

**(In)definiteness and partitivity in the history of German**  
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Independent (or generalized, cf. Seržant 2021: 889–892) partitive genitives, expressing partial affection of the referent, are well attested for Old High German (OHG) and Middle High German (MHG), cf. examples 1 and 2, with and without a definite article.

- (1) *Her skancta ce hanton sinan fianton bitteres lides* (OHG Ludw. 65)  
he served immediately his enemies bitter.GEN.SG.N wine.GEN.SG.N  
'he immediately served some bitter wine to his enemies'
- (2) *jâ sah er ligen umbe sich der liute sam der steine* (MHG Klage 1633)  
PRT saw he lie around him the.GEN.PL person.GEN.PL like the.GEN.PL stone. GEN.PL  
'indeed, he saw people lying around him like stones'

Generally, like in other Indo-European languages, one of the functions of the genitive case is the marking of (pseudo-)partitivity, cf. (3) for OHG:

- (3) *kelih caltes uuazares* (T 44.27 *calicem aquae frigide*)  
glass cold.GEN.SG water.GEN.SG  
'a glass of cold water'

Even if the genitive case cannot be equated with the partitive, as it also has other functions, the decline of the genitive case, beginning at the end of the Middle High German period, necessarily also led to the loss of the possibility to express part–whole relations by means of a case marker, with the exception of partitive constructions, in which genitive case marking has survived to a certain extent up to the present-day language (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001). The question arises for the later period as to whether and how the partitive function is still anchored in grammar after the degradation of the adverbial genitive.

In an earlier analysis of the strategies used in the process of grammatical restructuring (Glaser 1992), the focus was put on the pronominal expression. Different regional strategies were demonstrated, including the one that entered the standard language using the original indefinite pronoun *welch*, representing a contact-induced typological peculiarity.

In my talk, I will try to give an overall view on partitivity expressions, including the nominal phrase and taking into account the relevant literature that has appeared in the meantime (e.g. Scott 2014, Shubina & Blühdorn 2015, Zimmer 2015). I will look for functional parallels as well as for divergent developments in pronominal and nominal expressions.

Only in some peripheral German-speaking areas genitive forms have also been preserved in the nominal system to express partitive functions (Strobel & Glaser 2020). In many varieties, after the loss of the genitive a prepositional phrase with *von* 'from, of', which already existed in OHG, has been used increasingly. It usually appears with definite determiners, and thus resembles the so-called 'partitive article' in French and Italian.

- (4) *hier kommen von den alten redlichen wackern Männern* (GW, 1, 8, 275)  
here come.3PL from the old honest brave men

‘There are some of the old honest and brave men coming here’

A further system is based on the use of an indefinite article for mass nouns, which is also already found in MHG:

- (5) *ein wazzer iesch der junge man* (W. v. Eschenbach, Parzival 228,1)  
a water demanded the young man  
‘The young man asked for water’

In (5), the concept of partial reference is no longer apparent, just like in the standard language, where definiteness and indefiniteness are the relevant categories of the noun phrase.

Partial affection of the referent, as with independent partitive genitives, can be expressed optionally by various means, such as quantifiers or prepositions, but usually results from the context. This also increasingly holds true for the expression of (pseudo-)partitives, where marking with the genitive is limited (Zimmer 2015).

In the history of the German language, a specific partitive system did not develop. The partitive expressed by the genitive at the beginning of the written tradition was a side-effect of case-marking. As the genitive declined, the respective functions were taken over by other cases. Only in the case of anaphoric indefinite reference, the resulting gap in the standard language was filled by the pronoun *welch*. The category of (in)definiteness was the central category in German. The dialectal genitive systems in peripheral regions went their own way, possibly due to language contact, although based on inherited forms.

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**Number marking on nominals in Romance:  
insights from a spatial analysis of ‘partitive articles’ in Francoprovençal**

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According to Gil’s (1987) typology, Romance languages have overt number marking on their nominal arguments: the noun and/or the determiner are marked for number. For some languages with partitive articles (henceforth PA, historically a combination of the preposition DE and Latin ILLE-determiners, with, nowadays, generally an indefinite interpretation), it has been proposed that PAs compensate for the absence of overt number marking on the noun (Delfitto/Schroten 1991, Gerards/Stark 2020, a.o; for a diachronic perspective Mathieu 2009, Carlier/Lamiroy 2014). In this presentation, we will address the question whether there is a correlation between the presence/absence of phonologically overt number marking on the noun and the presence/absence of PAs in Francoprovençal, a non-standardized, highly endangered Gallo-Romance language (Zulato/Kasstan/Nagy 2018), which does not only have PAs but also an invariable correlate DE. Our study focuses on the Swiss and Aosta Valley (Italy) varieties of Francoprovençal and shows that PAs are not used to compensate the absence/loss of overt plural morphology on nouns, contrary to what is mentioned in the literature.

We will present the fine-grained spatial distributions of PAs/DE and overt number marking on nouns by means of maps based on fieldwork data assembled in the ALAVAL, an audiovisual atlas of Swiss varieties, plus additional data from fieldwork in the Aosta Valley in 2017 (see Ihsane 2018, Stark/Gerards 2020) as well as in Evolène, Valais, in 2019 (see Davatz/Ihsane/Stark 2023). This work demonstrates that, in our data, there is no (spatial) correlation between the distribution of overt number marking on nouns and the availability of PAs. It also shows that there is a negative correlation between the distribution of overt *sigmatic* plural marking (present exclusively on some masculine nouns) and of PAs in Evolène, the only locality with this type of number marking. This means that we cannot state in a generalized way that Francoprovençal varieties with overt plural marking on nouns do not have PAs (or that the absence of plural marking on the noun leads to the necessity of using PAs, cf. also Pinzin/Poletto (2022) Northern Italian Dialects). However, it is true that a dedicated form for the plural suffix (only attested in Evolène) does not co-occur with PAs.

Secondly, our study reveals that, in Francoprovençal, some noun phrases are overtly marked for number twice, once on the noun and once on the PA, while others are not overtly marked for number at all since the noun may be unmarked and cooccur with invariable DE. The absence of overt number marking altogether is typologically striking according to Gil (1987) and semantically strongly marked. To account for such data, the notion of semantic number needs to be taken into account (Ihsane/Gerards/Stark submitted).

This research adds to the knowledge of nominal determination in Francoprovençal but also more generally in Romance by showing that number marking on noun phrases in Romance is more complex than described in the literature and that the role of PAs in these mechanisms is not necessarily prominent.

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## Structural and geographical patterns in the system of Piedmontese partitive determiners, between specificity and quantification

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The Gallo-Italic varieties of Piedmont (Northwestern Italy) all possess the so-called “partitive article”. This is used both for singular mass nouns and as the plural form of the indefinite article, like in Italian or French. In peripheral varieties of Piedmontese, partitives are present in an articulated form, displaying different degrees of optionality (see Bonato 2004, Miola 2017, and Cerruti/Regis 2020):

- (1) A        j'    è                (di)                robe        c'                a  
      SBJ.3SG LOC be-PRS.3SG INDF.DET-ART.DEF.F.PL things        which                SBJ.3SG  
      venta                                nen fé  
      have to-PRS.3SG                not do-INF  
      “There are (some) things which one doesn't have to do”.  
      (Biellese; Flecchia 2023)

On the contrary, the urban *koine* centred in Turin shows an unarticled partitive determiner, ‘d/əd/dě, which is invariable both for gender and for number. As stated by Squartini (2022: 83), both countable nouns and mass nouns end up having the same morphosyntactic structure, bare Determiner + invariable Noun. In fact, the unarticled partitive determiner found in Turinese is properly *transnumeral* (Squartini 2023: 74).

Following reference grammars, Turinese partitive articles turn out to be obligatory (see also Miola 2017). However, Cerruti & Regis (2020) found an instance of omission, in a peri-Turinese variety, with countable plurals when referring to non-specific indefinite entities (ex. 3). This possibility is also sketched by Bonato (2004: 185), with the note that these cases are almost sporadic.

