Knowledge of determiners in L2 Spanish: Evidence from noun drop[*]

Joyce Bruhn de Garavito
The University of Western Ontario

SUMMARY

The purpose of the present paper is to ascertain whether second language learners are able to distinguish between definite articles, which are clitics in Spanish, and other types of determiners, including indefinite articles and demonstratives. The clitic nature of definite articles is made evident in cases of noun drop, in which Spanish exhibits a gap and English uses the pro-noun *one*. Ten advanced speakers of L2 Spanish completed a grammaticality judgement task that looked at the restrictions on the use of definite determiners in the remnant of noun drop. Results show that in general, L2 speakers are indistinguishable from native speakers, which is taken as evidence that there is no representational deficit in L2 acquisition.

RÉSUMÉ

L'objectif de cet article est de déterminer si les apprenants de langue seconde sont capables de distinguer les articles définis, qui sont des clitiques en espagnol, des autres types de déterminants, comme les articles indéfinis et les démonstratifs. La nature clitique des articles définis est manifeste dans la chute des noms : l'espagnol présente un trou, alors que l'anglais emploie le pronom *one*. Dix apprenants avancés de l'espagnol ont accompli une tâche de jugement de grammaticalité qui a évalué les restrictions sur l'emploi de déterminants définis dans ce qui reste de la chute des noms. Les résultats montrent que, en général, les locuteurs L2 sont indiscernables des natifs, ce qui suggère qu'il n'y a pas de manque de représentation dans l'acquisition d'une L2.

1   INTRODUCTION

Clitics are generally assumed to consist of bundles of features that are realized by reduced phonological content. Languages differ as to whether they include clitics in their grammars, what types of clitics there are, the type of host they cliticize onto and whether they are clitics only at

the phonological level, with no syntactic repercussions, or whether they are syntactic. All the Romance languages include object clitics and they have been the subject of a great deal of interest in linguistics, including second language acquisition studies. However, the present paper does not examine objects but rather a class of clitics that has received much less attention, definite articles. In Spanish, the clitic-like properties of definite articles are made evident in noun drop and this will be the focus of the experimental study we report on.

One of the main debates occupying second language researchers is whether second language learners are able to acquire functional categories and features not present in their first language (see White 2003), or to bundle features in ways that significantly differ from the way they are realized in their first language (Lardiere 2009). On the one hand, a number of scholars argue that only features and categories present in the first language are acquirable in second languages (Hawkins and Chan 1997; Hawkins and Franceschina 2004; Hawkins and Hattori 2006). For these researchers, the acquisition of the functional category associated with clitics, or the bundling of features associated with them (case, gender, specificity, etc.) is only possible if the same elements are found in the L1. In contrast, another school of thought argues that learners are not constrained by the features or functional categories present in their L1 but are able to acquire new ones, or bundle features old and new in different ways (Schwartz and Sprouse 1996; Lardiere 2000; Prévost and White 2000). Object clitics, particularly their position, have been useful in providing evidence for these debates (Duffield and White 1999; Duffield, White, Bruhn de Garavito, Montrul & Prévost 2002). However, one problem is that object clitics are an important part of the language curriculum in almost all language courses. Not only are learners taught to notice the presence of clitics, but they are explicitly told about the different possible positions, explanations that are generally followed by practice of various forms. Although we assume that explicit knowledge of this type does not necessarily lead to acquisition (see Schwartz and Gubala-Ryzak 1992), it is not possible to rule out completely the role of noticing or enhanced input, which is what various teaching approaches entail. In contrast to object clitics, definite articles are briefly taught in introductory courses, mostly in relation to gender agreement. What is never shown, either implicitly or explicitly, is that definite articles are clitics that must attach to hosts with a particular property: that of being noun-like. The attachment restriction on definite articles is particularly relevant in the case of noun drop. Specifically, unlike other determiners, definite articles may only attach to nominal elements, although other determiners and quantifiers show no such restrictions. We therefore use noun drop and the contrast between the behaviour of definite articles and other determiners as a window into learners' knowledge of the clitic properties of the former.

2   THE NATURE OF DETERMINERS IN SPANISH

Not much has been written regarding the possible clitic nature of determiners in English, the L1 of the speakers in the present study. Following Dixon (2007) we will assume that both definite and indefinite articles in English are generally pronounced as phonological clitics. Evidence for this comes from stress placement: generally the determiners *the* and *a* are not stressed, with the word stress placed on the following noun: [ðə ˈhaws]; [ə ˈhaws]. However, as Dixon points out, determiners and other clitics in English also have strong forms. It is possible to stress the determiner, as in [ˈði ˈhaws].

