On determined personal names in Chilean Spanish

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October 9, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Human-denoting proper names, AKA *anthroponyms* or *personal names*, are definite NPs. As such, they generally do not combine with *definite articles*.

(1)   (*The) Cosmo came early.   *English*

(2)   (*ha)-Yahweh, (*ha)-David, (*ha)-Yaʾakov
        the-Yahweh   the-David   the-Jacob
      'Yahweh, David, Jacob'   *Hebrew (Gesenius 1909: §125.2)*

INTRODUCTION

However, some languages require *definite articles* to combine with otherwise bare personal names.

(3) Érchetai *(o) Dimítris
     comes   the Dimitris
     'Dimitris comes.'

(4) *(I) Rómi íne i   protiévousa *(tis) Italias
       the Rome is the capital   the Italy
     'Rome is the capital of Italy.'

Modern Greek (Guardiano 2011: 192)

Crosslinguistically, personal names require determiners when modified by adjectives or (restrictive) relative clauses (Matushansky 2006), e.g,, (5).

(5) This is not *(the) Elizabeth I know.   *English*

I will not discuss these cases here and will focus on patterns such as (3). Similar considerations apply to plural uses of personal names, e.g., *the Johns*.

Introduction

A third type of language optionally licenses *determined personal names*.

(6) (O) João saiu cedo.
the João left early
'João left early'.   *Brazilian Portuguese (Sedrins 2017: 240)*

"In Dutch (Flemish) dialects the article *de* 'the' is used [...] to express familiarity with respect to the name bearer" (Van Langendonck 2007: 158).

(7) Wette gelle nog da   we de Jan op de met   emme gezien?
Know you   still that we the Jan on the market once   saw
'Do you still remember that we have seen Jan in the market?'
Brabant Flemish (Schmuck 2020: 164)

INTRODUCTION

The combination of definite article and personal name is also optionally attested in several Spanish varieties.

(8) (La) Candela le   habló al/a   José.
    the Candela 3SG.DAT spoke to.the/to José
    'Candela talked to José.'

This is a Panhispanic pattern that has been observed in the (mostly substandard) speech of many countries. The following is a non-exhaustive list.

- ➡ Argentina (e.g., Vidal de Battini 1964)
- ➡ Chile (e.g., Oroz 1966)
- ➡ Costa Rica (e.g., Agüero 1962)
- ➡ Ecuador (e.g., Toscano Mateus 1953)
- ➡ Dominican Republic (e.g., Henríquez Ureña 1940)
- ➡ Perú (e.g., Kany 1945)
- ➡ Spain (e.g., Calderón Campos 2015)

INTRODUCTION

Determined personal names are typically associated to *expressive interpretations* in Spanish. To name a few examples from the literature.

- ✔ Vidal de Battini (1964) assigns them a *pejorative meaning* in the Spanish variety spoken in San Luis (Argentina).
- ✔ Authors like Saab (2021) and Aguilar-Guevara & Oggiani (2023) maintain that the pattern in Rioplatense Spanish expresses *familiarity*, *affective proximity* or *interpersonal proximity*.
- ✔ According to De Mello (1992), in most varieties, the pattern denotes a certain *affection* or *familiarity*, or represents a basically neutral stance on the part of the speaker.
- ✔ In Colloquial Old Spanish, the pattern expresses different nuances of *closeness* and *subjective evaluation* (Calderón Campos 2015).
- ✔ In Mexican Spanish, the construction expresses *negative attitudes* towards the referent in *"emotionally charged contexts"* (Christodulelis 2016, 2017, *apud* Tieperman 2020: 11–12).

Introduction

In this presentation I will show that determined personal names do not differ in meaning from bare personal names in Chilean Spanish.

- ➤ The determiner introduces no expressive or discourse-related interpretation in the variety.
- ➤ The alternation is purely formal, and obeys syntactic factors.

We will see the latter conclusion emerging from:

- ✔ *quantitative differences* in the use of determined personal names in different varieties,
- ✔ the rejection of the thesis that determined personal names are *anaphoric expressions* or *expressivity markers* in Chilean Spanish, and
- ✔ the analysis of *nominal placeholders* in Rioplatense and Chilean Spanish.

The phenomenon in Chilean Spanish

Chilean Spanish admits personal names with definite determiners in any argument position.

(9) El Vicente llegó temprano.
the Vicente arrived early
'Vicente arrived early.'