- (2) A        mangia        mai    'd        fruta        cola fija  
      SBJ.3SG eat-PRS.3SG never INDF.DET fruit.F.SG that girl  
      “That girl never eats fruits”.  
      (ASIt Questionnaire 2, Turin; <http://asit.maldura.unipd.it>)

- (3) [a        i        suŋ        Ø 'tère        mak a'date        a fe        l'        ɛrba]  
      SBJ.3PL LOC be-PRS.3PL Ø areas only suitable to grow-INF the grass  
      “There are areas where only grass grows”.  
      (ALEPO Q502, Moncalieri; unpublished materials; Cerruti/Regis 2020: 665)

As stated by Stark & Gerards (2021:330), «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.» The aim of this paper is to investigate the different patterns displayed by the *koine* and the other Piedmontese varieties through a comparative analysis based on

linguistic atlases and on an oral corpus collected (and in course of enrichment) in Piedmont. The focus of the analysis is double: on forms (articulated vs bare partitives), and on the semantics of forms, with particular attention paid to the interplay between the two aspects.

For example, judging from ASIt (*Atlante Sintattico d'Italia* “Syntactic Atlas of Italy”) data, speakers of Chieri (near Turin) never omit the partitive article with non-specific indefinite entities, although the partitive is present in the articulated form. The spreading of the articulated partitive in Turinese and peri-Turinese varieties will be analysed with the help of data coming from our corpus: this kind of process is clearly an example of *Italianization of the dialects* (see Ricca 2010 for a definition).

In peripheral varieties, instead, the omission of the partitive determiner conveys the feature [- SPECIFIC], so that it can be seen as a “specificity indicator” (Stark 2002, 2007): a parallel situation to that of Standard Italian. This is probably not due to contact, although the Italian model can act as a reinforcement for this strategy (*contact-induced stability*, Kühn & Braunmüller 2014). In this respect, Turinese behaves similarly to French:

- (4) Je vais ramasser des (\*Ø) fraises  
SBJ.1SG go-PRS.1SG pick-INF INDF.DET-ART.DET.F.PL strawberry.F.PL  
“I go pick strawberries”.  
(French, private materials)

In addition to all this, the translation questionnaires of the ASIt also unveil another strategy for expressing the feature [- SPECIFIC], namely, the determinative article:

- (5) It cati mai ij pom  
SBJ.2SG buy-PRS.2SG never ART.DET.M.PL apple.M.PL  
“You never buy apples”.  
(ASIt Questionnaire 2, Turin; <http://asit.maldura.unipd.it>)

In this case, we see how a formally definite NP is functionally indefinite: the speaker doesn't refer to some specific apples but, more generally, aims to indicate them as a whole category. In this sense, our proposal also aims to analyze the subtle border between the categories of Specificity and Genericity, along with the potential overlaps between them.

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## LINGUISTIC ATLASES

- ALEPO = *Atlante Linguistico ed Etnografico del Piemonte Occidentale*. 2013. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.
- ASIt = *Atlante sintattico d'Italia*. <http://asit.maldura.unipd.it>.

## Prepositions in binominal constructions – really meaningless?

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It is well known that in Romance languages, the preposition DE is used in a variety of binominal constructions: ‘real’ partitives, pseudo-partitives, and also simple indefinites. In English, it is the preposition *of* that is found in these environments whereas German is known to use **von** in partitives but a null-element in pseudo-partitives and with container nouns, as illustrated below:

- |     |                                |                 |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| (1) | trois <b>de</b> vos livres     | partitive       |
|     | three <b>of</b> your books     |                 |
|     | drei <b>von</b> deinen Büchern |                 |
| (2) | un verre <b>de</b> vin         | container noun  |
|     | a glass <b>of</b> wine         |                 |
|     | ein Glas $\emptyset$ Wein      |                 |
| (3) | un peu <b>de</b> vin           | weak quantifier |
|     | a bit <b>of</b> wine           |                 |
|     | ein bisschen $\emptyset$ Wein  |                 |

However, in certain environments and also depending on the dialect, a variety of prepositions may show up in German in pseudo-partitives and also with container nouns:

- |     |                                       |                |
|-----|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| (4) | eine Menge                            | <b>an</b> Blut |
|     | a set(large amount)                   | at blood       |
|     | ein Eimer <b>mit</b> Sand             |                |
|     | a bucket                              | with sand      |
|     | ein bisschen <b>an</b> Aufmerksamkeit |                |
|     | a bit                                 | at attention   |

I will approach this situation by using a mereological approach to the meaning of these prepositions, Haselbach (2017) and model it with the [ $\pm$ coincidence] feature, suggested among others by Wiltschko (2014). *Von*, *DE* and *of* are clearly [-coin] prepositions that presuppose that there are two ‘points’ under discussion: the source and an unspecified goal in the case of a directional (real prepositional) usage and the ‘departed’ set plus the residue in pseudo-partitives, cf. Zamparelli’s R-operator. In contrast, the preposition *an* (also *mit*) – as [+coin] prepositions – will be taken as the lexicalization merely of the properties of individuals, kinds and properties, as recently suggested for some instances of *DE* in Romance by Espinal & Giusti (2024). As such, this element is syntactically very close to the little *n* position and thus, its semantic contribution is does nothing more than to discriminate between the varying encyclopedic meanings. This could explain why a null-version is also a possible outcome, cf. (2) and (3). In the last part of the paper, I will speculate on possible grammaticalization paths that might have lead to the situation in Romance and English today, where the prepositions [-coin] prepositions have obviously undergone a semantic bleaching such that they can be used in all the environments discussed above.



## Experimental evidence for weak indefinites and semantic incorporation in Brazilian Portuguese (format: talk)

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In article languages of the Romance or Germanic type, semantic incorporation analyses of verb-object constructions generally involve bare objects (1) or weak definites (2) (Aguilar-Guevara 2014). Yet, it has also been argued that some indefinite objects are ambiguous and can be subject to semantic incorporation (3c) rather than to standard compositional interpretations under which the direct object corresponds to an existentially bound variable (3b) (Carlson 2003, 2005, 2006).

- (1) Pedro jogou **bola**. #Ela estava murcha.  
Pedro play.PRF.3SG ball 3SGF be.IMPF.3SG flat  
'Pedro played football. #It was flat.' (Brazilian Portuguese, Taveira da Cruz 2008: 95)
- (2) Mary plays **the trumpet**. ~ trumpet-play(m)
- (3) a. John fed **a dog**. (Carlson 2003, adapted)  
b.  $\exists x \text{ dog}(x) \wedge \text{John fed } x$   
c. dog-feed(j)

The Carlsonian approach and subsequent work argue for a semantic incorporation analysis of weak indefinite object NPs (3c). Under this analysis, indefinite NPs are not interpreted compositionally as the combination of the meaning of a verb X and its argument Y. Instead, the verb + noun combination is treated as event type-denoting. Klein et al. (2013: 191) note that such weak indefinite interpretations are in many respects similar to other readings of indefinites (in contrast, e. g., to weak definites, which are strikingly distinct from regular definites). However, Srinivas & Rawlins (2023) have shown that weak definites also can be distinctively identified.

This paper investigates semantically incorporated weak indefinites in Brazilian Portuguese (Wall 2022). We argue that certain indefinite direct objects (4), when adjacent to a particular group of verbs, are interpreted as semantically incorporated, receiving non-quantified atelic activity readings.

- (4) Vamos assistir uma televisão, jogar vídeo game,  
go.PRS.1PL watch.INF indef.FSG television play.INF video game  
e depois comer uma boa abobrinha recheada. (attested blog post)  
and afterwards eat.INF indef.FSG good zucchini filled  
'Let's watch some TV, play some videogames, and after that eat some good filled zucchini.'

In (4), a list of activities is proposed, one of them using a bare object (*jogar vídeo game*) and two using indefinite objects (*assistir uma televisão*, *comer uma boa abobrinha recheada*). As shown in Wall (2022), neither of the activities involves an individual TV, video game, or zucchini, respectively, but instead refers to the event type TV-WATCHING, VIDEO-GAMING, and ZUCCHINI-EATING. In this paper, we report results from two tests for semantic incorporation which we implemented experimentally: (i) restrictions on modification and (ii) semantic enrichment (cf. Aguilar-Guevara/Schulpen 2011, 2014).

In an Acceptability Judgment Experiment, we tested the availability of modification types of the object, predicting that structures like (4) are restricted to kind-level modifiers. The experiment crossed bare and indefinite objects with kind and individual-level modifiers in a 2X2 Latin Square design (on-line, written, 20 target items, 25 fillers, 7-point Likert-type scale for judgment, N=40). The results confirm our prediction, supporting the incorporation analysis. We are currently conducting a further

Acceptability Judgment Experiment in which participants are asked to rate the naturalness of morphologically singular and morphologically plural items with allegedly incorporated objects. We predict that morphologically singular items will be rated considerably better than morphologically plural ones, which, if true, would corroborate the incorporation analysis of these structures further.

