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**DISENTANGLING BARE NOUNS  
AND NOMINALS INTRODUCED  
BY A PARTITIVE ARTICLE**

*edited by Tabea Ihsane*

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## Disentangling Bare Nouns and Nominals Introduced by a Partitive Article

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# Disentangling Bare Nouns and Nominals Introduced by a Partitive Article

*Edited by*

Tabea Ihsane



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# Glosses and Abbreviations

## Glosses

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
ALL	allative
APUD	apudlocative: marking the spatial relations of proximity (e.g., English 'nearby') or more specifically 'at the (habitual) sphere of' (e.g., French <i>chez</i> ).
ART	article
COMP	complementizer
DAT	dative
DE	<i>of</i> as an uninflected counterpart of the partitive article
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determiner
DOM	differential object marking
F	feminine
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HON	honorific
IMP	imperative
IMPF	imperfect
INDF	indefinite
INF	infinitive
IPFV	imperfective
IPG	independent partitive genitive
LOC	locative
M	masculine
N	neuter
NEG	negation, negative
NMLZ	nominalizer/nominalization
NOM	nominative
NUM	number
OBJ	object
PA	partitive article (with indefinite interpretation)

PART	partitive pronoun (typically EN in French and Catalan, and NE in Italian, Aragonese)
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PRN	pronoun
PRS	present
PRTV	partitive phrase
PST	past
PTCP	participle
Q	quantifier
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
SBJ	subject
SBJV	subjunctive
SG	singular

### Abbreviations

AIS	Jaberg Karl, Jud Jakob, <i>Sach- und Sprachatlas Italiens und der Südschweiz</i> , Zofingen, Ringier, 1928–1940.
ALAVAL	Atlas Linguistique Audiovisuel du Francoprovençal Valaisan
BFM	Base de Français Médiéval
BREL	Bureau Régional Ethnologie et Linguistique
CDE	Corpus del Español
CORDE	Corpus Diacrónico del Español, anonymous, 1242–1275
DOI	Differential Object Indexing (or Differential Object Cliticization)
ENHG	Early New High German
IE	Indo-European
KOM	Kind-oriented Mode of talk
LOD	Lëtzebuenger Online Dictionnaire
LWB	Luxemburger Wörterbuch
MHG	Middle High German
NHG	New High German
OFROM	Corpus Oral de Français de Suisse Romande
OHG	Old High German
OLDES	Corpus of Old Spanish
OT	Old Testament
ROI	Representative Object Interpretation
SWD	Short Weak Definite

# Introduction

*Tabea Ihsane*

## 1 Setting the Scene

Several Romance languages, but also a few Germanic languages like Luxembourgish, feature, inside their systems of nominal determination, an element traditionally called “partitive article”. This article is generally found in contexts where many European languages like Spanish, English, or German have bare plurals and bare mass nouns, a parallel which led to various semantic analyses treating these nominal expressions analogously (Bosveld-de Smet 1998; Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade 2012; a.o.).

Examples (1) and (2) illustrate the “partitive articles” *du/des* (of.the) in French and *del/dei* (of.the) in Italian, historically a conflation of the prepositions *de/di* ‘of’ and the definite article, and their bare counterparts in the English translations.

(1) French

a. *Hier, Jean a acheté des livres.*

Italian

b. *Ieri Gianni ha comprato dei libri.*  
 yesterday John has bought PA.PL books  
 ‘Yesterday John bought (some) books.’

(2) French

a. *Hier, Jean a bu du vin.*

Italian

b. *Ieri Gianni ha bevuto del vino.*  
 yesterday John has drunk PA.M.SG wine  
 ‘Yesterday John drank (some) wine.’

Despite their label, “partitive articles”, mainly attested in modern Romance varieties, do generally not express a part-whole relation: this interpretation, deriving from a preposition *de* ‘of’ plus definite article, is limited to the object

of a restricted class of verbs like ‘eat’ or ‘drink’ (Englebert 1992; Kupferman 1979). The most common interpretation of “partitive articles” is their indefinite use (Storto 2003; Le Bruyn 2007; Ihsane 2008; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006, 2016, 2018): in (1), *des livres/dei libri* means ‘(some) books’ and, in (2), *du vin/del vino* means ‘(some) wine’. Indeed, singular “partitive articles” such as *du* in French *Je bois du vin* (‘I drink wine’), which are typologically highly marked, necessarily lead to a mass interpretation of the constituent they are part of. This is not expected in Indo-European languages at first glance as the mass interpretation—and for the plural, the non-specific indefinite interpretation—usually result from the absence of determiner, typically in bare nouns. (2) could in principle be ambiguous between the two meanings, indefinite and partitive, but out of the blue the complement is understood as ‘(some) wine’ and not as ‘some of the (definite) wine’. It is this indefinite interpretation of “partitive articles”, generally corresponding to bare nouns, that is at the heart of this volume. Since these “partitive articles” do generally not have a part-whole interpretation, the term “partitive article” is a misnomer. Despite that, this label is widely adopted in the literature which is why it is also used in this volume. The use of quotation marks with this term signals that it is a misnomer, hence misleading. To identify “partitive articles” with an indefinite interpretation in the data, the gloss PA is used in all the contributions of the volume.

Although there is abundant literature on both “partitive articles”, at least in Standard languages like French and Italian, and bare nouns in different languages, both phenomena, “partitive articles” and bare nominals, are usually treated apart in the literature (for French “partitive articles” cf. e.g., Kupferman 1979, 1994; Bosveld-de Smet 2004; Ihsane 2008; for Italian, Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016, 2018, 2020; for bare nouns cf. e.g., contributions in Kabatek and Wall 2013; Delfitto and Fiorin 2017, and the references therein, among many others). There is, to the best of our knowledge, no systematic comparison available to date as to their evolution and distribution (Section 2), on the one hand, and their interpretation and internal structure (Section 3), on the other hand, a gap that the contributions of this volume aim to reduce: all the papers collected crucially zoom in on aspects like the function, the semantics and the internal structure of nominals with a “partitive article” and of the potentially corresponding bare nouns, in a cross-linguistic perspective. More specifically, the eight selected articles take up, to different degrees, many notions at the syntax-semantics interface like existentiality, specificity, scope properties, individuated reference, and number/gender of the nominal, but also the connection between “partitive articles” and genitive case and the question whether the presence/absence of a “partitive article” impacts the aspectual

properties of the eventuality, that is, (a)telicity, and the (im)possibility of having a kind or a generic reading.

## 2 Evolution and Distribution of “Partitive Articles”

Although Romance languages developed from Latin, not all of them have “partitive articles”. As Latin did not have articles, a question that arises is when and why (indefinite) bare nouns gave way to nominals with articles, especially “partitive articles” (Stark 2008a, 2008b, 2016). Although the evolution of “partitive articles” is addressed by Carlier and Lamiroy (2014), for instance, detailed diachronic studies and studies of other languages, also minor languages, are missing.

Why present-day Romance languages vary as to whether “partitive articles” are obligatory or not is another issue that is poorly understood: in French, there are no bare nouns in argument positions (except in special contexts like coordination, see Roodenburg 2004) and articles, including “partitive articles”, must be used; in standard Italian, in contrast, bare nouns seem to alternate with “partitive articles” (see Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016, 2018 for Italian):

### (3) French

a. *Je bois* \**(du)* *jus*.

Italian

b. *Bevo* (*del*) *succo*.

I.drink PA.M.SG juice

‘I drink juice.’

Other Romance languages do not have “partitive articles” at all but may feature a plural indefinite article (e.g., *unos* in Spanish, *niște* in Romanian) in addition to bare nouns (Stark 2007; Carlier and Lamiroy 2014; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016; Carlier 2016). Some Germanic varieties seem to have special “partitive markers”, but they remain the exception rather than the rule (Glaser 1993). Thus, the question of the grammaticalization of (partitive) articles and the diachronic changes in the referential properties of bare nouns arises.

Many issues related to the distribution of nominals containing “partitive articles” (and of their bare counterparts) also call for an analysis. For instance, French “partitive articles” may pattern with English bare nouns in some contexts (e.g., in (1)–(2) or with individual-level predicates as in *\*Des hommes sont blonds*/*\*Men are blond*; Guéron 2006), but not in others (e.g., generic sen-

tences like *Je déteste \*des chats; \*Des chiens aboient* vs. *I hate cats; Dogs bark*). Many such examples with an individual-level predicate (Dobrovie-Sorin 1997a, 1997b) or a generic interpretation become acceptable despite the presence of a subject with a “partitive article” if the right kind of element is present in the sentence (e.g., adjective, negation ...) (Roig 2013). This also raises the question about the functions nominal expressions with a “partitive article” can have, compared to bare nouns: are they restricted to some functions or not and if so why (cf. e.g., Ihsane 2018 on French and Francoprovençal subjects headed by a “partitive article”)?<sup>1</sup> The role of the predicate and of operators, typically negation, in the distribution of nominals with “partitive articles” and of bare nouns needs thus to be accounted for. As is well-known, a “partitive article” is ungrammatical after a negation in Standard French as in *\*Marie n’a pas lu des romans* ‘Marie hasn’t read novels’.

### 3 Interpretation and Internal Structure

Another issue at the heart of this volume concerns the (lack of) correspondence between the interpretation of nominals with “partitive articles” and of bare nouns. For instance, several contributions of the volume discuss the presence/absence of a “partitive article” in connection to the event type (telic-atelic), and the possibility of having a kind reading or a generic interpretation.

Scope properties are also puzzling. Bare nouns, for example, are generally assumed to have only narrow scope, as in (4d) (Carlson 1977; Laca 1996; McNally 2004), except for Brazilian Portuguese (Wall 2017). In contrast, nominals with “partitive articles” are ambiguous between (4c) and (4d), just like (4a), although in Italian nominals with a plural “partitive article” take wide scope easily (Chirechia 1998; Zamparelli 2008; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016), compared to the ones in French (Dobrovie-Dorin and Beyssade 2004, 2012; Ihsane 2008). Since this ambiguity only concerns nominals with a “partitive article” in the plural, nominals with a singular “partitive article” being unambiguous, the question arises what role number plays in these facts (Benincà 1980).

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1 Although the term/spelling Franco-Provençal is generally adopted in academic research, we will use Francoprovençal: indeed, the hyphenated Franco-Provençal is misleading because it suggests that this language variety is a mixture of French and ‘Provençal’, which is not correct (Kristol 2016).

- (4) Spanish (McNally 2004, 120)
- a. *Hoy Juana tiene que leer unos artículos.* (c or d)  
 today Juana has that read.INF a.PL articles  
 ‘Today Juana has to read some articles.’
- b. *Hoy Juana tiene que leer artículos.* (d only)  
 today Juana has that read.INF articles
- c.  $(\exists x: \text{article}(x)) [\square [\text{read}(j,x)]]$
- d.  $\square (\exists x: \text{article}(x)) [\text{read}(j,x)]$

Singular and plural nominals with “partitive articles” do not only differ in number: the former are also mass, whereas the latter are count. How scope, number, individuated reference, and possibly additional notions like existentiality and specificity interact and are related to the indefinite interpretation of “partitive articles” remains to a large extent mysterious. Whether (some of) these notions are encoded in the syntactic structure of nominals with a “partitive article” and/or bare nouns, and if so how/where, also has to be formalised. This question arises for gender, as well, as gender plays a role in the distribution of bare nouns in different languages which do not have a “partitive article”, such as Brazilian Portuguese, for instance. The comparison between nominals with “partitive articles” and bare nouns will also enlighten the much-debated issue of the existence of an empty article in the structure of the latter (Longobardi 1994).

#### 4 Content

The papers selected for this volume focus on the syntax and the semantics of nominals with a “partitive article” and/or a bare noun (i.e. bare plural or bare mass noun). Each paper addresses several of the issues mentioned in Sections 2 and 3 as many of the notions presented are intertwined. Below we give an insight of the topics covered, before providing a summary of each article (Section 5).

Among the semantic issues covered by the contributions of the volume, is **scope**. Scopal properties (or absence thereof) of nominals with a singular and/or a plural “partitive article” are discussed by Dobrovie-Sorin, who mainly focuses on negation in French, and by Giusti, who claims that scope properties may distinguish different types of indefinite determiners in Italian and



Italo-Romance. Various facets of **generic readings** are addressed by Stark and Gerards, who look into generic emphatic sentences with a correcting purpose which seem to be ungrammatical in Francoprovençal, and by Giusti who contrasts weak indefinite determiners and definite articles in generic and **episodic** sentences (also studied by Stark and Gerards). Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou account for an **aspectual** difference between pancake sentences (a special type of copular sentences) in Brazilian Portuguese, where they are **generic** in contrast to French, where they are ambiguous with an **episodic** interpretation. Dobrovie-Sorin deals with the **kind reading** of bare nouns, whereas Giusti compares definite nominals with a kind interpretation and definite nominals with an *indefinite* interpretation (allowed in similar contexts as nominals with a “partitive article”); Gerards and Stark propose a **kind-oriented mode of talk** for the definite noun phrases found in the constituents traditionally analyzed as headed by a “partitive article” in Old-Spanish and argue that these constituents are quantifier phrases without a “partitive article”; whether a complement with a “partitive article” affects the (a)**telicity** of an eventuality is studied by Giusti and by Ihsane, who both provide examples, of Italian varieties and French, respectively, with complements headed by a “partitive article” in telic contexts, which is unexpected. Giusti further investigates what she calls “**specialized meanings**” of the indefinite nominals she analyzes (e.g., small quantity, specificity, wide/narrow scope, etc.), whereas Ihsane analyzes the data at the heart of her contribution in terms of epistemic **specificity**. Specificity, but also **referentiality, topicality, individuated reference**, in prominence-conditioned patterns, are considered by Schurr. The *sort/kind-of interpretation* which comes with Germanic partitive markers is discussed by Strobel and Glaser, who also tackle the form of partitive markers in terms of countability, number, gender and case marking (**genitive/partitive**). **Existentiality** is taken up by Dobrovie-Sorin who proposes that nominals introduced by *du/de la/des* in French denote weak existential quantifiers when they are arguments, in contrast to bare nouns which are always property-denoting. In their contribution, Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou analyze the **individual-denoting** bare nominals in subject position they are investigating as non-overt semantic structures of **events** and provide a detailed semantic account of Brazilian Portuguese and French data.

All papers further address, to different degrees, various facets of the **distribution** of nominals with a “partitive article” and/or bare nouns *in the sentence*: for instance, the ban on preverbal subjects introduced by “partitive articles”, in a broad sense, in Francoprovençal (Stark and Gerards); the (in)dependence of nominals with a partitive marker from quantifying expressions (Strobel and Glaser); the grammaticality of complements headed by a plural “partitive article” in telic eventualities (Ihsane); the obligatoriness of partitive markers in

particular contexts vs. their optionality in others (Strobel and Glaser; Giusti); the grammaticality of bare nouns as subjects of pancake sentences (Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou); and the (in)possibility for nominals with a “partitive article” to take narrow scope with regard to the sentential negation, in contrast to bare nouns which always take narrow scope with regard to this operator (Dobrovie-Sorin). More precisely, in their detailed scrutiny of Franco-provençal data, Stark and Gerards examine eleven contexts in which “partitive articles” occur in French in order to determine whether the two languages are alike: among the constructions examined figure most of the ones listed above, but also sentences with a stage-level predicate, presentative contexts, complements of a preposition, and specificity inducing constructions. To account for the distribution of bare nouns and of nominals headed by a “partitive article”, Schurr takes into account other aspects of nominal determination, in particular Differential Object Marking and the clitic system of the languages studied and offers a synchronic analysis of 22 languages from all sub-branches of Romance, as well as a diachronic study, in a usage-based account. As for Gerards and Stark, they propose that “partitive articles” did not exist at all in (Old) Spanish.

Several papers of the volume examine the position of “partitive articles” *inside the nominal structure* of the constituents containing them: Gerards and Stark postulate a Division Phrase hosting the *de* component of the “partitive article” and signalling non-individuation; Dobrovie-Sorin proposes that this *de* is similar to the one in pseudo-partitives, modulo the presence of interpretable number features and concord gender features, and that it sits in the head of a Measure Phrase, dominated by a Determiner Phrase containing a null Determiner  $\emptyset_{\exists}$  (vs. bare nouns, which are nPs). As for Giusti, she assumes that *di*, which is the counterpart of the French *de* in Italian and Italo-Romance, is located in Spec,DP, and that the Determiner head can have an overt realization of nominal gender and number features (formally the grammaticalized definite article) or a covert realization of these features. Finally, intriguing agreement patterns in gender and number with subject bare nouns are analyzed in Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou’s contribution.

**Diachronic** issues, such as grammaticalization, classification and the evolution in the use of “partitive articles” and markers, are examined by Strobel and Glaser (Germanic), Schurr (Romance), and Gerards and Stark (Spanish).

The **languages** covered by the contributions of the volume range from Germanic to Romance languages. Although it is not surprising that the latter family of languages is the most represented in the volume, since “partitive articles” are mostly attested in Romance languages, the inclusion of Germanic languages in connection to partitive markers is noteworthy. Many languages discussed in the volume are Standard Languages, like Brazilian Portuguese, French, German,

Italian, Spanish and Romanian, but others are dialectal and regional varieties. Importantly, several articles describe and analyze languages/varieties that are less studied, including endangered ones: Francoprovençal, Walliser and Walser German, Luxembourgish, and dialectal Italian. Several papers are based on data recently gathered in fieldwork/questionnaires (Giusti; Stark and Gerards; Strobel and Glaser), and/or from corpora (Giusti; Gerards and Stark; Schurr), which is also noteworthy.

The above description of the topics covered in this volume demonstrates the richness and the diversity of the contributions collected. A summary of each article, offering a more detailed and precise picture, is provided in the next section.

## 5 Summaries of the Contributions

The first three papers of the volume (Chapters 2–4) present a strong diachronic perspective on Germanic languages, on Romance languages, and more specifically on Spanish, respectively. In their paper *The Rise and Fall of Partitive Markers in Some Germanic Varieties*, **Strobel and Glaser** provide a comparative analysis of “partitive markers” in the Germanic noun phrase, in a diachronic and a diatopic perspective. They study the genitive case, whose function in older Germanic was to mark (pseudo-)partitivity, and the independent partitive genitive, frequent in Old and Middle High German. The possibilities to express part-whole relations decreased with the loss of the genitive case. However, as the authors show, several modern varieties of Continental West Germanic still have remnants of this use of genitive forms. Others developed new markers or reuse some forms like the preposition *von/van* ‘from, of’ (see Dutch and Southern Rhine Franconian). Strobel and Glaser highlight that in many contexts, the Germanic markers pattern with the so-called “partitive article” in Italian and French and raise the question whether this could be due to contact since several varieties they study come from the Germanic-Romance contact zone. The authors investigate the functions and the formation of these structures, also in comparison with bare nouns, and a parallel with the corresponding pronouns.

According to **Schurr**, the distribution of “partitive articles” and bare nouns can be explained on formal grounds (Stark 2016) or on functional grounds in a usage-based approach that combines diachronic data with constraints and biases in language change. In his paper entitled *Bound To Be? Bare and Partitive-Marked Noun Phrases in Romance Languages and the Emergence of Prominence-Conditioned Patterns*, Schurr approaches the bare/partitive distinction as part of a grammatical subsystem of prominence-conditioned classification, includ-

ing also Differential Object Marking (Bossong 1982; Körner 1981) and certain clitic patterns. Using a family-level synchronic typology and a diachronic corpus study of their grammaticalization in Medieval Spanish and French, he proposes that early variation in the frequency of clitics attests to ongoing grammaticalization processes, some of which concern prominence-conditioned patterns in the history of Romance languages. This differentiation, in turn, may have contributed to the current distribution of bare and partitive as similar differentiation process shift from clitic to adnominal marking.

Before discussing Old Spanish data, **Gerards and Stark** propose, in their article *Why “Partitive Articles” Do Not Exist in (Old) Spanish*, a formal morphosyntactic analysis of “partitive articles” found in several Romance varieties. They argue that “partitive articles” are, in the singular, mass classifiers hosted in the head Div<sup>o</sup> (cf. Borer 2005) and that they signal non-individuation. They build their analysis on the observation that explicit “dividers”, such as unambiguous overt plural morphemes, and the *de*-element contained in “partitive articles” are in complementary distribution. The authors test the prediction arising from their account, namely that “partitive articles” are not available in Romance varieties with (unambiguous) overt nominal plural marking, against Old Spanish data, which has unambiguous sigmatic nominal plural morphology and for which the availability of mass classifiers like the “partitive article” has been repeatedly claimed. Gerards and Stark refute this claim and show that what seem to be attestations of “partitive articles” are Quantifier Phrases with zero Q<sup>o</sup> containing a prepositional phrase, which shows that the prediction of their formal analysis is borne out for (historical) Ibero-Romance data.

Chapter 5, *Predicates of Personal Taste and Pancake Sentences in Brazilian Portuguese and French* by **Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou**, focuses on two different Romance languages and provides a sharp semantic analysis of bare nouns functioning as subjects but interpreted as an event type. The perspective offered by this work complements the one in Chapter 3, which compares bare nouns and partitive-marked nominals in a usage-based approach, the one in Chapter 6, which compares bare nouns and nominals with a “partitive article” in French, also with a strong semantic focus, and the one in Chapter 2 on Germanic languages/varieties in which subjects with genitive case often correspond to bare nouns in English. In their paper, Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou explore so-called pancake sentences, that is, copular sentences built with a (post-copular) adjective, in French and Brazilian Portuguese. In such sentences, the subject, generally a bare noun in Brazilian Portuguese, is reinterpreted as an event type involving the original referent, and there is agreement mismatch between this subject and the adjective (Greenberg 2008). The authors show that the exact output of the reinterpretation mechanism depends

on the building blocks of a non-agreeing copular sentence, which are not identical in French and Brazilian Portuguese. Their analysis accounts for the ambiguity of French non-agreeing copular sentences, and, therefore for the fact that they are not necessarily pancake sentences.

In her article *Negation, des-Indefinites in French and Bare Nouns across Languages*, Dobrovie-Sorin focuses on an important difference between bare nouns and French indefinites headed by *des/de la/du*, namely their distribution with regard to Negation and narrow scope: *des/de la/du* are banned in this context (the invariable *de* is required), whereas all bare nouns are always necessarily narrow-scoped. This includes bare plurals/bare mass nouns, on the one hand, and bare singulars, on the other hand, although the former and the latter are generally considered different both syntactically and semantically (Dobrovie-Sorin et al. 2005; Espinal and McNally 2007). The author therefore argues that *all* bare nouns can be analyzed as lacking some functional layers and, correlatively, be property-denoting expressions that can combine with the main predicate via Predicate Modification. As a result, bare nouns are insensitive to Negation. The French *des/de la/du* indefinites, on the other hand, are argued to be unable to denote properties when they occur in argument positions and therefore unable to form a complex predicate with the verb. Argumental *des/de la/du* indefinites are analyzed as weak existential quantifiers, which conflicts with a negated existential quantifier over events.

Dobrovie-Sorin's paper is followed by three chapters (Chapters 7–9) with a strong emphasis on the distribution of noun phrases with a “partitive article”. Chapter 7 investigates French data little discussed in the literature, namely, telic sentences with a complement headed by a “partitive article” in the plural. Chapter 8 has an ambitious agenda, namely the description and analysis of noun phrases with weak indefinite determiners, including “partitive articles”, in Italian and Italo-Romance, in a pan-European perspective. This chapter is followed by a more descriptive one on “partitive articles” in a broad sense in the Francoprovençal variety spoken in the Aosta Valley in Italy (Chapter 9), an important contribution to the understanding of nominal determination in Francoprovençal, an understudied endangered language.

In Chapter 7, entitled *Telicity, Specificity and Complements with a “Partitive Article” in French*, Ihsane investigates sentences with a *des*-complement (i.e. introduced by a “partitive article” in the plural) and discusses the impact of this complement on the telicity of the situation. In principle, *des*-complements occur in atelic sentences, but Ihsane provides and analyzes some data where they are possible in telic situations. To explain the grammaticality of such sentences, she examines various semantic properties of these complements which could play a role in the telic interpretation, such as the presence/absence of an

implicit quantity expression in the complement, their type of reference (quantized vs. cumulative; individuated) and specificity. What she proposes is that the *des*-complements found in telic situations involve a quantity that is known and that this “knowledge” can be formalized in terms of specificity (epistemic specificity). More precisely, the author shows that the referent of such specific indefinites can be identified via “referential anchoring” (see Von Heusinger 2002a, 2002b, 2011).

In the paper *A Protocol for Indefinite Determiners in Italian and Italo-Romance*, Giusti focuses on weak indefinite nominals in Italian and Italo-Romance varieties, presents the rich variation found across these varieties and claims that they display a robust use of the definite article with indefinite interpretation, unlike many other Romance varieties. Giusti identifies several syntactic and semantic contexts allowing the differentiation between indefinite nominals and kind referring ones (also headed by the definite article in all Romance languages). She provides diagnostics, structured in “protocols”, to capture the dimensions of variation and optionality among five different indefinite determiners, including the so-called “partitive article” and the zero article of bare nouns. More precisely, the author provides a theory neutral way to structure research questions, design a questionnaire, present and analyze empirical results, used in pilot running study on informal Italian and dialectal data whose results help to determine the distribution of the indefinite determiners i) in modern Italian dialects in contact with Standard Italian and ii) in regional varieties of modern Italian in contact with the local dialects.

The last paper of the volume, *“Partitive Articles” in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal—Old Questions and New Data*, by Stark and Gerards, presents new data on so-called “partitive articles” in the Francoprovençal variety of the Aosta Valley (Italy), collected in fieldwork carried out in May 2017. The data show that in various contexts such as after quantifiers and under the scope of negation, the informants use a highly grammaticalized invariable DE-element in front of indefinite mass singular and plural nominals. The authors show that the distribution of this element is more similar to the distribution of the “partitive article” in Standard French than to the one in Standard Italian. However, they also highlight some important differences with French, in particular an overall ban on preverbal subjects introduced by DE. As for other differences observed by the authors, such as the attestation, in the data, of fully-fledged (vs. grammaticalized DE) “partitive articles” in the singular (*contra* Kristol 2014), and their preservation under the scope of negation, will need to be further investigated.

## 6 Conclusion

This volume focuses on different aspects of the distribution, semantics, and internal structure of nominal constituents with a “partitive article” in its *indefinite* interpretation and of the potentially corresponding bare nouns. It further deals with diachronic issues, such as grammaticalization and evolution in the use of “partitive articles”. The outcome is a snapshot of current research into “partitive articles” and the way they relate to bare nouns, in a cross-linguistic perspective and on new data: the research covers noteworthy data (fieldwork data and corpora) from Standard languages—like French and Italian, but also German—to dialectal and regional varieties, including endangered ones like Francoprovençal.

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# The Rise and Fall of Partitive Markers in Some Germanic Varieties

*Thomas Strobel and Elvira Glaser*

## 1 Introduction

The purpose of this contribution is a comparative analysis of different “partitive markers” in the noun phrase of several Germanic varieties, with a special focus on areally peripheral non-standard or less standardized West Germanic varieties. Starting with the use of genitive case for the marking of partitive functions in various syntactic contexts in the older stages of German, we then take a closer look at those varieties for which the survival of at least some genitive forms and functions related to partitive meanings is reported in modern times. This is true for some Highest Alemannic dialects in Switzerland (Henzen 1932, 122–124; Szadrowsky 1937, 1940) and for Lëtzebuergesch, both the dialects and the Koiné (Döhmer 2017).<sup>1</sup> We would like to emphasize, however, that for Highest Alemannic recent data are lacking completely. While there is some recent research on the more widely existing pronominal remnants of partitive genitive forms (see Strobel 2017), there is in general much less information concerning the expression of partitivity within the noun phrase (see Glaser 1992, 1993; Grestenberger 2015).

In the following, we will focus on the expression of (pseudo-)partitivity<sup>2</sup> in Walliser (and Walser) German (Highest Alemannic) as well as in Luxembourgish (Moselle Franconian). We will give an outline on the formation and distribution of the relevant structures involving genitive forms with determiners and/or nouns, comprising independent partitive genitives not directly governed by some head (Seržant 2014). Our overview is based on various sources, including recent inquiries and fieldwork. We will show to what extent the meaning of partitivity is still present in these structures and discuss the over-

1 For the sociolinguistic situation of Lëtzebuergesch and the history of standardization see Gilles (2006).

2 With the differentiation between partitivity and pseudo-partitivity, we follow the terminology of Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001), in concise form Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2006), based on Selkirk (1977).

lap with other forms, as for example the use of bare nouns. When the genitive marking is restricted to the determiner and no longer present with the noun, these constructions pattern with the distribution of the so-called “partitive article” in French and Italian. Given that Highest Alemannic and Luxembourgish both are situated in the Germanic-Romance contact zone, the question of contact influence comes up. As in other varieties, the loss of the genitive is accompanied by the development of new markers or the reuse of forms in order to mark partitivity, such as the preposition *von* ‘from, of’ in Southern Rhine Franconian (Glaser 1992) or equivalent *van* in Dutch (Luraghi and Kittilä 2014, 23). A hitherto unsolved problem concerns the rather unclear relation to the use of the indefinite article with mass nouns in Bavarian (cf. e.g., Kolmer 1999) and the “non-delimited use” of the definite article in such contexts in some peripheral Swedish dialects (Dahl 2015, 50, 54).

Occasionally, we will also draw a comparison to the corresponding pronominals, since both in Romance and Germanic there are varieties with “partitive” pronouns and determiners (French, Italian; Walliser and Walser German, Luxembourgish) as opposed to systems with “partitive” pronouns but without the respective determiners (Catalan; Dutch, Central German dialects).<sup>3</sup> This leads to the question of why the pronominal use seems to have survived longer than the nominal use in these latter varieties.

The paper is organized as follows: in Section 2, we provide a short overview on the development and decline of the partitive genitive in the history of German, Section 3 presents newly elicited data and their analysis in Walliser German and Luxembourgish, both varieties still showing remnants of the partitive genitive. Section 4 concludes the paper.

## 2 The Historical Background

We take as a starting point the fact that in the older Germanic languages, as in other Indo-European languages, one of the functions of genitive case is the marking of partitivity and pseudo-partitivity (Luraghi and Huuimo 2014). There is also an independent partitive genitive (IPG), whose main function is, in correspondence with Seržant (2014), the partial affectedness of the referent. This can be illustrated by examples from Old High German (OHG, 700–1050 AD), where we find genitive case in object position (2)–(3) as well as in subject posi-

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3 Cf. Stark and Gerards, this volume, for a discussion of “partitive articles” in Francoprovençal.

tion (1), which is, however, much rarer. The genitive can cover a functional range from deictic use to indefinite readings, often difficult to distinguish in the given context of the historical sources.<sup>4</sup> In (1) there is no wine mentioned in the context, whereas in (2) there is a spring (*puzzi*) mentioned before. In (3), too, the text is referring to the oil of the wise virgins already mentioned. But in all these cases, there is some kind of partial reading involved, whether it is a part of a definite quantity or an undefined amount of a substance.

(1) OHG

*joh brast in thar thes win-es*

also was.lacking them there the.GEN.M wine-GEN.M

'and they also lacked wine' (O. 2.8.11)

(2) OHG

*so quam ein uuib thara tho [...] thes uuazar-es giholoti*

so came a woman there then [...] the.GEN.N water-GEN.N get

'a woman was coming there in order to get some (of the) water' (O. 2.14.14)

(3) OHG

*kebet uns iuuar-es ol-es*

give us your-GEN.N oil-GEN.N

'give us some of your oil' (Mons. 20.1)

The situation did not change much in Middle High German (MHG, 1050–1350 AD), where we find genitive case in the functions mentioned above, in particular in object position (4)–(5), but also in subject position (6). The examples show both indefinite articles in (4) and (5) and a definite article in (6):

(4) MHG

*er [...] tranc da zuo ein-es wazzers daz er vant in*

he [...] drank with it a-GEN.N water-GEN.N that he discovered in

*einem einber an der want*

a bucket at the wall

'he drank some water with it that he discovered in a bucket near the wall'

(Iw. 3311)

4 See Nishiwaki (2010, 17–62) on the development of the partitive genitive and its relation to indefiniteness, with further examples from Old and Middle High German.

- (5) MHG  
*Wand ich noch ein-er salbe-n hân die dâ*  
 because I still a-GEN.F ointment-GEN.F have that there  
*Feimorgân machte*  
 Feimorgân made  
 ‘Because I still have some ointment made by Feimorgân’ (Iw. 3423)
- (6) MHG  
*Do rais im ûz einer swalwen nest des*  
 at.once fell him from a swallow’s nest the.GEN.M  
*mist-es in diu ougen*  
 excrement-GEN.M in the eyes  
 ‘Excrement fell on his eyes out of a swallow’s nest’ (Sermons, 13th c.,  
 Grieshaber 1844, 128)

This usage of genitive forms continues until Early New High German (ENHG, 1350–1650 AD) times, as (7) exemplifies for a definite article, without referring to a particular piece of bread:

- (7) ENHG  
*Iss des brot-s*  
 eat the.GEN.N bread-GEN.N  
 ‘Eat (some) bread’ (Luther, OT., Ruth 2.14)

The use of genitive-marked determiners in order to express part—whole relations had its parallel in the use of genitive pronouns in cases of pronominalization, as the following selected examples with demonstrative and personal pronouns show. All three examples contain a pronoun with anaphoric reference to a neuter noun, *brot* ‘bread’ in (8), *swinâz* ‘pigfeed’ in (9) and *holtz* ‘wood’ in (10), the latter in subject position:

- (8) OHG  
*nam er tho selbo thaz brot [...] gibot thaz sie-s*  
 took he then himself the bread [...] demanded that they-it.GEN  
*azin*  
 ate.SBJV  
 ‘then he took the bread and demanded that they should eat it/some’  
 (O. 4.10.9)

(9) MHG

*und dez gap im nieman*

and this.GEN gave him nobody

'and nobody gave him any' [pigfeed] (Sermons, 13th c., Grieshaber 1848, 78)

(10) ENHG

*darmit das holtz, ob im des zufluß, aus dem*

with.this the wood if him this.GEN towards.flowed out.of the

*wasser gezogen werd*

water pulled was

'so that he could pull the wood flowing towards him out of the water'

(ms. 1475, Lexer 1862, 250)

We will not further elaborate on these historical examples of pronominal constructions. With regard to the further development, however, we can state that in several Germanic varieties the pronominal partitive genitive continues to exist much longer (see Glaser 1992, Strobel 2017) than the nominal genitive in partitive function.

It is during the Early New High German period that the partitive use of the nominal genitive gradually becomes rarer. A process of case loss concerning genitive case is going on, not only affecting the independent as well as dependent partitives discussed here but also other adverbial uses (Reichmann and Wegera 1993, 330–334, 353; Scott 2014, 225). Although there is no consensus on the exact motivation for the substitution of genitive case by accusative or even nominative forms, there is no doubt that the decline of the genitive case necessarily led to the loss of the possible expression of partial use in independent constructions (Fleischer 2011, 87–94). The usage of the genitive forms with true partitives and pseudo-partitives continues for a longer time, as documented for instance in several Early New High German cook books containing many part-of and measuring expressions, both with an article (11a) or without (11b), often dependent on quantifiers such as *viel* 'much' (11) or other quantifying nouns (12):

(11) ENHG

a. *reibe [...] ein-es so viel als deß ander-n*

grate [...] one-GEN.M/N as much as the.GEN.M/N other-GEN.M/N

'grate from one [mass nouns M. and N.] as much as from the other'

(1691, Stopp et al. 1980, 123)



- b. *nim II mal als uil Johannes treiblin als zucker-s*  
 take two times as much redcurrant as sugar-GEN.M  
 ‘take twice as much redcurrant as sugar’ (ms. 16th c., Letsch 2018, nr. 115)

## (12) ENHG

- a. 3 *seydla wein-s*  
 three mugs wine-GEN.M  
 ‘three mugs of wine’ (ms. around 1550, f. 116r)<sup>5</sup>
- b. *nim deß schönst-en zucker-s ½ lb*  
 take the.GEN.M finest-GEN.M sugar-GEN.M half pound  
 ‘take half a pound of the finest sugar’ (ms. 1640, 167)<sup>6</sup>

Even in New High German (NHG, 1650–AD), it is possible to use the dependent partitive genitive in formal contexts or archaic speech, especially together with an adjective.<sup>7</sup>

## (13) NHG

- ein Glas kühl-en Wein-es*  
 a glass chilled-GEN.M wine-GEN.M  
 ‘a glass of chilled wine’

In nearly all recent dialects, the genitive forms have died out, both with nouns and determiners. However, there are still some varieties of Continental West Germanic such as Luxembourgish (cf. e.g., Christophory 1974; Schanen and Zimmer 2006; Döhmer 2017, 2018) or Walliser and Walser German dialects (Henzen 1932, 122–124; Szadrowsky 1937, 278–279, 281, 284; 1940) where we can find remnants of the older genitive markers expressing (pseudo-)partitivity or similar functions. We will now take a closer look at the formation, distribution

5 Our thanks go to Mathias Wolfbeiss, Augsburg, for leaving us the unpublished transcription of the Pharmacopoeia manuscript, the so-called *Arzneibuch der Philippine Welser* (Wien, Kunsthistorisches Museum Inv.Nr. PA 1474).

6 This example is taken from the transcription in Müller (2010, 169).

7 It is not surprising that this case of still not fully completed language change leads to a grammatical doubt (*Zweifelsfall*) with (native) speakers of contemporary German, concerning the use of a partitive genitive as in *ein Glas kühlen Weines* (a glass chilled wine-GEN) vs. an apposition as in *ein Glas kühlen/kühler Wein* (a glass chilled wine-ACC/NOM) for ‘a glass of chilled wine’ (cf. e.g., Hentschel 1993; Zimmer 2015).

and semantics of noun phrases containing a partitive genitive in these varieties, especially at so-called “partitive determiners”.

### 3 The Situation in Modern (West) Germanic Varieties

The following results go back to recent questionnaire elicitations and fieldwork on “partitive markers”—determiners as well as pronouns—in Walliser German dialects (Highest Alemannic) and Luxembourgish (Moselle Franconian), with about 40 test sentences (and their variants) and a total of more than 30 informants from different places.<sup>8</sup> The aim of our investigation was a detailed analysis primarily of noun phrase structures with partitive determiners with respect to

- (i) case marking for genitive/partitive within the noun phrase,
- (ii) the type and form of the determiner (its choice in compliance with countability, number and gender),
- (iii) their independence vs. dependence of quantifying expressions,
- (iv) the different interpretations or readings of these constructions.

As has been reported previously, there are two morphological forms of the partitive determiner in Luxembourgish: one for plural and feminine mass nouns, *där* (with the variants *deer*, *därer* etc.), as in (14a) for plural *Äppel* ‘apples’ and (14b) for feminine *Mëllech* ‘milk’, and another one for masculine and neuter mass nouns, *däers* (or *dees*, *däs*, *därs*, *däres* etc.), as the sentences in (14c) and (14d) show for masculine singular *Téi* ‘tea’ and neuter singular *Gas* ‘gas’, respectively. Apart from a few geographical and orthographic variants to these forms, the basic system remains the same. Note that the head nouns of the partitive

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8 In the 2018 main inquiry (July–October), we used partially identical written questionnaires for Walliser German and Luxembourgish with the main difference that we left out the translation tasks directed to the use of nominal genitive forms in Luxembourgish, as Luxembourgish has lost these case forms, whereas in Walliser German they are still in use depending on various criteria. Moreover, we inserted several translation tasks containing French sentences with “partitive articles” in the Luxembourgish questionnaire, in order to see if the French model leads to a corresponding Luxembourgish equivalent. For the rest, we relied on question types and tasks repeatedly used in dialect syntactic projects on German dialects (see Glaser and Bart 2015; Lenz, Fleischer and Weiß 2015; Weiß and Strobel 2018), namely a combination of grammaticality judgment tasks (multiple choice) for various constructions possibly showing the use of genitives in the nominal group and translations from Standard German. In fall 2017, we had started a pilot study in the Wallis with several grammaticality judgment tasks in order to identify regional variation in the use of the different determiners analyzed in our present study.

phrases, however, are not marked for genitive, since case marking is completely lost in Luxembourgish.

- (14) a. *Hu mer nach där Äppel?*  
 have we still the.GEN.PL apples  
 ‘Do we still have (some) of these apples?’ (Döhmer 2017, 105)
- b. *Ech hätt gären där Mëllech*  
 I had gladly the.GEN.F.SG milk  
 ‘I’d like (some) milk of this kind.’ (LWB, vol. 1, col. 193b)
- c. *Hu mer nach däers Téi?*  
 have we still the.GEN.M.SG tea  
 ‘Do we still have (some) of this tea?’ (Döhmer 2017, 105)
- d. *geologesch Schichten, wou däers Gas ze fannen ass*  
 geological strata where the.GEN.N.SG gas to find is  
 ‘geological strata where one can find (some) of this gas’ (Döhmer 2017, 117)

The quoted independent partitive noun phrases—dependent partitives with a numeral/quantifier or a measure phrase will be discussed later—have different syntactic functions, representing the direct object in (14a–c) and the subject in (14d). This construction, however, seems to be ungrammatical in indirect object position (15a) and after prepositions (15b), as Döhmer (2017) points out. This finding is confirmed by our data, where both test sentences did not provide any instance of a partitive determiner (instead, our informants almost consistently used (*mat*) *sou Leit*, i.e., ‘so/such’, in these contexts).<sup>9</sup>

- (15) a. *\*Ech vertrauen där Leit net*  
 I trust the.GEN.PL people not  
 ‘I don’t trust such (lit. of these) people.’ (Döhmer 2017, 127)

9 However, we found an example of a (neuter singular) noun phrase introduced by a partitive determiner selected by a preposition on the internet: *Mat däers knaschtgem Geld, wat sténkt?* ‘With such dirty money, which stinks?’ (<https://www.josychristen.lu/gedichter/einfach-esou/de-secret-vu-lëtzebuerg>).

- b. \**Mat dār Leit ginn ech net eens*  
 with the.GEN.PL people go I not okay  
 ‘With such (lit. of these) people, I don’t get along.’ (Döhmer 2017, 127)

As for Walliser German, we can find some older examples of partitive determiners in the literature.<sup>10</sup> Henzen (1932) reports various partitive structures from the Lötschental dialect of the early 20th century, hardly discussing, however, their function compared to bare nouns (cf. Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou, this volume, for a discussion of bare nouns in subject position). The independent partitive noun phrases in (16) and (17), respectively, show different genitive forms of the determiner in the plural, *där(u)* and *dischr*, the second one being clearly a demonstrative pronoun. Note that the noun phrases in (16b–c) have a *kind of*-reading (‘such’), example (16c) is the only one displaying subject position and the noun phrases in (16c) and (17) are additionally modified by an adjective *chlein* ‘small’. The example in (18), also taken from Henzen (1932) and containing the same adjective, illustrates that the partitive genitive, marked by the determiner *dera*, was also present in Walser dialects, for example, in Davos (Grisons). Interestingly, most of these older examples—except for (16b) and (18)—are marked for genitive not only on the determiner but also on the head noun.

- (16) a. *weldr den dāru schtein-u?*  
 want.you then the.GEN.PL stones-GEN.PL  
 ‘do you want (some) of these stones?’ (Henzen 1932, 122)
- b. *dāru biähär hetti miär schön oich*  
 the.GEN.PL books would.have we even also  
 ‘we do also have (some) of these/such books.’ (Henzen 1932, 122)
- c. *Där chlein-u schäfflin-u [...] di heind nuch*  
 the.GEN.PL small-GEN.PL sheep-GEN.PL [...] they have still  
*wēnig wollu*  
 little wool  
 ‘Such small sheep do still have little wool.’ (Henzen 1932, 104–105)

<sup>10</sup> The following examples taken from the dialectological literature are transliterated in a slightly simplified manner here, by avoiding special characters.

- (17) *Dä gänd sch na disch-r chlein-um biks-u*  
 there give they you these-GEN.PL small-GEN.PL cans-GEN.PL  
 'There they give you (some) of these small cans.' (Henzen 1932, 122)
- (18) [*er*] *heiga* [...] *dera chleina tannalti uss da würza*  
 [he] has.SBJV [...] the.GEN.PL small fir.trees out.of the root  
*grissa*  
 pulled.up  
 'he has pulled up (some) of these small fir trees together with their roots.'  
 (Henzen 1932, 123)

In modern Walliser German dialects, genitive forms with partitive function are still present, but with some important changes and a great deal of variation, which is typical for processes of disintegration and language change. The most common forms we encounter are *deru* (or *dero/-ä/-e, därru*) and *deschi* (or *desch*), constituting quite different systems, though, most frequently with a split between plural and mass nouns. In (19)–(20), the present-day systems are illustrated by examples for independent partitive genitive constructions from the main valley (Visp and surroundings), taken from our questionnaires (main inquiry). The informant in (19) used *deru* for plural (*Epfla* 'apples'), whereas *deschi* appeared in combination with mass nouns, feminine (*Milch* 'milk') as well as masculine (*Kaffe* 'coffee'). Another informant, see (20), accepted both forms *deru* and *deschi* with plural and feminine singular (*Epfla* 'apples' and *Milch* 'milk'), but only *deschi* together with masculine and neuter singular (*Kaffe* 'coffee' and *Bier* 'beer'):

- (19) a *Weltisch nu deru Epfla?*  
 want.you more the.GEN.PL<sup>11</sup> apples
- b. *Weltisch nu deschi Milch?*  
 want.you more the.GEN.SG milk

11 Apart from etymologically unambiguous demonstratives (see our comment on example 17), we decided to gloss partitive determiners such as *deru* and *deschi* uniformly as genitive forms of the definite article, because a formal distinction to the so-called simple demonstrative forms is impossible in German. In cases of deictic use, however, we use a demonstrative in the English translation.

- c. *Welltisch nu deschi Kaffe?*  
 want.you more the.GEN.SG coffee  
 'Would you like (some) more of these apples/of this milk/of this coffee?' (Gampel/Visp\_1944)
- (20) a. *Welltisch nu deru/deschi Epfla?*  
 want.you more the.GEN.PL apples
- b. *Welltisch nu deru/deschi Milch?*  
 want.you more the.GEN.SG milk
- c. *Welltisch nu deschi Kaffe?*  
 want.you more the.GEN.SG coffee
- d. *Heider öi deschi Bier?*  
 have.you also the.GEN.SG beer  
 'Do you also have (some) of this beer?' (Visp\_1988)

Apart from these test sentences for partitive genitive phrases functioning as direct objects, we included also other syntactic functions, that is, as a subject, an indirect object and after a preposition, in order to compare the results to the restrictions observed in Luxembourgish. Again, the Walliser German data show that we do find partitive nominals in subject position, for example, (21a). Similarly to Luxembourgish, where partitive genitive phrases in indirect object position and after prepositions were completely absent, these cases seem to be quite bad in Walliser German, too. Nevertheless, we got one answer for *deru Lit* (21b) (with a majority for *denu/-e/-ä Lit* 'those people' and—in the Lötschental—*settigä/däriga Li(i)tn* 'such people'), and three informants accepted *mit deru/-ä/deschi Lit* (21c) (many more, though, *mit settige/-ä Lit(n)* 'with such people').<sup>12</sup>

- (21) a. *Deru chleini Firmä hent sus mit der hitig*  
 the.GEN.PL small businesses have it with the today's

12 Another proof for a noun phrase with a partitive determiner after a preposition (and the expansion of *dèru* to neuter mass nouns) comes from Bosco Gurin (Walser German in Ticino): *un tâs Broot heind-sch aba met dèru Maal [...]* *un hein Puleantu ggmächut [...]* (Gerstner-Hirzel 1979, 13) 'and they have the bread exactly with such flour [...] and made polenta [...]']

*Konkurränz nit einfach*

competition not easy

‘Such small businesses don’t have an easy time because of today’s competition.’ (Gampel/Visp\_1944)

b. *Ich verträwwu deru Lit nit*

I trust the.GEN.PL people not

‘I don’t trust such people.’ (Gampel/Visp\_1944)

c. *Mit deru/-ä/deschi Lit chumi nit zrächt*

with the.GEN.PL people come.I not alright

‘With such people I don’t get along.’ (Gampel/Visp\_1944, Staldenried\_1949, Lalden\_1988)

A pretest (fall 2017) on the distribution of the two forms *deru* (*dere*) and *deschi* with respect to number and gender of the head noun provided us with the (schematized) results in Table 2.1, which outlines the situation for three places or areas in the Upper Valais (from East to West): Goms, Visp and Guttet-Feschel. The choice of the respective partitive determiner was tested for plural, feminine mass nouns and masculine/neuter mass nouns. The syntactic contexts covered independent as well as dependent partitive genitives and both noun phrases with and without attributive adjectives. Note that besides the use of “partitive articles”, bare nominals or a null determiner were almost always possible, giving rise to a different, non-partitive meaning, though (cf. Giusti, this volume, for a comparison of five indefinite determiners, including the “partitive article” and the null determiner, and their distribution in Italian and Italo-Romance).

These results for partitive determiners in Highest Alemannic in combination with the situation in Luxembourgish reveal that we need to distinguish at least four different systems, a finding that basically has been confirmed and could be refined in our main inquiry. The first system holds for Luxembourgish, behaving very consistently in this respect, the second one is the most frequent for Walliser German, where we find considerable variation, though:

– PL/F.SG: *där* (*därer*)—M./N.SG: *dä(e)rs* (*dees*) (Luxembourgish):

This first system makes a morphological distinction between plural and feminine singular on the one hand and masculine/neuter singular on the other. This corresponds to the original clustering and is analogous to the different forms of partitive pronouns still to be found in the same varieties, among others.

TABLE 2.1 Distribution of partitive determiners in Walliser German in terms of number and gender (pretest October 2017)

		Goms	Visp	Guttet- Feschel
PL	Welleder nu <b>deru/deschi</b> <b>Steina/Boone/Epfla?</b> 'Do you still want (some) of these stones/beans/apples?'	<b>dere</b> *deschi ∅	<b>deru</b> (* <b>deschi</b> ) ∅	<b>deru</b> *deschi ∅
	Hets nu <b>e Hampfleta</b> <b>deru/deschi Boone?</b> 'Is there still a handful of these beans?'	<b>dere</b> *deschi ∅	<b>deru</b> <b>deschi</b> ∅	<b>deru</b> *deschi ∅
F.SG	Welleder nu <b>deschi (güeti/waarmi) /</b> <b>deru Milch?</b> 'Do you still want (some) of this (good/warm) milk?'	*deru <b>deschi</b> (∅)	*deru (* <b>deschi</b> ) (∅)	<b>deru</b> *deschi (∅)
M./N.SG	Welleder nu <b>deschi (güeta) /</b> <b>deru (schwarzu) Kaffe?</b> 'Do you still want (some) of this (good/black) coffee?'	*deru <b>deschi</b> (∅)	*deru (* <b>deschi</b> ) (∅)	<b>deru</b> *deschi (∅)

- PL: **deru** (*dero/-ä/-e*)—MASS: **deschi** (Valais: Pretest Goms, Eyholz\_1962, Lalden\_1990, Staldenried\_1949 etc.):

A second system seems to have generalized the original masculine/neuter singular form to all mass nouns, using it also for feminine singular. This has led to a new opposition between plural and mass nouns (apart from a few outliers leading to mixed systems). As to their pronominal counterparts, on the one hand we find the old split between plural/feminine singular (*ra/ru/deru/där*, but for feminine singular also *deschi*) and masculine singular (innovative null anaphora) (here: Eyholz\_1962)—with an interesting dissociation between partitive determiners and pronouns—and, on the other hand, a corresponding, symmetric configuration of plural (*deru/-o*) vs. mass (*deschi*) (e.g., Staldenried\_1949).

- PL: **deru/deschi**—MASS: **deschi** (Valais: Pretest Visp, Lalden\_1988, Brig\_1960):

In a third system, the original masculine/neuter singular form has not only been extended to all mass nouns, but it has also entered the plural, where it



coexists with the original plural form. In a slightly different subsystem, characterized by the distribution PL/F.SG: *deru/deschi*—M./N.SG: *deschi* (e.g., Visp\_1988), this change has not gone so far in the feminine singular, yet, since, as in the plural, *deschi* has not replaced completely *deru* here neither. The opposite development towards a system of PL: *deru*—MASS (N.SG): *deschi/deru*, with an expansion of *deru* instead, could be the case for Brigerbad\_1986.

- PL & MASS: *deru* (no *deschi*) (Valais: Pretest Guttet-Feschel, Ticino: Bosco Gurin<sup>13</sup>):

Another pathway can be identified in a fourth system, which has just one single form left, irrespective of number and gender, as a result of having totally generalized the original plural/feminine singular form.

This means that the partitive determiners in Walliser (and Walser) German underwent a change away from the original distribution of number- and gender-specific forms (PL/F.SG vs. M./N.SG) towards more syncretic forms. Despite this attempt to systematize the picture, however, there are still a lot of cases where *deru* and *deschi* seem to appear in almost completely mixed systems (PL: *deru/deschi*—MASS: *deschi/deru*).

Considering the above discussion on syncretisms and mixed systems in the nominal domain, one question that arises is whether there is a correspondence between the nominal and the pronominal domain or whether the former parallelism has been broken up. Note that in our Alemannic dialects—in contrast to Luxembourgish—the potentially competing strategy of a null anaphora ( $\emptyset$ ) has to be taken into account on the pronominal side (cf. e.g., Glaser 1993, 1995, 2008; Strobel 2017). Our recent elicitation of Walliser German has shown that this innovative strategy is still rare in comparison to the older genitive pronouns when referring to plural terms and feminine mass nouns, but that it is already the predominant strategy with masculine and neuter mass nouns, being up to twice as frequent as the genitive pronoun in this case.<sup>14</sup> With

13 In Bosco Gurin (Walser German) we found uniformly *deru* or *deschru* both for plural and mass nouns. Our informants clarified that *deru* was used for something further away and *deschru* for something nearby the speaker, having thus a demonstrative character (fieldwork October 2018).

14 The respective numbers of occurrence (null anaphora vs. genitive pronoun) show the following distribution:

- PL (*Pilza* ‘mushrooms’, *füüf Gschwisterti* ‘five siblings’): 1  $\emptyset$  vs. 17 *ra/ru/dru/deru* (and 10 occurrences of a genitive pronoun in the test sentence with a stranded numeral)
- F.SG (*Milch* ‘milk’, *en Schgutz Milch* ‘a drop (of) milk’): 3  $\emptyset$  vs. 6 *ra/ru/dra/dära* + 5 *schu/deschi*

respect to the number/gender configuration, there is indeed a certain equivalence of such partitive pronouns to the two main systems identified above:

– PL/F.SG—M./N.SG:

As already mentioned, this conservative clustering holds for Luxembourgish with the forms *der* (weak) and *där/därer* (strong) for plural and feminine mass nouns vs. *es* (weak) and *däers/dees* (strong) for masculine and neuter mass nouns (see also Döhmer 2017). Moreover, we still find this split in a few Walliser German dialects or idiolects, distinguishing for instance between *ru/deru* and *deschi/∅* (Gampel/Visp\_1944) or *ra/ru* and *∅* (Visp\_1988) for plural and feminine singular on the one hand and masculine/neuter singular on the other, where zero marking has already made its way into both systems.

– PL—MASS:

Other systems of pronominal partitivity in Walliser German show a split between plural terms and mass nouns, either as *ra/ru/deru/-o* vs. *schì/deschi* (Lalden\_2003, Brigerbad\_1986, Staldenried\_1949) or as *ra/ru* vs. *deschi/∅* (Brig\_1960) or else as *ra/ru/dru/deru* vs. *∅* (Agarn\_1996, Staldenried\_1982), reflecting also a different degree of progression of the innovative null anaphora (which, according to the “apparent-time hypothesis”, cf. e.g., Chambers and Trudgill 1998, becomes evident also on an intergenerational level in view of the dates of birth of the two informants from Staldenried).

Apart from these two principal patterns, some dialectal/idiolectal systems of partitive anaphors in the Valais appear to be quite chaotic—especially younger speakers seem to be rather insecure (cf. e.g., Lalden\_1993: *ru* for plural and neuter singular, *deschi* for feminine and masculine singular, but also *∅* for masculine singular)—, which, again, is typical for restructuring and decomposition processes. Furthermore, the finding that partitive pronominals seem to survive longer than the corresponding determiners becomes apparent in a striking way in the (often more conservative) Lötschental, where we do not find any partitive genitive determiners anymore, but still partitive genitive pronouns (mostly *dru/dra* for plural/feminine mass nouns vs. *schì/däschi* or *∅* for masculine and neuter mass nouns).

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(and 1+2 occurrences of a genitive pronoun in the test sentence with a residual quantifier)

- M.SG (*Zucker* ‘sugar’, *es Glas Wü* ‘a glass (of) wine’): 11 *∅* vs. 5 *schì/deschi*

(and 7 occurrences of a genitive pronoun in the test sentence with a residual quantifier)

- N.SG (*Gäald* ‘money’): 8 *∅* vs. 4 *schì/deschi* + marginally 1 *ru*

### 3.1 Case Marking for Genitive/Partitive

If one takes a closer look at the entire partitive noun phrase structure, one can notice both for modern Walliser German and Luxembourgish that genitive case is only marked on the determiner, not on the head noun itself (see already Szadrowsky 1940),<sup>15</sup> clearly missing the characteristic genitive -s inflection for masculine/neuter singular. This is exemplified again in (22) and (23), respectively:<sup>16</sup>

(22) Valais

- a. *Welltisch nu deschi Kaffe-Ø?*  
 want.you more the.GEN.SG coffee-Ø  
 'Would you like (some) more of this coffee?' (e.g., Visp\_1988)
- b. *Heider öi deschi Bier-Ø?*  
 have.you also the.GEN.SG beer-Ø  
 'Do you also have (some) of this beer?' (e.g., Visp\_1988)

(23) Luxembourgish

- a. *Wëllst du dä(e)rs (dote) Kaffi-Ø?*  
 want you the.GEN.SG (there) coffee-Ø  
 'Do you want (some) of this/that coffee (there)?' (e.g., Luxemburg-Stadt\_1946)
- b. *Hutt dir därs (dote) Béier-Ø?*  
 have you the.GEN.SG (there) beer-Ø  
 'Do you have (some) of this/that beer (there)?' (e.g., Luxemburg-Stadt\_1946)

This fact forms a clear contrast to the historical examples from the Old, Middle and Early New High German periods, see sentences (1)–(7) in Section 2,

15 Szadrowsky (1940, 232) emphasizes the missing genitive ending in constructions such as *désch Häu häi-mr rächt gnuég* 'we have really a lot of this hay' in the Grisons Walser dialect of Klosters. The loss of genitive marking on the noun, leaving behind solely the determiner in a frozen genitive form, is already attested in Brandstetter (1904) for Lucerne. For further information on comparable data in West Central German and other dialects see Weise (1906, 294–295).

16 In total, we got one single instance of a genitive suffix on the noun (-sch) in our entire elicitation: *Hets nu deschi güetä Wüsch?* 'Is there still (some) of this good wine?' (Valais: Lalden\_1990).

where both the determiner and the noun were marked for genitive: for example, OHG *thes wines* (the-GEN wine-GEN), *thes uuazares* (the-GEN water-GEN); MHG *des mistes* (the-GEN excrement-GEN), *eines wazzers* (a-GEN water-GEN); ENHG *des brots* (the-GEN bread-GEN). It seems that this rule was still valid for some Walliser dialects at the beginning of the 20th century, see some of the (plural) examples in (16)–(17), so that we can assume a recent language change.

However, in partitive noun phrases containing a modifying adnominal adjective, genitive case is additionally marked on the adjective. This is true both for Walliser German (24) and Luxembourgish (25), where the *-er* suffix on the adjective after the determiner *där* is a specific genitive ending. Note the apparent case difference for the Walliser German dialects, though: while the adjectives *siess* ‘sweet’ and *schwarz* ‘black’ display a genitive ending *-u* after the determiner *deru*, *siess* ‘sweet’ and *güet* ‘good’ have accusative morphology after *deschi* instead (*-i* and *-a*, respectively), governed by the verb *welle* ‘to want’.

(24) a. Valais: Visp

*Welleder nu deru siess-u Boone / deschi siess-i*  
 want.you more the.GEN sweet-GEN beans the.GEN sweet-ACC  
*Boone?*  
 beans  
 ‘Would you like (some) more of these sweet beans?’

b. Valais: Guttet-Feschel/Goms

*Welleder nu deru schwarz-u Kaffe / deschi güet-a*  
 want.you more the.GEN black-GEN coffee the.GEN good-ACC  
*Kaffe?*  
 coffee  
 ‘Would you like (some) more of this black/good coffee?’

(25) Luxembourgish

*Et leet een dann där kleng-er Steng dohinner*  
 it puts one then the.GEN.PL small-GEN.PL stones there  
 ‘Then, one places such small stones there.’ (Döhmer 2017, 129)

The results from our exploration are in line with the description of the Luxembourgish adjectival inflection after partitive determiners by Döhmer (2017). She points out that the adjective bears an *-er* suffix for plural (*där kleng-er Betriber* ‘of these/such small businesses’) and feminine singular (*där gudd-er Mëllech* ‘of this good milk’) as well as an *-en* ending for masculine (*däers gudd-en Hunneg* ‘of this good honey’) and neuter singular (*däers deier-en Holz* ‘of this expen-

sive wood'). Besides noun phrases such as *där(/därer) séisser Küsschten* 'of these sweet cherries' and *där waarmer Zopp* 'of this warm soup', which correspond to the expected pattern *där* A(djective)-*er* N(oun) for plural/feminine singular, in our questionnaires, however, we marginally got also adjectives without an ending (in total 3 times *där séiss Küsschten*). The same is true for masculine/neuter singular, where one informant each filled in *däers fräsch Brout* (without an ending), *däers fräsch Brout* (with *-t*)<sup>17</sup> and *däers fräsches Brout* (with *-es*, potentially influenced by Standard German), apart from *däers(/dees) fräsche Brout* 'of this fresh bread' and *däers(/dees) gudde Kuch* 'of this good cake' in accordance with the main pattern *däers* A-*en* N.<sup>18</sup>

As to Walliser German, on the other side, we found competition of especially two adjectival suffixes in the plural (*deru(/-o/därru)* A-*u/-i* N: e.g., *deru siessu/-i Chriese* 'of these sweet cherries', as opposed to unvarying *deschi* A-*i* N: e.g., *deschi siessi Chriese*), but mostly uniform adjective endings in partitive noun phrases with feminine (*deschi* A-*i* N: *deschi heissi Suppa* 'of this hot soup'), masculine (*deschi* A-*e/-ä* N: *deschi güete/-ä Wü* 'of this good wine') and neuter (*deschi* A-*us* N: *deschi frischus Brot* 'of this fresh bread') mass nouns (keeping in mind the variability in using the determiners *deru* and *deschi*, respectively).<sup>19</sup>

### 3.2 Type and Form of the Determiner

Concerning the type and form of the determiner introducing our partitive structures, we find a reduction of the possible types from Old High German to the modern varieties. In Old and Middle High German, every type of determiner can be used in the genitive form, that is, definite articles (e.g., OHG *thes wines* the-GEN wine-GEN, *thes uuazares* the-GEN water-GEN; MHG *des mistes* the-GEN excrement-GEN; ENHG *des brots* the-GEN bread-GEN) and indefinite articles (MHG *eines wazzers* a-GEN water-GEN) as well as demonstratives or

17 For the *t*-suffix on the adjective with neuter see also an example from the literature: *mam gudde Riecher fir déi richtig Plazen, wou däers "schwarz Gold" op eis kéint waarden* (Lux-Bintner 2014, 16) 'with a good feeling for the right places, where such "black gold" could wait for us'.

18 The *n*-loss of the adjectival suffix *-en* in these examples is due to the so-called "Eifeler Regel" (Eifel Rule), which is typical of Luxembourgish and some West (Central) German varieties.

19 For instance, we had a slight prevalence of *deschi* over *deru* in the dependent partitive structure *en Hamfleta deschi grieni Boone* 'a handful of these green beans'—a finding that cannot be generalized to all dependent partitives, however—, whereas in the cited IPG *deru siessu/-i Chriese* 'of these sweet cherries' the form *deru* occurred much more often.

possessives (OHG *iuuares oles* your-GEN oil-GEN). In the modern varieties, however, we only find specific elements used to form nominal partitive constructions, former demonstratives and partly new formations such as *däers* with unclear etymology in Luxembourgish: *där Äppel* ‘of these apples’, *däers Wäin* ‘of this wine’. In the Valais, we have various forms of the d-pronouns *deru* and *deschi* (the latter one being explained as < *des* + *šîn*):<sup>20</sup> *deru Boone* ‘of these beans’, *deschi Kaffe* ‘of this coffee’.

There are some Continental Germanic varieties, though, where the loss of the genitive gave rise to new markers or a reuse of forms, with the result that another type of nominal partitive developed, namely a periphrastic construction using the preposition *von/van* ‘from, of’ selecting a plural or mass noun phrase with different determiners (and, if applicable, marked for dative case). This “*von/van*-periphrasis” used as—among others—partitive expression can be found in some western varieties of German such as Southern Rhine Franconian as well as in Dutch, known there as “faded partitive construction” or “*verbleekte partitieven*” (cf. e.g., De Hoop 2003; Oosterhof 2005; also Broekhuis and Den Dikken 2012, 625–629, who show that this kind of *van*-phrase can be used with the distribution of a DP despite its appearance of a PP). It occurs both in independent and dependent constructions, in object and subject position (26)–(27). In both varieties, we have a more or less developed system of at least optional nominal partitivity marking. Dutch does also have partitive or quantitative pronouns (cf. e.g., Luraghi and Kittilä 2014, 23), Southern Rhine Franconian instead has a quite newly developed system of zero marking or null anaphora (cf. i.a. Glaser 1992).

(26) Southern Rhine Franconian

a. *Des sin doch fun daine Schdudende?*

this are after.all of your students

‘These are some of your students, aren’t they?’

b. *Dissjor hämmer fun de Tomate gstoole griecht*

this.year have.we of the tomatoes stolen got

‘This year we got some of the tomatoes stolen.’

20 *Dešši* is explained in Bohnenberger (1913, 221) as a compound pronominal form consisting of the simple demonstrative *deš* + *ši* (possessive pronoun M.SG) (see also fn. 11). The form is mentioned in other dialect descriptions as a demonstrative pronoun, see Wipf (1910, 142–143).

## (27) Dutch

*Er lagen van die dikke boeken op de tafel*

there lay of those thick books on the table

'Some thick books lay on the table.' (Luraghi and Kittilä 2014, 23)

The *Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst* (ANS, Haeseryn et al. 1997) labels the Dutch *van*+demonstrative-construction as informal and points to a differentiation between proximal (*van deze/van dit (soort)* as in *van deze penntjes* 'of these pens' or *van dit glas* 'of this glass') and distal (*van die/van dat (soort)* as in *van die chocola* 'of that chocolate' or *van dat fijne zand* 'of that fine sand'), depending on the type of demonstrative determiner (see E-ANS: <http://ans.ruhosting.nl/e-ans/05/06/09/body.html>). The special meaning of this *van*-construction, according to the ANS, often can be paraphrased as 'such ... as you see here in front of you/as we are talking about' or '... you know', with a different intonational structure.

In Walliser German, too, in many instances it is possible to exchange the genitive phrases by a prepositional phrase with *va* 'from, of' and a following determiner, see (28) for all varieties of our pretest. This construction seems to have spread in the last decades, as our questionnaires show. It is also possible to have a bare noun here, but a combination of *va* + *deru/deschi* is excluded. Furthermore, the construction appears also in dependent (pseudo-)partitive structures (such as *e bitz va dischum Kaffe* 'a bit of this coffee', *e Schgutz va der Milch* 'a drop of the milk' or *e Hampfleta va dischu Boone* 'a handful of these beans').

## (28) Valais: Goms, Visp, Guttet-Feschel

a. *Hets nu va denu/-e / dischu/-e Boone?*

has.it still of the/these beans

'Are there still (some) of the/these beans?'

b. *Hets nu va der/discher Milch?*

has.it still of the/this milk

'Is there still (some) of the/this milk?'

The reuse of the preposition *vun* 'from, of' in partitive constructions can also be found in Luxembourgish, see (29). However, according to our elicitation, it seems that the partitive determiners are still very present and productive there, they have a stronger position than in Walliser German. Moreover, as (30) shows, both topicalized noun phrases with a partitive genitive determiner—in example (30a) with an additional stranded numeral *zég* 'ten'—and *vun*-phrases

could feature a (resumptive) partitive genitive pronoun in our Luxembourgish data (see also Section 3.3).

- (29) a. *Wëllst du där (doter) Äppel / vun denen Äppel?*  
 want you the.GEN.PL (there) apples of these apples  
 ‘Do you want (some) of these/those apples (there)?’ (Diekirch\_1951)
- b. *Gëtt et nach däers gudde Kuch / vun deem gudde Kuch?*  
 gives it still the.GEN.SG good cake of this good cake  
 ‘Is there still (some) of the/this good cake?’ (Diekirch\_1951)
- (30) a. *Där Wirscherscher / Vun dene Wirscherscher huet de*  
 the.GEN.PL sausages of these sausages has the  
*Michel der zéng giess!*  
 Michel of.them ten eaten  
 ‘Michel ate ten of these sausages.’ (Esch-sur-Alzette\_1986)
- b. *Vun dene(n) (dote) Beem stin der och bei mir am*  
 of these (there) trees stand of.them also at me in.the  
*Gaart*  
 garden  
 ‘There are also (some) of these/those trees (there)/such trees in my garden.’ (Esch-sur-Alzette\_1986)
- c. *Vun deem Opschnatt hu mir es nach doheim*  
 of this cold.meat have we of.it still at.home  
 ‘We still have (some) of this/such cold meat at home.’ (Esch-sur-Alzette\_1986)

In many contexts, these markers pattern with functions and the distribution of the so-called “partitive article” in French and Italian. This may also be true for Bavarian dialects, which show a completely different system with an indefinite article used together with mass nouns (31), expressing a partial-affectedness reading (cf. e.g., Kolmer 1999). Bavarian is considered a “radical” article language, nouns being obligatorily accompanied by an article:

- (31) a. *Hoi a Wossa!*  
 get a water  
 ‘Fetch some water!’



- b. *I brauchat a Gäid*  
 I would.need a money  
 ‘I’d need some money.’

In the history of (especially eastern/southern) High German, the use of indefinite articles with mass nouns is also well documented, see for example (32) from a 16th century cook book manuscript (Sabina Welserin) from Augsburg. The occurrence of these articles is not yet analyzed sufficiently, though.<sup>21</sup>

- (32) *darnach nim ain rossenwasser*  
 then take a rosewater  
 ‘then take some rosewater.’ (ms. 16th c., Stopp 1980, 134)

To mention a last type, we turn to Northern Germanic. As Dahl (2015, 50, 54) reports, there are some Scandinavian dialects in the Peripheral Swedish area, where we find marking of definiteness with mass nouns showing a “non-delimited use”, see (33). This (suffixed) definite article obviously can also be considered a partitive marker in the sense of independent partitivity. Although more detailed analyses are lacking, it seems that this kind of independent partitivity marking cannot be compared to the cases mentioned before.

- (33) a. Skelletmål (Northern Westrobothnian):  
 [...] *sä skå I väärm mjölka åt ’n*
- b. Orsa (Ovansiljan):  
 [...] *sö skari wärm mjötje a num*  
 [...] so shall(.)I warm milk.DEF for him  
 ‘I’ll warm some milk for him.’

Until now, we focused on independent partitives and only sporadically mentioned true partitive and pseudo-partitive constructions—with the latter distinction, however, being often difficult to make without knowing the exact

21 The use of the indefinite article with mass nouns is also known in the modern dialect of Augsburg, representing the East Swabian area next to Bavarian, see Glaser (1995, 72–73). A preliminary check of indefinite DPs and PPs in Sabina Welserin’s cook book (Stopp 1980) shows that the indefinite article is not obligatory, but it is used in almost half of the instances in the PPs (84 out of 177) and in 35% of the cases in the DPs (161 out of 460), just as in the example cited in the text.

context. In the next section, we will characterize the situation of these types of dependent partitives.

### 3.3 *Independent Partitive Genitive (IPG) vs. Dependent Partitives (Partitive and Pseudo-partitive Constructions)*

Apart from the cases of independent partitive genitives discussed (predominantly) so far, that is genitives not directly governed by some head (Lux. *där Äppel* ‘of these apples’, *däers Béier* ‘of this beer’; Wall. *deru Boone* ‘of these beans’, *deschi Kaffe* ‘of this coffee’), there are also dependent partitives with a numeral/quantifier or a measure phrase (Lux. *véier där Wirschterscher* ‘four of these sausages’, *ee Glaas däers Wäin* ‘a glass of this wine’; Wall. *e Hampfleta deru Boone* ‘a handful of these beans’, *e Schgutz deschi Milch* ‘a drop of this milk’).<sup>22</sup> Contrary to Seržant’s (2014) assumption, however, the so-called IPG could also be analyzed as dependent on a null element, a non-explicit or non-overt quantifier, which would also make sense in view of the part—whole relation expressed, the undetermined quantity or subset: ‘some of (the apples/the beer etc.)’.

In the light of our recent elicitation, it seems that the usage of an archaic partitive genitive determiner in such dependent constructions is less frequent than in the independent examples. In Walliser German, this is especially true for plural noun phrases (3 occurrences of *vier deru/deschi Wurschtjini* ‘four of these sausages’, 4 *en Hampfleta deru/deschi Boone* ‘a handful of these beans’ and 4 *es par deru/deschi Häärpfla* ‘a few of these potatoes’ vs. 7 *deru/deschi Epfla* ‘of these apples’), whereas with mass nouns the (already lower) frequency is the same for IPGs and dependent partitives. Apart from a competing dependent *va*-phrase (see Section 3.2), we find many instances of simple juxtaposition in these contexts.<sup>23</sup> In Luxembourgish, the corresponding gen-

22 Similar examples—albeit often in lexicalized expressions—are reported for various Swiss German dialects, for example, in Weber (1987, 140) for Zürich German, comprising both independent partitive genitives (*Shüt dère Kärli* ‘There are such guys’, *S git dère Toorebuebe* ‘There are such fools’) and dependent ones (*vil dère Lüüt* ‘many of these people’, *kä dère Sache* ‘none of these things’, *gnueg dère Züüg* ‘enough of this stuff’), apparently with a generalized *dère* in this dialect (see the different systems at the beginning of Section 3).

