PARTITIVE ARTICLES AND INDEFINITES, MICRO AND MACROVARIATION

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Abstract. This introductory paper provides an overview of the main phenomena investigated in this Special Issue, such as the relation between the encoding of indefinites and the presence of genitive and definite markers, the relation between partitivity and indefiniteness and the distribution of these phenomena in minority, or "micro", varieties – such as Italian dialects, Galloromance varieties, North and South Saami – compared to the distribution of the same phenomena in majority, or "macro", varieties – such as French, Italian, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Estonian, Finnish, Czech and Serbian. The second part of the paper, then, provides an overview of the content of each original paper collected in the special issue.

1. Indefiniteness and partitivity, a complex relationship

French and Italian indefinite Partitive Articles (PAs; see (1)–(2)) have been at the center of a lively linguistic debate in recent decades both for the syntactic and semantic properties (Chierchia 1997, Storto 2003, Zamparelli 2008, Ihsane 2008, Cardinaletti & Giusti 2016, Stark 2016).

(1) Je mange du pain / des cerises. (Fr.)
    I eat of.the.M.SG bread / of.the.PL cherries
    'I eat bread / cherries'

(2) Mangio del pane / delle ciliegie (It.)
    eat.1SG of.the.M.SG bread / of.the.F.PL cherries
    'I eat bread / cherries.'

These elements can be defined – crossing morphophonological and semantic properties – as indefinite determiners whose lexical form is the conflation of the preposition/case marker derived from Latin DE (Fr. de, It. di) and the definite article (It. il-la, Fr. le-la etc.). The label commonly used in the literature contains the word 'partitive', which normally refers to a part-whole relation in which the whole is presupposed, specific, and identifiable (En. three of the apples; Hoeksema 1996, Falco & Zamparelli 2019). PAs, however, are pure indefinite markers, not necessarily presuppositional (Storto 2003, Zamparelli 2008, Ihsane 2008; see Chierchia 1997 for a different view). The label, however, is not completely off target, because, at least in languages like Italian and French, these indefinite markers are homophonous with "real" partitives ((4), (7)) and, more in general, with the conflation between the genitive preposition/case marker (DE) and the definite article ((5), (8)):

(3) Ho mangiato **del** pane. (It.)
     have eaten of.the.M.SG bread
     'I ate (some) bread.'

(4) Un pezzo **del** pane.
     A piece of.the.M.SG bread
     'A piece of the bread.'

(5) Il giocattolo **del** ragazzo.
     the.M.SG toy of.the.M.SG boy
     'The toy of the boy.'

(6) J'ai mangé **du** pain. (Fr.)
     I have eaten of.the.M.SG bread
     'I ate (some) bread.'

(7) Un morceau du pain.
     a piece of.the.M.SG bread
     'A piece of the bread.'

(8) Le jouet **du** garçon.
     the.M.SG toy of.the.M.SG boy
     'The toy of the boy.'

With respect to the highlighted homophony, it has been noted that in the Central Romance continuum, there are varieties in which this state of affairs does not hold. An example is found in Anconetano (Cardinaletti & Giusti 2016), where indefinite plural masculine PAs can lose the "definite" part ((9)), while this is not possible for real partitive and prepositional uses ((10)).

(9) T'hai da lege **de(i)** libri pe sapé la storia. (Ancon.)
     you have to read of.(the.M.PL) books for know the.F.SG history
     'You have to read some books if you want to know history.'

(10) La cupertina **de*(i)** libri de storia è sempre un po' sbregata.
      the.F.SG cover of.(the.M.PL) books of history is always a bit torn
      'The cover of the history books is always somewhat broken.'
                                              (From Cardinaletti & Giusti 2016:65)

There are also varieties that consistently use bare DE in the indefinite contexts, while they use the complex form with the definite article in real partitive and prepositional contexts. Following the description in Kristol (2014, 2016), this is what happens in the Francoprovençal varieties attested in eastern Valais (Switzerland), Savoie (French) and Aosta Valley (Italy) (see also Stark & Gerards 2020). Here an example from the variety of Stnic, collected in the online DiFuPaRo database (https://difuparo.linguistik.uzh.ch/, ID 261).

(11) De fɔʀijẽ n æn kwiʎɛ də mɛnta œ pœˈĩ sənˈaː. (Stnic2)
 of spring we have collected of mint for one week
 'In spring, we picked mint for a week.'