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Fabio Maion

## Two competing systems in the marking of nominal definiteness: The case of Middle Bulgarian

Bulgarian is a language that has undergone major structural changes since its first attestation in the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. The many changes that can be observed when comparing Old and Modern Bulgarian are often connected with the area where Bulgarian is spoken: the Balkans (e.g. Sandfeld 1930; Joseph 2020). The expression of definiteness is an illustrative example. Whereas definiteness in Old Bulgarian was expressed by specific adjective forms, the so-called “long forms” (Flier 1974), Modern Bulgarian has grammaticalized a definite article from a postpositive demonstrative pronoun (Stefanova 2017; Svane 1961, 1962). This is not only a rare process in the Slavic languages but must also at least partly be explained by language contact. The definite articles in Modern Albanian and Romanian show striking parallels in always attaching to the first element of the noun phrase (cf. Asenova 2002, my emphasis):

- (1) Bulgarian: *dobri-jat* čovek  
good-DEF.ART man (‘the good man’)
- Albanian: *njeri-u* i mirë
- Romanian: *om-ul* bun  
man-DEF.ART good (‘the good man’)

The emerging of the definite article and the accompanying loss of the distinction of short and long adjective forms are mostly dated to the Middle Bulgarian period (12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century), during which the two markers probably existed side by side. Regrettably, their interaction and the shift from one system of definiteness marking to the other are still poorly understood.

In my talk, I want to compare the use of both the different adjective forms and of postposed demonstratives in order to establish their productivity and interaction in the Bulgarian language of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Linguistic analyses of texts from this period are however far from straightforward. The overwhelming majority of such texts are both very archaizing and heavily dependent on Greek syntax (Ivanova-Mirčeva 1977). A notable exception is the so-called *Legend of Troy*, which is assumed to contain many traits of the vernacular of the time (e.g. the expression of future tense as shown by Dimitrova (2020)) For my talk, I will use the digitized version of *The Legend of Troy* by Šimko et al. (2021) as well as the digital edition of the Middle Bulgarian *Dioptra* translation, the latter being currently under preparation as part of a research project. Both texts have the advantage of being available in a lemmatized and morphologically annotated version and thus make various corpus searches possible. Moreover, these texts belong to different textual genres and allow for linguistic innovations to a highly varying extent. Comparing these texts by using corpus linguistic methods (a hitherto underrepresented approach in the field of Bulgarian medieval studies) can thus shed new light on the question how the expression of nominal determination evolved in the history of the Bulgarian language. Preliminary results suggest that the older system had not yet lost its productivity, whereas the emerging article was still in the process of making and mostly restricted to anaphoric contexts.

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## Degree modifiers as weak definites

Evangelia Vlachou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

Languages possess a variety of forms called degree modifiers (DMs) like *très* and *beaucoup* “much” in French. In this paper we study a particular use a) of the DM *très* when combined with a bare nominal in predicate position in constructions of the type *c’est une ville très sport* (*être-MD-N* “*be-DM-N*”) in French “these citizens love sports” (1) and b) of the Greek definite determiner, *του*, in the same type of constructions (*αυτή η πόλη είναι του σπορ* “these citizens love sports”) (2).

Although, according to grammarians, the modifier *très* does not combine with NP (3) and although the Greek definite determiner is not a DM according to grammars, these elements are nevertheless grammatical in constructions of the type *être-MD-N* “*be-DM-N*” and express high degree. The question that arises is what exactly is the semantics of constructions of this type in Greek and French. As for French, the answer to this question becomes even more intriguing if we want to understand the ungrammaticality of the degree modifier *beaucoup* in these constructions: \**c’est une ville beaucoup sport*.

Language comparison helps us at clarifying the semantics of the constructions in question. It is proposed that *très* “much” and the Greek definite determiner in the genitive (see *του*) in constructions of the type *être-MD-N* “*be-DM-N*” are examples of weak definites which transform non-scalar nouns to scalar ones. These constructions express a positive attitude towards the entities denoted by the noun in question. *Beaucoup* is ungrammatical in these constructions because it is not compatible with predicates that express permanent properties.

1. *C’est une ville très sport.* (Doetjes 2008, Beyssade & Dobrovie-Sorin 2005)  
This is a city very sport  
“These citizens love sports.”
2. *Η Μαρία ine tu spor/ tis salatas.* (Vlachou 2022, Vlachou to appear a&b)  
The Mary is the.GEN. sport the.GEN salad.GEN  
“Mary loves salad.”
3. \**Je mange très salade.*  
I eat much salad

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Senta Zeugin

## **Differential Object Marking in contexts of crosslinguistic influence among Romanian-Spanish bilinguals.**

Abstract for a talk

This study explores bidirectional crosslinguistic influence (Pavlenko/Jarvis 2002) among Romanian-Spanish bilinguals, with a focus on Differential Object Marking (DOM, Bossong 1982). DOM as a way to differentiate certain nominals is found in both languages under investigation: in Spanish *a* is used to mark certain DOs (1a) whereas in Romanian, *pe* (1b) is used. Commonly, DOM is described as dependent on several semantic parameters as, for example, animacy, specificity, referential stability and affectedness (cf. Aissen 2003, Chiriacescu/von Heusinger 2010, von Heusinger/Kaiser 2005, Leonetti 2004). While both DOM systems share similarities, especially concerning the basic configurations (1), there are also clear differences. In Spanish, animacy is assumed to be of primary importance, as illustrated, for example, in the case of quantifiers (2), where only animate referents can be marked (both in pronominal and adjectival form), whereas in Romanian, in pronominal form, the animacy constraint is overridden and all referents require marking (Irimia 2020). In contrast, in Romanian we expect a difference in absolute vs. partial quantifiers (Sora 2002). The former should always require marking, whereas the latter can permit it with animates.

The present study is part of a PhD-project, employing acceptability judgment tasks, oral production tasks and background questionnaires (LEAP-Q, Marian et al. 2007) to investigate DOM in Romanian-Spanish bilinguals. In this contribution we will focus on the production tasks in which a total of 112 participants took part: 48 Romanian-Spanish bilinguals of Romanian descent, residing in Madrid (age: range 18-32, M=21.7, SD=3.4; age of arrival: range 0-18, M=4.9; SD=4.4), 32 European Spanish native speakers residing in Madrid (age: range 18-33, M=22.7, SD=4.8) and 32 native speakers of Romanian (age: range 18-33, M=21.6, SD=3.7) living in Romania. The bilinguals completed the production tasks in both languages, counterbalanced for order. For each task type a fully crossed experimental design was used.

The production tasks revolved around different factors and constructions relevant to DOM in both languages, for example, specificity in human indefinite DOs (Leonetti 2004, Chiriacescu/Von Heusinger 2010), relative pronouns, and quantifiers with human and inanimate referents (Sora 2002). While analysis is still ongoing, tendencies indicate that the bilinguals produce DOM in a very similar way to both of the other groups. In general, there does not seem to be severe attrition of DOM in the Romanian spoken by the bilinguals, concurring so far with other studies that looked at the same phenomenon (Montrul & Bateman 2020). Nonetheless, the data seem to indicate some degree of crosslinguistic influence in most of the tested constructions, either in the Spanish or in the Romanian spoken by the bilinguals. Thus, for example, in the context of quantifiers, the Spanish animacy constraint seems to be stronger than the Romanian quantifier restriction, causing a slight decrease of marked pronominal quantifiers and a slight increase of marked adjectival quantifiers, as well as an increase in marked human partial quantifiers in the Romanian spoken by the bilinguals.

1. Examples of basic DOM split in a) Spanish and b) Romanian

a) Juan ama \*(a) María / (\*a) su coche  
 Juan love.PRES.3SG DOM María / DOM his car  
 'Juan loves María/his car.'

b) Ioan \*(o) iubește \*(pe) Maria/(\*o) iubește (\*pe) mașina sa  
 Ioan CL.F.ACC love.PRES.3SG DOM Maria/ CL.F.ACC love.PRES.3SG DOM car. ART his  
 'Ioan loves Maria/his car.'