Harris (1991) argued that definite articles in Spanish are realized by the root *l*. The masculine form *el* consists of the root plus an epenthetic [e] which is necessary to create a syllable; the feminine is formed by the addition of the word marker *a*, leading to *la*, and the plural by the addition, first of the masculine and feminine word markers *o* and *a*, giving us *lo* and *la*, and then the plural marker *s*, resulting in *los* and *las*; finally, the definite article *el* surfaces as *l* only in those cases where it contracts with the prepositions *de* and *a*, resulting in *del* and *al*. Note that these two contractions are the only two found in the Spanish language, which would

constitute an anomaly under any other analysis of these articles. Furthermore, definite articles meet most of the properties of clitics found in the literature: they cannot be stressed, they cannot stand alone, and they generally cannot be conjoined.

The clitic nature of definite articles contrasts with indefinites, *un*, *una*, *unos*, *unas*, which are derived from the numeral *one*. Unlike the definite article, the indefinite article can stand alone as a pronoun (*compré una* 'I bought one'). In the masculine, the form is shortened when it appears pre-nominally (*un libro* 'a book'), but this happens with other modifiers in Spanish (*el primer estudiante*, *el primero* 'the first student, the first one'). Demonstratives can also stand as pronouns (*este funciona* 'this one works'), and there are pronominal forms for possessives as well (*es suya* 'it is his').

Having established that the definite article in Spanish is a clitic, we may ask what the host is. Clearly definite articles attach to noun phrases, this is usually thought to be the main function of determiners. However, as, shown below, work on noun ellipsis (Braver 2009; Eguren 2010; Ticio 2010) has shown that the appropriate generalization is that definite articles attach to [+nominal] elements, including noun phrases, adjectives, and relative clauses. As we will explain, we also include as [+nominal] elements phrases introduced by *de*: *de Juana* 'Juana's', *de papel* 'of paper', *de francés* 'of French', etc.

3   NOUN ELLIPSIS

Nominal ellipsis or noun drop is the process, internal to the DP, by which a noun is dropped, leaving behind other constituents such as determiners, adjectives or relative clauses, which make up the remnant. Interpretation of the dropped noun is recovered through an antecedent found either in the linguistic context, usually the preceding clause, or in the non-linguistic context, for example when pointing to an item among others. Examples are given in (1). In (1a) the remnant is made up of a determiner and an adjective, in (1b) a determiner and a relative clause and in (1c) a determiner and a phrase introduced by *de* 'of'. In English we do not find a gap but rather what Raposo (2002) refers to as the pro-noun (as opposed to pronoun) *one,* (which does not appear in possessives), as seen in the translations.

(1)   a.   No compré   el   florero grande sino   el/uno/aquel/ ____   pequeño.
             neg bought-I the vase   big   but   the/a/that   ____   small
             'I didn't buy the big flower vase but the/a/that/small one.'
        b. No vino   la   estudiante rubia   sino la/una/aquella ___ que   tiene
           neg came the student   blond but   the/a/that   ___ that   had
           el   pelo   negro.
           the hair   black
           'The blond student didn't come but rather the/0/that one that has black hair.'
        c. Leí   el   libro   de Chomsky y   el/uno/varios ___   de Jackendoff.
           read-I the book   of Chomsky and the   ___   of Jackendoff
           'I read Chomky's book and Jackendoff's.'

In contrast to the above [+nominal] elements, the definite article cannot attach to prepositional phrases, as shown in (2), although other determiners can.

(2)   Leí   el   libro sobre Chomsky y   *el/uno/aquel   ___   sobre Jackendoff.
        read-I the book about Chomsky and the/a/that   ___   about Jackendoff
        'I read the book about Chomsky and the the/a/that/ one about Jackendoff.'

Why is it possible to find *de* 'of' in the remnant, but not a full preposition? Following a long tradition in linguistics we assume that, in fact, *de* is not a preposition but rather it is inserted for

case reasons. For some scholars it constitutes a case assigner and for others the realization of case (Demonte, 1989; Nunes, 2009; Sportiche, 1998/2005). In other words, a phrase such as *de Chomsky* is not a prepositional phrase but rather a determiner phrase, and the prediction is that definite articles should be able to attach to DPs. This is indeed borne out, as example (1c) has shown.

To summarize, both Spanish and English allow the speaker to avoid repetition of a noun phrase that is already part of the context, but do so in different ways. In English a defective pro-noun is used, in Spanish a gap. However, the licensing capabilities of the pro-noun and the gap are different, leading to contrasts in grammaticality. In particular, in Spanish the definite article clitic is only licensed when the host includes [+nominal] features, while in English no such restriction exists.

