REVISTING A ROMANIAN "FRIEND OF MINE"

ALEXANDRA CORNILESCU[1]

Abstract. The paper tackles two Romanian partitive constructions that feature partitive DE "of", one of which is a true partitive (un prieten de-ai mei/ a friend DE-AL.M.PL mine/ 'a friend of mine'), while the other is a possessive partitive (un prieten de-al meu / a friend DE-AL.M.SG mine / 'a friend of mine'). Since it has often been claimed that Romanian lacks the partitive construction, in the sense that Romanian does not use the preposition DE in the partitive construction, the first aim of the paper is that of suggesting a possible explanation for the loss of DE in the proper/standard partitive construction. At the same time, the paper aims to give a description of the possessive partitive to show how it differs from the standard partitive in its syntax and interpretation and why the use of the singular to designate the whole is justified by the properties of the construction.

Keywords: partitive, possessive partitive, standard partitive, Romanian.

1. INTRODUCTION

From a Romance perspective it has often been remarked that Romanian "does not have the partitive construction (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006), meaning that Romanian does not use the preposition DE in the partitive construction, on the model of Italian or French.

(1)   a.   J'ai vu   deux **de** ces garçons.
                 I have seen two of these boys
        b.   Am văzut doi dintre/*de aceşti băieţi.
                 have.I seen two among /*of these boys.

At the same time, more traditional normative grammars have sometimes mentioned that an erroneous possessive construction (2) is spreading at the expanse of correct form in (3).

(2)   un prieten de-al   meu
        a friend   DE-AL.M.**SG** mine
        'a friend of mine'
(3)   un prieten   de-ai   mei
        a friend   DE-AL.M.PL mine
        'a friend of mine'

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[1] University of Bucharest, alexandracornilescu@yahoo.com

The latest edition of the Academy's Grammar (2005/2008: 599) describes 2 and 3 as a phenomenon of variation, possibly accompanied by slightly different interpretations. Both forms are assumed to be correct and neither form is recommended as good usage. As to the different interpretations, (3) is a true partitive, while (2) simply *expresses non-uniqueness*. Example two is a *possessive partitive* according to GA. We have adopted the same term.

2. BRIEFLY ON THE STANDARD PARTITIVES IN ROMANIAN

The standard partitive construction has been intensely investigated for Romanian in important dissertations.

The proper partitive in (4) includes two full DPs; the first is a determiner/quantifier, or a pronoun, followed by a partitive preposition and a second DP. In Romanian the partitive prepositions are $Prep_{part}$ *dintre /din*, as in *doi /mulţi dintre elevii examinaţi* in (5a), corresponding to English *of* and French *de*.

(4) Det_1/Pronoun + $Prep_{part}$ + Det_2 + N
(5)   a.   doi/mulţi   *dintre/din*   studenţii   examinaţi
                 two/ many   among/from   students.the   examined.
         b.   deux *des* (=de les) étudiants examinés

As to its denotation, the standard partitve construction expresse the part-whole relation as a comparison between the size of two objects. One frequently compares the cardinality of two sets (see 5): the set representing the part and that representing the whole.

There are two well-known constraints on the interpretation of the standard partitive construction, specifically "the partitive constraint" and "the proper-partitivity constraint" (the non-uniqueness constraint).

The Partitive Constraint (Jackendoff 1977) was for a long time presented as a definiteness effect, claiming that the determiner of the DP inside the PP phrase must be definite (as in (7)).

(6)   *The Partitive Constraint* (Jackendoff, 1977)
         The complement of the partitive preposition is a definite DP
(7)   a.   câteva dintre **acele** idei propuse de Matei
                 several among those ideas proposed by Matei
         b.   *câteva dintre **nişte** idei propuse de Matei
                 several among some ideas proposed by Matei

Abbot (1996) notices, however, many counterexamples for English, as in (8), where the second determiner is indefinite. The irrelevance of definiteness is also apparent for Romanian, where there are partitive examples where the second determiner is indefinite (9):

(8)   a   Any of several options are open to us at this point.
         b.   This is one of a number of counterexamples.
(9)   a.   Acestea sunt trei dintr-**o serie** de argumente prezentate de autor.
                 these are three among a series of arguments presented by the author

b.   doi dintre **foarte mulţi** studenţi care au cerut lămuriri
           two among very many students who asked for clarifications

Faced with such clarifications, Ladusaw (1982) proposes a semantic reformulation of the Partitivity Constraint. According to him, in the partitive construction, the PP should denote a plural individual. The Det of DPs whose denotation is a (plural) individual are either definite or indefinite specific.