2. Examples of experimental context quantifier in a) Spanish and b) & c) Romanian

a) He visto \*(a) todas (las chicas) (pronominal & adjectival use)  
 He visto \*(a) todas (las películas) (pronominal & adjectival use)  
 see.PERF.1SG DOM QUANT (the girls/the movies)  
 'I've seen all (the girls/the movies).'

b) \*(le-)am văzut \*(pe) toate (human & inanimate referents)  
 CL.F.ACC- see.PERF.1SG DOM QUANT  
 'I've seen all.'

c) (le-)am văzut (pe) toate fetele  
 CL.F.ACC- see.PERF.1SG DOM QUANT girls.ART.DEF  
 \*(le-)am văzut \*(pe) toate filmele  
 CL.F.ACC-see.PERF.1SG DOM QUANT movies.ART.DEF  
 'I've seen all the girls/the movies.'

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### Investigating the linguistic properties and the geographical distribution of Differential Object Marking in Gascon

The existence of a marker for non-prototypical subsets of direct objects (differential object marking (DOM)) is characteristic of many Romance varieties and has been the subject of extensive descriptive and theoretical work (see Gerards 2023). Within this tradition, Gascon has already been the topic of several in-depth studies (see, among others, Rohlf's 1971, Séguy 1973, Floricic 2018, and Bach 2021). Nevertheless, current spatial distribution and exact linguistic properties of DOM in Gascon require further investigation. This study contributes to the topic by investigating new data collected during fieldwork on southern Gascon varieties and sets out to achieve two objectives. First, it describes in detail the linguistic properties of DOM in southern Gascon, placing it in a wider Romance perspective and making specific reference to more general properties of languages (see e.g. Silverstein 1976 for the Referential Hierarchy, Neuburger & Stark 2014, Ledgeway et al. 2019 for the relevant morphosyntactic patterns, Iemmolo 2010 for the role of information structure); second, it discusses and evaluates the way the processes of use and loss of DOM relate to geography, with specific reference to spatial variables, mobility, effects of local hubs, and contacts.

The following table gives an overview of the distribution of DOM in the survey points (categories from Stark 2011).

Types of NPs	Tonic Pro	proper N	kinship N	def Pro		interr Pro	def NPs	indf Pro	indf NPs		Quantified NPs	Bare Ns
				±	±				+	-		
human	±	±	±	±	±	±	-	±	-	-	-	-
animate	±	±	∅	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
inanimate	∅	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The DOM marker in Gascon is a strategy for expressing additional referential properties of the referent, provided that the NP is [+human] and appears at the top of the Referentiality Hierarchy, i.e. pronouns, proper names, and kinship terms. DOM is not found with common human nouns, either definite or indefinite. Its presence also depends on the internal composition of the nominal expression, and (partly) the relative position of the item. Speakers from my survey seem to select DOM as long as there is no determiner and according to reference-limiting modifiers, such as modifying PP or relative clause, or other syntactic constructions such as conjoined NPs, more than according to dislocation. Marking of dislocated direct objects: (i) is restricted to the NP classes which are DOM-marked in non-dislocated position; (ii) is more widespread in the varieties which are more influenced by Occitan. From a Romance perspective, the Gascon distribution is very similar to the Corsican one (cf. Neuburger & Stark 2014; Stark & Neuburger 2017).

The distribution of DOM varies depending on topographic accessibility. The varieties where DOM marking is more stable have a sharp topography, i.e. more isolation due to limited accessibility. The points without DOM are for the most part located in a gentler topographic space, which allows for better accessibility, and therefore more contact. French might influence Gascon by weakening its DOM system, particularly in the more accessible areas.

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# Differential Object Marking in Romance. The view from Romanian

Alina Tigău (Universitatea din București)

## 1. Aim

This paper dwells on the syntax of Differential Object Marking (DOM) in Romanian, an essential typological property of Romanian, focusing on some relevant differences between DOMed objects and their unmarked counterparts.

## 2. Proposal

Our account builds on López (2012)'s analysis of Spanish DOM, which correlates the position of the object DP with its semantic interpretation. According to López (2012), languages where DOM is present exhibit two mechanisms for Accusative checking: a) by incorporation into the lexical verb, for direct objects (DOs) which remain in their merge position and b) by movement into a higher position, where case may be checked. A correlation is also established between the size of the DO nominal projection i.e. its functional structure, and the type of case checking mechanism that the DO will undergo. Thus, Spanish DOs which evince a DP (or smaller) structure check case via the former mechanism, while DOs which feature a KP structure need to undergo scrambling in order to check case. DOMed DOs are ranged with the latter category, being unable to incorporate and checking case by moving into a higher projection at the VP periphery. Scrambling of the DO is the syntactic hallmark of DOM and is associated with argumenthood.

We argue that the difference between Spanish and Romanian lies in how the two languages differentiate between those nominals which remain in their merge positions and those which undergo movement. In Spanish the relevant division holds between KPs and DPs: while KPs have to move, DPs incorporate. Romanian, on the other hand, draws the boundary between KPs/DPs which undergo movement on the one hand, and NPs/NumPs, which stay *in situ* and undergo incorporation on the other hand. Scrambling objects of the DP/KP type cannot incorporate and hence have to move to a higher position at the left periphery of the verb, have full argument status, and combine with the verb by means of functional application.

Unlike, their Spanish correspondents, Romanian marked and unmarked DOs evince a similar distribution. There is, however, one relevant syntactic difference between them: DOMed objects *must* scramble, while unmarked objects *may* scramble. This difference is a consequence of the fact that DPs may be re-analyzed as NP/NumPs, but KPs may not. Given that both DPs and KPs (DOMed DOs) scramble and are interpreted as arguments, the projection of the functional category *PE*, the DOM marker in Romanian, is determined by the very local context, primarily, but not limited to it, the internal structure of the nominal expression. More specifically, the properties of the NP contained within the KP prove to have significant import if the N is interpreted as [+HUMAN] and if this lexical property is syntactically translated as a [Person] feature (Richards 2008).

Our claim is that the DOM marker *PE* is a functional category whose distribution follows from the fact that it represents the spell-out of a valued<sup>1</sup> syntactic [*u*Person] feature. [+Human(like)] NPs incorporate an unvalued syntactic [*i*Person] feature themselves, which percolates to D and which is then valued by the merging the DOM marker *PE*: *PE* bears a

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<sup>1</sup> We also posit that this feature is unvalued if the DOMed DO is doubled by means of a pronominal clitic.

valued [*u*Person] feature and the D head of its DP complement carries [*i*Person]; the [*u*Person] feature is checked off against the [*i*Person] feature of D.

Incorporating a syntactic [Person] feature is possible only for those NPs which are provided with the lexical feature [+Human] (or rather [+Human (like)]) given that other types of nouns may be treated like [+human] and consequently DOMed). Unmarked DOs exhibit a standard DP structure.

### 3. Conclusions

DOMed DOs evince an additional functional category ( $[KP_{PE}]$ ) and an additional syntactic feature [+Person]. The existence of an unvalued [*i*Person\_\_] feature within N, which projects to D, triggers the merger of this functional category.

The [Person] feature is the syntactic reflex of the animacy hierarchy and the DOM marker *PE* is the spell-out of an uninterpretable [Person] feature.

The additional layer of structure of DOMed DOs (as KPs) is what renders them “more prominent”, a property from which various semantic and pragmatic effects may be derived, such as: combining with the predicate by means of functional application, binding into the indirect object in ditransitive configurations, propensity for wide scope interpretation, and specificity.

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## Classifiers: *hic sunt leones*

Johan Rooryck (Universiteit Leiden)

In this presentation, I will provide a new theoretical perspective on classifiers. Classifiers tend to be defined as a function of grammatical categories and discussions extrinsic to classifiers themselves: the mass/ count distinction (Chierchia 1998ab), gender (Corbett 1991), or their relative obligatoriness in certain languages for individuation and enumeration (Aikhenvald 2000, Borer 2005, Her & Tang 2022). This also applies to the distinction between sortal and mensural classifiers, which is based on individuation and quantification. It is generally acknowledged that sortal classifiers refers to the shape of the objects in their complement, and that these shape properties vary across languages without limits and in unpredictable ways. I will argue that a very different and novel understanding of sortal classifiers in terms of their intrinsic properties affords in turn a new perspective on mass, count, and individuation.

