



Partitivity across domains: an introduction

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Abstract

This introduction provides an overview of current research on partitivity. The contributions in this volume collectively address several persistent challenges in the analysis of partitivity, such as (i) the semantic underspecification of partitive markers, which are not always transparently associated with the part-whole relation; (ii) the connection between partitive markers and indefiniteness and negation; (iii) the diachronic development of partitive markers and their relation to other categories, such as determiners and prepositions; and (iv) the syntactic structure of binominal constructions. Overall, we hope that these contributions advance our understanding of the many empirical and theoretical problems that partitivity poses for linguistic theory.

Keywords: partitivity; negation; syntax; semantics; genitive; source; partitive; (in)definiteness

Resum. *La partitivitat en els diferents dominis: una introducció*

Aquesta introducció ofereix una visió general de la recerca actual sobre la partitivitat. Les contribucions d'aquest volum abordem diversos reptes persistents en l'anàlisi de la partitivitat, com ara (i) la subespecificació semàntica dels marcadors partitius, que no sempre s'associen de manera transparent amb la relació part-tot; (ii) la connexió entre, d'una banda, els marcadors partitius i, de l'altra, la (in)definitud i la negació; (iii) el desenvolupament diacrònic dels marcadors partitius i la seva relació amb altres categories, com ara els determinants i les preposicions; i (iv) l'estructura sintàctica de les construccions binominals. En conjunt, esperem que aquestes contribucions facin avançar el nostre coneixement dels nombrosos problemes empírics i teòrics que la partitivitat planteja per a la teoria lingüística.

Paraules clau: partitivitat; negació; sintaxi; semàntica; genitiu; origen; partitiu; (in)definitud

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1. Introduction

This special issue of the *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* brings together several papers on the concept of partitivity, with a focus on partitive markers in understudied and peripheral domains. These domains include exclamative sentences (Villalba 2003), nominal ellipsis and dislocated constituents (Mensching 2020; Saab 2022), negative contexts (Pesetsky 2013; Garzonio & Poletto 2020), quantified expressions (Ionin et al. 2006; Corver 2009), binominal qualitative constructions (den Dikken 2006; Saab 2022), and the diachronic evolution of partitive constructions (Traugott 2008; Espinal & Cyrino 2022). Together, these contributions shed light on the role of partitivity in syntax and semantics, and its linguistic instantiations in natural languages.

The term *partitive* usually describes nominal constructions that semantically express the relation between a set of individuals and a part of it (e.g., *three of the students*). Partitives have long been of interest for both syntacticians and semanticists in linguistic research since the seminal works by Jackendoff (1968, 1977) and Selkirk (1977). Recently, partitives have received renewed attention as attested by the number of publications on this topic (e.g. Falco & Zamparelli 2019; Ihsane & Stark 2020; Sleeman & Giusti 2021; Sleeman & Luraghi 2023). Research on partitivity has focused on the cross-linguistic typology of partitive constructions, the relation between partitivity, quantification, measurement, and proportion (Solt 2019; Bale 2022; Pasternak & Sauerland 2022), and the possibility of a unified analysis of constructions involving partitive markers (see, among others, Ionin et al. 2006).

Partitivity is at the core of natural language semantics. The part–whole relation seems to be a fundamental property of language. Champollion and Krifka (2016), for instance, propose that relevant concepts such as the mass/count distinction, the denotation of plurals, or (a)telicity can be formalized as a mereology. The idea that partitivity is the basic notion for different theories of nominals and verbal aspect has been proposed in many different works (see de Hoop 2003 for an overview). This relation has direct consequences for syntax and semantics. For example, pseudo-partitive constructions are subject to a well-known restriction whereby only those measures that are monotonic can appear in pseudopartitive measure constructions. See, for example, the minimal pair below (from Champollion & Krifka 2016: 529; see also Schwarzschild 2002):

- (1) a. Three liters of water
b. *Three degrees of water

Only measures that track the part–whole structure of their complement are licensed in pseudopartitive constructions. In other words, for a measure such as *three liters*, every proper subpart of the denoted quantity corresponds to a smaller volume than the whole. By contrast, the measure *three degrees* instantiates a non-monotonic measure function, since it applies uniformly to an entity and to its proper parts (e.g., the temperature of the water is identical for the whole and for its subparts). A parallel distinction emerges in the nominal domain. Definite DPs such as *the cat* are referential expressions that denote a maximal individual and do not extend to its proper parts. Mass singular nouns such as *sugar*, by contrast, are cumulative predicates: if the predicate applies to a given entity, it also applies to its subparts. These contrasts thus reflect the idea that part–whole relations are linguistically relevant notions.

