can also be, like the individual level predicates, non-phase and phase predicates. In what follows, we first present the stative predicates followed by the eventive ones.

2.4.1. Stative non-phase predicates

Singular and plural indefinites in subject position are only allowed with an existential reading as the examples (36a) and (36b) show:

- (36) a. *Uma criança tem 40° de febre.*
A child has 40° of fever.
 b. *Umas crianças têm 40° de febre.*
Some children have 40° of fever.

2.4.2. Stative phase predicates

Combined with stative phase predicates singular and plural indefinites behave differently. They are both acceptable in a non habitual (episodic) context as seen in (37a-37b) but in habitual contexts only the singular indefinite is allowed (see (37c-d)):

- (37) a. *Um turista detestou a viagem.*
A tourist hated the trip.
 b. *Uns turistas detestaram a viagem.*
‘Some’ tourists hated the trip.
 c. *Um turista adora viajar (sempre que tem tempo).*
A tourist loves travelling (whenever (he) has time).
 d. *??/*Uns turistas adoram viajar (sempre que têm tempo).*
‘Some’ tourist love travelling (whenever (they) have time).

2.4.3. Event predicates

Depending on several factors, among which the tense of the sentence, an episodic reading or a habitual reading is available for event predicates. The latter reading is favored by the simple present tense in EP, similarly to other languages like English.

So, in episodic contexts, both singular and plural indefinites are allowed in an existential reading as examples (38)-(39) illustrate:

- (38) a. *Um elefante invadiu o campo.*
An elephant invaded the field.
 b. *Um professor trabalhou muito.*
A teacher worked a lot.
 c. *Uma mulher discutiu política.*
A woman discussed politics.
- (39) a. *Uns elefantes invadiram os campos.*
'Some' elephants invaded the fields.
 b. *Uns professores trabalharam muito.*
'Some' teachers worked a lot.
 c. *Umas mulheres discutiram política.*
'Some' women discussed politics.

On the contrary, in habitual contexts two readings are possible: the predicate *invadir os campos* (*invade the fields*) induces preferably an existential reading but the predicate *discutir política* (*discuss politics*) only allows a generic reading. In the later case only the singular is allowed as the contrast between (41a) and (41b) shows:

- (40) a. *Um elefante invade os campos todos os anos.*
An elephant invades the fields every year.
 b. *Uma mulher discute política (raramente).*
A woman discusses politics (rarely).
- (41) a. *Uns elefantes invadem os campos todos os anos.*
'Some' elephants invade the fields every year.
 b. *??Umas mulheres discutem política raramente.*
'Some' women discuss politics rarely.

3. TYPES OF PREDICATES AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF BARE NOUNS IN EP

In this section we will pursue the same general plan as in the previous one. We will present the possibilities of combination of BNs with different types of predicates in EP, starting with Kind-level predicates, followed by Individual-level and Stage-level predicates.

3.1. Kind-level predicates

Singular and plural BNs are generally disallowed in the context of Kind-level predicates, although some EP speakers accept them in definition contexts:

- (42) **?Baleia é uma espécie em vias de extinção.*
Whale is a species about to be extinct.
- (43) **?Baleias são uma espécie em vias de extinção.*
Whale are a species about to be extinct.
- (44) **Baleia está extinta.*
Whale is extinct.
- (45) **!/?Elefantes estão extintos.*
Elephants are extinct.

3.2. Non-phase individual level predicates

The combination of BNs with non-phase individual level predicates is not possible (see (46)-(47)), contrary to what happens to DPs with a lexical D (definite plural / indefinite singular) (see 48), where kind and characterizing readings are available (see Oliveira et al., 2006):

- (46) **Arranha céus é alto.*
Skyscraper is high.
- (47) **Arranha céus são altos.*
Skyscrapers are high.
- (48) *Os arranha céus são altos.*
The skyscrapers are high.
- (49) *Um arranha céus é um edifício alto.*
A skyscraper is a high building.