(10) La Carorolina saludó al Vicente.
the Carolina greeted DOM.the Vicente
'Carolina greeted Vicente.'

(11) Le dimos la tarjeta al Vicente
3SG.DAT gave the card DAT.the Vicente
'We gave the card to Vicente.'

(12) Confiamos en el Vicente.
trust in the Vicente
'We trust in Vicente.'

The phenomenon in Chilean Spanish

The pattern is attested with given names, e.g., (8) to (12), surnames, e.g., (13), a combination of both, e.g., (14), shortenings, e.g., (15) and nicknames, e.g., (16).

(13) El Milei está más loco que la cresta.
     the Milei is   more crazy that the crest
     'Milei is crazy as hell.'

(14) Ese weón de ahí   es el Cristián González.
     that dud of there is the Cristián González
     'That dude over there is Cristián González.'

(15) ¡Llamemos a   la Vicky!
      call   DOM the Vicky
     'Let's call Vicky!'

(16) El Care'Churrasco se había quemado la cara con una línea de vapor
     the face.of.beef   SE had   burned the face with a line of steam
     a presión.
     to pressure
     'Beef-Face burned his face with a line of high-pressure steam.'

The phenomenon in Chilean Spanish

There are two contexts in which personal names reject overt determination: when used as *vocatives*, e.g., (17), and in so-called *naming contexts*, e.g., (18).

(17) (*La) Ana, acuérdate de cerrar la   puerta.
              Ana remember of close the door
      'Ana, remember closing the door.'

(18) Yo me   llamo (*la) Ana.
      I   REFL.1SG call   the Ana
      'I am called Ana.'

The same restrictions are attested in Modern Greek and other languages.

(19) O   Yanis vaftistike   (*o) Petros.
      the Yanis baptize.PASS   the Petros
      'Yani was baptized Petro.'

Modern Greek (Matushansky 2006: 286)

(20) (*I) Maria, na grafis   prosektika.
       the Maria NA write.2SG carefully
      'Maria, write carefully.'

Modern Greek (Stavrou 2014: 332)

The phenomenon in Chilean Spanish

In most Spanish varieties, the pattern is considered *substandard*: it is typically associated with country-side speech or slang.

➡ This is not true for Chilean Spanish.

Consider the following observation by Oroz (1966: 371).

> *El empleo del artículo con nombres propios no se limita en Chile al habla rústica y vulgar, sino que se puede considerar casi como norma general. Su omisión suena a cursilería, tratándose de nombres femeninos; de ahí que se diga, por ejemplo: 'llame a la Juanita'; en cambio, los nombres propios masculinos se usan luego con artículo, luego sin él, como ya señaló L. Cifuentes (o. c., p. 397); en Cura-Cautín, por ejemplo: la Rosa, la Filomena; el Lucho; el Edgar; en los sobrenombres, el empleo es de rigor: 'el Guatón', etc.*

The phenomenon in Chilean Spanish

luis felipe ventura @infraxp · 12 mar.
Hola @RAEinforma #dudaRAE es posible o correcto llamar a las personas de la siguiente manera? "La Gabriela, El Christian, La Natalia, El Pablo" o se considera inapropiado y/o déspota? Gracias 😊

💬 3   🔁 10   ♡ 69   ◫ 58,1 mil   ⬆

RAE ✔
@RAEinforma

En respuesta a @infraxp

#RAEconsultas Salvo en el español de Chile y entre hispanohablantes catalanes, el uso de artículo ante nombres propios de persona se considera vulgar. Los nombres de pila se usan, en el español general culto, sin artículo.

5:54 a. m. · 13 mar. 2023 · **70,3 mil** Reproducciones

106 Retweets   **78** Tweets citados   **750** Me gusta

Quantitative data

There are several quantitative studies focusing on the frequency of the phenomenon in different Spanish varieties.

➥ As we will see, their results suggest that the phenomenon in Chilean Spanish has a structural motivation.

De Mello (1992) measured the frequency of the pattern with educated speakers of Spanish in ten cities. From 135 instances of the construction...

City	Examples	City	Examples
La Habana	0	Sevilla	0
Lima	0	C. de México	0
Bogota	1	San Juan	1
Madrid	3	Buenos Aires	15
Caracas	17	Santiago	98

Quantitative data

As mentioned, Chilean Spanish exhibits the pattern with different types of proper names. De Mello's sample shows that other varieties are more selective.