(10)   *The Partitive Constraint* (Ladusaw,1982: 238).
          The second DP of a nominal partitive construction always denotes a (plural) individual.

The partitive constraint also explains why *ambii* 'both' and *fiecare* 'every', which are distributive quantifiers are not acceptable in the partitive phrase, although they are syntactically definite determiners. The reason is that, *ambii/fiecare* are quantifiers and as such they cannot identify an individual. Compare in examples (11b, d), the denotation of the quantifier *both,* with the denotation of the phrase *cei doi* 'the two', which denotes a plural individual.

(11)   a.   unul din cei doi oameni
          b.   one of the two men.
          c.   *unul din ambii oameni.
          d.   one of both men
(12)   a.   Cei doi au reuşit   să   urce   pianul   pe scări împreună.
                    the two have managed Subj   lift   piano.the on stairs. together
                    'The two of them managed to lift the piano on the stairs together.'
          b.   *Ambii au   putut ridica pianul   pe scări (*împreună).
                    both.the have could lift.inf piano.the on stairs (*together).

As for the Proper Partitivity Constraint, this property states that partitivity is a relation of inclusion, i.e. x < y (x is maller than y), not x ≤ y (x is smaller than or equal to y). The part is always smaller than the whole. Consequently, quantifiers which denote totalities (*amândoi* 'both', *toţi* 'all') are excluded from the partitive construction:

(13)   a.   mulţi dintre ei
                    many of   them
          b.   *toţi dintre ei   (all of them)?
                     all   among them
          c.   *amândoi dintre ei
                    both among them

The partitive construction expresses a quantitive relation between some subgroup / i.e. one part of the group and the whole group (the group taken as a whole). What is being compared are the cardinals of the part/whole sets for countable nouns and the quantities that respectively denote the part/whole for uncountable nouns.

Thus, in Baker's analysis (1998: 699) (see (14)), Prep_part expresses a relation of size between between two sets, both of whichh satisfy the property denoted by the NP. A partitive PP, such as *dintre studenţii înalţi* 'among students.the tall' denotes the set of those groups y whose cardinal is smaller than the cardinal of the set (*studenţii înalţi* 'students.the tall').

(14)   a.   Of / dintre/din: [[of _PART_]] = λx λP λy [P (y) ∧ y < x]
       b.   dintre studenţii înalţi = λy [y < studenţii înalţi]

The property P (*student înalt* 'tall student', (14b)) is true of the set designated by the part, as well as of the members of the set denoting the whole, but it can be expressed either by the DP designating the whole (inside the PP), as in all the examples mentioned so far, or by the first DP which designates the part, as in (15b):

(15)   a.   doi dintre cei trei **studenţi înalţi**
            two among the three students tall
       b.   **doi studenţi înalţi** dintre cei şapte.
            two students tall   among the seven.

To briefly conclude, in the standard partitive construction the part-whole relation is expressed as a comparison between the size of two sets, a relation between *two individuals*, respectively denoting the part and the whole.

3. THE POSSESSIVE PARTITIVE

The possessive partitive has a different form. The first DP is, or at least may be, complete (D+NP), and the partitive preposition. Prep_part is followed by a DP in the genitive or by a possessive pronoun.

