

Pseudo-partitives and (silent) classifiers in Romanian

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This paper addresses the question of classifiers in languages with plural morphology. I will propose that pseudo-partitives of the quantitative type (see Selkirk 1977) consist of a classifier-noun sequence, where the classifier is a semi-lexical or functional noun. The second section of my paper posits a classifier phrase for all languages. The ClasP will be conceived of as emerging above NumP in all ‘count’ situations (see Kayne 2003). The head of the ClasP in languages with plural morphology may be filled with semi-lexical material (see van Riemsdijk 1998, 2003) – as in the case of pseudopartitive constructions – or, building on Kayne’s (2003) proposal, with an abstract noun NUMBER.

1. What classifiers classify

In the recent literature it has been often pointed out that according to the way they express grammatical number, languages fall into two categories:

- a. classifier languages, i.e. languages with a classifier morpheme ranging over the noun (areal feature of languages in Asia and Southeast Asia).
- b. languages with plural morphology

It has been suggested (see Borer 2005) that the absence of plural inflection correlates with the existence of classifiers. The absence of plural marking correlated with the absence of number inflection is illustrated in (1) – examples from Chen (2003):

- (1) a. Qianmian turan tiao chulai yi zhi laohu
Front suddenly jump out one CL tiger
‘suddenly a tiger jumped out in front of us’
b. Ta mai le yi zhuang fangzi
he buy PERF.ASP. one CL house
‘he has bought a house’

In languages with plural morphology, such measure phrases are required by mass nouns in order to be rendered countable. Examples in (2) show such classifiers at work in English and Romanian:

- (2) a. two grains of sand / three drops of whisky / a loaf of bread
 b. două boabe de orez / trei pahare de lapte / un cub de zahăr
 two grains of rice / three glasses of milk / a cube of sugar

The main question at this point is: are these measure words/ partitive expressions/ amount quantifiers the same as classifiers in Chinese? The major difference is that classifiers in Chinese are required both for what is generally called ‘mass’ nouns (like *rice*, *water*, etc) and for count nouns (*pen*, *book*, etc) while in languages like English they are required only for mass nouns. This has led some linguists to propose that in Chinese all nouns are mass nouns (Chierchia 1998). Another important observation is that in languages with plural morphology, mass nouns *can* receive plural suffixes in order to become countable as an alternative to classifier inflection, while in Chinese they cannot.

- (3) două zaharuri trei ceaiuri multe săruri
 two sugars three teas many salts

1.1. Classifying classifiers

It has been argued (see Cheng & Sybesma 1999 and references there) that classifiers can be divided into two classes:

- classifiers that create a unit of measure

- (4) san ping jiu
 three bottle liquor
 ‘three bottles of liquor’

- classifiers that name the unit in which the entity denoted by the noun naturally occurs

- (5) san ge ren
 three CL person
 ‘three persons’

I will follow Cheng & Sybesma in calling the first type of classifiers – massifiers and the second – count-classifiers. There are two important distinctions between massifiers and classifiers. First, massifiers allow the appearance of a modification marker *de*, which may intervene in the [massifier + N] sequence, while count-classifiers do not (6). Secondly, massifiers allow the modification of the massifier head with a limited number of adjectives (‘da’ / big, ‘xiao’ / small), while count-classifiers do not (7):

- (6) a. san bang (de) rou
 three CL-pounds DE meat
 ‘three pounds of meat’

- b. ba tou (*de) niu
 eight CL-head DE cow¹
 ‘eight cows’
- (7) a. yi da zhang zhi
 one big CL-sheet paper
 ‘one big sheet of paper’
 b. *yi da zhi gou
 one big CL dog
 ‘one big dog’

On the basis of such evidence, Cheng & Sybesma (1999) conclude that the count-mass distinction is lexically encoded on Chinese nouns. Following in essence Chierchia (1998), the noun does have a mass denotation and is inserted in the structure where the massifier or count-classifier takes over the job of ‘encoding’ countability or divisibility.

Coming back to the question of the status of classifiers in English and Romanian, it seems safe to assume that they behave like Chinese massifiers. Applying Cheng and Sybesma’s (1998) criteria of discrimination, it is obvious that both English and Romanian massifiers allow markers of nominal boundary *of* and *de* respectively (8a) and allow modification by adjectives (8b):

- (8) a. trei kilograme de carne
 three kilos of meat
 a’. three pounds of meat
 b. o foaie mare de hârtie
 a sheet big of paper
 b’. a big sheet of paper

The next section analyzes the so-called ‘quantitative pseudo-partitives’ when functioning as classifiers employed to identify portions of mass nouns. As a preliminary remark, Romanian has a different strategy for marking ‘true’ partitivity – the prepositions *din* / *dintre*, as opposed to the preposition *de*, which is involved in pseudo-partitives.

1.2. Classifiers and pseudo-partitives

1.2.1. Classifiers and mass nouns

In Romanian, characteristic of mass nouns are classifiers, which individuate a certain portion of the stuff designated by the mass noun. In (9) there are examples of classifiers used with mass nouns:

- (9) a. o picătură de sânge – a drop of blood
 b. un deget de whisky – a shot of whisky (lit. a finger of whisky)
 c. un grăunte de sare – a grain of salt
 d. un cățel de usturoi – a clove of garlic (lit. a puppy of garlic)

¹ I thank the two anonymous reviewers for pointing out the example (6b).

All these amount quantifiers operate as partitioning expressions of the whole N (Q N) designating a portion of the respective stuff.

According to the criterion of degrees of semi-lexicality (which will be dealt with in section 2 of this paper) of the noun functioning as N₁ in a pseudo-partitive construction, Vos (1999) distinguishes six subtypes of such classifiers:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| (10) a. een aantal voorbeelden | QUANTIFIER NOUN |
| a number examples | |
| b. drie liter melk | MEASURE NOUN |
| three liter(s) milk | |
| c. een snee brood | PART NOUN |
| a slice bread | |
| d. die krat bier | CONTAINER NOUN |
| that case beer | |
| e. een kudde olifanten | COLLECTIVE NOUN |
| a herd elephants | |
| f. vijf soorten zoogdieren | KIND NOUN |
| five types mammals | |

The same classification is to be found in the Modern Grammar of Dutch (MGD), with the only difference that kind nouns are assumed to be non-quantificational, while the other five types vacillate between quantificational and referential interpretations. It is not clear whether this classification (or any other, for that matter) is exhaustive and it is often difficult to decide to which particular class a certain N₁ belongs. As MGD states: ‘N₁s tend to shift from one class to another (especially into the direction of quantifier nouns) when their referring force weakens’.

Therefore, a very important dimension of study has been introduced: that of analyzing N₁s in pseudo-partitive constructions as oscillating between a referential and a quantificational interpretation. This dimension will help us determine that N₁s in pseudo-partitives have semi-lexical status.