Ciudad	Pila	Dimin.	Apodo	Apellido	Completo
Bogotá	0	0	0	0	1
Bs. Aires	1	0	10	2	2
Caracas	6	0	0	8	3
La Habana	0	0	0	0	0
Lima	0	0	0	0	0
Madrid	2	0	0	1	0
C. de México	0	0	0	0	0
San Juan	0	0	0	1	0
Santiago	53	11	15	3	16
Sevilla	0	0	0	0	0
Total	62	11	25	15	22

Quantitative data

De Mello (1992) reports an asymmetry between male and female-referring proper names: the pattern seems to be much more frequent with the latter.

Ciudad	Mujer	Hombre
Bogotá	0	1
Bs. Aires	10	5
Caracas	3	14
La Habana	0	0
Lima	0	0
Madrid	0	3
C. de México	0	0
San Juan	1	0
Santiago	90	8
Sevilla	0	0
Total	104 (77%)	31 (23%)

This type of tendency is also attested in other languages, e.g., Flemish shows a preference for male-referring proper names (Van Langendonck 2007).

Quantitative data

Tieperman (2018) analyzed several episodes of the Chilean TV show *Casado con hijos*.

- ✔ She counted 746 instances of human-referring proper names.
- ✔ The definite article was realized 54.6% of the time.
- ✔ The gender of the referent was a significant predictor of the pattern.
    - – Female referents (e.g., *La Laura*) favor its use more than male referents (e.g., *El Pablo*).

Quantitative data

Tieperman (2020) studied the factors governing the pattern in speakers from Santiago, Mexico City, and Granada. She used the PRESEEA Corpus.
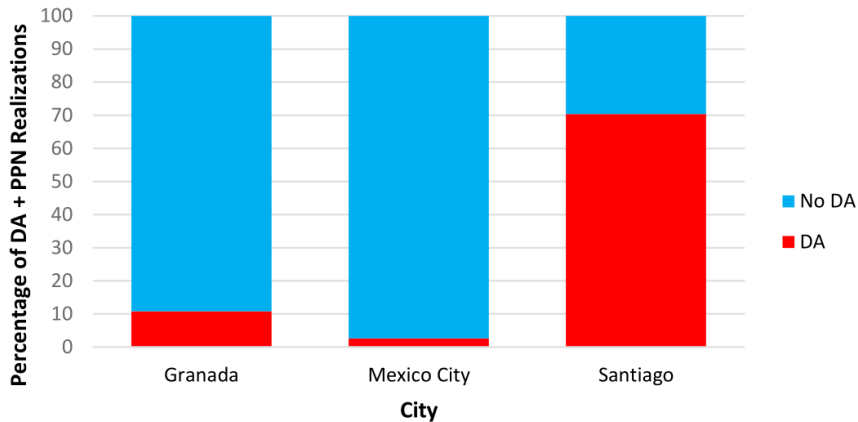
The main predictor for the pattern was once again the gender of the referent.

Santiago: Main Effect of Referent Gender for DA + PPN Realizations

Quantitative data
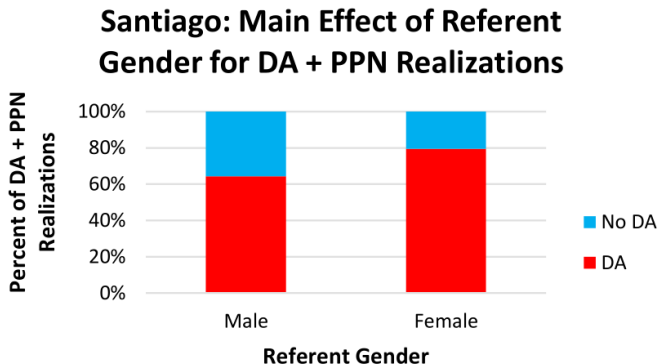
This contrasts with the distribution of the phenomenon in Granada, whose best predictor is social class: upper class participants did not produce the pattern.

City	Lower	Middle	Upper
Santiago	68.1	74.9	53.8
Granada	17.9	19	0
Mexico City	4.2	4.3	1.6

Anaphoric resource

Unlike Modern Greek, Classical Greek exhibited optionality in the presence of definite determiner with personal names.

(21) oupou ēn   ho Iōannēs baptizōn
      where was the John   baptizing
      'Where John was baptizing.'

(22) kai emarturēsen Iōannēs legōn hoti
      and testified   John   saying that
      'And John testified, saying that...'

