Ellipsis in DPs: Covert Partitives vs. Covert Proportions

Michelangelo Falco
Leibniz-Centre General Linguistics (ZAS)

Roberto Zamparelli
CIMeC, University of Trento

1. Partitives vs. Proportions in Italian

Post-V numerals: the NP pro-form *ne* (1) is obligatory inserted; the ambiguity seen with pre-V numerals (I) persists.

(1) (Oggi) **ne**$_i$ ho   sentite [tre t_i].   **DL / NDL** with "today"
    (Today) **ne**$_i$ I have heard   [three t_i]
    'I heard three'

Pre-V proportions: (2) obligatory DL reading $\neq$ numerals (I).

(2) [La   metà]$_{i \subset j}$ sono esplose   oggi.   **DL** (so, odd)
       the half   are   exploded$_{Pl.Fem.}$ today.

Post-V proportions: (3) the pro-form *ne* (3) is obligatory inserted; either reading is possible (with *ne*)

(3) (Oggi) **ne** ho   sentite   [la metà].   **DL / NDL** with "today"
    (Today) **ne** I have heard$_{Pl.Fem.}$ [the half].

Experiment: judgments confirmed with a pool of 24 native speakers.
Pre-V position: there is a **strong difference in the possibility of DL between numerals and proportions**.

Post-V position: the **non-DL reading of *la metà* is acceptable with plural verb agreement**.

2. Proposal: Ellipsis in Numerals and in Proportions

• **Non-DL readings contain an NP**, elided in pre-V (I), or picked up by the pro-NP *ne* in post-V position (1).

(4) [$_{DP}$ 3 [$_{NP}$ bombs]]

• **DL readings are partitives** (5a), where [*of the bombs*] is the complex NP shown in the tree on the side, with the semantics in (5b); this complex NP is elided pre-V ((I), (2)) and picked-up by the pro-NP *ne* in Italian post-V (1).

(5) a. [$_{DP}$ 3 [$_{NPj}$ of the bombs]]   *see →*
     b. [of the bombs] = Pl($[\![$bomb$]\!]$)−Max(Pl($[\![$bomb$]\!]$))
        'the plural denotation of bomb+s, minus its maximal element'

• *metà* is an alternative to the abstract partitive head *part*, internal to NP$_j$ (see tree). For this reason *la metà* in pre-V position has only the **DL reading** (6).

(6) La metà {*bombe / *di bombe / delle bombe}
     the half {*bombs / *of bombs / of_the bombs}

Note, however, that **in post-V position (still with *ne*) *la metà* has the possibility of NDL readings** (3) (see §4).

Problem: which is the source of **referentially dependent - aka D-linked (DL) - interpretations**?

(I) [Ten bombs]$_j$ exploded yesterday in this town.
    a. [Three]$_{i \subset j}$ were cluster bombs.   **D-Linked**
   b. [Three] exploded today.   **Non DL**, other bombs

Variables considered
• Type of det: numeral vs. quantifier vs. proportion.
• Position: pre-V vs. post-V.
• Language: Italian vs. English.

Proposal: ellipsis in DPs
• The DL reading is due to the presence of an elided, NP-based partitive structure.
• Quantifiers that do not allow overt PPs (e.g. Eng: *someone*, Ita: *nulla* 'nothing') do not allow DL.
• Quantifiers that only allow partitive complements (Ita: *la metà* 'half') only allow DL readings (modulo elided bare plural objects).