Another classification of N₁ in pseudo-partitives is provided by Stavrou (2003) for Greek. What is of interest in this classification is that the author stresses the progressive loss of lexical meaning with several classes of such nouns:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (11) a. ekatosti, duzina | CARDINAL NOUN |
| a hundred a dozen | |
| b. zevgari, arithmos | QUANTIFIER-LIKE NOUN |
| pair number | |
| c. kuti, bukali | CONTAINER NOUNS |
| box bottle | |
| d. plithos | COLLECTIVE / GROUP NOUNS |
| crowd | |
| e. buketo, matsaki | CONSISTIVE / MATERIAL NOUNS |
| bunch small prig | |
| f. kilo | MEASURE / UNIT NOUN |
| g. komati, feta | PARTITIVE NOUN |
| piece, slice | |

It is of interest to notice that some noun classes, such as a, b, and f, are clearly closed classes, as they cannot freely register new members, while the rest of the classes allow creative use as in *tria țigara dromos* (literally *three cigarettes way*, meaning a distance that takes the smoking of three cigarettes to be covered). As the next sections will show, at least some of these noun classes have become grammaticalized, i.e. have covered the way from the fully lexical to the functional end of the continuum.

Another point of interest is that container and consistive nouns are usually called ‘classifiers’, which is the same term used in the case of classifier languages. Chierchia (1998) distinguishes classifiers from measure nouns on the basis of their semantics but he also notes that the two classes are similar in that both are relational and both allow quantification of a certain domain of objects.

The next section will continue in this vein – that of treating N_1 in pseudo-partitives as ‘classifiers’. In this respect, I will show that recent analyses of predicate inversion cannot apply to this domain; moreover, pseudo-partitives involve a single projection with one semi-lexical (or functional) head, i.e. the classifier, and one lexical head.

1.3. *Why pseudo-partitive constructions are neither pseudo nor partitive*

In this section I claim that the so-called pseudo-partitive constructions in Romanian actually involve a classifier and a lexical noun that the classifier ‘classifies’. The description of the classifier will overlap Cheng & Sybesma’s description of ‘massifiers’ in Chinese, with the important difference that in Romanian, classifiers are themselves marked for number.

Nevertheless, what I maintain is that classifiers in Romanian are semi-lexical nouns, i.e. the functional nature of these nouns justifies my claim that they can be grouped together with ‘purely functional’ classifiers in languages like Chinese. Inasmuch as they are semi-lexical or functional nouns, a predicate inversion analysis cannot account for their status.

In what follows, I will briefly present the main tenets of the most influential analyses of pseudo-partitive constructions and try to show why a unified approach to the study of quantitative and qualitative pseudo-partitives in terms of predicate inversion does not hold water. My main claim will be that qualitative constructions are based on a relation of predication while quantitative constructions are underlain by a different semantic relation which I will call classificatory. The following section will draw up a list of features (by no means, exhaustive) that converge to an analysis of the nouns heading a pseudo-partitive construction as semi-lexical.

1.3.1. *Predication and classification: why quantity is not quality*

Insights from Zamparelli (1995), Bennis et al. (1998), Moro (1997), Corver (1998), Den Dikken (2006) may lead to the idea that the pseudo-partitive (quantitative) structures in Romanian are derived via predicate raising and the preposition *de* ‘of’ is a nominal copula.

Initially, the rule of predicate raising was applied to the domain of copular sentences and was characterized as A-movement of a predicate to subject position, around the position occupied by the subject (Moro 1997). For copular constructions like these, it has been argued that they underlyingly feature a small clause (SC) in the complement of the copula *be*, a head triggering raising to subject position of a constituent contained within the small clause.

- (12) John is the best candidate.
The best candidate is John.

- (13) a. [_{IP} ... be [_{XP} John X [_{Pred} the best candidate]]] (cf. Bennis et al. 1998)
 b. [_{IP} John_i ... be [_{XP} t_i X [_{Pred} the best candidate]]]
 c. [_{IP} the best candidate_j ... be [_{XP} John X [_{Pred} t_j]]]

As Moro (1991) pointed out, Predicate Inversion sometimes leads to the obligatory presence of the copula (14a), phenomenon which is likened to the obligatory presence of the ‘functional’ preposition ‘of’ in ‘inverse’ nominal structures (14b). The assumption following naturally from these considerations would be to regard the preposition ‘of’ as a nominal copula:

- (14) a. I consider John (to be) the best candidate / I consider the best candidate *(to be) John.
 b. The village is like a jewel / the jewel *(of) a village

The next step was the application of this rule to the nominal domain, in the spirit of Abney (1987) and Szabolcsi (1994) who extensively argue for a solid parallelism between the structure of the sentence and the structure of the nominal domain. The application of predicate inversion to the nominal domain has mainly concerned itself with the pseudo-partitive qualitative constructions, or N₁of N₂ constructions.

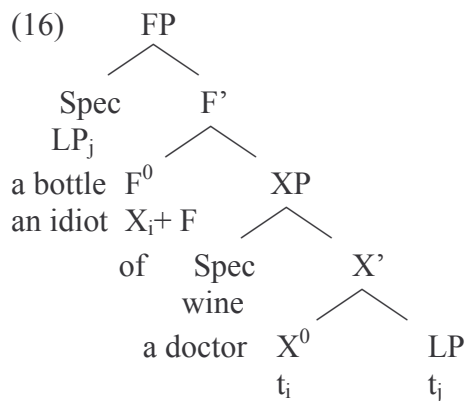
- (15) a. that barge of a woman (ex. from Den Dikken 2006)
 b. some rotten little fig of a human being
 c. a colorless mouse of a woman
 d. some shrinking violet of a civil servant

Regarding the structure of Predicate Inversion in the nominal domain, I will start from the one put forward by Bennis et al. (1998) and Corver (1998) – similar to the one implicit in Den Dikken (2006) – and discuss to what extent it can accommodate Romanian data.

1.3.1.1. Bennis et al. (1998), Corver (1998)

Starting from Moro’s studies of predicate inversion in equative sentences and Den Dikken’s idea of predicate movement within nominal phrases for qualitative predicates such as *idiot* in *that idiot of a doctor*, Corver (1998) extends this framework to nouns denoting quantity or measure in pseudo-partitive constructions such as *a bunch of flowers* or *a bottle of wine*.

In the structure in (16), LP is the raising predicate and XP is the SC containing the predicate and its subject. The SC head, X, undergoes a domain extending movement to a higher head (the head in whose specifier position the predicate lands) in order to render the position Spec XP and Spec FP equidistant from the extraction site of the predicate.



The analysis presented in (16) entails that the nouns are related by the relation of predication. It follows that in the structure *a bottle of wine*, the measure noun *bottle* is base-generated as a predicate whose subject is the measuree *wine*, while the preposition *of* being the nominal counterpart of the copula.

Corver's analysis is supported by a number of properties which characterize predicate nominals and also apply to measure phrases:

- (i) measure phrases can be linked to the subject by a copular verb like *become*
- (ii) measure phrases can be used as an answer to *what...like* questions, which typically ask for a property
- (iii) they can be coordinated with APs – typical examples of predicative phrases (as in *The range of these guns is only 200 meters but nevertheless sufficient*).

But before starting to integrate massifiers in predicate inversion structures it is indispensable to answer the following questions: 1. what arguments compel one to consider such structures as based on predicate inversion? and 2. what compels the predicate itself to raise?