Classical Greek (Guardiano 2011: 191)

There is a traditional (although imperfect) explanation for the distribution of these forms.

Insofar as a consensus among Greek grammarians exists, it is that names of persons normally are not preceded by the article (they are anarthrous), but may be preceded by the article (be arthrous) if the reference is anaphoric. However, Winer (1882: 140) considers that, in fact, the use of the article with proper names "can hardly be reduced to any rule".

(Levinsohn 1991: 91)

Anaphoric resource

According to this hypothesis, the definite article is basically a cohesion marker, i.e., an element that connects distinct parts of a text.

➤ Its presence would allow to distinguish between the first and subsequent mentions of a certain human referent.

Levinsohn (1991: 93) illustrates the pattern with the references to proconsul *Gallio* in Acts 18: 12, 14, 17.

Verse	subject	non-subject	summary of contents
v12	∅ Gallio		was proconsul
	the Jews	the Paul	attacked
v14	the Paul		was about to speak
	the Gallio	the Jews	said to
v16	all	∅ Sosthenes	turned on
		the Gallio	nothing mattered to

ANAPHORIC RESOURCE

Calderón Campos (2015) argues for a similar analysis of determined personal names in (Old) Spanish data taken from CORDE.

➥ He contends that in historical prose and witness statements, the pattern has an anaphoric value, equivalent to *el dicho* 'the said'.

➥ However, in literary texts that imitate spoken language, the colloquial use of the structure is reflected, with different nuances of "closeness" and subjective evaluation.

Consider the following example taken from Calderón Campos (2015: 81); it is dated around 1540–1550 AC.

(23)   envió a uno, llamado Juan, a África, contra los sarracenos [...] y habida victoria
       d'ellos, dexó el Juan su exército en la mejor manera que pudo.
       'He sent one, named Juan, to Africa, against the Saracens [...] and having
       obtained victory over them, Juan left his army in the best way he could.'

Notice that the first mention of *Juan* is in a naming context, so it arguably would not accept the presence of the definite determiner *el*.

ANAPHORIC RESOURCE

The same observation applies to other examples of chronicles provided by Calderón Campos (2015): the first mention of the name is in a naming context.

➥ This invalidates these pieces of evidence, as the first personal name is determinerless arguably for reasons other than introducing a new referent.

The problem can be seen in the following example, dated from 1535–1537.

(24) y se abrazaron e besaron muchas veces [..] porque eran muy amigos de antes, y
      por la novedad del caso y por el remedio deste cristiano, el cual se llamaba
      Francisco Martín, y era uno de los que se perdieron con el capitán Íñigo de
      Vascuña [...] y llegados al pueblo, no hallaron a nadie en él: que habían los
      indios huido al arcabuco o monte. Y el Francisco Martín los fue a llamar.
      'And they embraced and kissed each other many times [...] because they were
      very good friends from before, and because of the novelty of the situation and
      the remedy of this Christian, who was named Francisco Martín, and was one of
      those who got lost with Captain Íñigo de Vascuña [...] and when they arrived at
      the village, they found no one in it: the Indians had fled to the thicket or
      mountain. And Francisco Martín called them.'

ANAPHORIC RESOURCE

The examples of witness statements provided by Calderón Campos (2015) do not suffer the same issue. The following example is from 1717.

(25)   A la segunda pregunta dijo [...] que [...] viniendo [...] un mozo con un jumento cargado con yerba, le habían venido siguiendo por dicha calle Miguel Barranco y Francisco Ruiz, portero y ministro de esta dicha ciudad [...] por desirse llevaba una bayoneta. El dicho don Antonio Rodríguez había llegado a dicho alboroto y pedido a dichos ministros soltasen a el referido hombre [...] y que aunque el Francisco Ruiz le había obedecido, el Miguel Barranco no había querido soltarlo. 'To the second question, he said [...] that [...] coming [...] a young man with a donkey loaded with grass, Miguel Barranco and Francisco Ruiz, the doorkeeper and minister of this city, had been following him down that street [...] because he was carrying a bayonet. The aforementioned Don Antonio Rodríguez had arrived at this commotion and asked the ministers to release the referred man [...] and that although Francisco Ruiz had obeyed him, Miguel Barranco did not want to let him go.'

ANAPHORIC RESOURCE

This final example is from 1797.

