1. Singular Descriptions and Cumulative Reference. Brazilian Portuguese allows count
bare NPs (CBNs) in argument positions (Schmitt and Munn 1999, inter alia). CBNs are
morphologically unmarked, but semantically number neutral. They carry no plural
morphology, but can be resumed by plural anaphoric pronouns at the discourse level:

(3) Maria comprou CD na Fnac. Eles estão no carro.
    Mary bought CD at Fnac they are in-the car
    'Mary bought CDs at Fnac. They are in her car'.

The crucial data (due to Ferreira (2010)) that we discuss is related to how CBNs behave
with respect to some instances of plurality-seeking predication. Consider, for instance, (4)
and (5):

(4) Eu vi aluno se cumprimentando.
    I saw student SE greeting
    'I saw students greeting themselves/each other'.

(5) a. Eu vi aluno que estava se cumprimentando.
    I saw student that was SE greeting
    'I saw students who were greeting themselves.

b. Eu vi alunos que estavam se cumprimentando.
    I saw students that were SE greeting
    'I saw students who were greeting themselves/each other.'

The crucial observation is that (4) is ambiguous, allowing both a reflexive and a reciprocal
reading, whereas (5a), built with a relative clause containing an inflected verb marked as
singular, blocks the reciprocal reading; compare (5b), built with a BP and a verb marked as
plural, which allows the reciprocal reading. These data suggest the singular number marking
on the verb of the relative clause induces a singular interpretation of the CBNs in (5a).
Nevertheless, the CBN in (5a) is naturally resumed by a plural pronoun. Not only (4) and
(5b), but also (5a) can be followed by a sentence such as they looked crazy.

To account for this somewhat paradoxical situation, in which CBNs that seem to
refer to (quantify over) atomic individuals are resumed by plural pronouns, we propose a
solution that distinguishes between predicates of entities (NP-level) and the
cardinality/measuring of entities (higher up).

(6) Syntactic Analysis of (5a)
[DP[D Ø] [QntP [Qnt Ø] [NP [CBN student] [relative clause ... was SE-greeting ...]]]]
NP is a predicate of atomic entities; QntP is a cumulative predicate

Given that the verb in the relative clause is singular, the reciprocal reading of SE is filtered
out and the relative clause is interpreted as a predicate of atoms. Since the relative clause
and the CBN combine intersectively, we end up with a NP denoting a set of atoms. Qnt turns
sets of atoms into sets of amounts that are characterized by the atomic property described by
the NP, namely over amounts of atomic individuals each of which is greeting
himself/herself. Finally, Det denotes a choice function that selects an element of the QntP
denotation.

2. Amounts and Pluralities
But what are amounts? We propose that amounts should not be equated with individuals and
that the denotation of CBNs is not the closure under sum formation of a set of atoms, that is, bare nominals are not like bare plurals. Our motivation is the following: Dayal (2007) observed in relation to Hindi and Hungarian that certain plurality-selecting verbs, e.g., compare, allow BPs but do not allow number-neutral CBNs, in contrast with other plurality-selecting verbs, e.g., collect, which allow both BPs and CBNs. The contrast between CBNs and BPs seems to also hold in Brazilian Portuguese:

\[(7)\]  
\[\begin{align*}
    &\text{a. } \text{João coleciona selo} & &\text{b. } \text{João coleciona selos} \\
    &\text{João collects stamp} & &\text{João collects stamps}
\end{align*}\]

\[(8)\]  
\[\begin{align*}
    &\text{a. } \text{?? João compara selo} & &\text{b. } \text{João compara selos} \\
    &\text{João compares stamp} & &\text{João compares stamps}
\end{align*}\]

Our proposal is that compare (other verbs like compare: to enumerate, to list, to mix ...) imposes a distinctness condition on its plural argument. Such a distinctness condition has been discussed in relation with the difference between collective terms vs plural terms (see Moltmann 1997):

\[(9)\]  
\[\begin{align*}
    &\text{a. } \ast \text{John compares this family} & &\text{(also enumerate, list, etc.)} \\
    &\text{b. } \text{John compares the members of this family.}
\end{align*}\]

The unacceptability of (8a) can be analyzed, on a par with that of (9a), as being due to a violation of the distinctness condition imposed by compare. Our proposal is that (i) the distinctness constraint can only be satisfied by plurality-referring terms, obtained via Link's pluralization operator. Bare plurals as well as plural definite DPs denote plural individuals (generated from a set of atoms) and as such they satisfy the distinctness condition imposed by compare-type predicates. CBNs on the other hand denote amounts of individuals, which are not obtained via pluralization, and as such are not good arguments for compare-type predicates.

More concretely: in a universe with three cats, \(\{\text{cat+sg}\} = \{c_1, c_2, c_3\}\) and \(\{\text{cat+pl}\} = \{c_1, c_2, c_3, c_1+c_2, c_1+c_3, c_2+c_3, c_1+c_2+c_3\}\). When it comes to amounts, \(c_1\) would not be different from \(c_2\), they would both count as "amounts of cat" perceived as having one minimal part (cat-unit). More generally, the distinction between \(c_1, c_2, c_3\) is blurred and all we have now can be represented as \(c\#\). Likewise, \(c_1+c_2\) would not be different from \(c_2+c_3\), for instance, both being amounts of cat perceived as having two minimal parts (cat-unit). More generally, the distinction between \(c_1+c_2, c_1+c_3, c_2+c_3\) would be blurred and we now have \(c##\). Finally, instead of \(c_1+c_2+c_3\), we have \(c###\). We assume that the silent head Quant is a function that turns sets of individuals into sets of amounts: \(\text{Quant} [\text{NP cat }] = \{c\#, c##, c###\}\).

Our conclusion is that number neutrality should be kept distinct from inclusive plurality and that number-neutral CBNs refer to amounts of individuals. Since the entities that make up an amount are not identifiable/distinguishable, the atoms are not retrievable/accessible from a CBN denotation.

**Selected References:** Dayal, Veneeta 2004, Number marking and (in)definiteness in kind terms. L&P 27; Ferreira, Marcelo. 2010. The Morpho-Semantics of Number in Brazilian Portuguese Bare Singulners. Journal of Portuguese Linguistics; Schmitt, Cristina and Munn, Alan 1999. Against the Nominal Mapping Parameter: Bare nouns in Brazilian Portuguese. Proceedings of NELS 29