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**Linguistics : An Interdisciplinary Journal of the Language Sciences / Special Issue:
Shades of partitivity: Formal and areal properties**

Edited by: Ihsane, Tabea ; Stark, Elisabeth

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Tabea Ihsane* and Elisabeth Stark

Introduction: Shades of partitivity: Formal and areal properties

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Keywords: partitive article/pronoun/case marker, pseudopartitivity, indefiniteness, language contact, geographical distribution, nonstandard varieties/dialects

1 Introduction

This special issue stems from the workshop *Partitivity and Language Contact* held in 2016 at the university of Zurich, organized by David Paul Gerards, Tabea Ihsane, and Elisabeth Stark, and funded by the University Research Priority Program “Language and Space” (<https://www.spur.uzh.ch/en.html>). It gathers selected papers from the workshop’s participants. Partitivity is at the heart of a large international research network with more than 50 members from 18 countries initiated by Elisabeth Stark. It is also the topic of the three-year project *PARTE* (*PARTitivity in European languages* – <http://www.parte.humanities.uva.nl/>), directed by Petra Sleeman at the University of Amsterdam and started in 2017.

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This project is financed by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research NWO and co-financed by the University of Zurich, the University of Venice, the University of Pavia and the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. It gathers 16 researchers from 10 European universities and research institutes, both senior faculty and early career researchers, interested in the semantics, history, function and morphosyntax of elements expressing one or the other *shade of partitivity*.

One special interest of the partitivity network above-mentioned lies in the geographical distribution of partitive elements and in the identification of potential instances of language contact; another one, sometimes combined with the first one, in the formal description and explanation of different partitive constructions. These are the two overarching topics this special issue is about, with a strong and wide crosslinguistic (typological) coverage. The comparative work of this issue covers Romance languages (French, Gallo-Angevin French, Italian, different Northern Italian Dialects, like Piedmontese), Germanic languages (English, German, Dutch), Balto-Finnic languages (Finnish, Estonian), Balto-Slavic (Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian), but also Greek and Breton, and to a minor extent Basque, Mordvin, and Turkic and Mongolic languages.

1.1 Partitivity and partitive elements (PE)

In the last decades, interest in the notion of partitivity has continuously increased and given rise to considerable advances in research, both from a functional and formal perspective (cf. e. g., Glaser 1993; Hoeksema 1996; Ihsane 2008; Stark 2008a, 2008b, 2016; Carlier and Lamiroy 2014; Luraghi and Huumo 2014; Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016; Giusti and Sleeman In prep., among many others). However, many of the structural and also areal aspects of partitive elements, which we will use as a cover term in what follows to designate so-called “partitive articles”, partitive pronouns, and partitive case markers in the languages of Europe, are still largely under-researched topics.

The objective of this special issue, composed of ten articles, is twofold: first, determine whether (part of) the geographical/linguistic distribution of partitive elements can be accounted for in terms of language contact (borrowing), and, second, present and discuss, in a comparative perspective, the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of the different partitive elements mentioned above. Language contact is at the heart of Luraghi et al.’s contribution in this issue, but it is also addressed in five other papers of this special issue, namely the ones by Breu, Cardinaletti and Giusti, Cerruti and Regis, Garzonio and Poletto, and Stark and Widmer. Various aspects of the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of

partitive elements are discussed in all the articles of this issue, in particular in Alexiadou and Stavrou, Huumo, Mensching, and Sleeman and Ihsane.

Partitive elements (henceforth PE) can express different “shades” of partitivity, namely true partitivity, i. e., the indication of a part-whole relationship between an (un)specified subpart of a definite substance or set, pseudopartitivity, i. e., reference to an (un)specified subpart of an indefinite substance, or indefiniteness, without any part-whole relationship in the meaning. Some partitive elements, especially so-called “partitive articles” and pronouns, express (at least) two such notions, as they can be truly partitive, but often are not. As a result, the issues around partitivity are complex, interrelated and challenging.