(26) Por las preguntas siguientes, serán examinados los testigos que se presentasen
por parte de Josef, Gaspar y Nicolás Rodríguez [...] en los autos que siguen [...]
con Thomás y Manuel Tortosa, de la propia vecindad, sobre haber estos
supuesto que aquellos maltrataron de obra y de palabra a el Thomás y su mujer.
'By the following questions, the witnesses presented on behalf of Josef, Gaspar,
and Nicolás Rodríguez will be examined [...] in the proceedings that they are
pursuing [...] against Thomás and Manuel Tortosa, of the same town,
concerning the allegation that the latter claimed the former mistreated Thomás
and his wife both physically and verbally.'

Could it be the case that determined personal names in Chilean Spanish work in a
similar fashion?

➡ Perhaps the logic of *thematic progressions* (Daneš 1970) can explain why
Chilean Spanish speakers produce the pattern so often.

Anaphoric resource

In principle, if determined personal names are anaphoric, then they should not be able to function as sentence *foci*.

➥ *Foci* are, by definition, non-anaphoric constituents.

This prediction is not borne out for Chilean Spanish. For instance, the sentence in (27) shows that the pattern can appear in a broad focus sentence.

(27) A: ¿Qué pasó?
       what happened
       'What happened?'

   B: El Carlos llamó a los pacos.
      the Carlos called DOM the cops
      'Carlos called the cops.'

Anaphoric resource

The same happens in narrow focus contexts, like fragment answers.

(28) [*Ding dong*]
    A: ¿Quién es?
       who   is
       'Who is it?'
    B: El Carlos.
       the Carlos.
       'Carlos.'

A determined personal name can even function as the subject of a cleft-sentence, a syntactic slot that is reserved for focal constituents.

(29) A: ¿Quién compró el auto de la Bea?
      who   bought the car of the Bea
      'Who bought Bea's car?'
    B: Fue el Carlos el que compró el auto de la Bea.
      was the Carlos the that bought the car of the Bea
      'It was Carlos who bought Bea's car.'

ANAPHORIC RESOURCE

Chilean Spanish speakers also admits an "inverted pattern", in which the *determined personal name* precedes its bare counterpart.

(30) ¿Y por qué no llamamos al Gonzalo? Erika siempre dice que Gonzalo sabe arreglar computadores.
'Why don't we call Gonzalo? Erika always says that Gonzalo knows how to fix computers.'

(31) Abrí la puerta y el único que estaba ahí era el Gonzalo. Me puse a hablar con él y le dije que teníamos que guardar todo al tiro. El problema fue que Gonzalo es más lento que la chucha para hacer cualquier weá; por eso te dije que no me gusta que me asignen a Gonzalo en mi grupo.
'I opened the door, and the only one there was Gonzalo. I started talking to him and told him that we needed to put everything away right away. The problem was that Gonzalo is slow as hell at doing anything; that's why I told you I don't like being assigned to a group with Gonzalo.'

In short, *determined personal names* in Chilean Spanish do not seem to function as anaphoric devices.

Marker of expressive content

Let's consider the possibility that *determined personal names* in Chilean Spanish convey some form of *expressive meaning*.

➡ We will use Rioplatense Spanish as a control case.

As discussed, the pattern in Rioplatense Spanish and other dialects exhibits *interpersonal proximity* (either positive or negative) towards the referent.

(32) María vino a mi fiesta.
      María came to my party.
      'María came to my party.'

(33) La María vino a mi fiesta.
      the María came to my party.
      'The María (with whom I have a close bond) came to my party.'
                              Rioplatense Spanish (Aguilar-Guevara & Oggiani 2023)

MARKER OF EXPRESSIVE CONTENT

Aguilar-Guevara & Oggiani (2023) show that the pattern systematically receives this interpretation by showing that it becomes *infelicitous* in certain contexts.

➤ These are scenarios in which the speaker declares not knowing the referent of the proper name.

➤ You cannot express *interpersonal proximity* towards someone you have not met for long enough!

Consider the following examples from Rioplatense, all taken from Aguilar-Guevara & Oggiani (2023).

(34) Hoy   conocí a   Carla / #la Carla
     today met   DOM Carla /   the Carla
     'Today I met Carla.'

Marker of expressive content

(35) Hoy   viene a mi casa Julia / #la   Julia, una prima de mi padre
today comes to my house Julia /   the Julia, a   cousin of my father
que nunca vimos.
that never saw
'Today Julia comes to my place, a cousing of my father that we never
met.'