As I have argued for evidentials, I will assume that classifiers are not particular to specific language groups, and present data from English and French for the sake of simplicity. I propose that Classifiers encode the result of an internalist and computationally distinct cognitive mechanism that describes the dynamic patterns of spatial distribution of the material denoted by the predicate in their complement. Classifiers do not simply denote shape, but rather the transformations into shapes that are afforded by the material properties of material objects. More precisely, I will argue that the specific spatial distribution of classifiers should be formally analyzed in terms of Champollion's (2010) analysis of distributivity. These patterns of spatial distribution do not vary unrestrictedly: they are governed by three computationally calculable parameters: Force (internal/ external); Vector, and Dimension/ Axes. This predicts a typology of classifiers that is both rich and constrained. These fundamental aspects of classifiers then in turn provide the grammatical scaffolding for the construal of individual and countable objects.

I will argue that there are two types of Classifiers, Samples and Pointers, each with distinct properties in terms of countability and spatial distribution, illustrated in (1) and (2):

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| (1) <i>Samples:</i>               | (2) <i>Pointers:</i>                          |
| a. Three splashes/ drops of water | a. A trace/( <i>*two</i> ) traces of blood    |
| b. Two lumps of sugar             | b. A whiff/ ( <i>*two</i> ) whiffs of perfume |
| c. Four slices of cake            | c. A tinge/( <i>*three</i> ) tinges of green  |
| d. Five spoonfuls of sugar        | d. A note/ ( <i>*four</i> ) notes of cinnamon |

To concentrate on Samples (e.g. *splash, drop, slice, spoonful*), these describe *directly* how specific materials distribute in space or time: *a drop of water* refers to a small globular shape of liquid that separates from a larger mass of water through the application of an internal force, as minimally distinct from *splash*, which requires an external force. Pointers also encode spatial distribution, but do so *indirectly*. This distinction will be operationalized in some detail, and the consequences for a new understanding of the mass/ count distinction will be spelled out.

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# A picture naming study on the neuter vs masculine contrast in Macerata

Federica Breimaier (University of Zurich)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Maceratese, an Italo-Romance variety spoken in Macerata, central Italy, differs from standard Italian with its four-gender system featuring a masculine (1b), a feminine (1d), a neuter (1a), hosting only mass nouns, and an alternating gender (1c), which is considered an inqorate gender due to the limited number of (only countable) nouns (Paciaroni 2017).

The presentation explores the persistence of the  $N \neq M$  contrast, marked on the definite article, which has a N dedicated form *lo* contrasting with *lu* (M) and *la* (F). The morphological distinction between the first two forms is granted by the retained phonological contrast between final *-u* and *-o* (Loporcaro & Paciaroni 2016: 228). Two processes though may affect the stability of this gender agreement system. On the one hand, the phonological opposition between *-o* and *-u* has weakened over several decades in the neighboring areas whereby a tendency to generalize *-o* is spreading (Mengel 1936: 20, Loporcaro 2018: 248). On the other hand, the morpho-syntactic  $N \neq M$  opposition has been reported to be undergoing simplification in those Italo-Romance varieties that still preserve it, based on geographical, historical, and experimental evidence (Loporcaro 2018: §7).

(1)

		SINGULAR		PLURAL		
a.	N	<u>lo</u>	'vi	Ø		'DEF wine'
b.	M	<u>lu</u>	'dende / pru'futtu	li	'dendi / Ø	'the tooth/ teeth'; 'DEF ham'
c.	A	<u>lu</u>	'mu:ru	le	'mu:re	'the wall/ walls'
d.	F	<u>la</u>	'majja/ 'la:na	le	'majje / Ø	'the shirt/ shirts'; 'DEF wool'

## 2. METHODS

This study investigates the stability of the  $N \neq M$  contrast quantitatively. In online one-to-one interviews, 15 participants named colored pictures (def. article and noun). The picture naming methodology, chosen over direct translation from standard Italian to dialect, aimed to reduce the influence of standard Italian on participants' responses. A total of 180 lexemes were selected, including 93 F nouns (33 mass, 60 countable), 39 M nouns (10 mass, 29 countable), and 48 N nouns. The imbalance in tested items reflects intrinsic lexical differences, especially in the scarcity of mass nouns belonging to the masculine category. Data analysis involved examining expected and unexpected article forms using a random forest and an inference tree (Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012), followed by a mixed-effect logistic regression model with by-participant and by-item intercepts

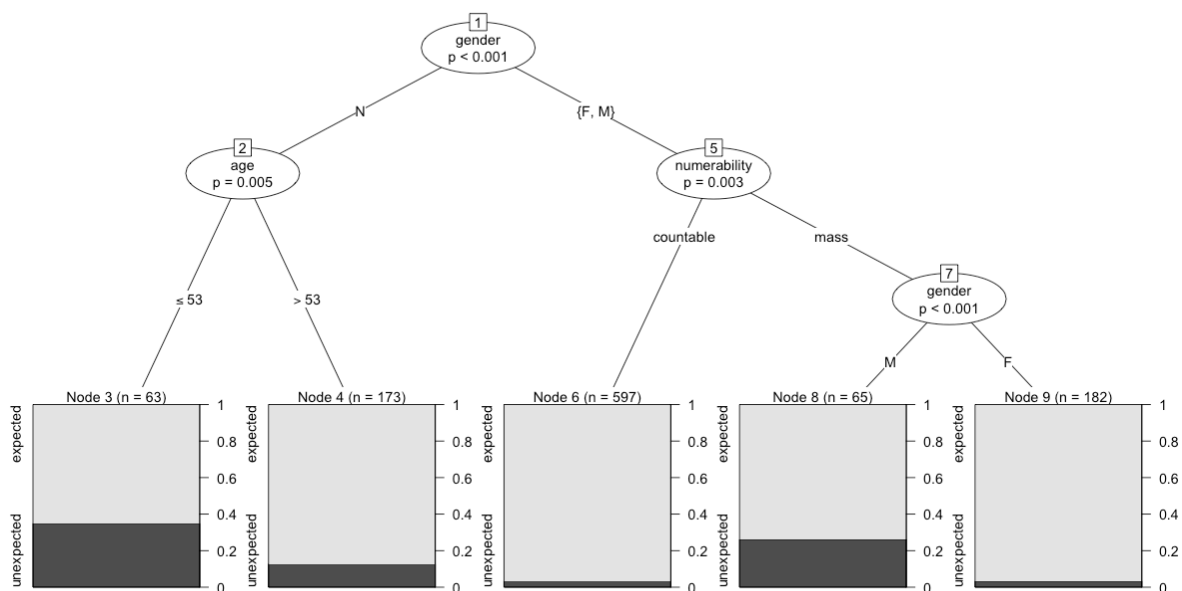
## 3. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Results show that pictures have been correctly named by 87% of the sample. Selection of the definite form of the articles was carried out only on the correctly named items. As visible in Fig. 1 no variation

was observed for countable nouns, which consistently selected the expected article, and the same holds for the feminine mass nouns. On the contrary, two instances of variation are present on nodes 8 and 3. In the former case, masculine mass nouns show a tendency to select a *lo* article, while in the latter, neuter nouns have a higher probability of selecting a *lu* article, especially among younger speakers. I will argue that these two results are evidence of the two processes currently impacting the stability of the system: (1) a tendency to generalize unexpected forms ending in *-o*, due to the weakening of the phonological opposition between *-o* ≠ *-u*; (2) a tendency to merge the neuter into the masculine, by generalizing masculine agreement targets.

[494]

Fig. 1



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## ***Cero* in colloquial Spanish: The numeral that became an almighty negator particle**

**Carlota de Benito Moreno (University of Zurich)**

The goal of this talk is twofold. First, it aims to describe the behaviour of the numeral *cero* ‘zero’ as a colloquial negator in Spanish based on corpus data. Although negation in Spanish has been extensively studied, colloquial negators have been typically disregarded by the scholarship (but not completely, see Pato 2013). However, as a negator, *cero* shows a distinctive behaviour that is very relevant for the literature that deals with negation both in Spanish and from a typological perspective, for at least three reasons. First, the syntax of *cero* does not fit with the syntax of other negation terms in Spanish, because it does not require preverbal negation. Second, in spite of its being originally a numeral, *cero* can be used to negate not only (plural) nouns, but also all kinds of nouns, as well as adjectives and even verbs, adverbs and sentences, showing a broad syntactic distribution that not many other negation markers in Spanish have (see (1)). Third, numerals have not been identified as sources of negation in the languages of the world (Bernini / Ramat 1996, Miestamo 2007), although this behaviour of numerals meaning ‘zero’ has been observed in other languages, like German (see (2)).