Crosslinguistically, true partitivity can be encoded by a variety of grammatical means, such as case markers and adpositions followed by a definite nominal. The former are, for instance, typical of Finnic and Balto-Slavic languages, Ancient Greek, Basque, or Russian (see Breu; Huumo; Luraghi et al. this issue). In these languages, the morphological partitive or genitive case encodes true partitivity (but also pseudo-partitivity and indefiniteness; for other semantic features also encoded by the partitive/genitive case, see Huumo 2010 *inter alia*), in opposition to nominative/accusative/absolute, which denote the whole set of a definite referent (Luraghi and Kittilä 2014: 20):

(1) Finnish

- a. *Aino sö-i leipä-ä*
 Aino eat-PST.3SG bread-PART
 ‘Aino ate some of the bread.’ (or: ‘Aino ate bread.’)
- b. *Aino sö-i leivä-n*
 Aino eat-ST.3SG bread-ACC
 ‘Aino ate the (whole) bread.’
 (Luraghi and Seppo 2014: 19)

Adpositional encoding, in contrast, is the standard way to express true partitivity (and also pseudo-partitivity) in most Romance and Germanic languages (see Alexiadou and Stavrou; Cardinaletti and Giusti; Cerruti and Regis; Garzonio and Poletto this issue):

(2) Spanish

- Jaime comió mucho del pan*
 Jaime eat.PST.3SG a.lot of.DET.DEF bread
 ‘Jaime ate much of the bread.’

(3) German

Marie aß drei Scheiben vom Brot
 Marie eat.PST.3SG three slices of.DET.DEF bread
 ‘Marie ate three slices of the bread.’

However, so-called PEs are also found in contexts where true partitivity is not expressed, but rather pseudo-partitivity, or no partitivity at all, i. e., indefiniteness. This is typically the case of so-called “partitive articles” (e. g., *du, de la, des* [‘of.the’] in French) and so-called “partitive pronouns” (e. g., *ne* in Italian or *er* in Dutch; see Mensching; Sleeman and Ihsane; Stark and Widmer this issue), which are typologically highly marked, and whose labels are often misnomers (cf. Berends et al. 2017; Carlier and Melis 2006; Delfitto and Schrotten 1991; Herslund 2008; Ihsane 2008; Sleeman and Ihsane Accepted; Stark 2006, Stark 2008a, Stark 2008b). The most frequent interpretation of “partitive articles” is an indefinite reading (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006, Cardinaletti and Giusti 2016; Carlier and Melis 2006; Hilgert 2010; Storto 2003) comparable to the one of bare nouns in argument positions in other Romance languages (e. g., Spanish or Romanian (see Ihsane Forth.), but not necessarily in Brazilian Portuguese, see Kabatek and Wall 2013; Dobrovie-Sorin Forth, for a more nuanced position), Standard German, and English, as well as to a subset of the possible interpretations of specific partitive cases in other languages (cf. the alternative reading of [1a]).

The functions of “partitive articles” partially overlap with the uses of “partitive pronouns”, outcome of Latin *INDE* for Romance languages (cf. La Fauci and Loporcaro 1997) or Dutch *er* and *(d)(e)r(e/u)* in some Swiss and West Central German varieties, especially with plural count but also mass nouns (cf. Glaser 1993). As for constituency, in French, nominals with a “partitive article” are not always and not exclusively constituents pronominalized by *en* (Ihsane 2013). Conversely, in Catalan, such pronominalization is possible despite the absence of “partitive articles” in the language (see also Mensching 2008 on Sardinian).

Especially so-called “partitive articles” and “partitive pronouns” seem to be a very marked feature of European, mainly Romance languages and contact languages of them (Dutch, Alemannic varieties in Switzerland), often neglected by traditional and typological descriptive work, but worth being analyzed in detail for their semantic and morphosyntactic complexity. For all PEs, we are convinced that the study of non-standard varieties, and especially dialects, turns out to be indispensable, since standard languages may not always show natural tendencies because of explicit levelling and conscious codifications (cf. Matras 2004), and as language-contact takes place between naturally acquired rather than learnt varieties.

1.2 Research questions

1.2.1 Areal issues

Language contact has been proposed as a major explanation for the distribution of so-called “partitive articles” in Romance (cf. Bossong’s [2016: 69] “cline from south to north”; also Cerruti 2014). This issue has to be verified empirically, and it also raises the question whether the distribution of other PEs, such as case markers, are affected by language contact and whether effects of language contact can be observed in all parts of Europe. In case the geographical distribution of PEs is affected by language contact, the question arises whether PEs spread to adjacent varieties directly and/or whether they influence existing categories/elements of the “receiving” language (matter vs. pattern borrowing).

Furthermore, the question how dialects and standard languages (vertical language contact) influence each other is also directly relevant, just as the potential effects of language contact in the make-up of the morphosyntactic properties of PEs, and the realization of the cases related to partitivity (e. g., genitive, partitive, ablative).