23 The following Walliser German examples taken from our elicitation illustrate such competing strategies:

- *va*-phrase: *vier va dische/va de/vanu/vane(/va dene) Wurschtjini(/-u)* ‘four of these/the sausages’, *en Hampfleta va dische/va de/vanu/va dene Boone* ‘a handful of these/the beans’, *es par va dische/va de/vanu/va dene Häärpfla* ‘a few of these/the potatoes’
- numeral/quantifier + noun: *vier Wurtschjini* ‘four sausages’, *en Hampfleta Boone* ‘a handful (of) beans’, *es par Häärpfla* ‘a few potatoes’

itive determiner seems to generally appear less often with dependent partitive structures (9 *véier där/därer Wirschterscher* ‘four of these sausages’, 7 *ee Schotz där (doter)/därer Bounen* ‘a bunch of these/those beans (there)’, 9 *e puer där (heiter)/därer Grompere* ‘a few of these potatoes (here)’; 4 *genuch där (doter)/därer Mëllech* ‘enough of this/that milk (there)’; 3 *e bëssen dä(e)rs (dote) Kaffi* ‘a bit of this/that coffee (there)’; 5 *ee Glaas däers/dees (dote) Wäin* ‘a glass of this/that wine (there)’) than with the independent ones (11 *där (doter) Äppel* ‘of these/those apples (there)’, 7 *där (doter) Mëllech* ‘of this/that milk (there)’, 7 *dä(e)rs (dote) Kaffi*, ‘of this/that coffee (there)’) (except for one test sentence, containing the phrase *e bëssen där gudder Zopp* ‘a bit of this good soup’). Here, too, the partitive genitive determiners are in competition with the *vun*-construction and, even more, with juxtaposition structures.<sup>24</sup>

All in all, Luxembourgish features different possibilities of undetermined and determined noun phrases relevant in our context: bare nouns as in *Beispiller* ‘examples’, quantified noun phrases such as *zwee Beispiller* ‘two examples’—these two types correspond to German, English and other Germanic languages. Hence, in Luxembourgish we can have bare indefinite nouns as for instance in (34a), in contrast to French. Furthermore, there are nominals with a partitive determiner: IPGs as in *där Beispiller* ‘of these examples’ on the one hand, see (34b), and dependent partitives as in *honnert där Beispiller* ‘100 of these examples’ on the other hand, see (34c) (examples from Döhmer 2017, 120–121):

(34) a. *Gitt Beispiller!*  
give examples  
‘Give examples!’

b. *Mir hunn all Dag där Beispiller*  
we have every day the.GEN.PL examples  
‘Every day we have (some) of these examples.’

24 These are some examples of such alternative constructions used by our Luxembourgish informants:

- *vun*-phrase: *véier vun dene(n dote) Wirschterscher* ‘four of these/those sausages (there)’, *ee Schotz vun dene Bounen* ‘a bunch of these beans’, *e puer vun dene Grompere* ‘a few of these potatoes’; *genuch vun der Mëllech* ‘enough of this milk’; *e bësse vun deem/vum Kaffi* ‘a bit of this/the coffee’, *ee Glaas vun deem Wäin* ‘a glass of this wine’
- numeral/quantifier + noun: *véier Wirschterscher* ‘four sausages’, *ee Schotz Bounen* ‘a bunch (of) beans’, *e puer Grompere* ‘a few potatoes’; *genuch Mëllech* ‘enough milk’; *e bësse Kaffi* ‘a bit (of) coffee’, *ee Glaas Wäin* ‘a glass (of) wine’

- c. *An ech kéint nach 100 där*            *Beispiller nennen*  
 and I    could more 100 the.GEN.PL examples mention  
 ‘And I could mention 100 more of these examples.’

Together with a quantifying expression, we find several possibilities for the position of the numeral/quantifier or measure phrase of the partitive noun phrase, exemplified here by the attested positional variants in Luxembourgish. According to our elicitation, though, this is in principle also applicable to Wal-liser German. In the examples under (35), we can see the “normal” starting structure with a prenominal position of the quantifier within the noun phrase (*véier där Wirschtercher* ‘four of these sausages’, *e puer där Kostümer* ‘a few of these costumes’):

- (35) a. *Ech hu véier där*            *Wirschtercher giess*  
 I    have four the.GEN.PL sausages    eaten  
 ‘I ate four of these sausages.’ (LOD: *där*)
- b. *Et ginn e puer där*            *Kostümer*  
 it    gives a few the.GEN.PL costumes  
 ‘There are a few of these costumes.’ (Döhmer 2017, 127)

In (36), in contrast, the DET+N constituent has been moved to the left of the quantifying phrase, but still remains within the nominal domain (*däers Waasser vill* ‘(lit.) of this water a lot’, *där Billercher eng Hellewull* ‘(lit.) of these pictures loads of’):<sup>25</sup>

- (36) a. *Mir brauchen däers*            *Waasser vill*  
 we need    the.GEN.SG water    much  
 ‘We need a lot of this water.’ (Döhmer 2017, 126)
- b. *Mäi Papp huet där*            *Billercher eng Hellewull an engem*  
 my dad has the.GEN.PL pictures a load    in a  
*Album*  
 album  
 ‘My dad has loads of these pictures in an album.’ (Jhemp Hoscheit: *Perl oder Pica*)

25 Together with the negation element *net* ‘not’ or adverbs such as *gär* (in *Ech hätt gär ...* ‘I’d like (to have) ...’), see for instance *Mir/Mer hunn där Wippercher/däers Wäin net genuch*

In (37), eventually, we get a discontinuous noun phrase by extraction, which reminds of Split-Topicalization or Floating Quantifiers (*Deer Tärtercher ... eng* '(lit.) Of these tartlets ... one', *Där Wippercher ... (net) genuch* '(lit.) Of these sausages ... (not) enough'):

- (37) a. *Deer Tärtercher wëll ech eng*  
 the.GEN.PL tartlets want I one  
 'I want one of these tartlets.' (Schanen and Zimmer 2006, 90)
- b. *Där Wippercher hu mer net genuch*  
 the.GEN.PL sausages have we not enough  
 'We don't have enough of these sausages.' (<http://www.land.lu/page/article/694/8694/DEU/index.html>)

A deeper quantitative as well as qualitative analysis of the results of our inquiry by use of the test sentences in (38) shows that with the quantifiers *eng Jett/hüüfu* 'a lot of' and *genuch/gnüeg* 'enough' in (38a–b), our Luxembourgish informants mostly accepted more than one order, that is, two or three different orders for 'a lot of these/such people' (*eng Jett där Leit, där Leit eng Jett* and/or *Där Leit ... eng Jett*, etc.). In contrast, our speakers of Walliser German most often ticked only one order (*e hüüfu deru/deschi Lit, deru/deschi Lit e hüüfu* or *Deru/deschi Lit ... e hüüfu* etc.) and accepted to a much lesser extent two or up to three serializations. With the numeral *een/eis* 'one', as in 'one of these cookies/tartlets', and with the negative quantifier *keen/keis* 'none', as in 'any of this beer', illustrated in (38c) and (38d) respectively, on the other hand, in Luxembourgish (*een där Kichelcher, där Kichelcher een, Där Kichelcher ... een* etc.) as well as in Walliser German (*eis deru/deschi Chüechjini, deru/deschi Chüechjini eis, Eis ... deru/deschi Chüechjini* etc.), there was a strong preference for selecting merely one of the given serializations. Qualitatively, with (38a) and (38b), the first and basic sequence quantifier + partitive phrase (Q PRTV) was the most popular one in both varieties, followed by the third sequence with Split-Topicalization (PRTV ... Q) and, lastly, by the second, (in the Valais only marginal) short raising sequence (PRTV Q). Intraindividual acceptance of the first, second and third or of the first and third positional variant occurred

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'We don't have enough of these sausages/of this wine' (<http://www.land.lu/page/article/694/8694/DEU/index.html>) and *Ech hätt där Kichelcher gär een* 'I'd like one of these cookies' (e.g., *Luxemburg-Stadt\_1946* in our questionnaires), the partitive DP is extracted, without being topicalized, though, but only raised to the *Mittelfeld* (middle field).

frequently. Combinations of the first and second as well as of the second and third variant were very rare. With (38c) and especially (38d) instead, the third serialization pattern (Split-Topicalization: PRTV ... NUM/NEG Q) was (strongly) preferred (except in the case of *eis deru/deschi Chüechjini* in the Valais), followed by the second pattern (short raising: PRTV NUM/NEG Q) and, finally, the first one (base order: NUM/NEG Q PRTV).

(38) a. Lux.

*Ech kennen eng Jett där Leit*

a'. Wall.

*Ich kennu e hüüfu deru/deschi Lit*  
 I know a heap the.GEN.PL people  
 'I know a lot of these/such people.'

b. Lux.

*Mir hu net genuch där Wirschterscher kaaf*

b'. Wall.

*Wier hei nit gnüeg deru/deschi Wurschtjini*  
 we have not enough the.GEN.PL sausages (bought)  
 'We haven't bought/don't have enough of these sausages.'

c. Lux.

*Ech hätt gär een där Kichelcher*  
 I had gladly one the.GEN.PL cookies

c'. Wall.

*Ich wellti eis deru/deschi Chüechjini*  
 I wanted one the.GEN.PL tartlets  
 'I'd like one of these cookies/tartlets.'

d. Lux.

*Mir brauche keen däers Béier*

d'. Wall.

*Wier brüüche keis deschi/deru Bier*  
 we need none the.GEN.SG beer  
 'We don't need any of this beer.'

Another point worth exploring in more detail is the co-occurrence of partitive nominals with a partitive pronominal in the case of Split-Topicalization with a stranded indefinite quantifier as in (39) or a numeral as in (40). There seem to be some interesting differences with respect to the optionality or obligatoriness of such a resumptive partitive pronoun (examples from Döhmer 2017, 123, 125–126):

- (39) *An där Beispiller ginn et (der) vill*  
 and the.GEN.PL examples gives it (of.them) many  
 ‘And there are many of these examples.’

- (40) a. *D’ Airline huet 13 där Maschinne*  
 b. *13 där Maschinnen huet*  
 c. *Där Maschinnen huet*  
 the airline has 13 the.GEN.PL machines has  
*bestallt*  
*(der) d’Airline (der) bestallt*  
*d’Airline \*(der) 13 / (der) 13 Stéck bestallt*  
 the airline (of.them) 13 pieces ordered  
 ‘The airline ordered 13 of these planes.’

Our investigation has confirmed that a noun phrase introduced by a partitive determiner (as well as a partitive *von*-phrase, see also Section 3.2) especially in Luxembourgish can be taken up again by a partitive pronoun, see (41). However, there were two instances of an (optional) resumptive pronoun in Walliser German, too, see (42a) for a case of Split-Topicalization as opposed to (42b), where the entire sequence numeral + dependent partitive phrase is topicalized. Note that, on top of that, the numeral *zää(n)* ‘ten’ bears an additional *i*-suffix (showing also stem alternation) in stranded position in our Highest Alemannic dialects, see (42a) vs. (42b):

- (41) a. *Där Wirschterscher huet de Michel der zéng giess!*  
 the.GEN.PL sausages has the Michel of.them ten eaten  
 b. *Vun dene Wirschterscher huet de Michel der zéng*  
 of the.DAT.PL sausages has the Michel of.them ten  
*giess!*  
 eaten  
 ‘Michel ate ten of these sausages.’ (Luxemburg-Stadt\_1946, Ettelbruck\_1980, Diekirch\_1\_1981, Diekirch\_1983, Walferdange\_1985, Esch-sur-Alzette\_1986)

- (42) a. *Deru Wurschtjini het (ra/ru) Beat zääni ggässu!*  
 the.GEN.PL sausages has (of.them) Beat ten eaten
- b. *Zää dero Wurschtjini het där Beat (dero) ggässu!*  
 ten the.GEN.PL sausages has the Beat (of.them) eaten  
 ‘Beat ate ten of these sausages.’ (a: *Visp\_1988*, b: *Staldenried\_1949*)

### 3.4 *Functions/Semantics*

The different functions or interpretations of the noun phrase structures discussed here are somewhat difficult to grasp. In contradistinction to French, the “partitive” determiners in the Continental West Germanic varieties we focused on are only optional, competing with bare nouns, see again the contrasting Luxembourgish examples (taken from *Döhmer 2017, 120–121*), repeated here as (43a) and (43b):

- (43) a. *Gitt Beispiller!*  
 give examples  
 ‘Give examples!’
- b. *Mir hunn all Dag där Beispiller*  
 we have every day the.GEN.PL examples  
 ‘Every day we have (some) of these examples.’

It is remarkable, though, that in our elicitation we got very often a partitive genitive determiner even with “out of the blue” questions such as *Haben wir noch Äpfel?* ‘Do we still have apples?’ (in the given situational context: *While preparing a grocery list ...*) or *Habt ihr auch Bier?* ‘Do you also have beer?’ (*During dinner at a friend’s home ...*). As opposed for example to French and Italian, one would expect a bare noun for an indefinite unspecific reading instead (cf. e.g., *Kabatek and Wall 2013*). Nevertheless, this was hardly the case in our contrastive test sentence *Das sind keine Rosen, das sind Tulpen/Kamelien* ‘These are not roses, these are tulips/camellias’ (*At the florist’s ...*), which triggered almost exclusively a bare noun *Tulpen* (Lux.) or *Kamelie* (Wall.). Unlike this contrastive example, *Äpfel* and *Bier* in our “out of the blue” contexts are in principle quantifiable and could thus refer to an undetermined quantity.<sup>26</sup> And in spite of the given introductory situation, the utterances seem to remain

<sup>26</sup> This contrast has also been observed for *des*-NPs in French (*Ihsane 2008*).



ambiguous between a general question for apples/beer and asking for particular apples/beer ('of these apples/this beer, ... you know').

Although the semantic differences sometimes seem to be quite small, there is often a more or less marked *sort of*-connotation conveyed by the Germanic "partitive" determiners (i.e., 'such, of this type/that kind'). The partitive noun phrase *däers Kéis* in the Luxembourgish example (44) apart from 'some of this cheese' can mean 'such cheese'. The same holds for the nominals under (45) *däru biähär* 'some of these/such books' and *deru/deschi Steina/Boone/Epfla* 'some of these/such stones/beans/apples' in Walliser German. Hotzenköcherle (1934, 431), too, reports on a development from a demonstrative partitive meaning to a *sort of*-meaning ("talis") for *Mutten*, a Grisons Walser dialect. For our test sentence (45b), however, a slight semantic difference between the two determiners *deru* and *deschi* has been reported by some informants, with *deru* leading rather to a *such*-interpretation ('of this type') and *deschi* being more partitive ('some of these stones/beans/apples').<sup>27</sup> Sometimes the determiners may also have a '... you know'-reading, as reported for the Dutch *van*-construction (see above Haeseryn et al. 1997).

(44) Luxembourgish

*Ech hunn nach däers Kéis doheem*  
 I have still the.GEN.SG cheese at.home  
 'I still have (some) of this/such cheese at home.' (Döhmer 2017, 2)

(45) a. Valais: Lötschental

*däru biähär hetti miär schōn oich*  
 the.GEN.PL books would.have we even also  
 'We do also have (some) of these/such books.' (Henzen 1932, 122)

b. Valais: Visp

*Welleder nu deru/deschi Steina/Boone/Epfla?*  
 want.you more the.GEN stones/beans/apples  
 'Would you like (some) more of these/such stones/beans/apples?'

We can find hints for a *kind of*-reading also in other German dialects, for instance in the example *dērä bəimər* 'such trees' (in contrast to *dērä kuχə* 'of these cakes' and *dəsən kuχə* 'of this cake', Dellit 1913, 133–134) from Kleinschmal-

<sup>27</sup> This is in line with the occurrence of *dēre* meaning 'such' in other varieties of Swiss German (see fn. 22), not showing any partitivity (anymore).

kalden (Hennebergisch), an East Franconian dialect. Note, moreover, that in our elicitation tasks aiming explicitly at a sortal reading—by pointing and referring to a specific type of trees/milk/cheese with the aid of an appropriate context description—, a majority of our Luxembourgish informants used the partitive genitive determiner (*där* (*doter*) *Beem* ‘such trees (over there)’, *där* (*doter*)/*därer Mëllech* ‘such milk (over there)’, *däers/dees* (*doten*) *Opschnatt* ‘such cold meat (over there)’), in competition with *sou* ‘so/such’ (*sou Beem*, *sou Mëllech*, *sou Opschnatt*), but in Walliser German, on the other hand, the adjectival formation *settigi/-e* ‘suchlike’ (*settigi Beim* ‘such trees’, *settigi Milch* ‘such milk’, *settige Üfschnitt* ‘such cold meat’) was clearly preferred over *deru/deschi* (*deru Beim*, *deschi Milch*, *deschi Üfschnitt*).

Furthermore, one can wonder if, besides partitive meanings and *sort of/ kind of*-readings, there is also the possibility of a pure indefinite interpretation of independent partitive genitives in (modern) Germanic, comparable to Romance so-called “partitive” determiners, for instance French *du/des*-NPs (cf. e.g., Ihsane 2008) as in *J’ai bu du vin* ‘I drank (some) wine’ or *Elle a acheté des livres* ‘She bought (some) books’. Although this question still has to be explored in detail, it strikes us that historical examples of genitive nominals, even with a definite determiner, sometimes clearly allow for an indefinite reading, see (46):

(46) OHG

*joh brast in thar thes win-es*  
 also was.lacking them there the.GEN.M wine-GEN.M  
 ‘and they also lacked wine.’

Although a generic use of noun phrases with a partitive determiner seems to be very unlikely both in Romance and cross-linguistically, on closer examination this turns out not to be completely excluded. As for Germanic, De Hoop (2003) gives an example for the Dutch “faded partitive construction” *van die/dat* + (A) + N (see Section 3.2), reproduced here as (47), which is generic indeed. However, according to her, this is only possible when a modifier is present, that is, in this context the adjective *zwart* ‘black’.<sup>28</sup>

28 Thanks to Giuliana Giusti for pointing out to us that *dei/delle*-phrases with a generic interpretation can be found in Italian as well, both with and without a modifying adjective, for example, *Dei veri italiani* ... ‘Real Italians ...’, *Delle barzellette devono far ridere* ‘Jokes have to cause laughter’ (Giusti p.c.). They are also possible in French, as discussed in the literature (Vogeleer and Tasmowski 2005; Wilmet 2003; see also Ihsane 2018).

- (47) *Van die zwarte katten brengen geluk!*  
 of those black cats bring luck  
 'Black cats bring good luck.' (De Hoop 2003, 198)

#### 4 Summary and Outlook

In our paper, we discussed new data gathered in recent questionnaire elicitation and fieldwork in two Germanic varieties known so far very superficially for the survival of genitive forms in nominal phrases potentially rendering notions of partitivity. In our research, we found several types of determiners showing forms going back etymologically to genitive forms or newly formed on such models. There are, however, no more nominal genitives. Although there is no thorough description of the usage of genitive and partitive markers available until now, it is clear that genitive definite determiners mainly function as (optional) partitive markers in our Germanic varieties, denoting a partial reading in deictic contexts as well as *sort of-/kind of*-readings. These archaic genitive markers seem to decrease in frequency in the younger generation, though, competing particularly with (among other functions) partitive *von* ('from, of')-phrases.

In connection with the findings presented in this paper on some structural and functional aspects of "partitive" determiners in Germanic (with a special focus on Luxembourgish and Walliser German), a number of open questions should be pursued in further research. A first issue concerns the exact relationship between "partitive articles" and pronouns, also contrastively to Romance, since in both language families there are systems with the respective determiner as well as the pronominal (in French, partially also in Italian, in Walliser/Walser German dialects and in Luxembourgish) (cf. Schurr, this volume, for a discussion of some clitic patterns and the bare/partitive distinction in Romance in a usage-based approach). On the other hand, there are also systems possessing only the pronoun, but no "partitive" article (such as Catalan, Dutch and some Central German dialects). This gives rise to a second line of investigation: Why is it that the pronominal use of partitive genitives has survived longer than their use in nominals and thus seems to be more resistant (a fact that ties in with the general observation that case distinctions persist longer in pronouns as opposed to the nominal domain)? And why do we still find genitive case here anyway, in spite of the general loss of the genitive in most dialects? A third issue targets the possible role of the Germanic-Romance contact situation for Walliser and Walser German as well as for Luxembourgish: Has the preservation of partitive forms of the determiner (and/or pronouns)

beyond fossilized or lexicalized expressions been sustained by Romance contact influence in these varieties? Some researchers considered also the *von*-construction (or at least its increase in the 18th century) to be a product of language contact (Reichmann and Wegera 1993, 353). Finally, the obligatoriness vs. optionality of partitive determiners in different syntactic contexts needs further exploration, similar to the Romance systems (French vs. Italian).

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### Abbreviations

ENHG	Early New High German
IE	Indo-European
LOD	<i>Lëtzebuenger Online Dictionnaire</i>
Lux.	Luxembourgish
LWB	<i>Luxemburger Wörterbuch</i>
MHG	Middle High German
NHG	New High German
OHG	Old High German
OT.	Old Testament
Wall.	Walliser German

- O. Otfrid v. Weissenburg, *Evangelienbuch*, 9th c.
- Iw. *Iwein. Eine Erzählung von Hartmann von Aue*, edited by Georg F. Benecke and Karl Lachmann, revised by Ludwig Wolff. 7th ed. Vol. 1. Berlin 1968: De Gruyter.
- Mons. *Monseer Fragmente*, 9th c.
- Tucher Lexer, Matthias, ed. 1862. *Endres Tuchers Baumeisterbuch der Stadt Nürnberg (1464–1475)*. Stuttgart: Literarischer Verein.

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- ms. around 1550 *Arzneibuch der Philippine Welser* (Wien, Kunsthistorisches Museum Inv.Nr. PA 1474).



# Bound To Be? Bare and Partitive-Marked Noun Phrases in Romance Languages and the Emergence of Prominence-Conditioned Patterns

*Hagay Schurr*

## 1 Introduction

“Partitive” morphemes (e.g., adpositions, articles or case) and bare nouns in many languages are intuitively similar in denoting some kind of indefiniteness. In Romance languages, partitive-marked nouns and a class of bare nouns share a core context of occurrence and indefinite interpretation (Körner 1981; Stark 2005).<sup>1</sup> Certain non-countable, substance- or abstract-denoting nouns may or must occur with a “partitive article” in some languages, but remain bare in other languages, as in French (1a) and Spanish (1b) respectively (see Section 2.4.4).<sup>2</sup>

### (1) a. French

*Je=bois                      du              café*  
 1SG=drink.PRS.1SG PA.M.SG coffee  
 ‘I drink coffee.’ (in general)

### b. Spanish

*Bebo                      café*  
 drink.PRS.1SG coffee  
 ‘I drink coffee.’ (in general)

The same morphological distinction extends to plural indefinites and hence to countable nouns (Section 2.4.4) (Carlier and Lamiroy 2014). For instance, the French indefinite plural may have a non-specific reading in (2a), while its Span-

1 See Dobrovie-Sorin, this volume, for a comparison between French plural indefinites introduced by a “partitive article” and bare nouns across languages. Partitive-markers in some Germanic varieties are discussed in Strobel and Glaser, this volume.

2 An anonymous reviewer notes that (1a) has another interpretation: ‘I drink some of the coffee’ in the context of a specific receptacle of coffee. While this reading is available, it is not equivalent to the Spanish bare object clause in (1b).





While Körner's approach to the typological distinction was met with criticism, it is true that there is some distributional relation between PA and DOM (Bossong 2008). Therefore, when accounting for the bare/PA distinction, it may be informative to identify the distribution of both PA/bare nouns and DOM and their grammatical correlates, as well as other seemingly prominence-conditioned phenomena. I focus on such phenomena in the Romance clitic systems. To illustrate this, consider Spanish example (2) again (Spanish *le<sub>i</sub> veo a Jesús Soria<sub>i</sub>*, 'I see Jesus Soria'). There, the proper name direct object that is marked by a dative-syncretic DOM is coreferential with a dative-syncretic accusative clitic, *le*, instead of the expected accusative *lo* (hence it is known as *leísmo*). This pattern is observed in some Ibero-Romance languages, but not in northern Romance varieties (Fernández-Ordóñez 2001).

Diachronic studies on the bare/partitive distinction describe the shift from article-less Latin to Romance and the grammaticalization of both PA and bare nouns (Carlier and Lamiroy 2014; Kabatek 2013; Section 2.1). However, such descriptions cannot reveal why PAs grammaticalized in some languages but not others. Bossong (2008) makes a similar observation on DOM and argues that while pathways of grammaticalization are "universally available" (they are observed time and again in different languages), not all languages follow them. This is the classic problem of the initiation of language change. Why did the emergent property of PA grammaticalize in one language at a certain time but not another? This question becomes even more intriguing in view of the loss of adnominal partitives in some Old Romance varieties (e.g., Old Neapolitan, Old Portuguese) (Ledgeway 2012, 84; Rohlf's 1968, 115–119) and the emergence of DOM in some of them.

The aim of this paper is twofold: (i) to shed light on the distribution of the Romance bare/PA-marked nouns and (ii) to test how variation and change in Romance adnominal syntax (bare/PA and DOM) relates to variation and change in seemingly prominence-conditioned clitics.

I address the following questions:

- i. What is the synchronic distribution of PA and bare nouns in Romance languages?
- ii. How and when did PA and bare nouns and functionally-related phenomena emerge in Spanish and French?

I approach question (i) using a family-level representative sample of Romance languages (Appendix 2) (Section 4) and question (ii) using a comparative diachronic study in Spanish and French (Section 5).

My synchronic study corroborates previous observations on the distribution of PA in northern Romance, while providing empirical breadth with data from 22 languages from all sub-branches of Romance. A second result concerns the

possible co-occurrence of PA, bare nouns and DOM in individual languages. Most importantly, there appears to be a negative relationship between the grammaticalization of PAs and that of DOM. To generalize, the greater the range of noun classes and syntactic structures in which PA becomes obligatory, the less extensive the use of DOM in the same language, if any. Similarly, languages with DOM rarely ever show PAs.

Based on the synchronic study, some languages show neither PA nor DOM, but only other seemingly prominence-conditioned clitics. This leaves open the question of whether such languages have never grammaticalized PA or have lost it. If this question is resolved, it may shed some light on the processes that led to the current distribution of bare and PA in Romance languages.

In the diachronic part of this study, I examine the case study of Medieval Spanish and French (12th–16th centuries) (Section 5). We already know that French has a PA, while Spanish does not. Did Spanish ever lose a PA or did it never grammaticalize?<sup>7</sup> By conducting a diachronic study on the emergence of PA and related structures in adnominal and clitic morphology (e.g., DOM, partitive clitics, *leísmo*), we may be able to answer this question and shed light on their current distribution. My main findings are that:

- i. Medieval French gradually grammaticalized PA patterns between the 11th and 16th centuries.
- ii. Spanish showed some variation between bare nouns and PA with substance-denoting nouns between the 13th and the 16th centuries.
- iii. Medieval Spanish gradually grammaticalized DOM between the 13th and the 16th centuries.
- iv. The Medieval French corpus showed no use of DOM.
- v. Partitive clitics grammaticalized in Old French (11th–13th century) and are relatively frequent throughout the corpus (11th–16th centuries).
- vi. In Old Spanish, both *leísmo* and genuine partitive pronouns are documented, though partitive pronouns are relatively infrequent.

This paper corroborates previous findings regarding the distribution of PA and bare nouns in Romance languages (Körner 1981; Stark 2007), while adding empirical breath based on a representative family-wide sample and several related phenomena. The historical analysis of Spanish and French shows that prominence-conditioned clitics grammaticalized before PA and DOM. It also reveals stark differences in variation and change to the relative frequency of third person clitics in both language throughout the period. I will argue that these results, raise the possibility that all else being equal, early variation in

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<sup>7</sup> Gerards and Stark, this volume, also discuss this issue.

the relative frequency of clitics—including prominence-conditioned tokens—could affect the tendency of a language to grammaticalize PA or not (and then possibly grammaticalize DOM).

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the theoretical and empirical background regarding the bare/partitive distinction (Section 2.1) and its place in a system of prominence-based nominal classification broadly construed (Section 2.2). Section 3 lays out the main questions addressed and an overview of the two studies conducted to answer them. Sections 4 and 5 report the methods, result and discussion of the synchronic and diachronic study respectively. Section 6 concludes with a general discussion.

## 2 Theoretical and Empirical Background

### 2.1 “Partitive Articles” and Bare Nouns

As mentioned in Section 1, the term “partitive” refers to syntactic structures that denote part-whole relations between a referential entity-denoting whole and its part, and which may grammaticalize into morphemes that mark part-whole relation between whole genera and their parts (“drink some of this coffee” as opposed to “drink some coffee”) (see Section 1) (Kabatek 2014; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2009; Luraghi 2012). As they grammaticalize, such “partitive articles” (PAs) in Romance languages are used more frequently and may become obligatory markers of indefiniteness. For instance, the juxtaposition of the ablative preposition *de* and the definite article in Old Italian (4a) can only have a genuine partitive reading. However, in contemporary Italian, such partitive phrases may also have an indefinite, parti-generic reading (4b).<sup>8</sup>

#### (4) a. Old Italian

*Ela mançà del pomo qe li de' un*  
 3SG.F eat.PST.3SG of.the.M.SG apple that 3SG.DAT give.PST.3SG a  
*serpente.*  
 snake

‘She ate of the apple that a snake gave her.’ (Uguccione da Lodi, early 13th century, cited in: Luraghi 2012, 15)

<sup>8</sup> The availability and distribution of “partitive articles” varies in regional varieties of Italian and Italo-Romance languages (see Giusti, this volume, for a detailed account). For a discussion on the problematic position of Italian in the bare/partitive typology, see Stark (2007).

## b. Modern Italian

*Ho bevuto della birra*  
 have.PRS.1SG drink.PTCP PA.F.SG beer  
 'I drank some beer.' (Storto 2003, 317)

Bare nouns simply lack determiner morphology so they appear in their bare form and are often referentially similar to PA-marked nouns.

In terms of their synchronic distribution, it is known that PAs occur in northern Romance varieties, but not in southern Romance varieties (Körner 1981; Bossong 2008). However, the details of their syntactic distribution in individual languages (across grammatical relations and clause type) remain debatable and so do the details of their occurrence and distribution in lesser studied Romance languages.

Several studies focused on the grammaticalization of the PA and the “negative grammaticalization” of bare nouns (Carlier and Lamiroy 2014; Kabatek 2013). Grammaticalization is a process of language change that yields new grammatical structures from lexical or grammatical sources (Boye and Harder 2012; Meillet 1912). As linguistic units grammaticalize, they shift from pragmatic conditioning to semantic and finally syntactic conditioning. As grammaticalizing units become entrenched (Langacker 1987), their meaning often undergoes generalization and abstraction from lexically-informative to grammatically-informative, a process known as “semantic bleach” (Bybee 2006; Sweetser 1988). The change in partitive phrases in some languages from denoting parts of specific, referential entities to parts of generic and abstract whole is an example of grammaticalization.<sup>9</sup>

Carlier (2007) and Carlier and Lamiroy (2014) note that the PA emerged in the shift between Old French (11th–13th centuries) and Middle French (14th–17th centuries). Its grammaticalization process originates in the inheritance of the Latin preposition *de* into Old French as a syncretic marker of source (spatial and non-spatial) and genuine partition of determinate wholes (“eat from this bread”) (Shift 1 and 2 in Figure 3.1). Only in Middle French is it extended to the marking of indefinite groups of individual (“aggregate plurals”) (example (2a): French *je vois \*(des) étudiants dans le bâtiment*, ‘I see (some) students in the building.’). At this point it enters the paradigm of articles, and gradually extends to be used with indefinite substance-denoting nouns and finally abstract-denoting nouns in the 16th century.

9 Although Campbell (2000) deconstructs grammaticalization to nothing more than the sum of other “atoms of language change”, understanding the process remains useful in shedding diachronic light on emergent morpho-syntactic properties.

Spatial source > non-spatial source (Shift 1) > genuine partition (Shift 2) > indefinite aggregate plural (Shift 3) > indefinite substance-denotation > indefinite abstract denotation (Shift 4)

FIGURE 3.1 Grammaticalization of the “partitive article” in French

Stages 1 and 2: The Latin ablative preposition *de* extends from spatial source marking to marking other source-like adjuncts (e.g., lineage, temporal meanings). Then, it is extended to denoting genuine partition of a contextually defined partition set. This process starts with objects of consumption verbs (‘drink’, ‘eat’) with which *de* extends from adjunct-marking to marking of argument. This state is inherited to Old Romance, including Old Italian (4a) and Old French (5).

(5) Old French

*Dunc but del vin<sub>i</sub> qui l'<sub>i</sub>=ad el*  
 so drink.PST.3SG of.the wine REL.SBJ 3SG.ACC=have.PRS.3SG the  
*champ trové*  
 field find.PTCP

‘So he who found the wine in the field drank from it.’ (Guilli, 25, v. 524, 12th century, ms. 13th century Cédille, 2016; henceforth BFM)

Stage 3: Once *de*-based morphemes extend to marking arguments, the PA extends beyond the class of consumption verbs at the expense of previously accepted bare noun contexts, e.g., in marking indefinite groups of individuals (aggregate plurals) (see example 2a).

Stage 4: PAs obligatorily mark substance-, kind-denoting nouns before abstract nouns in 16th century Middle French. Earlier variation in marking abstract-denoting nouns is observed in the 15th century.

In line with this grammaticalization process, while genuine partitive phrases are specificity-restricted in that their partitioned whole must be specific, full-fledged PA marks non-specific plural indefinites before its extension to non-specific, non-countable and abstract nouns.<sup>10</sup>

10 For a discussion of PA marked specific plural indefinites in French, see Ihsane, this volume.



To account for the occurrence of this shift in northern Romance, but not in southern Romance, the authors indicate that word order tendencies appear to correlate with the grammaticalization or not of certain morphemes, including the PA. Their account appears to hold, but there may be other typological factors which correlate with the grammaticalization and resultant distribution of PA and bare nouns.

Stark (2005) focuses on four languages, two from southern Romance (Spanish and Romanian) and two from northern Romance (Italian and French). She proposes that in the shift from Latin to Romance, a system of nominal classification was lost, obscuring the cognitively and communicatively important distinction between “contoured”, individual-denoting nouns and “non-contoured” substance-denoting nouns. As part of this change, languages that have all but lost the Latin neuter gender (e.g., French and Italian) found “functional compensation” in the emergence of PA.

Assuming with Stark that nominal classification is central to the bare/PA distinction, Section 2.2 lays out in more detail what I mean by nominal classification and its relation to referential properties of nouns in terms of prominence.

## 2.2 *Nominal Classification and Prominence*

Nominal classification systems generally share the primary function of classifying referents into semantically coherent groups (Fedden and Corbett 2017; Senft 2007), indicative of physical properties or degree of prominence, based on number, animacy or shape (Aikhenvald 2017; Seifart 2010), also known as individuation (Hopper and Thompson 1980). In addition to their classifying function, nominal classification systems also have other secondary functions, such as tracking the reference of nouns and other referential term (Greenberg 1978, 78). This function comes “for free” since classification to distinct groups that indicate semantic and grammatical properties narrows down the set of alternative referents.

In the typological literature, prominence is a cluster concept based on several pragmatic and referential scales (Aissen 2003; Seržant and Witzlack-Makarevich 2018; Haspelmath 2019). For instance, Haspelmath’s (2018, 5) definition of prominence (A) combines both referential (A.i) and discourse-based properties of referents (A.ii).

### A. Scales of Referential and Discourse Prominence

- (i) Inherent prominence
  - a. Person: 1st, 2nd > 3rd
  - b. Nominality: person form (free/bound) > full nominal
  - c. Animacy: human (> animal) > inanimate

- (ii) Discourse prominence
  - a. Specificity: definite (>specific indefinite) > nonspecific indefinite
  - b. Givenness: discourse-given > discourse-new
  - c. Focus: background > focus

This view of prominence as a cluster of scales that are essentially extra-grammatical and pre-theoretical (Haspelmath 2010) (e.g., phrased in terms of semantic scales) is couched in usage-based approaches whereby grammatical categories are by and large emergent properties of language (Haspelmath 2015). Hence the desideratum of distinguishing language-specific descriptive concepts from comparative concepts with the aim of facilitating cross-linguistic comparison with a single extra-grammatical yardstick.

Prominence thus construed can be used in considering the Romance PA in its grammaticalization (Carlier and Lamiroy 2014) and resultant distribution (Stark 2005). Addressing the emergence of the PA, Carlier and Lamiroy demonstrate that the genuine partitive of Old French exclusively applies to the partition of a definite, specific whole that is typically a substance-denoting, inanimate object of consumption verbs (e.g., Old French *del vin* 'of the wine' in example (4), Section 2.1). With the advent of the PA in Middle French, the definiteness restriction is relaxed, and PA-marking extends to wholes that are not identifiable to the addressee, including non-specific indefinites. Then, the animacy scale comes into play as the PA extends to the partition of indefinite plurals, including groups of human- and animate-denoting nouns. At this point, restrictions on specificity of the partitioned whole are relaxed, paving the way for the PA to extend to non-specific indefinite and inanimate, substance-denoting nouns in the 16th century. This restriction still affects the distribution of partitive phrases in Spanish where PA did not grammaticalize and partitive morphology applies to specific genuine partitives, not to non-specific parti-generic expressions. This is one way in which Stark's (2005) distributional observation that northern Romance languages tend to mark non-prominent arguments with PAs, while southern Romance languages tend to use bare nouns in the same contexts may be couched in terms of prominence scales.

Other syntactic phenomena that were previously described in terms of prominence or some of its component referential/pragmatic scales were also studied to some extent in relation to PA. This includes DOM (Section 2.2.1) and several clitic patterns in Romance and beyond, generally known as Differential Object Indexing (Section 2.2.2).

### 2.2.1 Differential Object Marking

Differential Object Marking (DOM) designates the morphological marking of direct objects based on grammatical conditions, often related to referential and pragmatic properties of arguments (Bossong 1982, 1985; Dalrymple and Nikolaeva 2011; see Section 1). These properties make their referents more prominent (and accordingly more frequently marked as direct objects, see Haspelmath 2018) or less so. Accordingly, both DOM and PA are sometimes considered as means of prominence-conditioned nominal classification (Stark 2005; Seržant and Witzlack-Makarevich 2018). Whether both are different types of DOM is a different question (see Luraghi 2012, for objections).

We have already seen that DOM tends to apply to prominent referents (e.g., specific, human-denoting) but not to non-prominent referents (e.g., non-specific, substance-denoting, Section 1). In Romance languages, we may distinguish two general types of DOM systems (Iemmolo 2010):

- a. “Incipient DOM” is restricted to the most topical referents. It minimally marks free personal pronouns but may extend to proper names and kinship terms.
- b. “Established DOM” systems extend DOM to become optional or even obligatory with a greater range of common nouns, typically including definite and specific-indefinite human-denoting objects.

To illustrate this, incipient DOM may mark dislocated pronominal object topics as in La Speza (Liguria, northern Italy) (5), though the marking of human-denoting common nouns is largely excluded in northern Italian varieties (Iemmolo 2010, 246).

#### (6) Italian (La Speza, Liguria)

*A te voglio vede subeto*

DOM 2SG want.PRS.1SG see quickly

‘I want to see YOU quickly.’ (University of Padua, 2011 Syntactic Atlas of Italy, Questionnaire 1:75)

In Peninsular Spanish today, definite human-denoting common noun objects must be marked with DOM, illustrating an established DOM system (Cuétara Priede and Company Company 2014). However, this is the result of grammaticalization from an earlier, incipient DOM system of Old Spanish (13th–14th centuries), which marked personal pronouns, proper names and kinship terms (Meier 1948; Von Heusinger and Kaiser 2005). This restriction was gradually relaxed, and the percentage of marked human-denoting common noun object increased from 42% to 57% (13th–20th centuries) (Cuétara Priede and Company Company 2014). We may mark the 16th century as the cut-off point

Free personal pronouns > Proper name > Kinship terms (singular before plural) > Definite human common nouns > Indefinite human common nouns (preferably specific) > Animate referents > Inanimate referents

FIGURE 3.2 Cline of topicality-worthiness/prominence  
BASED ON HILL AND TASMOWSKI 2008; IEMMOLO 2010

between incipient and established DOM in Spanish when human-denoting common noun objects hit the 50% mark.

To illustrate a system that represents an intermediate stage in the shift from incipient to established DOM, Western Asturian obligatorily marks left-dislocated pronominal object with DOM (7a), but definite common nouns such as see *el médicu* ('the doctor') are only optionally marked in situ (7b) (i.e., in their expected post-verbal position in Subject-Verb-Object clauses, see the Asturian grammar of the Asturian Academy, Asturiana 2001, henceforth ALA). Therefore, the western Asturian DOM extends beyond incipient DOM in some northern Italian varieties, but it is less grammaticalized than that of Spanish, in which such object referents must receive DOM.

(7) Western Asturian

a. *A min tráxo=me en coche.*  
DOM 1SG traject.PST.3SG=1SG.ACC in car  
'(S)he gave ME a ride.' (ALA, 352)

b. *Baxó a buscar el/al médicu pa moi*  
descend.PST.1SG ALL search.INF the/DOM.the doctor for my  
*ma.*  
mother  
'I went down to look for the doctor for my mother' (ALL=allative-syncretic purpose marker) (ALA, 352)

It appears that the gradual extension of DOM from the most prominent personal pronouns (Meier 1948) to the obligatory marking of prominent common nouns is conditioned by the prominence scale of Focus (background/topic > focus) (Iemmo 2010; Section 2.2). This process follows the topicality cline so that definite, human- and animate-denoting nouns are marked before specific indefinites (Figure. 2).

Since DOM typically almost never applies to non-specific referents nor, more importantly, to non-countable or abstract nouns, it is starkly different from

the PA in terms of the prominence of marked nouns (Stark 2005, 134).<sup>11</sup> But why should languages mark prominence in this way in the first place? One explanation is that prominence-conditioned morpho-syntax as in DOM is a low-frequency phenomenon in the sense that languages tend to more robust or “more special” adnominal marking of nouns whose referential properties are infrequently associated with certain semantic roles (Haspelmath 2018). Haspelmath argues that this frequency effect on grammatical coding can be explained based on predictability and coding efficiency (i.e., the less predictable associations tend to be marked, as in the case of DOM, cf. Hawkins 2012).

Does a language necessarily primarily mark only one type of prominence throughout its history? At least one example is known of a language that has lost an adnominal partitive in its history and saw the emergence of DOM (e.g., Neapolitan, see Ledgeway 2012, 84). While this is not necessarily a causal relation, some diachronic relation between them may be possible.

Although PA and DOM do not necessarily share properties such as syntactic distribution and grammatical category (cf. De Hoop and Malchukov 2008; Luraghi 2012, for objections). They both contribute to referential and pragmatic classification of noun phrases, that is, to their classification based on prominence. In Romance languages, both adnominal markers (PA and DOM) are also negatively related in terms of their cross-linguistic distribution in Romance languages (Bossong 2008; Stark 2005). Therefore, when studying the distribution of PA and its grammaticalization, it may be informative to also observe the distribution and grammaticalization of DOM.

### 2.2.2 Differential Cliticization (Differential Object Indexing)

Similarly to PA and DOM, Differential Object Cliticization, better known as Differential Object Indexing (henceforth DOI) provides semantic and grammatical information on referents using bound person morphemes (e.g., clitics, affixes). Previous studies have already drawn a semantic line between the Romance PA and partitive clitics (Bossong 2008; Ihsane 2013; Pinchon 1972), which may also corefer with non-prominent expressions (e.g., inanimate, indeterminate substance-denoting nouns and quantificational expressions). However, DOI differs from PA or DOM in its main function, namely, to support the referential tracking of topical objects (cf. Schikowski and Iemmolo 2015). In example (8), the partitive clitic *en* purportedly facilitates reference-

11 Exceptionally individuated bare nouns (e.g., definite, singular, specific referents) in DOM are beyond the scope of this paper (for such patterns in Romance languages, see Mardale 2008; Von Heusinger and Chiriacescu 2009).

tracking of a substance-denoting object (French *la sangria*, 'sangria') in topic-marking left-dislocation.

(8) French

*La sangria<sub>i</sub> en fait t'=as découvert en*  
 the.F.SG sangria in fact 2SG(.SBJ)=have.PRS.2SG discover.PTCP in  
*Espagne. Il=en<sub>i</sub>=a bu vraiment tous*  
 Spain 3M.SG(.SBJ)=PART=have.PRS.3SG drink.PTCP really all  
*les jours*  
 the days

'In fact, you discovered Sangria in Spain. He practically drank (of it) every day.' (G. Icor, S. Schwarz 2009, Bruxelles, Etienne, Jouin-Chadron, Lascar and Teston-Bonnard 2016; henceforth CLAPI)

As a reference-tracking grammatical device, such clitics perform a function long associated with nominal classification systems (Greenberg 1978). This alone favors the joint research on PA and partitive clitics among other DOI patterns on grounds of their commonalities with nominal classification.

Another DOI pattern of interest to non-prominence classification involves certain uses of the locative clitic in Romance languages. The French locative *y* primarily corefers with spatial goals, but it also tends to cliticize other types of mostly non-human referents (Pinchon 1972). Hence its similarity to partitive clitics in the tendency to cliticize referents of lesser prominence down the topicality cline (Figure 3.2, Section 2.2). Such uses are documented in Old Spanish (Sánchez Lancis 1992) where nouns that denote locations or a group of humans in the same institution may be *y*-cliticized as indirect objects. It is the non-prominence of institution or group-denoting 'the abbey and monastery' (example (9)) that conditions its locative- rather than the expected dative-cliticization, whereas dative-cliticized referents are typically prominent individual entities, capable of receiving property.

(9) Old Spanish

*Toda esta por nombrada heredit do io al*  
 all this for numerous property give.PRS.1SG 1SG the. DAT  
*conuiento e al monesterio et do y mio*  
 abbey and the. DAT monastery and give.PRS.1SG DAT(.LOC) my  
*cuervo*  
 body

'I give all of this great property to the abbey and monastery [...], and I give it/them my body.' (Sánchez Lancis 1992, 803)

This distinction resonates the conceptual distinction between “contoured” individuals and “non-contoured” mass-denotation (Stark 2005) or individuated and non-individuated referents (Hopper and Thompson 1980).

There are distributional reasons to examine such cliticizations when studying the bare/PA distribution. Although the occurrence of partitive clitics does not necessarily imply that of locative clitics or vice-versa (Benincà and Poletto 2005), both clitics occur in several mostly northern Romance languages, which also make the continuum in which we find PAs and related structures are found (Bossong 2008).

Yet another DOI pattern of interest is found in system of Spanish *leísta* varieties, in which a dative-syncretic clitic is used when cliticizing human- or masculine-denoting direct objects (Echenique Elizondo 1981; Fernández-Ordóñez 2001). We have already seen this in non-standard Spanish with dative-syncretic *le* being coreferential with a proper name (example (2), Section 1) repeated below as (10)).<sup>12</sup>

(10) Spanish

*Le<sub>i</sub>=veo*                      *a*    *Jesús Soria<sub>i</sub>*  
 3SG.ACC=see.PRS.1SG    DOM Jesus Soria  
 ‘I see Jesús Soria.’ (Española, 2016a Oral, 24/04/1999)

Distributionally, *leísmo* is found in Ibero-Romance languages of the southern Italian group, but not in northern Romance nor in other southern Romance phylogenetic branches (Fernández-Ordóñez 2001, 25–26).

The semantic contribution of *leísmo* clitics is similar to that of dative-syncretic DOM in Romance languages (Bossong 1991; Fernández-Ordóñez 2001, 23). Moreover, Bossong (1991, 155) claims more strongly that *leísmo* in northern Peninsular Spanish results from an analogical change due to dative-syncretic DOM. At any rate, the co-occurrence of dative-syncretic accusative in both adnominal and pronominal or clitic systems is attested in non-standard Spanish varieties with *leísmo* and DOM (8). For these reasons, it may prove instructive to consider *leísmo* along with the abovementioned DOI patterns when attempting to account for the distribution of PA and DOM.

Due to the commonalities in prominence-conditioning between the abovementioned DOI patterns—partitive, locative and dative-syncretic clitics—and their adnominal counterparts (PA and DOM) and in view of their current dis-

<sup>12</sup> Such examples with proper name direct objects may be considered ungrammatical (Llorente and Mondéja 1974, 36), but they are at least marginally acceptable (Gabriel and Rinke 2010, 68; Matthias Heinz, personal communication, 2017).

tribution in Romance languages, I add them to the typological toolkit in this study on the bare/PA distinction.

### 2.2.3 Two Hypothetical Avenues for the Grammaticalization and Distribution of Prominence-Conditioned Patterns in Adnominal Marking and Clitic Systems

Bossong (1991, 155) proposes that DOM affected the emergence of *leísmo* by analogy. If this holds, we should expect that DOM will have grammaticalized earlier. Since DOM and PA may be considered conceptually similar and negatively related in their distribution, it is possible that a similar precedence relation characterizes PA and adverbial clitics.

However, a different hypothesis emerges from Haspelmath's (2004) study of cross-linguistic variation in the morphology of certain object sequences across languages (e.g., Italian *\*lelo* 'it to him/her' > *glielo*).<sup>13</sup> Haspelmath makes two main arguments: that such variation is also determined in part by referential properties of arguments (i.e., similarly to prominence-conditioned PA and DOM) and that it is found in bound forms (clitics from a Romance perspective) earlier and more frequently than in free (pro)nouns (adnominal marking in the current paper).<sup>14</sup> But why should changes in clitics precede the grammaticalization of similar structures in adnominal markers? Haspelmath's account relies on frequency effects in grammaticalization and the "more grammaticalized status" of clitics to begin with. This seemingly circular argument can be broken down as follows. The high frequency of a class of bound pronouns favors the earlier grammaticalization of such morpho-syntactic variation in bound pronouns relative to free pronouns and an open class of common nouns, most members of which are relatively infrequent. Since the relative token frequency of individual closed class clitics is higher than that of individual members in the open class of common nouns and since their collocation patterns in recurrent syntactic positions are more frequent (cf. Diessel and Hilpert 2016), they are likely to grammaticalize earlier.

If the diachronic Romance data on prominence-conditioned structures follow Haspelmath's proposal, we should expect to find that clitics grammaticalize the relevant patterns before adnominal markers do.

13 For a review of such clitic clusters in Romance, see Pescarini (2005).

14 Arguments are considered "free" if they may be used contrastively and occur alone as a complete utterance, see Haspelmath (2013).



### 3 Proposal and Methods

In this paper, I report the results of two studies that aim to answer two main questions:

- i. What is the synchronic distribution of PA and bare nouns in Romance languages?
- ii. How and when did PA and bare nouns and similarly motivated structures emerge in Spanish and French?

In addressing the distributional question, I conduct a comparative study based on a representative sample of languages from all phylogenetic sub-branches of the Romance family with the aim of extending the empirical panorama of previous broad observations regarding PA. In view of the conceptual and distributional relation between PA and other adnominal and clitic structures (DOM and DOI) (Section 2), I test their co-occurrence patterns. More specifically, I intend to consider whether PA may co-occur with incipient DOM or established DOM (Section 2.2.1) to achieve a higher resolution in this synchronic study relative to previous studies (Körner 1981; Bossong 2008). Additionally, I include clitics involved in prominence-conditioned indexing (DOI) to assess whether individual languages show a single tendency in prominence-conditioned structures across both systems of adnominal marking (PA/DOM) and cliticization or not.

The purpose of the diachronic study is to examine the grammaticalization of prominence-conditioned patterns in adnominal marking and cliticization in Medieval Spanish and French. I choose to focus on these languages as they are known to present different tendencies in prominence-conditioned patterns, the former showing DOM and *leísmo*, the latter—PA and adverbial clitics (partitive, locative).

In studying their grammaticalization, I use two measures. I use data on variation in relative frequency of clitics per century as an indication of their part in ongoing grammaticalization processes (cf. Enrique-Arias and Bouzouita 2013; Haspelmath 2004). This is similar to the use that Enrique-Arias and Bouzouita (2013), among others, make of diachronic frequency data as a reflection of grammaticalization. The process of semantic bleaching in grammaticalization (Section 2.1)—that is, the shift from referential, idiosyncratic meanings to more abstract grammatical meaning—often results in concomitant relaxation of restriction on usage contexts and higher frequency of linguistic expressions involved in grammaticalization.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, I use an exploratory cor-

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<sup>15</sup> It is possible to cast doubt on the accuracy of the term “bleach” as indicative of some sort

pus study aimed to assess the date of grammaticalization based on the earliest occurrence of the investigated structures between the 12th and the 16th centuries. This methodology is aimed to replicate previous results on the grammaticalization of PA and DOM (Sections 2.2.1–2.2.2) and add data on related clitics.

Why should this part of the study be qualitative? This is partly due to the fact that prominence-conditioned patterns are a low-frequency phenomenon (Haspelmath 2018; Section 2.2.1). For example, unambiguous cases of a PA comprise only about 3% (16/547) out of all post-verbal *du* and *de la* occurrences in the Base de Français Médiéval corpus (BFM) (the alternative is not a PA but the preposition *de* juxtaposed with the singular definite article, see Italian example (3)). Similar figures emerge in the first 1,000 tokens out of 5,685 tokens of proclitic *en* in Medieval French. Consequently, corpora that are not tagged accurately or richly enough for the present purposes hinder any attempt to consider all and only relevant collocations.

Despite these limitations, using the frequency data as indicative of ongoing grammaticalization processes and the textual occurrence data in order to date the grammaticalization of PA and DOM, I aim to test whether the evidence supports the diachronic precedence of adnominal markers (Bossong 1991) or that of clitics (Haspelmath 2004; Section 4).

Finally, according to Haspelmath's (2004) prediction that clitics undergo grammaticalization earlier and more frequently than free adnominal morphemes (Section 2.2.3), only some of the logical possibilities of co-occurrence are predicted to occur across languages (Table 3.1).

One prediction is that such clitics may occur without similarly motivated adnominal markers (possibilities (a–c)). Both adverbial and *leísmo* cliticization are expected to co-occur (c) before the differentiation in prominence-conditioned tendencies to cliticizing either high or low-prominence referents. However, if the tendency to one type of prominence is entrenched in the clitic systems before its analogical transfer to the adnominal domain, we should expect for the PA to occur with incipient DOM, but not with established DOM (e, g).

Disregarding contact-induced changes, other logically possible co-occurrence patterns are hypothesized not to occur in the natural drift of grammaticalization (Table 3.2). Languages with a PA or DOM (incipient or established) but no prominence-conditioned cliticization (a–c) and languages that grammaticalize both PAs and an established DOM (irrespective of cliticization patterns) are excluded by hypothesis (d–f). So are also excluded languages

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of semantic loss (cf. Sweetser 1988; Von Stechow 1995), but the resulting effects on frequency of collocations stands (Diessel and Hilpert 2016).

TABLE 3.1 Predicted co-occurrence patterns of prominence-conditioned cliticization and nominal classifiers

	Cliticization patterns			Nominal classifiers		
	Partitive	Locative	<i>leísmo</i>	Partitive article	Incipient DOM	Established DOM
(a)	✓	✓				
(b)			✓			
(c)	✓	✓	✓			
(d)	✓	✓		✓		
(e)	✓	✓		✓	✓	
(f)			✓		✓	
(g)			✓			✓

TABLE 3.2 Hypothetically unpredicted cooccurrence patterns of prominence-conditioned cliticization and nominal classifiers

	Cliticization patterns			Nominal classifiers		
	Partitive	Locative	<i>leísmo</i>	Partitive article	Incipient DOM	Established DOM
(a)				✓		
(b)					✓	
(c)						✓
(d)	✓	✓		✓		✓
(e)			✓	✓		✓
(f)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

that grammaticalize PAS or DOM and retain both types of prominence-conditioned cliticization (f). Typological congruency in prominence-conditioned patterns follows from the expectation that grammaticalization of prominence-conditioned tendencies (to morphologically mark either prominent or non-prominent referents) in one subsystem will be transferred to the other (adnominal or clitic system) due, in part, to frequency effects on the process (Diessel and Hilpert 2016).

TABLE 3.3 Genealogical coverage of European Romance varieties sample

	Eastern	Italo-Western	Southern
Sampled varieties	2	16 <sup>a</sup>	2
Branch size	4	32	5
Percentage sampled <sup>b</sup>	50%	50%	40%

a 16 in terms of *Ethnologue's* language records. However, my sample of the Italo-Western branch counts 18 varieties with the inclusion of non-standard varieties, which *Ethnologue* subsumes under their respective language-groups, namely Gascon (Occitan), Valencian (Catalan) and Vallader (Raeto-Romance, Switzerland).

b Concerning the percentage of sampled varieties, data for Southern Romance (Sardinian and Corsican) is problematic: while Sardinian dialects are represented by 4 language entries, Corsican dialects receive only 1 language entry in *Ethnologue*, which disregards its recognized sub-classification. Two major dialect groups are identified in Corsican: Cismonticu, influenced by Tuscan and Pumonticu, influenced by southern Italian and Sicilian varieties.

#### 4 Synchronic Study: The Distribution of Prominence-Conditioned Patterns

In a representative sample of 22 languages from all sub-branches of Romance (Section 4.1), based on secondary sources (grammars and published papers), I tested each language for the occurrence of PA, DOM and clitics associated with prominence-conditioned patterns (*leísmo*, partitive, locative).

##### 4.1 Methods

The genealogically representative sample of 22 languages (but 23 varieties, see Appendix 2) from all sub-branches of Romance is based on the genealogical classification of European Romance languages in the *Ethnologue* database of world languages (Lewis, Simons and Fennig 2015). For this convenience sample, I sampled two languages from each sub-branch: standard and non-standard or national and regional pairs, based on the assumption that such pairs may differ morpho-syntactically due to the bias of language planning in standard varieties (Auer 2004). The distribution of varieties is captured in Table 3.3.

The synchronic typology is based on grammars—mostly from the past two decades—and completed with data from published papers and available corpora (Appendix 2), with which I coded each variety for the occurrence of adnominal morphemes (PA, DOM), previously associated with prominence-conditioned marking as *grosso modo* nominal classification devices (Section 2) and clitics that associate with similar functions (*leísmo*, partitive and locative clitics).

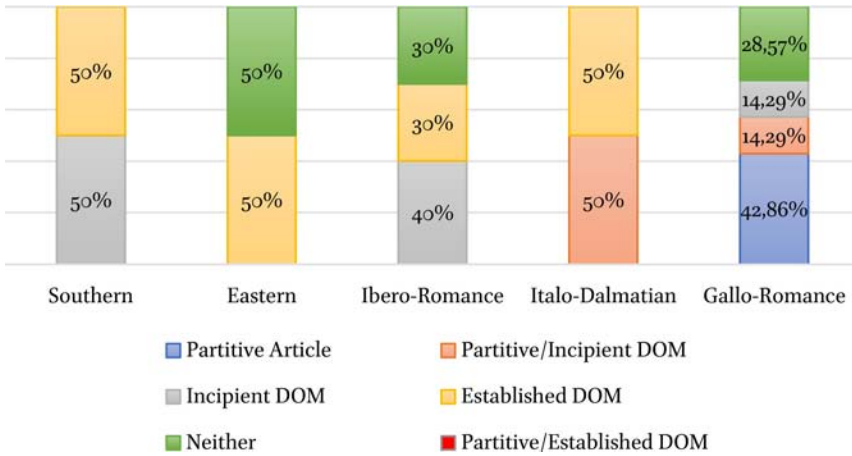


FIGURE 3.3 Co-distribution of “partitive article” and Differential Object Marking per genealogical subgroup in European Romance

By identifying their co-occurrence patterns in European Romance languages, I aim to test the predictions that follow from the hypothesized precedence of clitics over adnominal marking of free (pro)nouns in grammaticalization (Haspelmath 2004; Section 3).

#### 4.2 Results

Most generally, 60.86% (14/23) of the sample total show incipient or established DOM (Section 2.2.1) as opposed to 21.74% (5/23) that show PAS (Appendix 1).

In terms of areal distribution, PAS generally occur in the northern Romance area, while DOM occurs in the southern Romance area. However, PAS and incipient DOM co-occur in some northern varieties of the Gallo-Romance and Italo-Dalmatian branches (Appendix 2). Strikingly, none of the sampled languages features both PA and established DOM (Table 3.4).

The co-distribution of PAS and DOM with adverbial clitics (partitive and locative) is not uniform across varieties (Figure 3.4).

All PA-languages show both adverbial clitics. However, only 50% of languages with bare nouns (= no PA) and DOM show such clitics. 80% of languages with neither PA nor DOM lack these clitics (one such language shows the partitive clitic only).

Grouping all varieties according to these co-occurrence patterns (Table 3.5), PAS always occur with both clitics, whereas incipient DOM and neither adnominal marker vary in this respect.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ladin (Raeto-Romance, Switzerland) is the one variety in the sample with only the parti-

TABLE 3.4 Co-occurrence of “partitive articles” and Differential Object Marking

Partitive article	Differential Object Marking		
	None	Incipient	Established
Extant	5 <sup>a</sup>	1 <sup>b</sup>	0
Inexistent	5 <sup>c</sup>	7 <sup>d</sup>	5 <sup>e</sup>

- a Emilian, Ligurian, French, Italian, Arpitan (another term for Francoprovençal used elsewhere in the volume).
- b Italian (northern varieties).
- c Asturian (Eastern), Extremaduran, Provençal, Istro-Romanian, Ladin.
- d Portuguese, Galician, Aragonese, Vallader, Asturian (Western), Gascon, Corsican.
- e Spanish, Catalan (Central, Valencian), Daco-Romanian, Sicilian.

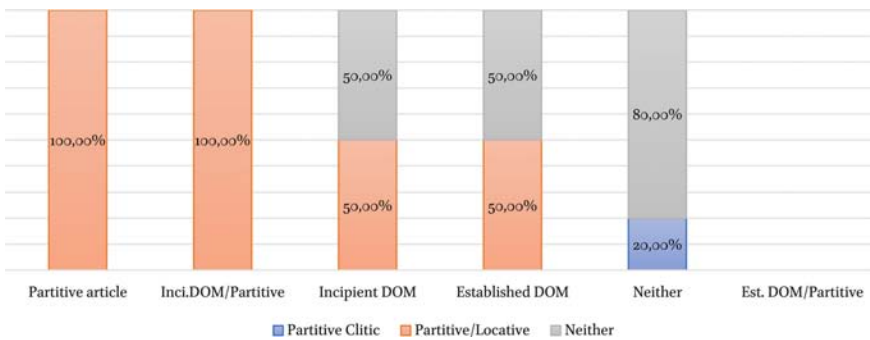


FIGURE 3.4 Co-distribution of nominal classification strategies and partitive/locative clitics

### 4.3 Discussion

This comparative overview precludes the strong hypothesis of mutual exclusion between PA and DOM (*pace* Körner 1981), which do co-occur in individual languages to some extent. Although none of the sampled languages features both full-fledged PA and established DOM, some languages feature PA and incipient DOM (e.g., some northern Italian varieties) or established DOM with a

tive clitic. At face value, this appears to suggest an implicational relation: if a language has locative clitics, it also has a partitive clitic (but not vice-versa). However, this is possibly a contact-induced pattern due to borrowing of the partitive clitic from northern Italian varieties (Stark 2015). Therefore, it does not affect the validity of previous generalizations about the non-implicational relation between locative and partitive clitics (Benincà and Poletto 2005).

TABLE 3.5 Co-occurrence patterns of adnominal classification patterns and adverbial clitics

	Partitive article	Part./Inc. DOM	Inc. DOM	Est. DOM	Neither
Both	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partitive only			✓		
Neither			✓	✓	✓

limited use of PA, such as Corsican, an established DOM language (Neuberger and Stark 2014), in which the PA is limited to a number of recurrent idiosyncratic expressions (Franchi 2000; Section 3.1), possibly due to long-term contact with northern Romance (e.g., French). This is suggestive of a weaker version of Körner's hypothesis, namely, that there is a negative relation between PA and DOM. The negative relation and typological gap (i.e., PA/established DOM) align with previous observations that languages with PA and DOM tend to differ in certain syntactic properties which arguably favor the emergence of PA in northern Romance (e.g., word order variation and the retention of morphological reflexes of neuter gender, see Carlier and Lamiroy 2014; Stark 2005).

The gap of a language with both full-fledged PA and established DOM could be accidental in principle. However, it accords with the predictions proposed at the outset (Section 3). Specifically, I hypothesized that as one type of prominence-conditioned adnominal marking becomes obligatory with a greater range of referents, so the grammaticalization of its counterpart in the same language is expected to become less likely. For instance, in the natural drift of grammaticalization, DOM is expected to remain incipient in PA languages.

Some languages show only *leísmo* or adverbial clitics, but neither PA nor DOM. For instance, eastern Asturian (Ibero-Romance) shows *leísmo* without DOM and Provençal Occitan (Gallo-Romance) shows partitive cliticization without PA. In this they differ from their genealogically-related neighbours: western Asturian features both *leísmo* and incipient DOM and northern and central varieties of Occitan also show PA.<sup>17</sup> The hypothesized precedence of clitics in grammaticalization predicts that prominence-conditioned adnominal markers imply the occurrence of such clitics (Section 3). However, one of the sampled languages, Vallader (Raeto-Romance, Switzerland), counters this expectation with its DOM but seemingly no dedicated prominence-conditioned clitics.

<sup>17</sup> In north-central Occitan PA may show full-fledged article morphology, but more frequently it surfaces as invariable *de* (Bossong 2008).

Another prediction was for languages with both prominence-conditioned adnominal phrases and clitics to be typologically consistent in marking and cliticizing referents of similar prominence (either high or low). Disregarding contact-induced changes, this expectation follows from the precedence of clitics hypothesis (Section 3). While it holds in most cases as a tendency, it fails as a universal generalization since some DOM languages of southern Romance (e.g., Sicilian, Sardinian) feature adverbial clitics. This fact also means that the occurrence of DOM does not imply the non-occurrence of adverbials nor does it imply the occurrence of *leísmo*. However, one such implication holds: if a language has a PA, then it also has adverbial clitics.

Setting aside language contact, this distribution is amenable to two kinds of diachronic accounts. Following Bossong's (1991, 155) precedence of DOM proposal, if extended to PA, then DOM and PA would have emerged before functionally similar clitics, but such adnominal markers would also be first to be lost. Alternately, the relevant cliticization patterns grammaticalize earlier (following Haspelmath 2004). In that case, the lack of similar adnominal markers results not from their posterior loss, but from their non-grammaticalization in the first place.

Section 5.2 presents the diachronic study in Spanish and French, two languages with typologically consistent adnominal and clitic patterns that represent opposite poles of prominence on the continuum. This may shed light on the precedence of either clitics or adnominal markers in two "well-behaved" languages.

## 5 Diachronic Study: The Grammaticalization of Prominence-Conditioned Patterns

The synchronic study (Section 4) focused on the co-occurrence patterns of several prominence-conditioned adnominal markers and related clitics. In the following diachronic study, I aim to describe central topics in their grammaticalization in Spanish and French as representatives of two poles of typologically inverse prominence-conditioned patterns.

This study concerns Medieval Spanish and French (12th–16th centuries) using two measures. First, I observed the relative frequency of third person pronouns—the diachronic source of the Romance clitics—which I later set against the dating of grammaticalization of the PA and DOM (Section 2).<sup>18</sup>

18 Since the pronouns are not yet cliticized and bound to the verb in a fixed position during this period (Fontana 1993), I refer to them as pronouns rather than clitics.



Additionally, I tried to replicate this dating using corpora queries in order to find examples from the first century of occurrence of each prominence-conditioned pattern.

### 5.1 *Methods*

For the quantitative measure of the relative frequency of third person pronouns, I used data from the OLDES corpus of Old Spanish (N=22,063,434) (Sánchez-Marco, Bofias, Bassaganyas, Chandía and Fontana, n.d.; henceforth OLDES) and the *Base de Français Médiéval* corpus of Medieval French (N=3,550,000) (Cédille 2016; henceforth BFM).

In this part of the study, the investigated pronouns are the dative and adverbials (partitive and locative) (Section 2.2.2) in addition to accusative and the reflexive-syncretic pronouns (e.g., French *le* and *se*).<sup>19</sup> To allow for comparison of relative frequency within language per century and across both languages, frequency data on third person pronouns were normalized for the number of tokens per 1 million words in each century.

In the “qualitative” textual occurrence data, I used a review of examples from 500-year corpora (12th–16th centuries) in order to try and replicate previous proposals regarding the date of grammaticalization of PA (Section 2.1) and DOM (2.2.1).<sup>20</sup>

### 5.2 *Results*

Section 5.2.1 presents the ratio of each third person pronoun out of all third person pronoun tokens per 1 million words per century in Medieval Spanish (Figure 3.5) and Medieval French (Figure 3.6). Section 5.2.2 reviews the emergence of prominence-conditioned patterns based on a series of examples.

#### 5.2.1 Variation in Relative Frequency of Third Person Pronouns

Beginning with adverbial pronouns, both locative and partitive are infrequent in Spanish (less than 5% of all pronouns throughout the period) and disappear by the end of the 16th, whereas in French, they are relatively frequent. In fact, between the 14th and the 15th centuries the French locative gains the most in relative frequency at the expense of the dative. This change contrasts with

19 Although the accusative and reflexive bound pronouns are not reviewed in the prominence-conditioned patterns (Section 4), they are included to allow for a comprehensive view of the changes, which reveals yet another difference between Spanish and French in this period.

20 For quantitative measures in the grammaticalization of DOM and “partitive article”, see Carlier and Lamiroy (2014); Cuétara Priede and Company Company (2014).

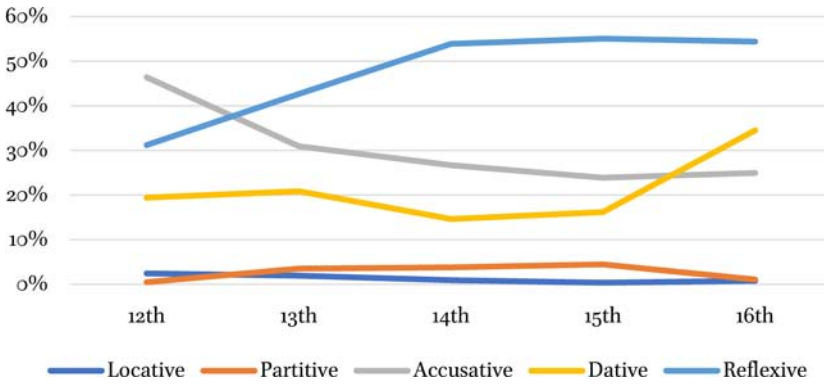


FIGURE 3.5 Relative frequency of third person pronouns per century in Medieval Spanish (OLDES)

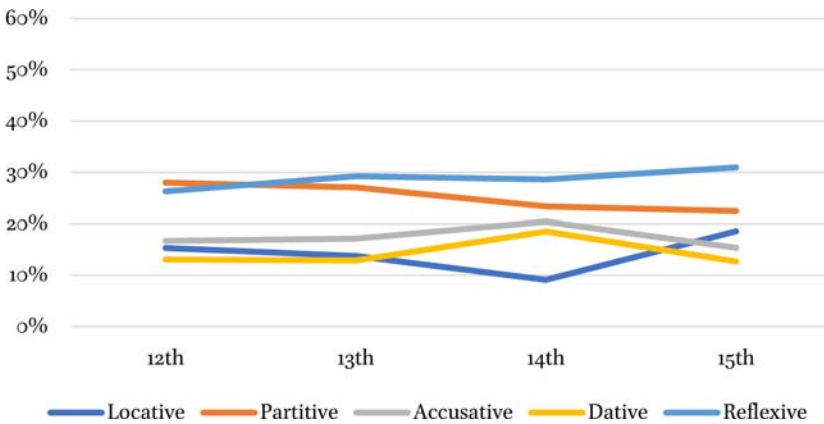


FIGURE 3.6 Relative frequency of third person pronouns per century in Medieval French (BFM 2014)

a sharp increase in the relative frequency of the Old Spanish dative between the 15th and the 16th centuries.

Finally, while the reflexive-syncretic *se* increases in Spanish and stabilizes at about 55%, its Medieval French counterpart remains rather stable at about 30%. Its frequency in French relative to the other clitics increases only slightly between the 14th and the 15th centuries (an increase of less than 3%), while the dative and accusative pronouns decrease in frequency. The Spanish third person accusative between the 15th and the 16th centuries sees a previously constant decrease in relative frequency coming to a halt. When this change occurs, Spanish partitive decreases in frequency before its demise in the 16th century.

### 5.2.2 Qualitative Morphosyntactic Data

This section covers representative examples of the major prominence-conditioned patterns (Section 3) in order to evaluate the chronology of their emergence and grammaticalization in Medieval Spanish and French.

Prominence-conditioned pronominalization is incipiently attested in both languages at an early stage. The 13th century Spanish corpus attests to the occurrence of the partitive pronoun in a genuine partitive meaning (11a) and *léismo* (11b).

#### (11) Old Spanish

- a. *et si oro o argento quisiera meter en apreciadura ...*  
 and if gold or silver wish.IMPF.3SG put.INF in evaluation  
*tomen ende la diezma parte*  
 take.PRS.3SG of.it the tenth part  
 ‘and if you wished to evaluate gold or silver, they would take one tenth of it.’ (Corpus Diacrónico del Español, anonymous, 1242–1275, Española 2016b; henceforth CORDE)
- b. *El fijo es fecho dela semiente del padre por*  
 the son be.PRS.3SG make.PTCP of.the sperm of.the father for  
*eso le=ama de tan grande amor su padre*  
 this 3SG.ACC=love.PRS.3SG of so big love his father  
 ‘The son is made of the sperm of the father. For this, the father loves him so.’ (1293, CORDE 2016)

In (11a) the pronoun *ende* corefers with the indefinite, substance-denoting *oro o argento* (‘gold or silver’) and marks genuine partition of a given quantity of material. In (11b) from the same period, the dative-syncretic accusative *le* is coreferential with *el fijo* (‘the son’), a definite, kinship-denoting noun.

Adnominal markers pattern similarly. Both incipient DOM and an incipient form of partitive determination are documented in Old Spanish. DOM in early Old Spanish (13th–14th centuries) applies to human-denoting personal pronouns (12a), proper names (12b) and kinship terms (12c).

#### (12) Old Spanish

- a. *Conosco a vos*  
 know.PRS.3SG DOM 2PL(.HON)  
 ‘I know you.’ (1321; CORDE 2016)

- b. *Tu amas a Leucotoe sola*  
 2SG.SBJ love.PRS.3SG DOM Leucotoe only  
 'You love Leucote only.' (Alfonso X 1275; CORDE 2016)
- c. *Yo vos amo verdaderamenete como padre*  
 1SG.SBJ 2PL.OBJ love.PRS.1SG truly as father  
*ama a sus hijos*  
 love.PRS.3SG DOM 3PL.POSS sons  
 'I love you truly like a father loves his sons.' (1300–1305; CORDE 2016)

An incipient form of partitive determination is also attested in Old Spanish with substance-denoting direct objects varying between unmarked and partitive phrases (13).