### (1) Colloquial Spanish

- a. Tengo *cero* hambre. ‘lit. I have zero hunger’
- b. Este chico es *cero* divertido. ‘lit. This guy is zero funny’
- c. Te extraño *cero*. ‘lit. I miss you zero’
- d. Eso me hace sentir *cero* mejor. ‘lit. That make me feel zero better’
- e. Me caen bien las niñas que *cero* tienen su jeta de mamonas. ‘lit. I like girls that zero have cocky faces’

### (2) (Androutsopoulos 1999)

- a. Da gibt es null Demokratie ‘lit. There is zero democracy’
- b. Themen, die mich null interessieren. ‘lit. Topics which zero interest me’
- c. Null cool ‘lit. No cool’

Second, it aims to contextualize the grammatical behaviour of this element within the grammaticalization literature and the special characteristics it might adopt in colloquial

language (Androutsopoulos 1999), especially regarding the speed of the grammaticalization process and the apparent lack of syntactic restrictions of the numeral in negation contexts. Other colloquial changes, such as the spread of the approximative suffix *-ish* in English or the intensifier prefix *re-* in Spanish of Río de la Plata have been shown to undergo a rapid loss of restrictions (Kornfeld / Kuguel 2013, Duncan 2015). Negation is, together with intensification, a semantic domain that undergoes frequent renewal (Hopper & Traugott 1991: 121, apud Androutsopoulos 1999: 170). In addition, emphatic markers are cited as possible diachronic sources of standard negation (as in French) by Miestamo (2007).

In order to achieve these two goals, I will rely on data from spoken teenage language (corpus COLA), from reference corpora of Spanish (corpus CORPES XXI) and a corpus of 12 million tweets (132,456,324 words) in Spanish collected during two weeks in May and June 2016 as part of the ProVaIn project. Twitter language, although written, is rather located in the communicative immediacy pole and allows for the study of phenomena typical from non-formal language (Estrada / De Benito Moreno 2016). As the talk will show, the large quantity of available data in this social network will allow to offer a detailed description of the behaviour of *cero* in colloquial Spanish.

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## Concealing *uno* ‘one’ in Spanish: (in)definiteness and person agreement

Edita Gutiérrez Rodríguez (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Pilar Pérez Ocón (Universidad de Alcalá)

The article *un(o)/una* ‘one [masc./fem.]’ when it appears with a null noun (Leonetti 1999 among others) has three main interpretations in Spanish that can be derived from the basic meaning of the indefinite article (Gutiérrez & Pérez 2023): the existential reading (1), in which *uno* can be paraphrased by *alguien* ‘someone’; the arbitrary or generalizing reading (2), where *uno* means ‘everyone, including the speaker’; and the referential or concealing reading (3), in which *uno* means the speaker. As shown in the examples below, the latter two are used to include the speaker without mentioning it:

- (1) Uno me ha dicho que van a cancelar el concierto  
One has told me that they are going to cancel the concert
- (2) Uno debe evitar ciertas amistades  
One should avoid certain friendships
- (3) Uno debió haber evitado esas amistades  
One should have avoided those friendships

Arbitrary and concealing *uno* don’t share the same syntactic contexts, even though both are mechanisms to avoid direct mention of the speaker. The concealing reading occurs with particular or episodic predications, while the arbitrary reading appears only in generic contexts with imperfective tenses, individual predicates, deontic contexts, etc. (RAE/ASALE 2009, Gutiérrez & Pérez 2023). In this talk we will focus on the concealing *uno*. This use is more frequent in colloquial language (Fernández Ramírez 1986 [1951]: 54; Ridruejo 1981; Gómez Torrego 1992; RAE-ASALE 2009: 15.80; Serrano 2022; Fábregas 2024) and refers exclusively to the speaker, even if it is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person nominal phrase, as shown by the agreement with the verb when it is the subject of the sentence:

- (4) Me cuesta hablar de mis sentimientos, una {puede/\*puedo} hablar con más facilidad de los ajenos  
‘I find it hard to talk about my feelings, one can [3<sup>rd</sup> person/\*1<sup>st</sup> person] talk more easily about other people's feelings’

However, it also behaves as a 1<sup>st</sup> person personal pronoun, that is, a non-quantificational referential definite pronoun. In the example above, *una* ‘one [fem.]’ has the same referent as the 1<sup>st</sup> personal pronouns *me* ‘me [dat., 1<sup>st</sup> person]’ and *mis* ‘my [poss., 1<sup>st</sup> person sing.]’. We will describe the contexts in which *uno* departs from the behaviour expected of a 3<sup>rd</sup> person indefinite and resembles in its grammatical properties a personal pronoun, hence a definite determiner phrase. For example, referential *uno* is incompatible, like personal pronouns and proper names, with restrictive relative clauses (Gómez Torrego 2013: 17):

- (5) a. Uno que ya está harto de todo solo piensa en dimitir (\*concealing/arbitrary)  
‘One who is fed up with everything only thinks of resigning’  
b. Uno, que ya está harto de todo, solo piensa en dimitir (concealing)  
‘One, who is fed up with everything, only thinks of resigning’

The concealing *uno* is assimilated to a personal pronoun and therefore can appear in contexts where definite NPs usually appear (see Vázquez Rojas 2014 for a parallel argument with the indefinite impostor *un servidor* ‘lit. yours truly’):

- (6) ¿Qué opinas de {la casa/mí/\*una casa/una}?  
‘What do you think of {the house/me/\*a house/one (fem.)}?’
- (7) a. ¿A que no sabes dónde está {la niña/\*una niña/una}?  
‘You don't know where {the girl/\*a girl/ one (fem.)} is?’  
b. ¿A que no sabes dónde estoy yo?  
‘You don't know where I am?’

Within the determiner phrase, we propose that the form *uno* rises from the lowest projection in which indefinite determiners are placed (Zamparelli 2000) to the D° head, as proposed for proper nouns (Longobardi 1994, 2005). This position explains the behavior of *uno* as a personal pronoun and the fact that it can refer to the speaker. This hypothesis predicts that concealing *uno* establishes scope relations characteristic of a personal pronoun and not of a quantifier, and also explains that it does not accept restrictive modifiers, it requires the pronominal doubling of the object, and, finally, it behaves, in anaphoric relations, as a personal pronoun, not as an indefinite nominal phase.

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## The diminutive numeral *eentje* in regional and stylistic varieties of standard Dutch: a syntactic analysis

Petra Sleeman (Universiteit Amsterdam)

In Dutch, the diminutive form of the numeral *een* ‘one’ can be used as in the example (1):

- (1) *Ik heb drie katten. Een(-tje) heeft gele ogen.*  
I have three cats one(-DIM) has yellow eyes  
‘I have three cats. One has yellow eyes.’

In (1), *eentje* refers to ‘cats’ in the preceding sentence and this construction is therefore a nominal ellipsis construction. Corver & Tatsumi (2021) state that in this construction *een* ‘one’ is the only numeral that permits attachment of the diminutive suffix. They furthermore observe that the diminutive form *eentje* is only possible in an ellipsis construction (2), but not if there is an overt noun (3):

- (2) *(Een leeuw?) Ik heb er gisteren een(-tje) gezien*  
a lion I have WK.PART. yesterday one(-DIM) seen  
‘I saw one (e.g. lion) yesterday.’
- (3) *Ik heb gisteren een(\*-tje) leeuw gezien.*  
I have yesterday one(-DIM) lion seen

Corver & Tatsumi show that if *eentje* occurs in object position, it is supported by the weak partitive pronoun *er*. As (2) and (3) show, the non-diminutive form of the numeral *een* can occur in an ellipsis construction, but can also be used in combination with an overt noun.

Since the suffix *-tje* essentially attaches to nouns in a productive way, Corver & Tatsumi assume that the diminutive suffix *-tje* is a functional head taking an NP complement (Borer 2005, Wiltschko 2007, De Belder 2011, Ott 2011). To the best of my knowledge, up to date the distribution of *eentje* illustrated in (2) and (3) has not been accounted for.

I checked in the Dutch SONAR corpus (2015) and the corpus of spoken Dutch (2014) how *eentje* is used, both in the Netherlandic and the Belgian varieties of standard Dutch, focussing on *eentje* in direct object position, as in (2). The results show that whereas in novels *eentje* is almost exclusively used with the partitive pronoun *er*, in the spoken varieties of Netherlandic and Belgian Dutch *er* is also omitted, in Belgian Dutch more than in Netherlandic Dutch. The omission of *er* in spoken Dutch may be related to the possible omission in Dutch dialects (Kranendonk 2010). I take the empty noun in the construction without *er*, as in (1), to be the empty variant of the partitive pronoun *er*. Crucially, in my data *eentje* is never used in combination with an overt noun. The question is why *eentje* can only be used in an ellipsis construction.