3.3. Phase individual-level predicates

What was said about non-phase individual level predicates is also the case for BNs combining with phase individual-level predicates: they are not possible, contrary to what happens to DPs with a lexical definite D, where kind, existential and characterizing readings are available (cf. Oliveira et al., 2006; Oliveira, 2004):

- (50) **Criança é inteligente.*
Child is intelligent.
- (51) **?Crianças são inteligentes.*
Children are intelligent.

3.4. Stage level predicates

As mentioned before, in this section we make a distinction between stative and non stative predicates, taking into account the distinction non-phase and phase states and, for events, the distinction between episodic and habitual readings.

3.4.1. Stative non-phase predicates

These predicates exclude BNs as the following examples show:

- (52) **Criança tem 40° de febre.*
Child has 40° of fever.

- (53) **Crianças têm 40° de febre.*
Children have 40° of fever.

3.4.2. Stative phase predicates

BNs are not allowed with stative non-phase predicates (see (54)-(55)), unless they are under the scope of a habituality operator, as in (56)-(57). This operator is supplied by the phase state in the simple present tense, which seems to operate the same way it does for events and supporting the distinction made previously for phase and non-phase states (see section 2.2 above). So, in these habitual contexts, a characterizing reading is obtained:

- (54) **Turistas detestaram a viagem.*
Tourists hated the trip.
 (55) **Turista detestou a viagem.*
Tourist hated the trip.
 (56) *Turistas adoram viajar.*
Tourists love travelling.
 (57) *Turista adora viajar.*
Tourist loves traveling.

3.4.3. Event predicates

In episodic contexts singular BNs are not allowed in EP as examples (58)-(60) clearly show. However, plural BNs are possible displaying an existential reading, as shown in (61)-(63). In habituality contexts only plural BNs are allowed, exhibiting two possible readings: an existential one and a generic one as in (64)-(65) respectively⁷:

- (58) **Elefante invadiu o campo.*
Elephant invaded the field.
 (59) **Professor trabalhou muito.*
Teacher worked a lot.
 (60) **Mulher discutiu política.*
Woman discussed politics.
 (61) *Elefantes invadiram os campos.*
Elephants invaded the fields.
 (62) *Professores trabalharam muito.*
Teachers worked a lot.
 (63) *Mulheres discutiram política.*
Women discussed politics.
 (64) *Elefantes invadem os campos todos os anos.*
Elephants invade the fields every year.
 (65) *Mulheres discutem política raramente.*
Women discuss politics rarely.

⁷ It should be noted that singular BNs are possible in habitual contexts in very rare cases like news headlines.

3.5. Summary of the data description

In the following table, we summarize the distribution of BNs and Indefinites in preverbal subject position in EP⁸.

	Predicate	BS	IS
Singular	Kind level (Uma) baleia está extinta	*	OK ♦
	Non Phase I-level (Uma) criança é alta	*	EX//#
	Phase I-level (Uma) criança é inteligente	*	EX//#
	Non Phase S- level (stative) (Uma) criança tem 40° de febre	*	EX//#
	Phase S-level (state, habituality) (Um) turista adora viajar	OK	EX//#
	Event (Episodic) (Um) elefante invadiu o campo	*	EX
	Event (habituality) (Um) elefante invade o campo todos os anos	*	EX
	Plural	Kind level (Uns) elefantes estão extintos	*
Phase and non-phase [i-level] (Uns) elefantes são inteligentes (Umas) crianças são altas		*	EX//*
Non Phase S- level (stative) (Umas) crianças têm 40° de febre		*	EX//*
Phase S-level (state, habituality) (Uns) turistas adoram viajar		OK	*//EX?
Event (Episodic) (Uns) elefantes invadiram o campo		EX	EX
Event (habituality) (Uns) elefantes invadem o campo todos os anos		EX	EX