- (13) Old Spanish  
*non deue mandar el jugador que*  
 NEG need.PRS.3SG ask.INF the judge COMP  
*ge=la=den d-el pan o d-el vino*  
 3SG.DAT=3SG.ACC=give.PRS.SBJV.3PL of-the bread or of-the wine  
 'The judge need not ask that they give him/her bread or wine.' (13th century, OLDES)

The results of the diachronic study in Spanish are summarized below (Table 3.6).<sup>21</sup>

In Old French, similarly to Old Spanish, the clitic *en* (cognate with Old Spanish *ende*) occurs in ablative uses (i.e., referring to spatial sources, e.g., Old French *s'=en<sub>i</sub>=issent*, 'went out of there') (14a) and in reference to quantitative expressions, such as to parts of a group of distinct entities. (e.g., Old French *dis mile en=ot*, 'ten thousand of them he had') (14b) (note that (14b) is a continuation of (14a)).

- (14) Old French
- a. *Par cele port<sub>i</sub> issi li rois o lui*  
 through this door exit.PST.3SG the king APUD 3SG  
*s'=en<sub>i</sub>=issent mil borjois<sub>k</sub>*  
 3(PL.REFL)=ABL=exit.PST.3PL thousand citizens

21 See Gerards and Stark, this volume, for an analysis of nominal phrases with a "partitive article" in (Old) Spanish as bare partitives, that is, Quantifier Phrases with zero Q°.

TABLE 3.6 Clitic and (pro)nominal prominence-conditioned patterns in Medieval Spanish

Period	Cliticization		Free (pro)nominal marking		
	Low	High	Incipient DOM	Established DOM	Partitive article
12th–13th centuries	✓	✓	✓	–	(✓)
14th–15th centuries	✓	✓	✓	–	(✓) <sup>a</sup>
16th century	–	✓	–	✓	–

a A stage 1 partitive pattern (cf. Carlier and Lamiroy 2014) alternates with bare nouns (cf. Section 2.4.4).

‘The king went out through this door. A thousand citizens around him went out of there ...’ (APUD=apudlocative)<sup>22</sup> (Thebes2, p. 65 v. 8136, 13th century Cédille 2016; henceforth BFM)

b. *Et quant il fu hors en la plaigne dis*  
 and when 3M.SG.SBJ be.PST.3SG out in the plain ten  
*Mile en=ot en sa compaigne*  
 thousand of.it=have.PRS.3SG in 3SG.POSS company  
 ‘... and when he was out in the plain, ten thousand of them accompa-  
 nied him.’ (Thebes2, p. 65 v. 8136, 13th century, BFM)

Additionally, Old French *en* in the 13th century may carry genuine partitive meanings, referring to a part of determinate quantities of substance. In example (15), *en* corefers with *dou mortel fruit* (‘of the deadly fruit’) as the direct object of *menjar* (‘to eat’) and the ‘give’-verb *donner*. However, the direct object of *cueillir* (‘to gather’) is accusative-cliticized (discussed in Section 5.3).

(15) Old French

*Il li=fist son desloial talent mener*  
 3M.SG.SBJ 3SG.DAT=make.PST.3SG 3SG.POSS disloyal desire lead.INF  
*a ce que ele cueilli [dou mortel fruit], de*  
 ALL this COMP 3F.SG.SBJ gather.PST.3SG from.the deadly fruit of

22 Apudlocative: marking the spatial relations of proximity (e.g., English ‘nearby’) or more specifically ‘at the (habitual) sphere of’ (e.g., French *chez*).

*l'=arbre [...] quant ele l'=ot cueilli si*  
 the=tree when 3F.SG.SBJ 3SG.ACC=have.PRS.3SG gather.PTCP so  
*en<sub>i</sub>=menja et en<sub>i</sub>=dona a mangier a Adam*  
 of.it=eat.PST.3SG and of.it=give.PST.3SG ALL eat.INF DAT Adam  
 'He made her lead her disloyal desire to the point that she gathered some  
 of the deadly fruit of the tree ... When she gathered it, so she ate some and  
 gave some to Adam.' (Qgraal\_cm, p. 186d, BFM, 1225–1230)

As early as the 11th century Old French, preverbal adverbial *en/an* occurs collocated with the consumption verbs such as *mangier* ('eat') (16a–b) with the resulting parti-generic interpretation, such as referring to some part of the classes of wolf, pork, dog (16b) or to an indeterminate quantity of an indeterminate non-singular, human-denoting whole (e.g., 'hostages') (16c).

(16) Old French

a. *et li=apareilla l'en char et poisson, mes*  
 and 3SG.DAT=prepared the=person meat and fish but  
*il n'=en menja oncques*  
 3M.SG.SBJ NEG=PART eat.PST.3SG at.all  
 'And they prepared meat and fish for him, but he did not eat any of it.'  
 (qgtaal\_cm, p. 203d, 13th century, BFM)

b. *N'=en mangerunt ne lu ne porc ne chen.*  
 NEG=PART eat.FUT.3PL NEG wolf NEG pork NEG dog  
 'They would not eat neither wolf nor pork nor dog.' (roland, 138, v. 1751,  
 11th century, BFM)

c. *S'il voelt ostages, il en avrat*  
 if=3M.SG.SBJ want.PRS.3SG hostages 3M.SG.SBJ PART have.FUT.3SG  
*par veir*  
 by truth  
 'I he wants hostages, he will have (some) indeed.' (roland, 30, v. 87, 11th  
 century, BFM)

Is this the only prominence-conditioned cliticization in Old French? No. The Old French locative clitic *i* may cliticize referentially non-prominent indirect objects, such as institutions composed of groups of humans (e.g., monasteries in (17a)). Unlike the locative, the Old French dative *li* cliticizes prominent referents, such as human-denoting singular third person (17b).

## (17) Old French

- a. *Il avint qu'=ele fonda et*  
 it happen.PST.3SG COMP=3SG.F found.PST.3SG and  
*estora [une abeie de nonnains] et*  
 establish.PST.3SG an abbey of nuns and  
*i=donna assés viles bones et riches*  
 DAT(.LOC)=give.PST.3SG much estates good and rich  
 'It happened that she established an abbey of sisters and gave it/them  
 many a good and rich estates.' (SBath1, 31, 1250–1300, BFM)
- b. *Après li cuens Loeis demanda un autre roiaume et*  
 afterwards the king Lewis ask.PST.3SG a other kingdom and  
*on li=donna*  
 they 3SG.DAT=give.PST.3SG  
 'Afterwards, King Lewis asked for another kingdom and they gave him.'  
 (clari, p. 105, 1300, BFM)

In the domain of adnominal marking, consider the collocation of the consumption verb *boire* ('drink') and its direct object *vin* ('wine'). While the direct object may remain morphologically unmarked in early Middle French (*boire vin vermelle*, 'drinking red wine') (18a), the second half of the 15th century attests to its marking by the juxtaposition of *de* and the definite determiner (*boire del vin claret*, 'drink some clary wine') (18b).

## (18) Middle French

- a. *c'est signe de boire vin vermelle*  
 DEM=be.PRS.3SG sign of drink.INF wine red  
 'It's a sign of drinking red wine.' (quenouilles2, p. 91, 1396, BFM)
- b. *apportez a nous un foitz a boire du vin*  
 bring.IMP.2PL DAT 1PL a time ALL drink.INF PA.M.SG wine  
*claret*  
 clary  
 'Bring us, one time, some clary wine to drink.' (Maniere 1396, 12, ca. 1480, BFM)

Note that only example (18b), in which the PA occurs, is in the imperative (i.e., a non-indicative) clause. In a similar vein, the abstract-denoting *pacience* ('patience') remains unmarked in indicative clauses (19a), but it is marked with the preposition *de* under negation (19b) (the latter, though not a case of PA, may prove relevant, see Section 5.3).

## (19) Middle French

- a. *En tous leurs affaires et necessitez et adversitez*  
 in all 3PL.POSS affairs and needs and difficulties  
*doivent avoir patience*  
 must.PRS.3PL have.INF patience  
 'In all their doing, needs and difficulties, they must have patience.' (Jou-  
 vancel2, 79, 15th century, BFM)
- b. *Finablement ne peüt le roy avoir de patience*  
 finally NEG can.PRS.3SG the king have.INF of patience  
 'Finally, the king could not have patience.' (commyn2, 122, 15th century,  
 BFM)

Example (20) from the 13th century shows what appears to be a PA in the absence of any phorically mentioned definite referent for *du vin* ('wine').

## (20) Old French

- Cascun nuit, quant il se=chouchoeroit,*  
 every night when 3M.SG.SBJ 3(SG.REFL.)=go.to.bed.IMPF.3SG  
*qu'=ele le=servist du vin*  
 COMP=3F.SG.SBJ 3M.SG.ACC=serve.PST.3SG PA.M.SG wine  
 'Every night, when he went to sleep, she served him some wine.' (SBath1,  
 2, 13th century, 13th century, BFM)

Finally, to consider the possible co-occurrence of partitive patterns and incipient DOM in Medieval French, similarly to those observed in Old Spanish (cf. examples (18)–(19)), I searched the BFM corpus for DOM patterns, but found none.

The results of the diachronic study in French are summarized below (Table 3.7).

### 5.3 Discussion

Based on findings of the diachronic study, the clitic systems of Medieval Spanish and French grammaticalized prominence-conditioned patterns in the 11th–14th century before the full-fledged grammaticalization of PAs in French and DOM in Spanish down opposite poles of prominence (14th–16th centuries).

While *leísmo* occurs as early as 13th century Spanish alongside incipient DOM (in line with Eberenz 2008), established DOM grammaticalized only in the 16th century (in line with Cuétara Priede and Company Company 2014; Von Heusinger and Kaiser 2005). Similarly, Old French (11th–13th centuries) already



TABLE 3.7 Clitic and (pro)nominal prominence-conditioned patterns in Medieval French

Period	Cliticization		Free (pro)nominal marking		
	Low	High	Incipient DOM	Established BFM	Partitive article
12th–13th centuries	✓	–	–	–	–
14th–15th centuries	✓	–	–	–	(✓) <sup>a</sup>
16th century	✓	–	–	–	✓

a The 15th century sees the emergence of a *de*-based plural indefinite article, but not a singular “partitive article” (cf. Carlier and Lamiroy 2014; Section 2.4.4).

features prominence-conditioned adverbial clitics, such as a partitive clitic in its parti-generic use with no PA, which only grammaticalized in Middle French (14th–17th centuries). While Old Spanish features a partitive pronoun *ende*, currently available examples only attest to a genuine partitive use.

Relating these findings to the relative frequency of third person pronouns, both languages show starkly different patterns. Concerning the dative clitics in both languages, the Spanish dative fluctuates somewhat before its major increase (18%) in relative frequency between the 15th and 16th centuries, while the French dative decreases in frequency between the 14th and the 15th centuries concomitantly with a major increase in the relative frequency of the locative. Note that in both cases, it is a clitic associated with the same prominence-tendency of an emergent adnominal marker in the language, Spanish DOM and French PA, that sees its relative frequency increase.

If we consider the adverbial pronouns, their relative frequency remains extremely low in Medieval Spanish before their eventual demise in the 16th century. In Medieval French both adverbial pronouns remain rather frequent throughout the whole period. In fact, its locative clitic increases in relative frequency the most between the 14th and the 15th centuries, that is, during the period in which the PA emerges.

Regarding the relation between the French partitive clitics and the emergence of the PA, we have seen that Old French *en* in the 13th century may carry genuine partitive meanings, referring to a part of determinate quantities of substance. This possibility appears similar to stage 2 in the grammaticalization of adnominal PAs (e.g., as described in Carlier and Lamiroy 2014) (Section 2.1) and predates it in its occurrence. This was illustrated in example (15), where *en* corefers with *dou mortel fruit* (‘of the deadly fruit’) as the direct object

of *menjar* ('to eat') and the 'give'-verb *donner*. However, the direct object of *cueillir* ('to gather') remained accusative-cliticized. One way of explaining this difference is that it parallels the grammaticalization of the "partitive article" in the domain of free nominal marking, which emerges with consumption verbs whose objects denote parts of a determinate substance (cf. Carlier and Lamiroy 2014).

Against this analysis, one may argue the structure of example (15) is underlyingly *a ce dou mortel fruit que ele cueilli* ('that (part) of the deadly fruit which she took'). Given such a scrambling analysis, the accusative clitic to the verb *cueillir* refers to the head *ce*, which, in turn, heads a relative clause that is interpreted referentially as 'that part', a definite, identifiable entity. Then the referential property of 'that part' as an identifiable entity accounts for its accusative rather than partitive-cliticization. However, I propose a different solution that does not require to assume such scrambling, namely, that *ce* heads a relative clause that denotes not an entity, but the predicated event of gathering some of the deadly fruit. In Old French, the expression *mener a ce que* may be interpreted as 'lead to (the event) that' or 'cause that'. With this analysis in mind, where *ce* does not refer to 'that part', the following accusative clitic corefers anaphorically with *dou mortel fruit* ('of the deadly fruit'). In fact, the same expression occurs later in the same text in reference to the same event. In example (21) *ce* cannot refer to that part which was gathered, but only to the event of gathering some (indeterminate quantity) of the deadly fruit.

(21) Old French

*il*            *fist*            *son*            *desloial talent mener a ce*  
 3M.SG.SBJ do.PST.3SG 3SG.POSS disloyal desire lead.INF ALL this  
*qu'=il*                    *li=fist*                    *cuillir dou mortel*  
 COMP=3M.SG.SBJ 3SG.DAT=make.PST.3SG gather.INF of.the deadly  
*fruit de l'arbre*  
 fruit of the=tree

'He led her disloyal desire lead to this, that he made her gather from the deadly fruit.' (Qgraal\_cm p. 210b, BFM)

Note that only 8 out of 8,031 occurrences of preverbal adverbial *en/an* in the tagged BFM corpus involve the verb *mangier* ('eat') and only 10 tokens involve the verb *boire* ('drink'). Since adnominal PA appears to emerge in collocations with consumption verbs (e.g., 'eat', 'drink'), this rarity is of diachronic importance. It accords with the designation of partitive and DOM morphosyntax as low-frequency phenomena (Haspelmath 2018; Hawkins 2012; Seržant and Wizlack-Makarevich 2018). However, despite the rarity of such uses of *en*,

they occur in Old French as early as the 11th century (16a), similarly to *en*-cliticization of indeterminate quantitative expressions (16c), centuries before the emergence of adnominal PA in French (Section 2.1). In both cases, the interpretation is parti-generic, referring to some part of the classes of wolf, pork, dog (16a) and hostages (16c).

With respect to the diachrony of adnominal markers, the findings largely accord with previous dating of their emergence. An incipient form of an adnominal partitive is attested in Old Spanish (e.g., with substance-denoting direct objects varying between bare and partitive phrases, *de*-marked in juxtaposition to a definite article (13) and this simultaneously with the occurrence of incipient DOM (Eberenz 2008)). In French, however, DOM does not occur in any form during that period and the PA grammaticalizes only during the Middle French period (14th–17th centuries). This corroborates previous research indicating the absence of DOM in Medieval French (Fagard and Mardale 2014). Its absence in the Medieval French corpus aligns with the lack of dedicated high-prominence Differential Object Indexing (i.e., “Differential Cliticization”). However, two notes are in place regarding the grammaticalization of PA and DOM in Medieval French and its relation to areal distinctions between northern and southern varieties.

While Carlier and Lamiroy (2014) date the grammaticalization of the French PA, marking indeterminate substance-denoting nouns to the 16th century, they note that such uses first occur in the 13th century. They designate such early tokens as “exploratory expressions” (Harris and Campbell 1995, 72) that vary with similar structures where they do not occur. Only once grammaticalized, are they analyzed as heralding the forthcoming grammatical change. This can be illustrated with a 13th century example from the BFM corpus (22) in which an apparent case of PA marks the direct object *du vin* (‘wine’), which appears to lack any phorically mentioned referent that would make it definite.

(22) Old French

*Cascun nuit, quant il se=chouchoit,*  
 every night when 3M.SG.SBJ 3(SG.REFL)=go.to.bed.IMPF.3SG  
*qu’=ele le=servist du vin*  
 COMP=3F.SG.SBJ 3M.SG.ACC=serve.PST.3SG PA.M.SG wine  
 ‘Every night, when he went to sleep, she served him some wine.’ (SBathu,  
 2, 13th century, 13th century, BFM)

This apparent counterexample to the 16th century dating can be explained out as an exploratory expression. However, its occurrence in a 13th century text of Picard origin (northern France) is expected to the extent that PA is known to

occur in northern Romance varieties (Section 2.1 and Section 4). While it may very well be an exploratory expression, only quantitative analysis will allow us to evaluate its frequency at the regional level and follow its dialectal spread.

In testing the extension of PA to indefinite, substance-denoting and abstract nouns, two examples revealed a possible difference between indicative and non-indicative clauses (18)–(19); the latter may have seen the PA emerge earlier. Although *de*-marked direct objects under negation do not illustrate PA in the narrow sense, it may prove fruitful to consider the relation between the two.<sup>23</sup> For instance, Tuten et al. (2016) argue that indefinite, mass-denoting and plural-denoting nouns in Aragonese (Ibero-Romance) occur with a PA, but they illustrate this with a *de*-phrase under the scope of negation (23).

(23) Aragonese

*¿ya no ne=b'ha de lupos?*  
 already NEG NE=LOC=have.PRS.3SG of wolves  
 'Are there no wolves anymore?' (Nagore Lain 1986, 111)

The effects of negation on the use of determiners across languages (Miestamo 2014) may also come into play in the grammaticalization pathway of the PA in the form of earlier marking under negation than in indicative clauses (17)–(18).

To consider whether Medieval French featured DOM in this period, let us consider apparent contradictions to its purported lack. When a perception verb like *veoir* ('to see') takes an infinitive clause complement, the latter is sometimes found marked with the preposition *a* (Fagard and Mardale 2014). The verb *veoir* takes *a ma mere plorer* ('my mother cry') as a complement clause in example (24).<sup>24</sup>

(24) Old French

*Je voi a ma mere plorer*  
 1SG.SBJ see.PRS.1SG ALL my mother cry.INF  
 'I see my mother cry.' (Bourciez 1946, 374, cited in: Fagard and Mardale 2014)

23 Dobrovie-Sorin, this volume, discusses such negative contexts in comparison with bare nouns.

24 Fagard and Mardale (2014) do note the occurrence of DOM in 16th French authors of Gascon origin. However, this is amenable to a contact explanation in line with an incipient DOM pattern in Gascon Occitan.

Regardless of whether this is analyzed as DOM which applies to whole complement clauses (*a ma mere plorer*) or as case of Differential Subject Marking (*a ma mere*), in which the subject of an infinitive complement clause is *a*-marked as if it were the object of the matrix clause in accusative-cum-infinitive clauses, Old French does not feature traditional DOM. Moreover, my review of the BFM corpus shows that such exceptional marking of complement clauses is far from obligatory even within specific noun classes. For instance, while kinship terms are among the first classes to be marked in traditional DOM (Section 2.2.1), not all kinship terms are *a*-marked in embedded subject position in Medieval French. Compare the marked ‘my mother’ in (24) and the unmarked ‘my dear son’ in (25) where the complement clause is *mon chier fil devant mes iex mourir* (‘my dear son die in front of my eyes’).

(25) Old French

*Je voi mon chier fil devant mes iex mourir*  
 1SG.SBJ see.PRS.1SG 1SG.POSS dear son before 1SG.POSS eyes die.INF  
 ‘I see my dear son die in front of my eyes.’ (passpal, 47, v. 1212, early 14th  
 century, BFM 2016)

To summarize, patterns akin to full-fledged PA and DOM rarely if ever occur in Medieval Spanish and French, respectively. However, their DOI counterparts, *léismo* in Spanish and adverbial clitics in French, occur early in the history of both languages. Both languages grammaticalize their respective adnominal markers by the 16th century. Concomitantly with the emergence of established DOM (13th–16th centuries) (Cuétara Priede and Company Company 2014; Von Heusinger and Kaiser 2005), Spanish sees its seldom used partitive *de*-phrases marking—substance-denoting direct objects (Eberenz 2008)—fall out of use by the 17th century (Harris-Northall 2005). This process of demise and emergence in the system of adnominal markers in Spanish is simultaneous with similar effects in the pronoun system with the decrease in adverbial pronouns to the point of oblivion and the increase in dative between the 15th and 16th century. In French, the partitive and locative clitics remain rather frequent and the frequency of the locative increases by the 16th century (as that of the dative decreases). Although this study cannot tell how much of these changes is due to prominence-conditioned clitic patterns, it is possible to note a general trend: changes in the relative frequency of pronouns take starkly different forms from the early outset of Medieval Spanish and French. This trend continues at least until 16th century Spanish and French grammaticalize DOM and PA, respectively (i.e., adnominal markers that align with their early tendency in prominence-conditioned clitics).

## 6 Towards a Comprehensive Account: Prominence-Conditioned Morpho-syntax and the Romance Bare/Partitive Distinction

This study produced several descriptive generalizations concerning the system of prominence-conditioned classification in Romance:

1. Full-fledged PA precludes established DOM.
2. Prominence-conditioned clitics grammaticalized before PA and DOM in Spanish and French.
3. Medieval Spanish and French differ in their diachronic variation in the relative frequency of clitics.

The apparent synchronic gap of no language with both established DOM and a full-fledged PA means that no language makes both PA and DOM obligatory to the full range of potentially-marked noun phrases. This negative relation between DOM and PA is reflected diachronically in the case study of Spanish and French. As Spanish shifts from an incipient to an established DOM system (13th–16th centuries), its partitive morphemes, the pronoun *ende* and partitive-marking *de*-phrases decrease and fall out of use. In Medieval French, on the other hand, neither DOM nor *leísmo*-type clitics are found, and the PA grammaticalizes in the same period of time (14th–16th centuries). This negative relation between PA and DOM might be related to other trends in the broader system of prominence-conditioned adnominal marking and cliticization.

In the case study of Medieval Spanish and French, prominence-conditioned clitic patterns grammaticalized before their adnominal counterparts. This aligns with the Haspelmath's (2004) proposal that certain grammaticalization processes occur in clitics (among other bound forms) earlier and more frequently than in free (pro)nouns since the difference in relative token frequency of individual members in a closed class (e.g., of clitics) is higher than that of individual members in the open class of common nouns. Consequently, their collocation patterns in recurrent syntactic positions are more frequent. The frequency of recurrent collocations is one factor that favors grammaticalization processes (Diessel and Hilpert 2016). As part of this tendency, the higher the relative frequency of a candidate for grammaticalization in some class (e.g., clitics, common nouns) in some collocation (e.g., preverbally in the case of preverbal clitics), the more likely it is to grammaticalize. In Medieval Spanish and French, the relative frequency of third person pronouns is different to begin with in the 12th century (Section 5.2.1) and the variation continues and becomes clearer throughout the period covered in this study. It is currently impossible to tell the effect that prominence-conditioned clitic patterns themselves have had on the overall frequency of clitics. However, the trend is one in which the higher relative frequency of certain clitics to begin with (the Span-

ish dative and French adverbial clitics) and the early occurrence of opposite tendencies in prominence-conditioned cliticization from the earliest stages precede a similar grammaticalization in adnominal marking. The early process in the clitic systems, as reflected in the extremely low relative frequency of adverbial clitics and use of *leísmo* in Spanish, culminates with a typological differentiation: while some languages tend to use “special morphosyntactic devices” for prominent referents, others tend to use them for non-prominent referents.

This shift of such a tendency from clitic to adnominal marking, as illustrated with comparative diachronic data from two languages, might be partly explained by frequency effects in grammaticalization. The relative frequency of clitics as compared to the open class of nouns makes them more prone to grammaticalization in the first place (Haspelmath 2004). All else being equal, the more frequently prominence-conditioned cliticization is used, the more likely it becomes for its gradual shift to adnominal marking (if any) to take on the same trend. However, this alone cannot explain the lesser marking of the opposite prominence category (e.g., referentially non-prominent nouns that remain bare in a DOM language). Here it may prove fruitful to consider the possible effects of language processing on cross-linguistic variation and the tendency to morphologically reduce some but not all members of different subsystems (e.g., number-marking, prominence-marking, cf. Hawkins 2012). This approach is driven by constraints on language change that affect synchronic grammars (Haspelmath 2019). By hypothesis, this may add to the precedence of clitics hypothesis to explain the negative relation between PA and DOM, and consequently the bare noun/PA distribution. However, further research is required to determine whether more evidence can be adduced that supports such an account.

While the diachronic data comes from languages at opposite poles of prominence-marking continuum, the synchronic study reveals several languages that combine both tendencies to some extent. At face value, some of these may challenge the precedence of clitics hypothesis (e.g., Catalan with adverbial clitics and a pervasive pattern of established DOM in non-standard varieties, see Escandell-Vidal 2009; Rigau 1982). However, the precedence of clitics is most probably not the only factor that determines the distribution of bare nouns and PA, among other phenomena of prominence-conditioned morpho-syntax. Other factors may include long-term contact with other languages (Escandell-Vidal 2009), word order typology (Carlier and Lamiroy 2014) and general factors in language processing (Hawkins 2012).

Further research is required to determine the contribution of individual factors and the place of the clitic system in this process.

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### Appendixes

#### *Appendix 1. Distribution of Partitive Article and Differential Object Marking per Genealogical Group*

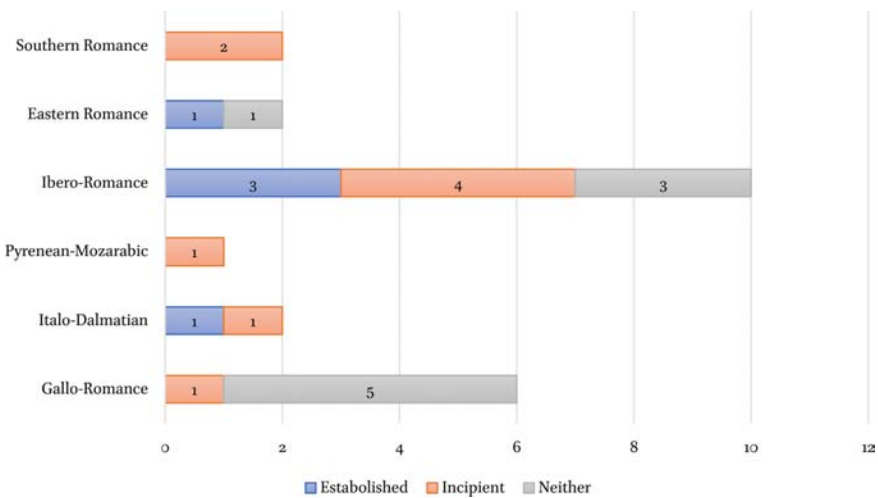


FIGURE 3.7 Distribution of DOM patterns per genealogical subgroup



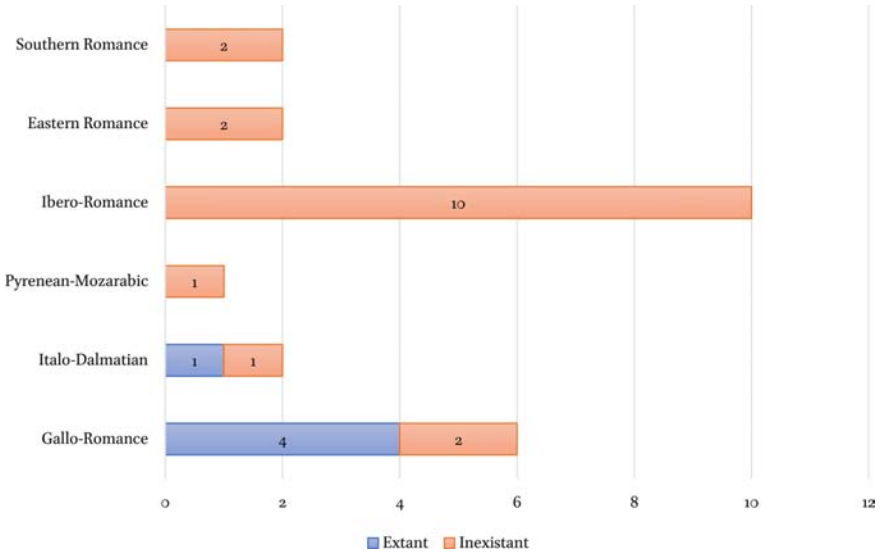


FIGURE 3.8 Distribution of partitive article patterns per genealogical subgroup

*Appendix 2*

TABLE 3.8 Distribution of Prominence-Conditioned Adnominal Patterns in European Romance

	(Pro)nominal marking						
	Low-prominence		Differential Object Marking				
	Partitive article	<i>De</i> -plural indefinites	Exists?	Pronouns	Proper	Kinship term	Human
Daco-Romanian			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Istro-Romanian							
Italian	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Sicilian			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emilian	✓	✓					
Ligurian	✓						
French	✓	✓					
Arpitan	✓	✓					
Ladin							
Vallader			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Catalan (Central)			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Valencian			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

TABLE 3.8 Distribution of Prominence-Conditioned Adnominal Patterns (*cont.*)

(Pro)nominal marking							
	Low-prominence		Differential Object Marking				
	Partitive article	De-plural indefinites	Exists?	Pronouns	Proper	Kinship term	Human
Provençal		✓					
Gascon			✓	✓		✓	
Asturian (western, eastern)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Extremaduran		✓					
Spanish			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Galician			✓	✓			
Portuguese			✓	✓			
Aragonese			✓	✓			
Corsican			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Campidanese			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

TABLE 3.9 Distribution of Prominence-Conditioned Clitics in European Romance

Clitics				
	Partitive	Locative	Leísmo	References
Daco-Romanian				(Corneliscu 2000; Hill 2013; David 2014)
Istro-Romanian				(Zegrean 2012)
Italian	✓	✓		(Genesini 2017; Iemmolo 2010)
Sicilian	✓	✓		(Messina 2007)
Emilian	✓	✓		(Ferretti 2007)
Ligurian	✓	✓		(Costa 1993)
French	✓	✓		(Bruxelles et al. 2016)
Arpitan	✓	✓		(Arpitana 2011)
Ladin	✓			(Chiocchetti 2001; Stark 2015)
Vallader				(Caduff, Caprez and Darms 2009; Tschärner 2013)(Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua 2006; Escandell-Vidal 2009)
Catalan (Central)	✓	✓		(Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua 2006)
Valencian	✓	✓		(Acadèmia Valenciana de la Llengua 2006; Escandell-Vidal 2009)
Provençal	✓	✓		(Mistral and Ronjat 1979)
Gascon	✓	✓		(Rohlfs 1971, 321)

TABLE 3.9 Distribution of Prominence-Conditioned Clitics (*cont.*)

Clitics				
	Partitive	Locative	Leísmo	References
Asturian (western, eastern)			✓	(Asturiana 2001)
Extremaduran				(Quiles Casas 2006)
Spanish			(✓)	(Eberenz 2008; Fernández-Ordóñez 2001)
Galician			(✓)	(Cidrás Escáneo 2006; Humanidades 2015)
Portuguese				(Schwenter 2014)
Aragonese	✓	✓		(Plaza Boya 1990)
Corsican		✓		(Batti 2009; Neuburger and Stark 2014)
Campidanese	✓	✓		(Holtus 1988; Mondo-Sardegna 2014)

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# Why “Partitive Articles” Do Not Exist in (Old) Spanish

*David Paul Gerards and Elisabeth Stark*

## 1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, we present a formal analysis of so-called indefinite “partitive articles” available in some Modern Gallo- and Italo-romance varieties. We put forward the idea that these are, *sensu lato*, a sort of nominal classifier and indicate non-individuation or mass in the singular, a value often considered to be the unmarked, default interpretation of nominals (cf. Borer 2005, 93). In a Pan-Romance perspective, “partitive articles” are in complementary distribution with unambiguous, agglutinative plural markers (like *-s* in Spanish *amigo-s*, ‘friend-s’), and lead to a mass reading of the respective nominal. We will argue that their existence is due to a (partial) diachronic loss of unambiguous number markers, that is, vocabulary items (VI) to express interpretable  $\varphi$ -features (number) on nouns and general AGREE requirements inside nominals (Stark 2008b; Mathieu 2009). We will follow Borer (2005, 93) in assuming identity for elements in complementary distribution across languages and argue that the *de*-element in Romance “partitive articles” realizes the same functional head as agglutinative plural morphemes. This leads to a strong generalization, namely that in Romance varieties or older stages of Romance languages with unambiguous (usually sigmatic) nominal plural marking, indefinite “partitive articles” in the singular, that is, mass determiners or classifiers, should not be available (cf. also Mathieu 2009, for Old French).<sup>1</sup> Secondly, this generalization will be tested against 275 Old Spanish occurrences of *con del/de la/de los/de las* ‘with of.the’ from the 13th–16th century stemming from the *Corpus Diacrónico del Español* (CORDE) and the *Corpus*

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1 We only claim complementary distribution of “partitive articles” and unambiguous plural markers in Romance (complementary across languages and varieties) and the grammaticalization of the former due to the loss of the latter (cf. Schurr, this volume, on additional grammaticalization facts). There is no universal generalization intended—except for the claim that every language needs some classification device to encode the conceptual distinction between mass and count.

*del Español* (CDE). Contrary to some authors who have claimed that Modern Gallo- or Italo-Romance-like indefinite “partitive articles” are sporadically attested in this variety, too (e.g., Lapesa 1964; Cano 1992; Eberenz 2008; cf. also Crispim 1996; Mattos e Silva 2008, for Old Portuguese), we will show that Old Spanish did not possess indefinite mass determiners (“partitive articles” in the singular). Instead, what seem to be “partitive articles” are to be analyzed as PPs governed by a zero  $Q^\circ$  and containing a definite DP with a representative object interpretation licensed by the so-called kind-oriented mode of talk (Krifka et al. 1995, 83–88). Such PPs are restricted mainly to the 13th century. Old Spanish, which has agglutinative sigmatic nominal plural marking, like Modern Spanish, is thus no counterexample to our generalization.

In Section 2, we will present the theoretical background (Section 2.1) as well as our analysis of Modern Gallo- and Italo-Romance “partitive articles” as indefinite mass classifiers (Section 2.2). Section 3 will be dedicated to Old Spanish *del*-constituents. It presents the data, that is, the results of an exhaustive string query in two (Old) Spanish corpora (Section 3.1), followed by an analysis of these Old Spanish data as PPs containing *definites with representative object interpretations* (Krifka et al. 1995), a special class of weakly referential DPs merged in D and denoting prototypical instantiations of the respective kind (Section 3.2). This makes Old Spanish *del*-constituents semantically and syntactically different from Modern Gallo- and Italo-Romance “partitive articles”, that is, from indefinite mass classifiers. Additionally, in Section 3.3, we will address a possible alternative analysis of the Old Spanish data in terms of *short weak definites* in the sense of Carlson and Sussman (2005) and Carlson et al. (2006). We will show that short weak definites and definites with representative object interpretations, despite sharing some properties, are clearly different from each other and that only an analysis in terms of representative object interpretations can adequately capture the Old Spanish data. Section 4 summarizes the main findings of the paper.

## 2 Why “Partitive Articles” in Romance?

### 2.1 *Theoretical and Typological Background*

Some Romance languages are known for a typologically highly marked element, namely an indefinite determiner encoding mass in the singular (Herzlund 1998; Stark 2008a, 2008b, 2016; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a, 2018).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The equivalent plural form (e.g., Fr. *des*, It. *dei*) is different from the singular in its syntac-

Despite their being “DP-argument languages” in Chierchia’s (1998) parametrization, that is, languages without nominal classifiers in the strict typological sense, Romance languages and varieties feature a systematic opposition between mass and count interpretations (= reference to portions vs. atomic units, individuals, see below) of the nominal predicate, for example ‘bread’ in (1) and (2). This opposition is encoded in their system of nominal determination in two different ways, either by marking the count vs. mass reading by an adequate numeral or quantifier, and having most often zero as the non-marked default case (= mass), or by systematically marking also the mass reading, namely by means of a “partitive article”:

- (1) Sp.: *Compro pan.*  
 Fr.: *J’achète \*(du) pain.*  
 It.: *Compro (del) pane.*  
 ‘I buy bread.’
- (2) Sp.: *Compro un pan muy rico.*  
 Fr.: *J’achète un pain très bon.*  
 It.: *Compro un pane molto buono.*  
 ‘I buy a very tasty bread.’

Even though, etymologically, the element *du/del*<sup>3</sup> in (1) goes back to a composition of the Latin preposition DE ‘from, of’ and the definite article (resulting in ‘of the’ when translated literally; a possible reading of the homonymous expressions combining a preposition *de* or *di* and a definite article in Modern Romance), there is no doubt that the indefinite determiners under investigation here are no longer compound PPS (cf. e.g., the extraction facts discussed in Ihsane 2013, 236; see also Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a, 2018). Their semantics is also clearly indefinite. Like the indefinite count determiner in (2), stemming from the Latin numeral UNUS (cf. Givón 1981 and, e.g., the detailed and comparative discussion of the different grammaticalization steps in Mulder und Carlier 2011), the mass determiners (“partitive articles”, PA in the glosses), too,

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tic distribution, semantic function and dialectal distribution (cf. Ihsane 2008; Zamparelli 2008; Garzonio and Poletto 2014; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a, 2018; Stark 2016, 132). In what follows, we will focus on the singular but include the plural in our morphosyntactic analyses.

3 In what follows, we will use the masculine singular form as a representative of the entire paradigm.

are excluded with textually or situationally given discourse referents, which inherit their mass- vs. count interpretation from their antecedent.<sup>4</sup>

While in the last decades, in-depth research has been done on the history (e.g., Carlier 2007; Carlier and Lamiroy 2014), syntax and semantics of Romance determiners, especially for French and standard Italian, we want to rather focus on an explanation of their cross-linguistic distribution, as not every Romance variety features all of them. In fact, indefinite mass determiners (“partitive articles”) are only found with a certain regularity in French (cf. Dobrovie-Sorin, this volume) and Northern Italian varieties (cf. Giusti, this volume), in some Occitan varieties and in Francoprovençal (cf. Schurr, this volume, and Stark and Gerards, this volume), whereas they do not exist in Modern Ibero-Romance varieties (see Section 3), central and southern Italian varieties or Romanian (see Bossong 2016; also Giusti, this volume). These latter languages and varieties admit bare plurals and bare singulars in argument position, contrary especially to French, and to a lesser extent to non-central and non-southern Italian varieties (Stark 2008a, 2008b, and 2016). We would like to put forward the hypothesis that the (non-)existence of “partitive articles” and their complementary distribution with bare plural arguments is causally linked to the (non-)availability of a dedicated nominal plural morpheme (cf. Delfitto and Schroten 1991; Mathieu 2009; Carlier and Lamiroy 2014 for a similar descriptive generalization), that is, to morphosyntactic properties of nominal declension in Romance.

Ever since Borer’s (2005) seminal work on (among other things) the count-mass distinction, plural morphemes can be considered signals of “nominal classification” in a broad sense in non-classifier languages (cf. e.g., Cowper and Hall 2012).

Rather, all nouns, in all languages, are mass, and are in need of being portioned out, in some sense, before they can interact with the ‘count’ system. This portioning-out function, accomplished in languages like Chinese through the projection of classifiers, is accomplished in languages like English, by the plural inflection, as well as by the indefinite article.

BORER 2005, 93

Borer (2005, 111, 114, for a preliminary conclusion) later discusses the exact location of the indefinite article, which, contrary to plural morphemes, is to be seen

4 Note that there are some Italian varieties where the indefinite mass interpretation typical of *du/del*-nominals also holds for nominals with the definite article not meeting the standard criteria for definiteness (Kupisch and Koops 2007; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016b, 2018; Leonetti 2019; Giusti, this volume).

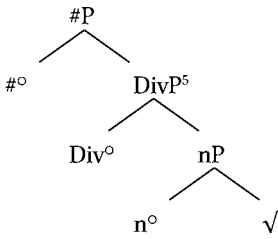


FIGURE 4.1

Internal structure of a count nominal following Borer (2005)

as an “individuator” (cf. Wiese 2012, 72), that is, both as a “divider” and as a “counter” (= some kind of portmanteau-morpheme). It therefore ends up being located higher in the internal structure of nominals.

Plurals in Modern Romance (and generally Indo-European) varieties are thus classifying plurals in the sense that they unambiguously denote sets of sets (cf. already Link 1983; Borer 2005, 127), contrary, for instance, to Latin, where plurals could also denote intensive manifestations of the noun’s denotation or collectives (Stark 2008b). Overt quantifiers and numerals, including the indefinite article deriving from the numeral ‘one’, explicitly assign a specific quantity to the expression. Based on these assumptions, Borer (2005, 109) proposes the structure represented in Figure 4.1 for English count nominals, which we slightly modified for the lexical material (nP).

## 2.2 Our Analysis

Applying the analysis of indefinite (plural) nominals in Borer (2005) and Mathieu (2009, 2014), for instance, to Spanish, we can analyze the Spanish plural *-s* as the overt exponent of  $\text{Div}^\circ$ , in parallel to English (cf. Pomino 2016, 111).

Following general assumptions in Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1993), we hold it that roots are not specified for grammatical categories, and follow Borer (2005, 93) in that they, that is, nouns, are not specified for mass or count readings either (cf. also Pelletier 2012). Roots combine in syntax with functional heads ( $n^\circ$ ,  $v^\circ$ ,  $a^\circ$ ) in order to form nominal, verbal, or adjectival constituents. These heads may contain lexical properties like animacy, often linked to gender or noun class.  $n^\circ$  is, more concretely, the “locus of gender negotiation”; the gender feature of  $n^\circ$  is valued under AGREE with the lexical root (cf. Lowenstamm 2007, 2012, for French; but cf. Stark 2016, for the assumption of a defective  $n^\circ$  in French; cf. also Picallo 2008; Alexiadou 2015). nP then merges

5 Borer (2005, 109) calls  $\text{DivP}$  *CIP*, despite the fact that it is headed by  $\langle e \rangle_{\text{Div}}$ , while #P is the maximal projection of a head  $\langle e \rangle_\#$ . We will not go into the details of Borer’s derivation and nomenclature here and name her Classifier Phrase *DivP*, a more transparent label as to its semantic contribution.



with a functional projection DivP, hosting the Num feature, expressed by number morphology, if available<sup>6</sup> (cf. *ClassP* in Picallo 2008, 57; *NumP* in Mathieu 2009; note that Alexiadou (2015) calls the higher functional projection *ClassP*, i.e., what is called *NumP* in Picallo's work and *#P* in Figure 4.1). Merge of #<sup>o</sup> brings the counting or quantifying head, carrying a probe for gender and number, for agreeing quantifiers and numerals (e.g., *much-o*<sub>M.SG</sub>/*-a*<sub>F.SG</sub>/*-o*<sub>M-S.PL</sub>/*-a*<sub>F-S.PL</sub>, 'much', 'many', in Spanish).

However, applying Borer's analysis for English to French brings some complication to the picture. The main difference lies in the availability of a mass classifier (cf. examples under (1)), absent in English or Spanish, correlating with the absence of number marking on nouns (cf. e.g., Pomino 2012, 2016). French looks like the complete opposite of English and Spanish, in that a plural exponent for Div<sup>o</sup> is not available, but rather an exponent for "not portioning out", namely *de*. French seems to possess an exponent for non-individuation, in complementary distribution with exponents for individuation, as a result of the interaction of the elements available in #<sup>o</sup> and Div<sup>o</sup> (cf. examples under (1) against examples under (2); cf. Borer 2005, 128). A nominal such as [vẽ], ⟨vin(s)⟩, 'wine(s)' itself is not specified (in the spoken, that is, naturally acquired registers) for number. For plural, this is only achieved by some determiners, numerals or quantifiers rather high in the structure, and by the opposition between *un* (= count) vs. *du* (= mass) in the singular:

(3) *I drink—Je bois—Bebo ...*

Table 4.1 shows possible continuations of the sequence 'I drink' in three languages. In grey, we see the complete underspecification of French nominal roots (and nPs) for number (3a), in parallel to languages like, for instance, Chinese. In contrast to Chinese, quantifying does not automatically lead to disambiguation or individuation (3e), as quantifiers like *beaucoup* ('much' / 'many') or *peu* ('little' / 'few') are also underspecified for count or mass and obligatorily combined with *de*, compatible with singular as well as with plural nominals (also under the scope of negation, where *de* shows up even with singular count nominals, see below). This observation and the sequence of *beaucoup—de—*[vẽ] leads to the assumption that, at least in French, Div<sup>o</sup> is always projected and overtly realized, also in mass nominals. The detailed adaptation of

6 See Pomino (2016, 122–127) for the proposal to locate *liaison* [-z] in French plural nominals originally in Div<sup>o</sup>, claiming however a phrasal clitic status for [-z], which may also be realized rather high in the structure, under D<sup>o</sup> [lezami] (*les amis* 'the friends').

TABLE 4.1 Plural marking and mass-count specification of arguments in English, French and Spanish

Plural marking and mass-count specification			
	English	French	Spanish
(a) Unspecified for number	–	*[vẽ]	–
(b) Mass	(some) wine	du [vẽ]	vino
(c) Count	a (very good) wine	un [vẽ] (très bon)	un vino (muy rico)
(d) Plural > count	(some very good) wine-s	des [vẽ] (très bons)	vino-s (muy ricos)
(e) High quantity—unspecified for number/mass-count	–	beaucoup de [vẽ]	–
(f) High quantity—mass	much wine	-	mucho vino
(g) High quantity—count	many wine-s	plusieurs [vẽ]	mucho-s vino-s

Figure 4.1 for French goes as represented in Figure 4.2 below: we assume that French roots come with a gender (for details, see Stark 2016, 138–139), but that there is no AGREE or probing operation between the root and  $n^\circ$  (we take as morphological evidence the absence of word class or gender markers in French). Therefore, the root remains *in situ*, and the result is a highly defective nominal, actually only a property-denoting expression that can usually not occupy an argument position, not even under the scope of negation (\**Je ne bois pas vin*, intended: ‘I do not drink wine’; correct: *Je ne bois pas de vin*; \**Je n’ai pas acheté voitures*, intended: ‘I did not buy cars’; correct: *Je n’ai pas acheté de voitures*). The combination of this root with  $Div^\circ$ , carrying no number feature in French and incapable of successful probing (cf. e.g., Mathieu 2009, 147 f., where the probe on his  $Num^\circ$  probes unsuccessfully for number, the Modern French nominal not carrying a number feature), does not change things much. This is due to the absence of plural markers and the general assumption that functional heads without any morphological or semantic effect should not be assumed to exist (cf. Heycock and Zamparelli 2005). Above, however, we saw that there exists an element in French, contrary, for instance, to Spanish or English, which always realizes  $Div^\circ$ , namely *de*. This *de*-element alone (having its own functional projection *de-P* in Ihsane 2008, 163, cf. also Shlonsky 2014) cannot in itself be analyzed as an explicit mass or non-individuation marker, as it is even found, in some colloquial varieties of French, after numerals (cf. Kayne 1977 citing Bauche 1951, *J’ai deux de bonnets*, ‘I have two caps’; cf. Ihsane 2013, 4 f., *deux vins* or *deux bonnets* would then be the result of a normative deletion rule).

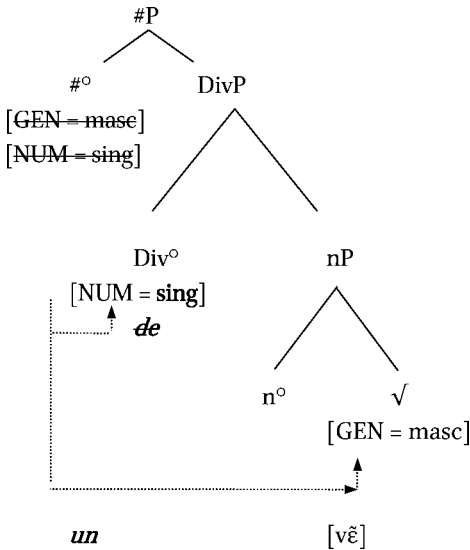


FIGURE 4.2  
Deriving indefinite nominals in French  
with internal AGREE operations

Now, and as shown in Figure 4.3 below, in the absence of explicit quantification (or individuation) via suitable elements in  $\#^\circ$ , an obligatory insertion of *le/la/les* ‘the’ takes place in this position (cf. Ihsane 2008, 163; Mathieu 2009, 148, for a similar idea; see also Borer 2005, 164). This happens, after probing with the root, in order to minimally realize gender and already valued number features of French indefinite nominals in the sense of Greenberg’s (1978) noun markers (note that this is the only locus of gender- and number-marking in indefinite nominals in Modern French). With *le/la/les* ‘the’ inserted in  $\#^\circ$  as a default—that is, as a mere number (and gender) morpheme and not as a generic or non-specific definite article ( $\neq D^\circ$ ; contra Gross 1967; Milner 1978; Kupferman 1979, 1994; Zamparelli 2008)—there is no explicit counting or quantification, potentially leading to individuation (cf. Borer 2005, 128). Subsequently, a post-syntactic operation called *lowering* (Embick and Noyer 2001)<sup>7</sup> takes place in indefinite nominals,<sup>8</sup> moving (the exponent of) a hierarchically

7 Embick and Noyer (1999, 2001) introduce this operation to account for English verbal inflection in the past: with syntax giving abundant evidence that there is no  $\nu^\circ$ -to- $T^\circ$  movement in English (Pollock 1989), temporal features of  $T^\circ$  have to be lowered to  $\nu^\circ$  in order to explain forms like *she laugh-ed*:  $[_{TP} T^\circ \dots [_{VP} \dots \nu^\circ \dots]] - [_{TP} \dots [_{VP} \dots [_{\nu^\circ} \nu^\circ + T^\circ] \dots]]$ .

8 For definite nominals and the English determiner *the*, Borer (2005, 164, example (8a)) speculates about a possible merge in  $\text{Div}^\circ$  and subsequent movement towards  $\#^\circ$ , which could account for the absence of *de* in definite French nominals. Note that *\*l’un vin* is ungrammatical in French (contrary to *the one wine* in English), which might be evidence for an initial insertion of *le/la/les* in  $\text{Div}^\circ$  in definite nominals (which inherit their mass-count distinction

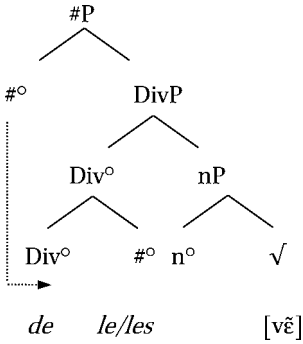


FIGURE 4.3 Indefinite nominals in French (without probes) with lowering of #° into Div°

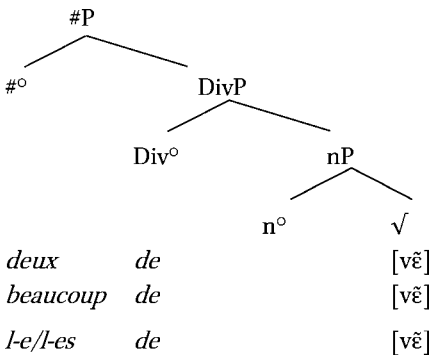


FIGURE 4.4 Indefinite nominals in French

higher head<sub>2</sub> to a lower head<sub>1</sub> being part of its complement. This yields *de + le = du/de la* and *de + les = des*.

As represented in Figure 4.4 above, French quantified indefinite nominals are derived by the same structure, and depending on the element inserted in #°, semantic number is specified (*deux*, ‘two’, *plusieurs*, ‘several’, etc.), and sometimes even morphological number and gender (e.g., in agreeing quantifiers such as *différent-e<sub>F</sub>-s<sub>PL</sub>*, ‘different’). This may, as a consequence, either yield a count, that is, individuated interpretation, or an interpretation for which individuation is left underspecified (*beaucoup*, ‘much/many’).

This analysis accounts for the fact that, at least for French, the interaction described in Borer (2005) between the lexical element (NP) and #P is not enough to yield an unambiguous mass reading of the whole nominal, contrary to, for example, Chinese, English or Spanish. Note that Borer rejects DivP for

from their antecedent, cf. Borer 2005, 166; recall that there is no plural morpheme on nP available in French to occupy Div°: *les vins*, [levẽ]). We leave the question of an exact derivation of Romance definite nominals and a potential relation to case (cf. e.g., Giusti 2015) open for future research.

*bare* mass nominals as well as #P for *bare* plurals (Borer 2005, 130), structures not available in French in argument position.<sup>9</sup>

The proposed analysis for French allows us to account for the underspecification of French *bare* nominals for number and of some French quantified nominals for individuation (e.g., with *beaucoup*), for the obligatory insertion of at least *de* with argument nominals, irrespectively of their mass or count interpretation, and for the observed correlation with a highly defective nominal morphology. It accounts also for the much discussed *en*-pronominalization facts (cf. Ihsane 2013; Shlonsky 2014); *en* pronominalizes DivP:

- (4) a. *Je bois deux vin-s.* — *J' en bois deux.*  
 I drink two wine-M.PL — I =PART drink two  
 'I drink two wines.—I drink two.'
- b. *Je bois beaucoup de vin(-s).* — *J' en bois beaucoup.*  
 I drink much/many DE wine.M(-PL) — I =PART drink  
*beaucoup.*  
 much/many  
 'I drink much wine/many wines.—I drink much/many.'
- c. *Je bois du vin* — *J' en bois.*  
 I drink PA.M.SG wine.M — I =PART drink  
 'I drink wine.—I drink (sm).'
- d. *Je ne bois pas de vin(s).* — *Je n' en bois pas.*  
 I NEG drink NEG DE wine.M(PL) — I NEG =PART drink NEG  
 'I don't drink wine(s).—I don't drink (any).'

Standard Italian features a “partitive article”, too, albeit optionally and with slightly different scope properties (Zamparelli 2008; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a, 2016b; Giusti, this volume). As represented in Table 4.2 below, Italian nouns are marked overtly for plural, but the inventory of plural markers is highly syncretic. Except for  $-i_{M,PL}$ , all plural endings can also be interpreted as M.SG. OR F.SG. ( $-e_{F,PL}$ ;  $-a_{F,PL}$ ).

That means that *vino* in Italian is not a morphological component of *vin-i* or a constituent of a plural expression in DivP (it is not parallel to *vino*—*vino-s* in

9 Furthermore, Borer (2005, 164) seems to allow for projected, but not overtly realized heads: “[...] that plural or mass interpretations could emerge, in principle, without #P, or alternatively, with ⟨e⟩<sub>z</sub> but without any range assigned to it [...]”

TABLE 4.2 Italian noun classes

## Italian noun classes

---

<i>libr-o – libr-i</i> (M.) ‘book(s)’	<i>man-o – man-i</i> (F.) ‘hand(s)’	<i>bracci-o – bracci-a</i> (M.- F.) ‘arm(s)’
<i>cas-a – cas-e</i> (F.) ‘home(s)’	<i>poet-a – poet-i</i> (M.) ‘poet(s)’	
<i>can-e – can-i</i> (M.) ‘dog(s)’	<i>nott-e – nott-i</i> (F.) ‘night(s)’	

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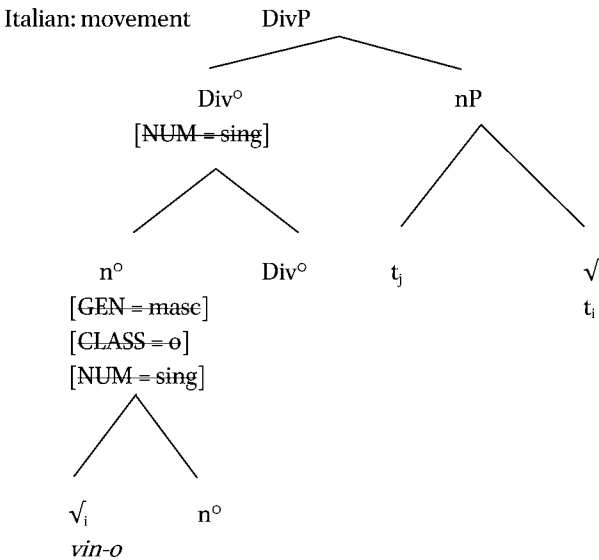


FIGURE 4.5 Deriving indefinite nominals without “partitive articles” in Italian with internal AGREE operations

Spanish or *wine*—*wine-s* in English); it cannot incorporate into  $\text{Div}^\circ$  in order to be pluralized. Rather, we assume that it is already specified for number on the level of  $\text{nP}$ , carrying a valued number feature (cf. Eichler 2012, 358f.; Alexiadou 2004, 27; Alexiadou 2015). Like in Spanish (see below), Italian nominal roots are combined with overt exponents of noun classes and incorporate, after a successful AGREE operation for gender (and noun class) between a probe in  $\text{n}^\circ$  and valued features of the root (which thus becomes mobile), into  $\text{n}^\circ$ . However,  $\text{nP}$  is not the locus of “portioning out”. This can be done in two ways: assuming a number probe on  $\text{Div}^\circ$ , AGREE with the expression in  $\text{n}^\circ$  either triggers movement, and the whole expression is incorporated into  $\text{Div}^\circ$  (see Figure 4.5), like in Spanish. Or, like in French, no movement takes place and the nominal, stuck in  $\text{n}^\circ$ , needs a default element in  $\text{Div}^\circ$ , namely, *di* as the first part of the Italian “partitive article” (see Figure 4.6).

Italian: no movement,  
*il-di > del*

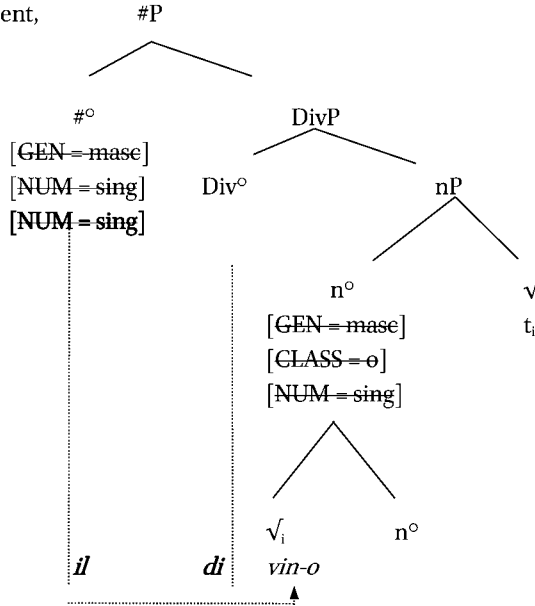


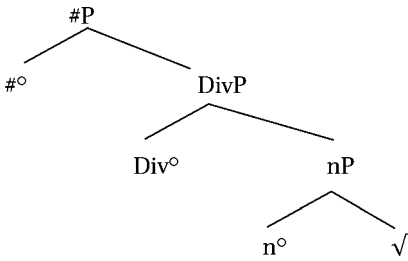
FIGURE 4.6 Deriving indefinite nominals with “partitive articles” in Italian with internal AGREE operations

It seems as if, at least in Standard Italian, no semantic or other substantial difference exists between the bare nominal and the nominal with a “partitive article” in the singular (indefinite reading; cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a), but this issue has to be further explored. Different Italian varieties, dialects as well as regional varieties, show different patterns of indefinite determination with much less optionality (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018; Giusti, this volume), so that the standard Italian pattern might also reflect some inconsistency due to standardization and koineization processes (cf. Stark 2007).

Applying the analysis to Spanish yields, of course, a somehow redundant derivation at first sight. This is shown in Figure 4.7 below.

Contrary to Borer (2005), we assume DivP to always be present in indefinite nominals, at least in Romance. In Spanish, due to transparent plural morphology (cf. (3)), the absence of plural (marking) or higher quantifiers or numerals results in a default mass reading.<sup>10</sup>

10 Cf. also Borer (2005, 107, note 18): “As to the possibility that languages project distinct functional structures, I assume, pending evidence suggesting otherwise, that the inventory and interpretation of functional structure is identical across all languages, and that to the extent that the output differs, it must be due to the mode of range assignment selected in a particular structure by a particular language.”



<i>dos</i>	<i>gato<sub>r</sub>-s</i>	<del><i>gat<sub>t</sub>-ø</i></del>	<i>gat<sub>r</sub></i>
<i>mucho-s</i>	<i>gato<sub>r</sub>-s</i>	<del><i>gat<sub>t</sub>-ø</i></del>	<i>gat<sub>r</sub></i>
<i>mucho</i>	<i>vin<sub>ø</sub></i>	<del><i>vin<sub>t</sub>-ø</i></del>	<i>vin<sub>r</sub></i>

FIGURE 4.7 Indefinite nominals in Spanish

Again, we assume Spanish roots to be combined with overt exponents of noun classes and to incorporate, after a successful AGREE operation for gender between a probe in  $n^\circ$  and valued features of the root (which thus becomes mobile), into  $n^\circ$  (see Figure 4.8 for deriving Sp. *gato-s*). Then, they are combined with  $Div^\circ$  coming with a gender probe and a valued number feature,<sup>11</sup> realized by *-s* if plural, and incorporate into  $Div^\circ$ . Further merge of  $\#^\circ$ , carrying a gender and number probe for agreeing quantifiers and numerals, may subsequently lead to the combination of the expression in  $Div^\circ$  with a numeral (*dos*, ‘two’) or a quantifier, yielding an (unspecific) quantification with forms inflecting for gender and number (*much-o*<sub>M.SG</sub>/*-a*<sub>F.SG</sub>, ‘much’ or *much-o*<sub>M.S.PL</sub>/*-a*<sub>F.S.PL</sub> ‘many’). Note that the mass or count interpretation of the complex element *vin-o* in  $n^\circ$ , *vino* in Figure 4.7 (third line), results from the form being clearly singular and not being combined with an explicit “counter” in  $\#^\circ$ : *un vino* would automatically yield a count interpretation (‘one special sort of wine’ or ‘a glass of wine’).

Now, if it is true that for Spanish, just like for English, the interaction of  $nP$  with  $\#P$  is enough to yield a count vs. mass interpretation in bare nominals or quantified nominals, the comparative approach we choose here allows us to account for the typologically complementary distribution in Romance of “partitive articles” always including some variant of *de* and unambiguous plural marking, in parallel to Borer’s (2005) observation starting from Chierchia (1998) of the widespread complementary distribution of classifiers and plural morphemes in the languages of the world.

If our analyses are on the right track, they make a strong prediction about the cross-linguistic distribution of the indefinite Romance mass classifier (i.e., the traditionally wrongly labeled “partitive article”) containing DE: this element is

11 This is different from Mathieu (2009), who does not take gender probing into account.



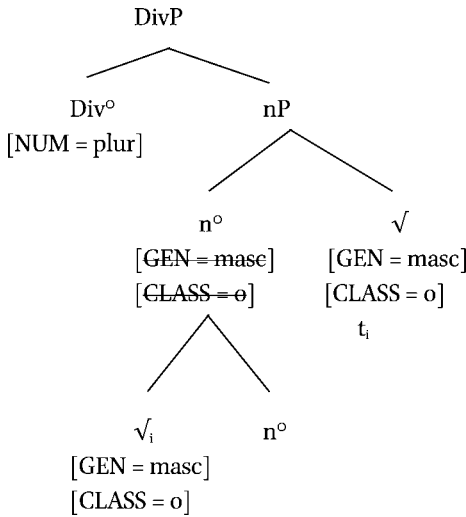


FIGURE 4.8  
Deriving indefinite nominals in Spanish  
with internal AGREE operations

not to be expected in Romance languages or varieties with overt and unambiguous morphological exponents of plural in  $\text{Div}^\circ$ , as is the case in Ibero-Romance. In the next section, we will discuss apparent counterevidence to this prediction in the history of Spanish.

### 3 The Case of Old Spanish

Different authors (e.g., Lapesa 1964; Cano 1992; Eberenz 2008) have claimed that Old Spanish featured (optional) “partitive articles” in the sense of indefinite mass classifiers comparable to those of French and Italian discussed in Section 2. Based on data obtained by an exhaustive string search in the *Corpus Diacrónico del Español* (CORDE) and the *Corpus del Español* (CDE),<sup>12</sup> we will show that this claim originates from an incorrect analysis of the data: all Old Spanish *del*-constituents are superset-denoting PPs headed by a zero  $\text{Q}^\circ$  (which, besides the superset PP, also governs a subset-denoting zero DP, cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006).<sup>13</sup> In other words, they are *bare partitives* in the sense

12 CORDE (<http://corpus.rae.es/cordenet.html>) contains data from the beginning of documentation until 1974 (236,709,914 tokens; 34,155 texts) from Spain, Latin America, and the Philippines. The *Corpus del Español* (<http://www.corpusdelespanol.org/>) covers Peninsular and Latin American varieties. It comprises 101,311,682 tokens from 1200–1999 (13,926 texts). Cf. Schurr, this volume, for another corpus study of Old Spanish.

13 Throughout the rest of this paper, the neutral label *del-constituent* comprises both singu-

of Hoeksema (1996, 15f.) and Kornfilt (1996) and never feature “partitive articles”.<sup>14</sup> Yet, besides regular strong definite DPs, Old Spanish *bare partitives* can also contain weakly referential definite DPs with a so-called *representative object interpretation* licensed by what is known as the *kind-oriented mode of talk* (Krifka et al. 1995). Such weakly referential definite DPs, responsible for the wrong “partitive article” analysis of the Old Spanish data in older literature, are not to be confounded with short weak definites in the sense of Carlson and Sussman (2005) and Carlson et al. (2006). Although, due to reasons of space, we will focus on Old Spanish data, all analyses presented hold true of Old Portuguese as well. This can be evidenced by a survey of data from the *Corpus do Português* (cf. also Gerards 2020).<sup>15</sup> Neither Old Spanish nor Old Portuguese are, thus, counterexamples to the prediction resulting from Section 2.2.

### 3.1 *The Data*

The aim of this section is to determine the morphosyntactic and semantic status of seemingly Modern Gallo- and Italo-Romance-like *del*-constituents in Old Spanish. To this aim, we performed an exploratory corpus search, for practical reasons restricted to one specific context, namely, *del*-constituents governed

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lar masculine *del* + N and feminine *de la* + N, as well as the plural forms *de los* + N and *de las* + N.

- 14 Note that this use of *bare partitive* is different from that of Chierchia (1998) and Le Bruyn (2010), who use the label *bare partitive* for referring to “partitive articles”, that is, D-elements, as discussed in Section 2. Disagreeing with Kupferman (1994), we take as evidence for bare partitives to be headed by a zero Q° two facts. First, with bare partitives in subject function, the verbal predicate clearly agrees with zero Q° (cf. Seržant 2012, for the same observation on partitive genitives in Ancient Greek). This is illustrated by data from Palatian ((i); see also Old Spanish (18) below), a Rhine Franconian variety of German in which bare partitives are particularly frequent (cf. Glaser 1993, for issues of general frequency, but not for agreement facts; Strobel and Glaser, this volume, on partitive markers in some Germanic varieties; cf. also Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou, this volume, on (dis-)agreement facts between subject and predicate):

- (i) [∅] *Vunn de Bohne leit (noch) uffem Deller.*  
 [∅]<sub>SG</sub> of the.PL bean.PL lie.PRS.3SG (still) on.the plate  
 ‘There is [still] (a portion) of the beans on the plate.’  
 (lit.: ‘Of the beans [still] lies on the plate.’)

Second, the pronominal expression *sie* ‘it’ in Standard German (ii) is clearly coreferential with zero Q°, not with the overt DP *der Milch* ‘the milk’:

- (ii) *Ich habe [∅]<sub>j</sub> von der Milch genommen und sie<sub>j</sub> dann getrunken.*  
 1SG AUX.PRS.1SG [∅] of the milk take.PTCP and 3SG then drink.PTCP  
 ‘I took of the milk and then drank it.’

- 15 *Corpus do Português* (<https://www.corpusdoportugues.org/hist-gen/>) covers European and Brazilian varieties. It comprises 45,606,959 tokens from 1200–1999 (55,493 texts).

TABLE 4.3 Chronologic distribution of the 275 *del*-constituents governed by *con* from *CORDE* and *CDE*

Chronological distribution		
Century	N texts	<i>del</i> (disc. new)
13th	11	62.5 % (172/275)
14th	4	18.9 % (52/275)
15th	12	15.6 % (43/275)
16th	5	2.2 % (6/275)
17th	1	0.4 % (1/275)
20th	1	0.4 % (1/275)
TOTAL	34	100 % (275/275)

by the preposition *con* 'with'.<sup>16</sup> As represented in Table 4.3, we obtained 275 occurrences from 34 texts,<sup>17</sup> out of which most are from the 13th-, 14th-, and 15th-century; six occurrences are from the first quarter of the 16th century, 1 is from the 17th century, and 1 from the 20th century.<sup>18</sup>

16 Restriction to one context was necessary as *CORDE* is not lemmatized and data collection, therefore, was extremely complicated and time-consuming. According to the literature (cf. e.g., Lapesa 1964, 79; Sánchez Lancis 2009), *del*-constituents are attested as direct objects, as objects of P<sup>o</sup>, and as subjects of unaccusative constructions, that is, as internal arguments. Gerards 2020 shows that what will be said in this section about *del*-constituents governed by *con* 'with' holds across the board for *del*-constituents in direct object and subject function and explains their syntactic distribution in terms of case theory.

17 The initial number was considerably higher. However, *CDE* proved to be unreliable due to scanning mistakes in the process of corpus compilation (e.g., pages with two columns scanned as if they contained one). In order to warrant a scrupulous analysis, all data from this latter corpus had to be checked manually. This procedure led to the exclusion of many false positives.

18 These proportions would be even more biased towards the 13th century if we counted as belonging to the 13th century those attestations from later centuries that are (often *verbatim*) copies of 13th-century ones (among which the only datum from the 20th century). Note furthermore that both *CORDE* and *CDE* contain up to three times more tokens for the 15th and up to six times more tokens for the 16th century than for the 13th and 14th century. Obviously, this, too, means that the proportions reflected in Table 4.3 would be even more biased towards the 13th century if the corpora were to contain an equal number of tokens per century.

TABLE 4.4 Distribution of discourse-given and discourse-new *con*-governed *del*-constituents from *CORDE* and *CDE*

Distribution of <i>del</i> -constituents			
Discourse-given	Discourse-new	Total N	Total texts
78/275 (28.4%)	197/275 (71.6%)	275 (100%)	34

*Del*-constituents are thus a phenomenon characteristic of the 13th century (cf. also Gerards 2020 for more details).

As represented in Table 4.4, out of the 275 *del*-constituents governed by *con*, 78 (= 28.4%) could readily be identified as bare partitive PPs governed by a zero  $Q^{\circ}$ , as they contain a discourse-given definite superset DP referring back to a specific entity introduced cotextually by indefinite or bare nominals or given by accommodation of the type *the car ... the wheels*. For the remaining 197 (= 71.6%) occurrences, in contrast, an analysis as textual or situational definites à la Russell (1905), Christophersen (1939), Hawkins (1978), or Heim (1982) is difficult to construct:

- (5) *destiépren=la* [...]                      *con d=el*                      *vinagre*  
 dissolve.IMP.3PL=3F.SG.ACC with of=the.M.SG vinegar.M.SG  
*fuerte*  
 strong.M.SG  
 ‘Dissolve it with strong vinegar.’ (Gerardus Falconarius, 13th century)

The occurrence of *vinagre fuerte* ‘strong vinegar’ in (5) is the first mention of the substance in a recipe text, which, furthermore, comes without an initial list of ingredients. The reason why it is highly implausible to assume that *del vinagre fuerte* in (5) denotes an unspecified subset portion of a *situationally unique* or *familiar* superset portion of vinegar is the enormous diversity of lexemes contained in the 197 occurrences of type (5) without any immediate cotextual givenness (see Section 3.3). Such *del*-constituents, the only ones of interest in the remainder of this paper, are only attested in the data until the first quarter of the 16th century.

At first sight, a plausible analysis of discourse-new *del*-constituents governed by *con* seems to be one in terms of Modern Gallo- or Italo-Romance “partitive articles” seen in Section 2.2: indefiniteness, mass interpretation. A closer investigation, however, shows that such an analysis is incorrect: both intra-

textually and intertextually discourse-new *del*-constituents like in (5) alternate under identical discourse-pragmatic conditions and in the same syntactic functions with bare nominals (6), but also with definitely marked nominals (7) (cf. also Eberenz 2008):<sup>19</sup>

- (6) *trénpla=lo*    *con binagre fuerte*  
 dissolve.IMP.3SG=3M.SG.ACC with vinegar.M.SG strong.M.SG  
 'Dissolve it with strong vinegar.' (*Modo de Meleçinar las Aves*, 16th-century copy of (5))
- (7) *destiénpra=lo*    *con el binagre fuerte*  
 dissolve.IMP.3SG=3M.SG.ACC with the.M.SG vinegar.M.SG strong.M.SG  
 'Dissolve it with strong vinegar.' (*Dancus Rex. Esc. v.11.19*, 13th century)

Like in example (5) (and like the bare nominal in (6)), the definite nominal *el vinagre fuerte* in (7) is discourse-new: it is the first mention of the substance, and the use of the definite article is not licensed by the availability of a situationally unique or familiar discourse referent. This strongly suggests that discourse-new *del*-constituents (5)—unlike “partitive articles” (see Section 2.2)—also contain a definite article and that they are, thus, PPs with a zero Q°. <sup>20</sup>Crucially, this is the morphosyntax of bare partitives (see introduction to Section 3).

Besides the chronological one, two more restrictions apply to discourse-new *del*-constituents governed by *con* (5): first, 195/197 (= 99.0%) discourse-new *del*-constituents denote concrete referents.<sup>21</sup> Second, in the data analyzed, almost all (187/197 = 94.9%) such constituents are from technical prose, more precisely *medical*, *veterinary*, or *culinary treatises*.<sup>22</sup> This bias is not due to overrepresentation of some ingredient nouns in technical prose, a potential

19 For reasons elaborated on below, such uses of the definite article are not mentioned in grammars of Old Spanish (cf. e.g., Ortiz Ciscomani 2009).

20 The use of the definite article in (7) is to be distinguished from that of some Modern Italian varieties in which the definite article is the default morphosyntactic means to encode indefinite mass interpretations (cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016b, 2018, and note 4; Giusti, this volume). In this context, note that Kupisch and Koops (2007, 194, their note 5) sustain that such uses in Modern Italian varieties are the result of a grammaticalization process of definites with representative object interpretations in the kind-oriented mode of talk (see Section 3.2).

21 From our point of view, the only two attestations with abstract nouns are doubtful as to whether they really instantiate bare partitives.

22 The percentage could be argued to even be higher, as 6 out of the 10 occurrences from gen-

objection raised by an anonymous reviewer: an exemplary string search for ⟨miel⟩ ‘honey’ in a relevant non-technical prose subportion of *CORDE* (register: narrative prose until 1599) yielded 247 attestations, none of which was a discourse-new *del*-constituent and 93 of which were bare nouns in argument position.

