Plural indefinite articles: The case of *unos* and *des* *

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Abstract Plurality typically comes in two flavors: an inclusive and an exclusive one. We exploit these different plurality 'flavors' to argue that there are two types of plural indefinite articles, each with their own characteristics with respect to 'blocking' and aspect. We argue that French *des* instantiates the 'inclusive' plural indefinite article and Spanish *unos* the 'exclusive' plural indefinite article.

Keywords: indefinite article, blocking, *unos*, *des*

1   Introduction

This contribution is part of our joint enterprise to come to a diachronic and synchronic account of *unos*, a Spanish determiner that has received a fair amount of attention over the last two decades (see among others Villalta 1994, Laca & Tasmowski 1996, Gutiérrez-Rexach 2001, 2003, López-Palma 2007, Martí 2008, Le Bruyn 2010, Pozas-Loyo 2010 and Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez-Benito 2012). The ultimate goal of this enterprise is to further our understanding of articles and of referentiality within the nominal domain.

The specific question we try to answer in this contribution is whether we could exploit the difference between inclusive (individual atoms and sums/groups) and exclusive (sums/groups only) plurality to understand the differences we find between two determiners that each have been claimed to be plural indefinite articles: Spanish *unos* (see e.g., Lapesa 2000 [1973]) and French *des* (see e.g., Grevisse & Goosse 1993).

On the basis of a study of indefinite singular articles, we start in section 2 by making a provisional list of properties we expect indefinite articles (singular or plural) to have. Section 3 argues that these properties correspond exactly to those we find for French *des*. Sections 4 and 5 bring in the issue of inclusive/exclusive plurality and argue that the list of properties given in section 2 has to be adapted. These sections furthermore argue that the differences between French *des* and (at

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least some variants of) Spanish *unos* can indeed be reduced to the inclusive/exclusive distinction.

2   The indefinite singular article

In order to get a provisional list of properties we expect indefinite plural articles to have, we make a small detour via indefinite singular articles, which —be it sometimes indirectly— have been studied in more detail. We single out four properties, the first two of which we take to be intimately related.

a. Krifka (2004) notes that the indefinite singular article is different from the numeral *one* (its etymological antecedent) in that *a* has no ties with the number scale. This explains the contrast between *a* and *one* in (1):

(1)   How many students came to see you?

    a.   # **A** student came to see me.

    b.   **One** student came to see me.

Note that *a* behaves parallel to the definite article (see (2)) and unlike most other indefinite determiners (de Swart 2006). Examples of the latter include *some*, *several*, *three*, etc.

(2)   How many students came to see you?

    a.   # **The** students came to see me.

    b.   **Some/Several/Three** students came to see me.

b. Because of the fact that the indefinite singular article is not connected to the number scale (nor to any qualitative scale, as far as we know), we expect it not to give rise to partitive implicatures. This is as required: (3a) by no means implicates that there were students who didn't come to see me whereas (3b) does.

(3)   a. **A** student came to see me.

        b. **One** student came to see me.

c. Farkas (2002) notes that the indefinite singular is different from other determiners like singular *some* in that it can combine with most any operator (unless the operator requires a plural). She accounts for this contrast by introducing extra restrictions for *some*, that would be absent for *a*. One clear contrast between the two determiners is that *a*, but not *some*, can easily occur in the scope of a generic operator. This is illustrated in (4): whereas (4a) is fine on a generic reading, (4b) can only get a taxonomic reading.

(4)   a.   **A** seagull lays eggs in the sand. (Farkas 2002: ex. 27)

        b. # **Some** seagull lays eggs in the sand.

d. Chierchia (1998) notes that articles are in complementary distribution with covert type-shifts: languages that have articles won't allow bare nominals to undergo the type-shifts the articles instantiate covertly. For indefinite articles it's the existential type-shift which would be at play. The existence of the singular indefinite article is said to block singular bare indefinites. This property is illustrated in (5):

(5)   I saw *(**a**) dog.

The above properties are all subsumed by the following simple semantics that only attributes existential quantification to *a*:

(6) $\lambda P \lambda Q \exists x (P(x) \& Q(x))$

Property d. follows straightforwardly. Properties a. through c. follow from the absence of a richer semantics.

3   French *des*

Standard wisdom has it that *des* is a plural indefinite article. In this section, we argue that standard wisdom is right. In sections 3 and 4, we further argue that Spanish *unos* —at least in some variants of Spanish— should also be attributed article status.