(16)   *Det₁ + (N) + Prep _part_ +*   *DP [+Gen].*
       a.   o soră   de-a   fetei
            a sister   DE AL.F.Sg   girl.the.Gen
       b.   una   de-a   fetei
            one   DE AL.F.Sg   girl.the.Gen

The possessive partitve observes the Proper Partitivity Constraint (Barker 1998), expressing non-uniqueness of the identified referent. As a result, unique nouns (atomic or plural individuals) are not accepted in the possessive partitive constructiom

(17)   a.   *o mamă   de-a   mea
             a mother   DE AL.F.Sg mine
       b.   *doi părinţi de-ai   lui Matei
            two parents DE AL. M.Pl the.Gen Matei

The possessive partitive also expresses the part-whole relation, but the dentation of the whole is not directly expressed, because the possessive does not denote an object, it does not denote an individual. Instead, it denotes a property. This is the distinctive

semantic feature of the possessive partitive. Thus, if we repeated the antecedent NP, following the principle that both the part and the whole satisfy the same property, we would obtain either a phrase with a different meaning (18a vs. 18b), or an uninterpretable expression

(18) a. un prieten de-al meu   b. un prieten de-al prietenului meu
          'a friend of mine'   'a friend of my friend's'
      c. o unealtă de-a lui Ion   d. *o unealtă de-a uneltei lui Ion
          'a tool of John's'   'a tool of John's tool'

The suitable interpretation for *o unealtă de-a lui Ion* 'a tool of John's' is rather 'a tool that has the property of belonging to John', which means that in this context *a lui Ion* denotes *a property,* not an individual. The interpretation of the genitive as a property is the essential characteristic of the possessive partitive. Thus, the entity that designates the whole emerges at the intersection of two properties, the one expressed by N1 (the part) and the one expressed by the possessive phrase. Since each property determines a corresponding set, the intersection of the property 'being a tool' with the property *a lui Ion*, i.e. 'belonging to Ion', produces the set of 'entities which are tools that belong to Ion' in a given context.

In other words, the object which denotes the whole is not directly expressed as a plural individual, but it is determined by combining the two properties, respectively denoted by NP1 and by the Genitive. Hence the possibility of freely using the singular for NP2, given that properties do not have a plural. The formalism proposed by Baker (1998: 700) for the denotation of the partitive preposition DE in this case, faithfully indicates the semantic structure of the possessive partitive.

(19) $[[of/de_{\text{POS PART}}]] = \lambda D\, \lambda P\, \lambda y\, [P(y) \wedge y < \mathbf{D}(\mathbf{P})]$

In (19), *D*, the denotation of the Genitive is the *property of a property, namely* a property whose argument is the property P denoted by N1. The whole is the (plural) individual which satisfies the compound property *D*(P). The PP, in (*unealtă de-a lui Ion*) denotes the class/set of all subsets of the set (*unealtă a lui Ion*). Notice the difference with respect to the standard partitive prepositions *din/dintr* 'among, from', where the two sets, x and y are directly compared (20a).

(20)   a. $[[of_{\text{PART}}]] = \lambda x\, \lambda P\, \lambda y\, [P(y) \wedge y < x]$
       b. $[[of_{\text{POS PART}}]] = \lambda D\, \lambda P\, \lambda y\, [P(y) \wedge y < D(P)]$
       c.   *unealtă de-a lui Ion* $= \lambda y\, [\mathbf{unealtă}\,(y) \wedge y < \mathbf{unealtă\ a\ lui\ Ion}]$

Thus, the partitive possessive satisfies the Proper partitivity Constraint in a different manner from the standard one. The DP complement of the Preposition does not denote an individual, but a property. The property intersects with the property expressed by the antecedent NP (the NP-part) and the maximal phrase which satisfies the two properties denotes the whole out of which the part is extracted. Despite its singular form, the possessive *al lui Matei*, in *unealtă de-a lui Matei* designates a plurality, a set of objects, not an atomic individual. Given its interpretation, the occurrence of the singular form, *unealtă de-a lui Matei* is welcomed by the speakers.

At the same time, the occurrence of a possessive plural is not excluded. A plural possessive is obligatory when the antecedent is plural and it is a form of concord. Notice the difference in the form of the Genitive article AL (in bold).