Partitivity is encoded in various ways among languages, ranging from case markers to adpositions, pronouns, and verbal morphology (Luraghi & Kittilä 2014). In Finnish, for instance, partitivity is marked in the case system. In English, the preposition *of* appears in partitive constructions, like *half of the students*. Similarly, in Romance languages, the preposition *de* functions as a partitive marker. In languages like Italian or French, *de* has also been analyzed as a determiner, raising questions about its syntactic category and semantic contribution. Markers of this type are often semantically underspecified and occur in contexts where their connection to partitivity is less transparent. For example, Dutch *van* appears both in partitive constructions as well as in binominal qualitative NPs, (e.g., *hij is een idioot van een dokter* ‘he is an idiot of a doctor’, den Dikken 2006: 169). The distribution of such markers across constructions poses a significant challenge for the syntactic and semantic analysis of partitivity.

This volume brings together several papers that collectively address fundamental questions concerning the semantic underspecification of partitive markers, which allows them to appear in a variety of syntactic contexts, a phenomenon reminiscent of the “too many meanings” problem of possessives discussed by Myler (2016).¹ The problem of syncretism of partitive markers is explicitly examined in the contributions by Kayne and Espinal and Gianollo. Kayne concludes that syncretic elements are consistently the same exponent associated with different silent elements that encode distinct meanings. Similarly, Espinal and Gianollo argue that the *en/ne* clitic is not a genuine partitive marker, but rather a pronoun anaphorically linked to a property denoting nominal. Expanding on this line of inquiry, Cyrino and Espinal provide further evidence that *de*-NPs in Romance languages and non-canonical genitives in Russian are in fact indefinites containing an abstract *DE* operator (cf. Pesetsky 2013). Like Kayne, Cyrino and

1. Notably, the possessive relation itself is syntactically encoded as a part–whole relation in many languages (Stassen 2009).

Espinal address the puzzle of why languages encode the same abstract operator through different syntactic strategies. Challenging the unification approaches of Kayne, Cyrino and Espinal, and Espinal and Gianollo, Saab proposes that the Spanish partitive marker *de* in binominal constructions can instantiate two distinct types of genitives, with compelling evidence drawn from ellipsis. Taken together, these contributions offer complementary perspectives on the semantic underspecification of partitive markers, highlighting both cross-linguistic patterns and language-specific mechanisms.

In the remainder of this section, we provide an overview of the main theoretical problems discussed in previous work on partitivity markers, which serve as the foundation for the contributions in this volume. Specifically, we focus on: (1) partitivity markers within nominals; (2) partitivity markers in the context of negation; (3) the grammaticalization of partitivity markers and their relation to the source preposition; and (4) partitivity markers in dislocated elements and exclamatives.

2. Partitivity markers within nominals

Partitivity markers appear within nominals across a variety of contexts. The prototypical structure associated with partitivity is the partitive construction (Jackendoff 1968, 1977; Selkirk 1977), a binominal configuration comprising two DPs: DP_1 , which denotes the subset, and DP_2 , which denotes the superset. Importantly, the partitive construction encodes the part–whole relation in a semantically transparent way and plausibly serves as the source for other DPs that exhibit partitivity marking (Luraghi & Kittilä 2014). A defining property of the partitive construction is that the second nominal must be definite, a restriction known as the Partitive Constraint (Jackendoff 1977). The example below, in Catalan, illustrates this construction, where the referent of the second nominal has necessarily been introduced previously in the discourse.

- (2) Van arribar tard dues d'aquelles persones.
 AUX arrive late two of those people
 'Two of those people arrived late.'

Partitivity markers also appear in NPs that do not qualify as partitives under the definition provided above. For example, some constructions fail to satisfy the canonical partitive constraint, as in the pseudopartitive construction illustrated in (3). Pseudopartitives typically consist of a first nominal interpreted non-referentially as a quantity or a semilexical noun denoting a quantity (van Riemsdijk 1998; see Klockmann 2017 for an overview), followed by a second bare count plural noun or a mass singular noun.

- (3) Va menjar un plat/ un tou de pomes/sucre.
 AUX eat a dish/ a mass of apples/sugar
 'He/she/it ate a dish/a lot of apples/sugar.'