Before moving to the next section it is necessary to mention an additional constraint on noun ellipsis in Spanish because it was used in the tasks in the present study. As previous examples show, the remnant of noun ellipsis can include an adjective, in fact, this is probably the most common type. As is well known, adjectives in Spanish can precede or follow a noun under certain circumstances, and a number of them must appear prenominally. Interestingly, the inclusion of prenominal adjectives as part of the remnant leads to ungrammaticality in Spanish, as seen in (3) (example from Ticio 2003). The adjective *supuesto* 'alleged' is always prenominal and therefore it cannot appear as the remnant of the elision of *criminal*.

(3) * Arrestaron   al   verdadero criminal y   al   supuesto.
       arrested-they the   real   criminal and the alleged
      'They arrested the real criminal and the alleged one.'

4   PREVIOUS STUDIES

One of the aims of SLA research is to find an explanation for the differences found between first and second language acquisition. There is general agreement that L2 speakers do not necessarily converge on the target language, however we define the target, and that the result is often variability between individuals and within the same individual (Bley-Vroman 1990). However, many studies on advanced and near native speakers show that some learners in fact do converge (White and Genesee 1992; Bruhn de Garavito 2000, 2011; Borgonovo, Bruhn de Garavito & Prévost 2015) but others do not. Similar findings are reported for other types of acquisition contexts, for example heritage speakers. It is not the case that no heritage speakers converge on both the home and the dominant language, but not all speakers do, and in some cases the majority do not. This is the puzzle that must be solved.

There are presently two main positions regarding the explanation for differences between L1 and L2 speakers. On the one hand it is argued there is a representational deficit in that adult learners do not have access to UG (Meisel 2011) or are unable to acquire features not present in the L1, as suggested by the Failed Functional Features Hypothesis (FFFH) (Hawkins and Chan 1997; Hawkins and Hattori 2006; Tsimpli and Dimitrakopoulou 2007). In contrast to this position, there are those who argue that the problem is not one of representation and that Full Access to UG is available (Schwartz and Sprouse 1996). Explanations for the differences between L1 and L2 under Full Access vary: there is a problem of mapping between the form and the relevant functional categories (Lardiere 2000, 2003; Prévost and White 2000); the morphology constitutes a bottleneck while the syntax and semantics are not problematic (Slabakova 2008); the problem lies in the interface with phonology (Goad and White 2006); processing is problematic when dealing with several modules, particularly the interface between internal and external modules such as syntax and pragmatics (White 2009; Sorace 2011).

Definite articles are bundles of features, some of which are semantic, such as definiteness and/or specificity; some of which are morpho-syntactic, such as number and gender, and the

restriction on the type of hosts they attach to; and some related to discourse, in that the use of articles must take into consideration the speaker and the hearer (Ionin, Zubizarreta & Philipov 2009). It is clear that the features bundled in Spanish are in fact different from the features found in definite articles in English. English definite articles behave as Spanish definite articles do in relation to the semantic properties, namely definiteness and specificity, and they partially, but not completely, overlap in relation to discourse properties. However, English articles do not agree in number and gender with the head noun and, assuming they are clitics too, they only attach to noun phrases ('the small blouse'), including the pronoun *one* ('the small one' vs '*the small'; 'the one that I bought' vs. '*the that I bought').

Articles are central to studies on the acquisition of number and gender agreement (Bruhn de Garavito & White 2002; White, Valenzuela, Kozlowska-Macgregor, & Leung 2004; Grüter, Lew-William, & Fernald 2012; among others) but this research is beyond the scope of the present study. Although several studies used ellipsis as part of their methodology in one form or another (White, Valenzuela, Kozlowska-Macgregor, & Leung 2004**)** only one has focused explicitly on gender and number agreement with the antecedent (Bruhn de Garavito and Otálora 2016). Gender agreement is obligatory between the ellipsis site and the antecedent, but a mismatch in number is grammatical (Masullo & Depiante 2004**).** Bruhn de Garavito & Otálora found no significant difference between the control group and the second language learners. Both groups rejected gender mismatches, accepted number mismatches to a certain degree, and showed a strong preference for no mismatch at al.

Besides current interest in gender, Spanish articles have been researched mainly in relation to the fact that English allows bare plurals when the interpretation of the DP subject is generic, while the definite article is required only for a specific interpretation. In contrast, in Spanish bare plurals in subject position are unacceptable, and articles are generally obligatory, both when they are interpreted as generic and when they are interpreted as specific. Studies on the acquisition of definite determiners in subject position have found that learners are able to acquire new features and feature bundles not instantiated in their L1, but they continue to accept the settings of their L1 (Cuza, Guijarro-Fuentes, Pires, & Rothman 2013; Slabakova 2006; Snape 2008; Ionin, Montrul, & Crivos 2013), in other words transfer seems to be persistent. Cuza et al (2013) examined knowledge of the syntax and interpretation of definite articles in subject position with a group of advanced L2 learners of Spanish. Their results showed a subgroup of the learners performed in a similar fashion to the native speaker controls. However, they also found that the learners allowed bare plural subjects with generic interpretation to a greater extent than the native speakers. Similar results are found in Ionin et al (2013).