(21)   a.   o unealtă   de-**a**   lui Matei
              a too   DE AL.F.Sg   the.Gen Matei
        b.   două unelte de-**ale**   lui Matei
              two tools   DE AL.F.Pl   the.Gen Matei

4. MORPHO-SYNTACTIC PROPERTIES OF THE POSSESSIVE PARTITIVE "UN PRIETEN DE-AL MEU"

In the following sections, we briefly present a hypothesis on a) the reasons why Romanian has developed the possessive partitive, unknown to other Romance varieties, and b) why it has given up the P. DE in the standard partitive construction. Our hypothesis is that both facts are correlated with another characteristic feature of Romanian, namely the morhpo-syntactic specialization of the Romanian Genitive, briefly mentioned below

4.1. The morpho-syntactic specialization of the Romanian Genitive

As is probably known (Cornilescu 2004), Romanian presents an unusual form of morpho-syntactic specialization in the forms of the Genitive, namely, the choice of the Genitive markers strictly depends on the morpho-syntactic properties of the Gen complement. In the examples below, the three different Romanian Gen markers stand in opposition to the unique Gen marker *de* in French.

(22)   a. câştigător **al**   unui   premiu   gagneur d'*un* prix
           winner   AL M.sg   a.Gen.M.Sg   prize
           'winner of a prize'
        b. câştigător **a**   două premii   gagneur de *deux* prix
           winner [A$_P$]   two prizes
           'winner of two prizes '
        c. câştigător **de** premii   gagneur *de* prix
           winner [DE$_P$] prizes
           'winner of prizes'
        d.   câştigătorul   premiu**lui**
              winner.the   prize.the.Gen
              'the winner of the prize
        d'.   *câştigatoru**l**   a~~l~~   premiului.
              winner.the   AL M.sg   prize.the.Gen

What is essential for the present analysis is the distinction that Romanian operates in the marking of the Gen between nominals that have determiners (DPs), i.e. cases (22a, b) and bare NPs, i.e. (22c).

The preposition *de* is a realization of the abstract Gen feature only when the genitive is a bare NP, while in French *de* is used as a Gen for all types of Gen NP/DP, as shown by the French examples.

One might object that it is inappropriate to talk about the Gen case, if the Gen is not inflectional, i.e. outside situations (22a) and (22d). We here take the Gen to be an abstract syntactic case, which subsumes the morphologic case, as one of its realizations. In its most general interpretation. the role of Case is to license an argument of a predicate (see Sigurdson 2000). From this perspective, the role of the Gen is to license an argument inside an NP/DP. An important function of the Gen is to obligatorily mark the internal argument of eventive nominalizations (Grimshaw 1990). In such cases, the Gen is a structural case, corresponding to the Acc of VPs. Additionally, the Gen has typical semantic associations (in UG) to the notions of possession and partitivity (*rochia Mariei* 'Mary's dress, *piciorul mesei* the 'table's leg').

Detailed studies of eventive nominalizations (Anițescu 2021) have pointed out that at least in event nominalizations, the P *de* can license the internal argument of the nominalization, exactly like the Genitival article AL, or like the P *a*, which are generally accepted to be Romanian Gen. markers.

A genitive marked by *de*, if present, may give eventive properties to the nominalization, such as the possibility of an Agentive *de către* 'by' phrase, as apparent in the contrast between (23a) and (23b), (23d) and (23f). Secondly the possibility of a Dative argument in deverbal nominalizations of transitive verbs depends on a Gen corresponding to the Acc DP, and the Gen may be a de-Gen The examples below illustrate the parallel behavior of the the three genitive markers.

(23)   a. Studenții   citesc romanul   obligatoriu.
            students.the read   novel.the mandatorily
            'The students read the novel mandatorily'.
         b. citirea   obligatorie **a**   romanului   de către studenți DP
            reading.the obligatory   AL.F.Sg novel.the.Gen   by   students.
            'the mandatory reading of the novel by the students'
         c. Studenții   citesc obligatoriu   cel puțin două romane.
            students.the read   mandatorily the little   two novels
            'The students read at least two novels mandatorily.'
         d. citirea   obligatorie   a cel putin două romane de către studenți   DP
            reading.the obligatory   [AP]the little two novels by   students
            'the obligatory reading of at least two novels by the students'
         e. Studenții citesc obligatoriu și romane românești.
            students.the read obligatorily and novels Romanian
            'The students also read Romanian novels mandatorily.'
         f. citirea   obligatorie și **de romane românești** de către studenți   NP
            reading.the obligatory also DE novels Romanian by   students
            'the obligatory reading of Romanian novels, too'
         g. *citirea   obligatorie de către studenți.
              reading.the obligatory by   students

(24)   **acordarea** obligatorie [**de** burse]   [studenţilor]   NP
granting.the obligatory [DE grants] [students.the.Dat]
'the obligatory granting of scholarships to the students.'