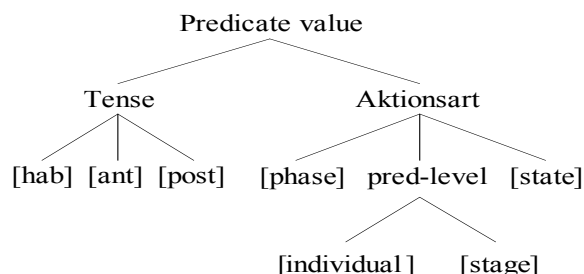
Table 1: summary of the data description

4. THE COMBINATION OF PREDICATE VALUE AND SUBJECT VALUE

In this section, we discuss the data taking into account the relation established between predicate values and subject values for Indefinites and Bare Nouns.

Based on Oliveira et al. (2006) where it is assumed that the relevant readings of BNs are obtained by the combination of *Aktionsart* and *Tense* features with the higher node features of the BNs, we will extend this to indefinites in subject position. So, we first take the feature geometry proposed in Oliveira et al. (2006) displayed below:

⁸ 'BS' should be read as 'bare subject' and 'IS' as 'indefinite subject. '#' is used for 'possible in generic context' and ♦ for 'taxonomic reading'.



This feature geometry allows a lexical characterization of predicates based on an *Aktionsart* classification according to some main distinctive features as described in section 2 above (see (66)-(71)), and it also accounts for the present tense, ‘*imperfecto*’ and past tense as shown in (72)-(74):

- (66) kind-level, e.g. (*estar*) *extinto* [to be extinct]: [+ state], [- ind], [- stage]
- (67) individual-level non-phase, e.g., (*ser*) *alto* [to be tall]: [+ state], [+ ind], [-stage], [- phas]
- (68) individual-level phase, e.g., (*ser*) *simpático* [to be nice]: [+ state], [+ ind], [- stage], [+ phas]
- (69) stage-level state non-phase, e.g., (*estar*) *avariado* [to be broken]: [+ state], [- ind], [+ stage], [- phas]
- (70) stage-level state phase, e.g., *gostar* [to like]: [+ state], [- ind], [+ stage], [+phas]
- (71) stage-level event, e.g., *ler* [to read]: [- state], [- ind], [+ stage]
- (72) *present tense*: [+ hab], [- ant], [post]
- (73) *past tense*: [hab], [+ ant]
- (74) *imperfecto (tense value)*: [+ hab], [+ ant]

Based on Duarte et al. (2002) and Oliveira et al. (2006), we will try to relate predicate and subject values in order to account for the properties of the BNs and indefinites preverbal subjects.

The combination of predicate value and subject value displayed in table 2 allows the comparison between BNs and Indefinites and their respective interpretations in similar contexts. It is quite clear that they do not behave the same way not only in what concerns their possible occurrence but also their possible interpretations:

Reading	subject value//predicate value	BS	IS
generic characterizing	subject: [-plural], [+count], [specific] predicate: [+state], [+stage], [+phase], [+habitual] (Um) turista adora viajar	OK	OK Gen
	subject: [-plural], [+count], [specific] predicate: [-state], [+stage], [+phase], [+habitual] (Uma) mulher discute política	*	OK Gen
	subject: [-plural], [+count], [specific] predicate: [+state], [-stage], [+phase] (Uma) criança é inteligente	*	OK Gen
	subject: [+plural], [+count], [specific] predicate: [+state], [-stage], [-phase] (Umas) crianças têm cara de anjinho	*	OK *Gen
	subject: [+plural], [+count], [specific] predicate: [+state], [-stage], [+phase] (Uns) elefantes são inteligentes	*	OK *Gen
	subject: [+plural], [+count], [specific] predicate: [+state], [+stage], [+phase], [+habitual] (Uns) turistas adoram viajar	OK	OK *Gen
kind	subject: [+plural], [+count], [specific] predicate: [+state], [-stage] (Uns) elefantes estão extintos	*//?	OK♦
existential (habitual)	subject: [+plural], [+count], [specific] predicate: [-state], [+stage], [+habitual] (Uns) elefantes invadem os campos todos os anos	OK	OK
existential (episodic)	subject: [+plural], [+count], [specific] predicate: [-state], [+stage], [+anterior] (Uns) elefantes invadiram os campos de arroz	OK	OK