(36) X: Fui a la casa del   Carlos y   no me abrió la   puerta. ¿Podés
went to the house of.the Carlos and not me open the door.   Can
creerlo?
believe.it
'I went to Carlos's house and he didn't open the door. Can you believe
it?'

   Y: Es que no sé   quién es Carlos / #el   Carlos / "el   Carlos".
is that not know who   is Carlos /   the Carlos /   the Carlos
'I don't know who Carlos is.'

Marker of expressive content

Chilean Spanish speakers are completely oblivious to these distinctions.

(37) Jamás conoceré al   Matías Contreras.
     never will.meet DOM.the Matías Contreras
     'I will never meet Matías Contreras.'

(38) Mañana viene a mi casa la Patricia, una prima de mi papá que ni
     tomorrow comes to my house the Patricia, a   cousin of my dad that not
     sabíamos que   existía.
     even   we.knew that   existed
     'Tomorrow Patricia, a cousin of my dad whom we didn't even know existed, is
     coming to my house.'

(39) A: Oye, ¿sabíh que fui a la casa del   Diego Soto y no me quiso
        listen know that went to the house of.the Diego Soto and not me wanted
        abrir la   puerta?
        open the door
        'Listen, did you know to Diego Soto's place and he didn't open the door?'

    B: ¿Y quién es el   Diego Soto?
       and who is the Diego Soto
       'And who is Diego Soto?'

Marker of expressive content

Oddly enough, the pattern can still be used when the speaker is referent of the proper name. Can you express *interpersonal proximity* to yourself?

(40) [*A new teacher is taking attendance.*]

    A: ¿Quiénes son Pedro y José?
       who   are Pedro and José
       'Who are Pedro and José?'

    B: ¡Yo soy (el) José!
       I   am the José
       'I am José!'

(41) [*Ding dong*]

    A: ¿Quién es?
       who is
       'Who is it?'

    B: Soy (el) Carlos.
       am the Carlos.
       'I am Carlos.'

Marker of expressive content

Chilean Spanish speakers do not report any difference between the alternative sentences in (42) that can be identified with expressive content.

(42)   Vino (el) Carlos.
       came the Carlos
       'Carlos came.'

My students gave me some guesses, but they are way off from what would be expected.

- ✗ Someone suggested that the pattern without the article makes it more difficult to identify the specific referent of the sentence (e.g., "it could be any Carlos!"). Most students didn't share this intuition.
- ✗ Someone said that the pattern without the determiner is less redundant, therefore correct.
- ✗ Someone suggested that the pattern without the determiner is more "neutral" and "less Chilean". Well, this is kinda true.

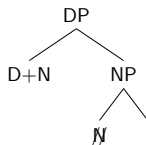In short, the pattern in Chilean Spanish does not seem to express any discernible meaning.

A STRUCTURAL CONTRAST

Longobardi (1994) characterizes definite articles preceding proper names as determiners with no semantic import. There are two alternative structures.
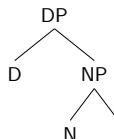
➡ The proper name N incorporates into D and is pronounced in this position.
➡ D is occupied by an expletive determiner; N stays in place.

The structure of the left is responsible for patterns such as *Juan*, while the one in the right generates *el Juan*. In principle, both structures should be synonymous.

(43)   a.

```
            DP
           /  \
       D+N      NP
                /  \
              N
```

b.

```
            DP
           /  \
         D      NP
                /  \
              N
```

I take that an analysis on these lines is correct for Chilean Spanish. This allows to account for a little puzzle with *nominal placeholders*.

A structural contrast

A *placeholder* is a dummy element filling a syntactic slot corresponding to some target expression (Seraku 2022).

�blacktriangleright Speakers employ placeholders when they are unable or unwilling to produce some word or phrase.

The following are examples of *nominal placeholders*, i.e., nominal elements whose target expression seems to be a noun.

(44) Could you hand me the *whatchamacallit*? *English*

(45) Je dois aller chercher mon *machin* chez le   réparateur.
      I   must go   pick   my machin at   the repairman
      'I have to go pick up my thingy from the repair shop.' *French*

(46) Ich habe gestern   mein *Dingsbums* im Büro vergessen.
      I   have yesterday my   Dingsbums in office forgotten
      'I forgot my thingy in the office yesterday.' *German*

A structural contrast

Rioplatense Spanish and Chilean Spanish have expressions filling syntactic slots corresponding to nouns, i.e., *nominal placeholders*.