In addition to pseudopartitives, partitive markers appear in constructions that are not binominal. So-called “bare partitives” (Chierchia 1998) consist of nominals introduced by the genitive preposition *de* combined with a definite determiner, yet they receive an indefinite interpretation, as illustrated with the Italian example in (4), from Falco and Zamparelli (2019: 3). The analysis of bare partitives and their relation to canonical partitive constructions have generated substantial debate (Chierchia 1998; Ihsane 2008; Martí 2011; Cardinaletti & Giusti 2018; Espinal & Cyrino 2022). The central problem is that bare partitives lack the semantically transparent part–whole relation that characterizes canonical partitives and do not require a linguistically established definite antecedent. For instance, in the example in (4), it is unclear whether the expression denotes a subset of a contextually salient superset or instead introduces a plurality without reference to any previously established whole. The absence of a transparent semantic relation between full and bare partitives challenges analyses that derive bare partitives directly from the canonical partitive construction.

- (4) Dei ragazzi sono qui.
 of.the boys are here.
 ‘Some boys are here.’

Turning to other types of binominal constructions, partitivity markers also appear in qualitative nominals (den Dikken 2006; Villalba & Bartra 2010; Saab 2022) and related constructions. In these constructions the NP₁ (which can be definite or indefinite) expresses an evaluation/quality of the second NP. Previous analyses have proposed that there is a predicative relationship between the two nominals and that the partitive marker is like a copular element (den Dikken 2006). More recently, Saab (2022, this volume) challenges such analyses and proposes that the *de* is the exponent of genitive case (Pesetsky 2013).

- (5) a. Compré una mierda de apartamento.
 I.bought a shit of apartment
 ‘I bought a shitty apartment.’
 b. Conoció al granuja del doctor.
 he.met at.the rascal of.the doctor
 ‘He met that rascal of a doctor.’

The constructions discussed above exhibit partitive markers even in the absence of a genuine partitive interpretation. These phenomena pose challenges for linguistic theory regarding the semantic underspecification of partitive markers and the viability of a unified syntactic account for all of them.

3. Partitivity markers and negation

Partitive markers can appear in several syntactic contexts cross-linguistically. For example, in Finnish, objects can be marked with either partitive or accusative case, with a difference in interpretation (Kiparsky 1998; de Hoop 2003).

- (6) a. Ammu-i-n karhu-a.
 shoot-PST-1SG bear-PARTE
 b. Ammu-i-n karhu-n.
 shoot-PST-1SG bear-ACC
 ‘I shot the (a) bear.’

When the object appears with the accusative case, the verb denotes a bounded event, an accomplishment, while when the object bears partitive case, it denotes an unbounded event, an activity. This distinction has also been analyzed in terms of complete vs. partial objects: that is, if the event affects the object completely, accusative is used; if it affects the object only partially, it appears in the partitive (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001: 655).

In Finnish, as in the Baltic and Slavic languages, the accusative/partitive alternation also occurs in other environments. The partitive/genitive alternation is sensitive to the aspectual interpretation of the predicate, as discussed above, but also to the referentiality (definiteness) of the object. A case in point is the example below, found in Polish ((7); Holvoet 1991: 110, *apud* Laugalienė 2022), in which the genitive appears with an imperfective form. In this case, the interpretation is that the pencil is given to someone only for a brief period of time, conveying the idea of partial transfer. Similar uses are found in Russian and Ukrainian (see Laugalienė 2022: 95).

- (7) Da-j mi ołówk-a.
 give-IMP 1SG.DAT pencil-GEN.SG
 ‘Hand me a pencil (for a while).’

Negation also triggers partitivity markers across these languages, as illustrated in (8), in Finnish.

- (8) a. Matti e-i myy-nyt talo-a (#talo-n)
 Matti-SG.NOM not-3SG sell-PST.PART house-SG.PART(house-SG.ACC)
 ‘Matti didn’t sell the/a house’

The fact that negation enables the presence of the genitive or partitive across languages has been described in Miestamo (2014), who provides a typological survey of the phenomenon. Miestamo claims that the partitive of negation is an areal phenomenon, as it affects several European languages in different, unrelated linguistic families. Examples can be found in the languages mentioned above (Slavic languages, Finnish (8), and Baltic languages), as well as in Basque ((9) vs. (10); from Luraghi et al. 2020: 888).

- (9) Amaiak goxokiak jan ditu. [definite / existential]
 Amaia.ERG candy.DEF.PL eat AUX.3OBJ.PL.3SBJ.SG
 ‘Amaia has eaten (the) candies.’
- (10) Amaiak ez du goxokirik jan. [*definite / existential]
 Amaia.ERG NEG AUX.3OBJ.SG.3SBJ.SG candy.PAR eat
 ‘Amaia has not eaten any candy.’