Table 2: combination of subject value and predicate value

From the observation of the above table some comments can be drawn. In the first place it should be noted that, when the subject value is [+plural] and the predicate value is [-state], [+stage], the positive value for [specific] is assigned and the existential reading is obtained, as the examples (77)-(78) show:

- (77) *Elefantes invadem os campos todos os anos.*
Elephants invade the fields every year.
- (77') *Uns elefantes invadem os campos todos os anos.*
'Some' elephants invade the fields every year.
- (78) *Elefantes invadiram os campos de arroz.*
Elephants invaded the fields of rice.

- (78') *Uns elefantes invadiram os campos de arroz.*
 'Some' elephants invaded the fields of rice.

Secondly, when the subject value is [-plural] and the predicate value is [-state], [+stage], the positive value for [specific] is assigned and the existential reading is obtained for indefinites, as (79)-(79') illustrate:

- (79) *Um elefante invadiu o campo.*
 An elephant invaded the field.
 (79') *Um elefante invade os campos todos os anos.*
 An elephant invades the fields every year.

Thirdly, the negative value for [specific] is assigned in two situations. First, when the predicate value is [+stage], [+phase], [+habitual], as in (80)-(82). However, plural indefinites do not get this reading. And secondly when the subject value is [-plural] and the predicate value is [+state] together with some sentence inducing habituality (when / if clause) for indefinites as (83)-(85) illustrate:

- (80) *Turista adora viajar.*
 Tourist loves travelling.
 (81) *Um turista adora viajar.*
 A tourist loves travelling.
 (82) *Turistas adoram viajar.*
 Tourists love travelling.
 (83) *Uma criança é alta quando os pais são altos.*
 A child is tall when the parents are tall.
 (84) *Uma criança é simpática quando está feliz.*
 A child is nice when (she) is happy.
 (85) *Uma criança tem 40° de febre quando tem pneumonia.*
 A child has 40° of fever when (she) has pneumonia.

CONCLUSION

The data presented above lead us to some final remarks in what concerns the main differences between Indefinites and BNs in subject position. In the first place, singular bare nouns are not allowed except in Stage-level predicates which are phase states in a habituality context (see (86)-(87)); singular indefinites are allowed in existential or generic reading in generic contexts (see (88)). Secondly, plural BNs are only possible with existential reading or with Stage-level predicates which are phase states in a habituality reading (see (89)-(90)), but plural indefinites are always existential, as shown in (91)-(92):

- (86) **Criança é inteligente.*
 Child is intelligent.
 (87) *Turista adora viajar.*
 Tourist loves travelling.

- (88) *Uma criança é alta quando os pais são altos.*
A child is tall when the parents are tall.
- (89) *Elefantes invadem os campos todos os anos.*
Elephants invade the fields every year.
- (90) *Turistas adoram viajar.*
Tourists love travelling.
- (91) *Uns elefantes invadem os campos todos os anos.*
'Some' elephants invade the fields every year.
- (92) *Umhas crianças têm 40° de febre.*
'Some' children have 40° of fever.

Indefinites also behave differently according to number. Singular indefinites occur in characterizing sentences and they are sensitive to basic and derived states getting an existential reading with events (see (93)-(94)). Plural indefinites have only an existential reading and they are not fully acceptable in habitual contexts (see (95)-(96)):

- (93) *Um turista adora viajar.*
A tourist loves travelling.
- (94) *Um elefante invade o campo todos os anos.*
An elephant invades the field every year.
- (95) *Uns elefantes invadem o campo todos os anos.*
'Some' elephants invade the field every year.
- (96) *??Uns turistas adoram viajar.*
'Some' tourists love travelling.

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