5   PREDICTIONS

The present study focuses on knowledge of the different properties of Spanish definite articles in opposition to other types of determiners, differences that become evidence in noun ellipsis. Our predictions are the following: If L2 speakers are restricted to features of their first language, English, as suggested by deficit accounts, they will reject all cases of noun drop where the definite article attaches to a [+ nominal] that is not a noun, namely adjectives or relative clauses. If, however, they have managed to acquire the new properties of Spanish, as suggested by full access positions, they will accept these sentences, while at the same time rejecting attachment to a prepositional phrase because prepositional phrases are [-nominal]. Their acceptance of *de* phrases will depend on an additional factor, noticing that *de* is not a preposition in Spanish.

6   METHODOLOGY

We discuss data from two groups of participants: a native control group (n= 10) and an advanced L2 group (n = 10). The age range for both groups was 20–49. The L2 group was comprised

mainly of graduate students who had studied Spanish for a minimum of 10 years. They had all begun learning Spanish at or after puberty in a formal setting, and for all except one, English was their first language. They reported having travelled and lived in a Spanish-speaking country for at least one year. The Spanish proficiency of the participants was assessed by using a DELE/MLA Proficiency Placement Test, a standardized 50-point cloze test/vocabulary task commonly used in L2 Spanish acquisition studies. All of the L2 Spanish participants classified at the high proficiency level, with scores ranging from 41-50. The control group consisted of individuals whose native language is Spanish. These participants came from different Hispanic countries. In both groups, the participants currently live in an English-speaking environment in North America and they use Spanish on a daily basis for academic and professional purposes.

The participants completed three tasks: a production task, an acceptability task, and a grammaticality judgement task. In the production task participants were presented with questions related to pictures that generally showed a series of choices (*¿Qué blusa te gusta más?* 'Which blouse do you like more?'). They were asked to give short answers (*La azul* 'The blue one'). Both the L1 and the L2 group answered as expected with very few errors, almost all of which consisted of incorrect gender agreement. The second test was an Acceptability Judgment Task that consisted of a list of short question and answer pairs. Speakers were asked to rate on a scale whether the answer seemed appropriate for the given question. This task examined whether L2 speakers were aware that noun drop is licensed by focus (Eguren 2010). The responses of the L2 speakers did not differ from those of the control group. We can assume, therefore, that noun drop itself is fully under control.

In this paper we will be reporting on the Grammaticality Judgment Task that was used for testing knowledge of determiners in noun drop. Participants were presented with sentences they were asked to rate on a 1 to 5 scale based on how natural they sounded. Directions included a breakdown of the scale: a rating of 1 signified that the sentence sounded completely awkward or ungrammatical while a rating of 5 meant that the sentence was entirely felicitous and grammatical. A rating of 3 meant the participant was not sure, and speakers were asked to avoid this rating as much as possible.

There were three noun drop sentence-types where the remnant included a determiner and (a) an adjective, (b) a prepositional phrase, and (c) a relative clause. The determiner alternated between a definite article and another type: an indefinite or a demonstrative.

In (4) we illustrate test sentences with adjectives in the remnants. (4a) is grammatical with a definite article, (4b) is grammatical with other determiners, and (4c) was ungrammatical because the adjective was prenominal. These sentences were included for comparison, not because they told us anything about the determiners.

(4) a. Vendí la blusa blanc pero no pude   vender la ___ verde.
         sold-I the blouse white but   not could-I sell   the ___ green.
         'I sold the white blouse but I could not sell the green one.'
     b. Unos candidatos están nerviosos, pero otros   ___ tranquilos.
         some candidates are   nervous,   but   others ___ quiet
         'Some candidates are nervous, but some others are quiet'
     c. *Juanita dio   una excusa razonable, Pedrito una mera.
         Juanita   gave   an   excuse reasonable, Pedrito a   mere
         'Juanita gave a reasonable excuse, Pedrito a mere one.'

In (5) we find examples of the sentences used to test prepositional phrases in the remnant. (5a) shows grammatical sentences in which the definite article attaches to a *de* phrase, in (5b) sentences which are grammatical because a determiner other than a definite article is followed after the gap by a full prepositional phrase. These sentences contrast with (6c), in which a definite article is followed by a full prepositional phrase, ungrammatical in Spanish.