In Basque, for example, the partitive can alternate with the absolutive in the object position of a transitive predicate, although the partitive is restricted to an indefinite reading. If, in this case, Amaia has not eaten a particular or specific candy, the object is marked with the partitive. Similarly, French exhibits alternation between the determiner *de* and the indefinite article in the object position of transitive predicates and in existentials when they appear under the scope of negation.

Although the phenomenon is absent outside European languages, similar changes in object marking are observed in other linguistic systems, also affected by negation (Miestamo 2014: 80, Table 2). The presence of negation causes different types of changes: (i) alternation to partitive/genitive (Finnish, Slavic, Basque, etc.); (ii) change to a partitive determiner (Polynesian languages; French); (iii) omission or restrictions on the use of the article (Albanian, Hungarian, Nambikuára); (iv) absence of a default determiner (Kita Maninka; Bantu languages); (v) appearance of an obligatory class marker (Nunggubuyu); (vi) absence of a referentiality marker on the verb (Hdi); (vii) presence of a partitive marker on the verb (Paamese); (viii) effects on focus marking (Aghem, Kanuri, Lavukaleve); and (ix) effects on alignment (Northern Gê). Overall, negation appears to cause objects to be interpreted as non-referential or non-specific, or as partially affected.

It therefore appears that partitive marking can be triggered by factors not directly related to the part–whole relation. Key triggers include negation, aspect, and their interaction with object specificity, referentiality, or delimitation. The genitive/partitive alternation in negated contexts has been widely analyzed, with both syntactic (e.g., Pesetsky 2013) and semantic proposals (e.g., Borschev & Partee 2002; Partee & Borschev 2004; Kagan 2013). Some scholars argue that the partitive of negation is heterogeneous: in certain languages it is semantically motivated, while in others it is syntactically conditioned (Sigurðsson & Šereikaitė 2024). For instance, Miestamo (2014) argues that in Finnish, negated events are interpreted as not completely affecting the object, unlike affirmative events, whereas in Lithuanian, the phenomenon is better accounted for syntactically (Arkadiev 2016). The precise interaction between partitivity and negation, and what lies at the core of this alternation, remains an open question.

4. The grammaticalization of partitivity markers

It is generally assumed that in many languages, today's genitive or partitive markers emerge as grammaticalized forms of Latin and Old Romance lexical elements with meanings such as, for instance SOURCE. Thus, partitive markers were subject to the *grammaticalization cline*, or *grammaticalization cycle* (Meillet 1912; Roberts & Roussou 2003; Roberts 2007; and van Gelderen 2011, among others) by which lexical contentful independent elements turn into functional dependent elements that are semantically and phonologically bleached such as clitics and affixes and sometimes even omitted altogether in the structures which keep the partitive meaning. Nevertheless, there is neither a uniform nor a parallel evolution across languages, even genetically related ones, and no general grammaticalization path of partitive markers, since, as pointed out, *partitivity* embraces different constructions with different markers. Therefore, there is no such thing as “the evolution of partitive constructions”.

Focusing on the Latin–Romance family, one must consider a first set of partitive constructions: noun phrases containing nouns denoting parts of a bigger or whole entity or amount, measure phrases, quantity adjectives, and cardinal and ordinal numerals. The complement selected by these elements used to bear a genitive complement in Latin. Romance constructions derived from the Latin ones tend to bear the correspondents of the Latin preposition *de* with nouns denoting parts and measure phrases but offer different solutions with the other elements. Cardinal and ordinal numerals tend to behave as prenominal modifiers and quantity adjectives differ in Romance varieties: some of them have a preposition whereas others do not. As a result, quantificational nominals have often been considered partitive in the descriptive literature, mainly due to the presence of the preposition. Formal analyses have shown that they only partially fulfill a partitivity criterion and are characterized as pseudopartitives (Falco & Zamparelli 2019 and others). Measure phrases mostly appear to select a *de* preposition. But several analyses consider the measure phrase to be a predicate which is preposed to the noun or the adjective and connected to it by a Relator (den Dikken 2006); therefore, the preposition would not bear a partitive meaning, being a functional element deprived of any semantic content (Corver 2009; Martí 2011; Eguren & Pastor 2014; and others).