Another piece of evidence that the Gen forms in (22) represent a paradigm is that the occurrence of a de Genitive prevents any other realization of the Gen, because Romanian does not tolerate any other realization of the Gen in the nominal phrase. For instance, one cannot have an objective genitive with DE, followed by subjective Gen realized as an inflectional Gen, as in (25). In contrast DE PPs with a modifier function may co-occur with a Gen argument, irrespective if how the latter is realized (26).

(25)   Un excelent actor citeşte poezii romantice.
An excellent actor reads romantic poems.
(25')   a. *citirea   de poezii romantice   **a**   unui   mare   actor
reading.the   DE poems romantic   AL.F.Sg a.Gen excellent actor
citirea <Ag, Th>
b. citirea de poezii romantice **de către** un mare actor
reading.the of poems romantic **by**   an excellent actor
'the reading of romantic poems by an excellent actor'
(26)   vizita de seară   a   doctorului
visit DE evening AL.F.Sg doctor.the.Gen
'the doctor's evening call'

Grimshaw (1990) observes that an argumental Gen cannot appear as a predicative constituent across the copula, unlike a modifier Gen. With respect to this test as well, some DE-phrases behave like arguments, while others behave like modifiers, and can function as predicative constituents.

(27)   Distrugerea (gravă) oraşului Bucureşti a fost in 1977.
'The (serious) destruction of the Bucharest city was in 1977.'
a.   distrugerea   din   1977   a   oraşului   Bucureşti
destruction.the   DE+in   1977 AL.F.Sg   city.the.Gen Bucharest
'the destruction in 1977 of the Bucharest city.'
b.   *Distrugerea din   1977 a fost   a   oraşului   Bucureşti.
destruction.the DE+in 1977 has been AL.F.Sg city.the.Gen Bucharest
'The destruction in 1977 was of the Bucharest city.'
(28)   a.   citirea   **de romane** englezeşti   argumental Gen
reading.the DE novels English
'the reading of English novels'
b.   *Citirea era de romane englezeşti.
reading.the was DE novels English
'the reading was of English novels'
c.   interpretarea   aceasta de maestru
interpretation.the this   DE master
'this masterful interpretation'

     d.   Interpretarea   aceasta este de maestru.
               interpretation.the this   was DE master
               'This interpretation is masterful'

In conclusion, the evidence shows that the *de+NP* phrase is, in fact, one of the realizations of the abstract Gen Case, at least in event-nomnalizations. In this case, the *de+NP* structure is the only possible realization of the internal argument when the internal argument is a bare NP. Secondly, being a bare NP, the *de* Gen has a property denotation.

4.2. Romanian has lost the DE-partitive in the standard partitive construction

The morpho-syntactic specialization of the Gen has important consequences on other aspects of the Romanian DP. One of them, as we suggested in Cornilescu (2006), is the loss of the structure *unul de noi* 'one DE us', i.e. the loss of the proper partitive construction with DE. In older Romanian, the DE partitive was freely used with any DP/NP, on the model of ther Romance languages. In particular, partitive DE occurred with personal and relative pronouns, which are DPs, not NPs.

(29)   a.   Unu de [DP noi] trebe să merem în târg. ALR II 3 222/349
            one DE us   must to go in fair
            'One of us should go to the fair.'
      b.   una de sâmbete
            one DE Saturday
            'one of (these) Saturdays.
      c.   carele de noi (apud DLR)
            which.the DE us
            which one of us

These are proper partitives and express the whole as a definite DP interpreted as a plural individual. Syntactically the complements of DE are **DPs** which have the form [D + (NP)]DP.

The question was raised as to why Romanian has lost this structure, which was preserved by other Romance languages. One could propose a functional explanation, namely, that Romanian has replaced DE by *dintre/ din* because of the ambiguity of the P DE. In this interpretation, the choice of *dintre/ din* could be an effect of a tendency towards disambiguation. This functional explanation does not account for the retention of DE in other Romance languages, where DE is equally ambiguous.