**Analysis.** I propose that the elliptical NP with the dominating SizeP (De Belder 2011) (4a) moves to a position dominating the numeral (4b), because in (4a) the SizeP blocks licensing of the partitive pronouns by the quantifier (Sleeman 1996). Subsequently the numeral moves to the Spec of SizeP (4c), so that *een* can serve as a host for the suffix and so that the suffixed quantifier is in the correct position to license the pronouns. In a next phase, with elliptical objects, the overt partitive pronoun *er* is moved to a position close to the verb.

- (4) a. [FP [QP *een* [SizeP *-tje* [NP  $\emptyset$  / ER ]]]]  
b. [FP [SizeP *-tje* [NP  $\emptyset$  / ER ] ] [QP *een* [~~SizeP *-tje* [NP  $\emptyset$  / ER ] ] ] ]]  
c. [FP [SizeP [QP *een* ] *-tje* [NP  $\emptyset$  / ER ] ] [~~QP *een* [~~SizeP *-tje* [NP  $\emptyset$  / ER ] ] ] ] ]]~~~~~~

Movement in Syntax and not postsyntactically, as in nominal ellipsis accounts proposed by Ghaniabadi (2010), Saab and Lipták (2016) and Murphy (2018), accounts for the fact that the noun phrase in (2) is interpreted as (5a) and not as (5b):

- (5) a. one.DIM lion  
b. one lion.DIM

The interpretation in (5a) may also account for the fact that in the elliptical construction the diminutive suffix only occurs with *een* and not with other quantifiers. The position of the quantifier *een* at the lowest end of a numerical scale may be reinforced by adding the diminutive suffix.

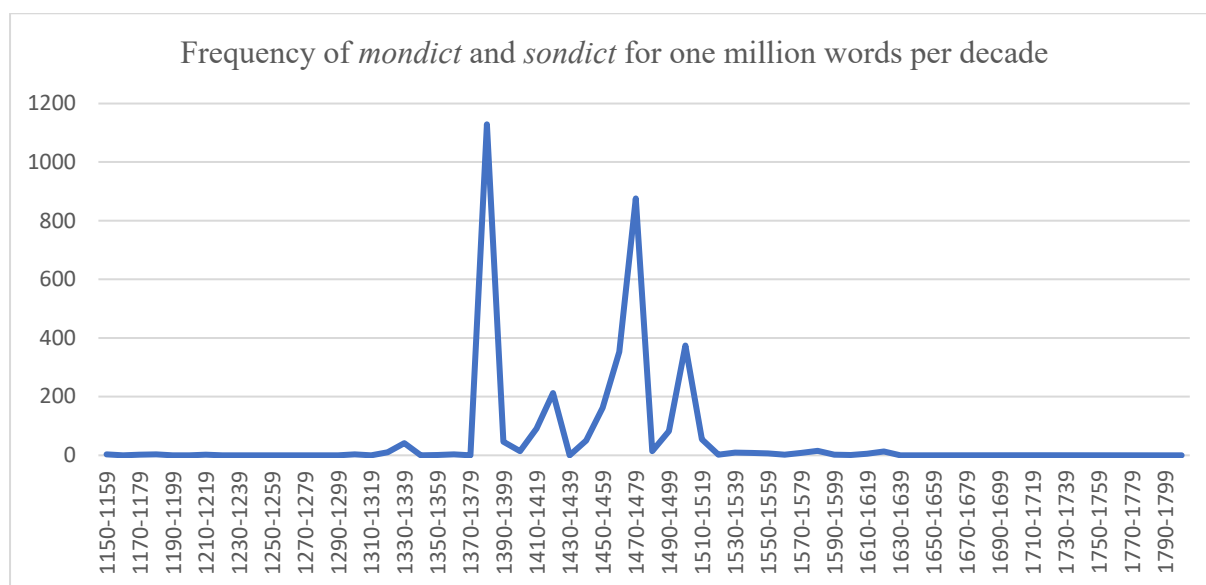
This analysis also accounts for the fact that *eentje* only occurs with elliptical NPs, and not in NPs with an overt noun as in (3).

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## ***Mondict, mon, and mien*: the development of a three-way possessive system in Middle French based on subcategories of definiteness.**

**Benjamin Dufour (Ecole Normale Supérieure - AOROC)**

While Old French presents an opposition between *mien* and *mon* mostly based on a pragmatic distribution (Buridant, 2000), and while Modern French uses *mon* as its only possessive determiner, some varieties of Middle French display a three-way opposition between *mon*, *mien* and *mondict* (Marchello-Nizia & Carlier, 2020). This third form appears in 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries historical and legal texts, by analogy of an earlier *ledict* (lit. *the said*). The following graph, from the *Frantext* corpus, displays the frequency of *sondict* and *mondict* per million words for each decade:



This possessive is exemplified by the following sentences:

Le duc Philippe estoit prins (...) à l'environ de la Haye  
*the.DEF duke.N Philip.N was.V\_3PS imprisoned.PART in.the.vicinity.of.PREP the.Hague.N*  
 en Hollande, où pour lors estoit **sondict**  
*in.PREP Holland.N where.REL for.PREP now.ADV was.V\_3PS his.said.POSS\_ANAP*  
**filz** (Commynes, *Mémoires*, 1464, p.4-5)

*son.N*

“The duke Philip was imprisoned (...) near the Hague, in Holland, where, for now, his aforementioned son was”.

**Mondit** seigneur de Charroloys et tous les  
*my.said.POSS\_ANAP lord.N of.PREP Charolais.N and.CONJ all.QM the.DEF*  
 plus grans de sa compaignye les  
*most.important.SUPER of.PREP his.POSS company.N them.PRO\_PERS\_O*

receuillirent.

*welcomed.V\_3PP*

“My said Lord of Charolais and all of the most important people from his company welcomed them”



In this presentation, we shall argue that these three forms underwent partial specialisation to sub-categories of definiteness. This observation is based on a manual annotation of Commynes’ *Mémoires*, a historical prose work from the 15<sup>th</sup> century (228 526 words), with special interest both to the absence or presence of a determiner in the noun phrase, and to the subcategory of definiteness ( deixis, anaphora, individual nouns...) as defined by Löbner (1985). Our corpus choice has been driven by Commynes’ idiolectal tendency to make great use of anaphoric determiners *ledict* and *mondict* in his narration.

Our analysis builds upon the distinction between semantic and pragmatic definiteness (Löbner 1985, Ortmann 2014), which is especially heuristic in Middle French: as we would like to argue, *mondict* is strictly restricted to direct anaphoric contexts, *mon* appears in all definite contexts, both pragmatic and semantic, while *mien* (with only one exception in our corpus) occurs in indefinite contexts – where it combines respectively with indefinite markers (Martin & Wilmet, 1980, Wunderli, 1978). In our corpus, the occurring of these three possessives is lopsided: we have found 34 occurrences of *mondict*, more than 3 000 of *mon*, and only 10 of *mien*, with the first person standing for all possessives. Due to the sheer number of occurrences, it is predictable that *mon* also appears in anaphoric contexts. However, *mondict* does not appear in other contexts than direct anaphora.

Whilst the 34 occurrences of the *mondict*-possessive might seem negligible by their sheer number, they are representative of a wider Middle French phenomenon: in the Middle French part of the *Frantext* corpus, the first person *mondi(c)t* form occurs 657 times (compared with 981 times for *mien* and 38 252 times for *mon*). Despite these occurring the position of the third possessive, *mondict*, which is too often omitted in Middle French descriptions, in this system. The following table summarises our results:

Indefiniteness	Definiteness		
	Deixis	Direct anaphora	Semantic
mien	mon	<b>mondict</b> / mon	mon

The complementary distribution of *mon* and *mien* can be exemplified by these sentences. The first sentence exemplifies definite noun phrases, with *son*, and the two others indefinite noun phrases:

Mais            depuis            changèrent    **ses**    **pensées**            car    il  
*but.CONJ            since.ADV            changed.V\_3PP    his.POSS thoughts.N            as.CONJ he.PRO\_PERS\_S*  
y            a            continué            jusques à            **sa**    **mort** (p.37-38).  
*in.it.PRO\_ADV    has.V\_3PS            pursued.PART    until.PREP            his.POSS death.N*

“But he has since changed his mind, as he kept doing this until his death”.