One of the apparently clearest changes is the one undergone by NPs with a mass noun or a bare plural head in object position. In several Old Romance languages, such constructions were introduced by a *de* preposition with a SOURCE interpretation, a fact that can be directly linked to the observation that some Latin partitive complements were introduced by *de* selecting the ablative case with the same SOURCE meaning. The identification of genitive case and partitive is still under debate (Sornicola 2020: 289–290). The preposition was present in Old Spanish and Old Catalan but was lost in the transition from the Late Medieval to the Modern period; French, on the other hand, developed a partitive article. Its behavior is only partially similar to that in Italian, which maintains the article only with a definite coda, i.e., a true partitive construction. Therefore, partitive articles create a contrast between Spanish and Catalan on one hand, and Italian and French on the other (Gerards & Stark 2021).

A well-known marker associated with partitives in French, Italian, and Catalan is the pronoun *en/ne*. Not all descendants of the Latin ancestor of the partitive *ne*, INDE, have survived; whereas Italian, French and Catalan have a so-called “pronoun” *ne*, this is not the case in Spanish. Even closely related languages like Sardinian and Sicilian differ in their evolution (Bentley 2004: 540-542). There is near general agreement that Latin INDE had a spatial source meaning, a meaning that apparently survived in Old Romance, but which cannot be clearly assigned a semantic bleached value and therefore should not necessarily be identified with partitivity in the oldest stages of Romance. In addition, in these old varieties partitive constructions cannot be clearly disentangled from indefinite quantified constructions (Camus Bergareche 2009; Mare 2020), which manifest the preposition *de*.

5. Partitivity and exclamatives

Several Romance languages display a quantificational *wh*-exclamative with a structure resembling pseudopartitives, as in the following Spanish (RAE 2010, para. 42.13e) and French examples (Abeillé & Godard 2021: 1439-1441):

- (11) a. ¡Qué de niños!
 what DE children
 ‘How many children!’
- b. ¡Qué de flores han salido!
 what DE flowers have.3PL bloom.PTPC
 ‘How many flowers have bloomed!’
- (12) a. Que de progrès il a fait!
 what DE progress he have.3SG make.PTPC
 ‘How much progress he has made!’
- b. Combien de voyages insensés il a faits!
 how.much DE trips crazy he have.3SG make.PTPC
 ‘How many crazy trips he has taken!’

These exclamatives are synonymous with the following pseudopartitives with a quantity noun:

- (13) a. ¡Qué multitud de niños!
 what multitude DE children
 ‘What a crowd of children!’
- b. ¡Qué montón de flores ha/han salido!
 what heap DE flowers have.3SG/have.3PL bloom.PTPC
 ‘What a ton of flowers have bloomed!’

- (14) a. Quelle foule d'enfants!
 what crowd DE=children
 'What a crowd of children!'
- b. Quelle multitude de fleurs!
 what multitude DE flowers
 'What a lot of flowers!'

Non-*wh*-exclamative sentences also form the pseudopartitive structure, but they differ regarding the availability of the null nominal version. On the one hand, exclamatives with *vaya/menudo* (Tirado 2016; Bosque 2017; Espinal et al. 2024) must include the quantity noun:

- (15) a. ¡Vaya/Menuda *(multitud) de niños!
 what/what multitude DE children
 'What a crowd of children!'
- b. ¡Vaya/Menudo *(montón) de flores ha/han salido!
 what/what bunch DE flowers have.3SG/have.3PL bloom.PTPC
 'What a lot of flowers have bloomed!'

On the other hand, definite exclamatives allow a feminine construction, which according to the RAE (2010: 42.16m), is possibly formed by elision of the feminine noun *cantidad* 'quantity':

- (16) [Sp.: RAE (2010: 42.16m)]
- a. ¡La de veces que se lo he dicho!
 the.F DE times that DAT.3SG.CL ACC.3SG.CL have.1SG say.PTPC
 'How many times have I told him/her so!'
- b. No sabes la de amigos que tiene.
 not know.2SG the.F DE friends that have.3SG
 'You don't know the huge number of friends (s)he has.'

Another feature of these exclamatives concerns quantifier-split. French does allow movement of the *wh*-element, leaving the *DE*+NP stranded (cf. ex. (12) above):

- (17) [Fr.: Abeillé & Godard 2021: 1439-1441]
- a. Qu'il a fait de progrès!
 what=he have.3SG make.PTPC DE progress
 'How much progress he has made!'
- b. Combien il a fait de voyages insensés!
 how.much he have.3SG make.PTPC DE trips crazy
 'How many crazy trips he has taken!'

In contrast, as happens with pseudopartitives generally (17),(18), this DE+NP structure cannot be dislocated nor fronted in exclamatives (19)-(21):

(18) [Sp.: RAE (2010, para. 42.13e)]

- a. *De niños, vi (a) una multitud!
 DE children see.PST.1SG DOM a multitude
 ‘I saw a crowd of children!’
- b. *De flores, ha/han salido un montón!
 DE flowers have.3sg/have.3PL bloom.PTPC a bunch
 ‘A ton of flowers have bloomed!’