(5)   a.   Me encantó la falda de Pepa pero no la   ___ de María.
                Me loved   the skirt of Pepa but   not the ___ of   María
                'I loved Pepa's skirt but not María's.'

        b.   Me gusta este vestido con rosas pero no   aquel ___ con mariposas.
                me like this dress   with roses but   not that   ___ with butterflies
                'I like this dress with roses but not that one with butterflies.'

        c.   *Me gusta el   sombrero con plumas pero no   el ___ con flores.
                 me like   the hat   with feathers but not   the ___ with flowers
                'I like the hat with feathers but not the one with flowers.'

In (6) we illustrate sentences in which the remnant includes a relative clause. (6a) is grammatical because the definite article is attached to a relative clause introduced by *que* 'that'; (6b) is grammatical because there is a determiner other than a definite followed by a relative clause introduced by a preposition; (7c) is ungrammatical because it is a definite article that is followed by the prepositional relative.

(6)   a.   Me gusta esa blusa   pero prefiero la   ___   que tiene mangas cortas.
                me like   that blouse but   prefer   the ___   that has   sleeves short
                'I like that blouse but I prefer the one that has short sleeves.'

        b.   No via   la mujer   que vino hoy   ni   aquella con   ___   que
                neg see-I the woman that came today nor that   with   ___   that
                hablé   ayer.
                spoke-I   yesterday
                'I did not see the woman that came today nor that one with whom I spoke yesterday.'

        c.   *No via   la estudiante que vino hoy   nia la ___   con que
                 neg see-I the student   that came today nor the ___ with that
                 hablé   ayer.
                 spoke-I   yesterday
                'I didn't see the student that came today nor the one with whom I spoke yesterday.'

The test consisted of a total of 60 sentences, 35 of which were grammatical and 25 were ungrammatical. Included were 15 distracter sentences, 5 of which were grammatical and 10 ungrammatical.

7   RESULTS

An ANOVA repeated measures in which the independent measures are group (L1 and L2) and sentence type shows there is no significant difference between the groups (F (1,18) = .63, p=.437), there is a significant difference between sentence types (F (8,144) = 47.333, p=.0001), and a significant interaction between group and sentence type (F (8,144) = 3.606, p = p=.0008). Overall then, the L1 and L2 groups responded in a similar fashion. We will now turn to look at the relevant contrasts, beginning with sentences in which the remnant includes an adjective.
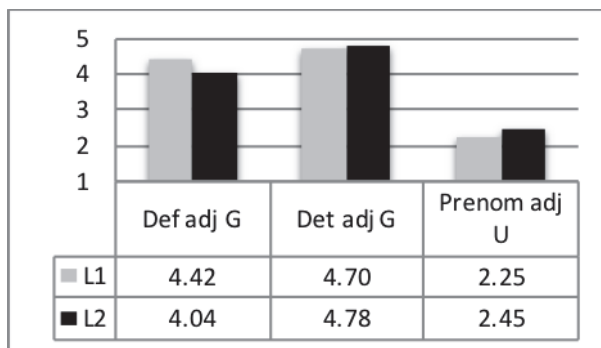
	Def adj G	Det adj G	Prenom adj U
L1	4.42	4.70	2.25
L2	4.04	4.78	2.45

Figure 1:Mean responses to remnants that include a determiner and an adjective

The first pair of columns in Figure 1 represents responses to remnants composed of a definite determiner and an adjective (*la verde* 'the green one**)**, in the second pair the remnant included some other type of determiner and an adjective (*otros tranquilos* 'others quiet**)**. The third set represents responses to sentences included as a point of contrast, in which the adjective that appeared in the remnant was prenominal (***una mera* 'a mere one'**)**. Both groups perform as expected and there is no significant difference between them (F (1,18) = 2.346, p = .143 for remnants with definite articles; F(1,18) =.317, p=.5803 for remnants with other determiners; F (1,18) = .471, p=.5013 for the ungrammatical sentences). Post hoc Scheffe F-tests show both groups make the appropriate distinctions between grammatical and ungrammatical sentences, in particular between remnants with definite articles and the ungrammatical prenominal adjectives.

We now turn to the remnants in which there is a determiner followed by a prepositional phrase.

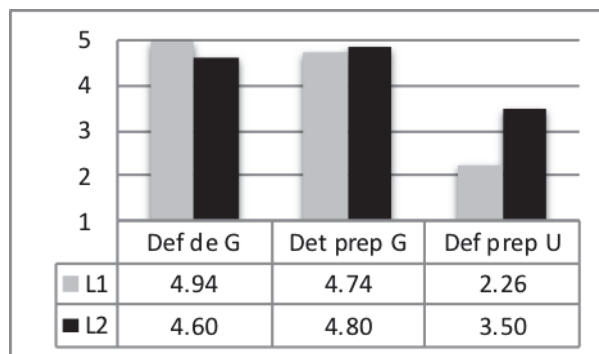|	Def de G	Det prep G	Def prep U
L1	4.94	4.74	2.26
L2	4.60	4.80	3.50

