



International Exploratory Workshop
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“Partitives”, number marking and negation in Occitan¹

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1. Romance without Occitan

- (1) Romance “partitives”² or massic and plural indefinites
- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Massic indefinite | b. Plural indefinite |
| <i>Pane</i> | <i>Pani</i> |
| <i>Pan</i> | <i>Panes</i> |
| <i>Du pain</i> [dy pɛ̃] | <i>Des pains</i> [de pɛ̃] |
| (some) bread | (loaves of) bread |

In this basic sample of Romance languages the presence of the partitive article correlates with the absence of audible plural marking in nominals. The correlation suggests a causal relationship: the article allows to express number which itself entails the distinction between a massic or countable reading of lexical items potentially endowed with both meaning. (Stark 2008) The two types of partitives are present in Occitan dialects.

2. Romance with Occitan a. Occitan plurals

Occitan presents another similar recapitulation of Romance variation regarding plural formation (cf. Sauzet 2012):

- (2) Occitan plurals (main types) (map 1)
- sigmatic, distributed over DP
sg. *la cabra blanca*
[la kaβrɔ βlaŋkɔ]
pl. *las cabras blancas*
[las kaβrɔs/z/ʝ βl' aŋkɔs]
 - non sigmatic, distributed over DP
sg. *la chabra blanca*
[lɔ sabrɔ blɔ̃sɔ]
pl. *las chabras blanchas*
[la: sɔbra: blɔ̃sa:]
 - non sigmatic, non-distributed (realized on the determiner)
sg. *la cabra blanca*
[la kaβrɔ βlaŋkɔ]
pl. *lei cabras blancas*
[lej/li kaβrɔ bl' aŋkɔ]
 - non sigmatic, non-distributed (realized on the noun and following adjective)
sg. *la chièbra blanca*
[la ʃjɛbr blɔ̃]
pl. *las chièbras blanchas*
[la ʃjɛbre blɔ̃ʃaj]

Type in 2a is characteristic of the “Aquitano-pyrenean” (Gascon + Lengadocian) and Alpine type.

Type 2b is the typical Limousin system, with –s deleted and replaced by length.

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² It has been correctly emphasized by many contributors to the workshop that “partitive” is not the right designation for the form under scrutiny. A more adequate term would be “unsingular” or “antisingular” to subsume both massic and plural indefinite. I keep using “partitive” in the sense of “antisingular”.

Type 2c is best known through its Provençal version because it is the one used in Mistral's work (Rhodanian Provençal) but it can also be found in a disjoint area in Perigord.

Type 2d is realized in the dialect of the Marche in the centre of the "Crescent" a transition area between Occitan and French.

b. Occitan indefinites

If the correlation observed in 1 resulted from a direct implication between number marking in nouns and the existence of a partitive article, the pattern one would expect to find inside Occitan a variation of the indefinite article parallel to the variation in the morphology of number marking.

Indeed we do find Occitan dialects with a zero partitive (and a zero plural indefinite) and others with a partitive article.

(3) Types of Occitan massic and plural indefinites

- a. *Que mingi Ø sopa e Ø pan, Ø higas e Ø melons.* (Southern Gascon, SW Occitan)
EN eat-1sg soup and bread, fig-pl. and melon-pl.
- b. *Minge de la sopa e del (dau) pan, de las higas e dels (daus) melons.* (Lemosin N Occitan)
eat-1sg of DEF-f soup and of-DEF-m bread, of DEF-f-pl fig-pl and of-DEF-m-pl melon-pl.
- c. *Mangi de pan e bevi d'aiga.* (Lengadocian or Central Oc., Provençal E Oc.³)
eat-1sg of soup and of bread, of fig-pl and of melon-pl.
I eat soup and bread, figs and melons.

3. Plural and "partitive" : a problematic correlation

However, as can be seen from the maps, there is no systematic correlation between the two variations.

Gascon (southern Gascon rather) and the western and southernmost dialects of Lengadocian have both sigmatic iterated plural marking and zero massic and plural indefinite (like neighbouring Iberian languages). I only repeat the plural indefinite. The singular massic is always parallel.

(4) Gascon and Fuxean (Foissenc) Lengadocian: zero and -s

Que mingi Ø pomas. [p'umɔs]

The other dialectal configurations do not express the correlation so plainly.

Most of Lengadocian has sigmatic and iterated plural marking and yet indefinite is explicit in this dialect.

(5) Most of Lengadocian: de and -s

Mangi de pomas [p'umɔs]

(compare the preposition + article: *Lo gost de las pomas.* The taste of [the] apples.)

In such Occitan varieties, the noun preserves plural marking and the "partitive" bears no number morphology. It is identical to the preposition *de*. The Lengadocian configuration doesn't directly contradict the possibility of a causal relationship between the absence of plural marking in nouns and the emergence of indefinite in some cases. It leaves the existence of this "light" type of "partitive" unexplained.

(6) Provençal: de and no number marking in nouns

Mange de pomas [p'umɔ]

³ Alpine Occitan and Auvergnat are identical in the relevant respect.