The four properties identified in section 2 carry over to *des* virtually without further qualifications:

a. *Des* cannot be used in an answer to a *how many* question and can therefore be said to have no links with the number scale:

(7)   How many students came to see you?
        *****Des** étudiants sont venus.
        'DES students have come.'

b. *Des* does not – by itself – give rise to any partitive readings. (8), for instance, by no means implicates that there are students who didn't come:

(8)   **Des** étudiants sont venus. [no partitive implicature]
        'DES students have come.'

c. *Des* is compatible with most any operator. In (9) we illustrate with a generic one:

(9)   **Des** lignes parallèles ne se coupent jamais.
        'DES parallel lines never meet.'

As an aside, we note that Romance languages are different from English in that they use plural definites and not bare plurals (or their corresponding article variants) to refer to kinds (see e.g., Dobrovie-Sorin & Laca 2003). The generic flavor of generic sentences with *des* is consequently the same as the one we find in generic sentences with the singular indefinite. It's then not really surprising that we find some kind of competition between singular and plural indefinites (Corblin 1987): French will typically prefer to use the indefinite singular in generic sentences without kind reference unless plurality is at issue (as would be the case in (9)).

d. French doesn't allow for indefinite bare plurals:

(10)   J'ai vu *(**des**) chiens.
        'I saw (DES) dogs.'

The above properties strongly suggest that *des* is indeed a plural indefinite article. The only potential problem for an article analysis comes from the fact that it displays —at least to a certain extent— positive polarity behavior. This behavior pops up in (normative) variants that use *de* instead of *des* in the scope of negation:

(11)   Jean n'a pas acheté **d'**appartements.
        'Jean didn't buy DE apartments.'

(12)   Jean n'a pas acheté **des** appartements.
        'Jean didn't buy DES apartments.'

Whereas the DE variant states that Jean didn't buy any apartments, the DES variant states that there are apartments that Jean didn't buy, allowing for there to be apartments that Jean did buy.

We take the positive polarity behavior of *des* not to pose a problem for an article analysis, as it can be understood in the light of a general tendency to avoid the use of determiners in the scope of negation. The relevant insight comes from dynamic semantics: determiners are used to introduce discourse referents and to allow for their subsequent anaphoric pickup. Given that discourse referents introduced in the scope of negation are not available for anaphoric pickup, it seems reasonable to expect languages to avoid the use of full-fledged determiners in the scope of negation wherever an alternative is available. A similar intuition can explain why a preposition like *without* is one of the most likely ones to occur with a (singular) bare noun and why —outside the prepositional domain— the scope of negation sometimes allows for singular bare nouns:

(13)   They were reportedly arrested **without warrant** several days after the demon-
        strations. (British National Corpus)

(14)   Non c'era **studente** in giro. (Benincà 1980)
        'There wasn't student around.'

4   Plurality flavors

On the basis of the evidence presented in section 3, we could propose the following
semantics for plural indefinite articles and present *des* as one of the instantiations of
this type of expression:

(15) $\lambda P \lambda Q \exists x(\text{plural}(x) \& P(x) \& Q(x))$

The above semantics, however, remains implicit about what it means to be
plural, an issue that should not be taken lightly, given the recent literature on the
interpretation of plurality in which it has become standard to distinguish between
inclusive plurality (individual atoms and sums/groups) and exclusive plurality (only
sums/groups). Our proposal is to explore the idea that both types of plurality can
give rise to indefinite articles. This section presents the semantics we assume for
the two types of articles and identifies *des* as an inclusive and *unos* as an exclusive
plural indefinite article.

4.1   The semantics of plural indefinite articles

We assume the following semantics for inclusive plurality:

(16) $\lambda P \lambda x(*P(x))$

With built-in existential closure, this gives us the basic semantics for inclusive
plural indefinite articles:

(17) $\lambda P \lambda Q \exists x(P(x) \& Q(x))$

Our semantics for the exclusive plural indefinite article is modeled on that of
standard plural DPs, which we take to be group denoting expressions:

(18) $\lambda P \lambda Q \exists X(*P(X) \& Q(\uparrow X))$

4.2   *Des* is inclusive, *unos* exclusive

The inclusive plural nature of *des* is known from the literature (Bosveld-de Smet
1998, de Swart 2006, Spector 2007, among others) and is illustrated in (19):

(19)   As-tu vu **des** enfants?
        'Have you seen DES children?'
        Yes, I saw one.