As for “partitive articles”, they exist in several Italo- and Gallo-Romance varieties, such as Northern Italian (cf. Berruto 1974; Rohlfs 1968), Francoprovençal (cf. Kristol 2014), and Occitan, many of which are in direct contact with French (see e. g., Barthélemy-Vigouroux and Martin 2000, on Provençal) and/or Italian. This raises the question whether French and/or Italian have impacted the morphosyntax and semantics of “partitive articles” also in other languages and varieties. Whether there are alternative explanations for the distribution of PEs (e. g., some systematic correlation with other features) is a key issue.

In their contribution, Cardinaletti and Giusti (this issue), for instance, argue that the distribution of indefinite determiners in Italo-Romance, including so-called “partitive articles”, can most probably be related to diatopic variation due to language contact. This is shown by comparing present-day informal Italian with the dialectal data reported in *AIS* atlas (Jahberg and Jud 1928–1940). The areal distribution of partitive objects under negation in the Northern Italian Dialects is addressed by Garzonio and Poletto (this issue). As for Cerruti and Regis (this issue), they examine the main paradigmatic differences between partitive determiners in varieties of Piedmontese and discuss the role of contact between Piedmontese and standard Italian (as well as with French for some period) and to the “superposition” of both an official standard language like Italian and a regional koine over local varieties of Piedmontese.

Another non-Romance language that has been in situation of total language contact with Romance varieties is Molise Slavic. This language and the expression of partitivity in Slavic in different settings is discussed by Breu (this issue), who compares the role of case in expressing partitive objects in Russian, Croatian and Molise Slavic. More precisely, the author suggests that the difference between Slavic languages, which have partitive case and partitive genitive nouns, and Molise Slavic, in which direct objects remain in the accusative, could be due to language contact with Italian, which is caseless. He also investigates the origin of the particle *na* in Molise Slavic, which resembles the Italian partitive pronoun *ne* with respect to its form, but concludes that it is difficult to determine whether it is a case of matter borrowing (from an Italian dialectal source *nə*). Stark and (this issue) discuss the possibility of language-contact between Northern French varieties (French, Gallo) and Breton, which, as a Celtic language, shows surprising object-marking and pronominal variants based on the preposition *a*, semantically similar to French *de*. Given the considerable structural and functional differences between partitive determiners and pronouns in Gallo-Romance and the potential Breton equivalents, the authors refrain from a definite conclusion.

Finally, Finnic languages and Basque are also covered by the issue. In particular, Luraghi et al. examine the rise of the partitive case in Finnic languages and of the partitive case/determiner in Basque under the hypothesis of contact-induced change. The authors propose that the Basque partitive determiner arose through contact with Romance languages and that the partitive case in Finnic languages has arisen as a result of Balto-Slavic influence.

1.2.2 Formal issues

What the exact syntax (e. g., obligatoriness, syntactic distribution with different predicates and in different functions, internal structure) and semantic function of the (borrowed and/or autochthonous) elements involved are, as well as their behavior with regard to operators and scope, represent core questions of the second thematic focus of this special issue. Romance “partitive articles” are, for example, semantically and syntactically excluded in most truly partitive or pseudo-partitive constructions as in French: “**Je bois un verre de du vin*” [‘I drink a glass of PA¹ wine’] (Carlier and Lamiroy 2014; Luraghi and Kittilä 2014; but cf. Kupferman 1994, for some rare exceptions). This contrasts with bare nouns, however often compared to nominal phrases with a so-called “partitive

¹ PA stands for “partitive article” in the glosses.

article”, and also with nouns with partitive cases (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001) as well as the ancestor of the first component of Romance “partitive articles”, i. e., the Latin preposition *de*, which are fine in such contexts. In addition, the question of the nature of the *of*-type element appearing in languages like English and French but absent in Greek arises. Whether this element is similar to the one found in real partitive contexts needs to be determined. This implies investigating the referential and semantic properties of the complement of this *of*-element, for instance, e. g., whether it must be definite or not, or whether it can involve a mass and/or a count noun.

Obligatoriness and syntactic distribution of partitive determiners are discussed in detail in Cardinaletti and Giusti, who focus on informal Italian in dialect contact and show that partitive determiners are restricted to episodic sentences in limited geographic areas, but not in negative statements, i. e., in narrow scope indefinite contexts, which favor both the zero determiner and the definite article throughout the country.