Importantly, this ⟨miel⟩-string search also shows that unembedded discourse-new definites of type (7) display the same genre bias as discourse-new *del*-constituents: besides the 93 bare nominals, the 247 attestations of *miel* also contain 91 tokens of definite *la miel* ‘the honey’. Crucially, all of them instantiate one of Hawkins’ (1978) eight different usage types of definite articles, that is, are regularly unique and/or familiar strong definites ( $\neq$  (7)).<sup>23</sup>

Returning to the question addressed in this paper, that is, whether Old Spanish featured (optional) “partitive articles” in the sense of indefinite mass determiners as available in Modern French and Modern Italian, and summarizing the preceding observations based on data from *CORDE* and *CDE*, we can state the following:

- (a) Old Spanish featured optional discourse-new *del*-constituents for which co(n)textual uniqueness or familiarity is difficult to construct (5). Such *del*-constituents are, at first sight, reminiscent of “partitive articles”.
- (b) In Old Spanish, and under identical discourse-pragmatic conditions, there is intratextual and intertextual variation between such discourse-new *del*-constituents and discourse-new nominals with the definite article only (7). This strongly suggests that discourse-new *del*-constituents in Old Spanish, differently from “partitive articles” (see Section 2.2), also contain a definite article and are, hence, PPs with a zero  $Q^{\circ}$ . This is the morphosyntax of *bare partitives*, not of “partitive articles”. The overt DP embedded in the PP of discourse-new *del*-constituents is superset-denoting.
- (c) Both discourse-new *del*-constituents and discourse-new definite nominals display a strong genre-bias in our data, being almost exclusively attested in technical prose.

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res *other* than technical prose are found in clearly instructive passages. This adds further robustness to the genre bias (for the reason of the bias, see Section 3.2).

23 This is, we believe, the reason why uses of the definite article such as the one in (7) are not mentioned in grammars of Old Spanish: these are mostly based on literary and poetic text genres. For a discussion of the problematic text selection underlying grammars of Old Spanish, see, for instance, Kabatek (2005) and references therein.

In view of (a)–(c), we need an adequate semantic analysis of the definite article in (5) and (7), as well as an explanation of the genre bias observed.

### 3.2 *Definite Articles in Need of Explanation: Representative Object Interpretations in the Kind-Oriented Mode of Talk*

We propose that discourse-new definites such as *el vinagre fuerte* in (7) and the same type of definite nominal contained in discourse-new *del*-constituents (5) are to be analyzed as definites with *representative object interpretations* (ROI) made available by what Krifka et al. (1995, 85–88) have dubbed *kind-oriented mode of talk* (KoM).<sup>24</sup> The label *representative object interpretation* (ROI) designates in our understanding a weakly referential use of definite nominals, often complements of V<sup>o</sup> or P<sup>o</sup>.<sup>25</sup> Such definites do not meet uniqueness or familiarity requirements at the object level and come with a “generic flavor” even though they occur with verbal predicates not licensing kind-denoting arguments. In this vein, *the grizzly* in (8) and *el gorila* ‘the gorilla’ in Spanish (9) are not generic in the sense of kind denotation, as the whole sentence does not make a straightforward predication about a property of *URSUS ARCTOS HORRIBILIS* or *GORILLA*, respectively. Rather, in the ROI-reading of interest here, the definites denote *arbitrary yet prototypical instantiations* of kinds, which were filmed or encountered. As will be shown below, such instantiations are inherently non-specific, the definite itself being semantically number-neutral:

(8) *In Alaska, we filmed the grizzly.* (Krifka et al. 1995, 78)

(9) *Aquella mañana tuvimos nuestro primer encuentro con*  
 that morning have.PST.1PL our first encounter with  
*el gorila.*  
 the.M.SG gorilla  
 ‘Yesterday we had our first encounter with the gorilla.’ (Leonetti 1999, 873)

ROI-definites as in (8) and (9) are under-researched and, therefore, not well understood. Yet, what we do know is that they are attested in many Indo-

24 As opposed to the default *object-oriented mode of talk* (Krifka et al. 1995, 87). The first scholar to (briefly) note the existence of this class of DPs was, to the best of our knowledge, Bally (\*1965 [1932], 89–90).

25 For the discussion of ROIs in the context of weak referentiality, see Pires de Oliveira (2013, 28–29). For an overview of many different types of weak referentiality, see the contributions in Aguilar-Guevara, Le Bruyn, and Zwarts (2014).

European and at least some non-Indo-European languages and that, truth-conditionally, they are equivalent to indefinites (Oosterhof 2006, 67).<sup>26</sup>

As pointed out above, ROI-definites refer to (an) arbitrary prototypical exemplar(s) of the respective kind, as noted by Krifka et al. (1995) and confirmed, among others, by Mueller-Reichau (2013):<sup>27</sup>

[...] the object in the situation described is only relevant as a representative of the whole kind [and] a property can be projected from the object to the kind.

KRIFKA et al. 1995, 79

[an] object term [...] function[s] as a kind term [and] reference to the kind is realised indirectly via reference to a representative of the kind.

MUELLER-REICHAU 2013, 93

The fact that ROI-definites are about representative prototypical *exemplars* of kinds and not about kinds ‘on the whole’ can only mean that such definites are, in principle, subject to the [ $\pm$  specific]-distinction. In other words, they introduce variables bound by an existential quantifier (Oosterhof 2008, 55, 159–161). Yet, we claim that ROI-definites, despite being subject to this distinction in principle, are inherently non-specific (see for the same claim, Koss Torkildsen 2002, 83 and, for closely related observations, Kupisch and Koops 2007). This claim is—we believe—in line with Krifka et al.’s (1995) and Mueller-Reichau’s (2013) observations. Support for inherent non-specificity of ROI-definites comes from their hitherto unnoticed semantic number neutrality. Both versions of (10), which are about one or two gorillas, respectively, are semantically felicitous continuations of (9):<sup>28</sup>

- (10) *A=l                    cruzar    el   bosque, de repente apareció/aparecieron*  
 at=the.M.SG cross.INF the forest suddenly appear.PST.3SG/3PL  
*una/dos espalda(/s) plateada(/s) impresionante(/s)*  
 an/ two silverback(/s)                    impressive.SG(/PL)  
 ‘When crossing the forest, there suddenly appeared an/two impressive silverback(/s).’

26 For ROI-definites in Indo-European languages, see the references in this section. For Arabic, see Jaber (2014).

27 See also Leonetti (1999, 872f.), Oosterhof (2008), and Pelletier (2010, 6).

28 For further evidence, see also the discussion of example (13) in Section 3.3.



Finally, note that from a syntactic point of view, the only plausible locus where the definite article in ROI-definites is located is  $D^{\circ}$ —as this is where referentiality (be it weak or strong) is established.

We believe that discourse-new Old Spanish definites (7) and discourse-new *del*-constituents (5) are—or, in the case of (5), contain—ROI-definites. The genre bias of our Old Spanish data (see Section 3.1) is perfectly compatible with Krifka et al.'s (1995) observations, whose hypothesis is that ROI-definites are pragmatically conditioned phenomena sensitive to a varietal bias. Yet, two possible objections need to be addressed.<sup>29</sup>

First, ROIs in modern article languages—the exclusive empirical basis of the scarce literature on such definites—are generally count nouns (cf. (8)–(9)). This is not the case of the Old Spanish data (cf. (5), (7)). However, in the case of Old Spanish, we are dealing with a less grammaticalized article system than that of modern languages. Such article systems are known to display greater freedom of article use and/or non-use (cf. e.g., Carlier and Lamiroy 2014). In this vein, for Old French, a language closely related to Old Spanish, it has explicitly been argued that definite articles with mass nouns could be used with non-unique and non-familiar referents in order to signal *discourse prominence* (Epstein 2001; cf. also Epstein 1993, 1994).<sup>30</sup> Our claim that the Old Spanish data involve ROI-definites, thus, does not seem far-fetched at all: after all, in recipes, ingredients are clearly central discourse referents (for statistical support of the discursive importance of ROI-definites in Old Spanish, see Gerards 2020). Drawing on Epstein (2001) also leads to the prediction that ROI-definites become rarer once the definite article of a given language continues to grammaticalize. Again, this is confirmed by the Old Spanish data, in which discourse-new *del*-constituents are only attested until the first quarter of the 16th century (see Section 3.1).

Second, ROI-definites in modern article languages, besides being count nouns, are generally morphologically singular only. Once more, this is not true of the Old Spanish data. Again, the diachronic argument sketched in the preceding paragraph is a reasonable counterargument against this objection. However, it is no longer the only one: experimental investigations on ROIs in Modern Dutch (Oosterhof 2006, 2008, 159–161), despite confirming that singular count nouns clearly get such readings most easily, reveal that, at least for some

29 We thank Anna Kocher and an anonymous reviewer of a previous version of this paper for these observations.

30 Possibly, the pragmatic notion of prominence can be formalized in terms of *salience*, which some have claimed to be the only universal meaning of definite articles (see, most recently, Von Heusinger 2013).

speakers, ROI-readings seem to not be completely ruled out with bare plurals. From our point of view, this suggests that it is reasonable to propose that Old Spanish plural definites, too, are amenable to ROIs.

Summing up, an analysis of the Old Spanish data, that is, of both unembedded discourse-new definites (7) and the definites contained in discourse-new *del*-constituents (5), in terms of ROI-definites is perfectly plausible: both are most typical of the 13th century, that is, of a less grammaticalized article system, instantiate a pragmatically-conditioned genre-biased usage type of the definite article, and vary intertextually and intratextually with bare nominals, as they are truth-conditionally equivalent to indefinites. Clearly though, having the same truth-conditions as indefinites does not mean that Old Spanish *del*-constituents featuring ROI-definites are semantically (let alone syntactically) identical to Modern Gallo- and Italo-Romance indefinite mass classifiers (“partitive articles”). Old Spanish *del*-constituents with ROI-definites but not “partitive articles” involve superset reference to prototypical instantiations of kinds. Only Old Spanish *del*-constituents with ROI-definites but not “partitive articles” (see Section 2.2) involve (weakly) referential definite articles located in D°. Furthermore, Modern Romance “partitive articles”, differently from Old Spanish *del*-constituents, do not involve prepositions and, differently from ROI-definites, are not number neutral. In short, Old Spanish *del*-constituents featuring ROI-definites are *bare partitives*, and do not involve “partitive articles”.

In the following section, we will address a possible alternative analysis of the Old Spanish data in terms of short weak definites. We will show that such an analysis is clearly inferior to one in terms of ROI-definites.

### 3.3 *The Old Spanish Data Are Not Short Weak Definites*<sup>31</sup>

Another class of weak referentials besides ROI-definites are so-called *short weak definites* (Carlson and Sussman 2005; Carlson et al. 2006; Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts 2013).<sup>32</sup> Short weak definites are definites that share a number of properties with ROI-definites, among others semantic number neutrality, non-

31 This section is the fruit of numerous informal discussions over the past three years, in the course of which we were repeatedly challenged to position ourselves with regard to whether short weak definites and ROI-definites are one and the same class of nominals. We particularly thank an anonymous reviewer of a previous version of this paper for his/her insightful comments.

32 The term *weak definite* is originally due to Poesio (1994), who was, however, mostly concerned with what is now known as *long weak definites*. For a recent comprehensive typology of weak definites, see Espinal and Cyrino (2017a).

uniqueness, non-familiarity, and some fuzzy “generic flavor”. In this vein, in (11), Lola could have taken several potentially different, previously unfamiliar trains:

- (11) *Lola took **the train** from Amsterdam to Nijmegen.* (Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts 2013, 34)

Inherent semantic number neutrality, non-uniqueness, and non-familiarity seem to approximate short weak definites to ROI-definites. Upon closer scrutiny, however, both turn out to be different classes of weak referentials. In the remainder of this section, this will be shown by means of three morphosyntactic, lexical, and semantic properties of short weak definites that are found neither in ROI-definites nor in our Old Spanish data: defectiveness with regard to introducing discourse referents, strong lexical restrictions, and restriction to one morphological number only.<sup>33</sup>

It is commonplace that short weak definites (SWDs) are bad at introducing discourse referents (Carlson et al. 2006; Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts 2013; Aguilar-Guevara 2014, among many others). Pronominal resumption of potential short weak definites, at least with stage-level predicates, obligatorily triggers a strong, “regular” definite reading of the nominal (SD), that is, a regularly unique and/or familiar interpretation:<sup>34</sup>

- (12) *Lola listened to **the radio**<sub>i</sub>, until she fell asleep. She turned **it**<sub>i</sub> off when she woke up in the middle of the night.* (? SWD/SD fine) (Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts 2013, 35)

ROI-definites, in turn, can perfectly function as antecedents of pronominal expressions also with stage-level predicates, without the ROI-reading being lost:

- (13) *In Alaska, we filmed **the grizzly**<sub>i</sub>. Often, we would even be able to observe **it**<sub>i</sub> /**them**<sub>i</sub>,<sup>35</sup> interact with **its**<sub>i</sub> /**their**<sub>i</sub> young.*

33 These properties of short weak definites, among others, are why Carlson et al. (2006, 2013) and Schwarz (2014) analyze short weak definites as a special type of incorporation. For different accounts, see Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2013), Beyssade (2013), Corblin (2013), Aguilar-Guevara (2014), and Zwarts (2014).

34 As a reviewer notes, pronominal resumption of swds is fine with individual or kind-level predicates (*Lola listened to the radio*, *It<sub>i</sub> is her favorite medium for listening to music*).

35 Note how the grammaticality of both a singular and a plural pronominal expression resuming a singular count ROI-definite in (13) adds further support to the semantic number neutrality of ROI-definites (see Section 3.2).

In the Old Spanish data, 101/197 (= 51.3%) discourse-new *del*-constituents serve as antecedents for either clitic or strong pronominal expressions with stage-level predicates:<sup>36</sup>

- (14) *tomen* *d=el* *eneldo* *e* *cuégan=lo*  
 take.IMP.3PL of=the.M.SG dill.M.SG and cook.IMP.3PL=3M.SG.ACC  
*con d=el* *agua<sub>i</sub>* *e* *póngán=ge=la<sub>i</sub>*  
 with of=the.F.SG water.F.SG and put.IMP.3PL=3PL.DAT=3F.SG.ACC  
*delantre por tal que beuan* *d'=ella<sub>i</sub>*  
 in.front so.that drink.PRS.SBJV.3PL of=3F.SG  
 ‘Take dill and cook it with water and put it [the water] in front of them so  
 that they drink of it [of the water].’ (*Moamín*, ca. 1250)

Summing up, the Old Spanish data clearly align with ROI-definites and not with short weak definites with regard to the introduction of discourse referents.

Short weak definites are also subject to strong lexical restrictions (Carlson et al. 2006; Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts 2013; Aguilar-Guevara 2014; Schwarz 2014). This holds true with regard to the noun itself, even for near synonyms (15a–b), the governing verb (15c–d), and the governing preposition (15e–f):

- (15) a. *I went to the hospital.* (SWD fine)  
 b. *I went to the clinic.* (no SWD)  
 c. *Sally checked the calendar.* (SWD fine)  
 d. *Sally tore the calendar.* (no SWD)  
 e. *Kenneth is at the store.* (SWD fine)  
 f. *Kenneth is behind the store.* (no SWD)  
 ([a], [b] Aguilar-Guevara 2014, 153; [c]–[f] Carlson and Sussman 2005, 76)

The 197 discourse-new Old Spanish *del*-constituents in the data contain 37 different governing verbs and 42 different nouns. Altogether, 85 different verb + *con* + noun combinations are attested in the data. Again, the Old Spanish data thus clearly align with ROI-definites and not with short weak definites.

36 In order to warrant comparable results, we only took into consideration the two clauses immediately following the one containing the *del*-constituent. Note that the actual number of *del*-constituents introducing discourse referents would have even been higher had we taken into account the 14 cases of resumption of *del*-constituents by means of a lexical DP. However, we decided not to include such data in our count as, so far, the defectiveness of short weak definites with regard to introducing discourse referents has exclusively been discussed and tested for pronominal expressions.

Finally, short weak definites are morphologically defective. With a given nominal lexeme, they can either be morphologically singular ((16a) vs. (16b)) or morphologically plural ((16c) vs. (16d)), but never both (Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts 2011, 181; Espinal and Cyrino 2017b, 130):

- (16) a. *Sally listened to the radio.* (SWD fine)  
 b. *Sally listened to the radios.* (SD only)  
 c. *Lola went to the mountain.* (SD only)  
 d. *Lola went to the mountains.* (SWD fine)  
 (Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts 2011, 181; [a–b] adapted)

ROIs, in turn—though preferably singular—are, according to previous research (see Section 3.2), not categorically ruled out in the plural and, more importantly, have, for a given nominal lexeme, never been argued to be restricted to only one morphological number. Again, the type of Old Spanish *del*-constituents studied in this paper align with ROI-definites rather than with short weak definites. As proof of this, consider the data in (17) and (18), taken from Gerards (2020), which not only analyzes *del*-constituents governed by *con* ‘with’ but also in other syntactic functions:

- (17) *tomen*          *d=el*          *seuo*          *de=las*          *uacas*  
 take.IMP.3PL of=the.M.SG suet.M.SG of=the.F.PL COW.F.PL  
 ‘Take cow suet.’ (*Moamín*, ca. 1250)

- (18) *den=les*                                  [...] *de=los*          *seuos*          *de=las*  
 give.IMP.3PL=3PL.DAT ... of=the.M.PL suet.M.PL of=the.F.PL  
*aves*          *que les*          *conuiene*  
 bird.F.PL REL 3PL.DAT be.adequate.3.SG  
 ‘Take bird suets that suit (lit.: suits) them.’ (*Moamín*, ca. 1250)

Both (17) and (18)—two examples from the same text—feature discourse-new *del*-constituents containing the lexical head noun *seuo* ‘suet’. Yet, *seuo* is morphologically singular in (17), while it is plural in (18). In addition, note how (18) may be further proof of our claim that the Old Spanish *del*-constituents under study in this paper—differently from “partitive articles” (see Section 2.2)—feature an empty Q° (see note 14): in (18), the *del*-constituent is the subject of the modifying relative clause *que les conuiene* ‘which suit (lit. suits) them’, where *conuiene* is 3rd person singular. Yet, neither *seuos* ‘suits’ nor its PP-complement *de las aves* ‘of the birds’ is morphologically singular. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that 3rd person singular *conuiene* agrees with

an empty Q-head specified for singular and which embeds the entire complex *del*-constituent.

Summing up, the Old Spanish data discussed are (i) perfectly able to introduce discourse referents and to function as antecedents of coreferential expressions even with stage-level predicates, (ii) lack strong lexical restrictions, and (iii) are not restricted to one morphological number for a given nominal lexeme. They thus clearly align with ROI-definites, and not with short weak definites.

#### 4 Conclusion

We have shown in this contribution that the typologically marked existence of an indefinite mass determiner (“partitive article”) in many Gallo-Romance and Italo-Romance varieties and also in standard French (and to a lesser extent in standard Italian) can be correlated empirically with the (non-)availability of word class markers and agglutinative plural morphemes in Romance languages. A formal analysis of the internal structure of indefinite nominals (based on Borer 2005, plus some minimalist assumptions on AGREE and Distributed Morphology mechanisms) has shown that *de* is the minimal expression of  $\text{Div}^\circ$ , in complementary distribution with overt and unambiguous plural morphemes. This analysis makes the prediction that languages like Ibero-Romance varieties with such a plural-s should not possess indefinite mass determiners (“partitive articles”). The prediction, contrary to older claims (Lapesa 1964; Cano 1992; Eberenz 2008), is borne out: the discourse-new Old Spanish *del*-constituents discussed in this paper, frequent only in the 13th century, turned out to be bare partitives, that is, QPs with a zero  $\text{Q}^\circ$  that contain PPs. These PPs, in turn, contain weakly referential definite superset DPs with representative object interpretations licensed by the kind-oriented mode of talk. In Modern Spanish, these *del*-constituents are no longer available.<sup>37</sup> The reason for this, we believe, is that in the 13th century, the system of nominal determination was much less grammaticalized than in Modern Spanish. Definites in Old Spanish were able to signal discourse prominence more easily than in Modern Spanish, even in the absence of uniqueness and/or familiarity of a discourse referent.

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37 Whereas ROI-definites not embedded in *del*-constituents are still available, at least with singular count nouns (9).

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# Predicates of Personal Taste and Pancake Sentences in Brazilian Portuguese and French

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## 1 Introduction

In several languages, for instance Mainland Scandinavian, Hebrew, Brazilian Portuguese, and French, certain intriguing agreement and interpretational patterns are found in copular constructions, as shown in (1), from Wechsler (2013), (2) and (3) from Roy and Shlonsky (2019), and (4a) from Rodrigues and Foltran (2015):<sup>1</sup>

(1) Swedish

*Pannkakor är gott.*  
pancake.PL be.3SG.PRS good.N.SG

‘Situations involving pancakes are good (e.g., eating pancakes).’

(2) Hebrew

*studentim ce'irim ze me'anyen.*  
student.M.PL young.M.PL be.M.SG interesting.M.SG

‘Teaching/talking to/etc. young students is interesting.’

(3) French

*Les/des enfants, c'est chouette.*  
the.PL/ PA.PL child.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS fun.M.SG

‘Doing something with children (having them, playing with them, raising them, and so on) is cool/fun.’

(4) Brazilian Portuguese

a. *Crianças é divertido.*  
child.F.PL be.3SG.PRS fun.M.SG

‘Playing with children/taking care of them ... is fun.’ (our translation)

<sup>1</sup> Translations are provided from the authors, except when indicated.

- b. *Estudantes é interessante.*  
 student.M.PL be.3SG.PRS interesting.M.SG  
 ‘Doing something with students (e.g., supervising them) is interesting.’

The sentences in (1)–(4) show similar syntactic and semantic properties. Firstly, the predicate appears in unmarked form for gender and number, and this correlates with a special reading for the subject; in particular, the bare NP or the DP subject does not receive its literal meaning.<sup>2</sup> We argue that the nominal expression is rather understood as referring to a *type of events* involving the original referent as a theme. We call this reading of the subject *the event type reading*. Following Wechsler (2013), we call sentences (1)–(4) pancake sentences, and their subjects will be labelled pancake subjects. Inspired by previous work of Piñón (2016) on a subclass of evaluative predicates, we propose that the subject of these sentences stands for a more complex, partially covert semantic structure denoting an event type, while the adjectival phrase predicates a (second-order) property over this event type.

This paper intends to offer an analysis of syntactic and semantic aspects of pancake sentences, having Brazilian Portuguese and French as its focus. Comparing these two languages is interesting because they differ in the structures they adopt to achieve the same interpretation.

The pattern in (5) summarizes the main ingredients of pancake sentences cross-linguistically. In all languages, including Brazilian Portuguese and French, the subject position is filled with a nominal expression which is individual-denoting in its literal meaning, as well as a copula and an adjective. The parentheses capture some cross-linguistic differences. While Brazilian Portuguese only allows bare NPs in this construction, French requires DPs in subject position (as it does in most argumental positions). Additionally, in most cases, the nominal expression is left-dislocated in French, and serves as the antecedent of the anaphoric demonstrative *ce*, whereas Brazilian Portuguese pancake sentences typically do not license left-dislocation nor demonstrative pronouns.<sup>3</sup>

2 Romance languages vary as to whether they allow bare nouns and/or nominals with a “partitive article” in subject positions; for more details on the issue, see Giusti (this volume). Strobel and Glaser (this volume) discuss subjects with genitive case in Germanic, often corresponding to bare nouns in English.

3 The demonstrative pronoun *ce* and left dislocation are not compulsory with numerals in the subject position, nor with a VP in the same position, see Sections 4 and 6.



- (5) Individual-denoting nominal expression (DP/NP)–(neuter demonstrative pronoun)–copula–adjective.

Importantly, pancake sentences in all languages mentioned above have counterparts with full agreement, where the bare NP or DP in subject position receives its literal (individual-denoting) interpretation. The difference between (4b) and (6a) illustrates this. Sentence (4b) is true if event types involving young students as theme are generally interesting (e.g., supervising them is interesting), but as Greenberg (2008) observes about a similar contrast in Hebrew, this may be true if very few or even no young students involved in these event types are interesting. By contrast, (6a) necessarily attributes the property of being interesting to the individuals denoted by the noun in subject position.<sup>4</sup>

- (6) Brazilian Portuguese

a. *Estudantes são interessantes.*  
 student.M.PL be.3PL.PRS interesting.M.PL  
 ‘Students are generally interesting.’ NOT: ‘Event types involving students as theme (supervising them, etc.) are generally interesting.’

b. *Estudante é interessante.*  
 student.M.SG be.3SG.PRS interesting.M.SG  
 ‘Students are generally interesting’ or ‘Event types involving students as theme (supervising them, etc.) are generally interesting.’

In languages such as Brazilian Portuguese, the bare NP in pancake sentences can be either singular or plural (as usually the case for subjects of generic sentences in such languages). When the bare subject is formally plural and the adjective singular (as in (4a)), or when the bare subject is singular and feminine and the adjective singular and masculine (as in (7a) below), we clearly have a surface mismatch, and as a result *only* the event type reading obtains. By contrast, when the bare subject is formally singular and masculine, it is ambiguous between an ‘event type’ and an ‘individual kind’ reading if the right type of adjective is used, see (6b). On the individual kind reading, the adjective agrees in gender and number with the nominal expression (masculine singular). But on the event type reading obtained in a pancake sentence, the adjective does

4 How (non)-individuated reference may affect the internal structure of noun phrases in Romance is explored in Gerards and Stark (this volume); (non)-individuation also plays a role in the analysis of Schurr (this volume).

not agree with the nominal expression, and rather receives default agreement, which is masculine and singular in Brazilian Portuguese.

As the translation of (6a) already suggests, the subject *cannot* be reinterpreted as its pancake counterpart in copular sentences with full agreement. That is, only non-agreeing constructions may have pancake subjects (see Rodrigues and Fortran 2015 for similar observations on Brazilian Portuguese). The contrast between (7)–(8) illustrates this point: while sentences in (7) make perfect sense (because an event type involving pancakes can be friendly), sentences in (8) are non-sensical (or funny), for they necessarily attribute friendliness to pancakes themselves. The contrasts in (9)–(12) are similar. Raising children may be expensive, but it is weird to attribute a financial value to children. Likewise, (12) oddly states that domestic animals are in general complicated, while (11) asserts that having domestic animals, caring for them, etc. is complicated.

(7) Brazilian Portuguese/ French

a. *Panqueca é amigável.*  
pancake.F.SG be.3SG.PRS friendly.M.SG

b. *Les/des crêpes, c'est convivial.*  
the.PL/ PA.PL pancake.F.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS friendly.M.SG  
'Pancakes will make a convivial/easy/warm evening/ Pancakes, that's convivial.'

(8) a. *#Panquecas são amigáveis.*  
pancake.F.PL be.3PL.PRS friendly.M.PL

b. *#Les crêpes sont conviviales.*  
the.PL pancake.F.PL be.3PL.PRS friendly.F.PL  
'(The) pancakes are friendly.'

(9) a. *Criança é caro.*  
child.F.SG be.3SG.PRS expensive.M.SG

b. *Les/des enfants, c'est cher.*  
the.PL/ PA.PL child.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS expensive.M.SG  
'Having children, raising them, etc. is expensive.'

(10) a. *#Criança é cara.*  
child.F.SG be.3SG.PRS expensive.F.SG

- b. #*Les enfants sont chers.*  
 the.PL child.M.PL be.3PL.PRS expensive.M.PL  
 '(The) children are expensive.'
- (11) a. *Animais domésticos é complicado.*  
 animal.M.PL domestic.M.PL be.3SG.PRS complicated.M.SG
- b. *Les/des animaux de compagnie, c'est compliqué.*  
 the.PL/ PA.PL animal.M.PL of company DEM=be.3SG.PRS  
 complicated.M.SG  
 'Having domestic animals, caring for them, etc. is complicated.'
- (12) a. *Animais domésticos são complicados.*  
 animal.M.PL domestic.M.PL be.3PL.PRS complicated.M.PL
- b. *Les animaux de compagnie sont compliqués.*  
 the.PL animal.M.PL of company be.3PL.PRS complicated.M.PL  
 'Domestic animals are complicated.'

As the French examples above illustrate, the DP used in this type of sentences is systematically dislocated. Dislocation alone does not suffice to obtain the event type reading; the choice of the demonstrative pronoun *ce* unmarked in gender and number is a necessary ingredient for the reinterpretation of the dislocated DP. A dislocated structure with a pronoun inflected in gender and number such as *elles* does not license the event type reading; for instance, (13a–b) raise the same anomaly as (8) and (10).

- (13) French
- a. #*Les crêpes, elles sont conviviales.*  
 the.PL pancake.F.PL they.NOM.F.PL be.3PL.PRS friendly.F.PL  
 '(The) pancakes, they are friendly.'
- b. #*Les enfants, ils sont chers.*  
 the.PL child.M.PL they.NOM.M.PL be.3PL.PRS expensive.M.PL  
 '(The) children, they are expensive.'

Following many other authors, we assume that pancake subjects stand for a larger and partly covert *semantic* structure. Building on Heller (1999), Greenberg (2008), and Wechsler (2013), we argue that this covert semantic structure

is obtained through a reinterpretation mechanism of the nominal expression, similar to Pustejovsky's (1995) mechanism of logical metonymy, where a part stands for a whole. For instance, in *start the book*, *the book* is not understood under its literal individual-denoting entity, but rather interpreted as standing for a whole—an event of reading, writing ... the book—of which the book forms a proper part only. The question of whether and how this covert structure is realized in the syntax is not addressed in this paper (see Josefsson 2009 on the idea that the covert structure has the syntactic properties of a verbal projection, which is syntactically active although not pronounced, and see Wechsler 2013 for some counter-arguments).

As Danon (2012) observes, pancake sentences raise important questions for the syntax of noun phrases and the theory of agreement, since the lack of agreement correlates with a special semantics. One puzzle, however, is that this correlation is optional for some languages, where the lack of agreement only allows, but does not automatically trigger, the event type reading of the subject. This has already been noted by Greenberg (2008) for Hebrew, and we will show that it is also the case in French. In French (as in Hebrew), pancake sentences therefore form a *proper* subset of non-agreeing copular sentences (i.e., copular sentences with no agreement between the gender/number feature of the first subject and the adjective).<sup>5</sup> In contrast, in other languages, the special event type semantics is compulsory in absence of agreement. We will argue that this is the case in Brazilian Portuguese, and we aim to explain this cross-linguistic difference.

We propose that in Brazilian Portuguese and in French, as apparently is also the case for other languages, it is the agreement feature mismatch which triggers the reinterpretation mechanism of the nominal expression. Under the pancake reading, the subject stands for a non-overt semantic structure. Precisely because this semantic structure is covert, it lacks agreement features, which explains the agreement feature mismatch, as proposed by Greenberg (2008). However, the exact output of the reinterpretation mechanism (and the meaning of the covert semantic structure the nominal expression stands for) depends on the building blocks of a non-agreeing copular sentence, which are different in Brazilian Portuguese and French. These differences will explain why French non-agreeing copular sentences may have more than one meaning and are thus not necessarily pancake sentences.

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5 Thus for us, the event type reading is a defining and necessary property of pancake sentences. In contrast, Wechsler (2013) uses this label for a broader kind of non-agreeing copular sentences, including sentences where the subject receives a kind interpretation (that Wechsler calls 'kind-type pancake sentences').

An overlooked common property of pancake sentences is that they are all built with evaluative adjectives of a certain type, of which *funny*, *interesting* or *complicated* are typical examples. In particular, we observe that object experiencer adjectives (for instance, adjectives derived from object experiencer psych-verbs, such as *surprising*, *fascinating*, *depressing*), better known as predicates of personal taste, are systematically acceptable in pancake sentences, although if and only if they can predicate a property of an event type. This condition is satisfied when the adjective accepts an infinitival VP as a subject. As Bylinina (2014) already observed, not all predicates of personal taste may host such a subject; compare *eating pancakes is depressing/\*tasty*. Also, factual adjectives (e.g., *green*), evaluative adjectives that cannot have infinitival subjects (e.g., *quiet*, *anxious*, *tasty*), or evaluative adjectives that can have such subjects but are not experiencer predicates (e.g., *lazy*, *faithful*, *smart*) generally cannot be used in pancake sentences. We think that the selection of adjectives in these sentences reveals something crucial about their semantics and helps understand why pancake subjects are interpreted the way they are. The details of the semantic analysis have to differ for Brazilian Portuguese and French, however, because of aspectual differences between the pancake sentences in these languages. In particular, while pancake sentences must be generic in Brazilian Portuguese, they may also be episodic in French (for further discussion of generic readings and episodic sentences, see Stark and Gerards this volume and Giusti this volume).

This paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we offer a typology of adjectives in non-agreeing copular sentences across languages. Building on Bylinina's (2014, 2017) typology of evaluative predicates, we identify the subtypes of these adjectives inducing the event type reading characteristic of pancake sentences. As we will see, only evaluative adjectives that (i) may predicate a property over an event type and (ii) are predicates of personal taste/object experiencer adjectives are felicitous in Brazilian Portuguese and French pancake sentences, which we take to support our proposal. We walk through our semantic analysis for pancake sentences in Brazilian Portuguese and French in Section 3. We first spell-out its main ingredients in Section 3.1, turning to episodic pancake sentences in Section 3.2, and then to generic ones in Section 3.3. Section 3.4 accounts for the absence of entailment between a pancake sentence and its counterpart with full agreement. In Section 4, we address the question of why the pancake interpretation in non-agreeing copular sentences is only optional in French but compulsory in Brazilian Portuguese. Section 5 raises the question of whether pancake sentences exist in Germanic languages such as English and German.

## 2 Typology of Adjectives in Non-agreeing Copular Sentences

### 2.1 *Factual vs. Evaluative Adjectives*

As already pointed out by De Conto (2016, 2018), adjectives used in pancake sentences are systematically evaluative. We believe that this is not an accident, and that the evaluative adjective present in this type of sentences is the main source of the event type interpretation of the subject.

As is well-known, one of the specificities of evaluative adjectives is that they can be predicated either of individuals or of eventualities. Some of them can also be predicated of more abstract objects such as states of affairs or propositions (Kertz 2009; Landau 2009 among others), and, crucially, event types (Piñón 2016). On this point, they differ from, for instance, factual adjectives such as adjectives of color, which can be predicated over individuals only. We call such adjectives *i*-predicates.

Interestingly, however, it is not the case that *i*-predicates are banned from non-agreeing copular sentences altogether. French, for instance, allows them. When built with *i*-predicates, non-agreeing copular sentences unsurprisingly do not induce an event type reading for their subject as was the case in (1)–(4) and are therefore not pancake sentences in the typology adopted here. Take for instance the French sentence (14), from Roy and Shlonsky (2019). Clearly, (14) does not mean that doing something involving vegetables is green, and the same point can be made about (15).

(14) French

*Les/des légumes, c'est vert.*  
 the.PL/ PA.PL vegetable.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS green.M.SG  
 'Vegetables are green.' NOT:#'Doing something with vegetables is green.'

(15) *Les/des tables, c'est droit.*

the.PL/ PA.PL table.F.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS straight.M.SG  
 'Tables are straight.' NOT:#'Doing something with tables is straight.'

In contrast, Brazilian Portuguese disallows adjectives of color in non-agreeing copular sentences altogether, see (16)–(17). Note that this is also not possible if the nominal expression is dislocated and a demonstrative inserted, see (18).

(16) Brazilian Portuguese

\**Maçã é vermelho.*  
 apple.F.SG be.3SG.PRS red.M.SG  
 Intended: 'Apples are red.'

- (17) \**Mesa é reto.*  
 table.F.SG be.3SG.PRS straight.M.SG  
 Intended: 'Tables are straight.'

- (18) \**Maçã, isso é vermelho.*  
 apple.F.SG DEM be.3SG.PRS red.M.SG  
 Intended: 'Apples, that's red.'

In summary, French allows *i*-predicates in non-agreeing copular sentences, which, however, are not pancake sentences with these adjectives. In contrast, Brazilian Portuguese seems to only allow evaluative adjectives in non-agreeing copular sentences, and those must be pancake sentences.

### 2.2 *Not All Evaluative Adjectives Are 'Pancake' Adjectives*

Pancake sentences cannot be built with any evaluative adjective, though. In order to induce the event type reading, the evaluative adjective must fulfill two conditions. Firstly, it should be able to predicate over an event type. Adjectives used in (1)–(4) are of this kind. Evidence for this is that one can explicitly apply these adjectives to an infinitive denoting an event type, see for instance (19)–(20) (different event types are also considered in Ihsane's analysis in her contribution to this volume of plural complements with a "partitive article" in French).

- (19) French  
*Jouer avec des enfants est marrant/anxiogène.*  
 play.INF with PA.PL child.M.PL is funny.M.SG/stressful.M.SG  
 'Playing with children is funny/stressful.'

- (20) Brazilian Portuguese  
*Brincar com criança é engraçado/estressante.*  
 play.INF with child.F.SG is funny.M.SG/stressful.M.SG  
 'Playing with children is funny/stressful.'

This, however, is not possible with all evaluative adjectives. Subject experiencer adjectives, for instance *anxious*, or *fearful*, obviously cannot predicate over an event type, since their subject must refer to an experiencer, see (21)–(22). Also, behavior-related adjectives such as *lazy* cannot be predicated over event types either, see (23)–(24).

(21) French

#*Jouer avec des tigres est anxieux/craintif.*  
 play.INF with PA.PL tiger.M.PL is anxious.M.SG/fearful.M.SG  
 #‘Playing with children is anxious/fearful.’

(22) Brazilian Portuguese

#*Brincar com tigre é ansioso/medroso.*  
 play.INF with tiger.M.SG be.3SG.PRS anxious.M.SG/fearful.M.SG  
 #‘Playing with tiger is anxious/fearful.’

(23) French

#*Aller en voiture au travail est paresseux.*  
 go.INF in car to.the work be.3SG.PRS lazy.M.SG  
 Intended: ‘Going to work by car is lazy.’

(24) Brazilian Portuguese

#*Ir de carro pro trabalho é preguiçoso.*  
 go.INF of car to.the work be.3SG.PRS lazy.M.SG  
 Intended: ‘Going to work by car is lazy.’

It is important to note that adjectives like *anxious* or *lazy* can be predicated over *events*, however. For instance, assuming that *a game* is an event-denoting noun, the fact that (25)–(28) are acceptable suggests that the French and Brazilian Portuguese counterparts of *anxious* or *lazy* can be predicated over events, although, as we just saw, they cannot be predicated over event types.

(25) French

*Son jeu était craintif/paresseux.*  
 his game be.3SG.IMPF fearful.M.SG/lazy.M.SG  
 ‘His way to play/game was fearful/lazy.’

(26) *Le trypanosome a des mouvements paresseux.*

the trypanosoma have.3SG.PRS PA.PL movements lazy.M.PL  
 ‘The Trypanosoma has lazy movements.’

(27) Brazilian Portuguese

*O jeito dele era medroso/preguiçoso.*  
 the way.M.SG of.his be.3SG.IMPF fearful.M.SG/lazy.M.SG  
 ‘His way to play/game was fearful/lazy.’



- (28) *A tripanossoma tem movimentos preguiçosos.*  
 the trypanosoma have.SG.PRS movement.M.PL lazy.M.PL  
 'The Trypanosoma has lazy movements.'

Similarly, in (29), the adverbial derived from *pareseux* arguably has the semantics characteristic of run-of-the-mill manner adverbials, which are standardly analyzed as predicates of events (see, e.g., Parsons 1990).

- (29) French  
*La neige tombe paresseusement sur le sol.*  
 the snow fall.3SG.PRS lazily on the ground  
 'Snow is falling lazily on the ground.'

That some adjectives such as *lazy* can be predicated over *events*, but nevertheless not be licensed in pancake sentences is interesting, because this indirectly suggests that the pancake adjective is not simply interpreted as predicated over events in this type of sentences. Inspired by Piñón (2016), we propose that the pancake adjective rather denotes a second-order property predicated over an event type (denoted by the covert semantic structure for which the nominal expression stands for).

A second property common to all evaluative predicates licensed in pancake sentences is that they are all (object) experiencer predicates projecting an experiencer argument.<sup>6</sup> It is not the case that all evaluative predicates are experiencer predicates. *Lazy* or *smart* are not experiencer predicates; *interesting* or *fun* are. All evaluative predicates 1) can be embedded under subjective attitude verbs such as *find* or *consider*, 2) have their content depending on a **judge parameter** (the person who decides on matters of taste) and 3) give rise to subjective (or faultless) disagreement (Lasersohn 2005 a.m.o.). However, Bylinina (2017) shows that among evaluative predicates, only experiencer predicates may have an extra '**experiencer**' argument, which is expressed in a *to-* or *for-PP* for object experiencer predicates. For instance, the evaluative adjectives *lazy* or *smart*, which are not experiencer predicates, do not take a *to-/for-PP*, while *interesting* or *fun* do, see (30).<sup>7</sup>

6 As will see later through the examples (88), French also allows non-copular sentences to have a pancake flavour, and interestingly, they also involve experiencer predicates.

7 When behavior-related adjectives can host a *for-/to-PP*, this *PP* is associated to the beneficiary rather than experiencer role. For instance, *John is generous to Mary* is grammatical, but this sentence does not entail that Mary experiences something; in fact, Mary may be completely unaware of John's generosity, even if she benefits from it.

- (30) a. This book is interesting for/ to me. (Bylinina 2017)  
 b. ?? Mary is smart for/ to me. (ibid.)

Thus, only evaluative experiencer predicates have an experiencer argument beyond a judge parameter. Although the experiencer argument and the judge parameter form different ingredients of the semantics of experiencer predicates, they are intimately connected. As Bylinina observes, they have to be set to the same value for the evaluative statement to be felicitous. Sentence (31a) illustrates this: the subject of *find* gives the value of the judge parameter, and the *for-/to-PP* refers to the experiencer. Given that (31a) indicates that they are not set to the same value, infelicity arises (whereas (31b) is acceptable).

- (31) a. #I find this fun for John.  
 b. I find this fun for me.

To capture this relation, Bylinina (2017) proposes a “judge=experiencer requirement”, i.e. the requirement that a statement about someone’s internal state can be made only if the judge parameter is set to the same value as the experiencer of this state. She formulates this requirement as a presupposition (see (34a–b) i) below).

On the basis of Japanese and Hungarian data, Bylinina (2014, 2017) argues that the presence of an extra experiencer argument systematically correlates with reference to an *experience event* as part of the predicate semantics. This experience event will play a crucial role in the semantics of pancake sentences (see Section 3). Reference to an experience event is obvious for *subject* experiencer adjectives such as *afraid* or *worried*. But Bylinina argues that the subjectivity of *object* experiencer predicates such as *interesting*, *fun* or *tasty* also has its source in an experience event they semantically refer to. However, object experiencer predicates vary in the *type* of experience event they denote. In the case of *tasty* or *delicious*, Bylinina argues that the experience event is a tasting event of the stimulus (the external argument of the predicate) by the experiencer. This accounts for the oddity of (32a) (first observed by Stephenson 2007), which strongly suggests that Sam tasted the cat food.

- (32) a. #Sam finds the cat food tasty. (Stephenson 2007, 98)  
 b. The ride was interesting/fun.

In the case of *fun* or *interesting*, Bylinina argues that the experience event is an event which may be described by the external argument of the predicate, for instance the riding event in (32b).

This distinction between the two subtypes of object experiencer predicates is relevant for us, too. As also observed by Bylinina (2014), only adjectives such as *interesting* may predicate over event types, see (33a–c). Adjectives such as *tasty* cannot do so. For this reason, they do not form felicitous pancake sentences, neither in English, nor in Brazilian Portuguese, as will be shown below.

- (33) a. To eat pancakes is fun.  
 b. \*To eat pancakes is tasty.  
 c. Brazilian Portuguese  
 \**Comer panqueca é saboroso/delicioso.*  
 eat.INF pancake.F.SG be.3SG.PRS delicious.M.SG

Bylinina proposes a slightly different semantics for the two subtypes of experiencer adjectives which captures this difference, see (34a–b), from Bylinina (2017, 327) (she has a state variable  $s$  that we turn to an event variable  $e$ ). In (34), the interpretation function  $\llbracket \cdot \rrbracket$  has as parameters a context  $c$ , an assignment function  $g$ , a world  $w$ , a time  $t$  and a judge  $j$ , with  $j$  identified to the speaker  $Sp$  in absence of judge-shifting expression such as *find*. In prose, according to her analysis, *this pancake is tasty* states that there is a tasting event  $e$  experienced by the experiencer (assumed to be syntactically projected as a null pronoun **pro** when implicit, see Epstein 1984) and which has this pancake as stimulus, and such that  $e$  gives rise to a percept on the TASTE scale greater than some standard degree  $d_{st}^{st}$  according to the judge/speaker  $Sp$  (and required to be identified with the experiencer). In contrast, *this ride is fun* states that there is a riding event  $e$  experienced by **pro** and such that  $e$  gives rise to a percept on the FUN scale greater than the standard degree  $d_{sp}^{st}$  according to  $Sp$  (again identified with the experiencer). Pronouns come with an index, and the assignment function  $g$  returns an individual for this index.

- (34) a.  $\llbracket \text{This cake is tasty } \mathbf{pro}_8 \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 i) defined iff  $g(8) = Sp$   
 ii)  $\exists e[\text{taste}(e) \wedge \text{experiencer}(e, Sp) \wedge \text{stimulus}(e, \text{this cake}) \wedge \text{TASTE}(e) > d_{sp}^{st} \text{ for } Sp \text{ at } t \text{ in } w]$ ;  
 b.  $\llbracket \text{The ride was fun } \mathbf{pro}_9 \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 i) defined iff  $g(9) = Sp$   
 ii)  $\exists e[\text{ride}(e) \wedge \text{experiencer}(e, Sp) \wedge \text{FUN}(e) > d_{sp}^{st} \text{ for } Sp \text{ at } t \text{ in } w]$   
 c. Yesterday, the students were interesting.

Let us underline that Bylinina’s understanding of what it means to be an experiencer is rather different from what is generally understood in the literature on psych-predicates. For her, being an experiencer of an event *e* projected by a predicate of personal taste means to *directly participate* to *e*, as a taster, a rider, or whatever. This is because with others such as, e.g., Stephenson (2007) or Pearson (2013), she assumes that predicates of personal taste impose a “direct sensory experience of the relevant kind on the basis of which to judge whether *x is P*” (Pearson 2013). Thus, the experiencer must be a ‘first hand participant’ of the experience event encoded by predicates of personal taste. And ultimately, an experiencer of *e* can also be the *agent* of *e*, which will be also relevant for us.

We agree with Bylinina that predicates such as *fun* systematically refer to a (direct) experience event. We would like to add that this event is not systematically described by the external argument of these adjectives. In particular, with individual-denoting subjects as in (34c), we take the external argument to be a stimulus rather than an event. The property of the experience event remains then implicit. We come back to the semantics of *fun*-adjectives used as predicates of individuals in Section 3. 4.

In summary, we have distinguished five types of evaluative adjectives, see a)–e) below (note that for obvious reasons, the sixth possible type is not instantiated, since no subject experiencer predicate can have an event type as their first argument).<sup>8</sup>

- (35) a. *lazy*-adjectives:  
     not predicates of event types      no experiencer argument
- b. *generous*-adjectives:  
     predicates of event types      no experiencer argument
- c. *worried*-adjectives:  
     not predicates of event types      subject experiencer argument
- d. *tasty*-adjectives:  
     not predicates of event types      object experiencer argument
- e. *interesting*-adjectives:  
     predicates of event types      object experiencer argument

The generalization we observe is that apart from some few exceptions,<sup>9</sup> **among evaluative adjectives, only predicates of personal taste of type e) are licensed**

8 Note that in English, *lazy* may be predicated of an event type, while it is not the case of the French and Brazilian Portuguese counterpart of this adjective, as our examples (23)–(24) show.

9 The adjective *expensive* is one exception. It is evaluative, and it is not a causative experiencer

**in pancake sentences.** In other words, only evaluative adjectives that may predicate over an event type *and* have an object experiencer argument are felicitous ‘pancake’ adjectives. Most *-ing* adjectives derived from object experiencer psychological verbs—*interesting, surprising, depressing, fascinating ...*—are thus pancake adjectives.

A first illustration of this generalization is that Brazilian Portuguese pancake sentences built with adjectives that cannot have an infinitival subject are all ungrammatical, see (36).

(36) Brazilian Portuguese

a. \**Mulher*      *é*                      *ansioso/medroso/preguiçoso*.  
 woman.F.SG be.3SG.PRS anxious/fearful/lazy.M.SG

b. \**Panqueca*      *é*                      *saboroso*.  
 pancake.F.SG be.3SG.PRS tasty.M.SG

Secondly, the sentences in (37a)–(38a), built with adjectives of type b) that may have an infinitival subject (see (37b)–(38b)), but are not experiencer predicates, are ungrammatical as well.

(37) Brazilian Portuguese

a. \**Criança*      *é*                      *generoso*.  
 child.F.SG be.3SG.PRS generous.M.SG

Intended: ‘Playing with children/caring for them ... is generous.’

b. *Cuidar*              *de criança*      *é*                      *generoso*.  
 take.care.INF of child.F.SG be.3SG.PRS generous.M.SG  
 ‘Caring for children is generous.’

(38) a. \**Amigo*      *é*                      *leal*.

friend.M.SG be.3SG.PRS faithful.M.SG

Intended: ‘Doing something involving friends is faithful.’

b. *Apoiar*              *um amigo*      *doente é*                      *leal*.  
 support.INF a friend.M.SG sick be.3SG.PRS faithful.M.SG  
 ‘Supporting a sick friend is faithful.’

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object adjective, but it is acceptable in pancake sentences (see examples in the introduction). Other potential exceptions are modal adjectives such as *important, forbidden, necessary*. We leave this problem aside for now.

French confirms the generalization proposed above too, although in a different way. In French, non-agreeing copular sentences built with an adjective of type e) (*interesting*) can all be pancake sentences, see, for instance, (3) in Section 1. In contrast with Brazilian Portuguese, however, non-agreeing copular sentences built with adjectives of classes a) to d) are all acceptable. However, they are not pancake sentences, see (39)–(40).

(39) French

*Les enfants, c'est anxieux/craintif/paresseux.*  
 the.PL child.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS anxious/fearful/lazy.M.SG  
 'Children are (in general/always) anxious/fearful/lazy.' NOT:#'Dealing, talking ... with children is anxious/fearful/lazy.'

(40) *Les enfants, c'est généreux/loyal.*  
 the.PL child.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS generous/faithful.M.SG  
 'Children are (in general/always) generous/faithful.' NOT:#'Dealing, talking ... with children is generous/faithful.'

### 2.3 Alternating Adjectives

As is well-known, a subset of experiencer adjectives, such as *sad* or *curious*, can project their experiencer argument either as a subject or as a *for-/to*-object, which may remain implicit, see Pustejovsky (1995), Landau (2009), Ramchand (2018), a.o., cf. (41).

- (41) These women are sad.  
 a. These women<sub>EXP</sub> feel sad. (subject experiencer use)  
 b. The women are sad (for X<sub>EXP</sub>). (object experiencer use)

For obvious reasons, the object experiencer use is automatically selected when the external argument is non-animate (*this book is sad/curious*).

We proposed above that evaluative adjectives are acceptable in pancake sentences only if they are object experiencer adjectives. Given this structural property, we therefore expect alternating adjectives such as *sad* to be exclusively used as object experiencer predicates in pancake sentences. Brazilian Portuguese confirms this prediction. For instance, in non-agreeing copular sentences, *triste* 'sad' can only be used as an object experiencer adjective (although it then conveys toughness rather than sadness), see (42). The same point can be made about *curioso* 'curious', see (43).

## (42) Brazilian Portuguese

*Criança é triste.*

child.F.SG be.3SG.PRS sad.M.SG

'Dealing with children, etc. is generally tough.' (*object experiencer use*)NOT: 'Children are generally sad.' (*subject experiencer use*)(43) *Mulher é curioso.*

woman.F.PL be.3SG.PRS curious.M.SG

'Dealing with women is generally curious/strange.' (*object experiencer use*)NOT: 'Women are generally curious.' (*subject experiencer use*)

In French, both readings are available in non-agreeing copular sentences, but the pancake interpretation only arises when the adjective is used as an object experiencer adjective, see, for instance, (44).

## (44) French

a. *Les enfants, c'est triste.*

the.PL child.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS sad.M.SG

'Dealing with children is sad.' (*object experiencer use*)'Children are generally sad.' (*subject experiencer use*)b. *Les femmes, c'est curieux.*

the.PL woman.F.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS curious.M.SG

'Dealing with women is curious/strange.' (*object experiencer use*)'Women are generally curious.' (*subject experiencer use*)

## 3 Pancake Semantics

3.1 *Main Ingredients*

The semantics we attribute to the pancake subject on one hand, and to the adjectival phrase on the other, is inspired by Piñón's (2016) analysis of behavior-related adjectives such as *generous*. Similarly to adjectives such as *friendly* or *funny*, behavior-related adjectives can have a gerund or an infinitive as subject, see (45).

(45) To donate/donating 300 euros to the museum was generous of Rebecca.

One of Piñón's core ideas is that in such sentences, the infinitive expresses a property denoting a type of behavior  $B$ , and the adjective is predicated of this behavior type  $B$ . Thus, the meaning of the evaluative adjective in (45) is a *second-order* property predicated of the (first-order) property denoting a type of behavior  $B$ , see the lexical core of *generous* in (46a). (46b) is one of the representations Piñón attributes to *generous* (adopting the semantic roles from FrameNet). Sentence (45) receives the (simplified) semantic representation (47).

- (46) a. Lexical core of *generous*: (Piñón 2016)  
 $\lambda B. \mathbf{generous}(\lambda e. B(e))$  (behavior type  $B$  is generous)  
 b. A semantic representation of *generous*  
 $\lambda B \lambda x \lambda e. \mathbf{resource-controller}(e, x) \wedge B(e, x) \wedge \mathbf{generous}(\lambda e'. B(e', x))$
- (47) (Simplified) analysis of (45) (Piñón 2016)  
 $\lambda e. \mathbf{resource-controller}(e, \mathbf{rebecca}) \wedge \mathbf{donate-300-euros-to-the-museum}(e, x) \wedge \mathbf{generous}(\lambda e'. \mathbf{donate-300-euros-to-the-museum}(e', \mathbf{rebecca}))$

The behavior type  $B$  can be left implicit, as in (48), which is then translated as in (49).

- (48) Rebecca was generous (yesterday).
- (49)  $\lambda e. \mathbf{resource-controller}(e, \mathbf{rebecca}) \wedge B(e, x) \wedge \mathbf{generous}(\lambda e'. B(e', \mathbf{rebecca}))$

In favour of this analysis, Piñón notes that in (45), *generous* appears to be equivalent to *do something generous*. According to a potential competing analysis, the adjective *generous* on the use illustrated in (45) is represented as a first order property of events, see (50a). On this view, (45) would be analyzed as in (50b).

- (50) a. An alternative representation of *generous*  
 $\lambda B \lambda x \lambda e. \mathbf{resource-controller}(e, x) \wedge B(e, x) \wedge \mathbf{generous}(e)$   
 b.  $\lambda e. \mathbf{resource-controller}(e, \mathbf{rebecca}) \wedge \mathbf{donate-300-euros-to-the-museum}(e, x) \wedge \mathbf{generous}(e)$

However, we observe that such an analysis would leave the properties of being generous and of being a donate-300-euros event completely unconnected:



(50b) may be true while *e*'s property of being generous has nothing to do with *e*'s property of being a donate-300-euros event, while intuitively, those are intimately related. This tight connection is well captured in (46)–(47).

In a nutshell, we propose to extend Piñón's (2016) analysis of evaluative behavior-related adjectives to pancake sentences as follows. The nominal expression under its pancake reinterpretation describes an event type *P* involving an entity *x* satisfying the nominal predicate in its literal meaning as theme. Take for instance sentence (51) in its pancake interpretation (see the example (6b) and the related comments in the introduction on the ambiguity of sentences such as (51)). The nominal expression *estudante* receives the literal meaning (52). We adopt Müller's (2002, 288) claim that the denotation of numberless count common nouns in Brazilian Portuguese contains both singular (atomic) and plural (non-atomic) entities (i.e., it neutralizes the singular/plural distinction). In the derived pancake interpretation, the same nominal expression receives the meaning (53), where *P* stands for a one place predicate of events *e* involving an (atomic or non-atomic) individual *x* which is/are student(s) as theme and an individual *y* as agent. The inclusion of an agent argument is motivated by the fact that implicit event types expressed by the subject of pancake sentences always seem to be agentive, in French as in Brazilian Portuguese. We come back to the specific translation we attribute to (51) in Section 3.3.

(51) *Estudante é interessante.*  
 student.M.SG be.3SG.PRS interesting.M.SG  
 '(Relevant) agentive event types with students as theme (teaching, supervising them, talking with them ...) are generally interesting.'

(52)  $\llbracket \text{estudante}_{\text{literal}} \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 $\lambda x. \text{student}(x) \wedge (\text{AT}(x) \vee \neg \text{AT}(x))$   
 'The set of (atomic or non-atomic) individuals which are students.'

(53)  $\llbracket \text{estudante}_{\text{pancake}} \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 $\lambda y \lambda P \lambda x \lambda e. P(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, x) \wedge \text{student}(x) \wedge (\text{AT}(x) \vee \neg \text{AT}(x)) \wedge$   
 $\text{agent}(e, y)$   
 'The set of event types that have an (atomic or non-atomic) individual *x* which is/are student(s) as theme and an individual *y* as agent.'

We propose to capture this reinterpretation mechanism by a covert 'pancake' operator (that we symbolise by '⊗'), see (54a). The operator in (54a) expresses a relation between a property *N* of individuals, a property *P* of events and indi-

viduals  $x$  and  $y$  yields the conditions that  $x$  is  $N$ ,  $e$  is  $P$ ,  $x$  is the theme of  $e$  and  $y$  the agent of  $e$ . Applied to an individual-denoting nominal predicate  $N$ , it returns a relation between event types  $P$ , individuals  $x$  and  $y$  and events  $e$ , and yields the condition that  $x$  satisfies  $N$ ,  $e$  satisfies  $P$ ,  $x$  is the theme of  $e$  and  $y$  is the agent of  $e$ , see (54b).

- (54) a.  $\otimes = \lambda N \lambda y \lambda P \lambda x \lambda e. N(x) \wedge P(e) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e, x) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e, y)$   
 b.  $N_{\otimes} = \lambda y \lambda P \lambda x \lambda e. N(x) \wedge P(e) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e, x) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e, y)$   
 c. *Superviser les étudiants (c') est*  
 supervise.INF the.PL student.M.PL (DEM) be.3SG.PRS  
*intéressant.*  
 interesting.M.SG  
 'Supervising students (, that) is interesting.'

For French, we assume that the pancake operator (which, as we will see, has a slightly different meaning than (54a)) is encoded by the pronoun *ce*. Obviously, it is not active when the subject overtly denotes an event type, for then, no reinterpretation of the subject is needed to obtain the target interpretation. And note that in French, the pronoun *ce* is not compulsory with such subjects, see (54c). The pancake operator is semantically active only when a type mismatch arises between an individual-denoting nominal expression and a predicate of event types. It is the lack of agreement in gender and number between the subject and the predicate which signals that the predicate is not meant to be composed with the subject in its literal individual-denoting meaning, but is rather used as a predicate applying to a (covert) first order event predicate. Arguably, the presence vs. lack of agreement can be modelled along the lines of systems of dual agreement (syntactic vs. semantic); see for instance Landau (2016), Smith (2015) and Wechsler and Zlatić (2000) for some alternatives.

### 3.2 *Episodic Pancake Semantics*

French pancake sentences can have an episodic use, as for instance in (55), differently from what happens in Brazilian Portuguese, where they are necessarily generic (see Section 3.3). Note that in the episodic use, the subject does not receive a generic interpretation.<sup>10</sup> In (55), the possessive or the demonstrative as well as the past tense and the temporal adverbial promote the episodic read-

<sup>10</sup> See Roy and Shlonsky (2019) on the alternative view that subjects of non-agreeing copular sentences must receive a generic interpretation.

ing.<sup>11</sup> We assume that the speaker asserting a pancake sentence in its episodic use always has in mind a particular event type  $P_c$  which justifies the assertion (see Heller 1999 and Greenberg 2008 on the related proposal that the original denotation of the subject of Hebrew pancake sentences is ‘widened’ to a contextually retrievable property involving the original denotation). The specific event type  $P_c$  behind the assertion obviously depends on the speaker and the context of use (think of (55) uttered by a teacher, a taxi driver or a drug dealer).<sup>12</sup>

(55) French

(*Hier*), *les/mes/ces étudiants, c’était*  
 yesterday the/my/these.M.PL student.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.IMPF  
*intéressant.*  
 interesting.M.SG

‘(Yesterday,) supervising the/my/these students (or teaching them, or talking with them, or driving them home, or selling them drugs, or ...) was interesting.’

Since the overt nominal expression in (55) is individual-denoting, in order to derive the pancake meaning, we need a pancake operator that has a slightly different meaning than (54a), since this operator must take an individual as its first argument. The meaning of the pancake operator for the episodic use, that we dub ‘ $\odot$ ’, is provided in (56a): it takes an individual  $x$  and an individual  $y$ , an event property  $P$  and an event  $e$  as its arguments and yields the conditions that  $e$  is  $P$ ,  $x$  is the theme of  $e$  and  $y$  is the agent of  $e$ .<sup>13</sup> Applied to the definite expression *les étudiants*, (56b) obtains. Once a specific event type  $P_c$  (e.g., the property of supervising) saturates the lambda term  $\lambda P$ , we obtain the meaning (56c).

11 When the episodic use is selected, the dislocated noun cannot host the weak indefinites *des/un* ‘some/a’, while such indefinites are as a rule acceptable in generic pancake sentences, as indicated in the examples in Section 1 (but see footnote 20). This is unsurprising, for in French, weak indefinites are as a rule unacceptable in episodic contexts when dislocated.

12 The role of the speaker and what they have in mind is taken up by Ihsane (this volume), in connection with specificity and telicity.

Note that “partitive articles” are often unacceptable in subject position with evaluative predicates such as *intéressant* ‘interesting’. For instance, *des étudiants étaient intéressants* ‘students were interesting’ is marginal in French, as is its English counterpart with a bare noun subject under a stage-level reading of *interesting* (see Martin 2009, Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade 2012 and references therein).

13 One could avoid a second entry for the pancake operator by assuming that *les étudiants* under its literal meaning is a predicate (denoting the set of entities that are identical to the students).

- (56) a.  $\odot = \lambda x \lambda P \lambda y \lambda e . P(e) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e, x) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e, y)$   
 b.  $\llbracket \text{les étudiants} \odot \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 $[\lambda x \lambda P \lambda y \lambda e . P(e) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e, x) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e, y)](\mathbf{the-students}) =$  (by application)  
 $\lambda P \lambda y \lambda e . P(e) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e, \mathbf{the-students}) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e, y)$   
 ‘The set of event types that have the students as theme and an individual  $y$  as agent.’  
 c.  $\llbracket \text{les étudiants} \odot \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp}(P_c) =$  (by application)  
 $\lambda y \lambda e . P_c(e) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e, \mathbf{the-students}) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e, y)$   
 ‘The set of events of a contextually retrievable event type  $P_c$  that have the students as theme and an individual  $y$  as agent.’

We want the postcopular adjective to have the same meaning in pancake sentences with a DP/NP subject and in sentences that have an infinitival subject, as for instance (57).

- (57) French  
*Superviser les étudiants était intéressant.*  
 supervise.INF the.PL student.M.PL be.3SG.IMPV interesting.M.SG  
 ‘Supervising the students was interesting.’

We propose that in pancake sentences, *interesting* refers to an experience event like any experiencer predicate, just like in the other uses (Bylinina 2017). However, while *interesting* denotes a first-order property when its external argument refers to an individual or an event (see *The students/the classes were interesting*), it denotes a second-order property predicated of an event type when its subject denotes a set of events, as in pancake sentences, or in (57) (or in Piñón’s example (45) built with the adjective *generous*). The idea that the subject of pancake sentences is interpreted as denoting an event type will be motivated below (see the discussion about (66) and (75)–(78)). We label this use the “2d-ord” use, see (58). When the experiencer argument is implicit as in (55), we assume with Epstein (1984) and subsequent authors that the position is occupied by a silent pronoun **pro** (for simplicity, we omit in (58) the degree semantics necessary to account for the fact that *interesting* is also gradable in its second order use, but ultimately, it should be added to (58); also, following Bylinina 2017, we formulate the ‘judge=experiencer’ requirement as a presupposition in (58a)).

- (58)  $\llbracket \text{intéressant}_{2d\text{-ord}} \text{pro}_5 \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 a. defined iff  $Sp = g(5)$  (judge=experiencer)  
 b.  $\lambda P \lambda e. P(e) \wedge \text{experiencer}(e, g(5)) \wedge \text{interesting}(\lambda e'. P(e'))$  for  $Sp$  at  $t$   
 in  $w$

Like any other experiencer predicate, *interesting*<sub>2d-ord</sub> projects an **experiencer** argument, and like any other evaluative predicate, its content is evaluated with respect to a **judge** parameter  $j$  (set to the speaker  $Sp$  in absence of a judge-shifting expression such as *find*). The predicate in (58b) applies to a one-place event predicate  $P$ , an event  $e$ , and yields the condition that **pro** is the experiencer of  $e$ , and that the event type  $P$  is an interesting type of events for the speaker at  $t$  in  $w$ .

Let us now return to the French sentence (55). A crucial property of (55) is that it triggers an actuality entailment (Hacquard 2006): it entails that an event satisfying the implicit event type took place (e.g., there was a supervising of the students), which is something we have to account for. Furthermore, Bhatt and Pancheva (1997) have shown that when predicates of personal taste are built with an infinitival subject, the experiencer argument must control the **PRO** subject of the infinitive (see their examples (20)–(22) and (50)). The same is true in Brazilian Portuguese or French. For instance, in (59a), the experiencer projected by *funny* or *stressful* is necessarily also the subject of the infinitive. Similarly in (59b), the experiencer of the fun is necessarily identical with the agent of *danser* ‘dance’.<sup>14</sup> Landau (2013) also showed that adjectives such as *interesting* or *difficult* force obligatory control on their subject; see for instance his example (59c), which forces the experiencer John to be the problem solver.

- (59) a. *PRO<sub>i</sub> lidar com/ter criança é divertido/estressante (para deal.INF with/have.INF child.F.SG is funny/stressful for João<sub>i</sub>).*  
 John  
 ‘Having/dealing with children is generally funny/stressful [for/to John].’
- b. *PRO<sub>i</sub> danser c’est marrant pro<sub>t</sub>.*  
 dance.INF DEM.is fun.M.SG  
 ‘To dance is fun.’

14 Bhatt and Pancheva (1997) argue that in English, infinitival subjects and gerunds differ in

- c. Mary<sub>j</sub> thought that PRO<sub>i/\*j/\*arb</sub> solving the problem by himself/\*herself/\*oneself would be easy/difficult for Peter<sub>i</sub>. (Landau 2013, 41)

In pancake sentences, whose subject is individual-denoting on its literal meaning, a similar relation arises: the experiencer/judge projected by the adjective must be identical with the agent participant of the event type denoted by the pancake subject. For instance, in (55), the judge who finds the *P*-event type interesting and experiences such a *P*-event must also be the implicit agent introduced by the subject (and remember from Section 2.2. that under Bylinina's understanding, the experiencer of an event *e* may be the agent of *e*). We capture this in the analysis by assuming that the agent argument *y* of the event type *P<sub>c</sub>* is realized syntactically as the covert pronoun **PRO** and semantically as a free variable, here indexed by 8, see (60a–b).

- (60) a.  $\llbracket \text{les étudiants}_{\odot} \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} = \lambda y \lambda e . P_c(e) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e, \mathbf{the-students}) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e, y)$   
 b.  $\llbracket \mathbf{PRO}_8 \text{ les étudiants}_{\odot} \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} = \lambda e . P_c(e) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e, \mathbf{the-students}) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e, g(8))$

Furthermore, we want the experiencer argument of the predicate of personal taste to control this covert pronoun **PRO**. Thus, when **pro** occupies the experiencer argument of *interesting*<sub>2d-ord</sub>, it must also determine the referent of the agent argument **PRO** projected by *les étudiants*<sub>⊙</sub>. To keep it simple—and as a consequence, to keep the binding mechanism implicit—we analyze (55) as in (61):

- (61)  $\llbracket \mathbf{PRO}_8 \text{ les étudiants}_{\odot} \text{ être intéressant}_{2d-ord} \mathbf{pro}_5 \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} = [\lambda P \lambda e . P(e) \wedge \mathbf{experiencer}(e, g(5)) \wedge \mathbf{interesting}(\lambda e' . P(e'))] (\lambda e . P_c(e) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e, \mathbf{the-students}) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e, g(8))) = (\text{by application and control of the agent by the experiencer})$   
 a.  $\lambda e . P_c(e) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e, \mathbf{the-students}) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e, g(8)) \wedge \mathbf{experiencer}(e, g(8)) \wedge \mathbf{interesting}(\lambda e' . P_c(e')) \wedge \mathbf{theme}(e', \mathbf{the-students}) \wedge \mathbf{agent}(e', g(8))$  for *Sp* at *t* in *w*  
 b. defined iff *Sp*=*g*(8) (judge=experiencer)

---

this respect: while *to dance is fun* patterns with French (59b), requiring that the experiencer is necessarily the dancer, *dancing is fun* leaves open the possibility that the implicit experiencer of *fun* is distinct from the agent of *dancing*.

Once the imperfective applies, the event variable gets existentially quantified:

- (62)  $\llbracket \text{IMPF}(\text{PRO}_8 \text{ les étudiants}_\ominus \text{ être intéressant}_{2\text{d-ord}} \text{ pro}_5) \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 a.  $\exists e.t_T \subseteq \tau(e) \wedge P_c(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{agent}(e, g(8))$   
 $\wedge \text{experiencer}(e, g(8)) \wedge \text{interesting}(\lambda e'. P_c(e') \wedge \text{theme}(e', \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{agent}(e', g(8)))$  for  $Sp$  at  $t$  in  $w$   
 b. defined iff  $Sp=g(8)$  (judge=experiencer)

According to (62), assuming that sentence (55) is uttered by John, (55) states that there was an event  $e$  of a (contextually retrievable) type  $P_c$  whose temporal trace includes the topic time, such that  $e$  has the students as theme and John as experiencer and agent, and such that the event type  $P_c$  involving the students as theme and John as agent is an interesting event type for John. We thus express that (55) triggers an actuality entailment.<sup>15</sup>

We can now analyze (57) along the same lines. We assume that the agent argument of the event type denoted by the infinitival subject is occupied by **PRO**, who must be controlled by **pro**, see (63)–(64):

- (63) a.  $\llbracket \text{supervisor les étudiants} \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 $\lambda y \lambda e. \text{supervise}(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{agent}(e, y)$   
 b.  $\llbracket \text{PRO}_8 \text{ supervisor les étudiants} \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 $\lambda e. \text{supervise}(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{agent}(e, g(8))$
- (64)  $\llbracket \text{PRO}_8 \text{ supervisor les étudiants être intéressant}_{2\text{d-ord}} \text{ pro}_5 \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 $[\lambda P \lambda e. P(e) \wedge \text{experiencer}(e, g(5)) \wedge \text{interesting}(\lambda e'. P(e'))]$   
 $(\lambda e. \text{supervise}(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{agent}(e, g(8))) =$  (by application and control of the agent by the experiencer)  
 a.  $\lambda e. \text{supervise}(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{agent}(e, g(8)) \wedge$   
 $\text{experiencer}(e, g(8)) \wedge \text{interesting}(\lambda e'. \text{supervise}(e') \wedge \text{theme}(e', \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{agent}(e', g(8)))$  for  $Sp$  at  $t$  in  $w$   
 b. defined iff  $Sp=g(8)$  (judge=experiencer)

15 In fact, the occurrence of the experience event satisfying the contextually salient event type  $P_c$  seems presupposed rather than entailed by evaluative statements with predicates of personal taste (as Bylinina 2017, 323 observes, *the cake is not tasty* still suggests that the speaker has tried the cake, and the negation of (55) triggers the inference that a supervising (or teaching, etc.) of students took place). Since our account is coached in a non-dynamic semantics, we do not make justice to this fact.

Let us now add the imperfective again:

- (65)  $\llbracket \text{IMPF}(\text{PRO}_g \text{ supervisor les étudiants être intéressant}_{2\text{d-ord}} \text{ pro}_5) \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp}$   
 =  
 a.  $\exists e.t_T \subseteq t(e) \wedge \text{supervise}(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{agent}(e, g(8)) \wedge \text{experiencer}(e, g(8)) \wedge \text{interesting}(\lambda e'. \text{supervise}(e') \wedge \text{theme}(e', \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{agent}(e', g(8)))$  for  $Sp$  at  $t$  in  $w$   
 b. defined iff  $Sp=g(8)$  (judge=experiencer)

According to (65), (57) has the same meaning as (55) in a context where  $P_c$  is the property of supervising (students), which is the desired result.<sup>16</sup>

One of the motivations for treating the predicate of personal taste in pancake sentences as a second-order predicate as in (61) or (64) is that by doing so, we explicitly require that the contextually retrievable event type  $P_c$  is an interesting thing to do, which is intuitively what a pancake sentence such as (55) asserts. In contrast, when *interesting* is used as a first-order predicate of events—as we assume with Bylinina (2017) to be the case with an event-denoting nominal expression (e.g., *the class*, *the ride*, recall (34c))—it is simply stated that  $e$  is an interesting event. Thus first-order and second-order evaluative statements built with predicates of personal taste do not entail each other. This is illustrated in examples (66a–b), where *interesting*<sub>2-ord</sub> is predicated of an event type  $P$ , and *boring*<sub>1st-ord</sub> predicated of an event  $e$  of type  $P$  (or vice-versa).

- (66) a. The travel/the drive was interesting<sub>1st-ord</sub> (but to travel/to drive was totally boring<sub>2d-ord</sub>).  
 b. To drive the students was interesting<sub>2d-ord</sub> (but the drive itself was totally boring<sub>1st-ord</sub>).

These examples are not contradictory precisely because evaluative statements of first and second order operate at different levels. Driving the students

16 As a side note, we observe that the evaluation time  $t$  at which is made the evaluation that supervising students is an interesting event type does not depend from the event time of the experience (supervising) event. That is, the evaluation time  $t$  is not determined by the (im-)perfective aspect on the copula. For the speaker may realize only *a posteriori* that the event he experienced was an interesting type of event, without understanding it while s/he was experiencing it. More concretely, there is no contradiction in the following statement:

(i) *Superviser les étudiants a été/était intéressant, même si je supervise.INF the.PL student.M.PL be.3SG.PFV/IMPF interesting.M.SG even if I ne m'en suis pas rendu compte au moment même.*  
 NEG REFL.ISG=PART be.ISG. NEG realized at-the moment same  
 'Supervising the students was interesting, although I didn't realize it at that moment.'



may have been a boring event type for John while the drive itself was exciting, for the students were such great conversation partners, for instance. Or on the contrary, the drive itself may have been very boring because the students were not willing to talk, while to drive them home was very exciting.