Ledict            duc    envoya            devers ledict            seigneur            **ung**    **sien**  
*said.ANAP            duke.N    sent.V\_3PS            for.PREP said.ANAP            lord            a.INDEF his.POSS*  
**varlet de chambre**            appelé            Jehan Boscise (p.124)  
*manservant.N            named.PART            Jehan.Boscise.N*

“Said duke sent one of his servants, named Jehan Boscise, to serve said lord”.

Il	avoit	Ham	et	Bouhan et	<b>autres</b>
<i>he.PRO_PERS_S</i>	<i>had.V_3PS</i>	<i>Ham.N</i>	<i>and.CONJ</i>	<i>Bohain.Nand.CONJ</i>	<i>other.SEL</i>
très	fortes	places	<b>siennes</b> (p.244)		
<i>very.ADV</i>	<i>strong.ADJ</i>	<i>holds.N</i>	<i>his.POSS</i>		

“He had Ham, Bohain, and other strongholds of his”.

Not only do these data provide evidence of the restructuring of a possessive system from a pragmatic opposition to a definiteness opposition, but it also underlines the development of a proper anaphoric possessive, when anaphora tends not to receive a specific marking in European languages (Becker, 2021). In this presentation, we thus aim both to synchronically describe the Middle French system as attested in Commynes’ idiolect, but also to shed light on this typologically rare phenomenon. Anaphoric *mondict*, which fell out of use after the 15<sup>th</sup> century, challenges the mostly linear approach of French possessives’ diachrony by introducing a third member into the equation, and is yet to receive the attention it deserves both in synchronic, diachronic and typological approaches. This study is the first step towards a larger corpus study of the phenomenon.

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Johannes Kabatek

### Proposal for a talk:

#### Determiner drop in German and Brazilian Portuguese: two instances of the same phenomenon?

It is well-known that several European languages allow for certain pragmatically licensed omissions of elements, so-called drop-phenomena (see, e.g. Haegeman 1997; Haegeman / Stark 2021). In German, topic-drop has been well described (Fries 1988) and experimentally explored (Schäfer 2021): certain referents clearly known to the interlocutors need not be mentioned explicitly under certain licensing conditions.

There is less literature about determiner drop, although the phenomenon is also widely attested in German (see e.g. Geist 2021):

- (1) **Auslöser** der Protestaktionen war die Krise in Spanien.  
trigger of the protests be.PRET.3sg the crisis in Spain.  
'The protests were triggered by the crisis in Spain.'

These cases can be explained by certain semantic characteristics of the left-dislocated bare subject. There are, however, other cases of sentence initial bare nouns mainly in spoken registers or in "language of immediacy" (Koch/Oesterreicher 1985) where pragmatically expectable referents appear without determiner, such as in (2) oder (3):

- (2) **Essen** ist fertig.  
Food be3sg ready.  
'Lunch/dinner is ready'
- (3) **Bus** kommt.  
Bus come3sg  
'The bus is arriving'

Here, there is no dislocation of the subject but only omission of the determiner in contexts where the subject refers to contextually clearly expectable referents. This construction is quite restricted and the determiner-drop is not compulsory: it co-occurs with the presence of the determiner.

In Romance languages, topic drop is possible under certain circumstances, but determiner drop is quite restricted and occurs in some languages (Italian, Latin American Spanish) and varieties mainly as a phenomenon linked to particular textual traditions (stenographic texts, telegraphic style, headlines). Interestingly, the only Romance language where determiner drop goes beyond and where similar occurrences as the ones observed in German are attested seems to be Brazilian Portuguese, something described in several publications in the last decades (Kabatek 2005, Barme 2011, Wall 2017):

- (4) Marido num tá em casa.  
husband not be.PRS.3SG in house  
'The/my husband is not at home.' (Barme 2011)
- (5) Bicicleta ia se arrebentar.  
bicycle be.IMP. 3SG. refl break.INF (Kabatek 2005)

Our contribution will offer further examples from German and Brazilian Portuguese corpora and discuss the range of contextually licenced determiner drop in German and Brazilian Portuguese. The question we would like to address is if the phenomena observable in both languages can be subsumed, as our hypothesis indicates, under one common account. The discussion will refer to syntactic, semantic as well as to pragmatic arguments.

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# Unpacking determiner agreement in the Eegimaa noun phrase

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Eegimaa (bqj) is a Jola language (Atlantic-Congo) spoken by approximately 13,000 speakers in 10 villages in the south of Senegal (Sagna, 2022). In this talk we look at the broad category of determiners, including demonstratives and articles, and consider differences in gender and number agreement across the different types of determiner. For articles in Eegimaa we need to distinguish between agreement in definiteness as a potential category in contrast to the manifestation of gender and number when articles are used.

Corbett (2006, p. 135-7) classifies definiteness itself as a less clear-cut example of agreement. It does not appear to exhibit canonical agreement behaviour. In particular, considering data from Hebrew (Winter, 2000), he notes that definiteness should most readily be considered a feature that is imposed on the noun phrase as a whole. This appears to be true for Eegimaa. The definite article agrees in gender and number. Furthermore, when there is an attributive adjective it is obligatory to repeat the definite article, as illustrated in (1).

- (1) **e-vval**            **yayu**        **e-vvugul** **yayu**  
e-stone(II.SG) II.SG.ART II.SG-new II.SG.ART  
'The new stone ...'

Repetition of the definite article might indicate that it falls broadly within the base definition of agreement, but it is less canonical in that it involves the use of free forms. Repetition not only indicates the imposition of the feature on the whole phrase, but it also serves to delimit the noun phrase. Contrast (1) with (2).

- (2) **e-vval**            **yayu**        **e-vvugul**  
e-stone(II.SG) II.SG.ART II.SG-new  
'The stone is new.'

In (2) the absence of the definite article after the adjective means that it is not part of the noun phrase, but serves instead as the main (non-verbal) predicate in the clause. The interaction of gender and number agreement with article use is quite intricate. Nouns denoting professions can exhibit hybrid agreement in which the plural marking is expressed by what would normally be the singular form of Gender 2 (3ii).

(3)

- (i) **á**-muse            **ahu**  
a-teacher(I.SG) I.SG.ART  
'The teacher ...'
- (ii) **é**-muse            **yayu**  
e-teacher(II.SG) II.SG.ART  
'The teachers ...'

For phrases containing these nouns we obtain a similar contrast in article use to delimit attributives within the phrase, as in (1), from non-verbal predication, as in (2). However, when this is possible, the outer layer of the noun phrase exhibits semantic agreement in gender and number (4).

- (4) **é**-muse            **yayu**    **gu**-vvugul **gagu**  
e-teacher(II.SG) II.SG.ART I.PL-new    I.PL.ART  
'The new teachers ...'

In taking semantic agreement the outer layer of the noun phrase patterns with the non-verbal predicate (5).

- (5) **é**-muse            **yayu**    **gu**-vvugul  
e-teacher(II.SG) II.SG.ART I.PL-new  
'The teachers are new.'

Demonstratives of necessity must belong to this outer layer, because they must occur after the definite article, and they exhibit similar agreement behaviour to modifying adjectives. Where semantic agreement is a possibility, demonstratives take semantic agreement (6).

(6)

- (i) **é**-muse            **yayu**    **u**-bug-e  
e-teacher(II.SG) II.SG.ART u-I.PL-e  
'These teachers ... / The teachers are here.'
- (ii) **é**-muse            **yayu**    **gu**-vvugul **gagu**    **u**-bug-e  
e-teacher(II.SG) II.SG.ART I.PL-new    I.PL.ART u-I.PL-e  
'These new teachers ... / The new teachers are here.'

We can see that definiteness, as a feature, is imposed on the whole noun phrase, suggesting its symmetric nature. In Eegimaa this is reflected in the requirement that every constituent edge within a definite phrase is marked by the article. We can also contrast this kind of non-canonical (from the perspective of agreement) repetition with the asymmetry of gender and number agreement; the choice between local agreement or semantic agreement arises inherently from the noun head. We will also consider different shapes of demonstrative in Eegimaa for which it is uncertain whether we can associate them with any clear difference in syntactic function.

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