At a closer look, standard French and Italian do not always pattern alike, despite surface similarities between PAs in the two languages. First of all, given the well-known restricted distribution of Bare Nominals in French (see a.o. Beyssade 2011; for a comparative approach on the distribution of BNs crosslinguistically, also including Italian and English, see Delfitto & Schroter 1991 and Longobardi 2001), French PAs appear in contexts where Italian would use Bare Nominals ((12)a) vs. (12)b)).

(12) a) Je construis *(**des**) maisons depuis 30 ans. (Fr.)
  I build of.the.PL houses since 30 years
 b) Costruisco (***delle***) case da 30 anni. (It.)
  build of.the.F.PL houses from 30 years
  'I have been building houses for 30 years'

As a second point of variation, French allows for PAs to introduce dislocated constituents with an indefinite interpretation ((13), see Ihsane 2013), while in Italian this gives rise to an obligatory real partitive interpretation ((14)). To maintain the indefinite quantity interpretation Italian has to employ the bare DE ((15)).

(13) **Des garçons**, j'en ai vu beaucoup. (Fr.)
 of.the.PL boys I CL.PART have seen many
 'I have seen many boys.'

(14) **Dei ragazzi**, ne ho visti molti. (It.)
 of.the.M.PL boys CL.PART have seen many
 'I have seen many of the boys.'

(15) **Di ragazzi**, ne ho visti molti. (It.)
 of boys CL.PART have seen many
 'I have seen many boys.'

A third well known fact, finally, regards negation. In French, descriptively speaking, negation in indefinite contexts triggers the "deletion" of the form of the definite article, leaving in place only the bare genitive preposition/case marker DE. This is not the case in Italian.

(16) Je n'ai pas mangé **de** pain. (Fr.)
 I CL.PART not have eaten of bread
 'I didn't eat bread.'

This shows that, even if the forms look the same and the indefinite semantics is comparable, there are indeed differences with respect to how they are employed within the nominal domain and how they interact with other elements encoding indefiniteness or other functions in the clause.

This is magnified when looking at the dialectal continuum. In a study based on the AIS, Cardinaletti & Giusti (2018) show that the Romance varieties that are present in the Italian territory differ vastly with respect to the ways in which they encode indefiniteness. Minimally different varieties employ different means like PAs, Bare Nominals, bare DE prepositions and bare generic definite articles, which compete and overlap within the indefinite domain and interact in various ways with other components of the sentence.

In general, the study of both standard and non-standard varieties shows how variable the morphosyntactic encoding of indefiniteness can be. This high variability demonstrates the necessity and value of crossing the macrocomparative perspective with the microcomparative one to better define the semantic field itself and its relations to elements that are usually taken as extraneous (the DE prepositional element) or antithetic (the definite article).

Considering these facts, the debate on Romance PAs mainly revolved around the morphosyntactic and semantic relationship with their homophonous counterparts, which show a different syntax and semantics, the 'real partitive' (see (3), (6)) and the prepositional phrases introduced by the genitive preposition/case marker DE plus the definite article (see (5), (8)). Following one line of analysis, represented by Storto (2003) Ihsane (2008), Stark (2016), Gerards (2020), Stark & Gerards (2020), Gerards & Stark (2020), Cardinaletti & Giusti (2016, 2018), PAs and the other forms for real partitives / preposition+definite article are only diachronically linked (along the lines of Carlier & Lamiroy 2014 and Carlier et al. 2013). Present varieties like French and Italian would then present a set of two distinct but homophonous lexical items, a genitive preposition/case marker and an indefinite marker. Following these analyses of indefinite PAs, it has been proposed that what appears to be a definite article would be a form of agreement and not a real definite article (see Ihsane 2013), with no synchronic relation with the form used for marking definiteness. Another approach, represented by Garzonio & Poletto (2020), differentiates between negative and positive environments, proposing two different lexical items for the positive environments (similarly to the previous approaches) but unifying the occurrences of bare DE in negative contexts with the genitive preposition/case marker in languages like French. More in detail, they adopt the idea that negation starts out as a quantity noun within the indefinite DP, which selects a genitive complement, as nouns generally do. Chierchia (1997) and Zamparelli (2008) put forward a different partial unification, this time between indefinite partitives and full partitives. A relevant difference between the two is that while Chierchia assumes a presuppositional interpretation for the definite article in both cases, for Zamparelli the definite article in real partitives would denote a unique salient entity in the discourse, while in indefinite partitives it would denote a kind. Both