Starting with the first question, there are two main arguments that could prompt one to view pseudo-partitive quantitative structures as based on predicate inversion. The first has to do with the meaningless preposition *de / of*, which surfaces in pseudo-partitive constructions and which qualifies as nominal copula:

- (17) a. o sticlă de vin
 a bottle of wine
 b. o ceașcă de ceai
 a cup of tea

Romanian has two 'specialized' prepositions to express partitivity; these are *din* and *dintre*, both of which can be paraphrased as 'of' in English:

- (18) unul dintre studenții lui / o sticlă din vinul acela
 one of students-the his / a bottle of wine-the that
 'one of his students' / 'a bottle of that wine'

Therefore, it may be argued that the preposition *de* does not express a partitivity relation. The mass noun can be seen as inserted in a syntactic structure above a massifier – which then undergoes predicate inversion (the reflex of which is the nominal copula *de*) and performs the divisibility function.

The second argument concerns the interpretation of the sentences in (19):

- (19) a. Am băut o sticlă de vin / *Am băut o sticlă /
 have drunk_{1st pers.sg} a bottle of wine/ have drunk_{1st pers.sg} a bottle/
 Am băut vin
 have drunk wine
 ‘I have drunk a bottle of wine / I have drunk a bottle / I have drunk wine’
- b. Am adăugat la mâncare un vârf de sare. /
 have added_{1st pers.sg} at food a tip of salt.
 *Am adăugat la mâncare un vârf. / Am adăugat la mâncare sare.
 have added_{1st pers.sg} at food a tip / have added at food salt
 ‘I have added the food a tip of salt / I have added the food a tip / I have added salt’

The interpretation of such sentences points to the fact that the true ‘subject’ in this relation of predication is the mass noun and not the massifier, which surfaces above the subject after predicate inversion.

The second question related to the mechanism that forces the predicate to raise. When discussing qualitative binominal structures, Den Dikken (2006) argues that the raising of the predicate is driven by a property of the raised predicate, i.e. the fact that it has an empty head. This empty predicate head is in need of licensing and predicate inversion is the mechanism that satisfies this need. For qualitative binominal structures (*a jewel of a child*), he argues that the empty predicate head structurally encodes a semantic aspect of comparison (*the child is compared to a jewel*) and can be paraphrased as SIMILAR.

The main problem with this structure is the following: if we assume that the raising predicate is actually a classifier, then why would a classifier raise at all? In other words, a raising structure needs a licensing mechanism, i.e. something to force the predicate to raise. In addition, it is not clear when and why syntactic number (represented by the cardinal one, indefinite article ‘a’, or plural morphology) should be generated in the structure. Consider examples (20):

- (20) a. o sticlă de vin
 a bottle of wine
- b. două sticle de vin / *două sticlă de vin
 two bottles of wine / *two bottle of wine

There is an important difference between classifiers in Chinese and plural marking on the one hand, and quantity-designating nouns which are used in the so-called pseudo-partitive constructions, on the other. Apart from a few lexically marked exceptions such as *three head of cattle* / *una bucată student* (*one piece student*), these quantity-designating nouns must themselves be marked for number.

If we opt for predicate inversion as the underlying structure of quantitative pseudo-partitives there is another problem concerning syntactic Number that should be answered. It is not clear why the number morpheme should be generated above and detached from the structure of the classifier. Since Number is not generated in the absence of a noun to which it

applies, it seems counter-intuitive to argue for a structure in which a classifier, i.e. understood as a semi-lexical noun, raises to attach to an independently generated Number projection.

On the other hand, if we take these classifiers to actually represent semi-lexical categories, then the fact that they may be pluralized follows.

Before I engage on presenting the pieces of evidence in favor of considering pseudo-partitives as Classifier Phrases, let me dwell on another framework that has proven influential in the study of both quantitative and qualitative pseudo-partitives. The framework proposed by Doetjes and Rooryck (2003) has the great merit of attempting a unifying approach to the study of these constructions and of introducing a distinction in terms of ‘comparative’ and ‘pure degree’ interpretations, which I will refine in terms of degrees of semi-lexicality of the noun which comes first in pseudo-partitives, i.e. N_1 .

1.3.1.2. Doetjes and Rooryck (2003)

Another framework that argues for a unified approach to the study of quantitative and qualitative pseudo-partitives is the one implicit in Doetjes (1997) and Doetjes & Rooryck (2003).

Starting from the observation that in both quantitative and qualitative constructions, agreement can be triggered by the element preceding *of* or by the element following *of*, i.e. by either N_1 or N_2 (21-22), Doetjes & Rooryck (2003) correlate this difference in agreement with differences in the interpretive nature of the quantitative/qualitative element (23).

(21) QUANTITATIVE

- a. Beaucoup de livres sont / *est tombé(s)
A lot of books are / is fallen
- b. Une montagne de livres *sont / est tombée
a mountain of books are / is fallen

(22) QUALITATIVE

(ex. from Hulk and Tellier 1999)

- a. Ton phénomène de fille est distrait*(e)
Your phenomenon.MASC of daughter.FEM is absent-minded.FEM/*MASC
- b. Ce bijou d’église romane a été reconstruit(*e)
That jewel.MASC of roman church.FEM was rebuilt.MASC/*FEM

(23) THE QUANTITATIVE / QUALITATIVE AGREEMENT PRINCIPLE

1. In quantitative / qualitative constructions, the quantified / qualified element determines agreement if the quantifier / qualifier has a ‘pure degree’ interpretation of quantity / quality = the ‘degree’ interpretation
2. The quantifier / qualifier determines agreement iff the relation between the quantified / qualified noun and the quantifier / qualifier is paraphrasable in terms of a comparison in which the quantifier / qualifier keeps its lexical interpretation = the ‘comparative’ interpretation

The ‘pure degree’ interpretation is to be found in contexts such as (21a) in which *beaucoup* has completely lost its original lexical meaning and indicates a quantity of high degree. In (21b), however, *montagne* still retains part of its lexical meaning and its relation with the quantified element can be paraphrased in terms of comparison: *the quantity of books is such that it resembles a mountain*.

I depart from this framework, however, in that this difference is not ascribed to major differences in syntactic structure but to different syntactic status of the quantifier: functional or semi-lexical.

2. The lexical-functional continuum: hybrid semi-lexical heads

The distinction between lexical and grammatical / functional categories is at the heart of modern grammatical theory. Starting from the intuitive difference between lexical and functional categories, namely that lexical categories have descriptive content while functional categories have the role of connecting lexical items into articulated discourse, in the course of time, various diagnostic criteria have been proposed to distinguish one class from the other:

- a. functional categories are closed classes, seldom having more than twenty-thirty members
- b. functional categories are usually phonologically and morphologically dependent; they do not carry stress and often develop weak, contracted forms; they may be realized as clitics or affixes (see Cornilescu 1995 and the references therein)
- c. functional elements are characterized by ‘unique morpho-syntactic behavior’ (Emonds, 1985), i.e. the members of different classes of functional elements cannot be differentiated from each other only by means of descriptive semantic features

Although there are clear-cut cases instantiating the fundamental opposition between functional and lexical categories or heads, such as the distinction between noun and determiner, there are many other instances for which it is more difficult to decide whether they side with the lexical or the functional part.