(19) [Fr.]

- a. *De voyages, j’ai fait un grand nombre.
 DE trips I=have.1SG make.PTPC a big number
- b. *D’arguments, une majorité sont excellents.
 DE=arguments a majority be.3PL excellent.PL

(20) a. *¡De niños, qué multitud!

DE children what multitude

- b. *¡De flores, qué montón ha/han salido!
 DE flowers what bunch have.3SG/have.3PL bloom.PTPC

(21) a. *D’enfants, quelle foule!

DE=children what crowd

- b. *De fleurs, quelle multitude!

DE flowers what multitude

This paradigm is possibly amenable to an analysis treating pseudopartitivity as involving a null AMOUNT/NUMBER nominal (Kayne 2005, 2007, 2008), which the exclamative *wh*-word quantifies over (cf. Sáez 2017: 66-67, who argues that *DE* is the degree head):

(22) a. ¡Qué AMOUNT de niños!

what AMOUNT DE children

‘How many children!’

- b. ¡Qué AMOUNT de flores han salido!

what AMOUNT DE flowers have.3PL bloom.PTPC

‘How many flowers have bloomed!’

(23) a. Que AMOUNT de progrès il a faits!

what AMOUNT DE progress he have.3SG make.PTPC

‘How much progress he has made!’

- b. Combien AMOUNT de voyages insensés il a faits!
 how.much AMOUNT DE trips crazy he have.3SG make.PTPC
 ‘How many crazy trips he has taken!’

This idea may give us a hint regarding the following cases with *DE* in Spanish described by the RAE (2010: par. 20.2g), which could be analyzed as involving a null QUANTITY nominal, along the lines already suggested for the definite exclamative in (16):

- (24) a. Aquí falta de todo.
 here lack.3SG DE all
 ‘Here there lacks everything.’
 b. No tenemos de nada.
 not have.1PL DE nothing
 ‘We don’t have anything.’

Albeit tentative, such an approach may help us to offer a simpler explanation of the parallels found between exclamatives and pseudopartitives, while at the same time suggesting a certain universal tendency to incorporate silent elements not linked to a previous antecedent as part of a readability requirement: the null nominals allow syntax to offer a more transparent mapping to the semantic interpretative component (Kayne 2021). Moreover, it opens a way for building a connection between the pseudopartitive cases just referenced, with the observation by Villalba (2001, 2003) regarding two kinds of understudied degree exclamative sentences in Catalan²:

- (25) (Institut d’Estudis Catalans, §34.3.1.2)
 a. Que n’és, d’impressionant, aquest poema!
 that PART.CL=be.3SG DE=impressive this poem
 ‘How impressive this poem is!’
 b. Com és d’impressionant, aquest poema!
 how be.3SG DE=impressive this poem
 ‘How impressive this poem is!’

In both cases an exclamative operator quantifies over the degree associated with the denotation of the adjective, quite similarly to standard *wh*-exclamatives as exemplified in (26):

- (26) Que maco que és!
 how nice that be.3SG
 ‘How nice it is!’

2. Exclamatives like Catalan (25a) (*that*-exclamatives) are found in Germanic languages as well, but they are not necessarily degree exclamatives, unlike our construction. See Trotzke & Villalba (2020, 2021) and Villalba (2023) for a review.

Crucially, in the constructions in (25), the exclamative operator (a null one in (25)a, and *com* in (25)b; see Villalba 2003 for details) leaves the adjective stranded in situ, and an obligatory marker *de* must appear.³ A similar pattern is found in Romanian and Spanish, with variations:

- (27) a. Cat de înalt e acel turn! [Rom.: (Giurgea 2015)]
 how DE high be.3SG that tower
 ‘How high that tower is!’
- b. ¡Cómo eres de bella! [Sp.: (Bosque 2017: 21)]
 how be.2SG DE beautiful
 ‘How beautiful you are!’
- c. ¡El Nahuel Huapi es de bello! [Sp.: Masullo (2017: 109)]
 the Nahuel Huapi be.3SG of beautiful
 ‘The Nahuel Huapi is so beautiful!’

Hopefully, these exclamative sentences might prove to be related to quantified constructions like the following, which also include a *DE* marker and a close affinity with pseudopartitives, as highlighted by Brucart and Rigau (2002, sec. 8.2):

- (28) a. Té molts (de) llibres.
 have.3SG many DE books
 ‘(S)he has many books.’
- b. No he anat a cap (de) mercat.
 not have.1SG go.PTPC to none PART market
 ‘I did not go to any market.’