Negative constructions and scope properties are examined in Stark and Widmer, who show that, in Breton, *a*-marking of internal arguments, for instance, under the scope of negation, are certainly not due to language-contact with Gallo-Romance despite some semantic parallels and one strong structural overlap. Negative contexts are further studied by Garzonio and Poletto, who focus on partitive objects under negation in the Northern Italian Dialects and who analyze these elements as a special type of grammaticalized partitive constructions with a silent quantifier licensed by the negation. As for the preposition *di*, the authors show that it expresses extraction from a “whole” suggesting that the development of partitive objects under negation is similar to the development of “partitive articles”. A difference between partitive objects under negation and nominals with “partitive articles” is, however, that the former have not lost their partitive meaning, unlike the latter.

Cerrutti and Regis investigate the similarities and differences in the use of partitive determiners between different varieties of Piedmontese, but also between such varieties and standard Italian. They show that two different ways of categorizing the relationship between mass noun and countable plurals can explain the main paradigmatic differences identified: one in which classification is foregrounded and one in which quantification prevails over classification.

Four contributions to the issue focus almost exclusively on formal and semantic aspects:

Pseudo-partitive constructions are examined by Alexiadou and Stavrou (also by Cardinaletti and Giusti). In particular, Alexiadou and Stavrou concentrate on the distribution of the preposition *apo* [‘of/from’] in Greek, which introduces the

partitive complement in partitive constructions but is absent from pseudo-partitive constructions. The preposition *de* in an alleged “partitive object” construction in Sardinian is discussed by Mensching. The author presents the syntactic distribution of this Sardinian construction with *de* and proposes that it is a case of Romance Clitic Right Dislocation with *de* on the dislocated constituent and a partitive clitic (*nde*) in the inflectional domain of the clause. In their contribution, Sleeman and Ihsane focus on the so-called “partitive pronoun” in Dutch and French, and the corresponding data in German (assumed not to have partitive pronouns in its standard variety) and develop an analysis accounting for the similarities and differences between these languages in relation to the presence/absence of the partitive pronoun in several different constructions and contexts. The impact of partitive elements on the aspectual properties of the sentence is the topic of Huumo’s contribution. The author reports on the interplay between quantifiers and the partitive–accusative case alternation in Finnish object marking, with special reference to the aspectual and quantificational semantics of the clause.

2 Summary of the papers

The articles in the issue are grouped in three parts, each focusing on one type of partitive element, that is, “partitive articles” (including adpositions), pronouns, and case markers, and each part contains several articles addressing contact issues and/or formal questions. The first part comprises four articles – Garzonio and Poletto, Cerruti and Regis, Cardinaletti and Giusti, and Alexiadou and Stavrou; the second part contains three – Stark and Widmer, Sleeman and Ihsane, and Mensching; and the last part also three papers – Breu, Luraghi et al., and Huumo. These contributions are summarized in the next sections.

2.1 The so-called “partitive article” and partitive adpositions

In the article “Partitive Objects in Negative Contexts in Northern Italian Dialects”, Jacopo Garzonio and Cecilia Poletto analyze indefinite (“partitive”) objects under negation (NPOs) in the Northern Italian dialectal area and discuss their diachronic and synchronic relation with both real partitive constructions and constructions with a “partitive article”. The authors examine the areal distribution of different determiners and bare nouns under the scope of negation, the syntactic variation and the different factors that regulate this variation. The main claim of the paper

is that NPOs in the Northern Italian Dialects are a special type of grammaticalized partitive constructions, where negation licenses a silent quantifier and the preposition expresses extraction from a whole. This analysis allows Garzonio and Poletto to account for the variation found with NPOs in the Northern Italian Dialects, i. e., to account for the fact that some dialects behave like French in having a bare preposition ‘of’ introducing the object in this syntactic context, while others use bare nouns or “partitive articles” in these contexts, or even both, like standard Italian.