One such case is instantiated by the category P (prepositions and postpositions), which seems to constitute an intermediate category between open classes and grammatical categories. Since they make up a closed set, they should be viewed as grammatical items. On the other hand, what justifies their grouping together with lexical categories is the fact that they can assign theta-roles directly or in conjunction with a lexical category. In a sentence like *John always relies on me*, ‘me’ is assigned the Theme theta-role by the preposition ‘on’ in conjunction with the verb.

Starting from Emonds’ (1985) discussion of grammatical nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions, or ‘disguised lexical categories’, van Riemsdijk (1997) and Corver & van Riemsdijk (2001) turn their attention to SEMI-LEXICAL heads, conceived as hybrid categories, i.e. categories exhibiting both lexical and functional/grammatical features.

Besides the category P, there are also other possible candidates for the status of semi-lexical category. Within the verbal domain, semi-lexical candidates might be auxiliary verbs (see Emonds 1985), certain verbs featuring in verb clusters in Germanic Verb Raising (see van Riemsdijk 2002), certain verbs that allow restructuring in Italian, like *sembrare* (see Haegeman 2005), etc.

For the nominal domain, Emonds (1985) refers to the pro-form ‘one’ in *the good ones*, the reflexive ‘self’/‘selves’, and ‘thing’ in *something good*. We are now in a position to add classifiers like the Chinese ‘ge’ in *san ge ren* (three CL person). The task is now to prove that nouns used as N₁ in pseudo-partitive constructions are also semi-lexical. Before engaging on that track, I will attempt to present a few facts that make the difference between functional and (semi)lexical categories.

2.1. *What makes the difference between functional and (semi)lexical categories – a peek at agreement*

Linguists have treated classifiers as either lexical instantiations of functional categories (Löbel 1997; Li 1999) or as semi-lexical heads which exhibit both functional and lexical properties (Van Riemsdijk 1998). In Van Riemsdijk (1998), quantifier nouns such as *number* in *a number of examples* and *couple* in *a couple of cigarettes* are considered to be functional heads, by virtue of their being closed-class items, while other type of nouns which may be used in pseudopartitive constructions (measure nouns, partitive nouns, container nouns, collective nouns, kind nouns) are semi-lexical heads. The difference between functional and semi-lexical heads is reflected in verb agreement and gender agreement with the determiner. As Löbel (2001) points out, especially agreement is taken as evidence that some measure nouns ‘may waver between functional and semi-lexical status’ (Van Riemsdijk 1998); in (27a), the measure noun *kilo* is functional, in (27b) it is semi-lexical:

- (27) a. Er zit drie kilo heroine in die zak
 Theresits three kilo heroin in that bag.
 b. ?Er zitten meerdere kilo’s heroine in die zak
 There sit several kilos heroin in that bag.

The noun *number* itself - which is said to be a functional noun – sometimes oscillates between a functional (28a) status and a semi-lexical one (28b):

- (28) a. a number of examples
 b. the number five

As Löbel (2001) emphasizes, what seems to be decisive for the status of *number* as a functional head is its use as a relational noun (*a number of examples*). This argument also applies to container nouns such as *bottle (of wine)*. These nouns may be used both as semi-lexical nouns (*a bottle of wine*) and in a non-relational fashion (*a green bottle*).

Van Riemsdijk’s (1998) overall purpose in analyzing pseudo-partitive constructions is that of arguing for a single (extended) projection that could account for such constructions. In Dutch, partitive constructions can be divided into two major groups: Direct Partitive Constructions (DPC 29a) – with no intervening material between the container and the containee - and Indirect Partitive Constructions (IPC 29b):

- (29) a. een bus toeristen / een pan soep
 a bus tourists / a pan soup
 ‘a bus of tourists / a pan of soup’
 b. een bus met toeristen / een pan met soep
 a bus with tourists / a pan with soup

DPCs are argued to involve a single projection in which N1 is a semi-lexical noun. Vos (1999) restates the analysis by considering DPCs as involving a kind operator (represented by the functional noun) that requires a lexical noun. Together, they form an extended nominal projection. Pseudo-partitive constructions in English and Romance languages are treated in Van Riemsdijk (1998) as disguised DPCs because they behave like DPCs with respect to selection, as shown in (30):

- (30) a. Mary ate a whole tray of / *with pastries.
 b. Jean a dilue plusieurs bouteilles de vin / *avec du vin.
 Jean has diluted several bottles of wine / with wine.

In view of these data, partitives in Romance are analyzed as single projections and the status of the prepositional element intervening between N_1 and N_2 is that of a functional element making the transition between the two nouns.

2.2. N_1 in pseudo-partitives as semi-lexical heads

So-called pseudo-partitive constructions equivalent to English *a bottle of wine* or *a lump of sugar* are believed to occur in all languages while numeral classifier constructions equivalent to *one living being fish* or *two fruit orange* are confined to classifier languages which lack number morphology. My task is now to prove that these nouns that head pseudo-partitive constructions behave like functional nouns.

It is a well-known fact that most nouns that are involved in pseudo-partitive constructions (where they have functional status) also appear as full lexical nouns. Consider the following examples from English and Romanian:

- (31) a. a green bottle
 a'. o sticlă verde
 a bottle green
 'a green bottle'
 b. a bottle of wine
 b'. o sticlă de vin
 a bottle of wine
 c. *a green bottle of wine
 c'. *o sticlă verde de vin
 a bottle green of wine
 'a green bottle of wine'

In (31a), *bottle / sticlă* is lexical noun, while in (31b) it is a semi-lexical noun, fact which is emphasized by the ungrammaticality of (31c). However, this does not relate to a general exclusion from such structures. An example like *a big bottle of wine* is fine because *big* modifies the quantifier status of *bottle* not its qualitative properties.

Thus, a first characteristic of semi-lexical and functional heads emerges: they become semi-lexical (a feature linked to semantic 'bleaching') when they are used as relational nouns.

This idea is reinforced by Cheng & Sybesma (1998, 1999) who, in discussing cases like (6), repeated here for convenience as (32), point out the interpretational differences between *de* and *de*-less structures:

- (32) a. san bang (de) rou
 three CL-pounds DE meat
 b. liang xiang (de) shu
 two CL-box DE book

In the absence of *de*, *xiang* (box) receives a more concrete interpretation, relating to its being an actual box, while in the context of *de* a measure interpretation is favored, i.e. boxful. We may conclude, therefore, that *de* signals when the noun is used as relational.

A second characteristic is that in the case of nouns used as heads of pseudo-partitives, they presuppose a ‘somewhat reduced lexical meaning in comparison to the quantified noun to which they are a sister’ (Löbel 2001). Thus in the Romanian examples in (33), the noun *vârf* used in a pseudo-partitive construction becomes semantically ‘bleached’, i.e. does not retain its original meaning of ‘summit / peak’:

- (33) a. am ajuns în vârf (ul muntelui)
 (I) have reached in peak (the mountain-the_{GEN})
 b. am pus la mâncare un vârf de sare
 (I) have put at food a little salt (lit. a peak of salt)

Bhattacharya (2001) also acknowledges the fact that a criterion for the functional character of the classifier is the lack of descriptive content. ‘This holds as well for the complex (i.e. the Num-Cla complex) as it does not pick out a class of objects but elaborates some property of the complement noun’ (Bhattacharya 2001).