The connection of these quantified constructions with pseudopartitives becomes clearer if we consider the form *mntó* ‘heap, ton’, typical of Valencian Catalan. This form may appear as a typical nominal in pseudopartitives (29a), but also as a degree modifier with the form *a mntó* (29b,c):

3. In contrast, the *de* marker is not found in French, Italian, or Portuguese:
- (i) a. Que cette histoire est obscuré!
 that this story be.3SG dark
 ‘How dark this story is!’ (Fr.: Gérard-Naef 1980)
- b. Come sarà stanco!
 how be.FUT.3SG tired
 ‘How tired he will be!’ (It.: Benincà 1995)
- c. Como você é ambicioso!
 how you.formal be.3SG ambitious
 ‘How ambitious you are!’ (Port.: Lima & Neto 2021)

Interestingly, the presence of the marker *DE* in dislocations is not necessarily linked to its availability in positions within the sentence. Note, for instance, the case of South Occitan variants and Sardinian, which as we have just seen must insert *de* in bare noun dislocates, but contrast regarding the form of the bare noun in object position⁵:

- (31) a. Bimus (*de) abba. [Sardinian: (Jones 2005)]
 drink-1PL DE water
 ‘We drink water.’
- b. Bimus meta abba.
 drink-1PL much water
 ‘We drink a lot of water.’
- (32) a. Se contentava de beure d’aiga cauda
 REFL satisfied of drink.INF DE=water hot
 e de manjar de pan de segal. [Occitan: BaTelÒc]
 and of eat.INF DE bread of rye
 ‘He was content to drink hot water and eat rye bread.’
- b. D’en premier, mon paire beviá ges d’alcoòl
 of=in first my father drink.PST.3SG none DE=alcohol
 o DE vin... [Occitan: BaTelÒc]
 or de wine
 ‘At first, my father drank neither alcohol nor wine...’

The marker *DE* in the Occitan examples has usually been analyzed as a partitive determiner (similarly to French and Italian; see Cardinaletti & Giusti 2016, 2018; Ihsane 2020; Espinal & Giusti 2024; and others). Hence, one can export this analysis to the dislocation cases in languages like Catalan or Sardinian: these languages have a *null* partitive determiner in argument position which somehow becomes overt when the DP is dislocated.⁶ This is essentially the idea defended by Martí (2011), which allows her to build the following parallel pattern of dislocation with partitives (33), pseudopartitives (34), and bare nouns (35):

5. North Occitan dialects and Franco-Provençal display a fully-fledged *DE*+article construction, like French.
6. Spanish doesn’t display the marker *DE* in dislocations (RAE 2010: par. 20.2g):
 - (i) Agua, no tenemos
 water not have.1pl
 ‘Water, we don’t have (any).’

However, we find the marker in some cases, like the following, discussed by RAE (2010: 20.2g):

- (ii) De agua potable, solo quedan dos litros.
 de water drinking only remain.3PL two liters
 ‘Of drinking water, there remain only two liters.’

- (33) a. Només conec una de les nenes.
 only know.1SG one DE the girls
 ‘I only know one of the girls.’
- b. De les nenes, només en conec una.
 DE the girls only PART.CL know.1SG one
 ‘Of the girls, I only know one.’
- (34) a. Tinc un munt de llibres.
 have.1SG a bunch de books
 ‘I have a bunch of books.’
- b. De llibres, en tinc un munt.
 DE books PART.CL have.1SG a bunch
 ‘Of books, I have a bunch.’
- (35) a. Només tinc un llibre.
 only have.1SG one book
 ‘I only have one book.’
- b. De llibre, només en tinc un.
 DE book only PART.CL have.1SG one
 ‘I only have one book.’

Martí argues that the marker *DE* is playing the same role in all three cases: it is a functional category necessary for the noun to obtain case (cf. the proposal by Espinal & Cyrino, this volume). Setting aside technical details, linking partitivity with quantification structures has considerable appeal, since it allows us to explain the appearance of the marker *DE* (sometimes linked to a partitive clitic) in constructions where the notion of partitivity has no bearing. For example, Martí (2011) deals with the marker *DE* preceding adjectives in nominal ellipsis contexts in Catalan⁷:

- (35) Tinc dos pantalons blaus i un de negre.
 have.1SG two trousers blue and one DE black
 ‘I have two pairs of blue trousers and a black pair.’