Figure 2: Mean responses to remnants that include a determiner and a prepositional phrase

The acceptance rate for remnants which include a *de* phrase (*la de María* 'the one of María'**)** is very high, as expected. There is no significant difference between the groups (F (1,18) = 2548, p=.1279). Remnants that include a determiner other than a definite article and a prepositional phrase (*aquel con mariposas* 'that one with butterflies') are accepted by both groups and there is no significant difference between them (F(1, 18) =.288, p=.5979). The two groups do differ significantly when the remnant includes a definite determiner and a prepositional phrase, which is ungrammatical (***el con flores* 'the one with flowers'**)** (F(1,18) = 4.621, p=.0453). As is clear in figure 3, the L2 speakers accept the ungrammatical sentences to a much higher degree than the native speakers.

Individual results show that two L2 speakers strongly reject these ungrammatical sentences (assigning them a 1 or 2, 80% of the time, that is, in 4 sentences out of 5), 5 strongly accept (assigning them a 4 or 5, 80% of the time), and the other 3 fluctuate between acceptance and

rejection. Interestingly, there are 2 native speakers who also accept them, the majority rejecting.
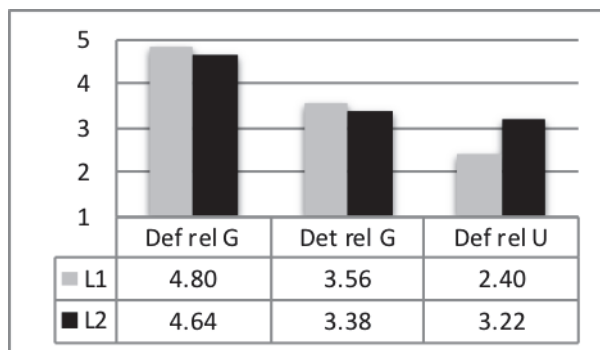Figure 3 shows the results for the relative clauses, with and without prepositions.

	Def rel G	Det rel G	Def rel U
L1	4.80	3.56	2.40
L2	4.64	3.38	3.22

Figure 3: Mean responses to remnants that include a determiner and a relative clause

There is no significant difference between the groups (F(1,18) = .401, p=.5979) when the definite article is followed by a relative clause without a preposition (*la que tiene mangas cortas* 'the one that has short sleeves**)**. Responses to the grammatical cases in which the remnant consisted of a determiner other than a definite article followed by a relative clause introduced by a preposition (*aquella con que hablé* 'that one with which I spoke'**)** were quite low. There was no significant difference between the groups (F(1,18) = .3.736, p=.069). The explanation that comes to mind is that the speakers in both groups preferred the more formal way of expressing these sentences, which is illustrated in (7), in spite of the fact that speakers of almost all varieties of Spanish use relative clauses introduced simply by *que* 'that' most of the time and in most contexts. The more formal (7) would have been preferred by participants who were in an academic setting.

(7)   No via la mujer   que vino hoy   ni   aquella con **la** que hablé   ayer.
        no saw the woman that came today nor that   with def that spoke-I yesterday
        'I didn't see the woman that came today nor the one I spoke to yesterday.'

Regarding the ungrammatical sentences in which the definite article is followed by a prepositional relative clause (******la con que hablé* 'the with which I spoke'), there is no significant difference between the groups (F(1,18) = .185, p=.6724), but the L2 group do seem to accept these to a greater extent than expected. A post hoc Scheffe F-test shows a significant difference between their responses to the ungrammatical sentences and the grammatical ones with definite articles.

8   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present paper was to examine L2 Spanish advanced speakers' knowledge of the clitic nature of definite articles, which is made apparent in cases of noun drop. In particular, definite articles attach to [+nominal] elements such as nouns, adjectives and relative clauses, but do not attach to prepositional phrases that are [–nominal]. These constraints do not apply in English, where instead of a gap we find the pro-noun *one*. The contrast between the two languages is even more salient in cases in which the remnant incudes *de*, which we have assumed is the realization of case. These remnants are grammatical with all types of determiners, unlike in English, where 'of' is never possible as an adjunct or a complement to *one* (Raposo 2002).
We argue that learners' consistent acceptance of grammatical sentences and rejection of ungrammatical ones can be interpreted as evidence against any sort of deficit accounts in L2.

Results show that the L2 speakers have no problem accepting a gap in situations in which English would use a pro-noun, *one*, both with definite articles and with other types of determiners. Furthermore, they clearly distinguish between grammatical and ungrammatical uses of noun drop. There is, however, one exception. Their responses to definite articles attached to prepositional phrases was much higher than expected, though not as high as their responses to fully grammatical sentences. It is in this area and only here that we find a significant difference between the control group and the L2 group.