In close connection to their reduced lexical meaning, these nouns also exhibit features that are known to pertain to semi-lexical categories (see Emonds 1985; Bhattacharya 2001). Thus, they constitute a closed class, i.e. they are limited in productivity², possess a small number of members and do not encourage novel coinages. Similarly, classifiers are universally derived from nouns, which enables one to view them as disguised nouns. Yet, some classifiers belonging to this closed class can have unique usage and meaning. For example, quantifier nouns like *pereche* / *pair* are mostly employed to quantify over lexical plurals. The plural form of these nouns denotes pairs:

- (34) pantaloni / ochelari / foarfece(i) / clești
 trousers / spectacles / scissors / tongs

Despite their defectiveness, the nouns that head the first constituent of pseudo-partitive constructions sometimes trigger the selectional restrictions on the verb and agreement in number:

- (35) a. Two pounds of sugar *was / were strewn / thrown on the floor
 b. Two lumps of sugar were *strewn / thrown on the floor.
 c. două kilograme de zahăr erau / *era vărsate /
 two kilos.FEM-PL of sugar.MASC-SG were / *was spilled.FEM-PL /
 *vărsat pe podea
 *spilled.MASC-SG on floor
 ‘two kilos of sugar were spilled on the floor’

² One may wonder whether Romanian nouns used as N₁ in pseudo-partitive constructions are really limited in productivity as there are clear differences between the restricted distribution of a purely functional noun (e.g. *pereche* ‘pair’) and the freer distribution of a semi-lexical noun like *sticlă* ‘bottle’. However, it is precisely this distinction in terms of distribution that allows for different degrees of lexicality.

The fact that these nouns sometimes trigger agreement not only points to their headedness but may also indicate their lexical nature. However, a noun that exhibits both lexical (agreement) features and functional (closed set, semantic ‘bleaching’) characteristics may be best viewed as semi-lexical. In the words of Bhattacharya (2001), while facts pertaining to quantifier-float and agreement make the complex Num-Cla in Bengali lexical, ‘its relative closed class properties and lack of descriptive content makes it functional. This ambiguity in status confirms its semi-lexicality’.

Having thus established the semi-lexical nature of N_1 in pseudo-partitive constructions in Romanian and showing that it may be viewed as a classifier, I now turn to two problems that do not follow from the theory. One regards the status of the preposition *de / of*, which so far has not received an account. The other regards the co-occurrence of the classifier and the number morpheme. The next section undertakes to gather the evidence in favor of the view that Romanian pseudo-partitives are single extended projections with one lexical and one semi-lexical head.

2.3. Romanian partitives as single extended projections

2.3.1. Evidence coming from agreement

The discussion of classifiers used in the so-called pseudo-partitive constructions has hinted so far that agreement phenomena are one of the most powerful tools that can be employed to demonstrate the functional or semi-lexical nature of N_1 .

Agreement is important at this point in the analysis because it helps to demonstrate that, although consisting of two members, pseudo-partitive constructions are single projections with a single referent (see van Riemsdijk 1998; Löbel 1999; Stavrou 2003).

The verb selects either N_1 or N_2 , as shown by the fact that it can agree in number with either of them:

- (36) a. Un număr de studenți mă așteptau pe hol.
 A number_{.SG} of students_{.PL} me were expecting on hallway.
 ‘a number of students were waiting for me on the hallway’
 b. Un număr mare de studenți a venit.
 A number_{.SG} big of students_{.PL} has come.
 ‘a big number of students have come’

The same variation in agreement is observed by Stavrou (2003), who discusses Greek pseudo-partitives like (37):

- (37) a. Iparhun /iparhi mia sira diavathmisis
 are /is a range_{.SG} gradations_{.PL}
 ‘there is a range of gradations’
 b. Ena buketo luludja itan pesmen-o/-a sto patoma.
 A bunch flowers was/were thrown on.the floor.
 ‘a bunch of flowers were thrown on the floor’

This kind of variation is expected if we assume that pseudo-partitives constitute a unitary phrase involving two nominal constituents. This ‘freedom’ of choice (see Stavrou, 2003) of the verb to select either of the two nouns within a single projection can only be accounted for if we take into consideration the categorical nature of the first noun, which is conceived of as

neither fully lexical nor entirely functional. Another prediction is that the lack of agreement between the verb and N_1 is more evident if the noun is closer to the functional end of the lexical-functional continuum.

To put it simply, we would expect N_1 in pseudo-partitive constructions to trigger agreement when N_1 has semi-lexical status; on the other hand, N_2 is expected to trigger agreement when N_1 has functional status. This distinction mirrors the one proposed by Doetjes & Rooryck (2003) between ‘pure degree’ and ‘comparative’ interpretations of pseudo-partitives. In (38a), the noun *vârf* ‘peak’ triggers agreement on the adjective and is thus assigned semi-lexical status, while in (38b), the noun *sare* ‘salt’ triggers agreement on the adjective, which is a clue to the functional or ‘pure degree’ status of *pic* ‘a little’. In other words, in (51a) the classifier is in the middle of the lexical-functional continuum and it is not fully grammaticalized, while in (38b) the classifier is fully grammaticalized and has reached the functional end of the continuum.

- (38) a. Un vârful de sare este suficient.
 A peak.MASC of salt.FEM is sufficient.MASC
 ‘a sprinkle of salt is sufficient’
 b. Un pic de sare este suficientă.
 A little.MASC of salt.FEM is sufficient.FEM.
 ‘a little salt is sufficient’

Other similar examples in Romanian may point to the fact that N_1 container nouns trigger agreement and are, therefore, interpreted as semi-lexical (39a-b), while N_1 quantifier-like nouns (see van Riemsdijk 1998) are less likely to trigger agreement and are, therefore, interpreted as functional (40a-b).

- (39) a. Un pahar / degetar / țap / butoi / borcan de bere este
 a glass / thimble / mug / barrel / jar.MASC of beer.FEM is
 sufficient.
 sufficient.MASC
 b. o damigeană / canistră / sticlă / cană de vin este suficientă.
 A demijohn / canister / bottle / mug.FEM of wine.MASC is sufficient.FEM
- (40) a. un strop de mândrie este necesară.
 a drop.MASC of pride.FEM is necessary.FEM
 ‘a little pride is necessary’
 b. o grămadă de orgoliu este nenecesar.
 A pile.FEM of pride.MASC is unnecessary.MASC
 ‘a lot of pride is unnecessary’

To conclude this section, pseudo-partitives in Romanian are single multi-headed projections. Agreement in variation depends on the semi-lexical or functional status of N_1 . N_1 is an instantiation of the feature complex [+Functional, -Grammatical] (see van Riemsdijk 1998; Stavrou 2003) – it is a non grammatical category with functional features and behavior.