Chierchia and Zamparelli do not explicitly address the problem of why the form is just a prepositional phrase followed by a definite article. Finally, Manzini & Savoia (2005, 2011) pursue yet another approach, proposing a total unification between indefinite partitives and both full partitives and genitive prepositional phrases followed by a definite article. In their framework, the DE marker would have an inclusion semantics (⊆) in all these cases, while the definite article would have either a generic or a definite interpretation, similarly to Zamparelli (2008).

Looking outside the Romance continuum, many Authors addressed the relation between indefiniteness, genitive (or partitive) case/prepositions and (pseudo)-partitive constructions. For a general overview, see the papers published in Luraghi & Huumo (2014), where it is clearly shown that the link between indefiniteness, partitivity and genitive markers is well attested across the languages of the world, most notably across Uralic, Slavic and Oceanic languages, Basque, ancient Greek, and other historical Indo-Iranian varieties.

With this special issue, we aim at broadening our understanding of indefinite partitive articles both on an empirical and on a theoretical level. While Italian and French have been the center of the debate, the non-standard varieties have received much less attention, especially from a comparative perspective (apart from Kristol 2014, 2016 Stark 2016, Cardinaletti & Giusti 2018 and, for the historical varieties, Stark 2006 and Carlier 2007, Carlier & Lamiroy 2014). The target is then to enlarge the pool of data at our disposal and show how this "micro" data compares to the "macro" data, shedding light on the morphosyntactic and semantic makeup of these elements, by challenging or supporting current analyses. More schematically, the targets of this special issue are: (i) to gather new data regarding PAs from understudied languages in a comparative perspective; (ii) to challenge, support, or integrate the existing analyses of PAs on the basis of the new data; (iii) to enlarge the comparison to languages outside the Romance continuum in order to reframe the debate as a more general one regarding the role of case (especially genitive) in the nominal domain (Pesetsky 2013, Caha 2020).

The complementary and more general target is methodological and regards the microcomparative approach, which acquired a relevant status within the linguistic debate since at least Kayne (1996). The central question regards the existence of a categorical difference between the macro and micro typological comparison; in other words, the question is if the variation that has been attested within a dialectal continuum must be analyzed with different tools with respect to the more classical variation among geographically and genetically unrelated languages. Many studies (Poletto 2000, 2012, 2013, Manzini & Savoia 2005, van Koppen 2012) provided a negative answer to this question. The micro typological analysis of minimally different grammatical systems allows

for stricter control of independent variables and, consequently, has the potential to reveal strong generalizations regarding linguistic variation and its limits.

2. Overview of the volume

This volume is composed of six papers plus the editor's introduction. Adopting different perspectives, the papers develop a common topic, the encoding of indefiniteness and its relationship with genitive/partitive markers on the one hand and definite markers on the other hand. By doing so, the Authors combine different theoretical approaches with new data, to provide both a better description of the phenomena and new theoretical insights on the structure and semantics of nominal phrases.

The general target is to address the issues outlined in the previous section by crossing the macro and the micro perspective in order to achieve a complete comparative perspective. The contributions by Pinzin & Poletto, Baldi & Savoia, Ihsane and Stark & Davatz take the micro comparative perspective, deepening our understanding of minority varieties within the Romance continuum, with a specific focus on Italian Dialects, Provençal and Francoprovençal varieties. The contributions by Espinal & Cyrino and Caha adopt, instead, the macro comparative perspective, taking into consideration both major Romance varieties (Espinal & Cyrino analyze Spanish, Portuguese, and Brazilian Portuguese) and varieties outside this family (Caha considers in his analysis North and South Saami, Estonian, Finnish, Czech, Serbian and Russian).

