



Department of
Spanish & Portuguese

Extended non-target optionality in L2 Grammatical Gender: An overabundance of constraints

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Evolving Perspectives on Advancedness

February 16, 2018



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The Gender Feature

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Early focus of research on gender in SLA

- A parametric feature
- Acquireability in adulthood

An interface feature (Kirova, 2016)

- Syntax
- Semantics
- Morphology
- Lexicon

Outline

Gender feature

Assignment

Optionality

Syntactic analysis

Research Qs

Hypotheses

Methodology

Results

Conclusions

Assigning gender: distributive factors

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External factors

- Syntactic

 - Determiners

 - El libro / La novela
 - Mi / Tu / Su llave
 - El/La mar / sartén
 - El agua / águila / arma

 - Adjectives

 - Contento/a
 - Feliz / rosa / inteligente

Internal factors

- Semantic

 - El hombre / la mujer
 - El personaje / La víctima

- Morphological

 - El mapa / planeta / día
 - La mano / foto / radio

- Lexical

 - puente / fuente
 - pincel / cárcel

(Gagliardi, 2012)

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Optionality

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The coexistence within an individual grammar of two or more variants of a given construction that utilize the same lexical resources and express the same meaning (Sorace, 2000).

- Target optionality:
 - I hope (that) you can come.
 - Ojalá (que) puedas venir.
- Non-target optionality:
 - El fantasma que está allí es *la fantasma más escalofriante.
 - La barba *rojo

This presentation focuses on non-target optionality found within the noun phrase, as in the second example above.

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Multiple Grammars

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- The process of L2 acquisition consists of filtering the input through the grammatical rules of the L1.
- When the L1 grammar cannot accommodate the L2 input, the learner posits a new grammatical rule in the interlanguage.
- **The proliferation of grammatical rules is the primary source for optionality in all stages of L2 acquisition.**

(Amaral & Roeper, 2014)

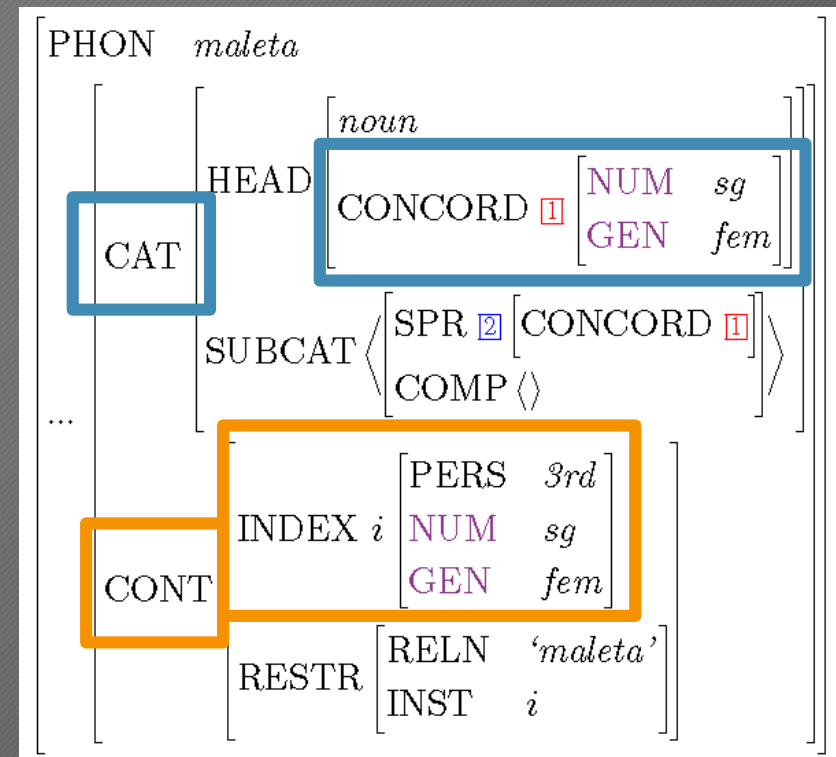
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Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG)

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- **CAT(EGORY)**: morphosyntactic features
- **CONCORD**: morphosyntactic agreement
- **CONT(ENT)**: semantic features
- **INDEX**: referential agreement features