Massimo Cerrutti and Riccardo Regis’ paper “Partitive determiners in Piedmontese: A case of language variation and change in a contact setting” addresses the use of partitive determiners in Piedmontese as a case in point for the interplay of language variation and change in Italo-Romance. The authors first provide a brief diachronic account of the development of partitive determiners in Piedmontese, before examining the behavior of partitive determiners in contemporary Piedmontese, drawing on unpublished materials. The study sheds light on the similarities and differences not only between different varieties of Piedmontese, but also between such varieties and standard Italian. The main paradigmatic differences identified in these varieties/languages are argued to relate to two different ways of categorizing the relationship between mass nouns and countable plurals, one in which quantification prevails over classification, and the other in which classification is foregrounded. This functional distinction is analyzed taking also into account the complex sociolinguistic situation of Piedmont, with continuous vertical language contact with standard Italian (as well as with French up to the end of the nineteenth century) and the “superposition” of both an official standard language (i. e., Italian) and a regional koine (based on the variety of Turin) over local varieties of Piedmontese.

The article “Indefinite determiners in informal Italian: A preliminary analysis” by Anna Cardinaletti and Giuliana Giusti presents the results of a pilot study (online questionnaire) on the distribution of indefinite determiners in contexts with narrow scope interpretation in current informal Italian. The authors examine the “zero” article found with bare nouns, the so-called “partitive article”, and an indefinite use of the definite article, and they show, first, that in negative statements, i. e., in narrow scope indefinite contexts, there is a preference for both the zero determiner and the definite article, and, second, that the partitive determiner is found only in episodic sentences and is limited to restricted geographic areas. Where one form is clearly preferred over the others, the authors propose that it is due to the context which may favour some specialized meaning of one specific form, e. g., saliency and small quantity, or to diatopic variation due to language contact with the dialect, as shown by comparing present-day

informal Italian with the dialectal data reported in *AIS* (cf. also Cardinaletti and Giusti 2018; Giusti Forth.).

In their paper, “Partitives, Pseudopartitives, and the preposition *apo* in Greek”, Artemis Alexiadou and Melita Stavrou revisit the main properties of the partitive (PC) and the pseudopartitive construction (PPC) in Greek, placing their focus on the distribution of the preposition *apo* (‘of/from’), which introduces the partitive complement in the PC, but is absent from the PPC. The obligatory definiteness of the partitive complement in *apo*-constructions shows that partitives share with possessives a component of meaning, namely the part-whole relation. The authors’ analysis connects this meaning component to a ‘have’ predication present both in possessives and partitives (cf. Barker 1998), whereas the PPC is assigned a structure that endorses *be*-predication (Corver 1998; den Dikken 1998, den Dikken 2006). Diachronic findings suggest that the partitive complement with *apo* is the analytic replacement of the old(er) genitive (ablative) case that existed in older stages of Greek, something which did not take place in the PPC. The authors take this evolutionary trait of Greek to provide a novel way to approach the question of the identity of *of* in English, which appears both in the PC and in the PPC, as two different manifestations: *of* is a real P in PCs and a case assigner in PPC, with similar considerations to hold for *de/di* in Romance.

2.2 Partitive pronouns

In their contribution “Breton *a*-marking of (internal) verbal arguments : A result of language contact?”, Elisabeth Stark and Paul Widmer look at a potential case of language-contact between Gallo-Romance and Breton, i. e., Breton *a*- [‘of’, ‘from’] marking of (internal) verbal arguments, unique in Insular Celtic languages, and reminiscent of Gallo-Romance *de/du*- (and *en*-) arguments. Three Middle Breton constructions are analyzed in detail (*a* with indefinite mass nominals in direct object position, *a*-marking of internal arguments under the scope of negation, *a* [allomorphs *an(ez)*-/*ahan*-] with personal pronouns for internal arguments, subjects [mainly of predicative constructions] and as expletive subjects of existential constructions), and compared to possible Gallo-Romance counterparts (Gallo, where description of the respective varieties is available, or in French). Despite some semantic parallels and one strong structural overlap (*a* and *de* under the scope of negation), the amount of divergences in morphology, syntax and semantics and the only partially fitting relative chronology of the different constructions do not allow to conclude with certainty that language-contact is an explanation of the Breton facts.

The paper “Convergence and divergence in the expression of partitivity in French, Dutch, and German”, by Petra Sleeman and Tabea Ihsane, focuses on the so-called “partitive pronoun” in French and Dutch, and the corresponding data in German, a language which is assumed not to have partitive pronouns in its standard, in contrast to certain dialectal varieties (cf. Glaser 1993). Taking the diverse uses of the French pronoun *en* as a starting point, the authors investigate the equivalent constructions in Dutch and German. They rely on data collected in a grammaticality judgment test taken by native speakers of French, Dutch and German and show that the subtleties of the French partitive pronoun *en* can also be expressed in these languages, but in partially different ways. For instance, German often uses no lexical item in the contexts where French and Dutch have an overt pronoun, but also uses *welch-* in some of the contexts with *en*. Sleeman and Ihsane formalize the results in the model developed in Ihsane (2013) in which the partitive pronoun can replace different portions of the nominal structure (see also Sleeman and Ihsane Accepted).

