

'Partitive Articles' in Old Spanish and Old Portuguese?

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keywords: partitive articles, bare partitives, Old Iberoromance, representative object interpretations, weak referentiality

Functional historical linguists have claimed that in contexts lacking maximality/familiarity (Hawkins 1978, Heim 1982), Old Spanish (OSp) *del* (1a) and Old Portuguese (OPt) *do* are so-called *partitive articles* (cf., e.g., Lapesa 1964 and Mattos e Silva 2008). Partitive articles (PAs) are indefinite determiners (Ihsane 2008, Dobrovie-Sorin/Beyssade 2012) available in Modern Gallo- (1b) and Italo-Romance. They correspond to bare nouns in Mod. Spanish/Portuguese and – in the singular – are mass determiners (Stark 2008, against Chierchia 1998):

- (1) a. OSp. *destiépren=la [...]* *con* ***del*** *vinagre* *fuerte*
 dissolve.IMP.3PL=3FSG.ACC with **PA?** vinegar strong
 'Dissolve it with [?] strong vinegar.' (Gerardus Falc., 13th century)
- b. Mod.Fr. *la=dissoudre* *avec* ***(du)** *vinaigre* *fort*
 3FSG.ACC=dissolve.INF with **PA.MSG** vinegar strong
 'to dissolve it with vinegar'

Crucially, both functional (Körner 1981, Carlier/Lamiroy 2014) and formal (Stark 2008, Gerards/Stark 2020) typological approaches on the availability of PAs predict OSp/OPt not to allow such elements. This is because both languages possess unambiguous nominal number marking and differential object marking, taken to be in cross-linguistically complementary distribution with PAs in Romance. The research question (RQ) of the contribution, hence, is to assess if OSp *del* (1a) and OPt *do* really do falsify established typological generalizations on the availability of PAs – i.e., mass determiners – in Romance systems of nominal determination.

Methodology: The RQ is tackled by means of a theoretically-informed study of four data sets from the corpora *CORDE* and *CdP* (n = 3,144; 12th–20th century) and from 20 OSp/6 OPt technical treatises (n = 2,960; 13th–17th century). The data – annotated for 21 external, lexical, (morpho)syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic criteria – are analyzed by help of conditional inference tree-based random forests as well as binomial mixed logistic regression modelling.

Results: I show that OSp *del* (1a) and OPt *do* are never PAs. Hence, these languages do not falsify typological approaches on the availability of PAs in Romance. Instead, the nominals studied are always *bare partitives* (BPs, Hoeksema 1996), i.e., binominal expressions with PPs embedding a superset-denoting definite. Yet, I demonstrate that in 13th–15th-century OSp/OPt, such superset definites are not always strong definites but may, possibly as a Romance innovation, get weakly referential *representative object interpretations* (ROIs; cf. Krifka et al. 1995). ROI-nominals yield type readings by means of what may be considered 'deferred' kind reference: they denote inherently non-specific, semantically number neutral regular objects relevant only as *typical* instantiations of their corresponding kinds (cf. *In Alaska we filmed the grizzly*, i.e., 'the animal type URSUS ARCTOS HORRIBILIS'). The arguments adduced for the ROI-analysis of the supersets in OSp/OPt *del/do*-nominals (1a; cf. Gerards 2020) – favored by post-modification, priming by other ROI-nominals, and preferably used to introduce important discourse referents – comprise (a) the restriction of such nominals to technical prose, (b) their compatibility with unambiguous kind-level modifiers and (c) with modifiers evincing non-specificity, (d) their being demonstrably semantically number neutral, and (e) the attestation of other determiners with ROI-readings in OSp/OPt. As the availability of ROI-supersets in bare partitives has, so far, largely gone unnoticed (but cf. Oosterhof 2006 on Dutch), the analysis provided is not only relevant for Romance (historical) linguistics but also makes a significant contribution to the cross-linguistic study of the semantics of (bare) partitives.

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