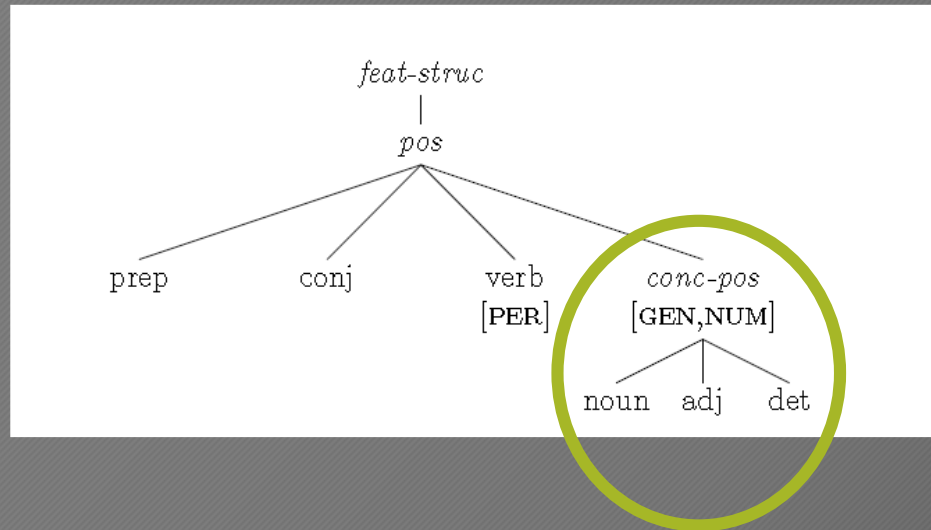
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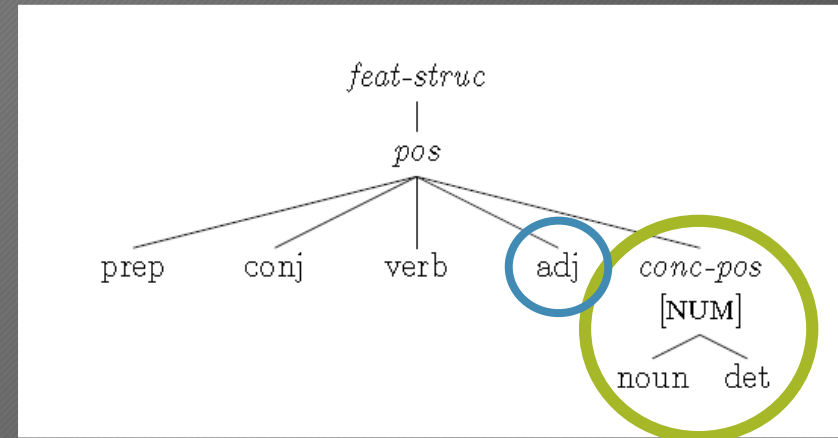
Feature structures

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Spanish & Portuguese



English



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Hypotheses

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H1. There will be no difference in results between L1 Spanish and L2 Spanish / L1 Portuguese speakers.

H2. Speakers will not produce noun phrases that violate restrictions in their L1.

H3. Adjectives will be primary non-target element.

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Methodology

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- Participants:
 - L1 Spanish (n=24)
 - L1 Brazilian Portuguese / L2 Spanish (n=24)
 - L1 English / L2 Spanish (n=24)
- 18 situations, pre-recorded, presented with images
- Nonce nouns manipulate gender & morphology, 6 versions in a Latin Square design:

		Morphology		
		Transparent	Neutral	Deceptive
Gender	Masculine	El taplino	El tapline	El taplina
	Feminine	La taplina	La tapline	La taplino