### 3.3 *Generic Pancake Semantics*

In Brazilian Portuguese, pancake sentences are necessarily generic. (The copula *estar* used in episodic readings of copular sentences is not licensed to begin with.) So for instance, (67) cannot mean that a (contextually restricted) event type involving children as theme was funny in a particular occasion in the past. It can only mean that in the past, (contextually retrievable) event types involving children as theme were generally funny. Also, perfective markers, which enforce the episodic reading in French, are forbidden in Brazilian Portuguese in a neutral context, see (68).

(67) Brazilian Portuguese

*Criança era engraçado.*

child.F.SG be.3SG.IMPf funny.M.SG

'Dealing with/taking care of/playing with the children was (in general/always) funny.'

(68) #*Criança foi difícil.*

child.F.SG be.3SG.PFV difficult.M.SG

Intended: 'Dealing with/taking care of/playing with the children was difficult [on a particular occasion].'

Another related difference between Brazilian Portuguese and French is that French pancake sentences may be generic while their subjects refer to specific individuals (see also Ihsane's contribution on specificity in this volume). For instance, sentences (69)–(70) may be used to express generalities about an event type involving specific individuals. In contrast, in Brazilian Portuguese, determiners needed to enforce the specific reading of the nominal expression are forbidden in pancake sentences, see (71), as well as modifiers inducing the specific reading of the bare NP, see (72).

(69) French

*Nos enfants, c'est difficile.*

our child.M.PL DEM=be.SG.PRS difficult.M.SG

'Dealing with our [particular] children is (in general/always) complicated.'

- (70) *Les étudiants qui viennent de débarquer dans la*  
 the.PL student.M.PL who come.3PL.PRS to land.INF in the  
*classe, c'est très sympa.*  
 class.F.SG DEM=be.3SG.PRS very nice.M.SG  
 'Teaching/dealing with ... the students that have just arrived in the class  
 is (in general/always) very nice.'

- (71) Brazilian Portuguese  
*\*Nossas crianças é difícil.*  
 our.F.PL child.F.SG be.3SG.PRS difficult.M.SG  
 Intended: 'Dealing with our children is (in general) difficult.'

- (72) *\*Criança que acabou de chegar na sala é*  
 child.F.SG that finished of arrive.INF in.the class be.3SG.PRS  
*difícil.*  
 difficult.M.SG  
 Intended: 'Teaching, dealing with ... the students that have just arrived in  
 the class is (in general) difficult.'

We propose that the generic interpretation of pancake sentences arises from quantification by **gen** on event types and individuals involved in these event types.<sup>17</sup> An argument for this is that intuitively, a sentence such as (51) repeated below seems in its pancake reading to describe a generalization on (contextually restricted) event types involving students, rather than making a generalization about a specific event type recovered in the context.

- (51) Brazilian Portuguese  
*Estudante é interessante.*  
 student.M.SG be.3SG.PRS interesting.M.SG  
 '(Relevant) agentive event types with students as theme are generally  
 interesting.'

We thus apply the  $\otimes$ -operator in (54a) to the nominal predicate *estudante* and we obtain (73a). In (73b), **PRO** occupies the agent argument of the event type in (73a).

<sup>17</sup> This is in line with previous accounts of bare singular nouns in Brazilian Portuguese as Heimian indefinites (Müller 2002 a.o.). As in other constructions in Brazilian Portuguese, the bare noun in subject position is bound by **gen**.

- (73) a.  $\llbracket \text{estudante}_{\otimes} \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 $\lambda y \lambda P \lambda x \lambda e. \text{student}(x) \wedge P(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, x) \wedge (\text{AT}(x) \vee \neg \text{AT}(x)) \wedge$   
 $\text{agent}(e, y)$
- b.  $\llbracket \text{PRO}_8 \text{estudante}_{\otimes} \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 $\lambda P \lambda x \lambda e. \text{student}(x) \wedge P(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, x) \wedge (\text{AT}(x) \vee \neg \text{AT}(x)) \wedge$   
 $\text{agent}(e, g(8))$

This time, we do not apply (73) to a contextually retrieved event type  $P_c$  (as we did for the episodic use in French). Instead, we now quantify over the variable  $P$  with **gen**. The subject *estudante*<sub>⊗</sub> serves as the restrictor of **gen**, and the result of the application of *interessante*<sub>2-ord</sub> to *estudante*<sub>⊗</sub> as its nuclear scope, see (74). We adopt the default null hypothesis that Brazilian Portuguese *interessante*<sub>2d-ord</sub> has the same semantics as French *intéressant*<sub>2d-ord</sub> in (58) (repeated partly below). Furthermore, the ‘judge=experiencer’ requirements is again in force, and the agent is controlled by the experiencer as before.

- (58)  $\llbracket \text{intéressant}_{2d-ord} \text{pro}_5 \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$
- a. defined iff  $Sp = g(5)(\text{judge=experiencer})$
- b.  $\lambda P \lambda e. P(e) \wedge \text{experiencer}(e, g(5)) \wedge \text{interesting}(\lambda e'. P(e'))$  for  $Sp$  at  $t$  in  $w$
- (74)  $\text{gen}[\text{PRO}_8 \text{estudante}_{\otimes}] [\llbracket \text{interessante}_{2-ord} \text{pro}_5 \rrbracket (\text{PRO}_8 \text{estudante}_{\otimes})] =$  (by application and control of the agent by the experiencer)
- a.  $\text{gen } P, x, e [\text{student}(x) \wedge P(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, x) \wedge (\text{AT}(x) \vee \neg \text{AT}(x)) \wedge$   
 $\text{agent}(e, g(8))] [P(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, x) \wedge (\text{AT}(x) \vee \neg \text{AT}(x)) \wedge$   
 $\text{agent}(e, g(8)) \wedge \text{experiencer}(e, g(8)) \wedge \text{interesting}(\lambda e'. P(e')) \wedge$   
 $\text{student}(x) \wedge \text{theme}(e', x) \wedge (\text{AT}(x) \vee \neg \text{AT}(x)) \wedge \text{agent}(e', g(8))]$   
 for  $Sp$  at  $t$  in  $w$  in the context  $c$ .
- b. defined iff  $Sp = g(8)$  (judge=experiencer)

Unpacking (74), we obtain (74a), which is defined iff the presupposition in (74b) is met. According to (74a), assuming that John is the speaker of (51), sentence (51) states that for all event types  $P$ , individuals  $x$  and events  $e$ , if  $e$  is  $P$ ,  $x$  is a student and the theme of  $e$  and John the agent of  $e$ , then John is the experiencer of  $e$  and  $P$  is an interesting event type for John at  $t$  in  $w$  in the context  $c$ .

The values of  $P$  are given by the domain of quantification of **gen**, which is limited by the context  $c$ . Nevertheless, (74a) is arguably too weak, for (51) might be true while many agentive event types retrievable from the context  $c$  that have students as theme and performed by John are not at all interesting for John (such as watching students entering the class, for instance). The set of

event types which are said to be interesting event types should probably be restricted to *stereotypical* event types through which the agent *interacts* with the theme (and this set of event types will drastically vary from experiencer to experiencer: think again of (51) uttered by a teacher, a taxi driver or a drug dealer). We leave the technical implementation of a solution along these lines for further research. As C. Piñón (p.c.) observes, another issue raised by our account is that it is more complex than necessary, mainly because we assume that *interessante*<sub>2-ord</sub> functionally applies to *estudiante*<sub>⊗</sub>. This is especially clear in (74), where *interessante*<sub>2-ord</sub> applies to *estudiante*<sub>⊗</sub> in the consequent of the conditional. A revised version of *estudiante*<sub>⊗</sub> and *interessante*<sub>2-ord</sub> that leads to a simpler account of generic (and episodic) sentences is also left for further research.

### 3.4 *Predicates of Personal Taste Used as First-Order Predicates*

Predicates of personal taste can also be used as first-order predicates over events or individuals. With Bylinina (2017), we assume that in this use too, experiencer adjectives refer to an experience event. One of the facts we need to explain is the absence of entailment between a sentence where *interesting* or *funny* is used as a second-order predicate of event types, and a sentence where the same adjective is used as a first-order predicate of events or individuals. For instance, as Greenberg (2008) observes for Hebrew, there is no relation of entailment between (75) and (76), see the absence of contradiction in (77)–(78).

(75) French

*Les étudiants c'était intéressant.*

the.PL student.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.IMPf interesting.M.SG

'Supervising (or teaching, or selling drugs to) ... the students was interesting.'

(76) *Les étudiants étaient intéressants.*

the.PL student.M.PL be.3PL.IMPf interesting.M.PL

'The students were interesting.'

(77) *Les étudiants c'était intéressant, mais les*

the.PL student.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.IMPf interesting.M.SG but the.PL

*étudiants ne l'étaient pas.*

student.M.PL NEG it=be.3PL.IMPf NEG.

'Doing something with the students was interesting, but the students were not.'

- (78) *Les étudiants étaient marrants. Mais les étudiants, c'était pas marrant.*  
 the.PL student.M.PL DEM=be.3PL.IMPf funny.M.SG but the.PL  
*étudiants, c'était pas marrant.*  
 student.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.IMPf NEG funny.M.SG  
 'The students were funny. But the students, that was not funny.'

We analyze predicates of personal taste used as first order predicates along the lines of Bylinina (2017), see (79).

- (79)  $\llbracket \text{intéressant}_{1\text{st-ord}} \text{pro}_5 \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 a.  $\lambda x \lambda e. \text{stimulus}(e, x) \wedge \text{experiencer}(e, g(5)) \wedge \text{interesting}(e)$  for  $Sp$  at  $t$  in  $w$   
 b.  $Sp=g(5)$  (judge=experiencer)

Applying this predicate to the definite expression *les étudiants* under its literal meaning, and assuming as before that **pro** saturates the experiencer argument, we obtain the meaning in (80), i.e, a set of events  $e$  such that the students are the stimulus of  $e$ , **pro** the experiencer of  $e$  and  $e$  is an interesting event for the speaker at  $t$  in  $w$ .

- (80)  $\llbracket \text{les étudiants être intéressant}_{1\text{st-ord}} \text{pro}_5 \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 a.  $[\lambda x \lambda e. \text{stimulus}(e, x) \wedge \text{experiencer}(e, g(5)) \wedge \text{interesting}(e)]$  for  $Sp$  at  $t$  in  $w$   
 (**the-students**) = (by application)  
 $\lambda e. \text{stimulus}(e, \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{experiencer}(e, g(5)) \wedge \text{interesting}(e)$  for  $Sp$  at  $t$  in  $w$   
 b.  $Sp=g(5)$  (judge=experiencer)

The absence of entailment from (76) to (75) is due to the fact that an event that makes (80) true does not necessarily make (61) (partly repeated below) true. To elaborate on a previous example, imagine for instance that John, a taxi driver, found the conversation with the students he drove home interesting. In that case, the conversation may be the interesting experience event having the students as stimulus, thus (76) (and (80)) are satisfied. Now, imagine that the contextually salient event type  $P_c$  is driving the students home. The situation just assumed making (76)/(80) true doesn't ensure that  $P_c$  is an interesting event type, for John may find the conversation with the students interesting and nevertheless find driving the students home a very boring thing to do.

- (61)  $\llbracket \text{PRO}_8 \text{ les étudiants}_{\text{ce}} \text{ être intéressant}_{2\text{d-ord}} \text{ pro}_5 \rrbracket^{c,g,w,t,Sp} =$   
 a.  $\lambda e.P_c(e) \wedge \text{theme}(e, \text{the-students}) \wedge \text{agent}(e, g(8)) \wedge \text{experien-}$   
 $\text{cer}(e, g(8)) \wedge \text{interesting}(\lambda e'.P_c(e') \wedge \text{theme}(e', \text{the-students}) \wedge$   
 $\text{agent}(e', g(8)))$  for  $Sp$  at  $t$  in  $w$   
 b. defined iff  $Sp=g(8)$  (judge=experiencer)

The fact that the reverse entailment from (75) to (76) does not hold either can be explained along the same line.

#### 4 Accounting for the Variations between Brazilian Portuguese and French

We observed in the previous sections that while in Brazilian Portuguese non-agreeing copular sentences under study must be pancake sentences, this is not the case in French. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 below aim to account for this difference. We first address the question of why the pancake interpretation is optional for French non-agreeing copular sentences in Section 4.1.

##### 4.1 Why Is the Pancake Interpretation Optional in French?

As mentioned in the introduction, French non-agreeing copular sentences indisputably have a dislocated structure (as indicated by the comma in our examples), and have two subject positions, one filled by the left dislocated DP, which is the higher one, and the second filled by the neuter pronoun *ce*, the lower one (cf. Roy and Shlonsky 2019). This is schematically indicated in (81).

- (81) *les légumes* SUBJ2 [*ce* SUBJ1 [TP est [PREDP [DP *les légumes*] [PRED [AP *vert*]]]] (Roy and Shlonsky 2019)

We observe one exception to this generalization: when the subject is a numeral, French tolerates non-agreement with the predicate even in absence of *ce* and left-dislocation, see (82). Note that in these sentences, the subject receives the event type reading characteristic of pancake sentences. We briefly come back to this exception in Section 5.

- (82) French  
 a. *Dix invités est vraiment trop difficile.*  
 ten guest.M.PL be.3SG.PRS really too complicated.M.SG  
 '(Dealing with) ten guests is really too complicated.'

- b. \**Les invités est vraiment trop difficile.*  
 the.PL guest.M.PL be.3SG.PRS really too complicated.M.SG  
 Intended: '(Dealing with) the guests is really too complicated.'

We assume that in presence of *ce*, the adjective agrees with this neuter pronoun, and therefore receives default agreement, which is singular/masculine in French. At first sight, the antecedent of *ce* seems to be the dislocated DP. When the dislocated DP is plural and/or feminine, a mismatch arises between the phi-features of the nominal expression and those of *ce* (and of the adjective agreeing with *ce*). Why is it so?

We argue that as in all other languages with pancake sentences, the mismatch is the expression of the fact that *ce* in fact agrees with a non-overt structure, which is its true antecedent, for which the nominal expression stands for. However, the meaning of this non-overt structure may vary a lot. That *ce* may induce a wide range of reinterpretations of the nominal expression serving as its antecedent is a well-known fact in French linguistics (Furukawa 1988, Cadiot 1988, Carlier 1996, Reed 1997, a.o). We here only briefly illustrate the most relevant meaning shifts typically triggered by *ce*.

The first reinterpretation of the dislocated nominal expression triggered by *ce* is the one obtained in pancake sentences. For this case, the semantics we attributed to the covert structure involved in pancake sentences obtains, see Section 3. In a second case, the covert antecedent of *ce* denotes a situation or state-of-affairs involving the individual denoted by the nominal expression in its literal meaning, and the adjective attributes a property to this situation, rather than to the theme of this situation. For instance, (83a) asserts that the situation of dead-leaves-in-the-garden is beautiful; the dead leaves themselves involved in this situation need not be. In contrast, (83b) attributes beauty to the dead leaves themselves. Similarly, (84a) attributes redness to the birds-in-the-sunset situation; the same birds do not have to be red themselves. In contrast, (84b) entail that the birds themselves are red (at least if the locative modifier is in preverbal position).<sup>18</sup>

18 If the modifier is in post-verbal position (*Les oiseaux sont rouges dans le coucher du soleil* 'The birds are red in the sunset'), it gets a restrictive reading. Restrictive modifiers often trigger a causal relation between their descriptive content and the main predication (thus, the latter sentence conveys that the birds are red *because* they are in the sunset), see Martin (2014) and references therein. Because of this causal relation, the sentence with a post-verbal modifier does not entail anymore that the birds are red regardless of the circumstances, although redness is attributed to birds themselves.

(83) French

a. *Les feuilles mortes dans le jardin, c'est beau.*  
 the.PL leaf.F.PL dead.F.PL in the.M.SG garden DEM=be.3SG.PRS  
 beautiful.M.SG  
 '(The) dead leaves in the garden, that's beautiful.' (situation)

b. *Les feuilles mortes dans le jardin sont belles.*  
 the.PL leaf.F.PL dead.F.PL in the.M.SG garden be.3SG.PRS  
 beautiful.F.PL  
 'The dead leaves in the garden are beautiful.' (individual)

(84) a. *Les oiseaux dans le coucher du soleil, c'est rouge.*  
 the.PL bird.M.PL in the sunset DEM=be.3SG.PRS  
 red.M.SG  
 'The birds in the sunset, that's red.' (situation)

b. *Les oiseaux dans le coucher du soleil sont rouges.*  
 the.PL bird.M.PL in the sunset be.3PL.PRS red.M.PL  
 'The birds in the sunset are red.' (individual)

Under a third type of meaning shift induced by *ce*, the covert antecedent has a generic interpretation, while the DP under its literal reading can only have a specific interpretation with the post-copular adjective used. The fact that with some adjectives, *ce* is necessary to get a generic interpretation of *indefinites* in subject position has been observed by Attal (1976) among others, see (85)–(86).

(85) French

*Des enfants, c'est bruyant.* (generic only)  
 PA.PL child.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS noisy.M.SG  
 'Kids are usually noisy.' NOT: 'Kids are (right now) noisy.'

(86) *Des enfants sont bruyants.* (specific only)  
 PA.PL child.M.PL be.3PL.PRS noisy.M.PL  
 'Kids are (right now) noisy.' NOT: 'Kids are usually noisy.'

We observe through the contrast in (87a–b) that at least with predicates of personal taste of the *tasty*-type, *ce* is even required for the generic interpretation of *definites* in subject position.



## (87) French

- a. *Les crêpes, c'est*  
 the.PL pancake.F.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS  
*délicieux/savoureux.* (generic/specific)  
 tasty.M.SG  
 '(The) pancakes, that is (generally/right now) tasty.'
- b. *Les crêpes sont*  
 the.PL pancake.F.PL be.3PL.PRS  
*délicieuses/savoureuses.* (specific only)  
 tasty.F.PL  
 'The pancakes are (right now) tasty.' NOT: 'Pancakes are usually tasty.'

In summary, *ce* may not only induce the event type reinterpretation of the individual-denoting dislocated DP, but also a situation/state-of-affairs or kind-reinterpretation (see Furukawa 1988; Cadiot 1988; Carlier 1996; Reed 1997 for other meaning shifts of the dislocated DP triggered by *ce*, less relevant for the discussion; see also Gerards and Stark this volume, who develops a kind-oriented mode of talk for the definite noun phrases found in the constituents traditionally analyzed as headed by a "partitive article" in Old Spanish). This is the reason why non-agreeing copular sentences do not have to be pancake sentences in French.

Before turning to Brazilian Portuguese, we wish to underline that it is *ce* itself which brings in this range of potential reinterpretations for the dislocated DP, rather than *ce* combined with the copula. Evidence for the crucial role of *ce* in these reinterpretation processes (including the one yielding a pancake reading of the dislocated subject) is that in French, they are also induced in non-copular sentences built with an experiencer predicate (but not in Brazilian Portuguese). For instance, (88a) does not mean that assistant professors make me laugh; what rather makes me laugh is what one is doing with them (e.g., paying them so little); similarly (88b) may be true although my children never get on my nerves; what (88b) asserts is that, e.g., caring for my children is too much for me. The same point could be made for the three other meaning shifts triggered by *ce* briefly illustrated above.<sup>19</sup>

19 The counterparts of (88) in Brazilian Portuguese, when acceptable despite the lack of agreement, do not have a pancake interpretation:

(88) French

a. *Les ATER, ça me fait rire jaune.*  
 the.PL ATER DEM me.ACC make.3SG.PRS laugh yellow  
 '(Hiring) assistant professors, that doesn't make me laugh.'

b. *Mes enfants parfois, ça m'emmerde.*  
 my.M.PL child.M.PL sometimes DEM get.3SG.PRS on my nerves  
 '(Dealing with) my children, sometimes, that's too much for me.'

#### 4.2 *Why Is the Pancake Interpretation Compulsory in Brazilian Portuguese?*

We now turn to the question of why non-agreeing copular sentences are systematically pancake sentences in Brazilian Portuguese. We first aim to dismiss an analysis making Brazilian Portuguese similar to French despite surface appearances. In principle, one could indeed assume an analysis in terms of left-dislocation for Brazilian Portuguese non-agreeing copular sentences as well, and posit a second silent pronominal subject with a semantics similar to the demonstrative neuter pronoun *ce*, which could also contribute to determining the semantics of the true antecedent. On that view, the nominal expression would not sit in Spec,IP, but in a higher position in the left periphery position, as schematically shown in (89).

(89) DP<sub>[TP Pred]</sub>

Rodrigues and Foltran (2015, 138), however, argue that this analysis is untenable for Brazilian Portuguese, on the basis of evidence related to different word order patterns. In particular, they point out that a *wh*-phrase precedes the bare nominal *criança* 'child' in an interrogative sentence, which suggests that the bare nominal is in subject, not in topic position, see (90a). When the bare nom-

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(i) Brazilian Portuguese

*Professores adjuntos me faz rir.*  
 professor.PL.M adjunct.PL.M me make.3SG.PRS laugh  
 'Assistant professors make me laugh.' NOT: 'Event types involving assistant professors as theme generally make me laugh.'

This is expected given that in Brazilian Portuguese, the pancake reinterpretation of the subject is mainly induced by the adjectival copular phrase. Our feeling is that in such sentences, the first noun phrase is in a topical position, and is not selected as the external argument of the verb. We leave the problem of lack of agreement in non-copular sentences in Brazilian Portuguese for further research.

inal occupies a left-dislocated position, as in (90b), it precedes the *wh*-phrase. In such cases, the pronoun *isso* ‘this’ appears in the subject position (but can remain implicit, as indicated by the parenthesis), and we observe that the pancake interpretation is not available anymore.

(90) Brazilian Portuguese

a. *Quando<sub>i</sub> que criança é divertido t<sub>i</sub>?*

when<sub>i</sub> that child is fun

‘When is it that dealing with/speaking with children is fun?’ (our translation)

b. *Criança, quando<sub>i</sub> que (isso) é divertido t<sub>i</sub>?*

child.F.SG when<sub>i</sub> that this is fun

‘Children, when are they fun?’

NOT: ‘When is it that dealing with/speaking with children is fun?’ (our translation)

Also, we observe that often, the literal Brazilian Portuguese counterparts with the demonstrative *isso* of the French sentences in the previous section illustrating the meaning shifts triggered by *ce* all turn out agrammatical, see, for instance, (91).

(91) Brazilian Portuguese

a. *\*(Os) passarinhos no pôr- $\emptyset$  do sol, isso*  
 \*the bird.M.PL in.the.M put.NMLZ in.the.M sun.M DEM  
*é vermelho.*

be.3SG.PRS red.M.SG

Intended: ‘Birds-in-the-sunset, that’s red.’

b. *\*Os crepes, isso é saboroso.*

\*the pancake.M.PL DEM be.3SG.PRS delicious.M.SG

Intended: ‘(The) pancakes, that’s tasty.’

We therefore assume that in Brazilian Portuguese, pancake sentences have one subject only, standing for a non-overt semantic structure. Since the adjective agrees with this non-overt structure without agreement features, it receives default agreement, which is masculine and singular in Brazilian Portuguese.

But why does this non-overt structure systematically denote an event type? Why, in particular, can’t it denote situations/states-of-affair or individual kinds, like the covert antecedent of *ce* in French non-agreeing copular sentences?

More concretely, why can't (11) repeated below under (92) be used to express in Brazilian Portuguese the generality that apples are red? Similarly, why are the non-agreeing copular sentences (93)–(95) all agrammatical in Brazilian Portuguese?

(92) Brazilian Portuguese

\**Maçã é vermelho.*  
apple.F.SG be.3SG.PRS red.M.SG

Intended: 'Apples are red.'

(93) \**Criança é barulhento.*

child.F.SG be.3SG.PRS noisy.M.SG

Intended: 'Children are noisy.'

(94) \**Panqueca é saboroso.*

pancake.F.SG be.3SG.PRS delicious.M.SG

Intended: 'Pancakes are tasty.'

(95) \**Gaiivota no pôr- $\emptyset$  do sol é vermelho.*

seagull.F.SG in.the.M put.NMLZ in.the.M sun.M be.3SG.PRS red.M.SG

Intended: 'Seagulls-in-the-sunset, that's red.'

We propose that the reason behind this restriction is that the semantic structure for which the subject of non-agreeing copular sentences stands for is by definition **covert**. But (plural and singular) bare nouns **overtly** denote individual kinds in Brazilian Portuguese (Müller 2002 a.o). This is true even with predicates such as *noisy* or *tasty*, which block the generic reading of indefinite or definite DPs in subject position in French. Since the bare noun can always *overtly* denote individual kinds in Brazilian Portuguese, agreement in gender and number is therefore required, see (96)–(98) below.

(96) Brazilian Portuguese

*Maçã é vermelha.*  
apple.F.SG is red.F.SG

'Apples are red.'

(97) *Criança é barulhenta.* (*generic*, compare with French (86))

child.F.SG be.3SG.PRS noisy.F.SG

'Children are noisy.'

- (98) *Panqueca* é  
 pancake.F.SG be.3SG.PRS  
*saborosa.* (generic, compare with French (87b))  
 delicious.F.SG  
 ‘Pancakes are tasty.’

Also, we observe that in Brazilian Portuguese, modified bare nouns may overtly describe situations/states-of-affairs involving an individual denoted by the nominal expression in its literal meaning. For instance, (99) has exactly the same meaning as the one obtained through the reinterpretation triggered by *ce* of the nominal expression in the French example (84a) (*modulo* the fact that (99) is generic only, while (84a) can be both episodic or generic). Thus, like (84a) built with *ce*, (99) does not entail that the seagulls are red by themselves.

- (99) Brazilian Portuguese  
*Gaivota no pôr- $\emptyset$  do sol é vermelha.*  
 seagull.F.SG in.the.M put.NMLZ in.the.M sun.M be.3SG.PRS red.F.SG  
 ‘Seagulls-in-the-sunset, that’s (generally) red.’ (*situation*, cp. with French (84b))

In summary, it seems that in Brazilian Portuguese, bare nouns *overtly* have the kind-denoting or situation-denoting meaning obtained for the *covert* antecedent of the French pronoun *ce*. We think this is the main reason why these additional meanings are not possible in non-agreeing copular sentences in Brazilian Portuguese, and only obtain when agreement takes place. But Brazilian Portuguese bare nouns cannot denote event type by themselves. Absence of agreement is thus required and justified to trigger the event type reinterpretation *via* the pancake-operator and the specific semantics of predicates of personal taste. In contrast, absence of agreement is not justified for the kind- and situations-interpretations, which can systematically be overtly obtained with bare nouns in Brazilian Portuguese. In French, the meaning-shifter *ce* is in some cases needed to get the situation- and kind- interpretations which is available at the literal level in Brazilian Portuguese.

## 5 Do Pancake Sentences Exist in Other Germanic Languages?

The question of whether pancake sentences exist in Germanic languages such as English or German has to our knowledge not been investigated in detail yet. Wechsler (2013) gives *en passant* an example of a non-agreeing copular

sentence with a post-copular bare NP, see (100a), which can be paraphrased as standard pancake sentences, i.e., as *selling steroids is big business*. (100b) is another example, from Nicolas Dumay (p.c.).

- (100) a. Steroids is big business.  
 b. Assistant professors is the way.

Also, non-agreeing *non-copular* sentences have been observed to exist in English, too, see, for instance (101) (see also examples (88a–b) in French).

- (101) Scrambled eggs make(s) a good breakfast. (Lauren Ackerman, 13/07/2018, Twitter)

We asked native speakers whether a semantic difference occurs between the two variants in sentences such as (101). Some of their answers are reminiscent of the differences documented between the agreeing and non-agreeing variants of adjectival copular sentences. In particular, they say that with a plural on the verb, (101) is about the eggs themselves, while with a singular, (101) states that making, preparing, etc. scrambled eggs is what makes a good breakfast. This suggests that the lack of agreement and the presence of an evaluative predicate of the right kind may also trigger the reinterpretation process of nominal expressions in subject position of non-copular sentences in English.

In general, however, pancake sentences built with a post-copular adjective rather than an NP seem much less natural in languages such as English. To begin with, we observe that pancake adjectival sentences of the French type seem not as natural in English or German, probably partly because subject dislocation is more pragmatically constrained in English than in French (Lambrecht 1987; De Cat 2002). Nevertheless, in a context satisfying the pragmatic conditions licensing left dislocation, it seems that the pronoun *that* used in such sentences play a very similar role to the one of *ce*: it looks for a covert antecedent having the meaning of an event predicate or a clause (e.g., *making pancakes is nice*), with which the neuter pronoun agrees.

- (102) ?Scrambled eggs/pancakes, that's nice.

- (103) German  
 ??*Waffeln, das ist lustig.*  
 waffle.M.PL DEM.N.SG be.3SG.PRS funny  
 Intended: 'Waffles, that's funny.'

(104) ?Children, that's expensive/complicated.

(105) German  
 ??Kinder, das ist teuer/ schwierig.  
 child.NEUT.PL DEM.N.SG be.3SG.PRS expensive hard  
 Intended: 'Kids, that's expensive/hard.'

In any case, English or German pancake sentences *à la française* are much more acceptable than their counterparts *à la portugaise*, which seem completely marginal in a default context, see (106)–(109).

(106) \*Scrambled eggs/pancakes is fun.

(107) German  
 \*Waffeln ist lustig.  
 waffle.F.PL be.3SG.PRS funny

(108) \*Kids is expensive/complicated.

(109) German  
 \*Kinder ist teuer/schwierig.  
 child.N.PL be.3SG.PRS expensive/hard

The reason why non-agreeing copular adjectival sentences are not grammatical in English or German is unclear to us, but we have two observations to offer. Firstly, we observe that in presence of a cardinal indefinite and an adjective inducing the collective interpretation of the cardinal, pancake sentences without left dislocation suddenly become much more acceptable in English as in German, see (110)–(111), which are quickly interpreted as meaning *having / dealing with ... two cats or thirty guests is funny/hard*. As we noticed in Section 4.1 through the examples (82) repeated below, even French accepts non-agreeing copular sentences with a single subject when the nominal expression contains a numeral.

(110) Two cats is funny.

(111) German  
 Dreißig Gäste ist schwierig.  
 thirty guest.M.PL be.3SG.PRS complicated  
 'Thirty guests is hard.'

(82) French

*Dix invités est vraiment trop difficile.*

ten guest.M.PL be.3SG.PRS really too complicated.M.SG

'Ten guests is really too complicated.'

We speculate that two (related) factors explain that such sentences are much better in presence of a cardinal indefinite. Firstly, the competing agreeing form leads to a completely different interpretation, i.e., an episodic (rather than generic) statement about non-generic entities (e.g., there are two cats in the context which are funny, ten of the guests are hard). Secondly, the singular vs. plural agreement in this case is reminiscent of effects discussed in the literature on group nouns, which can show both singular and plural agreement with interpretative differences, see for instance Barker (1992); Pearson (2011); Smith (2015). For instance, *the committee is old* can have a reading according to which it was founded a long time ago in addition to the reading that its members are old. The plural counterpart has only the latter reading. Why would numerals trigger such an effect? Authors such as Ionin and Matushansky (2006) have argued that in general numerals combine with nouns that are semantically atomic; to the extent that plural morphology is present on the noun this lacks a semantic import. Landau (2016) puts forth an analysis of agreement patterns with numerals that builds on Wechsler and Zlatić (2000). Landau (2016, 1005) argues that numerals split the DP internal domain into two zones: above numerals, showing plural agreement, and below numerals, showing singular agreement. Singular agreement as in e.g. (82) is suggestive of an Agree relation between the predicate and the head noun, while plural agreement is suggestive of an Agree relation with the whole Quantity Phrase, assuming this is where numerals are located, cf. Borer (2005), and hence plurality leading to individual interpretation.

Secondly, we note that in striking contrast with what we observed for Brazilian Portuguese and French, the event type interpretation of the nominal expression seems (at least with some adjectives) readily available in *agreeing* copular sentences in English and German. Recall, for instance, that (8) and (10) were odd in Brazilian Portuguese and French, see also (112)–(114); by contrast, (115)–(118) are quite natural in English or German. This suggests that at least these adjectives manage *by themselves* to trigger the reinterpretation process of the nominal expression, while in contrast, this reinterpretation process has to be “signaled” by a mismatch in the agreement features in languages such as French or Brazilian Portuguese.



- (112) French  
*#On fait quoi? Ben, les/des gaufres*  
 PRN.3SG.NOM make.3SG.PRS what? well, the.PL/PA.PL waffle.F.PL  
*sont (toujours) chouettes.*  
 be.3PL.PRS always nice.F.PL  
 Intended: 'What are we baking? Well, waffles are (always) nice.'
- (113) Brazilian Portuguese  
*#Criança é cara.*  
 child.F.SG be.3SG.PRS expensive.F.SG
- (114) French  
*#Les enfants sont chers.*  
 the.PL child.M.PL be.3PL.PRS expensive.M.PL
- (115) German  
*Kinder sind teuer.*  
 child.M.PL be.3PL.PRS expensive  
 'Kids are expensive.'
- (116) Kids are expensive.
- (117) German  
*Was machen wir? Waffeln sind (immer) schön.*  
 what make we? waffle.F.PL be.3PL.PRS always nice  
 'What should we do then? Waffles are always nice.'
- (118) What are we baking? Well, pancakes are always nice.

These data are of particular interest because they suggest that the basic ingredients of one-subject-only pancake sentences *are* available in the grammar of English or German, but that in these languages, more contextual cues are needed to trigger the event type denoting covert structure with which the VP may agree. In favor of this view, we note that the more the subject resembles a small clause, the more the non-agreeing form is acceptable, see for instance the German contrast (119)–(120), from Florian Schäfer (p.c.).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> We observe something similar in French, too. In particular, with some adjectives, the dislocated nominal expression sounds sometimes somewhat better with an *indefinite* in

- (119) German  
 \**Haustiere*                    *ist*                    *schwierig.*  
 domestic animal.M.PL be.3SG.PRS hard  
 Intended: 'Having/caring of ... domestic animals is hard.'
- (120) *Haustiere*                    *in einer kleine Wohnung ist*  
 domestic animal.M.PL in a        small apartment be.3SG.PRS  
*schwierig.*  
 hard  
 'Having/caring of ... domestic animals in a small apartment is hard.'

This, we suggest, again confirms that it is well and truly possible to have non-agreeing copular adjectival sentences with an event type interpretation for nominal expressions in languages such as German, too, provided that the context helps to get rid of the individual-denoting interpretation and induce the event type-denoting covert structure, with which the verb may agree.

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presence of a modifier making the subject more similar to a clause, compare (i) and (ii) below. Definite dislocated nominal expressions are in contrast always acceptable.

- (i) French  
 (?)*Des enfants, c'est compliqué.*  
 PA.PL child.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS complicated.M.SG  
 '(The) kids, that's complicated.'
- (ii) *Des enfants qui mangent des spaghettis, c'est*  
 PA.PL child.M.PL who eat.3PL.PRS PA.PL spaghetti.M.PL DEM=be.3SG.PRS  
*compliqué.*  
 complicated.M.SG  
 'Kids eating spaghettis, that's complicated.'

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# Negation, *des*-Indefinites in French and Bare Nouns across Languages

*Carmen Dobrovie-Sorin*

## 1 Introduction

This article is concerned with the contrasting behavior of Bare Noun Phrases (BNS) and the French indefinites headed by *des/de la/du* (*des*-indefinites henceforth) with respect to negation:<sup>1</sup> whereas the former must take narrow scope with respect to a negative quantifier, the latter cannot do so in canonical contexts. This difference cannot be accounted for within the wide-spread view that *des*-indefinites have the same semantic type as BNS interpreted existentially (in languages such as English, Romanian or Spanish). But importantly, both *des*-indefinites and BNS qualify as “weak” (in Milsark’s 1977 sense), which means that we need to assume two distinct types of denotation for weak indefinites. The solution will be to distinguish between property-denoting expressions (suited for BNS) and DPs that denote weak existential quantifiers (suited for *des*-indefinites). The insensitivity to negation of BNS is due to the fact that no existential Q (i.e., quantifier) is present at LF (Logical Form). The incompatibility between a negative quantifier and *des*-indefinites will be explained as follows: (i) polyadic negative quantification is needed for the intended reading; (ii) polyadic quantification obtains at LF only if Collins and Postal’s (2004) “Determiner Sharing” holds in the syntax; (iii) Determiner Sharing does not obtain between the positive existential Q denoted by *des*-indefinites and a negative existential Q.

The resistance to negation exhibited by *des*-indefinites can be referred to by using the label Positive Polarity Item (PPI). BNS differ from *des*-indefinites in being insensitive to negation (they are neither PPIs nor Negative Polarity Items (NPIs)). Section 2 will provide the empirical data in favor of these generalizations. Section 3 proposes distinct denotations for *des*-indefinites and BNS: the former denote weak existential quantifiers, whereas the latter denote

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<sup>1</sup> Schurr, in this volume, compares bare nouns and partitive-marked nominals in Romance in a usage-based account. Cf. also Garzonio and Poletto (2020) for an analysis of indefinite (partitive) objects under negation in the Northern Italian dialectal area.

properties. Section 4 shows that this difference in denotation corresponds to a difference in syntactic representations: *des*-indefinites are full DPs, whereas BNS lack the DP level of representation. Section 5 explains why *des*-indefinites are PPIS (cannot take narrow scope with respect to negation).

## 2 *Des-indefinites as Positive Polarity Items*

In this section I show that French *des*-indefinites qualify as Positive Polarity Items (PPIS). I will review the various tests that support the PPI status of *des*-indefinites, and I will show that the “exceptional” contexts in which *des*-indefinites can take narrow scope with respect to negation are exactly those contexts in which other PPIS can do so. This means that such exceptional contexts do not question the PPI status of *des*-indefinites. I will then turn to the BNS found in Romanian or Spanish, which are insensitive to negation. This contrasting behavior strongly suggests that *des*-indefinites cannot be assumed to have the same semantic type as BNS, despite the fact that both of these two nominals are weak indefinites. Instead, I will postulate the existence of two distinct types of weak indefinites, which only differ regarding their behavior with respect to negation.

### 2.1 *Des-indefinites and Negation: The Core Data*

The shift from *des* to invariable *de*<sup>2</sup> illustrated below is a very basic fact in French, which is mentioned in any grammar of French, as well as in more formal approaches to “partitives” (Gross 1967; Attal 1976; Wilmet 1977 and Kupferman 1979):

- (1) French
- a. *Jean a filmé des ours.*  
 Jean has filmed PA.PL bears  
 ‘Jean filmed some bears.’
  - b. *Jean a acheté du vin.*  
 Jean has bought PA.M.SG wine  
 ‘Jean bought some wine.’

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<sup>2</sup> As we will see in Section 5.1, these *de*-indefinites are analogous to those *any*-NPs that occur in the scope of negation.

## (2) French

a. *Jean n' a pas filmé d' ours/ \* des ours.*

Jean NEG has not filmed DE bear/ PA.PL bears

'Jean didn't film any bear.'

b. *Jean n' a pas acheté de vin/ \* du vin.*

Jean NEG has not bought DE wine PA.M.SG wine

'Jean did not buy any wine.'

These examples show that *des*-indefinites cannot take narrow scope with regard to sentential negation.<sup>3,4</sup> The indicated unacceptability of the *des/du* versions of the examples in (2) is due to the fact that in run-of-the-mill contexts *des*-indefinites are necessarily weak, which means that they strongly resist wide scope readings. It is only with well-chosen lexical items (both verbs and nouns) that wide scope is marginally possible (see footnote 14 in Section 2.4).

In Sections 2.2 and 2.3, I will describe a number of “marked” contexts in which *des*-indefinites *can* scope under negation. As will be made clear there, such contexts do not invalidate the following generalization (the relevance of restricting our attention to *local* narrow scope will become relevant in Section 2.2):

(3) In standard French, *des*-indefinites cannot take local narrow scope with regard to negation (in unmarked contexts).

3 In some dialects of French, *des/de la/du* can be interpreted in the scope of negation. Insensitivity to negation can also be observed in colloquial speech even in those regions where the *des/de* alternation is used by the majority of speakers (see the corpus OFROM hosted at the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland; see Stark and Gerards, this volume, on Francoprovençal). It should however be observed that the use of the *des/de* alternation is fully colloquial in standard French. As such, the use of *de* instead of *des* under negation is to be distinguished from, for instance, the agreement of past participles (see *les tasses que j'ai prises* 'the cups that I have taken.F.PL' vs. the colloquial *les tasses que j'ai pris* 'the cups that I have taken', which is less naturally used by French speakers). Thus, highly educated native French speakers (among others, CNRS researchers or Professors at the University) frequently disregard the norm concerning past participle agreement in oral speech but always use *de* under negation.

4 Interestingly, Italian seems to be similar to French in showing an alternation between *dei* in positive contexts and *BPS* and *BMNS* when narrow scope with respect to negation is intended. Giusti (this volume) briefly discusses the scope properties of nominals with a “partitive article” in Italian and Italo-Romance, but she only takes into account contrastive contexts (see Section 2.3 below).



Let me draw the attention of the reader that the ban on narrow scope with respect to negation does *not* correlate with narrow scope with respect to modals or intensional verbs. Indeed, on their unmarked reading, *des*-indefinites are weak indefinites and, as such privilege narrow scope interpretations (with respect to quantificational subjects, modals or intensional verbs):

(4) French

a. *Jean doit lire des romans.* *MUST > des*

Jean must read PA.PL romans

'Jean must read some novels.'

b. *Jean cherche des élèves* *look for > des*

Jean looks.for PA.PL pupils

'Jean is looking for pupils.'

The fact that narrow scope with respect to negation is *not* related to narrow scope in general is by no means an idiosyncratic property of *des*-indefinites but is instead quite general across languages for indefinites headed by overt Determiners (BNS, which are different, will be examined in Section 2.5).<sup>5</sup> Thus, most indefinites in object position allow a narrow scope interpretation with respect to modals and intensional verbs but disallow narrow scope with respect to negation. To make this point as clear as possible it is useful to consider those indefinites that preferentially take narrow scope, for example, the unstressed *sm* in English. The point is clearer in the sense that narrow scope with respect to negation is banned *despite* the fact that narrow scope is preferred, or even obligatory, with respect to other operators:

- (5) a. *John must read sm novels.* (MUST > sm)  
 b. *John is looking for sm students.* (look for > sm)  
 c. *John didn't read sm novels.* (\*not > sm)

Note now that the impossibility stated in (3) above is exactly the definition of PPIS:

- (6) A PPI is a constituent that cannot take local narrow scope with regard to negation.

<sup>5</sup> Also insensitive to negation are *des*-indefinites in the dialects described in footnote 3.

*Some*-indefinites in English constitute the paradigmatic example of PPI indefinite to be found in the current literature. Regarding narrow scope, the data are the same as (5), where the unstressed version of *some* was used. Wide scope readings are however preferred with the stressed *some*, an issue to which we will come back in Section 2.4. Taken together, (3) and (6) amount to saying that *des*-indefinites are PPIS.

The PPI status of *des* is confirmed by the fact that it is banned not only from the scope of a negated main predicate (which in French is signaled by *pas*), but also from the scope of the antiadditive operator *sans* ‘without’:<sup>6</sup>

- (7) \**Jean est venu sans des livres /du café.*  
 Jean is come without PA.PL books PA.M.SG coffee

These examples are interesting because they invalidate a plausible explanation for the *des/de* alternation that would build on the idea that the use of the invariable *de* is due to some morphosyntactic requirement of the negation particle *pas* itself.

To the best of my knowledge the PPI status of *des/de la/du* has not been observed in previous work on French *des*-indefinites.<sup>7</sup> The reason may be a tacit assumption that is explicitly mentioned in passing by Le Bruyn (2010): “articles are not PPIS”, a generalization that Le Bruyn illustrates with an example built with the singular indefinite article *a* in English:<sup>8</sup>

- (8) *John didn't see a bear/cat/car.*

Since according to Le Bruyn *des/de la/du* are articles, they would not qualify as PPIS.

6 Note on the other hand that the presence of *pas* seems nevertheless crucial for the analysis of the invariable *de*. Indeed, the invariable *de* is itself banned from the scope of *sans* ‘without’, which only allows BNS (which in French are disallowed in argument positions (unless they are coordinated, see Roodenburg 2004) but allowed with some prepositions):

- (i) \**Jean est venu sans de livres/ de café.*  
 Jean is come without of books/ of coffee  
 (ii) *Jean est venu sans livres/ café.*  
 Jean is come without books/ coffee  
 ‘Jean has come without books/coffee.’

7 In particular, *des*-indefinites are not mentioned among the items that are identified as PPIS in Tovená et al. (2004), a well-informed and comprehensive chapter on “Polarity Sensitive Items” in Corblin and De Swart (2004).

8 But see Van den Wyngaerd (1999) who argues that *a(n)* in English is a PPI.

The opposite view is expressed by Homer (2011) in a footnote:

- (9) The PPI phenomenon is extremely robust across languages: to my knowledge, the unacceptability of indefinites—otherwise acceptable in simple positive sentences—under a clausemate negation is universal.

Examples of the type in (8) do not constitute evidence against the PPI status of the singular indefinite, because in such examples the article has a “minimizing” use, as suggested by the fact that in run-of-the-mill examples, *a* changes to *any*:

- (10) a. *John saw a bear/cat/car.*  
 b. *John didn't see any bear/cat/car.*

Now, if the singular indefinite article is a PPI, there is no reason to deny the PPI status of *des/de la/du* in French.

The preceding remarks are not meant to criticize Le Bruyn (2010), who is not interested in PPIs. Homer (2011) himself does not mention *des/de la/du* indefinites at all. My only point in invoking these authors is that the PPI status of *des/de la/du* is either ignored or questioned by the current literature. More importantly, regardless of the labels we may want to use, the alternation between *des/de la/du* in positive assertions vs bare *de* in negative assertions, which is a core fact of French grammar, has been left aside by most (to my knowledge all) of the recent developments in formal semantics.

## 2.2 When PPIs can Scope under Negation

There are well-known contexts in which PPIs of the *some* type *can* occur in the scope of negation (see in particular Jespersen 1917; Szabolcsi 2004 and Larrivé 2012). Consider (11) from Szabolcsi (2004, (24), (7), and (23)):

- (11) a. *I don't think that John called someone.* (not > some)  
 b. *He found something.*  
     *Wrong! He DIDN't / DID NOT find something.* (not > some)  
 c. *John didn't show every boy something.* (not > some)

The following examples show that in the same contexts, *des can* take narrow scope with respect to negation:<sup>9</sup>

9 Both Szabolcsi (2004) and Larrivé (2012) assume that DPs of the form *some NP*, as in *some students, some wine* are parallel to *somebody/someone/something*, but only the latter appear

- (12) *Je ne pense pas que Jean ait écrit des romans.*  
 I NEG think not that Jean has.SBJV written PA.PL novels  
 'I don't think Jean wrote novels.'
- (13) a. *Jean a écrit des romans.*  
 Jean has written PA.PL novels  
 'Jean wrote some novels.'
- b. *Non, Jean n' a pas écrit des romans.*  
 non Jean NEG has not written PA.PL novels  
 'Jean did NOT write novels.'
- (14) *Tu ne gagneras pas de l' argent en composant de la musique.*  
 you NEG will.win not PA.SG money by composing PA.F.SG music  
 'You will NOT earn (\*some) money by composing music.'
- (15) a. *Jean ne dit pas souvent des bêtises.*  
 Jean NEG says not often PA.PL stupid.things  
 'Jean doesn't often say (\*some) stupid things.'
- b. *Jean n' a pas envoyé des livres à tous les élèves.*  
 Jean NEG has not sent PA.PL books to all the students  
 'Jean hasn't sent (\*some) books to all the students.'

What the examples above have in common is that the relation between negation and *des* is not local.<sup>10</sup> Thus, in (12), negation and *des* do not belong to the same minimal clause. The examples in (13)-(14) illustrate denial and emphatic-contrast contexts, which might be analyzed as metalinguistic negation (Horn

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in the examples that these authors use in order to illustrate the various generalizations. In the main text I build *des*-counterparts of some of the examples of these authors. In the translations I use BNS, the *some*-NPs being inappropriate. The difference between *some* NPs and the pronominal series of *some* is arguably due to differences in their respective scalar properties, but this has not been addressed in the previous literature (this issue is currently under investigation in joint work with Tabea Ihsane).

10 It is interesting to observe that scalar properties seem to be relevant for the "marked" non-local narrow scope with respect to negation discussed in the present subsection but not for the "unmarked" local scope with respect to negation: *some* NPs, *des* NPs as well as the pronominal series *somebody/someone/ something* and their French counterparts *quelqu'un/quelque chose* are alike in being unable to scope under local negation in unmarked contexts.

1989) or as a particular type of extracausal negation (Szabolcsi 2004, and references quoted there). Finally, examples (15a–b) illustrate the case in which non-locality is induced by the presence of an intervening operator (the adverb *souvent* ‘often’ or the universal quantifier) at the level of LF: note that in (15b), *tous* ‘all’ is not a linear-order intervener; but at LF, *tous* scopes in between *pas* and *des* (the sentence means something like ‘it is not to all students that John sent books’). According to Szabolcsi (2004), examples of this type (built with *something, someone*) do not constitute evidence against the PPI status of *some* in English provided that the relevant constraint on PPIs is defined in terms of *immediate* (meaning “local”) narrow scope rather than just narrow scope.

There is, however, a group of examples in which PPIs can appear in the *immediate* scope of negation, as in (16) (from Szabolcsi 2004, (33), (36), (37), and (39)).

- (16) a. *I don't think that John didn't call someone.*  
 b. *I regret that John didn't call someone.*  
 c. *If we don't call someone, we are doomed.*  
 d. *Only John didn't call someone.*

Again, we find that *des*-indefinites are themselves allowed in these contexts:

- (17) a. *Je ne crois pas qu' il n' a pas mangé du*  
 I NEG believe not that he NEG has not eaten P.A.M.SG  
*chocolat.*  
 chocolate  
 ‘I don't think he ate chocolate.’
- b. *Je regrette qu' il n' a pas écrit des romans.*  
 I regret that he NEG has not written P.A.PL novels  
 ‘I regret that he didn't write novels.’
- c. *Si Jean n' apporte pas des gâteaux, j' irai en acheter.*  
 if Jean NEG brings not P.A.PL cookies I will.go PART buy  
 ‘If Jean doesn't bring cookies, I'll go buy some.’
- d. *Seulement Jean n' a pas apporté des gâteaux.*  
 only Jean NEG has not brought P.A.PL cookies  
 ‘Only Jean didn't bring cookies.’

The hallmark of these examples is that the sequence [Negation > PPI] occurs in the scope of a higher operator, such as a negated belief verb, *regret*, the conditional or *only*.

Larrivée (2012) observes two further contexts in which *some* is allowed to take narrow scope with respect to negation, namely negated questions (18) and the complement of *the fact* (19). In these contexts also, *des*-indefinites pattern with *some*-indefinites:

- (18) *N' a t-il pas écrit des romans ?*  
 NEG has he not written PA.PL novels  
 'Didn't he write (some) novels?'

- (19) *Le fait qu' il n' a pas écrit des romans ...*  
 the fact that he NEG has not written PA.PL novels  
 'The fact that he didn't write novels ...'

Because of examples of the type in (17), Szabolcsi (2004) proposed that PPIs are doubly-negated existentials in their underlying representation. Under this hypothesis, the acceptability of (17) would be due to the presence of two downward monotonic operators, each of which would license one of the two negations of the *some*-indefinite.<sup>11</sup> This proposal was criticized by Larrivée (2012), who proposes an alternative explanation, based on a principle that uses the notion of “activated proposition” (Dryer 1996): all the contexts listed above are analyzed by Larrivée as triggering the activation of propositions; and when that happens, it is the whole proposition that is brought “into the focus of negation, which [therefore] does not interact directly with the PPI to produce infelicitous interpretations.” (Larrivée 2012, 869). In this article I will not be interested in the “rescuing” contexts briefly presented above. The discussion in this section was simply meant to make it clear that I am aware of these examples, but that I do not consider them to be counterevidence against the PPI status of *des*-indefinites. Nor do I think that the analysis of these examples bears on the analysis of the run-of-the-mill examples in which *des* must be replaced by *de*.

11 The unacceptability of narrow scope of *some* with respect to negation in unmarked contexts (see (5c)) would be due to the fact that only one of the two underlying negative elements is licensed. In the absence of any negation outside the *some*-indefinite, the two internal negations cancel each other, yielding acceptability.

### 2.3 *When des (But Not some) can Scope under Negation*

Quite interestingly, there is still another context in which *des*-indefinites can take narrow scope with regard to negation:<sup>12</sup>

(20) French

- a. *Jean n' a pas filmé d' ours/ des ours mais des pandas.*  
 Jean NEG has not filmed DE bear/ PA.PL bears but PA.PL pandas  
 pandas  
 'Jean did not film bears, but pandas.'
- b. *Jean n' a pas acheté de vin/ du vin mais du whisky.*  
 Jean NEG has not bought DE wine/ PA.M.SG wine but PA.M.SG whisky  
 whisky  
 'Jean did not buy wine, but whisky.'

In the English counterparts of these examples, the *des*-indefinites must be translated by BPS and BMNS; *some* is unacceptable or at best marginal (in a denial-type of context):

- (21) a. *?\*John hasn't filmed some bears, but some pandas.*  
 b. *John hasn't filmed bears, but pandas.*

The fact that *some* is disallowed in this type of example indicates that the reason for the acceptability of *des* cannot be attributed to the general behavior of PPIs of the *some* type. The fact that *des*-indefinites need to be translated by BPS and BMNS suggests that in this particular context, *des*-indefinites need to be analyzed as BPS and BMNS, not as *some* indefinites.

12 As far as I could gather from informal questionnaires, the Italian data are by and large similar: if contrastive contexts (the only ones mentioned in Cardinaletti and Giusti (2017)) are left aside, *dei/del/della* cannot be interpreted in the scope of negation. I could nevertheless find a counterexample in Le Bruyn (2010, 101), according to whom the example in (i) can take the two interpretations indicated below:

- (i) *Non ho visto dei bambini.*  
 not [I].have seen PA.PL children  
 'I haven't seen any children.'  
 'There are some children that I haven't seen.'

*Dei* is known to take wide scope easily (Chierchia 1998; Storto 2003 and Zamparelli 2008), unlike *des* in French. But the narrow scope with regard to negation (the "any" reading above) is much less acknowledged. Cf. also footnote 4 above.

The example in (20a) does not deny the existence of a filming event but only the fact that the filming event involved bears; it asserts the existence of a panda-filming event. Compare the examples in (2), which assert that there was no filming of bears and no buying of wine. In unmarked contexts, such examples entail that there was no filming and no buying event.

This informal description of the meaning of (20) suggests that it is only the *des*-indefinite that scopes under negation, to the exclusion of the main predicate. These scope relations can be overtly observed in clefts:

- (22) *Ce ne sont pas des ours/ \*d' ours que Jean a filmé.*  
 that NEG are not PA.PL bears \*PA bears that Jean has filmed  
 'It's not (\*some) bears that Jean has filmed.'

In this example, the main predicate is outside the scope of *pas*, whereas *des* itself is inside the scope of *pas*. The unacceptability of the invariable *de*-indefinite (*d'ours*) indicates that a negated copula not only allows for *des*, but also disallows (does not license) invariable-*de* indefinites. This latter observation concerns not only clefts, but is a general property of the negated copula (which to my knowledge has gone unnoticed so far):

- (23) *Tom et Henry ne sont pas des ours/ \*d' ours.*  
 Tom and Henry NEG are not PA.PL bears/ \*PA bears  
 'Tom and Henry are not (\*some) bears.'

Note furthermore that in fragment answers, *des* can scope below *pas*:

- (24) a. *Qu'est-ce que tu voudrais manger?* 'What is it that you would like to eat?'  
 b. *Pas des carottes/ de carottes*  
 not PA.PL carrots/ PA carrots  
 'Not (\*some) carrots.'

The facts mentioned in this subsection deserve a full-length article on their own. For my present purposes it is sufficient to refine our generalizations regarding the distribution of *des* under negation:

- (25) a. *Des*-indefinites cannot scope below a negated main predicate.  
 b. *Des*-indefinites can scope below a "bare" negative quantifier and below a negated copula.



In the explanatory part of this article (essentially Section 5) I will propose an explanation for (25a) and make a suggestion for (25b).

#### 2.4 *Indefinites That Scope above Negation*

The next task is to identify some defining property of *des*-indefinites that would explain their PPI status (more precisely, their impossibility of taking narrow scope with respect to a negated main predicate).

Giannakidou (2008, 34) attributes the PPI status of the English *some* (as well as of its Greek counterparts examined in Giannakidou 1998, 2000) to its being allowed to take wide scope:<sup>13</sup>

(26) “Scoping above negation is the defining property of PPI-hood.” Giannakidou (2008, 34)

Szabolcsi (2004) has convincingly argued that this type of explanation cannot be correct for the English *some*. There is no doubt that *some* can scope above negation (provided that it is pronounced with emphatic stress), but this property is independent of its PPI status, which is concerned with narrow scope. The crucial fact is that the impossibility of the narrow scope of *some* with respect to negation contrasts with the possibility of narrow scope with respect to other operators, such as the necessity modal:

(27) a. *John must have met some old friends.* (some > MUST; MUST > some)  
 b. *I haven't met some students.* (some > NEG; \* NEG > some)

The possibility of *some* scoping under MUST shown in (27a) and the impossibility of scoping under negation shown in (27b) are exactly parallel to our observations regarding *des* (see (4) and (2)).

*Des*-indefinites are more resistant to taking wide scope than *some* indefinites. It is only in well-chosen examples that *des*-indefinites can have specific interpretations, in which case they can take wide scope, and even scope above negation:<sup>14</sup>

13 A similar idea can be found in Progovac's (2000) analysis of the Serbo-Croatian PPI *ne(t)ko* 'someone'.

14 The external reviewer of this paper points out that Galmiche (1986) argued in favor of the possibility of specific readings of *des*-indefinites and correlatively of the possibility of wide scope, in particular over modals, as in *Berthe veut rencontrer des linguistes* 'Berthe wants to meet sm linguists'. I acknowledge this possibility, but the fact that it needs to be “proved” indicates that the specific readings of *des*-indefinites are “marked” compared

(28) French

a. ??*Des étudiants ne sont pas venus en cours aujourd'hui.*

PA.PL students NEG are not come in class today

'Some students did not attend class today.'

b. ??*Dans ce champ du maïs n' a pas été fauché.*<sup>15</sup>

in this field PA.M.SG corn NEG has not been mown

'In this field, some corn has not been mown.'

Let me however insist on the fact that the marked possibility of wide-scoped *des*-indefinites is independent of their PPI status, which is only concerned with narrow scope.

In sum, for both *some* and *des*, their PPI status (impossibility of narrow scope with respect to negation) is orthogonal to the (im)possibility of wide scope and moreover, the narrow scope with respect to negation does not correlate with the narrow scope with respect to other operators. In other words, the PPI status of *some* and *des*-indefinites cannot be explained on the basis of the general scopal properties of these items.

### 2.5 *Bare Nouns Are Not PPIs*

Their PPI behavior distinguishes *des*-indefinites from BPs and BMNs, which obligatorily take narrow scope with regard to negation (Carlson 1977):

(29) a. *John has(n't) read novels.*b. *Mary doesn't drink/drinks milk.*

In the languages in which they exist, count bare Ns, also called Bare Singulars (BSS), behave on a par with BPs and BMNs with respect to negation:

(30) Romanian

a. *Ion (nu) purta cămașă.*

Ion (NEG) wore shirt

'Ion was(n't) wearing a shirt.'

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to their non-specific readings. Indeed, the lexical choice of the verb, the noun, combined with pragmatic notions such as "relevance" (see also Attal 1976) are crucial for the specificity and wide scope of *des*-indefinites in standard French.

15 This is an example I have built on the model of the example in (i), attributed to Kleiber (1989) by Bosveld-de Smet (2004):

(i) *Dans ce champ du maïs est pollué.*

in this field PA.M.SG corn is polluted.

- b. *Blocul ăsta (nu) are lift.*  
 building.DEF this (NEG) has elevator  
 ‘This building has/doesn’t have an elevator.’

Although some qualifications may apply, for our present purposes I will assume (for languages with articles) the generalization stated below:

- (31) All existentially interpreted BNS (BPS, BMNS, BSS) take narrow scope with regard to negation.

The obligatory narrow scope of existential BNS with respect to negation has been attributed to their semantic analysis (existential quantification supplied by the main verb combined with kind-denotation (Carlson 1977) or property-denotation (Van Geenhoven 1996) of the BN), which is also responsible for obligatory narrow scope with regard to other operators.

## 2.6 *Distinguishing between des-indefinites and BNS*

The data reviewed in the previous subsections show that *des*-indefinites and BNS form an interesting minimal pair: both types of expressions qualify as “weak” and take narrow scope (obligatorily for BNS and preferentially for *des*-indefinites) with regard to modal operators or intensional verbs, but they differ insofar as *des*-indefinites cannot, whereas BNS must, take narrow scope with respect to negation.

In order to start understanding this contrasting behavior of BNS and *des*-indefinites with respect to negation, we need to find some difference that may turn out to be relevant.

There is an obvious perceptible difference between BNS and *des*-indefinites: bareness of the NP (noun accompanied by certain modifiers) as opposed to the presence of extra material, the inflected elements *des/de la/du* themselves, preceding the NP. But the way in which this extra material is relevant for PPI status is not given on its sleeve. Following Chierchia (2006), most of the existing analyses treat PPIs as a scalar phenomenon (see in particular Nicolae 2017, on disjunction and Falauts 2018, on free choice items). Nicolae (2012) extends this treatment to the English *some*, but in fact only deals with the *some* that takes a singular NP as a complement, as in \**Mary didn't meet some friend yesterday*. Since the singular *some* is known to be different from *some* NP<sub>pl</sub>/NP<sub>mass</sub>, I will not evaluate Nicolae’s proposal here, assuming that it is not relevant for the analysis of *des*-indefinites, the meaning of which does not seem to have a scalar component.

A scalarity-based account does not seem to help explaining the PPI status of *des*-indefinites, because these nominals do not have any scalar properties

that might distinguish them from BNS. I will instead show that the contrasting behavior of BNS and *des*-indefinites can be explained by assuming that they have different denotations (*contra* previous proposals, in particular Bosveld-de Smet 1998; Galmiche 1986; Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade 2004, 2012):

- (32) a. BNS are property-denoting nominals.  
 b. *Des*-indefinites are weak existential quantifiers.

The observations made in Section 2.3 above suggest the following refinement: (32b) holds when *des*-indefinites are interpreted in the scope of the main predicate. When occurring outside the scope of the main predicate (e.g., in clefts) or in copular constructions, the distribution of *des*-indefinites is different from that of *some* indefinites and resembles that of BNS. This suggests that in such contexts *des*-indefinites are property-denoting, on a par with BNS. In this article I will restrict my attention to those contexts in which *des*-indefinites are interpreted inside the scope of a lexical main predicate.

In Section 3 I give a brief overview of the various rules of semantic composition that have been proposed for property-denoting nominals, and I argue that a unique rule of semantic composition, Predicate Modification, should be assumed for all BNS (BSS and BPS/BMNS should be treated alike). The insensitivity with respect to negation will be explained as following rather straightforwardly from analyzing BNS as predicate modifiers of the main predicate. In the last subsection of Section 3 I introduce Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea's (2015) definition of the notion of weak existential quantifier, which according to (32b) is needed for the analysis of *des*-indefinites. In Section 4 I propose syntactic analyses of BNS and *des*-indefinites that correlate with the denotational distinction stated in (32). In Section 5 I show that the PPI status of weak existential quantifiers can be explained if we assume that (i) narrow scope with respect to negation involves polyadic quantification and (ii) polyadic quantification is constrained by Collins and Postal's (2014) Determiner Sharing.

### 3 The Semantics of Weak Indefinites

In what follows, I will briefly review two semantic analyses, which were respectively proposed for BPS and BMNS on the one hand and for BSS on the other hand (Sections 3.1 and 3.2, respectively).<sup>16</sup> In Section 3.3 I will argue that BPS

<sup>16</sup> Because of lack of space I will not present Diesing's (1992) proposal, which relies on trans-

and BMNS can be assumed to have the same semantics as that of BSS: they can be analyzed as property-denoting expressions that combine with the main predicate via Predicate Modification. Based on this assumption, the obligatory narrow scope of BNS with respect to negation is explained in Section 3.4. In Section 3.5 I review a third type of analysis for weak indefinites, which had been designed for BPS and BMNS, but which I argue is suited for *des*-indefinites.

### 3.1 *Property-Denoting Arguments That Saturate Existential Predicates*

According to a widespread view, existential BPS and BMNS in Romance (and other languages which lack kind-referring BPS) are property-denoting (type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ ) expressions (McNally 1995, 1998a, 1998b; Dobrovie-Sorin 1997; Dobrovie-Sorin and Laca 2003; Dobrovie-Sorin et al. 2005, 2006), despite the fact that they quite freely occur in argument positions, as in the following Romanian example:<sup>17</sup>

(33) Romanian

*Ion a citit romane.*

Ion has read novels

'Ion read novels.'

*Qua* property-denoting expressions, BPS and BMNS cannot combine with the main predicate via the canonical rules of semantic composition (saturation or quantification). The most largely adopted implementation, known as "semantic incorporation" is due to Van Geenhoven (1996): the main predicate is represented as an "existential predicate", that is, a predicate that has some or all of its argument positions bound by existential closure and waits to be saturated by a property P that restricts the range of the relevant argument (in the following, I notate this "existential" version of the main predicate with the prime symbol):<sup>18</sup>

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lating BNS (and weak indefinites in general) as free variables that get bound by VP-level existential closure. Insofar as Diesing's proposal relies on a variable bound by an existential Q, her analysis looks like a variant of an existential quantifier analysis and as such yields the wrong results for BNS (they would be predicted to show a PPI behavior).

17 The analysis of existential BNS in English is controversial (property-denotation or kind-denotation). Because existential BMNS and BPS in English have essentially the same properties as the Romance BMNS and BPS (in Romanian, Spanish), it is reasonable to assume the same analysis and to attribute the possibility of kind-reference in English to the presence of a covert DET(erminer) that has the semantics of Chierchia's (1998) Down operator. Romance languages lack such a covert DET and use the definite article for kind-reference.

18 The hypothesis that the existential reading of BPS depends on the existential quantifier

- (34) i.  $[[\text{citi}']] = \lambda P \lambda x \exists y (\text{read}(x,y) \wedge P(y))$   
 ii.  $[[\text{romane}]] = \lambda z \text{ novels}(z)$   
 iii.  $[[\text{citi}' \text{ romane}]] = [[\text{read}']]([[ \text{novels} ]]) = \lambda x \exists y (\text{read}(x,y) \wedge (\lambda z \text{ novels}(z))(y)) =$   
 $= \lambda x \exists y (\text{read}(x,y) \wedge \text{novels}(y))$

I-level predicates do not have an existential version:

- (35) a.  $[[\text{intelligent}]] = \lambda x \text{ intelligent}(x)$   
 b.  $[[\text{admire}]] = \lambda x \lambda y (\text{admire}(y,x))$

Such predicates must either be saturated by an entity-type expression or combine with a generalized quantifier. Under the assumption that BNS have a property-type denotation, their incompatibility with these predicates is explained:<sup>19</sup>

- (36) Romanian  
 a. *\*Copii sunt inteligenți.*  
 children are intelligent  
 b. *\*Admir profesori.*  
 admire.1SG professors

### 3.2 Predicate Modification

Another type of semantic composition has been proposed by Dayal (2003) for the analysis of un-Case-marked Hindi BSS and by Dobrovie-Sorin et al. (2005, 2006) and Espinal and McNally (2007, 2011) for BSS in Romanian, Spanish and Catalan.<sup>20</sup> According to Dobrovie-Sorin et al. (2005, 2006), both BPS/BMNS and BSS denote properties, but they differ from each other insofar as the former combine with existential predicates (see (34)), whereas the latter rely on

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being supplied by the main predicate rather than by the BP itself goes back to Carlson (1977), who combined this idea with the hypothesis of kind-referring BPS by postulating a realization relation between the kind and an existentially bound variable over realizations of the kind.

19 Because English allows for kind-referring BMNS and BPS, the counterparts of these examples in English are grammatical. But crucially, the BNS cannot take an existential reading; they can only be interpreted as referring to kinds.

20 English does not allow BSS.

Dayal's (2003) rule of "semantic pseudo-incorporation"<sup>21</sup> shown in (37)<sup>22</sup> which amounts to saying that they function as modifiers of the main predicate:

- (37)  $[[V]] = \lambda P \lambda y \exists e [P-V(e) \wedge \text{Ag}(e) = y \wedge \text{Appropriately Classificatory}(e)]$   
 where  $\exists e P-V(e)$  is true iff  $\exists e' (V(e') \wedge \exists x (\text{Theme}(e') = x \wedge P(x)))$   
 (adapted after Dayal 2011, 146)

(37) represents an "incorporating predicate", which is obtained from a transitive verb of the form  $\lambda x \lambda y \lambda e [V(e) \wedge \text{Ag}(e) = y \wedge \text{Th}(e) = x]$ , by replacing the Theme argument with a place-holder for a predicate-modifier notated P. The restriction to "appropriately classificatory" events is meant to account for the fact that v + bare singular sequences must refer to types of events that are culturally stable. Given (37), the object position can be filled by property-denoting nominals, which qualify as predicate-modifiers. Somewhat different implementations of the rule of predicate-modification were proposed by Espinal and McNally (2007, 2011)<sup>23</sup> and by Chung and Ladusaw (2003).

### 3.3 *A Unified Semantic Composition for BNS*

Both of the two rules described above apply to property-denoting nominals. This is problematic if we think that one and the same semantic type should compose with the main predicate unambiguously, via the same rule of semantic composition. And we may in fact wonder whether we really need two different rules, one for BSS and one for BPS/BMNS.

A uniform analysis of all BNS is supported by the uniformity of their external syntax (position with respect to the verb, possibility to occur in dislocated positions, etc.). Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2015, 91–95) showed that both BSS and BPS/BMNS qualify as "pseudo-incorporated" in the sense of Massam (2001).

21 Dayal's (2003) use of the label "pseudo-incorporation" suggests that this *semantic* rule applies to those BSS that are pseudo-incorporated in Massam's (2001) sense (i.e., VP-internal BNS), as opposed to BSS in the preverbal subject position and to BPS. Dobrovie-Sorin et al. (2005, 2006) use the term "Predicate Modification" for Dayal's "pseudo-incorporation".

22 Farkas and De Swart's (2003) rule of Unification of thematic arguments and Chung and Ladusaw's (2003) rule of Restrict are different implementations of the same type of analysis.

23 Espinal and McNally's (2011, 44) rule, given below, seems problematic to me because activity verbs such as *eat*, *drink*, *write* allow for implicit roles, that is, they can function as intransitives (*John was eating when I arrived*) and yet they cannot combine with BSS:

(i) If  $[[V]] = \lambda e[V(e)]$  and  $\theta$  is an implicit role function defined for V,  
 and if  $[[N]] = N$ , a property,  
 then  $[[[_v V N]]] = \lambda e[V(e) \wedge N(\theta(e))]$ .

Thus, all BNS are alike in that they are unable to raise out of their vP-internal position to some IP-internal argument position, which explains why subjects cannot occur in the preverbal position (cf. Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou, this volume, for Brazilian Portuguese examples where the subject is reinterpreted as an event type). The fact that BNS are not necessarily adjacent to the verb can be attributed to the fact that in Romance, *v* raises to Infl. All BNS, including BSS, can raise to a left-peripheral position, Topic or Focus.

Regarding internal syntax, Dobrovie-Sorin et al. (2005, 2006) argued that BSS were genuinely bare NPs, whereas BPS had an extra layer of syntactic structure, Num(ber)P.<sup>24</sup> This will be revised in Section 4.1 below, where I argue that BPS and BSS can be treated alike, as mere projections of little *n*, that is, as nominal projections that lack both D° and Num°.

If indeed all BNS are alike regarding their internal and external syntactic properties, why did certain authors want to treat them differently? The motivation put forth in Dobrovie-Sorin et al. (2005, 2006) was the difference in distribution: in certain languages, for example, Romanian, Catalan or Spanish, BSS show a highly restricted distribution: they can only combine with HAVE and with verbs that can be viewed as involving some more abstract notion of possession, such as *wear* or *buy* (Espinal and McNally 2007, 2011):<sup>25</sup>

(38) Romanian

a. *Maria* {*are* / *caută* / *a cumpărat*} {*mașină* / *mașini*}.  
 Maria has looks.for has bought car cars  
 ‘Maria has / is looking for / bought a car.’

b. *Maria* {*desenează* / *vede* / *aude* / *vopsește* / *mută*} {*mașini* / \**mașină*}.  
 Maria draws sees hears paints moves cars  
 car  
 ‘Maria is drawing / sees / hears / is moving cars / \*(a) car.’

This more restricted distribution was assumed to be due to the reduced internal structure of BSS: they would be mere NPs, whereas BPS would be (at least) NumPs.

The lack of Num was assumed to explain the “number-neutrality” of BSS (Dobrovie-Sorin et al. 2005, 2006; and especially Espinal and McNally 2007,

24 BMNS were not addressed in Dobrovie-Sorin et al. (2005, 2006).

25 Similarly, un-Case-marked bare NPs have a more restricted distribution than Case-marked bare NPs in Hindi.



2011). Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2015, 118–119) observed however that possession verbs, which notoriously allow BSS, also allow BPS and BMNS:

(39) Romanian

a. *Maria are {cărți / ?? carte}*.

Maria has books book

‘Maria has books/ (a) book.’

b. *??Ai mănușă?*

have.2SG glove

b'. *Ai mănuși?*

have.2SG gloves

‘Are you wearing a glove/gloves?’

Spanish

c. *??El perro tiene oreja larga.*

the dog has ear long.SG

c'. *El perro tiene orejas largas.*

the dog has ears long.PL

‘The dog has a large ear / large ears.’

Romanian

d. *??Are floare în grădină.*

has flowers in garden

d'. *Are flori în grădină.*

has flowers in garden

‘He has a flower / flowers in his garden.’

The choice between BSS and BPS seems to be dictated by whether the conventionalized type of possession involves more than one Possessee of the class N, in which case a BS is not felicitous, and the BP must be used instead. This observation indicates that BSS are not genuinely number neutral.

Note also that most verbs other than possession verbs refer to episodic events, which by default refer to events that involve more than one participant. Hence the preference for BPS over BSS. BMNS are expected to pattern with BPS, since eventive predicates by default refer to events that involve indeterminate amounts of stuff.

In sum, the highly restricted distribution of BSS compared to BPs may arguably be explained by invoking pragmatic principles. Provided this can be achieved (which constitutes a research project on its own), all BNS can be analyzed in the same way. And as I observed above, a uniform analysis is supported by the similarity in syntactic properties. Moreover, a uniform semantic composition is supported by the assumption that all BNS are property-denoting expressions.

The question now arises as to which one of the two rules described in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 should be chosen. Because existential quantification over events seems crucial for the analysis of BNS, I will choose Predicate Modification.