This leaves us with the question whether there is an instantiation of exclusive plural indefinite articles. In section 5 we argue that *unos* —at least in some variants of Spanish— qualifies. Its exclusive nature is illustrated in (20):

(20)   ¿Viste a **unos** niños jugando en el patio? (Martí 2008: 5)
        'Did you see UNOS children play in the garden?'
        #Yes, I saw one.

5   Spanish *unos*

The properties of plural indefinite articles that hold for *des* also hold for *unos* except for one, *viz.,* that Spanish differs from French in allowing for bare plurals (see (24)). Examples (21) through (23) furthermore show, respectively, the lack of a connection between *unos* and the number scale, its lack of partitive implicatures and its compatibility with a generic operator.

(21)   How many students came to see you?
        ****Unos** estudiantes han venido.
        'UNOS students came.'

(22)   **Unos** estudiantes han venido. [no partitive implicature]
        'UNOS students came.'

(23)   **Unas** líneas paralelas nunca convergen entre sí.
        'UNOS parallel lines never converge.'

(24)   He visto (**unos**) perros.
        'I saw (UNOS) dogs.'

Perhaps surprisingly, the fact that *unos* doesn't block the existential type shift for bare plurals is expected. Indeed, given that Spanish bare plurals instantiate inclusive plurals and *unos* an exclusive plural, there is no reason to expect *unos* to block argumental bare plurals.

In the remainder of this section, we look into three properties of *unos* that would seem to make an article analysis less viable. We argue that two of them follow (directly or indirectly) from the exclusive plural nature of *unos*. For the third one, we show that there is language-internal variation and sketch analyses for both variants that are compatible with an article analysis.
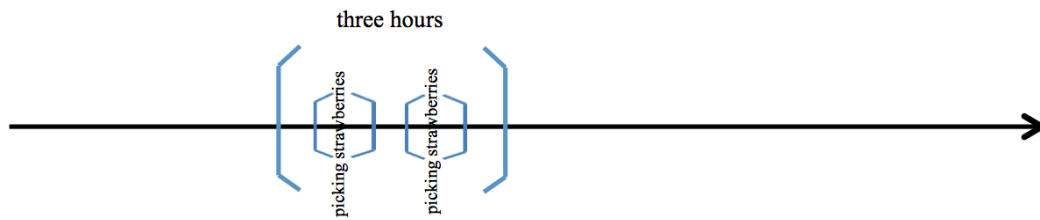
three hours

picking strawberries

picking strawberries

Figure 1 *For*-adverbials intervals.

5.1 *Unos* and *for*-adverbials

The first property is the specific behavior of *unos* when combined with *for*-adverbials:

(25) ?? He recogido **unas** fresas durante tres horas.
     'I picked UNOS strawberries for three hours.'

We note that this behavior is different from that of bare plurals, as shown in (26a, 26b), as well as from that of *des*, as shown in (26c), and could consequently be considered surprising.[1]

(26) a. I picked **strawberries** for three hours.

     b. He recogido **fresas** durante tres horas.
       'I picked strawberries for three hours.'

     c. J'ai cueilli **des** fraises pendant trois heures.
       'I picked DES strawberries for three hours.'

We propose to derive the difference between *des* and *unos* from the inclusive/exclusive distinction. In order to do so we first spell out our analysis of *for*-adverbials.

We follow Dowty (1979) in assuming that *for*-adverbials identify an interval and require the predicate (verb + object) to hold at all (relevant) subintervals. As shown in Figure 1, *picking strawberries for three hours* would e.g., identify a three hour interval and would require the predicate *picking strawberries* to hold both at the three hour interval and at all (relevant) subintervals.

What is left then is to determine what a relevant subinterval should be. One proposal would be to take subintervals that are sufficiently large so as to qualify

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1 Even though we don't work this out here, we do want to note that the behavior of *unos* forces us to prefer a Dowty-style analysis of *for*-adverbials over the one proposed by Krifka (1989). We leave a more extensive argumentation for future work.

as subintervals at which the verb can be true. This would mean that the atoms of the verb denotation would identify the size of the subintervals. We argue that this proposal can be extended by including the atoms of the object noun denotation, making the subinterval size dependent on what would seem to be natural units for counting events.

With our analysis of *for*-adverbials in place, it's not difficult to see how the behavior of *unos*, *des* and bare plurals follows: given that *des* and bare plurals are inclusive plurals, a predicate like *picking (des) strawberries* is expected to be compatible with *for*-adverbials because it can be true of a larger interval while at the same time being true of the relevant subintervals. The same doesn't hold for *picking UNOS strawberries* as this can only be true of larger intervals.