Significantly, the very same marker *DE* also precedes dislocated adjectives in Catalan:

7. These uses are different from the French partitive construction with an adjective, where the *DE* preceding the adjective is the partitive determiner (see Mensching 2020: 821):
- (i) a. De poires, j'en ai de bonnes.
 DE pears I=PART.CL have.1SG DE good.PL
 ‘I have good pears.’
- b. J'ai de bonnes poires.
 I=have.1SG DE good.PL pears
 ‘I have good pears.’

(35) e [Cat.]

- a. De blau, no ho/n'és pas.
 DE blue not NEUT.CL/PART.CL=be.3SG NEG
 'Blue it is not.'
- b. No m'ho sembla gaire, de car.
 not REFL=NEUT.CL seem.3SG any DE expensive
 'It doesn't seem expensive to me.'

To sum up, while the marker *de* seems mostly connected to the partitive clitic, its distribution is far more complex than that of the partitive marker *de* of French or Occitan, and it seems to be connected as well to adjectives not only in exclamative sentences, but in a bigger set of contexts. Hence, devising a unified treatment for all these cases in Romance represents a formidable challenge for the future.

7. The articles in this volume

The article by Sonia Cyrino and M.Teresa Espinal, “French *de* nominals and Russian non-canonical genitives. Are they partitive-like nominal expressions?” approaches the issue of count bare nominals under the scope negation receiving a particular marking, such as partitive *de* in French (*Jean n'a pas trouvé de livres* ‘John hasn't found (any) books’) or genitive case in Russian (*Anna ne kupila knig* ‘Anna didn't buy (any) books’). Against traditional accounts, Cyrino and Espinal rely on a semantic approach to the issue, proposing that these bare nominals are not partitive NPs but rather indefinite NPs under a non-veridical context. For them, both *de* and genitive case are the overt reflex of a semantic operator DE that shifts the original object-denoting DP (itself derived from a property) to a property-type object. Moreover, the resulting indefinite DP in French must be licensed by a non-veridicality operator, which explains its narrower distribution compared with its Russian genitive counterpart, and finds a parallel in the Russian *irrealis* genitives studied by Kagan (2013).

The article by M.Teresa Espinal and Chiara Gianollo, “The non-partitivity of Catalan and Italian nominal *ne*”, offers a critical assessment of the analyses of Catalan and Italian nominal *ne* clitic, and argues that it cannot be analyzed as a prepositional, partitive or quantitative clitic, but must instead be considered a property-denoting anaphora, as previously suggested by Espinal and Cyrino (2022). They review well-known data and offer new empirical support for an analysis of *ne* as a pro-NP, which is unmarked for gender and number, and whose antecedent is a non-specific weak indefinite nominal expression.

The paper “Antihomophony and English *of*” is another brick in Richard Kayne's reductionist program by which he gets rid of polysemic lexical items in the languages' lexicon. The principle responsible for this reduction is *antihomophony*, according to which, in the functional lexicon, identity in phonology implies identity in all features. The first part of the article is devoted to explaining the principle of antihomophony, first by showing that the principle must be limited to the functional subpart of the lexicon, given that there are truly homophonous contentful lexical

items. Moreover, the crucial identity involved in antihomophony concerns phonology, not phonetics. Some apparent counterexamples are debated before addressing the main point, the existence of only one *of*, the apparent polysemy of which is explained by establishing a parallel between the structures containing overt *out* and those containing a silent abstract *out*.

In “NP-Ellipsis Patterns in Spanish Binominals: A New Empirical Observation and its Theoretical Implications”, Andrés Saab investigates the syntactic structure of certain *de*-NPs that appear in pseudopartitives (*un grupo de estudiantes*, ‘a group of students’), quantitative binominals (*un montón de estudiantes*, ‘a ton of students’), and qualitative binominal constructions (*una mierda de departamento*, ‘a shitty apartment’). Although these constructions are superficially similar, they differ in semantic interpretation and syntactic behavior. Saab furthers the investigation by introducing new evidence from ellipsis. He shows that qualitative binominals do not permit ellipsis of the second nominal, whereas pseudopartitives and quantitative binominals do. He therefore proposes that qualitative binominals contain an Equative Phrase relating the *de*-NP to an empty nominal ranging over properties (Saab 2022), while the codas of pseudopartitives and quantitative binominals are NPs realized as primeval genitives in the sense of Pesetsky (2013). Saab’s contribution provides compelling evidence that genitive marking derives from distinct structural sources, thereby challenging a unified syntactic analysis of these constructions.

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