In sum:

- (40) All BNS (i.e., BSS, BPS and BMNS in subject or object positions) are property-denoting expressions that compose with the main predicate via Predicate Modification.

This proposal does not exclude the possibility that some BNS have other types of denotation, which may be needed for those BNS that seem to behave as strong indefinites.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.4 *Predicate Modification and Negation*

Going back to obligatory narrow scope with respect to negation, it can be straightforwardly explained: BNS are modifiers of the main verb, they do not contribute any individual variable, and sentential negation involves a negated existential quantifier that binds an event-variable (Acquaviva 1997; Giannakidou 1997 and Zeijlstra 2004).

- (41) *John didn't buy tickets.*

The meaning of (41) would be paraphrased as 'there was no event of John buying tickets'.

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26 BPs have been shown to exhibit some properties of strong indefinites in those languages that have "general Number" (Corbett's [2000] terminology), that is, in those languages in which BSS can freely occur in argument positions, in which case they have a "number-neutral" or more precisely an "inclusive plural" interpretation (cf. Kwon and Zribi-Hertz 2004, 2005, for Korean; Bale and Khanjian 2014, for Western Armenian).

### 3.5 *Des-indefinites Denote Weak Existential Quantifiers*

According to Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade (2012) and Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2015), BPs and BMNS are full DPs headed by a null  $D^\circ$  that denotes an existential Q over sum-entities notated  $\emptyset\exists$ :

- (42)  $[[D \emptyset\exists]] = \lambda P_{\text{cum}} \lambda Q \lambda e \exists x (P(x) \wedge Q(x)(e))$   
 defined iff  $\exists y, y \neq x$  such that  $y = \text{Participant}(e)$  and  $x$  is spatially localized with respect to  $y$  in  $e$

This weak existential determiner should be kept distinct from the strong existential Q (currently analyzed as relying on a choice function), as well as from Chierchia's (1998) Down operator.

The determiner defined in (42) is "selective", in the sense that it is specified to select nominal predicates that are cumulative (notated  $P_{\text{cum}}$ ), that is, either mass or plural NPs. This means that the variable bound by the existential Q does not range over atoms but rather over sums (portions of stuff or pluralities of atoms). This type of existential Q is assumed to be subject to a definedness condition: it is defined only if its second argument (the main predicate) allows for a Participant (argument or adjunct) that is spatially located.<sup>27</sup>

Neither Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade (2012) nor Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2015) were interested in distinguishing between BNS and *des*-indefinites: Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade (2012) assumed that the two types of nominals were alike (existential Qs over sums) and Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2015) did not discuss *des*-indefinites.

In order to account for their contrasting behavior with respect to negation, I will assume that BNS lack the  $D^\circ$  level of representation (see Section 4.1 below) and correlatively they denote properties and combine with the main predicate via Predicate Modification (as proposed in Section 3.3 above), which explains why they are insensitive to negation (see Section 3.4),<sup>28</sup> whereas *des/de la/du* are weak determiners of the semantic type proposed above:

- (43)  $[[\text{des}]] = \lambda P_{\text{cum}} \lambda Q \lambda e \exists x (P(x) \wedge Q(x)(e))$

27 Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade (2012) and Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2015) proposed this type of analysis for existential BPs/BMNS in replacement of property-denotational analyses (see Sections 3.1 and 3.2). An invoked advantage was the assumption that nominals in argument positions be analyzed as having an argument-type denotation (existential Q). Property-type denotation was assumed only for BNS, which were treated as predicate modifiers, with no individual variable filling the argument position.

28 This means that I reject the hypothesis that BNS are headed by null Det's of the type shown in (42) (*contra* Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade 2012 and Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2015).

#### 4 The Syntax of BNS and *des*-indefinites

The purpose of this section is to outline syntactic analyses that correlate with the distinct denotations proposed above for BNS and *des*-indefinites.

##### 4.1 *The Syntax of BNS*

The hypothesis of a unified semantic analysis for BNS proposed in Section 3.3 calls for a unified syntactic analysis. I will therefore reject previous hypotheses according to which BPS differ from BSS in terms of the presence vs absence of the functional category Num(ber).<sup>29</sup> All BNS will instead be analyzed as nPs. *Little n*<sup>30</sup> is particularly relevant for the analysis of BPS because it can host their plural morphology, thus rendering the projection of Num<sup>o</sup> unnecessary.<sup>31</sup> BSS themselves can be analyzed not as mere NPs, but rather as nPs headed by a null n<sup>o</sup>. Finally, BMNS would have the same structure as BSS, but would differ from them by the lexical properties of the root. I assume that count roots carry an AT(om) feature on the root listed in the Lexicon, as opposed to mass roots, which do not have such a feature.<sup>32</sup>

29 Dobrovie-Sorin et al. (2005, 2006) considered BSS as genuinely bare NPs (no functional category) and BPS as NumPs. They did not take into consideration the lowest functional category in the nominal domain, currently referred to as *little n*. Furthermore, they did not discuss BMNS, which could be taken care of by assuming that they are Measure Phrases (note that Num<sup>o</sup> itself can be viewed as a particular realization of the functional category Meas<sup>o</sup> for Measure, see Section 4.2 below). This would group together BMNS and BPS, thus correctly capturing their similar distribution across languages.

30 Functional categories such as *little n* and *little v* were proposed in Distributed Morphology in order to formalize the difference between syntactic categories and lexical roots. In this framework, there are no NPs or VPs *per se*, but only nPs and vPs, headed by functional categories (*little n* or *little v*) that take roots as complements. Under this view it is roots rather than nouns that are classified as substance or atom-referring. Depending on the language and on the type of DP, *little n* was argued to be filled by gender features (Picallo 2005) or by plural features (Lowenstamm 2007; Dobrovie-Sorin 2012).

31 On the hypothesis that plural morphology may realize distinct functional heads see Heycock and Zamparelli (2005).

32 The count vs mass distinction is a highly debated issue. Most theoreticians defend the view that the distinction is purely morphosyntactic, being due to inserting a root that is not distinguished as either “mass” or “count” into the complement of functional heads (Div for Borer 2005 or IND(ividuation) for Bale and Barner 2009), which are responsible for certain Ns behaving as count. Only some authors adopt (some variant of) the hypothesis adopted in the text, according to which roots are classified in the Lexicon as either count or mass (Deal 2017).

- (44) a. *zahàr* ‘sugar’ BMN  
            $[\text{N}^\circ \emptyset [\text{Root } \text{zahàr}]]$   
 b. *fatà* ‘girl’ BS  
            $[\text{N}^\circ \emptyset] [\text{Root-AT } \text{fatà}]$   
 c. *fete* ‘girls’ BP  
            $[\text{N}^\circ \text{PL}] [\text{Root-AT } \text{fete}]$

Constituents of this type are “bare” in the sense that they lack  $\text{D}^\circ$ , but they do have some reduced functional structure, they are not mere lexical constituents. Such reduced nominal constituents denote properties: (44a) denotes sets of portions of stuff, (44b) sets of atoms and (44c) sets of plural entities. Note that it is not necessary to assume that the syntactic structure of BNS proposed above is the only possible one. Following Ihsane (2008), we may assume that depending on the syntactic context, BPs and BMNs may have structures of different sizes. What counts for explaining their insensitivity to negation is that their underlying syntax may be the minimal possible one, which I take to be nP, the projection of little n.

#### 4.2 *The Syntax of des-indefinites*

The morphological form *des/de la/du* is made up of an invariable particle DE followed by PL/FEM/MASC. These forms can, however, clearly be distinguished from the homonymic Prepositional Phrases (PPs) headed by the preposition *de* followed by a definite DP (Ihsane 2008; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2017).<sup>33</sup>

I will assume that the DE inside *des/de la/du* fills the functional head postulated by Schwarzschild (2002) for the analysis of pseudo-partitives. For ease of readability I will use the label  $\text{Meas}^\circ$ , introduced by Solt (2009), rather than Schwarzschild’s  $\text{Mon}^\circ$ . The measure function introduced by  $[\text{Meas}^\circ \text{DE}]$  can be interpreted as volume/quantity/weight (of NP), all of which are monotonic, but not as temperature, which is not monotonic.

- (45) French  
       20g        *de sucre*  
       20 grams DE sugar  
        $[\text{DP} [\text{D} \emptyset] [\text{MeasP} [\text{Spec, Meas}^{20} \text{grammes}] [\text{Meas}^\circ [\text{Meas}^\circ \text{DE}] [\text{NP } \text{sucre}]]]]]$

33 Cf. Zamparelli (2008) and Chierchia (1998), who argue that *dei*-indefinites in Italian are PPs in which the complement DP is kind-referring.

Given that *des/de la/du*-indefinites contain DE, I will assume that their syntactic structure is similar to that of pseudo-partitives, *modulo* the presence of concord gender features (which copy the gender feature value of the N) and interpretable number features on Num<sup>o</sup>/Meas<sup>o</sup> that check the uninterpretable number features on little n.<sup>34</sup> I will furthermore assume that Spec,Meas<sup>o</sup> is filled with a null element  $\emptyset$  with the meaning ‘SOME quantity’ or ‘SOME plurality’, depending on whether the root is a mass or count N (see Ihsane, this volume, for a discussion of an implicit quantity in *des*-NPs in relation to specificity).

## (46) French

a. *du sucre*

PA.M.SG sugar

$$[_{DP} [_{D} \emptyset] [_{MeasP} [_{Spec, Meas} \emptyset] [_{Meas'} [_{Meas^o} DE+M(ASC)] [_{nP[+M(ASC)]} sucre]]]]]$$
b. *de la farine*

PA F.SG flour

$$[_{DP} [_{D} \emptyset] [_{MeasP} [_{Spec, Meas} \emptyset] [_{Meas'} [_{Meas^o} DE+F(EM)] [_{nP[+F(EM)]} farine]]]]]$$
c. *des garçons*

PA.PL boys

$$[_{DP} [_{D} \emptyset] [_{MeasP} [_{Spec, Meas} \emptyset+PL] [_{Meas'} [_{Meas^o} DE+PL] [_{nP[+PL]} garçons]]]]]$$

Given the presence of MeasP and D<sup>o</sup>, *des*-indefinites cannot be assumed to denote mere properties but must have an argument-type denotation. And since in unmarked contexts, *des*-indefinites function as weak indefinites, I will assume that Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea's (2015) weak existential Q takes MeasP as a complement:

- (47)  $[_{D} \emptyset \exists] [_{MeasP} \text{des } \text{étudiants}] = \lambda Q \lambda e \exists x (*\text{student}(x) \wedge Q(x)(e))$ ,  
 defined iff  $\exists y, y \neq x$  such that  $y = \text{Participant}(e)$  and  $x$  is spatially localized with respect to  $y$  in  $e$

34 This is in line with Heycock and Zamparelli (2005), who assume that plural features can be inserted in more than one syntactic position, in our case both in Num<sup>o</sup>/Meas<sup>o</sup> and little n. However, the suggestion made in the text here is somewhat different, because plural features are not only allowed to choose between two positions but also to occur in more than one position inside the same DP. I will not pursue the theoretical implications of this proposal here.

This configuration satisfies the selectional restriction mentioned in Section 3.5, which constrains the weak existential determiner to apply to a cumulative predicate: indeed, MeasP constituents denote cumulative predicates, sets of sums of atoms or sets of sums of amounts of stuff.

## 5 Weak Existential Quantifiers and Negation

In this section I will propose a line of explanation for the alternation between the inflected forms *des*, *de la*, *du* found in affirmative contexts and the invariable *de* found in negative contexts:

(48) French

*Jean a lu des livres.*  
 Jean has read PA.PL books  
 'Jean read some books.'

(49) French

*Jean n' a pas lu de livres.*  
 Jean NEG has not read DE books  
 'Jean didn't read any book.'

The invariable *de* will be analyzed as a strict NPI, and I will assume Collins and Postal's (2014) analysis of strict NPIS.

We will then turn to *des*-indefinites, which are clearly neither NPIS nor N(egative)-words. In order to explain the unavailability of their narrow scope with respect to negation, I will make two assumptions: (i) a sentence with multiple negations that is interpreted as involving just one negation is to be analyzed as involving polyadic negative quantification; (ii) polyadic quantification is syntactically constrained by Determiner Sharing (Collins and Postal 2014).

### 5.1 *Collins and Postal's (2014) Analysis of NPIS Applied to Invariable de*

Because the French indefinites headed by the invariable *de* are allowed to scope under negation, they qualify as NPIS. They are strict NPIS<sup>35</sup> because, in contrast to *any* in English, *de*-indefinites are not allowed in downward

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35 Starting with Horn (1971), theoreticians agree that different classes of NPIS need to be distinguished (see Van der Wouden 1997, for an overview), but they do not agree on the classification. For our present purposes it is sufficient to assume that a strict NPI can only

entailing contexts such as restrictors of universal quantifiers, questions, etc., as in for example *Chaque étudiant qui a lu des/\*de livres de linguistique* ‘Each student who has read linguistics books’, *As-tu lu des/\*de livres?* ‘Have you read books?’ This means that the NPI behavior of *de*-indefinites cannot be explained as being due to semantic operations such as domain widening and strengthening (Kadmon and Landman 1993) or exhaustification (Chierchia 2006, 2013).


I will instead use Collins and Postal’s (2014) analysis (based on Klima 1964) according to which NPIS, *any* in particular, are generated as negative existential determiners. Thus, the *any* in the b example below has exactly the same underlying structure as *no*:<sup>36</sup>

- (50) a. *I saw no widow.*  
 b. *I didn’t see any widow.*

- (51) a. *any*: [<sub>D</sub> NEG [SOME]]  
 b. *no*: [<sub>D</sub> NEG [SOME]]

Collins and Postal treat DPs headed by *any* not as indefinites (as currently assumed since Ladusaw 1979) but rather as negative quantificational DPs of the form [<sub>D</sub> NEG[SOME]NP], underlyingly indistinguishable from negative quantificational DPs headed by *no*.

Granting the underlying identity between [no NP] and [any NP], the surface forms of sentences containing *any* are obtained by assuming a syntactic operation, namely (i) NEG raising out of the DP and two morphophonological rules: (ii) the raised NEG is phonologically realized as *not*, and (iii) SOME is realized as *any*. Striking out (my notation) indicates a deleted copy (under the copy-theory of movement):

- (52) I did [<sub>NEG</sub>not] see [<sub>DP</sub>[<sub>D</sub><sup>o</sup>[<sub>NEG</sub>not] [<sub>SOME</sub> any]] widow].
- 

be legitimated by an antiadditive function (e.g., negation or the preposition *without*) in a local context.

36 According to Collins and Postal (2014), the *any* in (50b) is a strict NPI, which needs to be distinguished from the *any* that is legitimated in downward entailing non-negative contexts, which Collins and Postal analyze as containing two negative operators [<sub>D</sub> NEG [NEG [SOME]]], instead of just one.



The notation  $[[_{\text{NEG}} \text{not}] [_{\text{SOME}} \text{any}]]$  is also mine. It is meant to represent in a concise way Collins and Postal's assumption that the NEG and SOME that underlyingly make up *any* are respectively realized as *not* and as *any*.

Collins and Postal's analysis of *any* can be easily extended to cover the French *de*-indefinites legitimated by *pas*, a case which is not considered by the authors:


(53)  $[_{\text{DP}} [_{\text{D}} \emptyset]] [_{\text{MeasP}} [_{\text{Spec, Meas}} [[_{\text{NEG}} \text{pas}] [_{\text{SOME}} \emptyset]]] [_{\text{Meas}'} [_{\text{Meas}^\circ} \text{DE}] [_{\text{NP}} \text{livres}]]]]$

The notation  $[[_{\text{NEG}} \text{pas}] [_{\text{SOME}} \emptyset]]$  is parallel to the notation  $[[_{\text{NEG}} \text{not}] [_{\text{SOME}} \text{any}]]$  used above: the NEG and SOME that underlie the invariable *de* in French are respectively realized as *pas* and a null element. Further details of the representation in (53) such as the Meas head and its projection have been motivated in Section 4 above. The DP-internal position of *pas* is motivated by the fact that in fragment answers *pas* immediately precedes the *de* NP constituent, as in, Q: *Qu'est-ce que tu désires comme cadeau?* 'What would you like as a gift?'; A: *Pas de livres* 'Not books'.

Kayne (1975, his Section 2.5) suggested that indefinites introduced by invariable DE in negative sentences are to be analyzed as nominals of the form  $[\emptyset \text{ de NP}]$ , where  $\emptyset$  is an empty QP. Kayne's analysis neatly correlates with the structure given above, in which  $[[_{\text{NEG}} \text{pas}] [_{\text{SOME}} \emptyset]]$  sits in Spec,Meas, the dedicated position for QPs. Note that neither Kayne (1975) nor Kayne (1984, chapter 4) assume that *pas* is inserted inside the DP in the relevant underlying representation; nevertheless, Kayne (1984) proposed that *pas* can serve as the antecedent of the  $\emptyset$  inside the *de*-nominal. Since any minimalist implementation of this proposal involves movement (Second Merge), it seems safe to say that the proposal made here constitutes on the one hand an updated version of Kayne's (1975, 1994) analysis of *de*-indefinites under the scope of *pas*<sup>37</sup> and on the other hand a refinement suggested by Collins and Postal's analysis of strict NPIs.

The underlying syntax of the example in (49) would thus be (54):

(54) Jean n'a  $[_{\text{NEG}} \text{pas}]$  lu  $[[[_{\text{NEG}} \text{pas}] [_{\text{SOME}} \emptyset]]$  de livres].



37 The reader should be aware of the fact that not all French *de*-indefinites are obtained from the structure shown in (54), which means that not all *de*-indefinites are NPIs. Indeed, bare *de* indefinites can be derived by moving *beaucoup* 'many, much', *peu* 'little, few' or *combien* 'how much' out of the DP, thus yielding the so-called "Quantification at a Distance" configuration (Kayne 1975, 1984; Obenauer 1994; Honcoop 1992; De Swart 1992; Doetjes 1994; Doetjes and Honcoop 1997):

Given that  $[[[\text{NEG } \text{pas}]_{\text{SOME}} \emptyset]]$  translates as a negative existential quantifier, the corresponding LF would involve a unary negative quantifier  $\neg\exists$  that binds an individual variable:

(55)  $\neg\exists_z (*\text{book}(z) \wedge \text{John read } z)$

## 5.2 Polyadic Quantification

Let us now consider the unacceptable examples in which a *des*-indefinite needs to be interpreted under the scope of sentential negation, but cannot do so:

(56) French  
*\*Jean n' a pas lu des livres.*  
 Jean NEG has not read PA.PL books

Part of the explanation of this unacceptability is trivial: *des*-indefinites are not NPIS, which means that their underlying structure does not contain any negative element, and therefore, the example in (56) cannot be derived by raising NEG from inside the DP.

This is however not the end of the story. We must indeed also rule out the following alternative derivation: *pas* is first merged as a NEG modifier of V or VP and *des* stays in its DP-internal position.

My account will build on the following assumption, which crucially relies on the notion of polyadic quantification:

(57) (In unmarked contexts)<sup>38</sup> local narrow scope with respect to negation (i.e., with respect to a negated main predicate) is read off an LF relying on polyadic quantification in which a unique negative existential  $\neg\exists$

- 
- (i) *J'ai lu beaucoup de livres.*  
 I=have read many of books.  
 'I've read many books.'
- (ii) *J'ai beaucoup lu de livres.*  
 I=have many read of books.  
 'I've read many books.'

The fact that *de*-indefinites are ambiguous between strict NPIS and "remnants" of Quantification at a distance is an interesting fact, which as far as I know has not been yet examined within existing theories of NPIS.

38 The restriction to unmarked contexts is meant to leave aside the examples discussed in Sections 2.2 and 2.3. Such "exceptional" examples would not be analyzable as involving negative existential quantification over events, that is, as denying the existence of events, but rather as denying propositions.

binds an n-tuple that contains one event-variable and one or more individual variables.

Polyadic (also called “n-ary”) quantification is a configuration in which a single quantifier<sup>39</sup> binds an n-tuple of variables (Keenan 1987; May 1989). Polyadic quantification is particularly appropriate for the analysis of Negative Concord (De Swart 1999; De Swart and Sag 2002). Indeed, in negative concord environments, two co-occurring negatively marked DPs (N-words) yield a single negation:

- (58) Romanian  
*Niciun student n-a citit nicio carte.*  
 no student not-has read no book  
 ‘No student read any book.’

The single negation interpretation of such sentences cannot be obtained by assuming that each of the N-words counts as a negative quantifier. If that were the case the two negations would cancel each other, yielding a meaning identical to that of (59b), which does not correspond to the interpretation of negative concord sentences:

- (59) a.  $\neg\exists_x$ : student(x).  $\neg\exists_y$ : book(y). x read y  
 b.  $\forall_x$ : student(x).  $\exists_y$ : book(y). x read y

The observable single negation reading can be captured by using polyadic quantification, which allows several variables to be bound by the same negative quantifier:

- (60)  $\neg\exists_{(x,y)}$ : student(x), book(y). x read y

Collins and Postal (2014) contribute two novel ingredients to the theory of negative polyadic quantification. On the one hand, they use polyadic quantification not only for the analysis of negative sentences containing N-words, but also for those containing one or more NPIs in addition to an N-word.

39 Note that “single” quantifier does not mean a “non-complex” quantifier. The notion of polyadic/non-unary quantifier also applies to sequences of quantifiers, see in particular Keenan (1987), who uses the binary quantifier [each, different] for examples of the type *Each student read a different book.*

This extension is entailed by Collins and Postal's analysis of NPIS (see the previous subsection): since under their theory NPIS are underlyingly negative existential quantifiers, they will yield the same type of LF analysis as N-words. On the other hand, Collins and Postal (2014, 51) propose that polyadic quantification is syntactically conditioned by Determiner Sharing:

- (61) "The syntactic basis of polyadic quantification structures [...] involves syntactic determiner sharing between the different DPs [...]."

Determiner Sharing is transparent in negative concord configurations, which are built with several N-words, each of which is underlyingly a [NEG SOME] constituent. Thus, the example in (58) can be represented as in (62), where the indices notate sharing:

- (62) [NEG<sub>e</sub> SOME<sub>f</sub>]<sub>a</sub> student read [NEG<sub>e</sub> SOME<sub>f</sub>]<sub>a</sub> book

In its minimalist implementation, the notion of "syntactic determiner sharing" involves First Merge<sup>40</sup> of the same determiner, in this case [NEG SOME], into more than one syntactic position (see Collins and Postal 2014, 51–53).

Although Collins and Postal do not provide explicit analyses of examples with polyadic quantification in which one of the negative elements is first merged on the VP (and correlatively they do not make use of event-variables in their analyses), their theory can be extended to such cases. In particular, their notion of "Determiner" covers negative quantifiers that are first merged not only DP-internally, but also as VP modifiers.

Let us now go back to our problem, the obligatory use of *de* instead of *des* in the local scope of a negation, in particular in the local scope of sentential negation. In Section 5.1 I have sketched an analysis of *de*-indefinites based on Collins and Postal's analysis of NPIS. Here, I will analyze the same example under the following alternative derivation:

- (63) Jean n'a [[NEG pas] [SOME Ø]] lu [[~~[[NEG pas]~~][SOME Ø]] de livres].

40 Collins and Postal make it clear that Determiner Sharing does not arise via movement (Second Merge). The reason is obvious: polyadic quantification corresponds to syntactic configurations in which two or more negations are independently merged, not to two or more copies of a unique negation.

This configuration involves Determiner Sharing, since [NEG SOME] is First merged both VP- and DP-internally.<sup>41</sup> First merge of *pas* on the VP is independently needed for those examples that contain no negative DP, but only sentential negation, as for example *Jean n'est pas venu* 'John hasn't come'. The lack of morphophonological realization for the DP-internal [NEG pas] is in this case due to deletion under identity with the higher [NEG pas], an operation that Collins and Postal independently assume for examples like *No man loves any woman*.

Given the Determiner Sharing syntactic configuration in (63), polyadic quantification obtains at LF, in which a unique negative existential quantifier binds a tuple that contains an event variable (corresponding to the negative quantifier attached to the VP) and an individual variable corresponding to the negative-marked DP:

$$(64) \neg \exists_{(e,z)} (*\text{book}(z) \wedge \text{read}(e) \wedge \text{Theme}(e)=z \wedge \text{Agent}(e) = \text{Jean})$$

Turning now to the unacceptability of *des*-indefinites in negative contexts (see (56)), it can be explained as being due to the fact that Determiner Sharing does *not* obtain, because this example is built with two different Determiners, [NEG SOME] on the VP, and [SOME] inside the DP. In the absence of Determiner Sharing polyadic quantification does not obtain at LF.

In order to rule out the relevant interpretation we need the requirement for polyadic quantification stated in (57): the so-called "local narrow scope with respect to negation" *cannot* be obtained via a scoping mechanism (which would simply place the positive existential in the scope of the negative existential), but only via polyadic quantification.

Let us finally briefly go back to the example in (48), which arguably also involves polyadic quantification. In this example, the same underlying determiner [SOME] can be assumed to be merged in two distinct positions, on the one hand inside the DP (where it is realized as *des*), and on the other hand in a VP adjunction position (where it would remain silent). Given that the syntactic configuration relies on Determiner Sharing and given that SOME translates as the existential  $\exists$ , an LF relying on polyadic quantification can be assigned, in which a unique existential quantifier binds a pair of event and individual variable:

41 This is different from the derivation proposed in Section 5.1, which involved only one [NEG SOME], first merged inside the DP and raised from there to some VP-adjunction position.

(65)  $\exists\langle e, z \rangle (*\text{book}(z) \wedge \text{read}(e) \wedge \text{Theme}(e)=z \wedge \text{Agent}(e) = \text{Jean})$

In sum, if we assume Collins and Postal's (2014) syntax-based analysis of polyadic quantification, sentences that contain *des* in the local domain of negation cannot yield polyadic quantification at LF. And granting that the intended meaning (in which the indefinite does *not* scope out) can only be represented as involving polyadic quantification, examples of this type are correctly ruled out.

## 6 Conclusions

In this paper I have proposed an explanation of the alternation between *des/de la/du* in positive sentences vs invariable *de* in negative sentences. In intuitive terms, the central idea is that nominals introduced by *des/de la/du* sitting in argument positions denote weak existential Qs, and this denotation is incompatible with a negated existential Q over events. For the technical implementation I relied on Collins and Postal's (2014) principle of Determiner Sharing, which according to these authors is the "syntactic basis" of negative polyadic quantification. In a nutshell, scope under sentential negation can only be read off polyadic quantificational LF, and this requires Determiner Sharing in the syntax. *Des*-indefinites and sentential negation do not satisfy Determiner Sharing, hence the ban on *des*-indefinites under sentential negation. Indefinites headed by the invariable *de*, on the other hand, are to be analyzed as involving a raised or deleted negation (*pas*), which explains why *de*-indefinites take narrow scope with respect to sentential negation.

In sum, we have been able to explain the PPI status of weak indefinites, which arguably have no scalar properties. Such PPIs are sensitive to antiadditive operators, but not to other downward entailing operators.

The proposal has the following consequences: (i) *des*-indefinites in argument positions and BNS in argument positions have distinct denotations; (ii) all BNS (BSS, but also BPS and BMNS) denote properties. This means that the highly restricted distribution of BSS (compared to BPS and BMNS) must be attributed to pragmatic principles that take into account the lexical meaning of the main predicate and conventionalized meanings of singular vs plural markings; (iii) *des*-indefinites in predicate positions (as well *des*-indefinites that do not occur in argument positions at LF) are property-denoting.

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# Telicity, Specificity, and Complements with a “Partitive Article” in French

*Tabea Ihsane*

## 1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to discuss and analyze French sentences with a *des*-complement (i.e. a complement introduced by the so-called “partitive article” in the plural) and determine how this complement affects the telicity of the situation, that is, the involvement of a culmination or endpoint (cf. De Swart 2006).<sup>1</sup> Historically, the article *des* ‘of.the.PL’ comes from the preposition *de* ‘of’ and the plural definite article *les* ‘the.PL’ (Carlier 2007) but nowadays generally has an indefinite interpretation and not a real partitive one in the sense of a part-whole relation (Storto 2003; Ihsane 2008; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a; a.o.).<sup>2</sup> To illustrate the issue we are interested in, let us consider (1):

- (1) *Marie a mangé des fraises \*en une demi-heure / pendant*  
 Marie has eaten PA.PL strawberries \*in a half-hour / for  
*une demi-heure.*  
 a half-hour  
 ‘Marie ate strawberries for half an hour.’

One way to distinguish between telic and atelic situations is to use *en-* ‘in’ and *pendant-* ‘for’ temporal adverbials (De Swart 2006; Guéron 2006): the former modify telic situations whereas the latter target atelic situations. In (1), the *pendant*-adverbial is perfectly acceptable with the *des*-complement, whereas the *en*-adverbial is generally considered as bad. On the basis of such data, *des*-NPs are described as unbounded, that is, without a bound or unlimited in some way, in contrast to *plusieurs* ‘several’, for instance, as illustrated in (2) (Kupferman 1979; Bosveld-de Smet 1998, 2004; Roodenburg 2004; De Swart 2006):<sup>3</sup>

1 The use of the term “situation” is explained in Section 2.1.

2 See also Giusti, this volume for a detailed analysis of several indefinite articles, including the “partitive article”, in Italian and Italo-Romance.

3 We use the label NP for “nominal constituent” and remain agnostic on the presence/absence of further functional layers such as DP.

- (2) *Il a mangé plusieurs gâteaux en / \*pendant une heure.*  
 he has eaten several cakes in / for an hour  
 'He ate several cakes in an hour.'

In the nominal domain, (un)boundedness can be related to different semantic oppositions, such as the singular/plural or the mass/count oppositions (Corver 2015). According to Corblin et al. (2004), it is because *des*-NPs (and the singular *du*-NPs) do not "delimit individual referents" (2004, 19) that *en*-adverbials are out in examples like (1).

The use of temporal adverbials in the English counterpart to (1) suggests that *des*-complements like *des fraises* 'strawberries' are analogous to bare plurals, a well-known parallel (for e.g., see Schurr, this volume, for a usage-based approach of the analogy, but also Dobrovie-Sorin, this volume, for an analysis that shows that bare nouns and *des*-NPs should be distinguished):

- (3) *Mary ate strawberries \*in half an hour/for half an hour.*

In (3), the *in*-adverbial is impossible, whereas the *for*-adverbial is fine, showing that the situation is atelic, as the one in (1).

Examples like (1) can, however, become grammatical with an *en*/*in*'-adverbial as illustrated in (4):

- (4) [Context: Marie is in a hurry because she has an appointment. Since she is hungry, she eats the strawberries on the table very quickly]:  
*Marie était pressée et a mangé des fraises en 5*  
 Marie was in.a.hurry and has eaten PA.PL strawberries in 5  
*minutes.*  
 minutes  
 'Marie was in a hurry and ate some strawberries in 5 minutes.'

Example (4) is acceptable although the nominal complement *des fraises* co-occurs with *en 5 minutes* 'in 5 minutes', which contrasts with (1). Another example with this combination of elements is provided in (5):

- (5) *Pour son dessert, Marie a cueilli des fraises en 10*  
 for her dessert Marie has picked PA.PL strawberries in 10  
*minutes.*  
 minutes  
 'For her dessert, Marie picked some strawberries in 10 minutes.'

In (5), as in (4), the *des*-complement cooccurs with the *en*-adverbial in a grammatical sentence, a pattern also found (and sometimes even preferred in some varieties) in Italian and Italo-Romance (see Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016b, 2018; Giusti, this volume).

In addition to the temporal *in*-adverbial, several diagnostics can be used to show that a situation is telic; one of them is the use of the phrase “it took her/him X minutes/hours to ...” (Dowty 1979):

- (6) a. *Avant de sortir, il a fallu 3 minutes à Marie pour manger*  
 before of go.out it has needed 3 minutes to Marie for eat  
*des fraises.*  
 PA.PL strawberries  
 ‘Before going out, it took Marie three minutes to eat some strawberries.’
- b. *Il a fallu 10 minutes à Marie pour cueillir des*  
 it has needed 10 minutes to Marie for pick PA.PL  
*fraises pour son dessert.*  
 strawberries for her dessert  
 ‘It took Marie ten minutes to pick some strawberries for her dessert.’

In (6), *il lui a fallu 3/10 minutes ...*, which is the French equivalent of “it took her X minutes ...”, is grammatical. This shows that the eventualities of the tested sentences, namely (4) and (5), are telic and, hence, that *des*-NPs may occur in such contexts. French data of this type are not or little discussed in the literature, at least to the best of our knowledge, but need to be explained.<sup>4</sup> In her work on the aspectual implications of *des*-NPs and other plural indefinites, De Swart (2006), for instance, does not mention such examples.

To account for the acceptability of (4) and (5), one possibility would be to treat the complement *des fraises* on a par with *some strawberries* in English rather than with the bare plural *strawberries* as illustrated in (3): indeed, *some*-NPs may cooccur with the temporal *in*-adverbial, like *des fraises* in (4) and (5). Consider (7):

- (7) *Mary ate some strawberries in half an hour/?for half an hour.*

4 This may depend on the variety of French. The speakers of Swiss French we consulted accept such examples, but judgements may differ (a French colleague does not find these examples completely acceptable).



In (7), the *for*-adverbial is not fully acceptable, in contrast to the *in*-adverbial, showing that the situation is telic. The above discussion thus suggests that the *des*-complement in (1) is analogous to a bare plural in English as both occur in an atelic situation, whereas the *des*-complement in (4) is analogous to a *some*-NP as they both occur in a telic situation. This observation does, however, not explain what exactly affects the (a)telicity of the situation in these examples.

In English, the complements *strawberries* and *some strawberries* in (3) and (7), respectively, clearly differ in that the former is a bare noun, in contrast to the latter. It could thus be argued that it is this difference that has an effect on the (a)telicity of the situation (Verkuyl 1972, a.o.). However, how this “distinctive property” should be formulated is not an easy matter. The idea may be that *strawberries* is “unbounded”, hence incompatible with telicity, whereas *some strawberries* is “bounded”, hence incompatible with atelicity (Verkuyl 1993). Still, in what sense these nominals are (un)bounded is unclear: as evoked above, (a)telicity may be related to various characteristics of a nominal phrase such as the oppositions singular/plural, mass/count, or individuated/non-individuated reference. Furthermore, whatever the explanation is for English, it is not obvious that it extends to French, especially since the constituents *des fraises* in (1) and *des fraises* in (4) are formally identical.

The aim of this paper is to determine what distinguishes the two *des*-complements in (1) and (4) in terms of interpretation and how this difference impacts the telicity of the situation. To do so, we will examine different features of *des*-complements that could lead to telicity and systematically exclude the ones that are not decisive. More precisely, we will evaluate grammatical number and (in)definiteness (Verkuyl 1972), the role of quantitative expressions in the complement (Verkuyl 1972, 1993; Rothstein 2008; Borer 2005) since *des*-NPs are generally associated to an “undetermined” quantity (Milner 1978, a.o.), the notion of quantization often related to the complement in a telic situation, in opposition to cumulative reference (Krifka 1989, 1992), and the mass/count distinction (Bach 1986; Doetjes 1997) in connection to the presence of atoms in the denotation of the complement, before turning to specificity. What we will propose is that the *des*-complements found in telic situations are bounded because they involve a quantity that is known and that this “knowledge” can be formalized in terms of specificity; more precisely we will show that the referent of such specific indefinites can be identified via “referential anchoring” (see Von Heusinger 2002a, 2002b, 2011).

This paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we define the notions we are interested in and report the theoretical background on which we will build

our analysis: in Section 2.1, we present our conception of aspect and (a)telicity and, in Section 2.2, the nominal properties that could affect the (a)telicity of the situation. In Section 3, we develop our analysis, first eliminating the nominal features that cannot be responsible for the telicity of the situation in which a *des*-complement occurs (Section 3.1), and then showing that what distinguishes *des fraises* in (1) from *des fraises* in (4) is specificity, and more precisely “epistemic specificity”. Our claim is that the specific interpretation of these complements is due to a quantity that is known by the subject and that makes their reference quantized (Krifka 1989, 1992). This quantized reference leads to the telicity of the eventuality. Section 4 concludes the paper.

## 2 Theoretical Background

In this section, we set the scene for our analysis. Since different definitions of aspect and (a)telicity can be found in the incredibly wide literature on the topic, we first define the notions we are adopting, reporting the approaches on which we will build our analysis. In Section 2.1, we clarify what we mean by “aspect” and “(a)telicity”. In Section 2.2, we turn to the role of “quantity” (or absence thereof), that is, the presence/absence of a quantity expression in the nominal phrase, “quantization”, “countability” and “atomicity”, and “specificity” in the difference in telicity observed in Section 1.

### 2.1 *Aspect and (A)telicity*

Aspect pertains to “different ways of viewing the internal temporal constitution of a situation” (Comrie 1976, 35). Aspect interacts with modality, tense, and argument structure, and is related to the lexicon-syntax interface but also to the syntax-semantics interface. In linguistics, it often refers to two “domains”: the inner/lexical/situation aspect and the outer/grammatical/view point aspect.<sup>5</sup> The former “focuses on the inherent aspectual properties of the *situations* expressed by lexical verbs (i.e. verb constellations consisting of verbs and their complements)” (Dickey 2016, 339, italics ours). Inner aspect is not affected by prospective, (im)perfective and progressive meaning, in contrast to outer/grammatical/view point aspect which involves grammatical categories, often marked by grammatical morphemes. Since in this paper we are mainly interested in the relation between a lexical verb and its complement, we will use the term “situation” (Smith 1997; Dickey 2016) to describe the phenomenon

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5 For inner and outer aspect, see Travis 1991. For situation and viewpoint aspect, see Smith 1991.

under discussion. In the next section, we will see, however, that “eventuality description” (or eventuality) is more adequate.

One classification of situation types (also called event classes) widely adopted in the literature is Vendler’s (1957; cf. also Kenny 1963; Dowty 1979). It is based on two diagnostics, namely the possibility for the verb to occur in the progressive and the use of *in*-adverbials to express completion, in other words, telicity. These diagnostics reflect the temporal properties of a situation, that is, whether a situation is durative, dynamic and telic, and result in four types of situations: states, activities, accomplishments, and achievements.<sup>6</sup> A durative situation has extension in time, whereas a non-durative one does not. A dynamic situation involves the expenditure of energy that results in a change/motion. This change can be defined in terms of heterogeneity in the situation: the situation is not identical from moment to moment. In contrast, homogeneous situations have uniform parts. As for telic situations, they involve an endpoint: the idea is that a predicate (and its complement) expresses a “sense of boundedness”/completion in itself, “by its own lexical meaning” (Verkuyl et al. 2004, 236).

Simplifying the formalization, we can say that states are [-Change] and [+Duration]; activities are [+Change] and [+Duration]; accomplishments are also [+Change] and [+Duration]; achievements are [+Change] and [-Duration]. What distinguishes activities from accomplishments is the property [+/- Telicity] since the former are atelic (*John pushed a trolley*) and the latter telic (*John ate an apple*). Accomplishments are activities leading to a finishing point with a clear change of state: for instance, the situation in *John ate an apple* is finished when the apple is eaten. Since states have no finishing point or natural limitation, they are atelic (*John knows Mary*). As for achievements, they represent transitions between states. For instance, in *John recognized Mary*, there is a “mental switch” when John remembers Mary. The event is over as soon as the result state is established. This means that achievements are telic. In this paper, we will use the terms “(a)telicity” to refer to situations and “(un)boundedness” for nominal phrases.

The above information on the four types of situations is summarized in (8):

(8)	a. State	[- Change]	[+ Duration]	[- Telicity]
	b. Activity	[+ Change]	[+ Duration]	[- Telicity]
	c. Accomplishment	[+ Change]	[+ Duration]	[+ Telicity]
	d. Achievement	[+ Change]	[- Duration]	[+ Telicity]

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 10 for details on the diagnostic of temporal adverbials.

One way to demonstrate the differences in telicity among the four event categories discussed above is to use *in*- and *for*-temporal adverbials (i.e. *en*- and *pendant*-adverbials in French), as already mentioned: the former modify telic situations whereas the latter target atelic situations. Since *in*-adverbials can be used in situations denoting accomplishments (9a) and achievements (9b), but not with states (9c) and activities (9d), it shows that the situations in the former two are telic, in contrast with the ones in the latter two.<sup>7</sup> This is corroborated by the use of *for*-adverbials modifying atelic situations: they may occur with states (9c) and activities (9d), but not with accomplishments (9a) and achievements (9b):

- (9) a. *John ate an apple in 10 minutes / \*for 10 minutes.*  
 b. *John recognized Mary in 10 seconds / \*for 10 seconds.*  
 c. *John has known Mary \*in 10 years / for 10 years.*  
 d. *John pushed a trolley \*in 10 minutes / for 10 minutes.*

In (9a), *in 10 minutes* indicates the duration of the event. In (9b), *in 10 seconds* refers to the time which elapsed before the change of state. With activities (9d), the *in*-adverbial is sometimes accepted, although it is not the preferred reading, but the situation is then an accomplishment. This is what examples (1) and (4) with the complement *des fraises* '(some) strawberries' illustrate: (1) describes an activity whereas (4) describes an accomplishment, and what distinguishes them is their (a)telicity (see (8b–c)). Since (1) and (4) differ minimally (*Marie (...) a mangé des fraises*) in that they have the same verb form and the same subject, the complement of the verb seems to play a crucial role in the (a)telicity of the situation, an issue discussed in the literature since the 70s (Verkuyl 1972, 1993; Krifka 1989, 1992; Filip 2000; Rothstein 2008).

Verkuyl's (1972, 1993) approach is compositional as it formalizes the relation between the properties of a predicate and its arguments (cf. De Swart 2006, Section 2.2, for a concise summary). Crucially, for Verkuyl, the (a)telicity of a situation does not concern the lexical verb and its complement(s) only; the subject should also be considered (1993, 14). Verkuyl (1972) argues that the telicity of an English tenseless sentence like *Chantal write a letter* is due to the boundedness (see below) of *Chantal* and *a letter*, an idea that also applies to French. Consequently, telicity is "a property of tenseless predication" (Verkuyl

7 Note that a repair reading is available if the adverbial is anchored to the onset of the situation and does not modify the duration of the situation: with such interpretations, the *in*-adverbial can be accepted.

et al. 2004, 236). As for event classes, Verkuyl adopts a system with three categories, namely states, processes, and events (Comrie 1976; Bach 1986, 241). In this classification, states correspond to Vendler's states; processes more or less correspond to Vendler's activities, and events to Vendler's accomplishments and achievements. What distinguishes events from processes and states is that events represent a discrete unit thanks to the interplay between the temporal information provided by the verb and the arguments. Examples (4) and (5) thus represent events in Verkuyl's terminology.

To formalize his approach, Verkuyl (1972, 1993) postulates two parameters, namely the dynamicity (i.e. non-stative status) associated with the verb (parameter A) and the "specified quantity" tied up with the arguments of the verb, that is, complements and subjects, and synonymous to boundedness when the setting is positive (parameter B, which represents the feature [+/- SQA], for +/- specified quantity);<sup>8</sup> see Section 2.2.1. A positive setting of the feature B (i.e. there is a specified quantity) on an argument implies that the semantic object denoted is a discrete object or a discrete portion of substance (Verkuyl et al. 2004, 239). Feature B is set negatively when there is no "specified quantity", for example with mass nouns in the singular or bare plurals in English (as in (2), which contains a bare plural argument). A telic situation results from positive settings for the features involved (A and B).<sup>9</sup> If the verb, the complement or the subject have a feature set negatively, atelicity arises. For instance, a stative sentence like *Mary knows the problem* is necessarily atelic because the predicate *know* is stative, and therefore -A, a negative setting which leads to atelicity (whatever the setting of the B feature of the complement). The example *Mary ate two apples* is telic because the predicate *eat* is dynamic (i.e. non-stative) and therefore +A, and because the complement *two apples* is +B, as it represents a specified quantity, namely *two*. Although the analysis was developed for Germanic languages, it also holds for French (Verkuyl et al. 2004, 238).

A simplified version of this formalism is reported in (10): since the role of the subject is not what we are focusing on, all the subjects in (10) are marked +B.

8 More precisely, the feature [+/- SQA] stands for "referring to a specified quantity of A" where A represents the common noun (note that A in this definition differs from the feature [+/-A] mentioned in the text and in (10)).

9 Verkuyl uses the terminology durative vs. terminative for atelic and telic respectively. For consistency, we will stick to the latter two. In his 1993 work, Verkuyl adds one more element: some sentences contain a non-overt participant which can affect telicity. The reason is that some transitive verbs like *move* may combine with a *for*-adverbial although their object represents a "specified quantity" as in *John moved the car for three hours/?in three hours*. This extra participant provides a specified quantity of moving like *to the park* or *away*.

For the examples under discussion, in particular (1), (4) and (5), this positive setting is justified, since the subjects are proper names, which are +B.

(10)		NP <sub>subject</sub>	V	NP <sub>complement</sub>	
a.	State	+B	- A	-/+ B	→ atelic
b.	Process	+B	+ A	- B	→ atelic
c.	Event	+B	+ A	+B	→ telic

The combinations of settings for A and B that are of interest to us are the ones in (10b) and (10c), namely processes (activities) and events (accomplishments/achievements), since what determines (a)telicity here is the different status of the complement: in (10b), the complement is -B (i.e. there is no specified quantity), whereas in (10c), it is +B (i.e. there is a specified quantity). This issue is particularly intriguing for the complements *des fraises* in examples (1) and (4), as these complements are formally identical.

In the approach described above, example (1), which represents a process, can be accounted for if we assume that the *des*-complement is -B (i.e. [-SQA]): the eating process in (1) is not stopped by the [-SQA] information provided by *des fraises*. In other words, nothing delimits the dynamicity expressed by the verb *manger*. Therefore, the sentence has to be interpreted as atelic. A similar example with the predicate *écrire* 'write' and the complement *des lettres* 'letters' is discussed in Verkuyl et al. (2004, 239). This example is ungrammatical when an *en*/'in'-adverbial is added (ibid, 240):

- (11) \**Chantal a écrit des lettres en quarante minutes.*  
 Chantal has written PA.PL letters in fourty minutes

In (11), as in (1), the *passé composé* is used (*a écrit* 'has written'), the subject is a proper name (*Chantal*) and the *en*/'in'-adverbial is ungrammatical.<sup>10</sup> The rea-

10 The *in-* / *for*-temporal adverbials are not *responsible* for the (a)telicity of the eventuality, contrary to what a reviewer suggested to us. Adopting Verkuyl et al. (2004, based on De Swart 1998), we assume that *en-* and *pendant*-adverbials modify the eventuality description in (i) (Verkuyl et al. 2004, 237):

(i) PAST(ASP(Eventuality description))

In (i), ASP is an aspectual operator (i.e. grammatical aspect) which modifies the aspectual information expressed by the "eventuality description" (i.e. by the predicate and its

son is that the internal argument *des lettres* is [-SQA] and, therefore, does not restrict the verb. Whether a *des*-complement and an *en*/'in'-adverbial can cooccur (as in (4)) or not is not mentioned in Verkuyl et al. (2004), although they focus on French, in contrast to Verkuyl in his earlier work. If a *des*-complement and an *en*/'in'-adverbial combine, it implies that the complement in such examples is [+SQA] and delimits the dynamicity of the verb. However, assuming that *des fraises* in (1) is [-SQA] whereas *des fraises* in (4) is [+SQA] is not very helpful: we still would like to know what defines a “specified quantity” and what the “specified quantity” of strawberry is in (4). In other words, the label [+/-SQA] is not self-explanatory; it is further discussed in the next section.

## 2.2 *The Properties of Nominal Complements in (A)telic Sentences*

### 2.2.1 Quantification, Quantities, and Quantization

One aim of Verkuyl's (1972, 1993) work was to determine whether the intuitive notion of “specified quantity” can be captured by the Theory of Generalized Quantifiers (Barwise and Cooper 1981; Keenan and Stavi 1986). In this approach, set theory is the foundation of semantic interpretation, and determiners denote relations between two sets, that is, the set denoted by the verb (phrase) and the set denoted by the noun. For instance, *Three (boy) (dance)* is true if and only if the intersection of the set denoted by *dance* and the set denoted by *boy* has three elements. The semantic contribution of *three* is a cardinality condition imposed on the intersection between the noun denotation and the verb (phrase) denotation. It is this cardinality information which determines the setting of the feature [+/-SQA] introduced in the previous section.

Although Generalized Quantifier theory has been widely adopted and developed in the last thirty years (cf. Westerståhl 2016), it is not unproblematic. We will, however, not review the literature evaluating this approach (cf. e.g., Löbner 2016; Szabolcsi 2016, 325 ff.), but would like to point out that French nominals with a “partitive article” like the plural *des* have been convincingly analyzed as noun phrases that can denote properties (Dobrovie-Sorin and

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arguments), like PERF(ective)/IMP(erfective) in Slavic languages for instance, and PAST represents tense. In this analysis, *en/in*-adverbials can only modify the “event description” if it is an event, whereas *pendant/for*-adverbials can only modify the “event description” if it is a state/process. Informally, the temporal adverbials, modify the “event description” once this description is already complete. These adverbials are therefore *diagnostics* that can be used to test if an eventuality is telic or not, and not the cause of the (a)telic interpretation (De Swart 2006; Guéron 2006). The *passé composé*, (i.e. the verb forms in (1) and (4)), composed of the auxiliary *avoir* ‘have’ and the past participle (but different from the English present perfect; cf. the comparative discussion in Molendijk et al. 2004, 299 ff.) is a tense (not an aspect) (Vet 1992, 1999; Martin 1971; De Swart 1998).

Laca 2003) following work by McNally (1995/2004) and Van Geenhoven (1998). Some authors propose that *des*-NPs can be of three different semantic types: they can denote individuals  $\langle e \rangle$ , be quantificational expressions  $\langle \langle e, t \rangle t \rangle$  and property-denoting nominals  $\langle e, t \rangle$  (Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade 2004, 2012; Ihsane 2008), a position adopted here (see Dobrovie-Sorin, this volume, for an analysis of *des*-NPs as weak existential quantifiers in argument positions). This view is not compatible with the Generalized Quantifier theory but subsumes Kamp's (1981) and Heim's (1982) analyses of indefinites as individual-denoting expressions, on a par with definite noun phrases. In our view, indefinites thus introduce a new individual in the discourse or do not refer (which allows for the quantificational and the property-denoting interpretations), whereas definites refer to an individual already mentioned in the discourse (cf. Brasoveanu and Farkas 2016 for an overview of indefinites). In her classification of French determiners, De Swart (2006) analyzes *des* as indefinite (cf. also Bosveld-de Smet 2004, 43; Corblin et al. 2004, 7), as opposed to quantifying elements. As mentioned above, we do however not oppose indefiniteness and quantification.<sup>11</sup>

Since not all nominals are quantificational (or quantifying; we will use both terms interchangeably) in our view, we assume that there is a difference between “quantification” and “quantity”: quantification involves operators like *all*, *each*, *every*, whereas quantity is specified by numerals and vague quantity specifications (e.g., *several*, *many*, *much*) (Löbner 2016, 283–284). Since quantificational expressions do not pick out a referent, proportional determiners like *most* also pertain to quantification. The notions of “quantity” and “quantification” are relevant to our discussion because the eventualities with complements containing quantitative expressions and quantifiers, on a par with *des fraises* in (4), are telic as shown in (12):

- (12) a. *Mary ate some strawberries*                      *in 5 minutes / \*for 5 minutes.*  
       b. *Mary ate a lot of strawberries*                    *in 5 minutes / \*for 5 minutes.*  
       c. *Mary ate more than three strawberries*        *in 5 minutes / \*for 5 minutes.*  
       d. *Mary ate most strawberries*                      *in 5 minutes / \*for 5 minutes.*  
       e. *Mary ate all the strawberries*                    *in 5 minutes / \*for 5 minutes.*  
       f. *Mary ate 20 strawberries*                         *in 5 minutes / \*for 5 minutes*

11 Corblin et al. (2004) show that quantifying noun phrases and indefinites have different properties: indefinite determiners like *un* ‘a’ and numerals are symmetric, whereas quantifiers are not; the scope of indefinites is free, whereas the scope of quantifiers is clause-bound; quantifying noun phrases are inherently distributive, whereas indefinites are not (2004, 13–15). For a discussion of quantifiers and quantities in relation to aspect in Finnish, see Huumo (2020).



All the examples in (12) are fine with an *in*-adverbial but not with a *for*-adverbial; they are therefore telic.

As *des*-NPs are generally not quantifying, one question that arises is whether there is a quantity (as defined above) in their structure. This is relevant because some scholars claim that *any* expression of quantity in the object complement is sufficient for an accomplishment predicate to count as telic (Rothstein 2008). Clearly, there is no overt quantitative expression contained in the *des*-NPs under investigation, but there could be an implicit one (cf. Seržant 2014 on Lithuanian). This is what traditional works imply since they describe nominals with a “partitive article” as involving an “undetermined” quantity (*quantité indéterminée*, Milner 1978, 32; a.o.) or as having “a highly indeterminate sense ... as to the quantity of the entities referred to” (Bosveld-de Smet 2004, 42). That *des*-NPs comprise a “ $\emptyset$ ” quantity in their representation is what Milner (1978, 30) proposes. He treats this quantity on a par with numerals and considers that it designates *un nombre indéterminé d’individus* ‘an undetermined number of individuals’ (ibid). That nominals with a “partitive article” involve a quantity is supported by the fact that they allow modification by adverbials implying some quantity. Consider (13), from Bosveld-de Smet (2004, 46):

- (13) *Ces pommiers donnent des fruits à profusion.*  
 these apple.trees give PA.PL fruits in abundance  
 ‘These apple trees give fruit in abundance.’

In (13), *des fruits* ‘fruit.PL’ cooccurs with the adverbial *à profusion* ‘in abundance’, a quantity-involving constituent; since such adverbials are used when there is a quantity expressed, it supports the analysis of *des*-complements as nominals containing a quantity; this is because there is no other quantity expression in the example (Dobrovie-Sorin, in this volume, postulates a ‘SOME quantity/plurality’ in the structure of *des*-phrases; cf. also Giusti, this volume, for a discussion of indefinites involving a small quantity in Italian and Italo-Romance). Examples like (13) represent evidence for the presence of a quantity expression in the *des*-NPs and cannot be ignored. The question that arises is whether this “quantitative interpretation” of *des*-NPs will allow us to differentiate the *des*-complement in (1) from the *des*-complement in (4) (see Section 3).

Another way of describing the importance of the complement in the (a)telicity of the eventuality, often reported in the literature, is Krifka’s approach (Krifka 1989, 1992). Krifka (1992) aims at providing an analysis of the characteristics of nominals that affect the properties of eventualities and explores a mechanism of mapping between eventualities and their arguments.

He captures the relations between arguments and eventuality in terms of part-whole (i.e. mereological) relations. He builds his analysis on the part-whole properties of predicates which he relates to the way in which they establish reference. Two of those properties are “cumulativity” (i.e. predicate preservation under sum) and “quantization” (the predicate of the whole does not hold for any of its parts). They are defined below (quoted from Rothstein 2008, her examples (12) and (11), respectively):

(14) a. A predicate *X* is **cumulative** iff:

$$\exists e \exists e' [X(e) \wedge X(e') \wedge \neg e \subseteq e' \wedge \forall e \forall e' [X(e) \wedge X(e') \wedge R(e, e') \rightarrow X(e \cup e')]]$$

“*P* is cumulative if, whenever *e* and *e'* are in *X* and *e* is not part of *e'*, the sum of *e* and *e'* is also in *P*.”

b. A predicate *X* is **quantized** iff:

$$\forall x \forall y [X(x) \wedge X(y) \rightarrow [x \subseteq y \rightarrow x = y]]$$

“A predicate *P* is quantized if, whenever *x* is in *P*, no proper part of *x* is also in *P*.”

Both cumulative and quantized reference are relevant for the (a)telicity of the eventuality: when the predicate of an argument has cumulative reference, the eventuality is cumulative as well, which leads to atelicity; when the predicate of an argument has quantized reference, the eventuality is quantized, which leads to telicity. The meaning of determiners and quantifiers plays a crucial role in determining the reference type of a nominal expression. For instance, bare mass nouns and bare plurals are never quantized but have cumulative reference: since *strawberries* plus *strawberries* is *strawberries*, bare plurals in English have cumulative reference (idem for bare mass nouns). Their reference is also non-quantized since there are proper subparts of *strawberries* that are also *strawberries* (in contrast to *20 strawberries*, since no proper subpart of *20 strawberries* is *20 strawberries*). A problem for the notion of quantization is that some “determiners” (used in a broad sense) contained in the complement lead to a telic reading of the predicate although they are *not* quantized according to the definition provided above. It is the case of *some*, as illustrated in (7)/(12a), or *more than x*, for instance: the reference of the nominal expression *some strawberries* is not quantized because there are subparts of *some strawberries* that are *some strawberries*. Whether the notions of quantized and cumulative reference will allow us to distinguish between *des fraises* in (1) from *des fraises* in (4) is discussed in Section 3.

In this section we have defined several properties of nominal phrases that could play a role in the (a)telicity of an eventuality, in particular “quantity” and

“quantization”. In the next section, we turn to additional properties that may be relevant to account for the data under study here.

### 2.2.2 Number, Atomicity, and Specificity

Another feature of nominal phrases that could impact the (a)telicity of the eventuality is number, that is, the opposition singular/plural. However, that the number of the complement is not decisive for this issue has been shown by Verkuyl (1993, 71 ff.), who provides the English examples in (15) to support this observation (French counterparts ours; *in-* and *for-*adverbials our addition):

- (15) a. *Judith ate those three sandwiches in 10 minutes / \*for 10 minutes.*  
 Judith a mangé ces trois sandwiches en 10 minutes / \*pendant 10 minutes.
- b. *Judith ate three sandwiches in 10 minutes / \*for 10 minutes.*  
 Judith a mangé trois sandwiches en 10 minutes / \*pendant 10 minutes.
- c. *Judith ate sandwiches \*in 10 minutes / for 10 minutes.*  
 Judith a mangé des sandwiches \*en 10 minutes / pendant 10 minutes.
- d. *Judith ate that sandwich in 10 minutes / \*for 10 minutes.*  
 Judith a mangé ce sandwich en 10 minutes / \*pendant 10 minutes.
- e. *Judith ate a slice of bread in 10 minutes / \*for 10 minutes.*  
 Judith a mangé une tranche de pain en 10 minutes / \*pendant 10 minutes.

In (15a–c), the complements are all plural; however, only (15a) and (15b) are telic, in contrast to (15c). Furthermore, sentences (15a), (15b), (15d) and (15e) are telic; however, the complements in (15a) and (15b) are plural whereas the ones in (15d) and (15e) are singular. These observations, originally based on the English examples, extend to the French counterparts provided, suggesting that whether the complement is singular, or plural does not determine the (a)telicity of the eventuality (but see Section 3.1).<sup>12</sup>

The examples in (15) further show that the (in)definiteness of the complement does not determine the (a)telicity of the eventuality. Verkuyl (1993) draws this conclusion for English: all the examples are telic, since they are grammatical with an *in-*adverbial but not with a *for-*adverbial, except for (15c). Yet, *those three sandwiches* in (15a) and *that sandwich* in (15d) are definite, whereas *three sandwiches* in (15b) and *a slice of bread* in (15e) are indefinite. The same observations extend to the French counterparts of (15a–e). This means that the

<sup>12</sup> We assume that *des*-NPs are plural: see the discussion and the references in De Swart 2006.

(in)definiteness of the complement is not the property affecting the (a)telicity of the eventualities of those examples.

A question that arises is whether specificity, a semantic-pragmatic notion often associated to (in)definiteness, could play a role in the (a)telicity of the eventuality (Baker 1966; Farkas 2002; Von Heusinger 2002a). Although specificity may affect both definiteness and indefiniteness, it is more often linked to indefinite noun phrases than to definite ones (see Von Heusinger 2011 and the references therein). According to Von Heusinger (2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2011), specificity is a multi-dimensional concept associated to many notions, among which scope, epistemic reference, and partitive contrasts. This justifies the distinction between seven types of specificity, such as scopal specificity, epistemic specificity, and partitive specificity, to mention but three (Von Heusinger 2011). The core notion of all seven types of specificity is “referential anchoring” which means that

[t]he referent of a specific indefinite is functionally dependent on some discourse participant or on another expression in the sentence. The anchor must be familiar to speaker and hearer, while the content of the anchoring function must be unfamiliar to the hearer (to distinguish specific indefinites from definites).

VON HEUSINGER 2011, 1054

The function postulated,  $f(\text{anchor}) = \text{referent}$ , is a function from the anchor to the referent, where the anchor is not necessarily the speaker; it can be other attitude holders, like the subject (as in one reading of *Paula believes that Bill talked to an important politician*, where the anchor can be *Paula*; Von Heusinger 2011, 1048), or a variable bound by a quantifier, allowing systematic co-variation with the anchor/binder (as in *Every husband had forgotten a certain date—his wife’s birthday*, where the date covaries with husband; Von Heusinger 2011, 1048). This function captures the condition that the referent of the specific indefinite must be a unique individual. In the example *Every husband had forgotten a certain date—his wife’s birthday*, it concerns the assignment between the quantified noun (*husbands*) and the indefinite (*date*) rather than the referential intention of the husband. This analysis is analogous to Fodor and Sag’s (1982) but with some refinements, such as the flexibility around the attitude holder.

In our discussion, we will focus on one type of specificity, namely epistemic specificity illustrated in (16), a translation of Von Heusinger’s examples (3a)–(3b) (2011, 1027), with *des*-NPs instead of singular indefinites and some minor changes:

- (16) a. *Des étudiants du cours de syntaxe ont triché à l'examen. Je les connais: c'est Paul Dupond et Marie Schmidt.*  
 PA.PL students of.the course of syntax have cheated at the exam I them know this is Paul Dupond and Marie Schmidt  
 'Some students of the syntax class cheated in the exam. I know them. It is ...'
- b. *Des étudiants du cours de syntaxe ont triché à l'examen mais je ne sais pas qui c'est.*  
 the exam but I NEG know not who it is  
 'Some students of the syntax class cheated in the exam. But I don't know who it is.'

In (16), the contrast is between the speaker's knowledge about the referent of *des étudiants du cours de syntaxe* 'some students of the syntax class' and the speaker's ignorance.<sup>13</sup> This is why it is a case of epistemic specificity. That this notion plays a role in our puzzle will be shown in Section 3.

Specificity can be related to the notion of individuation (cf. e.g., Ihsane 2008, 204) and hence to the mass/count distinction: indeed, we assume that mass nouns do not have a set of atoms representing minimal entities in their extension (Bunt's 1985 homogeneity hypothesis), whereas count nouns make atomic denotations available (cf. Link 1983; Chierchia 1998, 2000; Rothstein 2010; Löbner 2016 who considers the mass/count distinction as conceptual and count concepts as integrative, p. 285; but see Rothstein 2010 for a different view, and Doetjes 2012 for an overview of different languages), although it is certainly a simplification to treat the opposition mass/count as binary (Grimm 2012; Lauwers 2019). In other words, we assume that count nouns, in contrast to mass nouns, are atomic, realizing that the complete picture is more complex. This

13 Note that *des*-subjects, like indefinite subjects in general (Givón 1976), are often not possible or do not sound very natural, especially in spoken French where the *il y a ...* 'there is' construction is used (Karssenbergh 2016; Ihsane 2018, a.o.; see Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou, this volume, for an analysis of bare subjects in Brazilian Portuguese). The lexical material *du cours de syntaxe* 'in the syntax class' specifying *des étudiants* 'students' contributes to the acceptability of the *des*-subject (see footnote 18). In Francoprovençal, the counterparts of *des*-NPs are impossible as subjects (Ihsane 2018; Stark and Gerards, this volume).

is relevant to our discussion because the mass/count distinction is also often associated to (a)telicity (Mourelatos 1978; Hoepelman and Rohrer 1980; Bach 1986; Krifka 1989; Borer 2005). Consider (17):

- (17) a. *John wrote poetry for an hour / \*in an hour.*  
 b. *John wrote a poem \*for an hour / in an hour.*

In (17a), the eventuality is atelic as the grammaticality of the *for*-adverbial shows; in (17b), the eventuality is telic as the grammaticality of the *in*-adverbial shows. The crucial difference between the two examples is that in the former, the complement is a mass noun (*poetry*), whereas in the latter it is a count noun (*a poem*), thus suggesting that the mass/count opposition should be taken into account in the analysis of (a)telicity. The same observation holds for French, where the mass noun phrase *de la poésie* 'poetry' and the count one *un poème* 'a poem' can replace *poetry* and *a poem*, respectively, without changing the grammaticality judgements.

Whether the above-mentioned aspects of the interpretation of the *des*-NPs under discussion shed light on our data is discussed in the next section.

### 3 Analysis

Examples (1) and (4), representing the puzzle we are examining, are repeated below as (18) and (19), respectively.

- (18) *Marie a mangé des fraises \*en une demi-heure / pendant*  
 Marie has eaten PA.PL strawberries \*in a half-hour / for  
*une demi-heure.*  
 a half-hour  
 'Marie ate strawberries for half an hour.'

- (19) [Context: Marie is in a hurry because she has an appointment. Since she is hungry, she eats the strawberries on the table very quickly]:  
*Marie était pressée et a mangé des fraises en 5*  
 Marie was in.a.hurry and has eaten PA.PL strawberries in 5  
*minutes.*  
 minutes  
 'Marie was in a hurry and ate some strawberries in 5 minutes.'

In this section, we develop an account for this contrast, building on the notions introduced in Section 2. We first review the properties of the *des*-complements which are not decisive in the differences in telicity illustrated in (1)/(18) and (4)/(19) (Section 3.1) before turning to our proposal which is that epistemic specificity plays a crucial role in this difference (Section 3.2).

### 3.1 *Number, Atomicity and Quantity*

In Section 2.2.2, we mentioned that number is generally considered not to play a role in the (a)telicity of an eventuality. Whether this conclusion is correct or not for French should however be tested with examples corresponding to (15c) and (19) but containing a complement introduced by the singular *du/de la*:<sup>14</sup> if the grammaticality judgements for such examples were different from the judgements for the data with a plural complement, it could be that the number of the complement plays a role in the (a)telicity of the eventuality, after all. The problem with this is that the singular counterparts of *des*, that is, *du* and *de la*, are also mass, in contrast to *des* which occurs with count nouns, except in a few rare cases like *des épinards* ‘spinach’. This means that the two sets of examples—the plural ones, which, in our discussion, are count (*une fraise-des fraises* ‘a/one strawberry-some strawberries’), and the singular ones with a mass determiner—differ in at least two dimensions: the number of the complement and the mass/count distinction. Comparing these two sets would therefore not allow us to determine which of these properties (or a combination of the two) is responsible for the observed difference in (a)telicity.

Since our aim here is to solve the puzzle in (18) and (19) and not to study (a)telicity in general, we will concentrate on the complements in those examples: since *des fraises* in (18) and *des fraises* in (19) are both plural and count, we conclude that, in the contexts under discussion, the number of the complement and the mass/count distinction cannot explain the difference in the (a)telicity of the eventuality observed. In the same vein, since *des fraises* in (18) and *des fraises* in (19) are both indefinite (Bosveld-de Smet 2004, 42; see Section 2.2.1 for some references), (in)definiteness is not relevant to solve our puzzle.

In Section 2.2.2, we associated the count interpretation to atomicity. Whether the denotation of *des fraises* in (18) and in (19) contains atoms or not can be tested with examples that isolate one atom:

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14 We thank a reviewer for this remark.

- (20) *Marie a mangé des fraises pendant une demi-heure et*  
 Marie has eaten PA.PL strawberries for a half-hour and  
*a trouvé la plus grosse délicieuse.*  
 has found the more big delicious  
 ‘Marie ate strawberries for half an hour and found the biggest one deli-  
 cious.’
- (21) [Context: Mary is in a hurry because she has an appointment. Since she  
 is hungry, she eats the strawberries on the table very quickly]:  
*Marie était pressée. Elle a mangé des fraises en 5*  
 Marie was in.a.hurry she has eaten PA.PL strawberries in 5  
*minutes et a trouvé la plus grosse délicieuse.*  
 minutes and has found the more big delicious  
 ‘Marie was in a hurry. She ate some strawberries in five minutes and found  
 the biggest one delicious.’

In (20) and (21), the sentence [*elle*] *a trouvé la plus grosse délicieuse* ‘[she] found the biggest one delicious’ describes one of the strawberries that Marie ate. In both (20) and (21), it is a natural continuation of the first sentence of the example, showing that *des fraises* is atomic in both (20) and (21), and, therefore that, in our examples, the atomicity of the reference of the complement is not responsible for our puzzle.<sup>15</sup>

Let us now turn to the property of “quantity” (as defined in Section 2.2.1) since the presence of a quantity expression in the complement of a sentence may influence the telicity of the eventuality. What is less clear is whether a *non-overt* quantity expression also has such an impact. In connection to the data under investigation, the question is whether *des fraises* in (18) and *des fraises* in (19) differ in their involving a quantity: if *des fraises* in (18) did not contain an implicit quantity expression but *des fraises* in (19) did, the presence vs. absence of such a quantity expression in the complement could explain the difference in telicity of these examples. One way to determine whether a *des*-NP contains

15 A reviewer suggests that this conclusion is not compatible with the property-denoting type, which is (e,t) and does not have individuation. If the *des*-NPs in our examples are not property-denoting, it supports Dobrovie-Sorin’s analysis in this volume, in which she proposes that nominals with a “partitive article” in French are not property-denoting in argument positions. If the *des*-complement in (20) did not have atoms in its denotation, the relation between atomicity and countability adopted here would have to be revised.



an implicit quantity expression or not could be to use an overt quantity expression in order to contrast the implicit quantity (Ihsane 2008, 158–159):

- (22) *Marie a mangé des fraises pendant une demi-heure ; mais Marie has eaten PA.PL strawberries for a half-hour ; but pas beaucoup, en fait, parce qu' elle mangeait très lentement. not a.lot in fact because she was.eating very slowly 'Marie ate strawberries for half an hour, but not a lot, in fact, because she ate very slowly.'*
- (23) [Context: Mary is in a hurry because she has an appointment. Since she is hungry, she eats the strawberries on the table very quickly]:  
*Marie était pressée. Elle a mangé des fraises en 5 Marie was in.a.hurry she has eaten PA.PL strawberries in 5 minutes. Mais pas beaucoup parce que elle n' avait pas le temps. minutes but not a.lot because she NEG had not the time 'Marie was in a hurry. She ate some strawberries in 5 minutes. But not a lot, because she didn't have time.'*

In (22) and (23), the use of *mais pas beaucoup* 'but not a lot' aims at giving details about a quantity expression in the sentence preceding it, thus implying that there is a quantity expression in the *des*-complement since there are no other quantities in the sentences. Another way to support the presence of a quantity in (18) and (19) is to add *en quantité* 'in a large amount/quantity' to these examples as observed in Section 2.2.1: *Marie a mangé des fraises en quantité ...* 'Marie ate (some) strawberries in a large quantity'. In the next section, we will propose that the quantity of strawberries in (19) is known to the subject and that this is what differentiates (18) and (19).

We do not think that the quantitative interpretation of the *des*-NPs in (22) and (23) is a conversational implicature (Grice 1989) and thank a reviewer for raising this issue: if it was, the implicit quantity would not be part of the meaning of the nominal constituent, but a pragmatic effect that can be cancelled. If the quantitative interpretation was a conversational implicature, the reasoning would be that *des*-NPs *implicate* a quantity and that this implicature can be cancelled by using "in fact" and "no quantity" (for instance *no/zero strawberry* in our examples). However, this would lead to a contradiction as shown in (24) and (25) and indicated by #:

- (24) #*Marie a mangé des fraises pendant une demi-heure. En Marie has eaten PA.PL strawberries for a half-hour in*

*fait, elle a mangé aucune/zéro fraise.*

fact she has eaten no/zero strawberry

#‘Marie ate strawberries for half an hour. In fact, she ate no/zero strawberry.’

- (25) [Context: Mary is in a hurry because she has an appointment. Since she is hungry, she eats the strawberries on the table very quickly]:

*#Marie était pressée et a mangé des fraises en 5*

Marie was in.a.hurry and has eaten PA.PL strawberries in 5

*minutes. En fait, elle a mangé aucune/zéro fraise.*

minutes in fact she has eaten no/zero strawberry

#‘Marie was in a hurry and ate some strawberries in 5 minutes. In fact, she ate no/zero strawberry.’

The above examples show that “a quantity” cannot be cancelled and therefore that the quantitative interpretation is not a conversational implicature.

The above discussion also clearly shows that the complements *des fraises* in (22) and in (23) do not differ in terms of quantity: *mais pas beaucoup* ‘but not many’ and *en quantité* ‘in abundance’ can be added to both (22) and (23), whereas *en fait, ... aucune fraise* ‘in fact, ... no strawberry’ can be added to neither of them. This means that the two complements *des fraises* are similar in that they involve an implicit quantity and, therefore, that this property cannot explain the difference in telicity observed in these examples.

In sum, none of the properties examined in this subsection allow us to solve our puzzle. This is because the *des*-complements under discussion are both indefinite and plural, have individuated reference, and involve an implicit quantity. In the next section, we will show that the reference of the *des*-complements in the telic examples is quantized (as expected but not explained so far) and that specificity plays an important role in the difference in telicity we are investigating.

### 3.2 *Specificity and Quantization*

The crucial difference between (18) and (19) is that, in the latter, Mary is in a hurry, which limits the number of strawberries she can eat. In the same vein, in (5), the type of dessert Mary will prepare determines the quantity of strawberries she needs. In other words, the quantity of strawberries is “known” in both cases.<sup>16</sup> If this is correct, then (19) is analogous to the example *John swam*

<sup>16</sup> The presence of a quantity that is known reminds us of Verkuyl’s (1993) non-overt partic-

*in an hour* discussed by Dowty (1979, 61):<sup>17</sup> for this example to be acceptable, some contextually given distance (i.e. a quantity of meters) has to be known; otherwise, the *in*-adverbial would not be grammatical. In the same vein, we propose that example (19) is acceptable because the *des*-complement involves a quantity of strawberries that is known, in contrast to the *des*-complement in (18). It is this “known quantity” that is responsible for the boundedness of the complement (see Sections 1 and 2.1)<sup>18</sup> allowing the telic reading (in that sense this quantity would set the [+/-SQA] feature discussed in Section 2.1 on plus). What we would like to capture next is what is meant by “known”. Indeed, this needs to be formalized, and we argue that an analysis in terms of specificity (Section 2.2.2) accounts for this “knowledge”: the fact that Marie knows the quantity of strawberries she ate/picked makes these strawberries specific.