Pinzin & Poletto's paper "Indefinite objects in micro-variation. A crosslinguistic analysis of the distribution of Partitive Articles, Bare Nominals and Definite Determiners in Northern Italy" provides an overview of the distribution of the different types of indefinite determiners in the languages of Northern Italy, focusing on the analysis of the data coming from the ASIt database (http://asit.maldura.unipd.it/) and from new fieldwork sessions in Friuli, Emilia and Liguria (https://difuparo.linguistik.uzh.ch/), collected by means of a questionnaire with orally presented inputs in Italian to be translated in the local variety. Their results show that these languages encode the same indefinite semantics in different ways; more specifically, Friulian encodes the least marked kind of indefinites as Bare Nominals, Emilian as PAs, while Ligurian has to be split in two sub-varieties, one adopting BNs and the other PAs. In addition, their data show that the presence of the definite article as a competitor for the expression of indefiniteness is constrained, in these varieties, to generic/weak definite contexts (see Aguilar-Guevara et al. 2014) and does not interact with the way indefiniteness is generally encoded in the language. In other words, while they observe an inverse correlation between the frequency of PAs and the frequency of BNs (the

more PAs the less BNs, and the other way around), the frequency of definite articles used in indefinite contexts is constant across the languages, showing no variation or correlation with the frequency of the other indefinite markers. From an intralinguistic point of view, finally, they observe that the least preferred way of expressing indefinites (BNs for Emilian, PAs for Friulian) actually occurs in the language, but only when the Italian input presents the same option and when the speaker is young and highly exposed to Italian in her everyday life. This datum speaks in favor of an analysis in terms of crosslinguistic influence (Italian – local variety) enhanced by the priming effect of the input.

Baldi & Savoia's article "Partitives and indefinites: Phenomena in Italian varieties" addresses the same issue – the distribution of indefinite markers in Italian varieties – from a slightly different perspective, including (i) the realization of indefinites under negation, (ii) Italo-Romance varieties beyond Northern Italy and other non-Romance ones. In the first part of the contribution, they target the role of the genitive preposition/case marker di. Other than indefinites, they take into consideration other structures in which di is present, as prepositional phrases and "real" partitives. The core idea – shared with part of the previous literature (see Manzini & Savoia 2011, Manzini et al. 2019, Savoia et al. 2020) – is that di marks an inclusion / part-whole semantics (⊆), which is the core semantics at the basis of the use of this preposition in genitive, dative, locative, partitive, and indefinite contexts. In their discussion of the properties of the markers carrying the inclusion / part-whole semantic, they range from Italian dialects to Albanian and Aromanian varieties, enlarging the comparison beyond Romance. In the second part of the contribution, they focus more closely on indefinite PAs in Italo-Romance varieties, which are composed of di plus a definite article. For di, they adopt the analysis put forward in the first part (⊆), completing it with the proposal that the definite article appearing as the second element in these indefinite markers is to be analyzed as introducing a generic semantic, along the lines of the proposal in Chierchia (1997). Their analysis contrasts with part of the literature on PAs, which take them as lexicalized indefinite determiners which, on the synchronic level, bear no direct link with the homophonous occurrences of di and the definite article (Cardinaletti & Giusti 2016, a.o.). From the point of view of the data, finally, Baldi & Savoia present an accurate overview of the realization of indefinites in a variety of Italo-Romance varieties. Such an overview will prove to be a good basis for further analyses of these phenomena.

Stark and Davatz's contribution "Unexpected Partitive Articles in Francoprovençal" shifts the focus of the analysis of data on indefinite Partitive Articles coming from Francoprovençal, a cover term for a continuum of Galloromance speech varieties spoken in Italy (Valle d'Aosta), Switzerland and France, at the crossroad between these

countries. These varieties are currently highly endangered, being actively mastered by around 110000–160000 speakers. Their data come from a collection of two sources, the ALAVAL database and first-hand data from fieldwork sessions (both collected in the DiFuPaRo database: https://difuparo.linguistik.uzh.ch/). They carefully analyze the distribution of PAs in the database and the new data, focusing on the cases in which the input given to the speakers contains a PA itself and on the output realization, generally either a fully-fledged PA (prepositional-like marker de plus definite article) or bare de. They focus their attention on two unexpected distributions. The first unexpected (geographical) distribution is the fact that they find fully-fledged PAs in varieties where, looking at the literature (Kristol 2014, 2016), we would only expect bare de realizations. The second unexpected (syntactic) distribution relates to the presence of fully-fledged PAs under quantity markers and negation. In the discussion they analyze the consequences of these new data, which are problematic for different formal analyses of indefinite PAs.