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Example

TAPLINO



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1

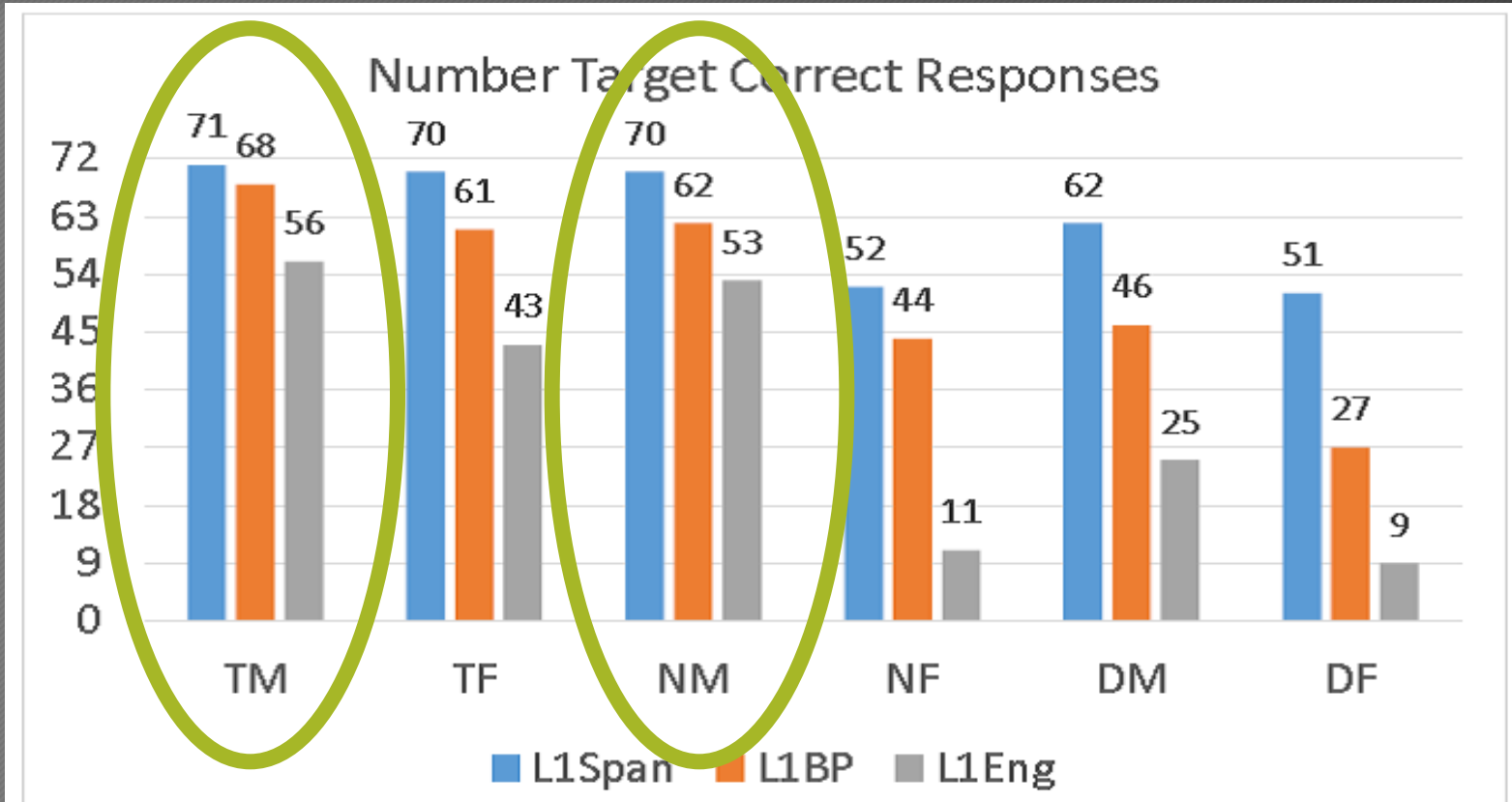




Pulse la barra espaciadora para seguir.