A close examination of (19), with the context “*Mary is in a hurry because she has an appointment. Since she is hungry, she eats the strawberries on the table very quickly*” provided in brackets, may suggest that this example is an illustration of *partitive specificity*, a type of specificity related to familiarity. A constituent may be familiar thanks to presuppositionality or partitivity, for instance (Von Heusinger 2011): since the context provided in brackets in (19) mentions the strawberries, we could conclude that the strawberries that Marie ate are part of this set of already introduced strawberries. However, the preferred interpretation of (19) is not partitive: Marie did not eat some of the strawberries on the table but all of them, suggesting that partitive specificity is not the right notion to account for this example. That (19) is not a case of partitive specificity is supported by the fact that the context in brackets is not necessary to identify the referent of the indefinite complement: (19) is acceptable even if no set of strawberries is mentioned in the context:

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ipant affecting telicity. In the example mentioned in footnote 9 (*John moved the car for three hours/?in three hours*), a specified quantity of moving is provided by an extra participant. However, Verkuyl’s example differs from (19) in different ways. In particular, it is unexpectedly fine with a *for*-adverbial, whereas we are discussing complements that are unexpected with *in*-adverbials.

- 17 We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this observation, which led us to reorganize some aspects of our analysis and to emphasize the role of this known quantity.
- 18 Bosveld-de Smet (2004) mentions that the semantics of the predicate may have a constraining effect: some *du/des*-subjects may become acceptable when spatio-temporal information is added to the sentence since this information provides spatio-temporal boundaries.

- (26) *Marie était pressée et a mangé des fraises en 5 minutes.*  
 Marie was in.a.hurry and has eaten PA.PL strawberries in 5 minutes.  
 'Marie was in a hurry and ate some strawberries in 5 minutes.'

Similarly, in (5) repeated as (27), no set of strawberries is introduced in the context, which means that partitive specificity is not at stake:

- (27) *Pour son dessert, Marie a cueilli des fraises en 10 minutes.*  
 for her dessert Marie has picked PA.PL strawberries in 10 minutes.  
 'For her dessert, Marie picked some strawberries in 10 minutes.'

What we suggest, rather, is that (19)/(26) and (27) are cases of *epistemic specificity* applying to contexts where the "speaker has a referent in mind". However as mentioned in Section 2.2.2, the anchor of the indefinite does not have to be the speaker. It could be the subject of a sentence or another element in the discourse or in a text. To illustrate this, let us consider Von Heusinger's example, from *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco (Von Heusinger 2003, 15):

- (28) [William to Jorge de Burgos about Malachi:] *You probably told him Berengar had been intimate with Severin, and as a reward Severin had given him a book from the Finis Africae.*

In this example, the anchor of the indefinite *a book from the Finis Africae* could, in principle, be the speaker (William), the hearer (Jorge), Malachi, Berengar, or Severin, although the context of the book suggests that it is Berengar (Von Heusinger 2003, 419). In the same vein, we propose that in (19)/(26) and (27) the anchor of the indefinite *des fraises* is *Marie*, the subject of the sentence, who is familiar to both the speaker and the hearer. As for the anchoring function, it can be formulated as "Marie has in mind a set of strawberries whose quantity is known to her because she had little time to eat them as she was in a hurry" for (19)/(26). The same reasoning applies to (27): *des fraises* is anchored by *Marie*, and the anchoring function is "Marie has in mind a set of strawberries, whose number/weight is known to her because it corresponds to the quantity needed for her dessert". In both anchoring functions, the piece of information which is new to the hearer, but known by Marie, is the quantity of strawberries eaten or picked, respectively: this quantity is restricted because Marie was in a hurry or

because the dessert she wants to prepare requires a certain quantity of strawberries. Since what Marie has in mind is a set of strawberries, these strawberries are specific.

As, in (19), the quantity of strawberries is known to Marie, the referent of *des fraises* in this example is bounded, in contrast to the one of *des fraises* in (18). Formally, this means that the reference of the strawberries that are specific is quantized, whereas the reference of the strawberries that are not specific is not quantized (Section 2.2.1). This difference explains why the eventuality in example (18) is atelic (hence the grammaticality of the *for*-adverbial), in contrast to the eventualities in (19)/(26) and (27), which are telic (hence the use of *in*-adverbials). The difference in quantization between the specific and non-specific complements can be explained as follows, starting with *des fraises (non-spécifiques)* ‘(non-specific) strawberries’ in (18): if something is *des fraises (non-spécifiques)*, then some subparts of it will also be *des fraises (non-spécifiques)*. Hence, the reference of this nominal expression is non-quantized. Since *des fraises (non-spécifiques)* ‘strawberries’ plus *des fraises (non-spécifiques)* ‘strawberries’ gives *des fraises (non-spécifiques)* ‘strawberries’, the reference of *des fraises (non-spécifiques)* is cumulative. Accordingly, the non-specific *des fraises* is analogous to the bare plural *strawberries*.<sup>19</sup>

The reference of the specific *des fraises* in (19)/(26) and (27) is quantized: when one refers to *des fraises* in these examples, one has in mind the-strawberries-Marie-ate-in-five-minutes-because-she-was-in-a-hurry (known to her but not to the hearer), and, crucially, this implies all of them. If this is correct, then no proper subpart of the-specific-strawberries-Marie-ate-in-five-minutes ... can be the-specific-strawberries-Marie-ate-in-five-minutes ... The reference of *des fraises* in these examples is therefore quantized (like the one of *some-NPs* in their strong interpretation).<sup>20</sup> How about the “cumulative” property? At first sight, we could think that *des fraises spécifiques/specific strawberries* plus *des fraises spécifiques/specific strawberries* is *des fraises spécifiques/specific strawberries* and that, therefore, their reference type is cumulative. However, it seems to us that the reasoning is more complex. Indeed, the-specific-

19 The non-specific *des fraises* is hence also similar to the *some-NPs* described as problematic for Krifka’s analysis (Section 2.2.1) in the sense that their reference is non-quantized. It is, however, different from these *some-NPs* because the latter are fine with *in*-adverbials (recall (7)), in contrast to non-specific *des-NPs*. This probably explains the translation issue which arises with *des-NPs*: it is often difficult to determine whether their counterpart in English is a bare noun or a *some-NP*.

20 *Some* can be weak or strong (Milsark 1977). That the weak/strong distinction can be treated on a par with the non-specific/specific difference is not new (see McNally 2020; cf. also Von Heusinger 2011).

strawberries-Marie-ate-in-five-minutes-because-she-was-in-a-hurry plus the specific-strawberries-Marie-picked-in-ten-minutes-to-prepare-some-dessert is *not* the-specific-strawberries-Marie-ate-in-five-minutes-because-she-was-in-a-hurry *nor* the-specific-strawberries-Marie-picked-in-ten-minutes-to-prepare-some-dessert. This means that the reference of *des fraises (spécifiques)* is not cumulative.

The difference between specific and non-specific noun phrases can be tested with the use of pronouns since the so-called partitive pronoun (also called quantitative pronoun) *en* in French cannot replace specific noun phrases (Ihsane 2013, where we use the term S-referential, for Speaker's reference, not the term specific). If the difference between (18) and (19) is due to the (non-)specificity of the complements involved as suggested here, it predicts that *en* should be ungrammatical in (19) but fine in (18). That this is borne out is shown in (29) and (30), respectively. The examples are turned into short dialogues to avoid ambiguity:

(29) [Context: Mary is in a hurry because she has an appointment. Since she is hungry, she eats the strawberries on the table very quickly].

Speaker A: *Tu sais, Marie a mangé des fraises en 5 minutes! Elle était hyper-pressée.*  
 you know Marie has eaten PA.PL strawberries in 5 minutes! She was very.much.in.a.hurry  
 'You know, Marie ate some strawberries in 5 minutes! She really was in a hurry.'

Speaker B: *J'ai vu! Elle \*en/les a mangées très vite.*  
 I=have seen she PART/them has eaten very fast  
 'I saw that! She ate them very fast.'

(30) Speaker A: *Tu sais, hier, Marie a mangé des fraises pendant une demi-heure!*  
 you know yesterday Marie has eaten PA.PL strawberries for a half-hour  
 'You know, yesterday, Marie ate strawberries for half an hour!'

Speaker B: *C'est vrai, je l' ai vue, elle en/\*les a mangé pendant une demi-heure.*  
 it is true I her have seen she PART/them has eaten for a half-hour  
 'It's true. I saw her; she ate strawberries for half an hour.'

In (29), the pronoun *en* ‘of.them’ is not possible, and the definite pronoun *les* ‘them’ has to be used in the intended meaning. For the pronoun *en* to be felicitous, it would have to denote a subpart of the strawberries or any strawberries, none of which is the meaning of (19). In (30), the judgements are reversed: *en* is grammatical whereas *les* is not. This is expected as *des fraises* ‘strawberries’ in (30) means *any strawberries* and does not refer to some strawberries whose referent is identified, in contrast to *des fraises* in (29). This confirms that *des fraises* in (30) is not specific and that, in (29), it is not non-specific, otherwise *en* would be grammatical. The anaphoric pronoun *les* in (29) is taken “as a means for disambiguation between a specific and a non-specific reading”, although this “test can only be illustrative” since anaphoric pronouns are licensed in different contexts (Von Heusinger 2011, 1031).<sup>21</sup> These examples confirm that there is a difference in specificity between the complements *des fraises* in (29) and (30).<sup>22</sup>

That specific and non-specific constituents are replaced by different pronominal elements is supported by the crosslinguistic analysis in Sleeman and Ihsane (2020): in this research, we investigated the German and Dutch constructions that correspond to the diverse uses of the French partitive pronoun *en* and developed an analysis accounting for the similarities/differences between these languages in relation to the presence/absence of the partitive pronoun (using the terminology in Ihsane 2013). The data at the heart of the paper were collected in a Grammaticality Judgment Test taken by native speakers of French, Dutch and German. The results of the work were formalized in the model developed in Ihsane (2013) mentioned above and show that in German, for instance, *welch-* is preferred for non-specific constituents.

In sum, we propose that the *des*-complements that are grammatical in a telic eventuality involve a “known” quantity and are specific. As a result, the reference of these complements is quantized. Since the referent of these nominals is known by the subject, we have argued that the type of specificity represented is epistemic specificity.

21 A reviewer also noted that the use of anaphoric pronouns was not conclusive, and we thank them for this observation.

22 Note that we are not claiming that all the complements of telic sentences are specific, but only that specificity is a feature that can lead to a telic reading, in particular with *des*-complements.

#### 4 Conclusion

In this paper, we have tackled an issue little discussed in the literature, namely the grammaticality of *des*-complements, usually associated to atelic eventualities, in telic sentences. To understand the role of the complement in the (a)telicity of the eventuality, we have investigated several features of the *des*-complements involved and shown that they do not play a decisive role, except for specificity which can be related to quantization. More precisely, we have shown that, in our examples, the grammatical number of the complement, the mass/count opposition and the atomicity of its reference cannot trigger the telic interpretation of our puzzling data. To account for the data, we have proposed that the telic examples involve a “known” quantity which leads to quantization, and that “known” can be formalized in terms of specificity. Thus, in telic eventualities, the *des*-complement is specific, whereas in atelic eventualities, it is non-specific. Building on Von Heusinger’s (2000a,b, 2003, 2011) work, we have argued that the type of specificity represented is epistemic specificity and that the referent of such specific indefinites can be identified via referential anchoring, a mechanism involving a function from an anchor to the referent: in our examples with the specific *des*-complements, the anchor is the subject of the sentence. The content of the function contains some information not available to the hearer, namely the quantity of strawberries eaten or picked by the subject of the sentence as she was in a hurry or preparing her dessert, respectively.

One question which arises is whether the analysis of specific *des*-NPs proposed in this paper has repercussions on the syntactic structure of these constituents (for a syntactic analysis of nominals with a “partitive article”, see Gerards and Stark, this volume, and also Dobrovie-Sorin, this volume, on *des*-NPs). One option could be to adopt Campbell’s (1996) proposal that, in languages like English which lack NP-raising, a null operator is merged in the specifier position of the Determiner Phrase, the projection generally hosting articles, as shown in (31) (adapted from Aboh 2002, 6):

$$(31) \left[ {}_{DP} Op_i \left[ {}_{D^{\circ}} \det \left[ {}_{FP} [e]_i N \right] \right] \right]$$

The operator in (31) sits in the highest projection of the nominal structure and relates this constituent to its referent in the discourse. Such an analysis could extend to the epsilon operator postulated by Von Heusinger (2000). This operator was, however, interpreted as a choice function, an analysis which evolved into the referential anchoring approach presented and adopted here. In this perspective, there could be a different operator in the position of Op in (31)



which would be interpreted as a function  $f(\text{anchor}) = \text{referent}$  which assigns a referent to the indefinite.

Another line of analysis could be to adopt Fodor and Sag's (1982) view that the indefinite article is lexically ambiguous and elaborate on it, postulating different feature hierarchies for indefinite articles. For instance, in our examples, *des* could spell out a hierarchy of features when it is non-specific and another hierarchy of features, certainly richer, when it is specific (cf. Gebhardt 2009). This would be analogous, to some extent, to the nanosyntactic approach developed by Starke (2001, 2014); cf. also Baunaz et al. (2019).

A third possibility would be to assume that specificity is encoded in a discrete projection of the nominal structure. In earlier work, we proposed that specificity (i.e. what we called S(peaker's)-reference in Ihsane 2008; see Section 3.2) is encoded in the highest functional projection of the nominal structure, that is, in a syntactic functional layer specialized for specificity. Accordingly, we labeled this projection S(peaker) Reference. In (32), we have replaced this projection with a Specificity Phrase, reflecting the analysis developed here:

(32) [Specificity Phrase [Quantificational Phrase [Property Phrase ... ]]]

The nominal structure in (32) represents the three semantic types *des*-NPs may belong to, namely  $\langle e \rangle$  (specific),  $\langle \langle e, t \rangle t \rangle$  (quantificational) and  $\langle e, t \rangle$  (property-denoting); see Section 2.2.1. One argument we provided for this structure is the use of the pronoun *en*, reported in the previous section (cf. Ihsane 2013). The idea is that pronouns replace different layers of the nominal structure and that *en* cannot replace the Specificity Phrase in (32) since it cannot pronominalize specific complements; it can only replace lower layers of the nominal structure.

A layered nominal structure like (32) seems costly because it implies two different structures for specific and non-specific nominal phrases like *des fraises* in (19) and *des fraises* in (18), respectively. However, besides theory internal justifications, a cross-linguistic perspective may support a complex structural analysis. Although there are no sets of articles that are specific vs. non-specific in Indo-European languages, there are many other languages which mark specificity morphologically or lexically (Von Heusinger 2002a, 254 who cites Lyons 1999, 59). The morphological realizations of specificity in various languages may be difficult to account for with a structure comprising only a Determiner Phrase: for instance, the case marking on specific nominals in Turkish, which involves a definite article *bir* and a case suffix (Lewis 1967; Kornfilt 1997, a. o.), or the combination of two other elements to express specificity (Von Heusinger

2011) could require more than one position in the nominal structure. For reasons of space and time, we leave the question open and will address it in future work.

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# A Protocol for Indefinite Determiners in Italian and Italo-Romance

*Giuliana Giusti*

*This paper is dedicated to Carme Picallo, a mother of modern Romance linguistics, and a pioneer in the study of noun phrases, who passed away on June 7, 2019. We shall miss her.*



## 1 Introduction

As observed by Brasoveanu and Farkas (2016), indefiniteness is such a broad topic in semantics and pragmatics that a simple definition cannot be reached in a few lines. One way to approach the definitory problem is to refer to its positive counterpart; that is, definiteness. In this perspective, if a definite nominal refers to an individual already mentioned in the discourse, an indefinite nominal may introduce a new individual in the discourse, or it may not refer at all. There are different types of indefiniteness, combining for different values of specificity and presupposition of existence.<sup>1</sup> For example, while in (1a-b) the objects *wine* or *violets* are non-specific (weak indefinites, according to Mil-sark 1977; Diesing 1992), in (1c) the subject *students* can either refer to existing individuals that the speaker has in mind, or to non-specific individuals whose existence the speaker is not committed to:

- (1) a. *I will drink wine.*  
b. *I will pick violets.*  
c. *Students will arrive.*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ihsane, this volume, on specificity and complements with a “partitive article” in French.

All the indefinites in (1) are called “uncontroversial indefinites” by Brasoveanu and Farkas (2016) to distinguish them on the one hand from quantificational indefinites (as *some children*, *some of the children*, also called strong indefinites in the literature; see McNally 2020 for an overview) and on the other hand from marked indefinites, such as those introduced by the complex determiner “a certain” (see Schwarz 2011, for an overview).

In this paper, I focus on uncontroversial indefinites in Italian and Italo-Romance varieties. The interest of the enterprise is due to the fact that in addition to bare nominals, these languages present a variety of determiners, including the definite article, the bare preposition *di*, the so-called “partitive article”<sup>2</sup> and possibly the use of *certain* with singular mass and plural nouns, as in (2), which may have the same non-quantificational interpretation as (1a–b) above:

- (2) a. *Berrò vino / il vino / di vino / del vino*  
 [I] will.drink wine / the wine / of wine / PA.M.SG wine  
 / *certo vino*  
 / certain wine  
 ‘I’ll drink wine.’
- b. *Raccoglierò violette / le violette / di violette / delle violette*  
 [I] will.pick violets / the violets / of violets / PA.F.PL violets  
 / *certe violette*  
 / certain violets  
 ‘I’ll pick violets.’

According to Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018, 2020) these constructions distribute in different ways across dialects and regional varieties of informal Italian, with different nuances of indefiniteness. The goal of this paper is to provide a tool to detect variation and optionality in the use of these elements and define the specialization of meaning associated to them. This will be carried out in what I call a “protocol methodology”, a metatheoretical approach, informed of the advances of current linguistic research, which pins down the properties and features relevant for the discussion, abstracting away from framework specific technicalities that may hinder the communication among linguists of different persuasions and with scholars in non-linguistic disciplines, such as education, language policy, language accessibility and clinical treatments.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of the different forms to express indefiniteness in Italo-Romance set in a pan-Romance

<sup>2</sup> The term “partitive article” is used here in an atheoretical sense. Strictly speaking, in our work

perspective. Section 3 assesses the diagnostics for the expression of indefiniteness in Italo-Romance according to seven features: (i) grammatical function; (ii) scope; (iii) noun classes; (iv) verbal aspect; (v) clause types; (vi) specializations of meaning; (vii) lexical collocation. Section 4 presents the aims and goals of the protocol approach and how the diagnostics discussed in Section 3 can be organized in protocols providing an adequate tool to capture the fine-grained dimensions of variation and optionality among indefinites. Section 5 draws the conclusions, highlighting how the protocol methodology can encompass cross-theoretical misunderstandings.

## 2 The Empirical Domain

### 2.1 *The Pan-Romance Perspective*

In Germanic languages, bare nominals are found in object and subject position, as in English (3)–(4) where the indefinite determiner *some*, more precisely a weak variant of it, often referred to in the literature as *s'm* (see Milsark 1977; McNally 2020), is possible but not obligatory in either position:

- (3) a. *I drank (some) wine.*  
 b. *I picked (some) violets.*
- (4) a. *(Some) wine is on the table.*  
 b. *(Some) violets are blooming in my garden.*

Romance languages are different from Germanic languages (see Strobel and Glaser, this volume, for a discussion of partitive markers in Germanic). Delfitto and Schroten (1991) observe that while Dutch (like English) has bare nominals in both subject (5a) and object positions (6a), Spanish only has them in object position (6b) vs. (5b), while French disallows them in both positions (5c) and (6c):

- (5) a. *Studenten hebben het gebouw bezet.* Dutch  
 b. \* *Estudiantes han ocupado el edificio.* Spanish  
 c. \* *Étudiants ont occupé l'édifice.* French  
 'Students have occupied the building'

---

it is a determiner, not an article, since the *di* component is in SpecDP (cf. Section 5). This is represented in the text with the annotation *di+art* and in the examples with the gloss PA for "partitive article".

- (6) a. *Ik heb studenten in het gebouw gezien.* Dutch  
 b. *Yo he visto estudiantes en el edificio.* Spanish  
 c. \**J' ai vu étudiants dans l'édifice.* French  
 'I have seen students in the building.'

Where bare nominals are not allowed, overt determiners must appear. Spanish and French present two different types of overt indefinite determiners: the plural form of the singular indefinite “one” and the so-called “partitive article” formed by a grammaticalized preposition *de* ‘of’ inflected with a definite article bleached of its definite meaning (Carlier 2007; Ihsane 2008; Carlier and Lamiroy 2014).<sup>3</sup> Note that in object position, these determiners are in competition with bare nominals in Spanish but mandatory in French, which is the only Romance language that does not allow for bare nominals:

- (7) a. \*(*Unos*) *estudiantes han ocupado el edificio.* Spanish  
 b. \*(*Des*) *étudiants ont occupé l'édifice.* French  
 ‘Students have occupied the building.’
- (8) a. *Yo he visto (unos) estudiantes en el edificio.* Spanish  
 b. *J' ai vu \*(des) étudiants dans l'édifice.* French  
 ‘I have seen students in the building.’

The subject/object asymmetry found in Spanish is widespread across Romance (Stark 2008a, 2008b, 2016; Carlier and Lamiroy 2018).

Variation is also found in the forms of the determiners: Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan and Romanian display no determiner with mass nouns, as illustrated in (9a-c) and (9f), and the plural form of the indefinite article “one” with plural count nouns, (10a-c) and (10f) (see Dobrovie-Sorin, this volume, for some discussion of Romanian). French and Italian display the “partitive article” with both mass nouns and plural count nouns. In French, (9d) and (10d), the “partitive article” is the only available form, while in Italian it covaries with bare nominals as illustrated in (9e) and (10e). Finally, in Romanian (9f) and (10f), we find the uninflected indefinite determiner *niște* for both mass and plural count nouns, on a par with bare nominals and the plural “one” for count nouns:

3 Note that there are semantic differences between Spanish *unos*, French *du/des* and Romanian *niște* and *unele* that cannot be discussed here for space reasons. Note also that when overt determiners compete with bare nouns, they are expected to have specialized meaning (see Section 3.6).

- (9) a. *Bebi* *vinho.* Portuguese  
 b. *Bebí* *vino.* Spanish  
 c. *Vaig beure* *vi.* Catalan  
 d. *J'ai bu* *du vin.* French  
 e. *Ho bevuto* *(del/il) vino.* Italian  
 f. *Am băut* *(niște) vin.* Romanian  
 drink.1SG.PST (DET) wine  
 'I drank wine.'
- (10) a. *Apanhei* *(umas) violetas.* Portuguese  
 b. *Cogí* *(unas) violetas.* Spanish  
 c. *Vaig collir* *(unes) violetes.* Catalan  
 d. *J'ai cueilli* *des violettes.* French  
 e. *Ho raccolto* *(delle/le) violette.* Italian  
 f. *Am cules* *(niște / unele) violete.* Romanian  
 pick.1SG.PST (DET) violets  
 'I picked violets.'

These facts are well known in the literature on individual languages. What is less known is the fact that the definite article can (marginally) appear in nominals with indefinite interpretation, in all Romance languages except the most lateral ones, namely Portuguese and Romanian, as represented in (10b-e) with a modified mass noun "bottled water" in a generic sentence expressing a habit:

- (11) a. *Bebo* *água de garrafa.* Portuguese  
 b. *Bebo* *(el) agua embotellada.* Spanish  
 c. *Bec* *(l') aigua en ampolla.* Catalan  
 d. *Je bois* *(de) l'eau en bouteille.* French  
 e. *Bevo* *(l')acqua in bottiglia.* Italian  
 f. *Beau* *apă din sticlă.* Romanian  
 drink.1SG.PRS (DET) water in bottle / bottled  
 'I drink bottled water.'

Since Romance languages express reference to kind with the definite article, it could at first sight be argued that the direct object in (11) refers to kind when it is introduced by the definite article. But this would be wrong for two reasons. First, the definite article is much more restricted in similar contexts with an unmodified plural count noun, as in (12), where only Italian and Catalan still allow for the definite article:

- (12) a. *Não como batata(s).* Portuguese  
 b. *No como patatas.* Spanish  
 c. *No menjo (les) patates.* Catalan  
 d. *Je ne mange pas de /??les patates.* French  
 e. *Non mangio (le) patate.* Italian  
 f. *Nu mănânc cartofi.* Romanian  
 NEG eat.1SG.PRS (DET) potato.SG/PL  
 'I don't eat potatoes.'

Second, this distinction is not found with the attitude predicates in (13)–(14), which can select a kind-referring object (see Laca 1990; Krifka et al 1995). In this case, all Romance languages require the definite article, except Portuguese which, however, does not rule it out:<sup>4</sup>

- (13) a. *Evito (a) água de garrafa.* Portuguese  
 b. *Evito el agua embotellada.* Spanish  
 c. *Evito l'aigua en ampulla.* Catalan  
 d. *J'évite l'eau en bouteille.* French  
 e. *Evito l'acqua in bottiglia.* Italian  
 avoid.1SG.PRS (DET) water in bottle / bottled  
 f. *Evit apa îmbuteliată.* Romanian  
 avoid.1SG.PRS water.the bottled  
 'I avoid bottled water.'
- (14) a. *Sou intolerante às batatas / a batata(s).* Portuguese  
 b. *Soy intolerante a las patatas.* Spanish  
 c. *Sóc intolerant a les patates.* Catalan  
 d. *Je suis intolérant aux patates.* French  
 e. *Sono intollerante alle patate.* Italian  
 be.1SG.PRS intolerant to.the potatoes / to potato.SG/PL  
 f. *Am intoleranță la cartofi.* Romanian  
 have.1SG.PRS intolerance to potatoes  
 'I am intolerant to potatoes.'

The contexts in (9)–(12) present different grammatical features that interact with indefiniteness. In (9)–(10) the mass noun “wine” and the count plural “vio-

4 Note that the definite article must be missing in Romanian if a definite or kind referring expression is unmodified and embedded in a PP, but this holds of both kind referring and definite nominals.

lets” are the object of an episodic predicate in the past tense. In this context all languages, except French, have bare nouns. With mass nouns only Italian and Romanian display an overt alternative indefinite determiner. With plural count nouns all languages have an alternative. In (9)–(10) the definite article is an alternative only in Italian. In (11) the mass noun “water” is modified by a preposition or an adjective.<sup>5</sup> This is probably what makes the definite article also possible in Spanish, Catalan and French, as well as in Italian. In (12), where the indefinite object is unmodified and under the scope of negation, the definite article is impossible in all the Romance languages, except Catalan where it is only marginal and in Italian where it is fully acceptable.

This short overview in the pan-Romance perspective suggests that French is the language that mostly requires overt determiners, while Italian is the language with the largest variation of forms, including the definite article generalized in the four indefinite contexts in (9)–(12).<sup>6</sup> When more than one form is possible, the question arises about the conditions that govern the competition among the forms. We expect to find variation in the semantic interpretation and syntactic distribution across speakers, as well as across dialects and regional varieties of Italian.

## 2.2 *Variation in Italo-Romance Dialects*

Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018) analyze three AIS maps (Jaberg and Jud 1928–1949; Tisato 2009), displaying indefinite nominal expressions, that is, map 637 ‘[to look for] violets’, map 1037 ‘[if there was] water’, and map 1343 ‘[go to the cellar] to take wine’, finding large variation and optionality among four possibilities, illustrated with Italian in (15)–(18).

In (15) we see a bare nominal, with no overt determiner:

- (15) a. *Ho bevuto vino.*  
       have.1SG.PRS drunk wine
- b. *Ho raccolto violette.*  
       have.1SG.PRS picked violets

5 The prenominal / postnominal position of adjectives in indefinite nominals also contributes to different specificity interpretations, see Picallo (1994, 2012). Given the preliminary nature of this study, the complexity of the interaction with adjectives is only hinted upon and will be left for future research.

6 Kupisch and Koops (2007) note that the Italian definite article occurs in indefinite contexts, such as *portare la giacca* ‘wear a jacket’ or *avere la macchina* ‘have a car’ (also see Korzen 1996) in which French would display an indefinite article, like English. They analyze this contrast

The same indefinite meaning can be conveyed by a definite article, as in (16), which is in principle ambiguous between definite and indefinite interpretation. For example, (16a) is appropriate in the context “In my whole life, I have drunk wine many times”, in which the predicate wine-drinking does not refer to any definite (quantity of) wine; and (16b) can easily be interpreted as referring to the activity of violet-picking, with no reference to previously mentioned violets:

- (16) a. *Ho bevuto il vino.*  
 have.1SG.PRS drunk the wine
- b. *Ho raccolto le violette.*  
 have.1SG.PRS picked the violets

In (17), we find the so-called “partitive article”, formed with *di* and a definite article, typical of Gallo-Romance varieties.

- (17) a. *Ho bevuto del vino.*  
 have.1SG.PRS drunk PA.M.SG wine
- b. *Ho raccolto delle violette.*  
 have.1SG.PRS picked PA.F.PL violets

In (18), also parallel to Gallo-Romance varieties outside Italy, we find the bare preposition *di*. Note that while (15)–(17) are attested in Standard Italian, (18) should be taken as a meta-representation of dialectal data. In fact, only Piedmontese varieties have bare *di* (Berruto 1974; Cerruti and Regis 2020, and the references therein):

- (18) a. *Ho bevuto di vino.*  
 have.1SG.PRS drunk of wine
- b. *Ho raccolto di violette.*  
 have.1SG.PRS picked of violets

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proposing that the grammaticalization of the definite article is one step further in Italian than in French (see Schurr, this volume, for further discussion of grammaticalization facts in Romance). We observe here extensively that this is also the case for mass and count nouns.



The four ways to express indefiniteness, illustrated in (15)–(18), correspond to plural and mass indefiniteness, confirming the general tendency displayed in Romance and Germanic for the two types of bare nouns to behave alike, and unlike singular count nouns. In Italian and all Italo-Romance varieties, singular count nouns display an obligatory indefinite article (19a), with no plural (19b) or mass (19c) counterpart. The only possible interpretation of (19c) is of a (countable) type of wine; for this reason, it is not given as ungrammatical, but it is indicated as #, which stands for unacceptable in the intended meaning (mass indefinite):

- (19) a. *Ho raccolto una violetta.*  
 have.1SG.PRS picked a/one violet
- b. \**Ho raccolto une violette.*  
 have.1SG.PRS picked one.F.PL violets
- c. #*Ho bevuto un vino.*  
 have.1SG.PRS drunk a wine

Following Cardinaletti and Giusti's (2018) terminology, I will call the missing article in (15) ZERO, the definite article with indefinite interpretation in (16) ART, the "partitive article" *di*+art in (17), and the indefinite determiner homophonous to the preposition *di* in (18) bare *di*.

Cardinaletti and Giusti's (2018) detailed analysis of the AIS maps 637, 1037, and 1343 reports the following areal distribution of indefinite determiners. The extreme northern and southern varieties favour ZERO; a large part of Italy displays a strong preference for ART; few varieties of the North-West favour bare *di*; a compact area starting from Liguria and northern Tuscany, including the whole Emilia and Romagna and reaching the northern Marche favours *di*+art. This distribution can be captured by two independent isoglosses: a North–South isogloss favouring ART, surrounded by an area (northern Piedmont, northern Lombardy, northern Veneto, southern Apulia, southern Calabria and the whole of Sicily and Sardinia) favouring ZERO; a West–East isogloss (from central Piedmont to the central-northern Adriatic regions ending in Ancona) favouring *di*, surrounded by an area where *di* is not used. Where the two isoglosses overlap (in southern Lombardy, southern Veneto, the whole of Emilia Romagna and the northern Marche), *di*+art is the favourite form. According to Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018), this is evidence for the independent categorial status of *di* and ART, the former being a determiner in SpecDP and the latter being the overt realization of functional nominal features (number and gen-

der, see Picallo 1991) in D. I will not dwell on the formal analysis of the four forms, referring the interested reader to that work.

Interestingly, very few varieties display just one form. Most varieties have more than one. When several forms are available, it appears that one has core indefinite meaning, whereas the others specialise. With “core indefinite meaning” Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018) intend the most basic notion of indefinites, namely those nominals that do not presuppose the existence of the referent or any other special meaning. This is the case of the AIS map 1037 ‘if there was water’, where the indefinite nominal is in the scope of a hypothetical operator. In the AIS map 637 ‘to pick violets’ the particular verb-object collocation enforces the special meaning of “small quantity”, because violets are generally gathered in small bunches. The AIS map 1343 ‘go to the cellar to take wine’ enforces a “salient” meaning, again due to the verb-object collocation, because a cellar is generally the place where wine is stored. This will be considered in more detail in Section 3.6.

The three AIS maps all display weak indefinites with narrow scope in post-verbal positions, that is, the referent of the indefinite object is not (necessarily) presupposed to exist (see Brasoveanu and Farkas 2016; McNally 2020). Furthermore, we know from the literature that there are other forms to express indefiniteness in Italo-Romance dialects competing with the four indefinite determiners found with mass and plural count nouns, illustrated in (15)–(18). They appear sporadically on the three AIS maps studied by Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018). Dialects have many ways to express small quantity, mostly with quantity nouns selecting the preposition *di* ‘of’ and no article. This ranges from general ‘a little’, for example, *un po’ di vino* ‘a bit of wine’ (see AIS map 1343, 523 Firenze), *un poko de viole mamole* ‘a bit of violets’ (see AIS map 637, Crespadoro (VI)), to measure nouns selecting a type of substance, for example, *un sorso d’acqua* ‘a gulp of water’ (see AIS map 1037, left column) or *istu pezzu de legname* ‘this piece of wood’, (see AIS map 538, 624 Rieti); or collective nouns, for example, *ne mattso da viola* ‘a bunch of violets’, (see AIS map 637, 707 Lucera (FG)) or the grammaticalized cardinal ‘two’, for example, *du viole bambele* ‘two violets’ (see AIS map 637, 590 Porto Santo Stefano (GR)).

Another form, reported in the dialectal literature, but not occurring in any relevant AIS map is *certo* ‘certain’. It appears in some southern Italian dialects, as a genuine indefinite determiner. We find an example with a mass noun *fieno* ‘hay’ in (20a) and a plural noun *kundi* ‘stories’ in (20b):

- (20) a. *S’era corcato mmiezo a ccerto fieno.* Neaples  
 be.3SG.PST lying on to certain hay  
 ‘He was lying on hay.’ (Rohlf’s 1968, 118)

- b. *certi kundi* Avezzano (L'aquila)  
 certain stories  
 'some stories' (Giammarco 1979, 141)

*Certo* with determiner function is present in all Italo-Romance varieties, as the mass singular / count plural counterpart of the marked indefinite determiner *un certo* 'a certain', which is parallel to its English counterpart (cf. Farkas 2002; Schwarz 2011).

In (21) *certo* occurs with a mass noun (21a) and a plural count noun (21b), but not with a singular count noun (21c), on a par with *di* and *ART* above. Furthermore, with plural count nouns, it ambiguously specifies either the referent or the type of referent, as indicated by the two translations in (21b); with mass nouns it only refers to the type, (21a); with singular count nouns it only refers to a specific referent (21c):

- (21) a. *Mangio solo certa pasta.*  
 eat.1SG.PRS only certain pasta  
 'I only eat a certain type of pasta.'
- b. *Conosco certe persone.*  
 know.1SG.PRS certain persons  
 'I know some people of a specific type.' / 'I know some specific people'
- c. *Conosco \*(una) certa persona.*  
 know.1SG.PRS a certain person  
 'I know a specific person.'

Such a profusion of forms in the local dialects at the first half of last century witnessed by AIS and the dialectal literature, raises questions regarding both the development of these forms in the modern dialects in contact with Standard Italian and the presence and status of these forms in regional (informal) Italian in contact with the local dialects. This paper is a first step of a large research project aiming to explore variation and optionality in the expression of indefiniteness in modern local dialects as well as in modern informal Italian.

### 3 Diagnostics for Indefiniteness

This section aims at highlighting the different semantic and pragmatic contexts where different indefinite determiners can appear. In this view, it is important to disambiguate the definite article with indefinite interpretation (ART), from the better studied reference to kind and definite interpretations of the definite article.

In principle, *l'acqua* 'the water' in (22), or *le zanzare* 'the mosquitos' in (23) are three times ambiguous and can only be disambiguated by the context: in (22a) and (23a) they are kind-referring, in (22b) and (23b) they are indefinite, and in (22c) and (23c) they are definite:

- (22) a. *L'acqua abbonda in questa regione.*  
 the water abounds in this region  
 'Water abounds in this region.'
- b. *Ho versato l'acqua nel bicchiere.*  
 have.1SG.PRES poured the water in.the glass  
 'I poured water in my glass.'
- c. *L'acqua che ho preso dal frigorifero era troppo fredda.*  
 'The water that I took from the fridge was too cold.'
- (23) a. *Le zanzare sono molto diffuse in questa regione.*  
 the mosquitos are very widespread in this region.  
 'Mosquitos are very wide-spread in this region.'
- b. *In questa stanza (non) ci sono le zanzare.*  
 in this room (NEG) there are the mosquitos  
 'In this room, there are (no) mosquitoes.'
- c. *Le zanzare che mi hanno punto erano fastidiose.*  
 the mosquitoes that =1SG.ACC have bit were annoying  
 'The mosquitoes that bit me were annoying.'

#### 3.1 Grammatical Function

The predicates in (22a) and (23a) select a kind-referring subject and are incompatible with an object-referring nominal. A subject with a ZERO determiner, as in (24a) and (25a), is excluded for the independent reason, seen for Spanish in (5b) and (7a) above, that in Romance languages, bare nouns in subject position

are ungrammatical (cf. Dobrovie-Sorin, this volume; and Martin, Carvalho and Alexiadou, this volume, for Brazilian Portuguese examples where the subject is reinterpreted as an event type). But the fact that (24b) and (25b) with an overt “partitive article” are also ungrammatical shows that the definite article in (22a) and (23a) does not express indefiniteness but reference to kind. In (7) above, indefinite subjects in Spanish and French must display an overt determiner (*unos* in Spanish and the “partitive article” in French). This is also the case in Italian, which displays *di+art*, as shown by the episodic sentences in (26):

- (24) a. *\*Acqua abbonda in questa regione.*  
 water abunds in this region
- b. *\*Dell'acqua abbonda in questa regione.*  
 PA.F.SG water abunds in this region  
 ‘Water abunds in this region.’
- (25) a. *\*Zanzare sono molto diffuse in questa regione.*  
 mosquitos are very widespread in this region.
- b. *\*Delle zanzare sono molto diffuse in questa regione.*  
 PA.F.PL mosquitos are very widespread in this region.  
 ‘Mosquitoes are wide-spread in this region.’
- (26) a. *Dell'acqua sta scorrendo nella canaletta.*  
 PA.F.SG water is running in.the pipe  
 ‘Water is running in the pipe.’
- b. *Delle zanzare stanno ronzando nella mia camera.*  
 PA.F.PL mosquitos are buzzing in.the my room  
 ‘Mosquitoes are buzzing in my room.’

Bare nominals can occur in subject position provided they are modified by postnominal or prenominal adjectives (or prepositional adjuncts). The contrasts in (27)–(28) confirm that ZERO can never appear in the subject of predicates selecting for kind, while it can appear in indefinite subjects, obeying some restrictions:

- (27) a. *\*Acqua fresca e pulita abbonda in questa regione.*  
 water fresh and clean abunds in this region  
 ‘Fresh and clean water abunds in this region.’

b. *Acqua fresca e pulita scorre giù dalla montagna.*  
 water fresh and clean runs down from the mountain  
 'Fresh and clear water runs down from the mountain.'

(28) a. \**Pericolosissime zanzare tigre sono diffuse in questa regione.*  
 'Very dangerous tiger mosquitoes are wide-spread in this region.'

b. *Pericolosissime zanzare tigre ronzavano nella mia stanza.*  
 Very dangerous mosquitoes tiger were-buzzing in.the my room  
 'Very dangerous tiger mosquitoes were buzzing in my bedroom.'

In episodic sentences with positive or negative polarity (29)–(30), the object can be indefinite, as shown by the fact that it can be introduced by ZERO or *di+art*. This context also allows for ART, compare (29) and (22b), (30) and (23b):

(29) a. *(Non) ho versato acqua nel bicchiere.*  
 NEG have.1SG pour water in the glass

b. *(Non) ho versato dell'acqua nel bicchiere.*  
 NEG have.1SG be.1SG PA.F.SG water in the glass  
 'I poured / didn't pour water in my glass.'

(30) a. *In questa stanza (non) ci sono zanzare.*  
 in this room NEG there are mosquitoes

b. *In questa stanza (non) ci sono delle zanzare.*  
 in this room NEG there are PA.F.PL mosquitoes  
 'In this room, there are (no) mosquitoes.'

Note that a definite referential interpretation of the objects in (22b) and (23b) is also possible, as they can be synonymous to the sentences in (31), where the object is modified by a relative clause in the indicative, which enforces definite interpretation, parallel to what we find in (22c) and (23c):

(31) a. *Ho versato nel bicchiere l'acqua che era nella tua tazza.*  
 'I poured in my glass the water that was in your cup.'

b. *In questa stanza ci sono le zanzare che mi hanno punto.*  
 'In this room there are the mosquitoes that bit me.'

Kind-referring objects can be found in the object position of attitude verbs, such as “love” or “hate” (cf. Laca 1990 for English and Spanish; Anscombe 2001 for French) but cannot be the object of consumption verbs such as “eat” or “drink”. This is shown by the contrast between *les bananes* in (32a) and *des bananes* in (32b):

- (32) a. *Les singes aiment les bananes.*  
 the monkeys love the bananas  
 ‘Monkeys love bananas.’
- b. *Les singes mangent des bananes.*  
 the monkeys love PA.PL bananas  
 ‘Monkeys eat bananas.’

In Italian, the contrast is only partially replicated with a major difference, namely, that the article is mandatory in the object of attitude predicates (33), whose object can refer to kind, and optional in the complement of consumption verbs (34), whose object cannot refer to kind as confirmed by the contrast with French (32b), and the pan-Romance overview in (11)–(14) above:

- (33) a. *Detesto \*(il) café.*  
 hate.1SG.PRS the coffee  
 ‘I hate coffee.’
- b. *Detesto \*(le) ciliegie.*  
 hate.1SG.PRS the cherries  
 ‘I hate cherries.’
- (34) a. *Bevo (il) café.*  
 drink.1SG.PRS the coffee  
 ‘I drink coffee.’
- b. *Mangio (le) ciliegie.*  
 eat.1SG.PRS the cherries  
 ‘I eat cherries.’

To conclude, the object position is the most reliable grammatical function to study the variation among bare nominals and overt indefinite determiners. This is because bare nominals cannot appear in subject position unless further modified by an adjective (or other adjuncts). In object position the different

determiners give different flavours to the notion of indefiniteness to be better defined in the rest of this section. The kind-interpretation of ART can be safely excluded avoiding the predicates that select kind-referring objects, such as attitude verbs. Note that the definite referential interpretation is always possible and must be excluded with appropriate means to be discussed in the following sections.

### 3.2 Scope

As noted by Chierchia (1997), in Standard Italian, bare nominals in direct object position only have narrow scope, while nominals with the “partitive article” may be ambiguous in the plural between narrow and wide scope, like the ones with a singular indefinite article (see also Zamparelli 2008).

- (35) a. *Non ho invitato ragazzi.* \* $\exists \neg / \neg \exists$   
 NEG have.1SG.PRS invited boys  
 ‘I didn’t invite boys.’
- b. *Non ho invitato un ragazzo.*  $\exists \neg / \neg \exists$   
 NEG have.1SG.PRS invited a boy  
 ‘I didn’t invite a boy.’
- c. *Non ho invitato dei ragazzi.*  $\exists \neg / \neg \exists$   
 NEG have.1SG.PRS invited PA.M.PL boys  
 ‘I didn’t invite boys.’

This is supported by the fact that, while (35a) is only compatible with the continuation in (36a), (35b-c) are compatible with both continuations in (37) and (38) respectively:

- (36) *Non ho invitato ragazzi*  
 NEG have.1SG.PRS invited boys
- a. *ma solo ragazze.*  $\neg \exists$   
 but only girls
- b. *#perchè erano antipatici.*  $\exists \neg$   
 because be.3PL.IMPV unpleasant  
 ‘I didn’t invite boys but only girls / # I didn’t invite boys because they were unpleasant.’



- (37) *Non ho invitato un ragazzo*  
 NEG have.1SG.PRS invited a boy
- a. *ma una ragazza.* ¬E  
 but a girls
- b. *perchè era antipatico.* E ¬  
 because be.3SG.IMP unpleasant  
 ‘I didn’t invite a boy but a girl. / # I didn’t invite a boy because he was unpleasant.’
- (38) *Non ho invitato dei ragazzi*  
 NEG have.1SG.PRS invited PA.M.PL boys
- a. *ma solo ragazze.* ¬E  
 but only girls
- b. *perchè erano antipatici.* E ¬  
 because be.3PL.IMP unpleasant  
 ‘I didn’t invite boys but only girls / I didn’t invite some boys because they were unpleasant.’

Cardinaletti and Giusti (2016) point out that in the dialect of Ancona, the “partitive article” can only have wide scope. This is consistent with the observation that the “partitive article” is not witnessed in point 539 (Ancona) in the AIS maps 637, 1037 and 1343, since the noun phrases illustrated in these maps only have narrow scope:

- (39) *Nun ho ‘nvitato dei fiolì*<sup>7</sup>  
 NEG have.1SG.PRS invited PA.M.PL boys
- a. *#ma solo le fiole.* \* ¬E  
 but only the girls  
 ‘I didn’t invite boys but only girls.’

7 Laura Brugè notes that here it would be preferable to have the DOM marker *a* preceding *dei fiolì*. I agree with her. Although the study of DOM in Anconetano has never been pursued, if we take prepositional accusative to be associated with presupposition of existence, specificity, or wide scope, also in Anconetano, as is the case of other central Italian dialects (see

- b. *perché erano 'ntipatici.* E ¬  
 because be.3PL.IMPf unpleasant  
 'I didn't invite some boys because they were unpleasant.'

Cardinaletti and Giusti (2016) further claim that mass nouns can only have narrow scope, at least in Italian, as shown in (40):

- (40) *Non ho bevuto del vino,*  
 NEG have.1SG.PRS invited PA.M.SG boys
- a. *ho bevuto solo acqua.* ¬E  
 have.1SG.PRS drink only only  
 'I didn't drink wine. I only drank water.'
- b. *#perché era acido.* \*E ¬  
 because be.3SG.PST sour  
 'I didn't drink wine because it was sour.'

The two claims, that *di+art* with mass nouns can only have narrow scope<sup>8</sup> and that in the dialect of Ancona it can only have wide scope, correctly predict that mass nouns cannot be introduced by the “partitive article” in this dialect. The two claims also predict that in those Italian varieties that allow the “partitive article” with mass and plural nouns, the “partitive article” is ambiguous between wide and narrow scope.

### 3.3 *Noun Classes*

The different properties of mass and count nouns lead us to the third feature, that is, a finer-grained distinction in the classification of nouns, in particular with regard to their being mass or count.

It is well-known that abstract nouns, such as “courage” and “talent”, behave differently from both singular mass and plural count nouns (cf. Tovina 2001). We will not consider them here. We introduce here a less known distinction between singular mass nouns such as *pasta* and plural nouns that can or must be conceptualized as mass, such as *spaghetti* and *spinaci* ‘spinach’ respectively.

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Loporcaro and Paciaroni (2016), this would actually confirm Cardinaletti and Giusti's claim that *di+ART* in Anconetano can only have wide scope.

8 This is in line with Ihsane's (2008) observation that in French the singular “partitive article” only takes narrow scope, while the plural “partitive article” can have wide or narrow scope.

The grammaticalized cardinal *due* ‘two’ (devoid of cardinal interpretation) can appear with genuine plural count nouns such as *amici* in (41a) as well as with plural mass nouns such as *spaghetti* (41b) and *spinaci* (41c):

- (41) a. *Ho invitato due amici.*  
 have.1SG.PRS invited two friends  
 ‘I invited two friends.’ / ‘I invited (a small number of) friends.’
- b. *Ho preparato due spaghetti.*  
 have.1SG.PRS prepared two spaghetti  
 ‘I cooked (some) spaghetti.’ / ‘I cooked two strings of spaghetti.’
- c. *Ho raccolto due spinaci.*  
 have.1SG.PRS picked two spinach.M.PL  
 ‘I picked (a small quantity of) spinach. / \*I picked two pieces of spinach.’

Other low cardinals can be grammaticalized to the point that they occur in idiomatic expressions, for example, *tre soldi* (lit. three coins, ‘little money’), *quattro gatti* (lit. four cats, ‘few people’). Higher cardinals do not have this possibility and can only be interpreted quantificationally.

The quantitative interpretation of cardinals allows us to detect a difference between what we may define as “semantically mass” plural nouns like *spinaci* in (41c), which can hardly be enumerated, from nouns like *spaghetti* (41b), which are ambiguous between the “semantic mass” and the regular plural count interpretation (cf. Gerards and Stark, this volume, on mass determiners and nominal plural marking). In fact, with a high cardinal such as ‘twelve’, which only has the quantitative interpretation, unambiguously semantically mass nouns are not allowed, cf. \**dodici spinaci* ‘twelve spinaches’, while ambiguous nouns only have plural interpretation, cf. *dodici spaghetti* ‘twelve [strings of] spaghetti’.

Grammaticalized low cardinals are used as indefinite determiners in all Italian dialects and regional varieties and provide a good alternative to the definite article, which, as pointed out in Section 3.1 above, is three times ambiguous. This is particularly relevant in the study of those varieties that do not allow for the “partitive article” and / or for bare nominals. Grammatically plural but unambiguously semantically mass nouns allow us to distinguish between the determiner and quantitative functions of low cardinals.

### 3.4 Aspect (*Telic / Atelic*)

Since Verkuyl (1972, 1993), the interpretation of object-referring nominals is strictly related to the aspect of the sentence. The canonical test that allows us to distinguish between telic and atelic (or resultative) aspect is the compatibility with adverbials such as ‘in an hour’ and ‘for hours’ respectively. De Swart (2006) reports that Bosveld-de Smet (1998) uses this test as a diagnostic to show that *des*-NPs in French correlate with atelic interpretation (42), unlike singular *un* ‘a’ and plural *les* ‘the’, which correlate with telic interpretation (43) (cf. Ihsane, this volume, for a discussion of *des*-NPs in telic sentences):

- (42) a. *Marie a cueilli des fraises pendant des heures.*  
 Marie has picked PA.PL strawberries for PA.PL hours  
 ‘Mary picked strawberries for hours.’
- b. \**Marie a cueilli des fraises en une heure.*  
 arie has picked PA.PL strawberries in an hour
- (43) a. \**Marie a cueilli une fraise / les fraises*  
 Marie has picked a strawberry / the strawberries  
*pendant des heures.*  
 for PA.PL hours
- b. *Marie a cueilli une fraise / les fraises en une heure.*  
 Marie has picked a strawberry / the strawberries in an hour  
 ‘Marie picked the strawberries in an hour.’

Italian, once again, is different from French in the distribution of the “partitive article” and the definite article, although it behaves like French with respect to the distribution of the indefinite singular article.<sup>9</sup>

In Italian, *di+art* is almost unacceptable with atelic aspect (44a) and fully possible with telic aspect (44b).<sup>10</sup> In (45) ART is possible with both aspects, while ZERO correlates with atelic aspect:

9 In these contexts, the singular count noun preceded by a definite article can only have definite referential interpretation.

10 In this case, I am trusting my personal grammatical judgement. We will come back to this in Section 4.2.

- (44) a. *Maria ha raccolto (??delle)fragole per un'ora.*  
 Maria has picked PA.F.PL strawberries for an hour  
 'Mary picked strawberries for an hour.'
- b. *Maria ha raccolto delle fragole in un'ora.*  
 Maria has picked PA.F.PL strawberries in an hour  
 'Maria picked strawberries in an hour.'
- (45) a. *Maria ha raccolto (le)fragole / \*una fragola per un'ora.*  
 Maria has picked the strawberries / a strawberry for an hour  
 'Maria picked strawberries for an hour.'
- b. *Maria ha raccolto \*(le)fragole / una fragola in un'ora.*  
 Maria has picked the strawberries / a strawberry in an hour  
 'Maria picked the strawberries / a strawberry in an hour.'

The definite article is not ambiguous in (45). With atelic aspect (45a), *le fragole* 'the strawberries' is synonymous to the bare nominal *fragole* 'strawberries'; with telic aspect (45b), *le fragole* is a referential definite plural noun phrase.

### 3.5 Clause Type

According to Krifka et al. (1995), generic sentences do not necessarily have arguments that refer to kind, as observed in (11) and (12) above, and, vice versa, kind-referring nominals may be the arguments of non-generic sentences: *potatoes* in (46a) is the kind referring subject of an episodic sentence; *a potato* in (46b) is the indefinite singular nominal subject of a generic sentence:

- (46) a. *Potatoes were introduced into Ireland by the end of the 17th century.*  
 b. *A potato contains vitamin C, amino acids, protein and thiamine.*

We have already observed in Section 2.1 that in Romance languages the definite article introduces kind referring nominals, and only in Italian it can generally introduce indefinite nominals (we call this indefinite determiner ART). Cardinaletti and Giusti (2020) present the results of a questionnaire on the expression of indefiniteness in colloquial Italian and find that ART is much more frequently used in generic negative sentences in the present, such as 'I don't eat meat' and 'I don't drink wine', than in episodic positive sentences in the past, such as 'We ate meat' and 'We drank wine'. Furthermore, in generic sentences *di+art* is never present, unlike what is found in episodic sentences, where it is in competition with ZERO and ART. We will get back to this in Section 4.2.

Polarity is another sentential feature interacting with indefiniteness. Sentence negation allows us to check for the scope of the indefinite object, as observed in (39)–(40) above (cf. Dobrovie-Sorin, this volume, for a discussion of French nominals with a “partitive article” in the scope of negation). In Italian, we have observed that while bare nominals can only have narrow scope, the “partitive article” is ambiguous between narrow and wide scope. This not only holds of positive and negative declaratives (47a–b), but also of questions, as in (47c):

- (47) a. *Ho mangiato (dei) biscotti.*  
 ‘I ate (some) biscuits.’  
 b. *Non ho mangiato (dei) biscotti.*  
 ‘I didn’t eat (any) biscuits. / I didn’t eat some biscuits.’  
 c. *Hai mangiato (dei) biscotti?*  
 ‘Did you eat (any) biscuits? / Did you eat some biscuits?’

In a variety which only allows for wide scope of *di*+art, such as Anconetano, (47c) is expected to be felicitous only in the interpretation in which the existence of biscuits that I did not eat is presupposed. This is because Anconetano only allows for the wide scope interpretation of *di*+art. This prediction is borne out, at least in my native speaker capacity.

Mood and modality generally interact with the presupposition of existence of the referent of the indefinite complement. A predicate in a conditional clause does not state the existence of its internal argument. The Italian sentences in (48) are equally felicitous whether I have in mind some specific biscuits or friends (strong interpretation) or not (weak interpretation):

- (48) a. *Mangerei (dei) biscotti.*  
 ‘I would eat (some) biscuits.’  
 b. *Arriverebbero (delle) amiche.*  
 ‘There would arrive (some) friends.’

This also holds of relative clauses in the subjunctive mood, which strongly favour the weak interpretation of the object of predicates such as “look for” or “wish”:

- (49) a. *Cerco (dei) biscotti che non facciano ingrassare.*  
 ‘I am looking for (some) biscuits that do not make you fat.’  
 b. *Desidero (delle) amiche che mi vogliono bene.*  
 ‘I wish [to have] (some) friends who love me.’

In Anconetano, the contexts enforcing narrow scope, such as those in (49) are predicted to be ungrammatical. This is borne out in my native speaker judgement. Fieldwork is needed to confirm this judgement.

### 3.6 *Specialization of Meaning*

Cardinaletti and Giusti (2018) argue that the different distribution of ZERO, ART, bare *di*, and *di+art* in given areas of the Italian territory can be due to different specializations of meaning associated to weak indefinites. The examples corresponding to the AIS map 1037 '[if there was] water' have the largest occurrence of bare nominals, because a mass noun in postverbal subject position of an existential predicate in a conditional sentence does not trigger any special meaning. ZERO thus represents the core form to express uncontroversial indefinites. ART occurs more often in the AIS map 1343 '[go to the cellar] to take wine', because wine is the typical substance stored in a cellar and this suggests that ART specializes for saliency. *Di+art* occurs more often in the AIS map 637 '[to look for] violets', because violets are usually picked in small quantities, a notion encoded by the "partitive article" in those Italian dialects that display it. This proposal was based on our personal intuitions and needs to be confirmed by the metalinguistic observations of a larger number of native speakers. This is one of the aims of the questionnaire presented in Section 4.

It is well-known that different indefinite determiners convey different types of indefiniteness. The semantic literature is abundant in distinguishing "identifiability" of an indefinite referent in epistemic Logic (Horn 2000; Jayez and Tovena 2002). It is therefore expected that coexisting determiners specialize for different interpretations. What is difficult to establish is what exactly these specializations are and how they correlate with the other features interacting with indefiniteness. One case in point in our repertory of indefinite determiners is *certo* "certain". *Certo* is present in all Italian varieties. It combines with the indefinite article (*una certa persona*, 'a certain person') with count singular nouns, but behaves as a determiner, therefore competes with *di+art* and ART, with plural count nouns ((*\*delle/\*le certa persone* '(\*some) certain people') and mass nouns ((*\*della/\*la certa carne* 'certain meat'). Given that *certo* is reported to have core indefinite meaning in some southern Italian dialects, as in (20) in Section 2.2, the issue arises as to whether it can be a core indefinite in certain varieties.

### 3.7 *Collocation (Frequency of Possible Predicate-Object Combinations)*

The notion of saliency does not only concern our encyclopedic knowledge and shared assumptions; it also regards the frequency with which the predicate and direct object (or other arguments) combine in the same collocation. For

example, “eat meat” or “drink water/wine” are supposedly more frequent and certainly more general than “eat potatoes” or “drink spirits”. The issue of the frequency of the verb-noun collocations is an important matter that requires a separate dedicated search in large corpora of Italian. Such corpora are unfortunately not available for Italian dialects and comparison across regional varieties of Italian and local Italo-Romance varieties would be impossible in this respect.

#### 4 The Protocol Methodology

A “protocol” in science is an established procedure, which applies in the same way with the same tools in different but comparable situations. It is therefore set to ensure comparability in experimental design and the collection, organization, and presentation of data avoiding disturbances, as far as this is possible. General linguistics is used to expressing correlations across phenomena and languages in table charts that display a +/- value. In Giusti (2011), I propose to turn this shared procedure of data representation into something more reflected and structured, which I call a “protocol”. The protocol methodology aims to go one step further in the appropriate design of the table charts, presenting the features of the elements under investigation in a reflected way. In the streamline of the search for parameters or implicational universals, the features of the protocol can be organized in clusters of properties that contribute to the understanding of parameter hierarchy and parametric variation.<sup>11</sup>

In this section, I give examples on how to transfer the empirical observations presented in Section 3 into the protocol methodology, in order to answer our two basic research questions: Have modern dialects changed due to contact with Italian? And conversely, does colloquial Italian display contact with the local dialects? In Section 4.1, I set the protocols; in Section 4.2, I present a questionnaire built on the protocols and the results of the questionnaire submitted to Italian native speakers; in Section 4.3, I present the results of pilot adaptations of the same questionnaire to some Italian dialects.

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11 The protocol methodology has been applied to the study of Romance-Slavic contact in Istro-Romanian, a severely endangered Romance language in Croatia, with the aim to enhance inclusive language awareness by Giusti and Zegrean (2015). It has been applied to the comparative teaching of psychological verbs in classical and modern languages (Latin and English) to Italian students by Giusti and Iovino (2016). It has also been applied in dialectological fieldwork on the Sicilian pseudo-coordination construction by Di Caro and Giusti (2015) and Di Caro (2019).



#### 4.1 *A Protocol for Indefinite Determiners in Italo-Romance*

In Table 8.1 we find a simple protocol that can be applied to any Romance language to establish the distribution of the various indefinite determiners found in that language. The horizontal axis is filled with six determiners in non-dialectal informal Italian among those presented in Section 2.2 (but we could have more). The vertical axis presents the three main noun classes we adopt. Here we could be more detailed, as regards noun subclasses, as we have seen for *spaghetti* and *spinaci* in (41) above. For each property we attribute a value: [+] indicates that the form is present, [-] that it is absent, and [#] that it exists but has a different interpretation.<sup>12</sup>

The determiners in Table 8.1 interact with the other features discussed in Section 3. Let us start with the observations we made about the grammatical functions of the nominal phrase. These functions are represented in Table 8.2, where the value [o] indicates that the feature is not relevant. We take bare *di* to be irrelevant, because it is attributed a [-] for each noun class in Table 8.1.<sup>13</sup>

We can look for possible specializations of meaning as discussed in Sections 2.2, 3.2 and 3.6. The protocol in Table 8.3 displays the value [?] for unchecked items. This means that we do not have an answer to the following research questions expressed in the protocol: How does the grammaticalized determiner *due* behave with respect to the different specialized meanings of indefiniteness seen in Section 3? Is it restricted to core meaning? Is it used for small quantity (as is probably the case, if I can trust my personal judgement)? Is it compatible with specific interpretation? Does it display scope ambiguities, like *di+art*? Appropriate fieldwork is needed to answer these questions.

12 In (a) in Table 8.1, *un* occurring with a mass noun turns it into a count noun. In (c) in Table 8.1 ART occurring with a singular count noun can only have definite interpretation. The values given in Table 8.1 are based on the discussion on Italian in Section 3. It remains to be checked in all Italo-Romance varieties (as will be briefly presented in Section 4.3 below).

13 Here we abstract away from bare nominals in dislocated positions, which are mandatorily preceded by bare *di* in right dislocation structures and optionally so in left dislocations structures, see Cardinaletti and Giusti (2017) for a detailed discussion of quantitative constructions:

- (i) *Ne ho viste molte, \*(di) ragazze!*  
 =PART have.ISG seen many.F.PL of girls  
 'I saw many, girls.'
- (ii) *(Di) Ragazze, ne ho viste molte.*  
 of girls, =PART have.ISG seen many.F.PL  
 'Girls, I saw many.'

TABLE 8.1 Protocol for the distribution of indefinite determiners

<b>Indefinite determiners in Italian</b>	<b>ZERO</b>	<b>ART</b>	<b>di</b>	<b>di+art</b>	<b>certo</b>	<b>un</b>	<b>due</b>
a. mass nouns	+	+	-	+	+	#	-
b. plural count nouns	+	+	-	+	+	-	+
c. singular count nouns	-	#	-	-	-	+	-

TABLE 8.2 Protocol for the grammatical functions of the nominal phrases

<b>Indefinite determiners across grammatical functions in Italian</b>	<b>ZERO</b>	<b>ART</b>	<b>bare di</b>	<b>di+art</b>	<b>certo</b>	<b>un</b>	<b>due</b>
a. preverbal subject	-	-	o	+	+	+	+
b. direct object	+	+	o	+	+	+	+

TABLE 8.3 Protocol for specialized meanings of indefiniteness

<b>Indefinite determiners in object position in Italian</b>	<b>ZERO</b>	<b>ART</b>	<b>bare di</b>	<b>di+art</b>	<b>certo</b>	<b>uno</b>	<b>due</b>
a. core indefiniteness	+	+	o	-	-	+	+
b. saliency	-	+	o	-	-	+	?
c. small quantity	-	-	o	+	-	-	?
d. specificity	-	-	o	+	+	+	?
e. narrow scope	+	+	o	+	?	+	?
f. wide scope	-	#	o	+	+	+	?

In Sections 3.4 and 3.5, we discussed sentence types and different properties of the predicate. The questionnaire illustrated in Sections 4.2 and 4.3, only includes present vs. past tense associated to generic vs. episodic sentences and telic vs. atelic aspect. For this reason, protocol in Table 8.4 nests Tense (present / past) and Aspect (telic vs atelic) as sub-features of sentence types (generic vs episodic). The values filling the protocols in Tables 8.1–8.4 refer to the discussions in the literature and in some cases to my own judgement:

TABLE 8.4 Protocol for sentence types

Sentence types interacting with indefinite objects in Italian	ZERO	ART	bare <i>di</i>	<i>di+art</i>	<i>certo</i>	<i>uno</i>	<i>due</i>
a. generic sentences							
i. present	+	+	o	-	-	+	?
ii. past	?	?	o	?	?	?	?
b. episodic sentences							
i. present	+	+	o	+	+	+	+
ii. past	+	+	o	+	?	+	?
c. episodic sentences							
i. atelic	+	+	o	-	?	-	?
ii. telic	-	#	o	+	?	+	?

Generativists are often criticized because they rely on few native speakers' judgements and do not check these judgements on a larger scale. This would enable us to observe that judgements are not as categorical as presented in the generative literature. The protocol approach is precisely meant to transfer theoretical claims such as the ones reported in Section 3 into a tool for empirical research (the questionnaire) to detect variation and optionality in the distribution of indefinite determiners and provide a widely accessible presentation of the results.

#### 4.2 *A Questionnaire Based on the Protocol*

This section presents the design of a questionnaire meant to check a subset of all possible combinations of the properties arising with indefiniteness as highlighted in the four protocols discussed in the previous section. The questionnaire was made of 25 items:

- 9 items presenting multiple possibilities for direct objects (singular mass vs. count plural) to express indefiniteness in different contexts (tense / aspect / polarity).
- 2 open substitution tasks, asking the participant to replace a singular mass noun encountered in the previous context with a plural count noun.
- 6 open comments on possible differences in interpretation, in case the participant selected more than one choice, to collect metalinguistic observations.
- 4 items asking the participant to judge the coherence of statements with a follow-up causative clause, to check the occurrence of determiners in narrow vs. wide scope.

- 3 open questions on the linguistic attitude of the participant (confidence in their judgments, their normative vs. descriptive attitude, their personal appreciation of the experience of completing the task).
  - The last item requested the consensus to use the data in anonymized form.
- The items were administered in a fixed order with no fillers.<sup>14</sup> This made the questionnaire as short and accessible as possible, allowing the participants to “warm up” with the shorter and simpler sentences and to complete the more engaging tasks without getting tired towards the end of the session. All instructions and items were provided in Italian. In Table 8.5, I provide the English glosses and the variation among the five determiners in order to save space but mind that each item of the table was spelled out as 5 full sentences:<sup>15</sup>

TABLE 8.5 Illustration of a questionnaire, in English

- 
1. In your variety of informal Italian, a vegetarian would say:  
I don't eat  $\circ$ /the/of/PA/certain meat.
  2. Please substitute ‘meat’ with ‘potatoes’.
  3. In your variety of informal Italian, a teetotaler would say:  
I don't drink  $\circ$ /the/of/PA/certain wine.
  4. Please substitute ‘wine’ with ‘spirits’.
  5. Talking about the menu at a dinner party yesterday, you would say:  
We ate  $\circ$ /the/of/PA/certain meat.
  6. If you allowed more than one choice in the previous answer, do you find any difference among them? If so, please explain.
  7. Talking about a toast among friends yesterday, you would say:  
We drank  $\circ$ /the/of/PA/certain wine.
  8. If you allowed more than one choice in the previous answer, do you find any difference among them? If so, please explain.
  9. Suggesting what one could do in the mountains, one could say:  
You can pick  $\circ$ /the/of/PA/certain violets.
  10. If you allowed more than one choice in the previous answer, do you find any difference among them? If so, please explain.

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14 For reasons of space we refer the reader to Cardinaletti and Giusti (2020) for the detailed presentation of the methods of administration of the questionnaire and the linguistic profiles of the participants.

15 The questionnaire is meant to detect the rate of optionality among five possible forms: ZERO ( $\circ$ ), ART, bare *di*, *di+art* (PA), and *certo*. The possibility to choose more than one option is designed to answer the following research questions: What is the rate of optionality? How is it distributed across regional Italian? How do competing forms distribute across contexts?

TABLE 8.5 Illustration of a questionnaire, in English (*cont.*)

- 
11. Carefully read the sentences to the end and only chose those that you find internally consistent. To my party, ...  
I didn't invite o/the/of/PA/certain boys but only girls.
12. Carefully read the sentences to the end and only chose those that you find internally consistent. To my party, ...  
I didn't invite o/the/of/PA/certain boys because they were unpleasant.
13. I am telling what I did last Sunday in the open air.  
a. I cut o/the/of/PA/certain grass for an hour.  
b. I cut o/the/of/PA/certain grass in an hour.
14. If you allowed more than one choice in the previous answer, do you find any difference among them? If so, please explain.
15. Still telling what you did last Sunday to spend time in the open air, you would say:  
a. I picked o/the/of/PA/certain blueberries for an hour.  
b. I picked o/the/of/PA/certain blueberries in an hour.
16. If you allowed more than one choice in the previous answer, do you find any difference among them? If so, please explain.
17. Carefully read the sentences to the end and only chose those that you find internally consistent. Today, at lunch,  
I didn't drink o/the/of/PA/certain water because it tested like chlorine.
18. Carefully read the sentences to the end and only chose those that you find internally consistent. Today, at lunch,  
I didn't drink o/the/of/PA water but only wine.
19. If you allowed more than one choice in the previous answer, do you find any difference among them? If so, please explain.
20. Complete the sentences: While Gianni was setting the table in the garden ...  
Maria went to the cellar to take o/the/of/PA wine.
21. and in the meantime, ...  
Teresa went to the butcher's to buy o/the/of/PA beefsteaks.
22. Reflecting upon your attitude in filling in the questionnaire, please chose one:  
I had no doubts. I had some doubts. I was not sure of my judgements.
23. What competence did you rely upon in answering the questions?  
knowledge of the Italian native competence of native competence of  
grammar the high register regional Italian
24. How did you like answering the questionnaire?  
It made me think of It was boring and repetitive:  
phenomena I had never noted. I see no point in doing it.
-

TABLE 8.6 Combination of features

Item	Sentence type	Tense	Polarity	Noun class	Frequency in collocation	Special meaning	Presupposition of existence	Telicity	Task
1	GEN	PRES	NEG	MASS	high	NO	NO	NO	5-choices
2	GEN	PRES	NEG	PL	high	NO	NO	NO	open Q
3	GEN	PRES	NEG	MASS	mid-high	NO	NO	NO	5-choices
4	GEN	PRES	NEG	PL	mid-low	NO	NO	NO	open Q
5	EPIS	PAST	POS	MASS	high	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	5-choices
7	EPIS	PAST	POS	MASS	high	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	5-choices
9	EPIS	PRES	POS	PL	mid-low	YES/NO	NO	NO	5-choices
11	EPIS	PAST	NEG	PL	high	NO	NO	NO	5-choices
12	EPIS	PAST	NEG	PL	mid-high	YES/NO	YES	NO	5-choices
13a	EPIS	PAST	NEG	MASS	high	YES/NO	YES/NO	NO	5-choices
13b	EPIS	PAST	NEG	MASS	high	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES	5-choices
15a	EPIS	PAST	NEG	PL	mid	YES/NO	YES/NO	NO	5-choices
15b	EPIS	PAST	NEG	PL	mid	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES	5-choices
17	EPIS	PAST	NEG	MASS	high	NO	YES	NO	5-choices
18	EPIS	PAST	NEG	MASS	high	NO	NO	NO	4-choices
20	EPIS	PAST	POS	MASS	high	YES	YES/NO	NO	4-choices
21	EPIS	PAST	POS	PL	mid-high	YES	YES/NO	NO	4-choices

The combinations of features to be investigated are spelled out in Table 8.6. In the first column, we find the item numbers of Table 8.5. In the last column, we find the type of task that was used to collect the data. Items [13] and [15] were split according to the different value of telicity to be checked. Items [18], [20] and [21] did not have the choice with *certo*. The [YES], [NO], [YES/NO] values should be read as follows: [YES]: the feature is positively enforced in the stimulus; [NO]: the feature is negatively enforced in the stimulus; [YES/NO]; the feature is not enforced in the stimulus. The value for frequency of the collocation are arbitrary estimations and need to be checked.

Cardinaletti and Giusti's (2020) quantitative study of items [1–4, 5–7] shows that ZERO and ART are the most common. ZERO is more often used than ART in negative generic sentences in the present [1–4]. ART is more often used than ZERO in positive episodic sentences in the past [5,7]. Bare *di* never appears in non-dialectal informal Italian. *Di+art* and *certo* do not occur in generic sentences, thereby confirming their specialized meanings.

Table 8.7 reports the results of the whole questionnaire. Recall that it was possible to choose more than one possibility; all cells could in principle be filled with the value 100%. Any deviation from this percentage means that some participants did not find the determiner appropriate:

TABLE 8.7 Results of the questionnaire

Item	ZERO		ART		bare <i>di</i>		<i>di+art</i>		<i>certo</i>	
1	69/82	84%	57/82	69%	0/82	0%	2/82	2%	2/82	2%
2	66/82	80%	75/82	92%	0/82	0%	3/82	3%	10/82	12%
3	76/82	93%	49/82	59%	0/82	0%	3/82	3%	1/82	1%
4	78/82	96%	46/82	56%	0/82	0%	3/82	3%	7/82	8%
5	66/82	80%	43/82	53%	0/82	0%	37/82	45%	2/82	2%
7	56/82	68%	37/82	45%	0/82	0%	44/82	53%	6/82	7%
9	50/82	60%	66/82	80%	0/82	0%	40/82	49%	6/82	7%
11	74/82	91%	22/82	27%	3/82	3%	25/82	30%	8/82	10%
12	16/82	19%	52/82	64%	1/82	1%	40/82	49%	62/82	76%
13a	36/82	44%	75/82	92%	0/82	0%	22/82	27%	9/82	11%
13b	4/82	5%	55/82	67%	0/82	0%	15/82	18%	8/82	10%
15a	70/82	85%	56/82	68%	0/82	0%	27/82	33%	12/82	15%
15b	11/82	14%	50/82	61%	0/82	0%	25/82	30%	12/82	15%
17	47/82	57%	72/82	88%	3/82	3%	12/82	15%	11/82	13%
18	72/82	88%	29/82	35%	0/82	0%	26/82	32%		x
20	11/82	13%	77/82	94%	0/82	0%	56/82	68%		x
21	12/82	15%	76/82	93%	0/82	0%	43/82	53%		x

In Table 8.7, only ZERO and ART massively appear in all contexts. ZERO has the highest preference ( $\geq 80\%$ ) in items [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 15a, 18]. ART has the highest preference ( $\geq 80\%$ ) for items [2, 9, 13a, 17, 20, 21]. ART prevails over ZERO in the two telic contexts [13b, 15b], and the contexts with salient objects: [20] (“wine” salient to cellar); [21] (“beefsteaks” salient to the butcher’s); [9] (“violets” salient to mountains). Another saliency context is item [2]: according to the comments collected in item 3, “potatoes” was interpreted by many participants as salient to a hypernym “vegetables” (to be contrasted to “meat” found in the previous item). Finally, item [13a] presumably presents a highly frequent collocation of the predicate “cut” with the mass noun “grass”, which favours ART, even if ZERO is robustly present.