As an aside, we note that we expect English *some* to function like *unos*, but not because of its exclusive plural nature. *Some* is indeed crucially different from *unos* in that it comes with a (vague) cardinality specification as is illustrated in its different behavior in answers to *how many* questions (see example (2)).

(27)   How many students came to see you?
       Some students came to see me.

5.2   *Unos* and positive polarity

Unos has been claimed to display positive polarity behavior. This is illustrated in example (28), taken from Laca & Tasmowski (1996: 121):

(28)   A la reunión no asistieron **unos** profesores.
       at the reunion not assist   UNOS professors

       'Some professors didn't attend the reunion.' [*unos*>no / *no>*unos*]

As we noted earlier for *des*, we take positive polarity behavior to be a consequence of the availability of alternatives without determiners (*de* for French *des* and the bare plural for Spanish *unos*) and consequently don't take this behavior to endanger an article analysis.

Indirectly, the fact that *unos* —because of its exclusive plural nature— doesn't block argumental bare plurals, can then be taken to be responsible for its own positive polarity behavior.

5.3   *Unos* and collective readings

Unos subjects in Peninsular Spanish have been claimed to have a preference for collective readings (Villalta 1994, Gutiérrez-Rexach 2001,2003, López-Palma 2007, Martí 2008, Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez Benito 2012), a property that *des* lacks.

In this section, we provide an overview of the (conflicting) data in the literature and propose a sketch of an analysis without, however, making any strong claims. We then turn our attention to Mexican Spanish and argue that *unos* in this variant behaves as we would expect, in a first approximation, an article to behave, *viz.,* to allow for both distributive and collective readings.

5.3.1 The data from the literature

An often cited paper that, at least to our knowledge, has never been published is Villalta 1994. We reproduce here the crucial fragments:[2]

[*Beginning of Villalta (1994) quote*.]

Several examples show that unstressed *unos* in subject position blocks the distributive reading. Examples (29)-(32) only allow the collective reading:

(29) Durante la   mudanza, **unos** hombres levantaron una mesa.
      During the move,   some men   lifted   a   table.

      'During the move, a group of men lifted a table.'

(30) **Unos** hombres compraron un billete de lotería.
      Some men   bought   a   ticket of lottery.

      'A group of men bought a lottery ticket.'

(31) Este año, **unos** estudiantes publicaron un artículo.
      This year, some students   published an article.

      'This year, a group of students published an article.'

(32) # **Unos**   hombres se pusieron una camisa.
        UNOS men   SE put   a   shirt

        'Some men put on a shirt.'

In example (29) there can only be one table that has been lifted, in (30) there is only one lottery ticket that has been bought and in (31) there is only one article that has been published by the whole group. Notice that the example (32) is pragmatically odd because the only plausible reading is the distributive reading: it is difficult to imagine a group of men putting on one shirt together.

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2 This paper was presented at Going Romance VIII (1994). Note that for ease of reference we however adapt the numbering of the examples.

[. . .]

Notice now that an example like (33), where *unos* N combines with an inherent distributive predicate, is not a counter-example to the claim that *unos* N disallows distributive readings: the same is in fact possible for collective NPs, as shown in (34):

(33)　**Unos** niños dormían en el jardín.
　　　'Some children were sleeping in the garden.'

(34)　**Un grupo** de niños dormía en el jardín
　　　'A group of children was sleeping in the garden'.

This last example shows that inherent distributive predicates can also apply to collective NPs (which do not allow for distributive readings). Thus, the possibility of *unos* N showing up in these contexts is not unexpected.

[. . .]

[U]nos N can combine with an explicit distributive operator, *cada uno* (each), and the distributive reading is then the only possible reading, as illustrated in (35):

(35)　**Unos** estudiantes publicaron un artículo **cada uno**.
　　　Some students　　published　an article　each one.
　　　'Some students each published an article.'

[*End of quote.*]

The facts Villalta (1994) presents can be summarized as follows: *unos* leads to collective readings with mixed predicates (see (29) to (32)) and it leads to distributive readings with inherently distributive predicates (see (33) to (35)).[3] Even though Villalta does not provide examples with an inherently collective predicate, we assume that she would have claimed it to be compatible with *unos* DPs as well. To account for these data, one could make the following assumptions:

(36)　a. Standard plural indefinite DPs are ambiguous between a group and a sum denotation.

　　　b. *Unos* is different in only allowing for a group denotation.

　　　c. Verbal predicates come in three guises: (i) those that can only take group atoms, (ii) those that can only take individual atoms and (iii) those that can take both group and individual atoms.