There appear to be at least two possible explanations. The first has to do with the context of acquisition. As mentioned, these speakers had all learned Spanish in a formal university setting. They would have been taught that *de* is a preposition like any other preposition. *De* in determiner phrases is very frequent in the input, linking noun phrases to agents, complements, possessives, and adjuncts of all types (*la invasión de las tropas españolas* 'the invasion of Spanish troups'; *la invasión de Roma* 'the invasion of Rome'; *la casa de Juan* 'John's house; *la mesa de plástico* 'the plastic table'; among others). In all these cases noun drop is possible and frequent. Therefore, the combination of formal instruction added to the frequency of noun drop with what would appear to the learners to be 'prepositional phrases' might lead them to overgeneralize. It would seem that, for many, metalinguistic knowledge may in fact be in conflict with intuitions derived from natural input.

The second tentative explanation is related to the type of prepositions used in the remnant of noun drop in the Grammaticality Judgement Task. Two of the prepositional phrases were introduced by *sobre* 'about', two with *con* 'with', and one with *para* 'for'. The only preposition that was accepted with definite determiners was 'with', both among the native speakers and the L2 learners. Luis Eguren (*pc* made in the Hispanic Linguistics Symposium 2015) suggested that speakers were misanalysing the remnant as including a prepositional compound. Several of these exist with the preposition *sin* 'without': *el sinvergüenza* 'the shameless person', *el sin gafas* 'the (one) without glasses'. According to Eguren, even native speakers may accept compounds with *con*, even if they are not standard expressions: *el con gafas*, 'the one with glasses'.

In conclusion, the results of the present research suggest L2 speakers acquire important properties of Spanish: definite determiners are clitics that can only attach to [+nominal] elements. This requirement places restrictions on the type of remnant possible in cases of noun drop, restrictions that do not apply in English. Although it has not been the focus of this study, it is also clear that learners realize that the pro-noun *one* is not the equivalent of the gap that is found in Spanish (see Raposo 2002). This needs further study.

9 REFERENCES

Bley-Vroman, R. (1990). "The logical problem of foreign language learning." *Linguistic Analysis* 20: 3-49.

Borgonovo, C., J. Bruhn de Garavito, P. Prévost (2015). "Mood selection in relative clauses. Interfaces and variability." *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 37: 33-69.

Braver, A. (2009). "DP-internal ellipsis in Spanish." *Rutgers University Linguistics Conference (RULing IV)*.

Bruhn de Garavito, J. (2000). "The *se* Constructions in Spanish and Near-native Competence." *Spanish Applied Linguistics* 3: 247-295.

Bruhn de Garavito, J. (2011). "Subject/Object asymmetries in the grammar of bilingual and monolingual Spanish speakers: Evidence against connectionism." *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism* 1(2): 111-148.

Bruhn de Garavito, J., & Otálora, M. (2016). L2 knowledge of gender and number agreement in Spanish noun ellipsis. In A. Alba de la Fuente & E. Valenzuela (Eds.), *Papers in Honor of Juana Liceras* (pp. 99-124). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Cuza, A., P. Guijarro-Fuentes, A. Pires & J. Rothman (2013). "The syntax-semantics of bare and definite plural subjects in the L2 Spanish of English natives." *International Journal of Bilingualism* 17(5): 634-652.

Demonte, V. (1989). Linking and case: The case of prepositional verbs. In C. Laeufer and T. A. Morgan (eds), *Theoretical analyses in Romance linguistics : selected papers from the nineteenth Linguistic Symposium on Romance Languages (LSRL XIX), the Ohio State University, 21-23 April, 1989*. Amterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins**:** 415-456.

Dixon, R. M. W. (2007). Clitics in English. *English Studies, 88*(5), 574-600.

Duffield, N. and L. White (1999). "Assessing L2 knowledge of Spanish clitic placement: convergent methodologies." *Second Language Research* 15(2): 133-160.

Duffield, N., White, L., Bruhn de Garavito, J., Montrul, S., & Prévost, P. (2002). Clitic placement in L2 French: evidence from sentence matching. *Journal of Linguistics, 38*, 487-525.

Eguren, L. (2010). "Contrastive focus and nominal ellipsis in Spanish." *Lingua* 120: 435-457.

Goad, H. and L. White (2006). "Ultimate attainment in interlanguage grammars: a prosodic approach." *Second Language Research* 22: 243-268.

Grüter, T., Lew-William, C., & Fernald, A. (2012). Grammatical gender in L2: A production or a real-time processing problem? *Second Language Research, 28*(2), 191-215.

Harris, J. W. (1991). "The exponence of gender in Spanish." *Linguistic Inquiry* 22(1): 27-62.