2.3.2. Evidence coming from selection

It seems that selection is powerful evidence in favor of considering partitives single projections containing one lexical and one functional head. In Dutch partitives, selection is between the predicate and either N_1 or N_2 . In (41) the verb *turn over* may select either the object *tray* or the second noun – *pastries*, resulting in two interpretations, one in which the tray gets turned over and the other in which the pastries get turned over:

- (41) Zij hebben een schaal (met) gebakjesomgestoten.
They have a tray (with) pastries turned-over.

If we consider the Romanian equivalents of (41), the first observation is that the two readings emerge in relation to two distinct prepositions: *de* ‘of’ vs. *cu* ‘with’. In (42a) the reading is that in which many pastries have been turned over (the tray is the container), while in (42b) the tray gets turned over.

- (42) a. Ei au răsturnat o tavă de prăjituri. AMBIGUOUS
They have overturned a tray of pastries
‘they have overturned a tray of pastries’
b. Ei au răsturnat o tavă cu prăjituri. NON-AMBIGUOUS
They have overturned a tray with pastries.
‘they have overturned a tray with pastries’

Of course, if the main verb is a verb imposing strong selectional restrictions on its object, such as *a mânca* ‘eat’, the reading in which only the tray is affected is odd. This will be taken as evidence that in (43a), the verb selects *prăjituri* ‘pastries’ as object, while in (43b) it selects *tavă* ‘tray’:

- (43) a. Ei au mâncat o tavă de prăjituri.
they have eaten a tray of pastries
b. ??Ei au mâncat o tavă cu prăjituri.
They have eaten a tray with pastries

In the light of these considerations I will consider, therefore, that sentences like (42a) contain a semi-lexical noun which comes to be used as a ‘classifier’.

It seems that N_1 can have either a quantificational (see 43a) or a referential interpretation (see 43b). In the former case, it indicates a certain amount or quantity while in the latter case it refers to an actual object, one that is present in the universe of discourse. As the Modern Grammar of Dutch (2003) maintains, the fact that N_1 can be a discourse referent can be made clear by means of pronominal reference. In the example in (44a) – taken from MGD, section 2.4. (2003) – N_1 satisfies the selection restriction of the verb *vasthouden* ‘to hold’, and it must refer to an actual object in the domain of discourse. The construction contains two referential expressions and pronouns can be used to refer back to either of these expressions. In (44b) the pronoun *het* refers back to the neuter noun *glas* and in (44c), the pronoun *ze* refers back to the feminine *melk*:

- (44) a. Jan houdt een glas_i melk_j vast.
Jan holds a glass [of] milk prt.

- b. Het_i is mooi versierd.
It is beautifully decorated.
- c. Ze_j is zuur.
It is sour

When N₁ has a quantificational interpretation (45a), using the pronoun *het* to refer back to the quantificational expression gives a semantically anomalous result (45b). On the other hand, the pronoun *ze* corresponding to N₂ *melk* can be used to refer back to the quantificational expression (45c), which indicates that N₁ doesn't have a reference in this case but is used quantificationally.

- (45) a. Jan drinkt een glas_i melk_j.
Jan drinks a glass [of] milk
- b. *Het_i is mooi versierd.
It is beautifully decorated.
- c. Ze_j is zuur.
It is sour.

If we construct similar examples in Romanian, facts related to agreement with the copular AP and to pronominal anaphora point to the same interpretation. When the verb imposes strong selectional restrictions on N₁, like *a ține* 'to hold', N₁ has a referential interpretation and it refers to an actual object in the discourse domain (46a). The construction contains two referential expressions: *sticlă* 'bottle' and *lapte* 'milk', which can be referred to by means of the pronouns *ea* for the feminine *sticlă* (46b) and *el* for the masculine substance noun *lapte* (46c):

- (46) a. Ion ține o sticlă_i de lapte_j.
Ion holds a bottle of milk
- b. (Ea) e spartă
(she_i) is broken.FEM
'it is broken'
- c. (El) e acru
(he_j) is sour.MASC
'it is sour'.

When N₁ has a purely quantificational interpretation (47a) – in other words, when it functions as a classifier – we can only refer back to the substance noun *lapte* (47b), since the classifier does not refer to an actual object that is present in the universe of discourse:

- (47) a. Ion a băut o sticlă_i de lapte_j.
Ion drank a bottle of milk.
- b. *(Ea) e spartă.
(she_i) is broken.FEM
'it is broken'.
- c. El e acru
(he_j) is sour.MASC
'it is sour'

All these observations point to the fact that N_2 can (and more often than not, is) the semantic head of the construction. A verb like *a fuma* ‘smoke’ selects a complement which refers to some substance that can be smoked, i.e. tobacco, or to an object made out of this substance (48a). A complement like *cutie* ‘box’ does not satisfy the selection restriction of the verb (48b), but a pseudo-partitive expression like *cutie de trabucuri* ‘box of cigars’ is acceptable. This reinforces the view that N_2 can satisfy the selection restrictions of the verb and can be regarded as the semantic head of the construction:

- (48) a. Ion a fumat un trabuc.
 Ion has smoked a cigar
 b. *Ion a fumat o cutie.
 Ion has smoked a box.
 c. Ion a fumat o cutie de trabucuri.
 Ion has smoked a box of cigars.

To conclude this sub-section, it is often the case that N_2 is the semantic head of the pseudo-partitive construction, i.e. the verb selects N_2 rather than N_1 to satisfy its selectional restrictions. The immediate consequence is that N_1 can be effectively construed as a functional or semi-lexical item, i.e. a classifier, which designates amount or quantity but has no actual referent. Therefore, facts related to selection support our analysis of pseudo-partitives as single extended projections, with one semi-lexical head (the classifier) and one lexical head.

2.3.3. Evidence coming from interpretation

While it makes sense to claim that the underlying structure of *that idiot of a doctor is the doctor is a idiot*, which clearly points to a relation of predication, I claim that the same does not hold of structures like *a bottle of wine* or *twenty DE students*. Consider (49) and (50) with examples from English and Romanian, respectively:

- (49) a. a crook of a minister = the minister is a crook
 b. a number of examples = ??? the examples are a number
 c. a bottle of wine = ??? the wine is a bottle
- (50) a. un boboc de fată = fata e un boboc
 a bud of girl = the girl is a bud
 b. o pereche de exemple = ??? exemplele sunt o pereche
 a pair of examples = ??? the examples are a pair
 c. un pahar de lapte = ??? laptele e un pahar
 a glass of milk = ??? the milk is a glass
 d. treizeci de motociclete = ??? motocicletele sunt treizeci
 thirty DE motorcycles = ??? motorcycles are thirty

In the examples a. of (49) and (50) N_1 is predicated of N_2 . More specifically, the construction is used to express evaluative metaphoric comparison; N_2 is compared to the entity denoted by N_1 , which is clear from the fact that the construction is sometimes paraphrased as ‘a minister like a crook / the girl is like a bud’. In sharp contrast, the paraphrases for the examples b, c and d clearly show that the constructions are not based on a relation of predication. This

standpoint has two immediate consequences: a) the derivation of these constructions is not the result of predicate inversion and *de/of* is not a nominal copula; b) the relation is of a different nature, call it *classification*, which can best be captured by a syntactic configuration which contains a single extended projection, with *de/of* marking the transition from one semi-lexical (or functional) domain and one lexical domain.