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3 We take *cada uno* to transform any predicate into an intrinsically distributive predicate.

     d. Verbal predicates that can only take individual atoms can shift to a version with a built-in ungrouping operator when combining with group denoting DPs.

On the basis of these assumptions, the facts follow straightforwardly. *Unos* DPs can directly combine with predicates that only take group atoms, a combination that leads to collective readings. The clash that pops up when we combine *unos* DPs with predicates that only allow for individual atoms is resolved by the predicate shift that introduces an ungrouping operator, leading to a distributive reading. No clash pops up when *unos* DPs are combined with mixed predicates and there will consequently be no shift. The resulting reading is consequently a collective one.

The analysis sketched above makes *unos* into a special determiner within the plural indefinite paradigm, but still allows us to maintain that *unos* is a more basic determiner than the others in the sense that the ability to generate a sum interpretation can be modelled as a supplementary ingredient. An article analysis would consequently not be endangered.

Another view on *unos* is defended by Gutiérrez-Rexach in a series of publications. For concreteness, we'll focus on the facts presented in Gutiérrez-Rexach 2003 and we will oppose them to the ones in Villalta 1994.

Contra Villalta 1994, Gutiérrez-Rexach (2003) claims that *unos* DPs cannot appear in the subject position of intrinsically distributive predicates. He provides the following examples:[4]

(37)   * **Unos**   estudiantes se   pusieron los pantalones. (2003: 427)
           UNOS students   themselves put   the trousers

           'Some students put on their trousers.'

(38)   **Unos**   estudiantes comieron una tarta (*cada uno). (2003: 430)
           UNOS students   ate   a   cake (*each one)

           'Some students each ate a cake.'

In agreement with Villalta (1994), Gutiérrez-Rexach (2003) claims that *unos* DPs are compatible with collective predicates and can only lead to collective readings with mixed predicates.

(39)   **Unos**   estudiantes se   reunieron en el pasillo. (2003: 427)
           UNOS students   themselves gather   in the corridor

           'Some students gathered in the corridor'.

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4 Gutiérrez-Rexach (2003) actually doesn't state that this judgement goes against Villalta (1994). In fact, he actually states that this judgement is in accordance with that of Villalta.

(40) **Unos** estudiantes levantaron una mesa. (2003: 430)
      UNOS students   lifted   a   table

      'Some students (together) lifted a table'/ *'Some students (each) lifted a table'.

The crucial difference between Villalta (1994) and Gutiérrez-Rexach (2003) then is that Villalta claims that *unos* DPs are compatible with intrinsically distributive predicates, whereas Gutiérrez-Rexach claims they are not.

To account for *unos* while respecting the data presented by Gutiérrez-Rexach is difficult, not only within an article analysis but also more generally because Gutiérrez-Rexach's intuition boils down to stating that there is no way to recover the individual atoms that underlie the group atoms the referents of *unos* DPs consist of. This surprising intuition has not really found support in the literature. López-Palma (2007) e.g., claims that the group atoms *unos* DPs introduce can be accessed:

> A cluster-denoting expression [i.e. a group denoting expression] can become transparent, and its atoms can be accessible to syntactic operations if the speaker gives a sufficiently rich description of the group that would enable him to individuate the atoms. The marked distributive reading, which may be obtained when the indefinite has a specific interpretation, can be favored by the deictic interpretation of tense, the informative structure, the syntactic structure, or by the presence of identifying nominal modifiers, like a relative sentence complement, or certain adjectives. (López-Palma 2007: 259)

López-Palma argues that *unos* allows for an ungrouped (and hence for a distributive) interpretation in a number of contexts that she subsumes under the label 'specific'. Specificity being typically speaker-defined (see e.g., Fodor & Sag 1982), one could however wonder whether the specificity criterion is not more pragmatic than semantic. Indeed, if the speaker intends to refer specifically, it's unclear why he/she would have to mark this explicitly, especially when the verbal predicate already indicates that a 'specific' (ungrouped) interpretation should be at play.

This brings us to Martí (2008) who notes, in agreement with Villalta (1994), that *unos* DPs are compatible with inherently collective and inherently distributive predicates:

(41) **Unos** chicos se   reunieron en la oficina. (Martí 2008: 23)
      UNOS boys   themselves gathered in the office

      'Some boys gathered in the office'.

(42)   **Unos** chicos se   pusieron los pantalones al   llegar   al
       UNOS boys   themselves put   the trousers   at-the arriving at-the
       gimnasio. (Martí 2008: 23)
       gym

       'Some boys put on their trousers when they arrived at the gym.'