Results

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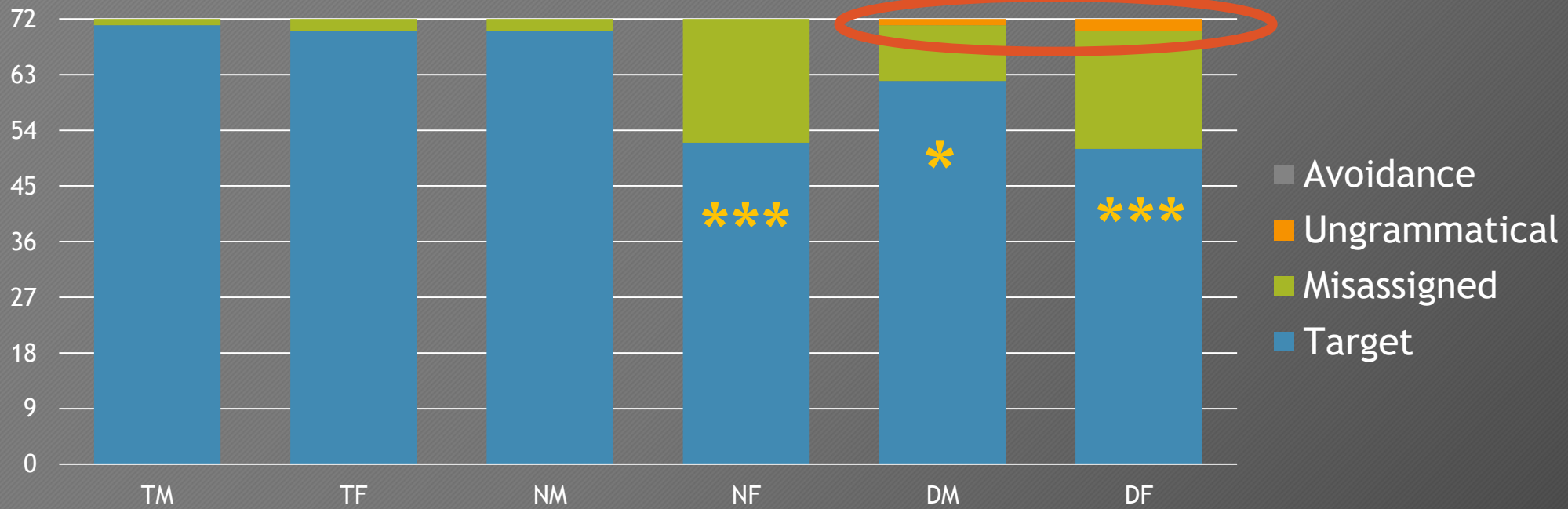
TM	TF	NM	NF	DM	DF
El taplino	La taplina	El tapline	La tapline	El taplina	La taplino

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L1 Spanish Results

L1 Spanish Production Results by Type



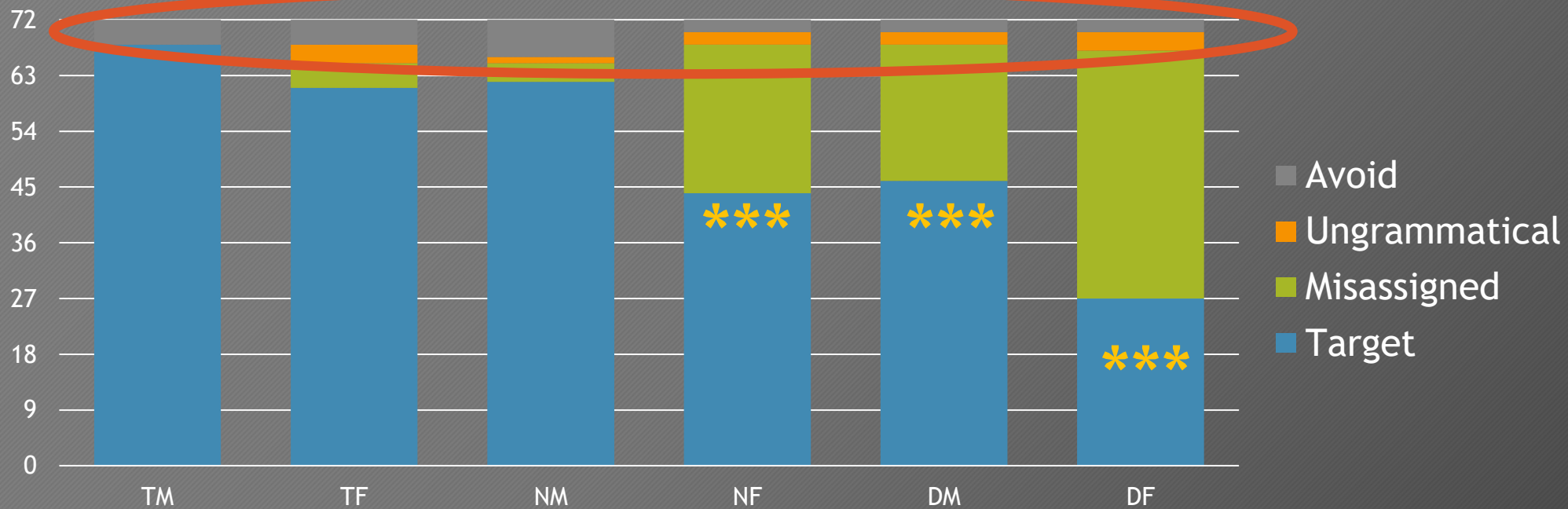
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L2 Spanish / L1 BP