Ihsane's "Preverbal subjects with a Partitive Article: A comparison between Aosta Valley Francoprovençal and French" concludes the series of contributions targeting the "micro" level. Given the focus on the comparison between a minority language and a major Romance language, this article functions also as a bridge with the second series of contributions, which take into consideration both major Romance languages and languages external to the Romance continuum. The Author focuses on the distribution of indefinite PAs (de + definite article) / bare de markers in subject position in Francoprovençal and in French. The datum addressed by Ihsane regards the fact that speakers of Francoprovençal do not accept indefinite bare de markers in preverbal subject position in contexts in which in French we can find indefinite PAs. Considering that indefinite bare de in Francoprovençal are often considered the counterpart of indefinite PAs in French, the datum is unexpected. She looks at two syntactic-semantic environments, stage level predicates and emphatic generic contexts. First, she shows that the distributional difference between these two languages cannot be explained in terms of register. While it is true that French has a formal/literary register while Francoprovençal does not, she shows that indefinite PAs in subject position are widely attested in non-formal/literary registers of French too and that, therefore, the availability of different registers cannot account for the observed datum. She proposes that the difference regarding the second context –emphatic generic predicates – is to be explained in terms of misinterpretation of the input sentence. In other words, the Francoprovençal speakers did not correctly understand the stimulus, so that the results cannot be directly compared with French. As for the first context, she argues that the difference lies in the interpretational possibilities that preverbal subjects have in the two

languages. In other words, she maintains the parallel between French indefinite PAs and Francoprovençal indefinite bare de, shifting the explanatory burden on the interpretation of preverbal subjects in general. Building on previous work, she argues that Fancoprovençal, like French and differently from, for example, Spanish, allows for new information preverbal subjects, but, differently from French, it only does so when the nominal in preverbal subject position has a certain degree of referential givenness (like plurals that are count).

In their paper "The status of de in Romance indefinites, partitives and pseudopartitives", Espinal and Cyrino address one of the major problematic issues related to indefinite Partitive Articles and the likes, the presence of the genitive-like preposition/case marker de/di. Looking at Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Catalan, French, and Italian they advocate for an analysis of the de element in indefinite and psudopartitive contexts as a marker of indefiniteness, more specifically defined as a subtracting operator canceling definiteness. Considering, then, "real" partitive contexts, they propose to interpret de in these environments as a bi-relation functional relator that has a definite DP in complement position and a QP in specifier position. In general, they adopt the homophony approach to the function of de in these environments, stating the presence in the lexicon of two homophonous but distinct lexical items (three lexical items, also considering the preposition/case marker de). In support of their analysis, they present a series of syntactic arguments, as the fact that de is already used in Late Latin to introduce indefinite direct objects/subjects, and the diverging behavior of the different des in coordination and looking at extraction and extraposition environments.

The last paper of the volume brings us beyond Romance languages and opens the comparison to a wide variety of other linguistic families and groups. Pavel Caha, in his "The marking of mass, count and plural denotations in multi-dimensional paradigms", compares North and South Saami, Estonian, Finnish, Czech, Serbian and Russian, hinting at other languages too, such as Turkish, Dutch and English. The point of comparison is the way in which these languages externalize mass pseudo-partitives (a meter **of fence**), noun-numeral (three **fences**) and plural nominals (**fences**). The relevant point is the observation that the noun in these three structures shows consistent syncretism across languages. For example, English shows an ABB syncretism, as Dutch, while Turkish shows an AAB syncretism. Caha shows (i) how a solution in terms of syntactic decomposition of the nominal phrase can deliver us the right results, that is explaining the attested syncretisms while at the same constraining it in a predictive way (no ABA patterns, the so-called *ABA); (ii) how case marking interacts with this kind of decomposition on a multi-dimensional level. On a general theoretical level, the paper argues for a model of cross-linguistic variation which abandons

parameters and focuses on the shape of the language-specific lexical items for predicting the different grammars. The paper conjugates a careful description of the data with a general formal analysis based on the Nanosyntactic framework, allowing the reader to see how the Romance patterns that have been described and analyzed throughout the issue are paralleled by similar patterns beyond the Romance family. This insight makes the phenomena analyzed of interest on a more general linguistic level.

Acknowledgments

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