*Di+art* is virtually absent ( $\leq 3\%$ ) in generic negative sentences in the present [1–4]. It is more frequently chosen (between 45% to 68%) in items [5, 7, 9, 12, 20, 21], which favour small quantity interpretation: wine is drunk in small quantity [5, 7, 20], violets can be collected in small bunches [9], steaks for a dinner are certainly bought in the appropriate (small) quantity [21]. It is mildly chosen (27–33%) in narrow scope contexts [11] and [18], in atelic con-

texts [13a, 15a], and with small objects, such as blackberries [15a–b] independently of telicity. It is possible but less popular (15%–18%) with mass nouns with a telic predicate [13b] or with presupposition of existence (wide scope) [17]. It is interesting to contrast item [12], which enforces presupposition of existence of plural count nouns and has *di+art* chosen by 49% of the speakers and item [11], which disfavors presupposition of existence of plural count nouns, and is chosen only by 30% of the speakers. This confirms the ambiguity of *di+art* between wide and narrow scope, and the preference of some speakers to only use it with wide scope. Note that the results of the questionnaire partially contradict my judgement of (44a), which ruled out the “partitive article” in narrow scope contexts. My judgement was in fact representative of my central Italian competence in contact with Anconetano (my native dialect).

The distribution of *certo* was only tested in items [1–17]. According to the comments collected in items [6, 8, 10, 14, 16], *certo* is interpreted as either specifying the intension (a specific type of N) or the extension, that is as denoting a specific referent. This is confirmed by the observation that *certo* is the most chosen determiner in item [12], which not only presupposes the existence of the referent but also provides a context to pick specific (types of) individuals (with the characteristic of unpleasantness), as stated in the continuation of the sentence (“... because they were unpleasant”). More research is needed to establish whether it is appropriate to distinguish the specification of the referent as opposed to the specification of the type.

#### 4.3 *A Pilot Adaptation of the Questionnaire to Italo-Romance Dialects*

The protocol methodology is designed to capture cross-linguistic variation. It would be desirable to translate the questionnaire into individual dialect points or areas across the Italian territory. The values in Table 8.8 are the results of pilot studies conducted by students of the MA programme in Language Sciences at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, attending my Comparative Syntax class in the academic years 2017–2018 and 2018–2019. The dialects investigated partially cover the Italian territory: Campomolino (TV), Furlan (2018); southern Friulian (Castions di Strada, Pocenia and Gonars, UD), Perinot (2018); Piacenza, Molinari (2018); Altamura (BA), Vicenti (2019); the Neapolitan area (Casalnuovo, Casoria, Soccavo, Bagnoli, Pozzuoli, Santa Lucia, San Ferdinando, Vasto Napoli, Somma Vesuviana, Frattamaggiore), Procentese (2019); Galati (RC), Maesano (2019); Lecce, Antonaci (2018). The Ancona dialect is represented by my own judgements and needs proper fieldwork but is inserted here to represent a central variety. Totally missing areas are the North-West, Sicily and Sardinia. Despite these areal gaps, the organization of the protocol allows us to con-



TABLE 8.8 Results of pilot studies conducted by MA students

	Core indefinites in object position	ZERO	ART	bare <i>di</i>	<i>di+art</i>	<i>certo</i>	<i>un</i>
a.	Campomolino (TV)	+	(+)	-	(+)	(+)	+
b.	Southern Friulian (UD)	+	+	-	(+)	(+)	+
c.	Piacenza	(+)	+	NEG > +	+	(+)	+
d.	Ancona	-	+	-	(+)	(+)	+
e.	Altamura (BA)	-	+	-	-	(+)	+
f.	Neaples area	(+)	+	-	-	(+)	+
g.	Galati (RC)	+	+	-	-	(+)	+
h.	Lecce	+	(+)	-	-	(+)	+

firm some of Cardinaletti and Giusti's (2018) generalizations on Italian dialects, based on the AIS maps, and Cardinaletti and Giusti's (2020) generalizations on informal Italian, based on the first 6 items of the questionnaire. The straight +/- value indicates that the form is present or absent. The value in parenthesis indicates that it is present only in some contexts.

The "partitive article" *di+art* is only present in Gallo-Romance varieties, mostly in Emilia (Piacenza), where it can have core indefinite meaning (as indicated by a straight [+]). In the rest of the North (Friulian and Campomolino), *di+art* is possible, as in Italian, only in episodic contexts, as indicated by the parenthesized [(+)] value. In the South *di+art* is totally absent, as indicated by a straight [-] value.

Bare *di* is possible in the dialect of Piacenza in the scope of negation, as represented by [NEG > +]. The dialect of Piacenza can thus be considered as the area in which bare *di* covaries with *di+art* to express core indefiniteness. Cerruti and Regis (2020) report the possibility of bare *di* in object position in modern Piedmontese (cf. Stark and Gerards, this volume, on Francoprovençal, which has a bare *DE* in many contexts). In future research, an adaptation of our questionnaire to Piedmontese will allow us to ascertain whether it coexists with other forms, and if so, how the coexisting forms distribute in the different contexts.

Note that in no dialect, not even the southern ones, have we detected the use of *certo* with core indefinite interpretation, which is reported by Rohlfs (1968, 118) and Giammarco (1979, 141). The sparseness of our data may well be the reason of this gap. Research on other areas of the South is needed to check the survival of this form, which is in strong competition with itself in the specialized meaning of specific interpretation.

ZERO is not only absent in the central dialect of Ancona, but, surprisingly, even in the southern dialect of Altamura (central Apulia). Note that in Piacenza and Naples, it is possible but not favoured as indicated by the value in parentheses (+). ZERO is the unmarked determiner at the extreme South (Lecce (southern Apulia) and Galati (Southern Calabria)) and in the North (Venetan dialect of Campomolino and Friulian). This confirms the hypothesis of the North-South isogloss of ART in indefinite nominals surrounded by the area in which ZERO has core indefinite interpretation and ART is limited to special readings (namely the ones involving saliency or in generic sentences).

## 5 Conclusions

The protocol methodology proposed in the previous section is nothing else than a meta-theoretical way to formulate the research questions raised by the theoretical advances in syntactic and semantic literature presented in Sections 2 and 3 in a structured fashion and without resorting to theory internal assumptions and technicalities. The questionnaire based on the protocol allowed us to detect variation and fine-grained dimensions of optionality in the occurrence of five indefinite determiners, that had up to now been discussed separately and at different levels of intensity in the literature.

The highlight of the present contribution lies in a systematic observation of the properties of the grammaticalized form of the definite article with indefinite interpretation, ART, which distinguishes Italo-Romance from most other Romance languages and varieties. This is conducted in a comparative perspective with the other, better described, indefinite determiners, that is the “partitive article”, and the ZERO determiner or absence of determiner in bare nouns.

The administration of the pilot questionnaire in Italian and in different Italian dialects allowed us to formulate preliminary answers to the two urgent questions arising from the observation of variation and optionality in indefinite determiners in Italo-Romance: What is the distribution of indefinite determiners in modern Italian dialects in contact with Italian? What is the distribution of indefinite determiners in regional varieties of modern Italian in contact with the local dialects?

What emerges from the discussion is that all regional varieties of modern Italian have the four determiners (ZERO, ART, *di+art* and *certo*) with a sort of homogeneous specialization of functions. It also emerges that local dialects have maintained their characteristics, which can be highlighted as absence of ZERO irradiating from the centre in the North-South direction, and absence of *di(+art)* below the Gothic line (the dialect of Ancona). Interestingly, the dialect

of Piacenza marks the upper area of the use of ZERO, even if it is fully included in the area delimited by ART. Note that Piacenza is in the area where *di*+art is also used for core indefiniteness and interestingly provides the only evidence found so far of the use of bare *di* in argument position, limited to objects in the scope of negation.

The systematic empirical research done in the protocol methodology allows us to come back to the theoretical dimension. The dialect of Piacenza confirms Cardinaletti and Giusti's (2016, 2018) hypothesis that the four determiners ZERO, ART, bare *di*, and *di*+art are structurally derived by the overt/covert realizations of two positions in the Determiner Phrase (DP) of indefinite expressions: SpecDP can have a covert indefinite determiner or an overt counterpart *di*, while D can have a covert realization of nominal features (gender and number) or an overt counterpart of it (formally the grammaticalized definite article). The two options are areally distributed as two independent isoglosses. The dialect of Piacenza, being at the crossroad of the two isoglosses, has the four options. The other dialects have more limited possibilities. Only Gallo-Romance allows for *di* in SpecDP which may occur with a null D (as in Piedmontese) or require the overt realization of D resulting in the "partitive article" *di*+art. Central dialects lacking bare nouns have a covert indefinite determiner in SpecDP requiring D to be overt.

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# “Partitive Articles” in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal—Old Questions and New Data

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*This paper is dedicated to Wolf-Dieter Stempel, Elisabeth Stark’s mentor,  
model and friend, for his 90th birthday.*



## 1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present and discuss fieldwork data from present-day Francoprovençal varieties spoken in the Aosta Valley (Italy), gathered in May 2017 in order to complement our knowledge of “partitive articles” in Romance from both a typological and theoretical perspective. The varieties at issue are interesting for at least three reasons: first, they constitute varieties of a minority Gallo-Romance language that in its history has never been standardized (Kristol 2016, 350); second, they are in continuous vertical contact with both Standard Italian and Standard French, taught from preschool level onwards, and in horizontal contact with Northern Italian dialects; third, Francoprovençal features invariable DE-elements as well as fully-fledged “partitive articles” functionally possibly parallel to “partitive articles” of Standard French and/or Standard Italian. To date, these elements are scarcely described in the literature (in fact, the only specialized study is Kristol 2014, who investigates the morphology and geographical distribution of invariable DE-elements and fully-fledged “partitive articles” in the Swiss canton of Valais; other insights come from dispersed observations in descriptions such as Jeanjaquet 1931; Olszyna-Marzys 1964 or Jauch 2016).

In the literature, the existence of “partitive articles”, that is, of indefinite mass determiners in the singular and of indefinite determiners in the plural, has been correlated either with non-existing DOM-systems (Körner 1981, 1987; see Schurr, this volume, for a usage-based approach of the issue), that is, with some sort of complementary case-marking, or with the unavailability of inflectional



information on nouns concerning declension class, gender and number (Stark 2008a, 2008b, 2016; Gerards and Stark, in this volume), related to internal and external agreement of nominals and argumenthood. Besides purely morphosyntactic approaches to “partitive articles”, semantic and distributional properties of these elements have also repeatedly been discussed in the literature for the two standard languages French and Italian (see Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade 2004, 2012; Zamparelli 2008; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a). Yet, virtually nothing is known about these aspects of “partitive articles” in minor Romance languages such as Occitan, Rhaeto-Romance or Francoprovençal, and even information on Catalan is scarce (but cf. Laca 1990).

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 will first give some background information on Francoprovençal and on existing resources for its study and then comment on previous documentation and research on “partitive articles” in this (and other) Romance languages, thus setting the scene for our first fieldwork in the Francoprovençal context. Section 3 will describe the fieldwork methodology and participants, while Section 4 offers a detailed description of the results obtained. Section 5 contains a sketch of the first formal explanatory attempt of the data. A short conclusion (Section 6) will summarize the main findings and indicate pending research questions that will be of value for future data collections as well as for the systematic exploitation of already existing material.

## 2 State-of-the-Art: Francoprovençal and “Partitive Articles” in Minority Gallo-Romance Languages

Bossong (2016), in his typological overview of the Romance languages, also mentions so-called “partitive articles” (or, in his quite fuzzy terminology, “the partitive”; Bossong 2016, 69–70) as a typical feature of Romance, displaying a remarkable geographical distribution. Such marking of mass and plural indefinite nominals by a descendant of the Latin preposition *DE* ‘of, from’, absent in Ibero-Romance, Romanian and many parts of the Central and Southern Italo-Romance area, ranges from South-Western areas of Occitan to Northern France and to Eastern Francoprovençal in the Aosta Valley. Consider, for instance, Languedocian (1), displaying a simple, invariable *DE* (cf. Stark 2016, 142–146):

- (1) *dounàs-me*                      *de pan*                      [...] *d’ amellas*  
 give.IMP.2SG-1SG.DAT *DE* bread.M.SG [...] *DE* almond.F.PL  
 ‘Give me (some?) bread [...], (some?) almonds.’ (Thérond 2002, 86; our glossing)

The same pattern as in Languedocian (1) holds for Provençal varieties (Barthélemy-Vigouroux and Guy 2000, 83). Interestingly, in turn, according to Bossong (2008, 142; also Bossong 2016, 69 with the same example; our glossing), Northern Occitan dialects (more precisely: Limousin and Auvergnat) feature a fully-fledged “partitive article”, that is, a morphological combination of DE plus the definite article with an indefinite reading:

- (2) *demandar del pan, de la carn e del*  
 ask.INF PA.M.SG bread.M.SG PA.F.SG meat.F.SG and PA.M.SG  
*vin*  
 wine.M.SG  
 ‘to ask for bread, meat and wine’

Note, however, that Bossong’s statement on Northern Occitan dialects has not yet been empirically verified.

Bossong (2016, 69) claims French to be the most advanced system with a fully grammaticalized “partitive article” not only in object position. This latter specification by Bossong seems to imply that there is a morphological and syntactic classification underlying his observations. Rather unsurprisingly, Bossong’s enumeration of Romance varieties featuring some kind of indefinite “partitive” determiner as well as his list of examples do not comprise any hint as to Francoprovençal, the easternmost Gallo-Romance language, in close contact with systems with fully-fledged “partitive articles” in the West (Northern Occitan, French) as well as DE in the East (some Northern Italian dialects, see, e.g., Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016b, 2018; other Northern Italian dialects do have fully-fledged “partitive articles”, Stark 2016).

Francoprovençal is, in multiple regards, the *parent pauvre* of the Romance language family, not only for laymen and its speakers (who most often consider it a dialect, a *patois*), but also for specialists. This may be due to its sociopolitical situation, the scarcity of written testimonies over the centuries, the absence of standardized varieties, and, last but not least, the fact that at present only very traditional descriptions of Francoprovençal are available. Such descriptions almost exclusively focus on phonetics and the lexicon and are written by traditional dialectologists not up to date concerning terminology or methodology, let alone analysis (see Massot and Stark 2018 for a critical summary of Gallo-Romance dialectology and the need to modernize this field).

Francoprovençal is a non-standardized and highly endangered Romance language, which is heavily underresearched, especially from a modern morphosyntactic point of view. We already mentioned its special geolinguistic situation between French oïlique dialects, Eastern Occitan varieties, and North-

ern Italian dialects. The earliest attestations of Francoprovençal are mostly toponyms and stem from the sixth century; the earliest documents, in turn, are from the thirteenth century (Kristol 2016, 350). In their history, Francoprovençal varieties were never the language of a unique political formation (read: state). Already by the beginning of the twentieth century, active use and transmission of Francoprovençal to the following generations had ceased in Swiss Romandy and in the French cities (Lyon, St. Etienne, Grenoble). The rural population of the respective areas in Switzerland maintained Francoprovençal at least until the 1930s (Kristol 2016, 351). Today, native speakers of Francoprovençal in Switzerland are generally older than 70, except for Evolène, where a third of the school-age children are still speakers of Francoprovençal (Kristol 2016, 351). In the Aosta Valley, due to active language policy, the situation is slightly better; competent—however never monolingual—native speakers of all ages can still be found.

As for the system of nominal determination,<sup>1</sup> under scrutiny in this contribution, Kristol (2014, 2016) claims a subdivision of Francoprovençal into two types (cf. also Stark 2016, 145). According to Kristol, there exists, on the one hand, a group of Francoprovençal varieties agnostically labelled “Francoprovençal A” which comprises Southern Francoprovençal, that is, the Southern varieties spoken in France, the Eastern varieties in the Swiss canton of Valais and the Aosta Valley in the very East of the Gallo-Romance area. These varieties, like French and unlike Ibero-Romance or Italian, do not show any gender distinction on the plural definite article. There is, thus, a single form for masculine and feminine plural definite articles: *le(z)*. Unlike French, however,—and unlike the neighboring Northern Italian dialects in the case of Aosta Valley Francoprovençal—there is no fully-fledged “partitive article” in “Francoprovençal A”. Instead, according to Kristol, we merely find grammaticalized invariable DE for indefinite mass singulars and indefinite plurals alike, though with a (not systematically used, see Section 4.2.2) allomorph *de-[z]* in the plural before vocalic onset (Kristol 2016, 358–359; this *liaison*-like element is also found on definite plural determiners).

The following examples illustrate the invariable DE in “Francoprovençal A”:

- (3) *oe kɔ̃tra a t'v fo fi.ɛ de te*  
 ehm against the cough.F.SG have.to.PRS.3SG make.INF DE tea.M.SG  
 ‘Ehm, against a cough one has to make tea.’ (Kristol 2014; our glossing)

<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, some residues of an older two-case system—not discussed in what follows—are still found in the Eastern Valais. For more information, see Kristol (2016, 356–357).

- (4) *oe pə fe            lɔ buʎ'oŋ            oe b'ot:o            de=z*  
 ehm for make.INF the bouillon.M.SG ehm put.PRS.1SG **DE=PL**  
*osə            aw'i la mɪ'o:la*  
**bone.M.PL** with the marrow.F.SG  
 ‘Ehm, in order to make bouillon, eh, I add bones to the marrow.’ (Kristol 2016, 359; our glossing)

In (3), we find invariable DE with a singular mass noun in postverbal direct object position; (4) contains its plural allomorph [dez] (same syntactic distribution). Possibly, this *liaison* consonant could be seen as a problem for our analysis, as arguably it could be located in the head postulated in Section 5, Div. However, this is anything from clear and there are, in fact, explicit proposals locating it in a different head (Pomino 2017).

Except for this latter *liaison* element, the system of “Francoprovençal A” is thus parallel to that of Languedocian or Provençal.

Opposed to “Francoprovençal A”, there exists, on the other hand, a group of Francoprovençal varieties labelled “Francoprovençal B”, which comprises the Western varieties of the Valais (Switzerland) and the Northern varieties (in France and Switzerland). “Francoprovençal B” displays a gender distinction on plural definite articles (masc. *lu(z)*—fem *le(z)*), like in Ibero-Romance systems, plus a fully-fledged “partitive article” like in French (which, however, does not seem to be categorically used, in the sense that invariable DE is also available):

- (5) *Sg. M. dy (dɛ) F. dla (dɛ)*  
*Pl. M. de            F. dle (dɛ)*

In contrast to Standard French (cf. Dobrovie-Sorin, this volume, for a detailed analysis), the fully-fledged form is preserved under the scope of negation (Kristol 2016, 358), something we also find in non-standard varieties of spoken French:

- (6) *on n' a            pas du            travail            pour des types*  
 3SG NEG have.PRS.3SG NEG **PA.M.SG work.M.SG** for **PA.PL guy.M.PL**  
*comme ça*  
 like that  
 ‘We don’t have work for guys like that.’ (OFROM: unine15–034)

By and large, Francoprovençal seems to have the same rules for *en*-constituency as (Standard) French (see Bjerrome 1957, 74, for the canton of Valais; Gerards and Stark, this volume, Section 2). Nevertheless, there do seem to be some

contexts where, differently from French, *en* is not mandatory (Olszyna-Marzys 1964, 110, who claims the existence of constructions with *un* plus N-ellipsis in direct object position without *en* figuring in the sentence; something to be checked by future fieldwork in the Valais).<sup>2</sup>

Besides the scarce information on its morphology and its distribution under the scope of negation and with *en*, nothing is known about “partitive articles” in Francoprovençal. This holds especially true of its obligatory or optional status and its exact syntactic distribution and semantic value(s) (scope-behavior, specificity etc.). This is just as much a lacuna with regard to many other Gallo- (and Italo)romance varieties and constitutes the main motivation for the submission and approval of the SNSF-DFG-funded research project “Distribution and Function of ‘Partitive Articles’ in Romance (DiFuPaRo): a microvariation analysis” (SNSF ID: 100012L\_172751 and DFG ID: PO1642/8-1; <https://www.rose.uzh.ch/de/seminar/personen/stark/DiFuPaRo.html>), which officially started in 2018 and also guided the research questions and research design of the present contribution.

One final observation relevant in the typological and theoretical context of this contribution (see Section 1) concerns nominal morphology, which might be correlated to the existence and degree of grammaticalization of “partitive articles”: Francoprovençal does, according to the literature, not have plural marking on nouns (cf. e.g., Jauch 2016, 169–170; Barmas and Pannatier 2013; Jeanjaquet 1931, 31–34), with the notable exception of Evolène (Kristol 2016, 357), a small community in the Swiss canton of Valais (see below). Franco-provençal varieties do not seem to have real declension classes either, except for some feminine nouns, where we have  $-a_{SG}$  as opposed to  $-e_{PL}$ . This being said, note however that (i) a considerable amount of work is still to be done with regard to number marking on N in Francoprovençal, and (ii) that the claims in the literature mentioned above need to be double-checked by means of fieldwork: as in the case of “partitive articles”, existing work on number marking on N in Francoprovençal is scarce, unsystematic and partially unreliable.

Given that, as of today, the picture we have of Francoprovençal “partitive articles” is decidedly incomplete, we decided to develop a systematic inventory and classification of Francoprovençal “partitive articles” by means of data

2 If this turns out to be true, the contrast between Standard French and “Francoprovençal B” would find a parallel in Standard Dutch vs. Central German dialects: whereas in Standard Dutch, the partitive pronoun *er* is obligatory with ‘one’ plus N-ellipsis (*\*(er) één/een*), the Central German partitive pronoun *ere* is ungrammatical in such contexts. Possibly thus, ‘one’ (and maybe also ‘none’) has a special status cross-linguistically in this respect. We thank an anonymous reviewer for this valuable hint.

elicited in a pilot fieldwork in May 2017 in the Aosta Valley, a particularly interesting area because of its geographical location between French and Northern Italian dialects. This fieldwork campaign is presented in the next section.

### 3 Methodology

In the present section, we briefly describe the methodology applied for the collection of the Aosta Valley Francoprovençal data to be presented in Section 4. Data collection took place during a four-day fieldwork trip to the Aosta Valley in May 2017.<sup>3</sup> The aim of the fieldwork was the elicitation of Aosta Valley Francoprovençal equivalents of French “partitive articles” under a series of different (morpho)syntactic and semantic conditions (see Table 9.1 below) in accordance with modern, comparable elicitation techniques (cf. e.g., Cornips and Poletto 2005; Giusti and Zegrean 2015). Altogether, a total of 629 nominals were elicited from 17 informants from four different localities (Saint-Nicolas (5 inf.), Fénis (5 inf.), Pontey (1 inf.), Saint-Vincent (1 inf.)). The remaining five speakers were collaborators of the *Bureau Régional Ethnologie et Linguistique (BREL)* from different dialectal areas.

All 17 informants were asked to translate a questionnaire, designed by Dr. Tabea Ihsane in collaboration with further experts on Francoprovençal and previously tested in a pilot, into *Patois* (the glottonym assigned to Aosta Valley Francoprovençal by its speakers). The questionnaire contained 50 French stimuli (36 target stimuli containing indefinite nominals, partly inspired by the *ALAVAL* questionnaire,<sup>4</sup> + 14 fillers) embedded orally into guided semi-spontaneous interviews of approx. 30–40 minutes duration (matrix language French and, to a lesser extent, Italian). The interviews were always conducted by one researcher only, whereas another two to three researchers took note both of the informants’ replies and their metalinguistic comments. Addition-

3 Designed to provide both fieldwork training and language awareness for minority varieties to prospective and young researchers, participants did not only include established experts on morphosyntax and (Francoprovençal) dialectology († Prof. Federica Diémoz [University of Neuchâtel/Switzerland], Prof. Elisabeth Stark, Dr. Tabea Ihsane [both University of Zurich/Switzerland], and Dr. Claus Pusch [Albert-Ludwigs-University Freiburg/Germany]) but also several undergraduate and doctoral students from these three universities.

4 *ALAVAL* (*Atlas Linguistique Audiovisuel du Francoprovençal Valaisan*; <http://alaval.unine.ch>), elaborated at the University of Neuchâtel/Switzerland under the direction of Prof. Andres Kristol, is an online atlas of the Francoprovençal varieties spoken in the Swiss Canton of Valais.

ally, the interviews were recorded. In a later step, the replies to the 36 target stimuli were phonetically transcribed in IPA by a native speaker of Franco-provençal.<sup>5</sup>

As represented in Table 9.1, the 36 target stimuli were distributed over eleven different contexts, held maximally constant with regard to the verbal predicate and to tense so as to best isolate the target variable. For ten out of these eleven contexts, there were four test items, one for each M.SG, F.SG, M.PL, and F.PL.<sup>6</sup> The reason for this is that plural “partitive articles” are demonstrably different from singular “partitive articles” in their syntactic distribution, semantic function, dialectal distribution and diachronic chronology (Ihsane 2008; Zamparelli 2008; Carlier and Lamiroy 2014; Garzonio and Poletto 2014; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a,b, 2018; Stark 2016). Note, too, that no fragmentative verbs in the sense of Kupferman (1979, 1994, like *manger* ‘to eat’) were included in order to minimize the risk of obtaining replies with semantically partitive Prepositional Phrases with a zero Quantifier (Q<sup>o</sup>) head and a definite superset instead of indefinites.

Based on what is known about Standard French and Standard Italian “partitive articles”, we take postverbal indefinite direct objects in affirmative contexts without any additional operators (= context 1) as the most prototypical locus of “partitive article”-nominals (cf. e.g., Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade 2004, 2012; Ihsane 2008; Zamparelli 2008; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a). Testing for direct objects under the scope of negation (= context 2) is necessary, as “partitive articles” in different languages and varieties differ morphologically with such operators (Standard French, for instance, differently from Standard Italian, reduces its fully-fledged “partitive article” to invariable DE; cf. Ihsane 2008, 135 vs. Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018, 145–146). A further aspect taken into consideration by the questionnaire is that “partitive article”-nominals seem to be somewhat disfavored—at least in some varieties—with atelic predicates (= context 3; cf. Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016b, 2018). Additionally, specific readings of nominals with “partitive articles” (= context 4) are highly restricted and possible only

5 We fully agree with one anonymous reviewer with regard to the risk of interferences with the questionnaire’s original language (French) and, for this reason, plan additional fieldwork including grammaticality judgments in the form of multiple-choice questions and/or insertion tasks. See Cornips and Poletto (2005).

6 For the reason why indefinite nominals in specificity-inducing contexts were only tested in the plural, see below. Note that some stimuli contained two coordinated items, which is why the stimuli number of 36 is lower than 42 (NB: 10 contexts \* 4 items + 2 items [specificity-inducing context] = 42). See Ihsane, this volume, on specificity and plural complements with a “partitive article” in French.

TABLE 9.1 The eleven different contexts tested by the fieldwork questionnaire

Syntactic function	Position of nominal w.r.t. verbal predicate	Test contexts
<i>Direct object</i>	Postverbal	1) affirmative context 2) under scope of NEG 3) with unbound/atelic predicate 4) in specificity-inducing context (only PL) 5) in characterizing sentence 6) following a Q° 7) following a numeral
<i>Subject</i>	Preverbal	8) with individual-level pred. (emphatic) 9) with stage-level predicate
<i>Compl. of presentative</i>	Postverbal	10) affirmative context
<i>Compl. of P°</i>	Postverbal	11) affirmative context

in the plural, both in Standard French and Standard Italian (Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade 2004, 2012; Le Bruyn 2007; Ihsane 2008; Zamparelli 2008; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a, 2018).<sup>7</sup> Note, too, that quantifiers show particular behavior with regard to “partitive articles” (= context 6): in Standard French, for instance, some quantifiers require DE—to which the fully-fledged “partitive article” (never allowed after Q°) is reduced in these contexts—whereas other quantifiers do not allow DE (cf. e.g., Asnès 2008); in Standard Italian, DE (as well as the fully-fledged “partitive article”) is not licensed after Q°; Catalan displays diatopic differences (Martí i Girbau 1995, 258–259). Numerals (= context 7), too, are particular in that neither Standard French nor Standard Italian allow DE or fully-fledged “partitive articles” (but cf. Bauche 1951, quoted in Kayne 1977, for differences with important theoretical implications in some substandard varieties of French). “Partitive articles” are also characterized by a slight subject/object asymmetry, subjects with “partitive articles” being more constrained than objects. Standard French, for example, allows preverbal subject “partitive article”-nominals only with stage-level predicates but not normally with individual-level predicates (Kupferman 1979; Guéron 2006; Grevisse

7 Note, however, that only Standard Italian allows (plural) “partitive article”-nominals to take wide scope over negation (Le Bruyn 2007; Zamparelli 2008; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016a, 2018). Scopal specificity with negation was not tested for in the questionnaire.



and Goosse 2007, 745), unless they occur in an argumentative/corrective context with a focused constituent (often negated) other than the subject (Wilmet 2003, 165; Vogeleer and Tasmowski 2005, 69; Roig 2013), hence the inclusion of and differentiation between these contexts (= 8 and 9) in the questionnaire. Individual-level predicates are often found together with generic statements, that is, “[...] ⟨principled⟩ generalizations over the entities of a class” (Krifka et al. 1995, 44). This could arguably be the reason for the observed subject/object symmetry. Possibly, thus, the additional investigation of indefinites in direct object position in so-called “characterizing sentences” (Krifka et al. 1995, 3; = context 5) can shed more light on this issue. “Characterizing sentences” are sentences that express generalizations (such as *Snow is white* or *John drinks a coffee after lunch*) and are also sometimes called “habitual” or “gnomic”. Finally, the questionnaire also tested for complements of  $P^o$  (= context 11): if  $DE$  or fully-fledged “partitive articles” turn out to be compatible with prepositions, then this may be further support that these are no longer prepositions themselves but indefinite determiners (Korzen 1996, 494; Garzonio and Poletto 2014; Carlier and Lamiroy 2014, 494).<sup>8</sup>

As will be shown in Section 4, the procedure described in this section allows us to draw a fine-grained picture of the (un)availability and optionality/obligatoriness of fully-fledged “partitive articles” and invariable  $DE$  in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal, adding, thus, invaluable new insights to Francoprovençal dialectology. Furthermore, the Aosta Valley Francoprovençal data discussed prove an important empirical input to the theoretical debate on “partitive articles” (see Section 5).

#### 4 Results

The aim of this section is to present the most important empirical results obtained by the analysis of the 629 Francoprovençal nominals elicited as described in Section 3. In Section 4.1, it will be shown that Aosta Valley Francoprovençal has a fully grammaticalized invariable  $DE$ -element to mark indefinite mass singulars and indefinite plurals. This is in accordance with the findings reported in earlier studies (see Section 2). However, the data evince that the distribution of the Aosta Valley Francoprovençal  $DE$ -element is not iden-

<sup>8</sup> An anonymous reviewer notes that the same observation has been made for Dutch *van die/dat*, referred to in the literature as “faded partitive constructions” (cf. e.g., Broekhuis and den Dikken 2012, 627).

tical to that of French (and maybe Italian) “partitive articles” and that it often co-varies with (semantically indefinite) definite articles (cf. e.g., Kupisch and Koops 2007; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018). Most remarkably, postverbal indefinite direct objects in characterizing sentences and complements of P° seem to preferably take the semantically indefinite definite article in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal. Additionally, our data suggest that DE-nominals in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal are strongly disfavored as preverbal subjects—especially with individual-level predicates—and that they are optional with some quantifiers. Also, no DE-nominals were found with numerals. These important empirical findings have hitherto not been reported in the literature (but see recently Ihsane 2018). Finally, Section 4.2 briefly addresses some informants’ productions (partly) featuring fully-fledged “partitive articles” of the Standard French/Italian type, even under the scope of negation, as well as replies in contexts in principle amenable to the use of the *liaison* consonant [z] (see Section 2).

#### 4.1 *Aosta Valley Francoprovençal Has a Grammaticalized Invariable DE-element*

Overall, we can state that an invariable DE-element is the obligatory minimal indefinite determiner in our data with singular mass and indefinite plural nominals in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal. Sometimes, reformulations trigger definite articles, which in some contexts are even the preferred option (e.g., in characterizing sentences, see below), but never actual zero determination (bare nominal) (in contrast to Italian (varieties); cf. Giusti, this volume, for a discussion of different indefinite determiners and their distribution in Italian and Italo-Romance). A summary of the results for the eleven contexts is provided in Section 4.1.12.

##### 4.1.1 Postverbal Indefinite Direct Objects in Affirmative Contexts

In order to elicit the Aosta Valley Francoprovençal equivalent of Standard French/Italian “partitive articles” with indefinite direct objects in affirmative contexts, the informants were asked to translate the following two French stimuli (a.1) and (a.2):

(a.1) (M.SG+F.PL) *Dans la soupe, j’ajoute du céleri et des carottes.*  
‘I add celery and carrots to the soup.’

(a.2) (F.SG+M.PL) *Souvent, on ajoute de la sarriette et des pois, dans la soupe.*  
‘Often, we add savory and peas, to the soup.’

In 91% of the valid replies (59/65),<sup>9</sup> the informants used phonic variants of invariable *DE* (7). In a minority of 5% (3/65) each, the answer contained a definite article (8) or even a fully-fledged “partitive article” (see Section 4.2.1):<sup>10</sup>

- (7) *sæeã æn dz'ontø də parj'eta e də pɛzɛ a la*  
 often 3SG add.PRS.3SG *DE* *savory.F.SG* and *DE* *pea.M.PL* to the  
*s'ø:pa*  
 soup.F.SG  
 ‘Often, we add savory and peas, to the soup.’ (BREL 5)

- (8) [...] *e də pɛvrã nã le pɛz'etə dødã la*  
 [...] and *DE* *paprika.M.SG* no *DEF.ART.PL* *pea.M.PL* in the  
*s'ø:pa*  
 soup.F.SG  
 ‘[...] and paprika | no | peas to the soup.’ (St.Vinc.)

4.1.2 Postverbal Indefinite Direct Objects under the Scope of Negation  
 Postverbal indefinite direct objects under the scope of negation were elicited by means of the following four French stimuli (b.1)–(b.4):

- (b.1) (M.SG) *Nous, on (n')achetait pas de fromage, on le faisait nous-même.*  
 ‘We didn’t buy **cheese**, we made it ourselves.’
- (b.2) (F.SG) *Ma mère aimait le fromage, mais elle (n')achetait pas de fontine.*  
 ‘My mother liked **cheese**, but she didn’t buy **Fontina cheese**.’
- (b.3) (M.PL) *À l'époque, ma grand-mère (n')achetait pas de draps. Elle les cousait elle-même.*  
 ‘Back then, my grandmother didn’t buy **bedclothes**. She sewed them herself.’
- (b.4) (F.PL) *Quand j'étais jeune, je (n')achetais pas de jupes.*  
 ‘When I was young, I didn’t buy **skirts**.’

9 By “valid replies”, we mean replies reproducing the syntactic structure and the semantics of the French stimulus. All other replies were discarded. Note that due to rounding differences, some of the percentages given do not exactly add up to 100.

10 In the F.SG, we counted all replies containing [d] plus [l] as instantiations of a fully-fledged “partitive article”. In the M.SG, we counted all replies containing [d] plus [y] or [ɣ] (see (5)) as instantiations of a fully-fledged “partitive article”. Additionally, forms with [d] plus the back vowel [o] were also counted as fully-fledged for M.SG. In the plural, we counted as fully-fledged all forms with [d] plus the front vowels [i] and [ɪ] (for justification of this, cf. Kristol 2016, 358; his examples (14) and (15)).

In 82% of the valid replies (54/66), the informants used phonic variants of invariable DE (9). In a minority of 14% (9/66), eight of which in the singular, the answer contained a definite article (10). Only in 5% (3/66) did the answer contain a fully-fledged “partitive article” (see Section 4.2.1):

- (9) *nʊ atsətam po də from'a:zo nʊ lə fiʒã*  
 IPL buy.IPFV.1PL NEG DE cheese.M.SG IPL 3M.SG.ACC make.IPFV.1PL  
*nʊ m'i:mə*  
 ourselves  
 ‘We didn’t buy cheese, we made it ourselves.’ (St.-Nic. 4)

- (10) *nʊ atsətəð po lo from'e:dzə nʊ lə*  
 IPL buy.IPFV.1PL NEG DEF.ART.M.SG cheese.M.SG IPL 3M.SG.ACC  
*fiʒjõ nð*  
 make.IPFV.1PL IPL  
 ‘We didn’t buy cheese, we made it ourselves.’ (St.-Nic. 1)

#### 4.1.3 Postverbal Indefinite Direct Objects with Unbound/Atelic Predicates

Postverbal indefinite direct objects with unbound atelic predicates were elicited by means of the following four French stimuli (c.1)–(c.4):

- (c.1) (M.SG) *Les voisins ont cueilli de l'ail (des ours) toute la journée.*  
 ‘The neighbors picked **garlic** the entire day.’
- (c.2) (F.SG) *Au printemps, on a cueilli de la menthe pendant une semaine!*  
 ‘In spring, we picked **mint** for a week!’
- (c.3) (M.PL) *Dimanche, mon père a ramassé des champignons pendant 2 heures.*  
 ‘On Sunday, my dad picked **mushrooms** for two hours.’
- (c.4) (F.PL) *Les enfants ont cueilli des mûres tout l'après-midi.*  
 ‘The children picked **blackberries** the entire afternoon.’

In 85% of the valid replies (55/65), the informants used phonic variants of invariable DE (11). In a minority of 9% (6/65), three of which in the singular and the plural, respectively, the answer contained a definite article (12). Only in 6% (4/65) did the answer contain a fully-fledged “partitive article” (see Section 4.2.1):

- (11) *dæmmɪðə p'a:pa l=a tʃɛrtʃə dæ buli*  
 Sunday dad 3SG=AUX.PRS.3SG search.PTCP DE mushroom.M.PL  
*pø doz ɔ:ɔ*  
 for two hours  
 'On Sunday, my dad looked for mushrooms for two hours.' (BREL 5)

- (12) *læ mɛmu l=ɑŋ kɔʎa lə=z*  
 the children 3PL=AUX.PRS.3PL collect.PTCP DEF.ART=PL  
*ãmplə tɔta la v'iprɔ*  
 blackberry.F.PL all the afternoon  
 'The children picked blackberries the entire afternoon.' (BREL 3)

#### 4.1.4 Postverbal Indefinite Direct Objects in Specificity-Inducing Contexts

Postverbal indefinite direct objects in specificity-inducing contexts were elicited by means of the following two French stimuli (d.1) and (d.2):

- (d.1) (M.PL) *Au restaurant, j'ai rencontré des voisins que tu connais aussi: Paul et Eric.*  
 'At the restaurant I met (some) neighbors you know too: Paul and Eric.'
- (d.2) (F.PL) *À ce souper, ma mère a rencontré des connaissances / personnes qu'elle connaissait: Chiara et Marie.*  
 'At that dinner my mother met (some) acquaintances/persons she knew: Chiara and Mary.'

In 100% of the valid replies (30/30), the informants used phonic variants of invariable DE (13):

- (13) *ɪ restorãŋ z=e kɔntro dɛ vøh'on ke*  
 at restaurant 1SG=AUX.PRS.1SG meet.PTCP DE neighbor.M.PL who  
*tæ kɔne o:si pɔl e ɛrik*  
 2SG know.PRS.2SG too Paul and Eric  
 'At the restaurant I met (some) neighbors you know too: Paul and Eric.'  
 (Fénis 1)

#### 4.1.5 Postverbal Indefinite Direct Objects in Characterizing Sentences

Postverbal indefinite direct objects in characterizing sentences were elicited by means of the following two French stimuli (e.1) and (e.2):

- (e.1) (M.SG+F.PL) *Dans le garage, on entasse/empile du bois et on range des conserves.*  
 ‘In the garage, we stack **wood** and we put **cans**.’
- (e.2) (M.PL+F.SG) *Au grenier, on range des draps et à la cave de la confiture.*  
 ‘In the attic, we put **bedclothes** and in the basement **jam**.’

In 31% of the valid replies (18/59), the informants used phonic variants of invariable DE (14). This makes invariable DE a minority solution, differently from what is observed in the data for all other contexts discussed so far. In fact, answers containing a definite article are clearly the most frequent option with postverbal (semantically) indefinite direct objects in characterizing sentences (15). They are contained in 64% of the valid replies (38/59) and show very similar frequencies both with singular and plural nominals. Only in 5% (3/59) did the answer contain a fully-fledged “partitive article” (see Section 4.2.1):

- (14) *dã lo gara:ʒe ən ẽr'anzə dœ bukʲe e õn*  
 in the garage one store.PRS.3SG DE wood.M.SG and one  
*aranzə dœ kõs'ervə*  
 store.PRS.3SG DE can.F.PL  
 ‘In the garage, we store wood and we store cans.’ (BREL 2)

- (15) *dã lo garaʒœ no bæteã læ buk:kjø e*  
 in the garage 1PL put.PRS.1PL DEF.ART.M.SG wood.M.SG and  
*lə kõs'ervə*  
 DEF.ART.PL can.F.PL  
 ‘In the garage, we put wood and cans.’ (St.-Nic. 1)

#### 4.1.6 Postverbal Indefinite Direct Objects Following Q°

Postverbal indefinite direct objects following Q° were elicited by means of the following four French stimuli (f.1)–(f.4):

- (f.1) (M.SG) *Dans la recette que j'ai, ils mettent beaucoup de poivre.*  
 ‘In the recipe I have, they put a lot of **pepper**.’
- (f.2) (F.SG) *Si tu veux, je mets un peu de crème dans ton café.*  
 ‘If you want I put a **bit of cream** into your coffee.’
- (f.3) (M.PL) *Les gens de la région mettent peu de champignons dans leurs sauces, je trouve.*  
 ‘The people of this region put **few mushrooms** in their sauces, I think.’

- (f.4) (F.PL) *Quand je cuisine, je mets **plein d'épices**. Parfois j'en essaie de nouvelles.*  
 'When I cook, I add a **good deal of spices**. Sometimes I try new ones.'

In 89% of the valid replies (59/66), the informants used phonic variants of invariable DE (16). In a minority of 8% (5/66), four of which in translations of (f.3) containing [poka] 'few, little', the answer contained a noun directly preceded by Q° (17). Only in 2% (1/66) did the answer contain a fully-fledged "partitive article" (see Section 4.2.1):<sup>11</sup>

- (16) *se t ju bəɔ tʃika də kr'e:ma dædã la*  
 if 2SG want.PRS.2SG put.PRS.1SG a bit DE cream.F.SG into the  
*tiŋ kafɪ*  
 your coffee  
 'If you want, I put a bit of cream into your coffee.' (Fénis 5)

- (17) *le dzi dæ la resõ i=bəɔtõ<sup>m</sup> p'oka bəl'ejo*  
 the people of the region 3M.PL=put.PRS.3PL few mushroom.M.SG  
*dædã la s'øpa*  
 into the soup  
 'The people of this region put little mushroom in their soup.' (Fénis 5)

#### 4.1.7 Postverbal Indefinite Direct Objects Following Numerals

Postverbal indefinite direct objects following numerals were elicited by means of the following three French stimuli (g.1)–(g.3):

- (g.1) (M.SG) *À la fin, j'ajoute **un œuf**. Un seul, sinon ce n'est pas la bonne consistance.*  
 'At the end, I add **an egg**. Just one, otherwise it's not the right consistency.'
- (g.2) (F.SG+F.PL) *Dans la recette originale, ils ajoutent **une gousse d'ail entière et deux, trois tomates**.*  
 'In the original recipe, they add **one clove of garlic and two to three tomatoes**.'
- (g.3) (M.PL) *Pour ce gâteau, ma mère ajoute **une ou deux poires**.*  
 'For this cake, my mother adds **one or two pears**.'

11 In 2% (1/66) of the translations, the answer contained a definite article. We believe that this is either a transcription error or reflects a wrong interpretation of the translation stimulus, that is, one where Q° scopes over the entire VP.

In 100% of the valid replies (64/64), the noun is directly preceded by the numeral (18). No invariable DE was used.

- (18) *pæ fe seta t'urtə m'ama adzente du o tri*  
 in.order.to make.INF this cake mother add.PRS.3SG two or three  
*pæ*  
 pear.M.PL  
 'To make this cake, mum adds two or three pears.' (BREL 2)

4.1.8 Preverbal Indefinite Subjects with Individual-Level Predicates  
 (Emphatic Context)

Preverbal indefinite subjects with individual-level predicates were elicited by means of the following four French argumentative stimuli (h.1)–(h.4):

- (h.1) (M.SG) *Du vin blanc va mieux avec la fondue que du vin rouge!*  
 'White wine goes better with fondue than red wine!'  
 (h.2) (F.SG) *De la bière coûte moins cher que du vin!*  
 'Beer is cheaper than wine!'  
 (h.3) (M.PL) *Des moutons n'ont jamais 5 pattes!*  
 'Sheep never have 5 paws!'  
 (h.4) (F.PL) *Des poules n'ont pas de dents!*  
 'Chicken don't have teeth!'

In none of the valid replies (0/67), the informants used phonic variants of invariable DE.<sup>12</sup> In fact, invariable DE was explicitly considered ungrammatical in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal with preverbal indefinite subjects and individual-level predicates by three of our informants. By far the most frequent (97%, 65/67) answer type contained the definite article (19), most plausibly yielding a kind reading of the respective nominal. In 2% of the valid replies each (1/67), the informant used a fully-fledged “partitive article” (see Section 4.2.1) or a cognate of *certains* ‘some’:<sup>13</sup>

12 One informant used an invariable variant of DE in a reformulation of his first spontaneous reply. This reformulation was not counted. Note, too, that three of the 67 replies contained postverbal subjects. These are included in the calculi, as all contain the majoritarian definite article (see below).

13 We decided to include this answer in the calculus, as there are Italian varieties in which cognates of Standard Italian *certi* ‘some’ are no longer quantifiers but [+ specific] indefinite determiners (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016b, 2018).



- (19) *lo vim bjãnk va miej avœ la*  
 DEF.ART.M.SG wine.M.SG white. M.SG go.PRS.3SG better with the  
*fõndy kε lɔ vɪŋg r'ɔsɔ*  
 fondue than the wine red  
 'White wine goes better with fondue than red wine!' (BREL 6)

4.1.9 Preverbal Indefinite Subjects with Stage-Level Predicates  
 Preverbal indefinite subjects with stage-level predicates were elicited by means of the following three French stimuli (i.1)–(i.3):

- (i.1) (M.SG) *Son mari n'avait rien nettoyé: (en effet) du sucre couvrait toute la table.*  
 'Her husband hadn't cleaned anything; in fact, **sugar** was covering the entire table.'
- (i.2) (F.SG+F.PL) *C'est les enfants qui ont cuisiné: de la farine recouvrait toute la table et des épiluchures de pomme traînaient par terre.*  
 'It's the kids who cooked: **flour** was covering the entire table and **apple peels** were lying around on the floor.'
- (i.3) (M.PL) *Quand je suis rentré, des papiers de bonbons traînaient dans la cuisine. Les enfants ne les avaient pas jetés.*  
 'When I came back, **candy papers** were lying around in the kitchen. The kids hadn't thrown them away.'

Only 14 of all 67 replies collected were valid, that is, were not syntactically reformulated or semantically reinterpreted (see below and note 9). As illustrated in (20) and (21), 12 of these contained invariable DE (M.SG: 2, F.SG: 1, M.PL: 6, F.PL: 3). Two replies contained a fully-fledged "partitive article" (see Section 4.2.1):<sup>14</sup>

- (20) *dε sɔkro kɔvataε tɔtε la t'a:bjɑ*  
 DE sugar.M.SG cover.IPFV.3SG all the table  
 'Sugar was covering the entire table.' (BREL 6)
- (21) *e dε pœl'yræ dε pɔ'mε trɛjnaɔ̃ pε t'ɛ:rɛ̃*  
 and DE apple.peel.F.PL lie.around.IPFV.3PL on ground  
 '... and apple peels were lying around on the floor.' (St.-Vinc.)

14 Three informants used an invariable variant of DE in a reformulation of their first spontaneous reply. These reformulations were not counted.

All remaining 53/67 replies were clear (and often very free and sometimes multiple) reformulations of the original stimuli. Reformulations contained either presentative constructions (‘there is’), quantifiers and/or morphologically *and* semantically definite nominals. In this context, note too that the native speaker who transcribed the interviews marked one of the three replies with invariable DE in the SG with the metalinguistic label *hesitant* and that five informants explicitly excluded invariable DE with preverbal indefinite subjects with stage-level predicates in the SG.

Overall, replies to the stimuli with preverbal indefinite subjects with stage-level predicates were somewhat difficult to deal with. This is why we feel that the respective data should once more be double-checked by a native speaker of Francoprovençal, both for possible reformulations we might not have discovered and for the precise system of plural morphology on the feminine nouns (see Section 5).

#### 4.1.10 Postverbal Complements of Presentatives

Complements of presentatives were elicited by means of the following four French stimuli (j.1)–(j.4):

- (j.1) (M.SG) *Il y a du lait dans mon frigo; tu peux en prendre, si tu veux.*  
‘There’s **milk** in my fridge; you can take some, if you want.’
- (j.2) (F.SG) *Quand il y a de la neige, je vais moins souvent faire des courses.*  
‘When there is **snow**, I do a lot less grocery shopping.’
- (j.3) (M.PL) *Dans ce plat, il y a des œufs.*  
‘In this dish, there are **eggs**.’
- (j.4) (F.PL) *Fais attention, si tu es allergique: il y a des noix dans ce gâteau.*  
‘Watch out, if you are allergic: there are **nuts** in this cake.’

In 77% of the valid replies (50/65), the informants used phonic variants of invariable DE (22). In a minority of 22% (14/65), all of which in translations of (j.2), the answer contained a definite article (23). The reason for this asymmetry, we believe, is that (j.2), differently from the other three stimuli, is a characterizing-sentence (see Section 4.1.5). In 2% (1/65), the answer contained a bare noun (which we consider a performance error).

- (22) *la də laɛiː dā lə fr'igæ tæ pu nɛm*  
there.is **DE milk.M.SG** in the fridge 2SG can.PRS.2SG =PART  
*prɛndə se ta v'ɔjɐ*  
take.INF if 2SG want.PRS.2SG  
‘There is milk in the fridge; you can take some, if you want.’ (St.-Nic. 5)

- (23) *kã ja la nei zœ vo mwã*  
 when there.is DEF.ART.F.SG snow.F.SG 1SG go.PRS.1SG less  
*fê la sp'ɛzɛ*  
 make.INF the shopping  
 'When there is snow, I go shopping less.' (St.-Nic. 2)

#### 4.1.11 Complements of Prepositions

Complements of prepositions were elicited by means of the following four French stimuli (k.1)–(k.4):

- (k.1) (M.SG) *On cuisine les épinards sauvages avec du lard.*  
 'Wild spinach is cooked with **bacon**.'
- (k.2) (F.SG) *Il ne faut pas nettoyer les bidons avec de l'eau tiède.*  
 'One must not clean the jugs with lukewarm water.'
- (k.3) (M.PL) *Elle fait revenir de la viande avec des oignons.*  
 'She roasts meat with onions.'
- (k.4) (F.PL) *Les voisins mangent la fondue avec des patates.*  
 'The neighbors eat fondue with potatoes.'

Only in 46% of the valid replies (31/68) did the informants use phonic variants of invariable DE (24). Invariable DE is thus a minority solution, differently from what is observed in the data for most other contexts discussed so far. In turn, 50% (34/68) of the valid replies with complements of prepositions contained a definite article (25), making this the most frequent option in our data in this context. Only in 5% (3/68) of the cases did the answer contain a fully-fledged "partitive article" (see Section 4.2.1):

- (24) *fã kyi dœ tsir avwi dœ=z ɨɲõ*  
 make.PRS.3SG cook.INF DE meat.F.SG with DE=PL onion.M.PL  
 (BREL 5)
- (25) *e fa kwe dœ tsœ awe lœ=z*  
 and make.PRS.3SG cook.INF DE meat.F.SG with DEF.ART=PL  
*œɲõ*  
 onion.M.PL  
 '(and) s/he brings meat to cook with onions.' (St.-Nic. 3)

#### 4.1.12 Summary of the Results

Table 9.2 below summarizes the results reported in Sections 4.1.1–4.1.11. For the sake of convenience, the eleven contexts have been reordered accord-

TABLE 9.2 Summary of the results

	Invariable <i>de</i>	Definite article (indefinite reading or kind reading)	Fully- fledged PA	Cognate of <i>certain</i> s	No further determiner
Postverbal indef. dOs; specificity-inducing contexts (4.1.4)	100% (30/30)	0	0	0	0
Postverbal indef. dOs; affirmative context (4.1.1)	91% (59/65)	5% (3/65)	5% (3/65)	0	0
Postverbal indef. dOs following Q <sup>o</sup> (4.1.6)	89% (59/66)	2% (1/66)	2% (1/66)	0	8% (5/66)
Postverbal indef. dOs; unbound/atelic predicates (4.1.3)	85% (55/65)	9% (6/65)	6% (4/65)	0	0
Postverbal indef. dOs; under scope of negation (4.1.2)	82% (54/66)	14% (9/66)	5% (3/66)	0	0
Postverbal complements of presentatives (4.1.10)	77% (50/65)	22% (14/65)	0	0	2% (1/65) <sup>a</sup>
Complements of prepositions (4.1.11)	46% (31/68)	50% (34/68)	5% (3/68)	0	0
Postverbal indef. dOs; characterizing sentences (4.1.5)	31% (18/59)	64% (38/59)	5% (3/59)	0	0
Preverbal indefinite subjects with stage-level predicates (4.1.9)	n/a <sup>b</sup> (12 cases)	0	n/a <sup>c</sup> (2 cases)	0	0
Preverbal indef. subjects with individual-level predicates (4.1.8), emphatic	0	97% (65/67)	2% (1/67)	2% (1/67)	0
Postverbal indef. dOs; following numerals (4.1.7)	0	0	0	0	100% (64/64)

a We consider this answer a performance error (see 4.1.10).

b No percentages are given for preverbal indefinite subjects with stage-level predicates. For justification, see 4.1.9.

c See note b.

ing to the relative frequency of invariable DE, beginning with the highest value attested. For every context, the most frequent result has been highlighted.

As for a potential geographical pattern in our results, we have to admit that none is visible in our data. Many results are categorical or almost categorical across speakers and locations, and contexts where we observe some variation (see results in Sections 4.1.2, 4.1.10, 4.1.11, 4.1.5 and 4.1.8) do not have location as

TABLE 9.3 Use of the “indefinite” definite article in six contexts per location

	Affirma- tive dO	Negation dO	Unbound dO	C-Sen- tence dO	Compl. of presenta- tive	Comple- ments of P <sup>o</sup>	Total N def. art/ sentences	Total N def. art./location
Bondaz 1	1/4	0/4	0/4	1/2	1/4	0/4	3/22	13.6% (3/22)
Brel 2	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/4	1/4	4/4	5/24	n/a (speakers at BREL come from different locations)
Brel 3	0/4	1/4	3/3	2/4	1/4	4/4	11/23	
Brel 4	0/4	0/4	0/4	4/4	1/4	0/4	5/24	
Brel 5	0/4	0/4	0/4	1/4	1/4	0/4	2/24	
Brel 6	0/4	1/4	0/4	1/4	0/3	1/4	3/23	
Fenis 1	0/4	0/4	0/4	2/3	0/4	1/4	3/23	
Fenis 2	2/4	0/4	0/3	2/3	1/4	3/4	8/22	32.1% (36/112)
Fenis 3	0/4	1/4	0/4	2/3	0/3	2/4	5/22	
Fenis 4	0/3	0/4	0/4	2/3	1/4	2/4	5/22	
Fenis 5	0/4	1/3	1/4	3/3	1/4	3/4	9/22	
Ponthey 1	0/4	1/4	0/4	4/4	1/4	3/4	9/24	
StNic 1	0/4	3/3	1/4	4/4	1/3	4/4	13/22	32.1% (36/112)
StNic 2	0/4	0/4	0/4	4/4	1/4	2/4	7/24	
StNic 3	0/2	0/4	1/2	3/4	1/4	4/4	9/22	
StNic 4	0/4	0/4	0/4	0/2	1/4	0/4	1/22	
StNic 5	0/4	1/3	0/4	3/4	1/4	1/4	6/22	
<b>Total N</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>104</b>	

the independent variable responsible for it. This is shown in Table 9.3 for the use of the “indefinite” definite article in our data.

We can only compare Fenis and St. Nicolas (5 speakers each), and Table 9.3 shows similar percentages for the use of the “indefinite” definite article instead of DE or the “partitive article” for these two locations (27.0% and 32.1%). We thus conclude for the moment that our data do not permit any spatial analysis or conclusion as for any spatial pattern.

#### 4.2 *Fully-Fledged “Partitive Articles” and the liaison Consonant [z] in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal*

In this section, we briefly present the 20 replies featuring a fully-fledged “partitive article” (4.2.1), as well as 28 replies with the *liaison* consonant [z] (4.2.2).

4.2.1 Fully-Fledged “Partitive Articles” in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal  
As foreshadowed in Section 4.1, a small number of 20 replies in our data contained a fully-fledged “partitive article” (18 in the singular, 15 out of which with

TABLE 9.4 Contexts in the data with fully-fledged “partitive articles”

Context	N
Postverbal indefinite dO, affirmative (4.1.1)	3
Postverbal indefinite dO under scope of negation (4.1.2)	3
Postverbal indefinite dO with unbound atelic predicate (4.1.3)	4
Postverbal indefinite dO in characterizing sentence (4.1.5)	3
Postverbal indefinite dO following Q <sup>o</sup> (4.1.6)	1
Preverbal indef. subjects with individual-level predicates (4.1.8)	2
Preverbal indef. subjects with stage-level predicates, emphatic (4.1.9)	1
Indefinite complement of P <sup>o</sup> (4.1.11)	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

feminine nouns and 3 out of which with masculine nouns, and 2 in the plural).<sup>15</sup> The 18 fully-fledged “partitive articles” in the singular are opposed to 147 attestations of invariable DE with singular stimuli, thus accounting for 11% of the relevant cases. The 2 fully-fledged “partitive articles” in the plural are opposed to 221 invariable attestations of DE with plural stimuli, that, is for less than 1% of the relevant cases. Fully-fledged “partitive articles” in our data do not respond to any clear geographic pattern, as 11 out of 17 informants from all 4 villages covered by the fieldwork produced at least one fully-fledged “partitive article”. Nevertheless, it strikes the eye that 9 of the 20 fully-fledged “partitive articles” in our data stem from the five speakers from St. Nicolas, whereas the five speakers from Féris (the only location that provided five speakers, too; see Section 3) only provided one fully-fledged “partitive article” in total. Likewise, as represented in Table 9.4, the 20 replies under scrutiny are distributed over 8 different contexts.

The following examples illustrate fully-fledged “partitive articles” with postverbal indefinite dOs in affirmative contexts (26), under the scope of negation (27), in characterizing sentences (28), as subjects of individual-level predicates (29), and as complements of P<sup>o</sup> (30):

- (26) *sɔv'eẽ nɔ dzɔntɛn dɔ la pari'eta* [...] *dẽ la s'ɔpa*  
 often 1PL add.PRS.1PL PA.F.SG *savory.F.SG* [...] in the soup  
 ‘Often, we add savory to the soup.’ (St.-Nic. 4)

<sup>15</sup> See note 10 for how fully-fledgedness was assessed.

- (27) *ma m'amã l=am'æ* [...] *dɛ frɔm'a<sup>d</sup>zɔ mɛ aɛtæ*  
 my mother 3SG=like.IPFV.3SG [...] DE cheese but buy.IPFV.3SG  
*pa dæ la font'ina*  
 NEG PA.F.SG fontine  
 'My mum liked cheese, but she didn't buy Fontina cheese.' (Bondaz 1)
- (28) *dã lo ga'aʒə ðn amatsæ dɻ bukæ*  
 in the garage 3SG stack.PRS.3SG PA.M.SG wood.M.SG  
 'In the garage, we stack wood.' (BREL 5)
- (29) *di zɛlɛn n æjɔm pa le dɛŋ*  
 PA.PL chicken.F.PL NEG have.PRS.3PL NEG DEF.ART.PL tooth.PL  
 'Chicken don't have teeth.' (BREL 6)
- (30) *fã pa aprɔpr'ie le bidø awɛ dəl' ɛ:vɛ*  
 must.PRS.3SG NEG clean.INF the jugs with PA.F.SG water.F.SG  
*tç'ɛdɛ*  
 lukewarm.F.SG  
 'One must not clean the jugs with lukewarm water.' (Bondaz 1)

4.2.2 The *liaison* Consonant [z] Aosta Valley Francoprovençal  
 As pointed out in Section 2 (4), Francoprovençal features a *liaison* consonant [z] in the plural before vocalic onset. According to Kristol (2014, 2016), this *liaison* consonant appears both with DE and with the definite article. In our data, too, we found this *liaison* element in both contexts, however not categorically with DE in plural nominals with vocalic onset.

As for invariable DE, the *liaison* consonant appeared in 68% (21/31) of the cases potentially amenable to it.<sup>16</sup> Compare (24), repeated here as (31), with (32):

- (31) *Fa kyi dæ tsir avwi dæ=z ipɔð*  
 make.PRS.3SG cook.INF DE meat.F.SG with DE=PL onion.F.PL  
 (BREL 5)

16 This calculus does not include the answers to the translation stimulus (f.4) featuring the French noun *épices* 'spices', as for many replies it was not at all clear whether the Franco-provençal equivalent had a vocalic onset (like the Standard French form) or a consonantic one (like the Standard Italian form *spezie*). Many replies contained lexical crossings between the Standard French and the Standard Italian form.

- (32) *fɛ*                      *kwir*        *dɛ tsir<sup>v</sup>*        *awi de ʝnõ*  
 make.PRS.3SG cook.INF DE meat.F.SG with DE onion.F.PL  
 ‘S/he brings meat to cook with onions.’ (Fénis 5)

With regard to the definite article with indefinite semantics, however, the *liaison* consonant did appear in 100% (7/7) of the cases potentially amenable to it. Consider (25), repeated here as (33) (see also (12) above):

- (33) *e fa*                      *kwe*        *də tsə*        *awe lɛ=z*  
 and make.PRS.3SG cook.INF DE meat.F.SG with DEF.ART=PL  
*æpõ*  
 onion.F.PL  
 ‘And s/he brings meat to cook with onions.’ (St.-Nic. 3)

## 5 Discussion

Comparing our findings from the Aosta Valley Francoprovençal data (see Section 4) to French results in the very superficial impression of a more or less comparable system of nominal determination with regard to singular mass and plural indefinites. DE and its allomorphs are used in the great majority of cases (and even in 100% of cases with animate specific direct objects) of indefinite mass or plural nominals in postverbal object position and as complements of presentatives, in affirmative contexts and under the scope of negation, and also with atelic predicates and specificity inducing contexts. The second frequent option is the definite article, which thus seems to have an indefinite value also in parallel to some Italian dialects (Kupisch and Koops 2007; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016b, 2018; Giusti this volume), a finding to be investigated in more detail in further studies and not attested for (Standard) French. In contrast to Kristol’s (2014) bipartition of the Francoprovençal area, where Aosta Valley Francoprovençal is part of “Francoprovençal A”, with invariable DE only, we also find 20 attestations of fully-fledged “partitive articles”—also under the scope of negation (cf. e.g., (27) above)—which in the singular are also clearly gender-marked. Bare mass nominals or bare plurals in argument position are thus as excluded in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal as they are in French, which is an important syntactic finding and an important difference with respect to (Standard) Italian.

Parallels exist also for mass singulars and plural indefinites after quantifiers and numerals: whereas DE is the default option after quantifiers (a perfect match with French regularities; except for *poka* ‘little, few’, which seems to



allow also the Italian construction *poca acqua* ‘little water’), it never occurs after numerals, like in (Standard) French. Contexts with a “generic flavor” such as indefinite direct objects of characterizing sentences or (preverbal) subjects of individual-level predicates in argumentative contexts systematically trigger the definite article and, in the latter case, sometimes heavy reformulations (something which we would also expect for spontaneous productions of informal French). Generally speaking, the data discussed suggest preverbal DE-subjects, also with stage-level predicates, to be blocked more strictly in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal than according to what is reported for French, a fact to which we will return below (see also Ihsane 2018). The only possible exception appear to be preverbal (M)PL DE-subjects with stage-level predicates. Finally, there is high variation in complements of prepositions, which is different from what is the case for Standard French and needs further research.

As for morphology, out of 388 valid productions, 20 (= 5%) show the fully-fledged “partitive article” like in French, without any clear geographical pattern—it seems to represent a rare yet existing allomorph of DE. “Italian-like” constructions are 4 attestations of the quantifier *poka* (‘few, little’) without a following DE, one use of the equivalent of *certain* in the plural with a preverbal subject of an individual-level predicate, and the recurrent use of the definite article with indefinite semantics reported in detail in Section 4.

Searching for an explanation of this highly grammaticalized indefinite determiner DE could thus also be done in parallel to French: many researchers claim, either diachronically (Carlier 2007; Carlier and Lamiroy 2014) or synchronically (Stark 2008a, 2008b, 2016; Gerards and Stark, this volume), that the impoverished nominal morphology of Modern French without any declension classes, overt and transparent gender and number marking on nouns, makes it necessary to minimally mark nominals for “argumenthood” by the determiner *de* (obligatory even under the scope of negation). “Partitive articles” in French, just like the remaining nominal determiners of this language, are marked for number (in the singular also for gender) and compensate in a way the loss of gender and number marking on nouns, both relevant *phi*-features in Indo-European agreement systems.<sup>17</sup>

In Section 2, we saw that Francoprovençal nouns are almost as highly defective as French ones, without any overt number marking (except for feminine

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17 An anonymous reviewer points out to us that this is reminiscent of the distribution of case, number and gender features in the New High German noun phrase, which is characterized by a sort of “division of labor” (word group inflection) between Det, A and N. Morphological features such as case often are expressed on the determiner and rarely on the noun (cf. Strobel and Glaser, this volume, on partitive markers in Germanic).

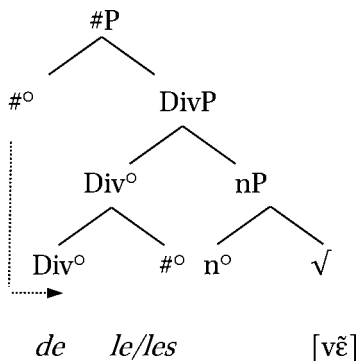


FIGURE 9.1  
Indefinite nominals in French with lowering of #°  
into Div°

a/e-alternations, which do not seem to be systematic, and the existence of sigmatic plural marking in Evolène, Switzerland, a variety not covered by our fieldwork). In turn, Francoprovençal varieties have a grammaticalized invariable DE or, depending on geolinguistic factors, even a fully-fledged “partitive article”. In parallel to what has been done for French (Stark 2008a, 2008b), such elements could be considered the expression of the functional head realized by the overt plural marker in languages which systematically and unambiguously mark number on the noun (in the sense of how Borer (2005) considers classifiers and plural affixes such as English -s to be in complementary distribution and to both mark “portioning out”, that is, the creation of countable elements in nominals, in a functional head Div°). Of course, invariable DE or fully-fledged “partitive articles” mark the opposite value of “portioning out”, but elsewhere (Gerards and Stark, this volume) we show that inside Romance languages, two options exist: either, only “portioning out” is explicitly marked by plural markers or the indefinite article stemming from Latin UNUS, zero marking being the default (= mass/indefinite), like in Ibero-Romance. Alternatively, both “portioning out” (by UNUS) and “mass” (by DE or fully-fledged “partitive articles”) are marked (like in French, to some extent also Italian). We could thus assume that DE and the DE-element of fully-fledged “partitive articles” are located in the very same position as are plural markers (Div° in Borer’s 2005 terms), and may then be combined with counting elements like quantifiers (e.g., *beaucoup*, ‘much/many’) or erased post-syntactically when combined with numerals. When no such element is in the “counting head” #° (following Borer 2005), *le/la/les* is inserted, to assure minimal number marking (Borer 2005, 164, for that assumption). The analysis for French is represented in Figure 9.1 above. Concretely, Figure 9.1 shows how the root [vẽ], *vin* (‘wine’), without any information on declension class, gender or number, is combined with a functional head n° to form a noun—a highly defective noun, however, not being able to combine with a verb, not even with a mass reading or in incorporation struc-

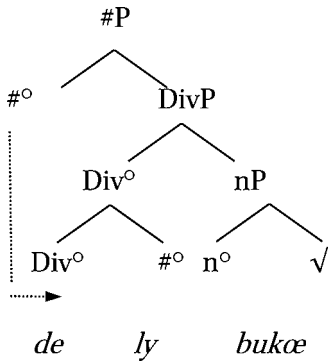


FIGURE 9.2  
Indefinite nominals in “Francoprovençal B” with lowering of #° into Div°

tures (as, in turn, available in Spanish; cf. *tengo vino*, ‘I have (some) wine’, or *tengo perro*, ‘I am a dog owner’). This nP then combines with the Div°-head, minimally expressed by *de*, and with another head, #°, responsible for “counting” in a broad sense and hosting quantifiers or numerals, or minimally, as in Figure 9.1, *le/la/les*, expressing gender and number (#° being the lowest position where this is possible in French). Post-syntactically, the morphological material hosted in #° is lowered (Embick and Noyer 2001) to Div°, which results in *du vin* or *des vins* (‘wine’, or ‘wines’) (for a detailed argumentation for this analysis, see Gerards and Stark, this volume). The structure slightly resembles so-called bare partitives with a zero quantifier, but those are followed by a PP containing a definite nominal: *Je prends du vin (que tu m’as servi)* (‘I take (an unspecified quantity) of the wine which you served me’, see Kupferman 1979, 1994; Ihsane 2008).

Applying this analysis to “Francoprovençal B”, that is, to our cases with a fully-fledged “partitive article” in the singular, results in the very same representation and postulates the very same explanatory mechanism: existence of “partitive articles” to compensate the loss of number (and gender) marking on nouns in Francoprovençal. This is shown in Figure 9.2 above.

“Francoprovençal A” with invariable DE, in turn, is a different case in point: in case no numeral or quantifier is inserted in #°, nothing is inserted in ‘Francoprovençal A’ in #°, differently from French, but similar to some Occitan dialects. This is shown in Figure 9.3 below.

“Francoprovençal A” thus admits nominal arguments that are not overtly specified for gender and number, unlike French and other Romance languages and varieties (remember: \**je bois vin* is ungrammatical). Gender and number are, however, important *phi*-features also in Francoprovençal, where gender agreement with adjectives or number agreement between the subject constituent and the finite verb is completely grammaticalized. DE-nominals in “Francoprovençal A” are almost as defective as French nPs and should accordingly also be extremely restricted as to their syntactic distribution (e.g., to positions where some sort of “incorporation meaning” is available).

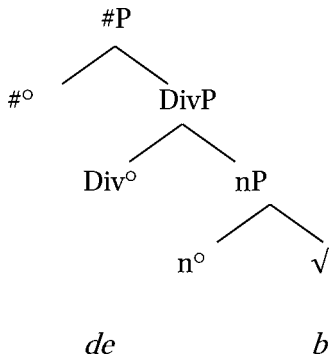


FIGURE 9.3 Indefinite nominals in “Francoprovençal A”

And this is exactly where our data point at: in Sections 4.1.8 and 4.1.9, we showed that, both with preverbal subjects of individual level-predicates and with preverbal subjects of stage-level predicates, DE is highly disfavored in “Francoprovençal A”, at least in the singular, which is thus also syntactically different from French, where such “partitive article”-constituents are fine in literary registers (Englebert 1992; Vogeleer and Tasmowski 2005). This issue is further discussed in Ihsane (2018).

Of course, the data this discussion is based on are still small in number and stem from questionnaire-based fieldwork only, which can never result in a complete picture of fully-fledged “partitive articles” or invariable DE in Aosta Valley Francoprovençal. The alleged typologically marked system of nominal declension in these Francoprovençal varieties has to be studied in more detail, also in a Pan-Romance perspective, and a methodologically more varied and bigger data set (elicitation tasks, grammaticality judgements) is necessary to better understand the underlying regularities and restrictions of fully-fledged “partitive articles” and invariable DE.

## 6 Conclusion

Starting from the observation that fully-fledged “partitive articles” and invariable DE seem to constitute an areal phenomenon, ranging from South-Western France to the North of the country and over Switzerland to the Northern Italian dialects in the East (Bossong 2016), this paper focused on the empirical description of (questionnaire-, translation task-based) fieldwork data gathered in the Aosta Valley in May 2017, where we investigated eleven syntactic and semantic properties of invariable DE in the Francoprovençal varieties spoken there. Contrary to other Romance languages, this variety of Francoprovençal is known to have non-inflected DE (with different allomorphs) in front of

indefinite mass singulars and plurals. Except for Standard French, Standard Italian and some Italian dialects, little is known about the syntactic and semantic properties of such invariable DE-elements (and of fully-fledged “partitive articles”) in the different Romance varieties. This is especially true of Franco-provençal (and, *mutatis mutandis*, of Occitan), a highly endangered and non-standardized minor Romance language, as traditional dialectological descriptions focus at most on the etymology, morphology and geographical distribution of attestations of these elements, without even indicating their obligatory (like in Standard French) or optional character (like in Standard Italian) in the respective systems. There are several hypotheses about potential correlations between the existence of invariable DE and fully-fledged “partitive articles”, on the one hand, and other phenomena (no overt and unambiguous number marking on nouns, absence of DOM), on the other hand, according to which these indefinite mass and plural determiners seem to play a major role in the nominal morphosyntax of Romance languages. This makes them a crucial object of study for typologists and theoretical linguists alike, and this even more so in “natural”, non-standardized spoken varieties.

The major findings reported and discussed concern striking parallels to the French system. First: a quasi-obligatory use of invariable DE with indefinite mass and plural arguments, also after quantifiers and under the scope of negation, and despite the sociolinguistically more intense “vertical contact” with Standard Italian, second: the attestation of fully-fledged “partitive articles” also in Aosta Valley Franco-provençal (*contra* Kristol, 2014), and third: a quite generalized ban on preverbal subject arguments with invariable DE or “partitive articles”, at least in the singular (cf. Ihsane 2018). We correlated this last finding to the almost absent (systematic) number marking on nouns in Aosta Valley Franco-provençal, which is also the case for French. In the latter language, however, gender and number are overtly marked via determiners in argumental nominals (except under the scope of negation and after some quantifiers), whereas an expression like Franco-provençal *de bukæ* (‘wood’) is not marked for any of these *phi*-features and thus unable to occupy the preverbal subject position, where it would control number agreement on the verb and introduce a topical discourse referent. Of course, this first, admittedly tentative explanation is in need of further corroboration by means of more data (especially from grammaticality judgments and fill-in-the-gap tasks, cf. Cornips and Poletto 2005). Additionally, more theoretical discussion about *en*-pronominalization and the behavior of fully-fledged Franco-provençal “partitive articles” (which are preserved under the scope of negation, like in Italian, but contrary to French) is needed in order to fully understand the syntax (and semantics) of Franco-provençal partitive determiners.

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