L1 BP Production Response by Type



TM	TF	NM	NF	DM	DF
El taplino	La taplina	El tapline	La tapline	El taplina	La taplino

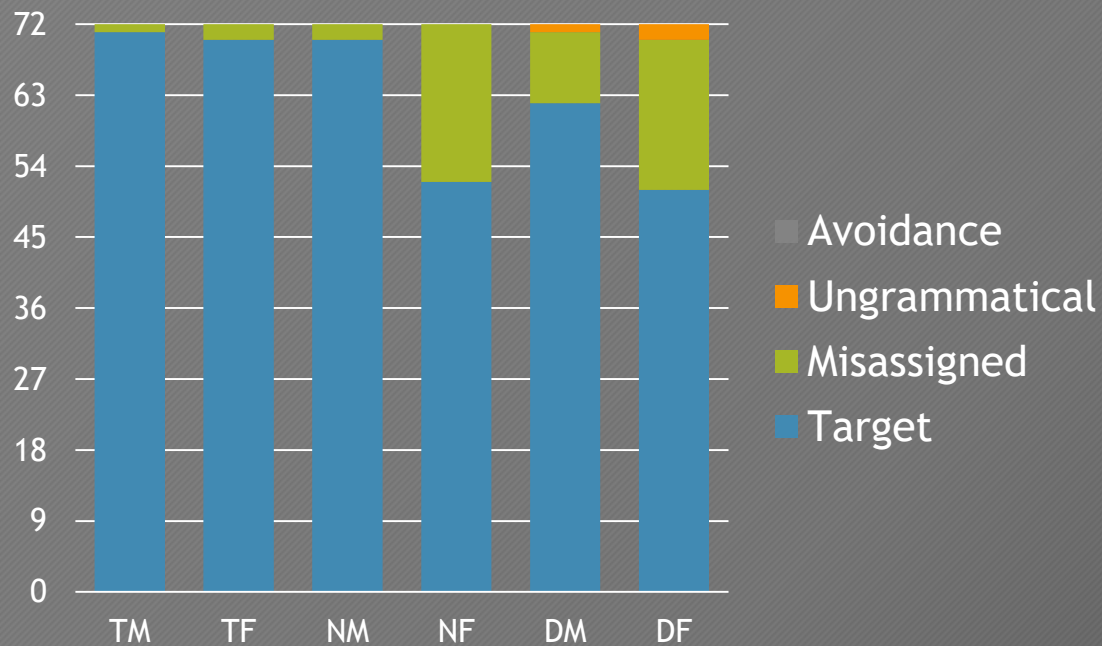
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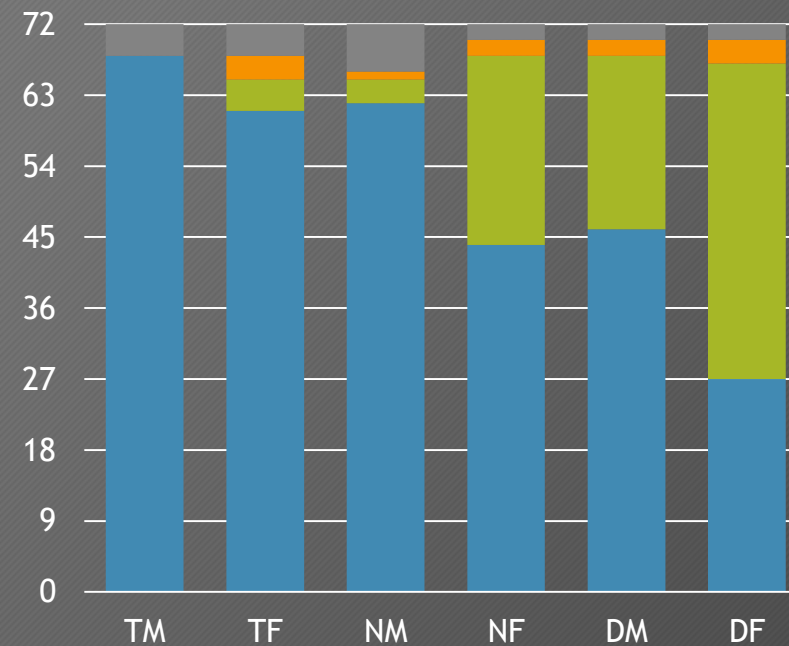
L1 Spanish vs. L1 BP