DL Structure (Falco and Zamparelli 2019):
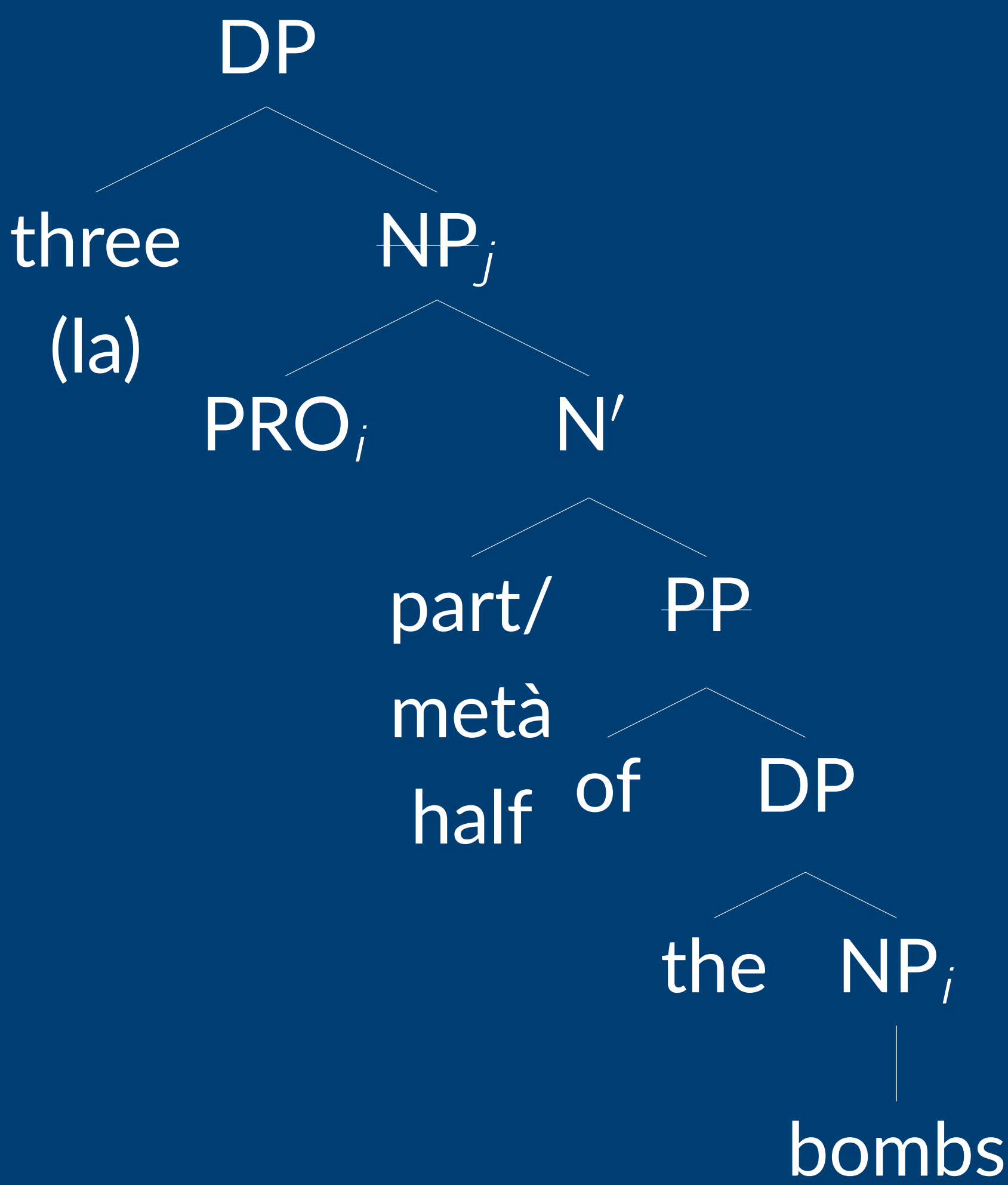
*
Selected reference
Falco, M. and R. Zamparelli (2019). Partitives and partitivity. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 4(1), 1–49.

Reference

---

3. Ellipsis in Quantifiers: DL $\neq$ Quantifier Restrictions

(7) Everybody came to my party!

Quantifiers undergo *domain restrictions*: in (7) *everybody* refers to every person in a contextually restricted set (e.g. my friends). This suggests an **alternative account**: DL/NDL could be both based on (4) (+N ellipsis), but **in DL readings N would be restricted to contextually relevant objects** (e.g. the 10 bombs that exploded yesterday).

All quantifiers can have domain restrictions, but not all can support overt partitives (non-part det).

language	part-det	non part-det
English	some (of the people) each (of the people) none (of the people) …	somebody (*of the …) everybody (*of the …) nobody (*of the …) nothing (*of the …)
Italian	nessuno 'no/no-one'(✓+part) qualcuno 'some/someone' (✓ +part) …	nulla 'nothing' (*+part) niente 'nothing' (*+part) entrambi 'both' (*+part)

Experiment: given a context like (8), 24 native speakers judged if the sentences with part-dets (8a) and non part-dets (8b) meant "det person in the courtyard pred" vs. "det girl pred".

(8) Three boys were waiting in the courtyard when five girls arrived.
     a. [Some / None] {had a colorful hat / spoke for a while}.   **part det**
     b. [Someone / Everybody / Nobody] {had a colorful hat / spoke for a while}.   **non-part det**

Result: **the non-partitive determiners** in (8b) **cover the whole group** (the persons, not just the girls). Analogous results in tests on inanimates (e.g. with Italian *nulla* 'nothing').

4. The Sources of *ne* and NDL in Proportions

Italian has (at least) two *ne*-s (Cordin 1988). **1. a pro-NP** (cf. Eng. 'one(s)'), found only after D$_{Indef}$ in non-predicative position (9);

(9) Amici,   **ne** {ho   3 / *ho   ognuno   / *sono 3}
     friends, **ones** {I_have 3 / have every-one / are   3}

2. a pro-PP found after relational nouns, which can move over strong Qs and out of predicates (10).

(10) Quel quadro? Ugo **ne**   {è l'autore   / conosce ogni dettaglio}
       That painting? Ugo **of_it** {is the author / knows   each detail}

1. La metà + pro-NP *ne* → NDL reading. Problem: pro-NP *ne* cannot be part of the DP containing *la metà*; reason: selection properties of *la metà*: only 'la metà+PP' is possible (see (6)). **Proposal: a) *ne* corresponds to a Bare Plural object** (i.e. 'bombs' in (11)), hence the obligatory plural agreement; **b) *la metà* is a VP modifier** (cf. *leri ho dormito 8 ore, oggi, la metà* 'yesterday I slept 8 hours, today, the half').

(11) Ho   sentito bombe, la   metà.
        I have heard   bombs, the half.

2. La metà + pro-PP *ne* → partitive-based DL reading ((3) - ne = 'of the bombs'): *la metà* is a relational noun, so it can license pro-PP *ne* in our DL tree and permit its extraction, also out of predicates (12).

(12) Vedi quello spago? Questo pezzo **ne**   è la   metà esatta.
       See that   string? This   piece **of_it** is the half exact

Z A S CIMeC