2.3.4. Evidence coming from modification and sub-extraction phenomena

I already mentioned that fact that the classifier becomes semantically ‘bleached’, and is thus transparent to modification. In (51a), the modifier ‘wonderful’ obviously modifies the second noun in the construction. The same applies to (51b,c). Romanian examples are available in (52):

- (51) a. a wonderful cup of tea
 b. a stupid gang of schoolboys
 c. a sexy bunch of girls
- (52) a. o gașcă idioată de huidume
 a gang idiotic of bullies
 ‘an idiotic gang of bullies’
 b. o sticlă minunată de șampanie
 a bottle wonderful of champagne
 ‘a wonderful bottle of champagne’
 c. un stol grăbit de școlărițe
 a bevy hurried of schoolgirls
 ‘a hurried bevy of schoolgirls’

The adjectives modifying the first noun obviously refer semantically to the second noun. The fact the pseudo-partitive as a whole can be modified by attributive modifiers that rather belong to N_2 than N_1 suggests the fact that the semantic head of the construction is N_2 . This falls in neatly with our analysis, which predicts that N_1 is a classifier and in this capacity, i.e. quantificational force, it shouldn’t be sensitive to modification. In the same vein of thought, if we consider pseudo-partitives as single multi-headed projections, modification facts point to N_2 as the lexical head of the extended nominal projection (which can be modified by attributive modifiers) and to N_1 as the functional / semi-lexical head of the same projection, which is transparent to modification.

In addition to the obvious semantic relation between the modifier and the modifée, in Romanian the modifier agrees in number and gender with the first noun, a clear indication of headedness. I take these facts to indicate that the so-called pseudo-partitive constructions in Romanian contain a lexical head (modified by the adjective) and one functional noun, i.e. a classifier, which is transparent to modification.

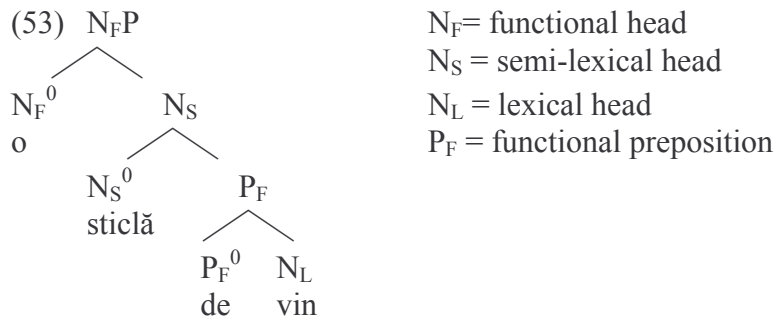
2.3.5. A final note on N_1 in pseudo-partitives as semi-lexical heads – the syntactic configuration

I will capitalize on suggestions made by van Riemsdijk (1998) and Borer (2005) and consider pseudo-partitive constructions in Romanian as involving a single extended projection. The

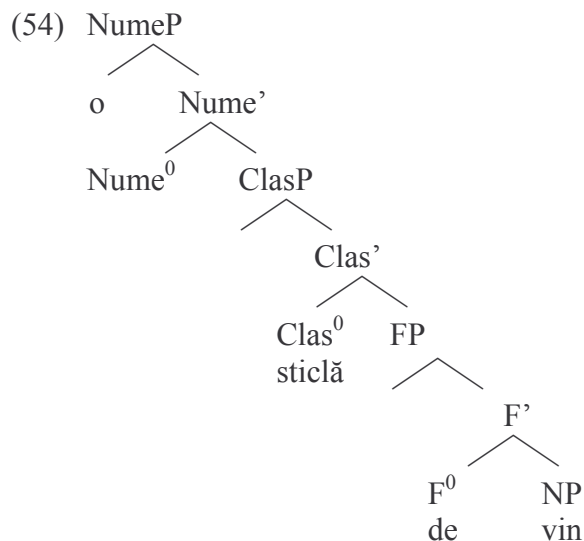
classifier phrase is headed by a semi-lexical or ‘quasi-functional’ item (Borer, 2005), such as *sticlă (de vin)* ‘bottle of wine’ or *ceașcă (de ceai)* ‘cup of tea’³.

As for the status of the ‘dangling’ *of* (Corver, 1998), it may simply be regarded as a functional preposition (van Riemsdijk, 1998) or a marker of phrasal nominal boundary (Borer, 2005).

The syntactic structure I am going to assume (implicitly and explicitly) is the one proposed by van Riemsdijk (1998) for pseudo-partitives, which is governed by the law of categorial feature magnetism:



I will transcribe the syntactic structure of a pseudo-partitive as given in (54) to capture the essence of my proposal, i.e. N_S is a classifier:



I have argued that the so-called pseudo-partitives in Romanian and English are better viewed as classifier phrases headed by a semi-lexical or quasi-functional noun. Therefore, our initial premise, i.e. that the mass noun taken from the lexicon is in need of partitioning, before it interacts with the count system, is supported by the data coming from pseudo-partitives.

The next section of my paper will tackle the issue of classifier projections as a matter of UG. If Borer (2005) takes complementary distribution as the hallmark of identity, therefore

³ Henk van Riemsdijk (personal communication) pointed out the fact that, in some registers of English, *cup of tea* becomes contracted – *cuppa*, as in *Let's have a cuppa*. This is also taken as evidence arguing contra predicate inversion and for considering pseudo-partitives as single (extended projections).

proposing that NumPs and ClasPs perform the same function – that of dividing the stuff denoted by the noun, I will refine the analysis and propose that, in ‘plural languages’, NumPs and ClasPs are not in complementary distribution. I will claim that ClasPs project cross-linguistically and parameterize languages as follows:

1. exclusively ‘classifier’ languages, i.e. Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai, etc.
2. ‘plural-classifier’ languages, i.e. English, Romanian, Italian, etc.

The languages in the first group project a ClasP, which conflates the roles of the morphologic number and that of the classifier. A ClasP in such languages will be responsible for dividing the stuff denoted by the noun and making it syntactically visible for countability.

The languages in the second group project both a ClasP and a NumP. The head of the ClasP may be filled with lexical material – as in the case of pseudopartitive constructions – or, building on Kayne’s (2003) proposal, with an abstract noun NUMBER.

3. *A ClasP for everyone*

This section is devoted to an in-depth analysis of classifiers as universal classificatory devices. In arguing for a universally legitimate Classifier Phrase, I will go along the main tenets of Doetjes (1997), Cheng and Sybesma (1999), Borer (2005). At the same time, however, I will depart from the strict parameterization of languages as either classifier or non-classifier languages (implicitly or explicitly assumed by the above-mentioned).

While still maintaining that the role of plural inflection in languages with plural morphology is the same as the role of classifier inflection in classifier languages, I will propose a new dimension of study to this analysis. Specifically, my claim is that classifiers project universally; when there is no classifier inflection, silent (semi-lexical) nouns come to the forefront (see Leu 2004, van Riemsdijk 2005, Kayne 2003).