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L1 Spanish Production Results



L1 BP Production Response



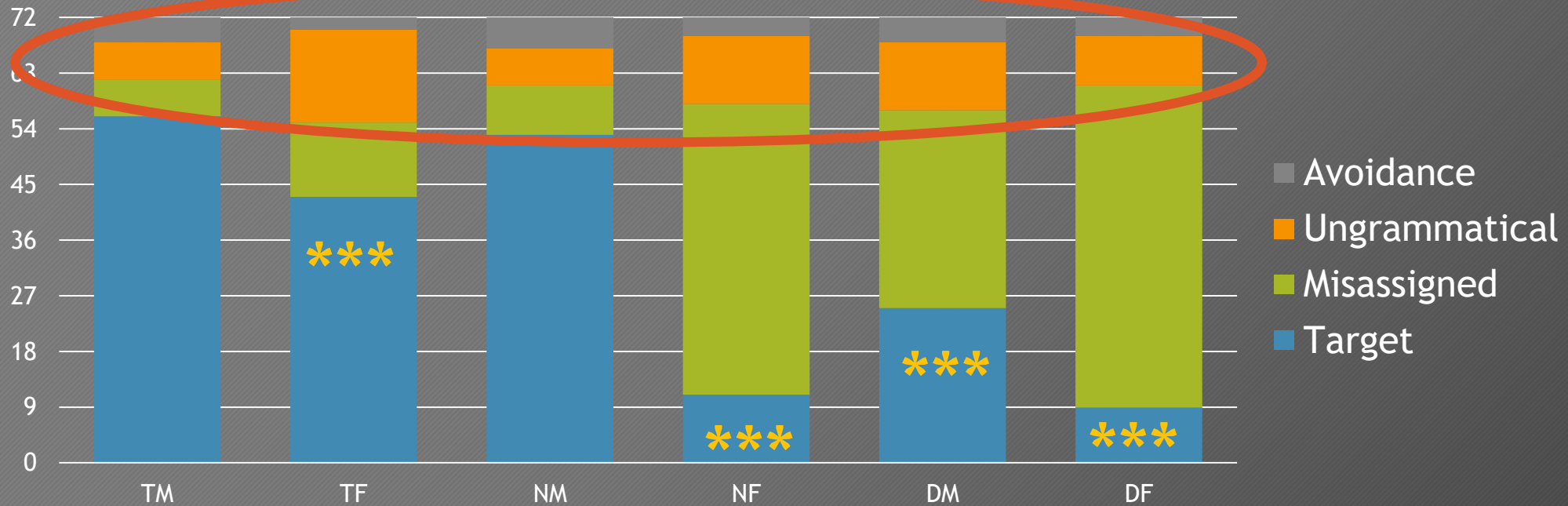
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L2 Spanish / L1 English

L1 English Production Results by Type



TM	TF	NM	NF	DM	DF
El taplino	La taplina	El tapline	La tapline	El taplina	La taplino

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Instances of Optionality within the NP

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	Transparent		Neutral		Deceptive		TOTAL
	masc	fem	masc	fem	masc	fem	
L1 Spanish	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
L1 BP	0	3	1	2	2	3	11
L1 English	6	15	6	11	11	8	57

TM	TF	NM	NF	DM	DF
El taplino	La taplina	El tapline	La tapline	El taplina	La taplino

*Una taplino amarillo (DF)

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Non-target elements

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	Non-target determiner	Non-target adjective	Total
L1 Spanish	0	3	3
L1 BP	7	4	11
L1 English	39	18	57

Returning to the hypotheses

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H1. There will be no difference in results between L1 Spanish and L2 Spanish / L1 Portuguese speakers.

- **Not confirmed**, L1 BP speakers depend more on noun morphology

H2. Speakers will not produce noun phrases that violate restrictions in their L1.