(47)   No encuentro el   coso.
       not find.1SG   the.M.SG thing.M.SG
       'I don't find the thingy.'   *Rioplatense Spanish*

(48)   No encuentro el   este.
       not find.1SG   the.M.SG this.M.SG
       'I don't find the thingy.'   *Chilean Spanish*

In principle, one might think that Chilean Spanish has a noun *este* fulfilling this function. We will see that this is not the case.

A STRUCTURAL CONTRAST

In Rioplatense, *coso* may replace a proper name. In this scenario, it behaves syntactically as a proper name does, e.g., rejects determiners, triggers DOM.

(49) (*El) Coso me trajo   un regalo de Waikikí.
       the   Coso me brought a present of Waikiki
       'The person you know about brought me a present from Waikiki.'

(50) Ayer   vi   a   Coso.
       yesterdat saw DOM Coso
       'I saw the person you know about yesterday.'

A structural contrast

Chilean *este* also replaces proper names, but with an important caveat: it cannot drop the definite article.

(51) *(El) este me trajo   un regalo de Waikikí.
      the   this me brought a   present of Waikiki
      'The person you know about brought me a present from Waikiki.'

(52) Ayer   vi   al   este.
      yesterdat saw DOM.the this
      'I saw the person you know about yesterday.'

The presence of the definite article is mandatory in this context.

- ➡ It appears no matter the informative structure of the sentence.
- ➡ It is not associated to any specific meaning.

A structural contrast

I contend that the obligatoriness of the definite article in the last examples stems from the fact that *este* is not a noun, but a pronoun.

➡ In Rioplatense, *coso* is a true *nominal placeholder*.
➡ In Chilean Spanish, the *placeholder* is actually a null noun that is licensed by the presence of the demonstrative pronoun *este*.

EVIDENCE 1: only *coso* admits nominal morphology, e.g., diminutives.

(53)   el   cosito
         the little.coso
         'the little thingy'

(54)   *el   estito
         the little.this
         'the little thingy'

A STRUCTURAL CONTRAST

EVIDENCE 2: only *coso* can combine with demonstrative pronouns.

(55) a.   el coso ese
            the coso that
            'that thingy'

       b.   ese coso
            that coso
            'that thingy'

(56) a. * el   este ese
            the this that
            'that thingy'

       b. * ese este
            that this
            'that thingy'
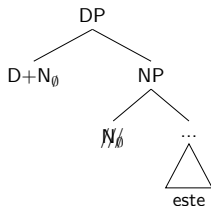
A STRUCTURAL CONTRAST

EVIDENCE 3: while *coso* governs agreement when functioning as a proper noun, *este* seems to agree with the null noun just as the determiner does.

(57) a. Coso se vino lindo hoy.
Coso SE came cute.MASC today
'The male individual you know about looks cute today.'

b. Coso se vino linda hoy.
Coso SE came cute.FEM today
'The female individual you know about looks cute today.'

(58) a. El este vino bonito hoy día.
the.MASC this.MASC came cute.MASC today day
'The male individual you know about looks cute today.'

b. La esta vino bonita hoy día.
the.FEM this.FEM came cute.FEM today day
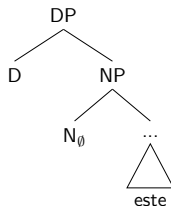'The female individual you know about looks cute today.'

A STRUCTURAL CONTRAST

If N is null in the Chilean Spanish placeholder construction, we expect D to always receive pronunciation as an expletive.

(59) a.

```
        DP
       /  \
  D+N∅    NP
         /  \
       N̸∅   ...
              ▲
            este
```

b.

```
        DP
       /  \
      D    NP
          /  \
        N∅   ...
               ▲
             este
```

In (59a), there is no overt element in D if an expletive determiner is not inserted.

➡ Both structures produce the DP *el este*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

– We discussed the phenomenon of *determined personal names* in Chilean Spanish.
– We saw that Chilean Spanish produces a *much higher rate* of determined personal names than any other variety.
– We rejected an analysis of the phenomenon in terms of it being an *anaphoric device* or a *marker of expressivity*.
– Instead, we saw that the pattern fits perfectly in *Longobardi's (1994) scheme*.
– We saw that this approach offers a rationale for the behavior of *nominal placeholders* in the dialect.

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¡Gracias por su atención!