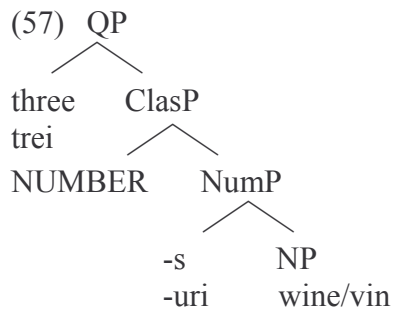
3.1. *Silent classifiers*

In his analysis of *few* and *many* as adjectives modifying a silent noun NUMBER, Kayne (2005) notes that NUMBER can be conceived of as occurring with numerals, in classifier-like fashion:

(55) John has three NUMBER books.

Extending his analysis of *few* and *many* as adjectives of a silent noun NUMBER (59), nouns in ‘plural-classifier’ languages can be conceived of as projecting a NumP – which is responsible for divisibility – and a ClasP – which is responsible for identifying the portions divided by NumP, before they interact with numerals.

(56) John has few books = John has few NUMBER books.



The postulation of unpronounced NUMBER in (55) is supported by the fact that the adjective *few* can also modify the overt noun *number* (58a); in the same way, the overt *number* may sometimes appear in exclamative constructions (58b), which otherwise contain an empty classifier head (58c). These constructions will be analyzed in detail in the next subsection.

- (58) a. John has too few a number of books / the fewest number of books.
 b. Ce număr mare de mașini sunt aici!
 What number big of cars are here
 ‘what a great number of cars!’
 c. Ce de mașini sunt aici!
 What of cars are here
 ‘what a great number of cars!’

Therefore, it is conceivable and theoretically intuitive to allow a classifier projection above the number projection. What is still missing is some evidence as to the existence of a silent semi-lexical noun in its head. This is what the next section does. In analyzing some exclamatory constructions in Dutch and Romanian, the overall purpose is to show that they are based on a relation of modification of a silent noun NUMBER. Another interesting thing is that the functional preposition *de / of* will have a role to play in these constructions, too.

3.2. Silent nouns and exclamatives – evidence for NUMBER

This section will discuss exclamative constructions in Romanian. The analysis is meant to show that this type of construction contains a silent noun NUMBER. The presence of the silent noun is linked with the presence of the *de*-element, which has been analyzed in the previous sections as a functional preposition making the transition between the functional and the lexical domains of a partitive construction.

Consider the following examples:

- (59) a. Ce case au unii!
 What houses have some (people)
 ‘some have such big/beautiful houses!’
 b. Ce de case au unii!
 What of houses have some (people)
 ‘some have so many houses!’

(59a) can only be an exclamation about some salient property of houses, for example their being large or beautiful; on the other hand, (59b) exclaims about the relatively large number of the houses in question.

In this respect, Romanian differs from languages like English or Dutch, where what-exclamatives are consistently ambiguous between an interpretation where the number of elements is involved and an interpretation some other ‘relatively excessive property’ (van Riemsdijk (2005) is marveled at:

- (60) a. Wat heeft die auto een deuken! (van Riemsdijk 2005)
 What has that car a dents
 ‘what dents that car has!’
 b. What dents that car has!

(60) may be uttered to exclaim either about the relatively large number of car dents or about the type of dents, i.e. their large size or their deformation. In contrast, in the case of Romanian what-exclamatives what seems to make the difference is the element *de / of*.

It seems safe to assume that the *de*-exclamative construction in Romanian involves the silent noun NUMBER while the *de*-less construction may be viewed as containing the silent KIND / TYPE / SORT (see Leu 2005, van Riemsdijk 2005). Moreover, whenever the overt *number* is present, *de* is obligatory:

- (61) a. Ce de băieți la petrecere! = Ce NUMĂR de băieți la petrecere !
 What of boys at party = what NUMBER of boys at party
 ‘there are so many boys at the party’
 b. Ce băieți sunt la petrecere! = Ce TIP băieți sunt la petrecere!
 What boys are at party! = What KIND boys are at party
 ‘the boys at the party are really handsome, tall, etc’
 c. Ce număr mare *(de) băieți la petrecere!
 What number big *(of) boys at the party!
 ‘what a great number of boys are at the party!’

The same can be noticed when mass nouns are involved. There are two patterns: one involving *de* and presumably, a silent noun, which can be paraphrased as AMOUNT (see Kayne 2003) and a *de*-less pattern, which exclaims about some relevant property of the noun (and not its amount):

- (62) a. Ce de vin a băut! = Ce CANTITATE de vin a băut
 What of wine has drunk = what AMOUNT of wine has drunk
 ‘What an amount of wine did the guy drink!’
 b. Ce vin au avut la petrecere! = ce TIP vin au avut la petrecere!
 What wine have had at party = what KIND wine have had at party
 ‘What a good wine they had at the party!’

Another interesting pattern has to do with abstract nouns. Consider (63):

- (63) a. Ce tristețe / bucurie e aici! = ce CANTITATE tristețe / bucurie e aici
 What sadness / joy is here = what AMOUNT sadness / joy is here
 ‘What sadness/joy!’
 b.?? Ce de tristețe / bucurie e aici = ce NUMĂR tristețe / bucurie e aici
 What of sadness / joy is here = what NUMBER sadness / joy is here

Since the *de*-element is taken to indicate the presence of silent NUMBER, (63b) is odd. The oddity comes from the fact that abstract nouns and NUMBER do not go together. The mass interpretation of an abstract noun like *sadness* is coerced by NUMBER into a count interpretation.

A piece of evidence for silent nouns acting as classifiers has thus been found. It is interesting to notice that the functional preposition *de*, which was shown to play an important role in the case of pseudo-partitive constructions, also surfaces in the case of silent classifiers. Pseudo-partitives have been shown to consist of a single extended projection with one quasi-functional element, i.e. the classifier and one lexical element, the *de*-element marking the transition between the two. In a parallel manner, seemingly ‘discontinuous’ constituents like *what of* in Romanian are shown to consist of one semi-lexical silent noun (see van Riemsdijk 1998, 2005, Kayne 2003) and a lexical noun, with the same *de*-element marking the transition.

4. Conclusion

To conclude my exposition, there are sufficient pieces of evidence to postulate a Classifier Phrase across languages. My proposal was that, in ‘plural languages’, i.e. languages with plural morphology, NumPs and ClasPs are not in complementary distribution, as implicit in Borer (2005). I have amassed evidence in favor of the claim that ClasP project cross-linguistically and parameterize languages as:

1. ‘classifier’ languages, i.e. Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai, etc.
2. ‘plural-classifier’ languages, i.e. English, Romanian, Italian, etc.

The languages in the first group project a ClasP, which conflates the roles of the morphologic number and that of the classifier. A ClasP in such languages is responsible for dividing the stuff denoted by the noun and making it syntactically visible for countability (see Doetjes 1997; Sybesma 2006).

The languages in the second group project both a ClasP and a NumP. The head of the ClasP may be filled with semi-lexical material (see van Riemsdijk 1998, 2003) – as in the case of pseudopartitive constructions – or, building on Kayne’s (2003) proposal, with an abstract noun NUMBER.

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