- **Not confirmed**, non-target optionality is present in all three groups

H3. Adjectives will be primary non-target element.

- **Not confirmed**, L1 English speakers make more errors with determiners than with adjectives

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Origin of optionality

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Internal origin

- Clash of feature values within the noun itself

External origin

- Mapping feature values to new lexical items
- Restrictions from the L1

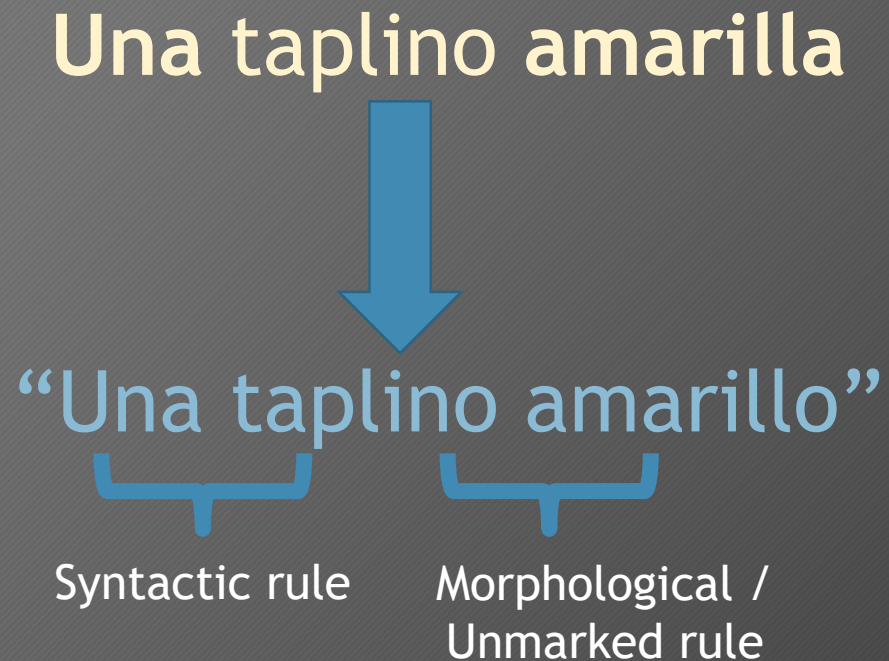
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Internal origin optionality

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- **Syntactic rule:**
 - “Una” + noun = feminine
- **Morphological rule:**
 - Noun with -o = masculine
- **Unmarked gender rule:**
 - With no evidence to the contrary, noun = masculine



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External origin optionality

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Spanish

Portuguese

English

PHON *maleta*

CAT	HEAD	[<i>maleta</i>]
	CONCORD	[NUM <i>sg</i> GEN <i>fem</i>]
	SUBCAT	{ <i>NP</i> [CONCORD [1]]}
	COMP	{}
...		
CONT	INDEX	{ <i>PERS</i> <i>3rd</i> NUM <i>sg</i> GEN <i>fem</i> }
	RESTR	{ <i>RELN</i> <i>'maleta'</i> <i>INST</i> <i>i</i> }

PHON *mala*

CAT	HEAD	[<i>mala</i>]
	CONCORD	[NUM <i>sg</i> GEN <i>fem</i>]
	SUBCAT	{ <i>NP</i> [CONCORD [1]]}
	COMP	{}
...		
CONT	INDEX	{ <i>PERS</i> <i>3rd</i> NUM <i>sg</i> GEN <i>fem</i> }
	RESTR	{ <i>RELN</i> <i>'mala'</i> <i>INST</i> <i>i</i> }

PHON *suitcase*

CAT	HEAD	[<i>suitcase</i>]
	CONCORD	[NUM <i>sg</i>]
	SUBCAT	{ <i>NP</i> [CONCORD [1]]}
	COMP	{}
...		
CONT	INDEX	{ <i>PERS</i> <i>3rd</i> NUM <i>sg</i> }
	RESTR	{ <i>RELN</i> <i>'suitcase'</i> <i>INST</i> <i>i</i> }