Provençal makes the case heavier: here the absence of nominal plural marking correlates with the existence of a light (numberless) partitive which brings no remediation this absence.

(7) Lemosin: de + article and (vocalic) number marking in nouns

Mange **de las pomas [de la: puma:]**

Limousin raises another type of questions: it (generally) preserves number marking as length distinction (accompanied by changes in vowel quality). Yet it has developed a number bearing “partitive”.

(8) Marchés: de + article and

I mange **de las pomas [d la pumaj]**

This northernmost variety of Occitan differs from Limousin by the fact that number regularly only shows on noun (not on the determiner). Marchés has a heavy yet not number marking partitive.

4. Another correlation : postverbal negation and “partitive”

As can be seen from map 3 the whole Occitan domain presents a post-verbal negative element. In some dialects (blue dots on the map) it is a discontinuous combination as in standard French or an exclusively post-verbal negation as in “colloquial” French.

(9) Examples of Occitan negation ALF 89 “il n’y a pas (de source)”

ALF 724 *et passim* [j a paz de] « i a pas de » ; ALF 611 [ɲ ɔ pa de] « n’i a pas de » ALF 697 [ke nu a nada] « que non a nada » ; ALF 790 [j a kap] « i a cap »

Not every variety with a negative post-verbal element has explicit partitives, but all varieties with such articles have postverbal negation. (I hope the survey of Italian dialects will not too brutally contradict this claim...).

Of course, outside Romance, there are languages with post-verbal negation and no “partitive”. A further stipulation could be that the second element should be etymologically not negative per se as *pas, point, cap, brica, ges, mia, gran ...*

An interesting point is that the presence of the post-verbal term of the negation favours the appearance of an explicit “partitive” element in the object:

In map 4 it shows up clearly that the area with zero partitive is much more reduced than in a positive context (as was the case in map 2).

[Critical excursus on the ALF : [pas nade sursɔs] → [pas na de sursɔs] « pas nat de sorsas » (≠ [pas nado sursɔ] « pas nada sorsa »)]

The presence of “partitive” de after the negation in dialects which otherwise ignore it suggests the possibility for a causal interpretation of the correlation.

(10) Stage one (classical medieval Occitan)

Preverbal negation, zero “partitive”

Manja capo(n)s. Beu vi(n).

No manja capo(n)s. No beu vi(n).

(11) Some real attestations

ez avia i pa e vi (*Cançon de la crosada*, Appel 1907, 7,77, Jensen 1986, 79)

and ther wer bread and wine

es bo per comprar porcs e abelhas (*Las virtuz de l'aiga ardent* Bartsch 1856 pp. 316-7, Jensen 1986, 79)

it is good for buying pigs and bees

(12) Stage two (late medieval Occitan XVth century)

Development of minimisers (or “expliciters”) of the preverbal negation, and of de “partitive”

Manja capo(n)s. Beu vi(n).

No manja (pas de) capo(n)s. No beu (pas de) vi(n).

The fact that in historical documentation negation does favour the presence of *de* in a significant way has to be established (the *Concordance de l'occitan médiéval* will be the right tool). Frede Jensen notes that *de* appears after quantifiers and the negation (Jensen 1986, 81).

(13) *de* in late medieval Occitan

- a. (un) pauc de pauc d'ora, pauc d'amics, pauc de deners
- b. No te doni pas ieu de bona vianda (*Jutjament general* XVth century)
Do I not give you good food.

It is likely that the positive counterpart of 13) b would have been: *Te doni bona vianda.*

(14) Stage three: modern Occitan (except SW)

Generalization of *de*

Manja de capons. Beu de vin.

(No) manja pas de capons. (Ne) beu pas de vin.

(15) Stage four: west-northern modern Occitan

de + art.

Manja dels/daus capo(n)s. Beu del/dau vi(n).

Ne manja pas dels/daux capo(n)s. No beu pas dau vin.

Apparition of *de* after *pas*, *cap...* which are nominal elements follows the general tendency to systematically mark genitive in nominal except for [+reasonable] nouns (*la filha lo senhor*)

Generalization of *de* in positive context could result from the loss of the nominal character of *pas*, entailing the reinterpretation of *de* from preposition to determiner.

Yet this new determiner could preserve from its etymological source some form of inability to receive number agreement which other article do receive (as they have evolved from former demonstratives or numeral adjectives). This conflict between etymological (synchronically perhaps lexical) inability to agreement and the appearance in a position where agreement is the rule is solved in one of the following way:

- *de* preserves its invariability : Lengadocian, Provençal, Alpine, Auvergnat.
- *de* receives agreement thanks to a combination with a buffer definite article (a combination for which true partitive may have been the model): *dels*, *de las*
- agreement is forced onto *de* and a **des** (or **das**) form emerges, a situation which has never been described till now to my knowledge but which can be read on **map 5**

Prediction plural precedes massic partitive (*del*) (los parlars amb *des* an un singular *de*)

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