Hawkins, R. and Y.-h. C. Chan (1997). "The partial availability of Universal Grammar in second language acquisition: the 'failed functional features hypothesis'." *Second Language Research* 13(2): 187-226.

Hawkins, R. and F. Franceschina (2004). Explaining the acquisition and nonacquisition of determiner-noun gender concord in French and Spanish. In J. Paradis and P. Prévost (eds), *The Acquisition of French in Different Contexts*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins**:** 175-205.

Hawkins, R. and H. Hattori (2006). "Interpretation of English multiple *wh*-questions by Japanese speakers: a missing uninterpretable feature account." *Second Language Research* 22(3): 269-301.

Ionin, T., Montrul, S., & Crivos, M. (2013). A bidirectional study on the acquisition of plural NP interpretation in English and Spanish. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 34*(3), 483-518.

Ionin, T., Zubizarreta, M. L., & Philipov, V. (2009). Acquisition of article semantics by child and adult L2 English learners. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 12*(3), 337-361.

Lardiere, D. (2000). Mapping features to forms in second language acquisition. In J. Archibald (ed) *Second Language Acquisition and Linguistic Theory*. Oxford, Blackwell**:** 102-129.

Lardiere, D. (2003). Second Language Knowledge of [+/- past] vs. [+/-finite]. In J. M. Liceras, H. Zobl and H. Goodluck (eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th Generative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition Conference (GASLA 2002)*. Somerville, Cascadilla Press**:** 176-189.

Lardiere, D. (2009). "Some thoughts on the contrastive analysis of features in second language acquisition." *Second Language Research* 25(2): 173-227.

Masullo, P. J., & Depiante, M. A. (2004). *Variable vs. intrinsec features in Spanish nominal elipsis*. Paper presented at the GLOW 2004, Thesaloniki, Greece.

Nunes, J. (2009). Dummy prepositions and the licensing of null subjects in Brazilian Portuguese. In E. O. Aboh, E. van der Linden, J. Quer, & P. Sleeman (Eds.), *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory. Selected papers from 'Going Romance' Amsterdam 2007* (pp. 243-266). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Meisel, J. (2011). *First and Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Prévost, P. and L. White (2000). "Missing surface inflection or impairment in second language acquisition? Evidence from tense and agreement." *Second Language Research* 16(2): 103-133.

Raposo, E. (2002). Nominal Gaps with Prepositional Modifiers in Spanish and Portuguese. In M. J. Arche, A. Fábregas, & A. M. Trombetta (Eds.), *Cuadernos de Lingüística IX* (pp. 127-144). Instituto Universitario Ortega y Gasset.

Schwartz, B. and M. Gubala-Ryzak (1992). "Learnability and grammar reorganization in L2A: against negative evidence causing unlearning of verb movement." *Second Language Research* 8: 1-38.

Schwartz, B. D. and R. Sprouse (1996). "L2 cognitive states and the Full Transfer/Full Access model." *Second Language Research* 12(1): 40-72.

Slabakova, R. (2006). "Learnability in the second language acquisition of semantics: a bidirectional study of a semantic parameter." *Second Language Research* 9: 22-48.

Slabakova, R. (2008). *Meaning in the Second Language*. Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter.

Snape, N. (2008). "Resetting the Nominal Mapping Parameter in L2 English: Definite article use and the count–mass distinction." *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 11(1): 63-79.

Sorace, A. (2011). "Pinning down the concept of "interface" in bilingualism." *Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism* 1(1): 1-33.

Sportiche, D. (1998/2005). *Partitions and Atoms of Clause Structure. Subjects, agreement, case and clitics*. London: Routledge.

Ticio, M. E. (2003). On the Structure of DPs. Storrs, University of Connecticut.

Ticio, M. E. (2010). *Locality Domains in the Spanish Determiner Phrase*. Dordrecht, Springer.

Tsimpli, I. M. and M. Dimitrakopoulou (2007). "The Interpretability Hypothesis: evidence from *wh*-interrogatives in second language acquisition." *Second Language Research* 23(2): 215-242.

White, L. (2003). *Second Language Acquisition and Universal Grammar*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press.

White, L. (2009). Grammatical theory: Interfaces and L2 Knowledge. In W. C. Ritchie and T. K. Bhatia. Bingley (eds.) *The New Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*. UK, Emerald**:** 49-65.

White, L., & Genesee, F. (1996). How native is near-native? The issue of ultimate attainment in adult second language acquisition. *Second Language Research, 12*, 238-265.

White, L., Valenzuela, E., Kozlowska-Macgregor, M., & Leung, Y.-K. I. (2004). Gender and number agreement in nonnative Spanish. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 25*, 105-133.