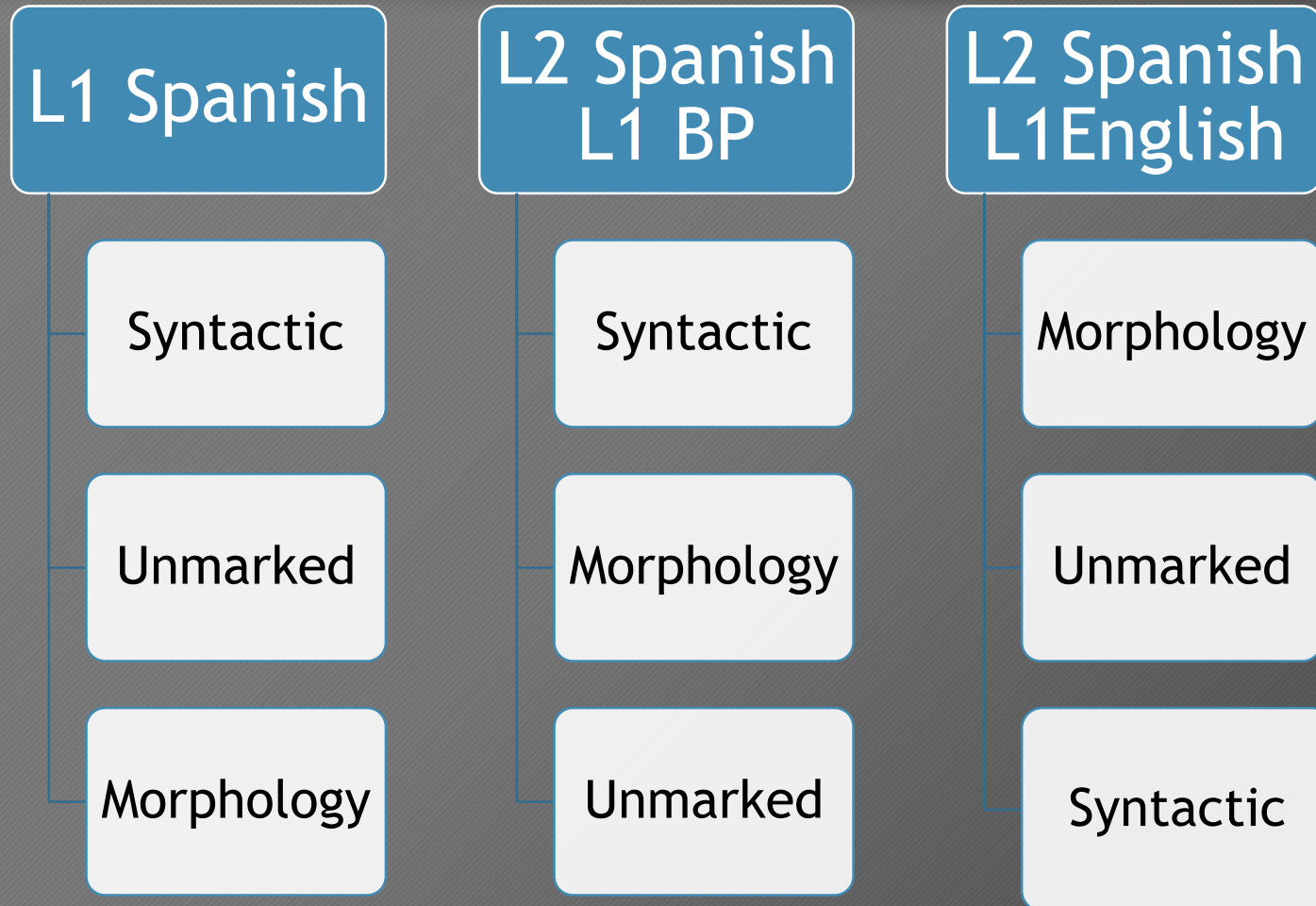
L1 Restrictions

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Hierarchy of gender assignment rules

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Final Thoughts

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- Gender is a complex interface phenomenon
- L2 speakers need to map features to new lexical items
- Depending on their L1, L2 speakers may also have to reassemble their L2 feature structures so that all parts-of-speech that inflect for gender fall under the *CON-POS*
- The more conflicting constraints involved (internal or from L1), the more possibilities exist for speakers to implement non-target constraints at the moment of production

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Gracias
Obrigada
Thank you
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**Evolving Perspectives on Advancedness:
A Symposium on Second Language Spanish**

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