Guido Mensching argues in his contribution “On ‘partitive dislocation’ in Sardinian: A Romance and Minimalist perspective” that an alleged “partitive object” construction in Sardinian is an instance of the quite common Romance Clitic Right Dislocation (CLRD) structure, involving the preposition *de* on the dislocated constituent and the partitive clitic *nde* in the Tense Phrase. The article presents the syntactic distribution of this Sardinian construction and its CLLD counterpart and compares it to similar structures in French, Catalan, and Italian, where the dislocated indefinite NP is consistently marked by *de/di* (at least) and taken up by a partitive clitic (Sardinian *nde*, French *en*, Italian *ne*, Catalan *en/ne*) inside the clause. The author then proposes a Minimalist analysis of the construction, in which clitics are the spell-out of a probe in *v* that triggers movement of a complement to the specifier of *vP* to overcome a phase boundary. In this account, a probe that targets indefinite NPs assigns partitive case, while the probe itself is spelled out as a partitive clitic, something that can be generalized to the group of Romance languages that possess partitive clitics.

2.3 Partitive case

Walter Breu’s article “Partitivity in Slavic-Romance language contact. The case of Molise Slavic in Italy” focuses on Molise Slavic, a south Slavic micro-language, spoken in three municipalities of Italy. It contributes to two combined fields of linguistics: first, contact linguistics – as Molise Slavic has been in a situation of total language contact with Romance varieties for about 500 years, with strong foreign influence on all linguistic levels – and, second, the expression of partitivity in Slavic

in different settings. The paper compares the role of case in expressing partitive objects in Russian, Croatian and Molise Slavic and deals with other means of rendering pure and ablative partitivity in Italian and in Molise Slavic, in particular with respect to the similarities and differences in existential constructions. Special attention is paid to the Italian partitive particle *ne* and its formal and functional equivalents in Molise Slavic. Finally, the author tests various hypotheses about the origin of the Molise Slavic particle *na/ne*, whose formal variation in one of the Molise Slavic dialects causes serious problems for both loanword integration and semantic calquing.

In their contribution “Contact-induced change in the languages of Europe: The rise and development of partitive cases and determiners in Finnic and Basque”, Silvia Luraghi, Merlijn de Smit and Iván Igartua compare partitive (genitive) cases and partitive determiners in Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages of Europe and explore the hypothesis of contact-induced change for the rise of the partitive case in Finnic languages and of the partitive case/determiner in Basque. On the basis of the well-established Indo-European partitive-genitive case and taking into account the lack of such a basis on the Uralic side, the authors argue that the partitive case in Finnic languages has arisen as a result of Balto-Slavic influence. They further suggest that a contact scenario (with Romance languages) is responsible not only for the rise of the Basque partitive determiner, but also for the development of an entire system of determiners, including the definite article, possibly the indefinite article, and the partitive case marker, which originates in an old ablative ending but crucially lacks the morphological properties characteristic of Basque inflectional markers.

The last article of the issue is Tuomas Huumo’s, entitled “Layers of (un)boundedness: The aspectual–quantificational interplay of quantifiers and partitive case in Finnish object arguments”. The author presents an account of the interplay between quantifiers and the partitive–accusative case alternation in Finnish object marking, with special reference to the aspectual and quantificational semantics of the clause. In Finnish affirmative clauses, the case alternation expresses two oppositions, first, bounded (ACCUSATIVE) vs. unbounded (PARTITIVE) quantity, and, second, culminating (ACCUSATIVE) vs. non-culminating (PARTITIVE) aspect. What the author argues is that the case marking of the object relates primarily to the level of the individual component events (which concern one entity each), while the meaning of the number quantifier (e. g., *moni* [‘many’]) relates to the level of the higher-order event (which concerns the whole quantity expressed). This is why a number quantifier typically renders the quantity bounded and the aspect culminating at the level of the higher-order event, even when the partitive case expresses unboundedness or lack of culmination at the level of the individual component events.

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