

Towards diachronic typology of partitive expressions Ilja A.

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A partitive expression is a construction that encodes part-whole relationship between two referents (*a cup of that tea*). In this talk, I focus on what kind of meanings and functions these constructions develop in addition to or, sometimes, instead of, the original part-whole meaning. More specifically, I focus on partitive expressions that can be used without the head constituent, henceforth PE, (like ‘*of that tea*’).

In many languages, these expressions undergo very versatile developments. Thus, they enter the domain of *indefiniteness* and *non-specificity* which is typically handled by determiners otherwise, cf. Russian *ja kupil konfet* (1SG buy.PST.M.SG candy.GEN.PL) ‘I bought (some) candies.’ In this example, the candies concerned are indefinite and often non-specific. The indefiniteness of the PE-encoded referents is sometimes related to *discourse backgroundedness*: the PE-marked NP typically has low cataphoric potential; it is part of a larger focus constituent and never argument focus itself, etc.

Another function of PEs is to code *weak quantification* of the NP’s referent and, in some languages, of the hosting VP which has immediate implications for its aspectual interpretation, cf. Finnish *Hän avasi ikkunaa* (3SG open.PST.3SG window.PART.SG) ‘(S)he was opening the window’ or ‘(S)he somewhat opened the window.’ The PE-marked NP’s referent ‘window’ is affected holistically while the activity of opening the window is quantified (‘somewhat’). Historically immediately related to (i) is *predicate negation* (cf. Muller 1997 on French; Kiparsky 2011 on Finnish; Timberlake 1986, Padučeva 2006, Rakhilina, ed. 2000, Harves 2013 or Guiraud-Weber 2014 on Russian; Arkadijev 2017+ on Lithuanian; Miestamo 2014 on cross-linguistic patterns). In some of these languages, it has developed into a syntactic rule requiring the PE marking on direct objects and existential subjects across the board if the negation scopes over the predicate, cf. Lithuanian *Jo/*Jis nėra namuose* (3SG.GEN/*3SG.NOM NEG.be.PRS.3 home) ‘He is not at home.’ Finally, *intensional verbs*, i.e. those verbs which allow the opaque (narrowest scope) reading of the object’s referent (cf. Quine 1960: §32; Zimmermann 1993), may favour (cf. Huumo 2013) and, subsequently, generalize the PE marking of their object as did the Lithuanian verb *ieškoti* ‘to seek, to look for’, which now requires the PE marking on its object.

Very often partitives develop into *pseudo-partitives*. While a true partitive construction (*a piece of that cake*) is the one that codes a *subset* (*a piece*) from a clearly defined *superset* (*that cake*) under the exclusion of the *complement* (all other pieces of that cake), a *pseudo-partitive* expression is the one in which a construction formally analogical to a true-partitive construction violates the Partitivity Constraint. The latter requires the superset to refer to sets identifiable by both the speaker and the hearer. A pseudo-partitive expression, in turn, has no restricted superset. The latter is replaced by a kind-referring expression (cf. *Yesterday I had a cup of tea*). With a kind referring expression, neither the complement nor the superset can be defined in terms of sets.

While the main line of research on partitivity and pseudo-partitivity has been concerned with the description of how the PEs apply in these different domains (cf. Huumo 2010), less work has been done to uncover the historical and areal development of the polysemy, i.e., how these meanings are historically interrelated. An important study of the diachrony of partitives encoded by the preposition *de/dē* in Romance is Carlier & Lamiroy (2014) based on evidence from Latin, Old Spanish and Old French, and, finally, the modern successors. These authors distinguish five stages in each of which they describe the semantic properties and syntactic properties. To our knowledge, this is the only study that provides a complete picture while others only treat particular aspects or diachronic stages. The present paper will elaborate on the diachronic aspects of partitives along these lines.

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