Martí's basic intuition is that *unos* DP subjects are not imposing a collective reading, but rather a reading in which the agents do things "together". This is reminiscent of what Villalta notes about example (33):

> [O]bserve that *unos* N has "group" behavior in the sense of Lasersohn (1991): when collective action is impossible (when the NP combines with an inherent distributive predicate), the interpretation of *unos* N necessarily requires spatio-temporal proximity of the participants. (Villalta 1994)

In order to implement these intuitions, only a small change in the assumptions in (36) would be necessary, *viz.,* that the ungrouping shift hinted at in (36d) should come with the extra requirement that the events the members of the group are said to be the (individual) agents of should be spatio-temporally close to one another. The "group" effect is then transferred from the subject DP to the verbal predicate. We note that this would not affect the semantics of *unos* DPs.[5]

As we said at the beginning of this section, we don't want to make any strong claims about the collectivity/distributivity of Peninsular Spanish *unos*. What we hope to have done though is to give a fair overview of existing claims and to sketch how, on the basis of the intuitions of Villalta (1994) and Martí (2008), we could maintain that Peninsular *unos* counts as an indefinite article.

5.3.2   *Unos* in Mexican Spanish

The case of Mexican *unos* is significantly simpler than the one of Peninsular *unos*. This is due to the fact that the literature doesn't report any conflicting judgements but also —we would like to claim— to the fact that intuitions are very clear and in line with an analysis that would take *unos* to behave like any other indefinite determiner in being compatible with all types of predicates, allowing for collective and distributive readings with mixed predicates (see (43)), not requiring any spatio-temporal adjacency when allowing both for collective and distributive readings, and

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5 Note also that a similar group-transfer effect is not expected for other indefinite plural DPs combining with inherently distributive predicates. This is due to the fact that other indefinite plural DPs always have a sum interpretation at their disposal anyway (see assumption (36a)).

not requiring any spatio-temporal adjacency with inherently distributive predicates (see (44)).

(43)   a. **Unos**   estudiantes adoptaron un perro. Le   pusieron Paul. [collective]
          UNOS students   adopted   a dog him named   Paul

          'Some students adopted a dog. They named him Paul.'

       b. **Unos**   estudiantes adoptaron un perro. El de María es negro y   el de
          UNOS students   adopted   a dog   the of María is black and the of
          Silvia es gris. [distributive]
          Silvia is grey

          'Some students adopted a dog. María's is black and Silvia's is grey.

(44)   **Unos**   estudiantes míos de historia vinieron ayer   al   despacho.
       UNOS students   mine of history came   yesterday to_the office

       'Some students of my history class came to my office yesterday.'

The first sentences of (43) contain a mixed predicate. The continuations in (43a) and (43b) follow-up on the collective and the distributive readings respectively. In Peninsular Spanish, (44) has been claimed to only allow for a reading in which all the students came at the same time (Martí 2008: 21). In Mexican Spanish however, the students might have come at different times (be it of course within the timeframe provided by *ayer*).

The facts in (43) and (44) show that any account of the collective/distributive contrast that has been proposed for plural indefinite determiners can easily be extended to Mexican Spanish *unos*. This means that no special provisos have to be made for this determiner and that an article analysis is easy to maintain.

In this section, we have shown that there are at least two variants of Spanish one should take into account when assessing the article status of *unos*, *viz.,* Peninsular and Mexican Spanish. For Mexican Spanish, the article status of *unos* is straightforward in the sense that it doesn't differ from other indefinite determiners and there's consequently no reason to assume that its semantics should be complicated beyond what we have claimed in section 4.2. Peninsular *unos* is another matter and would require us to make a certain number of assumptions. We have however refrained from working these out in detail given that the interpretational facts connected with Peninsular Spanish are far from agreed upon in the literature. What is crucial for us though is that there is a variant of *unos* that behaves exactly in the way we would expect an exclusive plural indefinite article to behave.

6 Summary and conclusion

In this contribution, we have argued that both *des* and *unos* (esp. Mexican *unos*) have the properties we expect plural indefinite articles to have, *modulo* the distinction between inclusive and exclusive plurality. In particular, we have argued that the two are expected to differ in blocking and aspectual properties. Next to an exploration of the viability of the idea that plural indefinite articles come in two guises, the present contribution can also be interpreted as a defense of an analysis of *unos* as the least marked plural indefinite determiner in Spanish, in line with the work by Martí (2008) and Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez Benito (2012).

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