Our hypothesis is that the loss of DE in the standard partitive construction correlates with the morphosyntactic specialization of DE genitives in Romanian. As shown above *DE* Gen selects only *bare NPs*, and has a property interpretation. The preposition DE is eliminated in the standard partitive precisely because in the proper partitive construction, the complement of the partitive P must be a DP with a definite or specific determiner, i.e. a referential phrase, to satisfy the *Partitivity Constraint*, and this has become impossible for the P DE, whose complement now has a property reading.

On the basis of the facts discussed so far, we can answer our first question, relating to the loss of DE in the standard partitive construction: We have argued that *unul de noi* is lost as a consequence of the morpho-semantic specialization of the Gen. The consequence of this specialization is that with the P DE (genitive or partitive), complements of type DP with an <e> denotation are excluded, so that complements of DE can no longer satisfy the needs of the proper partitive structure.

4.3. The possessive is interpreted as a property in the possessive partitive construction

In this section we show that a Gen phrase introduced by the genitival article AL may denote either an individual or a property. This depends on whether the AL-phrase is an argument or a predicate, as well as on the definiteness of the phrase.

(29')   a.   Toţi ai   Mariei.Gen sunt muzicieni
                   all AL.M.PL Mary.Gen   are musicians
                   'All of Mary's folks   are musicians
         b.   Al   Mariei   este mai inteligent.
                   AL.M.SG Mary.Gen is more intelligent
                   'Mary's is smarter.'
         c.   Creionul   este al   Mariei.
                   pencil.the is   AL.M.SG Mary.Gen
                   'The pencil's is Mary's.'

The fact that the AL-phrase does have a property reading explains why it can appear after the P de, which selects property denoting phrases. Thus, while referential phrases are excluded after DE, AL-genitives are welcome since they may denote properties. As a result, AL-phrases may be part of the possessive partitive construction.

As to definiteness, AL-phrases are definite when the first NP of the possessive partitive has been elided. Recall that AL-phrases have both < e,t> readings, and <e> readings.

(30)   a   Torturile erau excelente. Al   Mariei   era cel mai bun. <e>
                  cakes.the were excellent. AL.M.Sg Maria.Gen was the best
                  'The cakes were excellent. Mary's was the best.'
         b.   Caietul   este al   Mariei. <e,t>
                  copybook is   AL.M.Sg Maria.Gen
                  'The copybook is Mary's.'

Previous research has proved that the genitival article AL is definite [+definite] only if it incorporates the definiteness feature of the Determiner of the noun that it modifies, which has been deleted in configuration (31). In (31), the Gen phrase is in prenominal position and it will get the feature [+definite] through agreement with the determiner of the head noun. A prenominal genitive can only be interpreted as definite, as apparent in (32). Structure (31) also shows that the modified NP may be a null pronoun, pro, in which case the Gen is interpreted as definite and referential, having an <e>-type denotation. This is what happens in examples like (33a) and this is also the interpretation of the AL-phrase in the standard partitive construction (33b).

(31)   DP

          DP   D'

                          D   NP
          al Mariei   [*i*+def]   *pro*/ prieten

(32)   a   *Ai   noştri tineri   la Paris învaţă*…(=Tinerii noştri…)
               AL.M.PL our   young-men.M.PL   at Paris study
               'Our young men study at Paris.'
        a'   Tinerii noştri   învaţă la Paris.
               young-men.the our   study in Paris.
               'Our young men study at Paris.'
        b   *Pe-al   nostru steag   e scris   unire*…(=Pe steagul nostru…)
               on AL M.Sg our flag.M.Sg is written union
               'Union is written on our flag'
               Pe steagul nostru este scris unire
               On flag.the our   is written union…
               'Union is written on our flag'
(33)   a.   Al   Mariei   este acesta.
               AL.M.Sg Maria.Gen *pro* is   this
               'This is Mary's.'
        b.   unul **dintre** ai   Mariei/   unul **dintre**-ai   noştri
               one among AL.M.PL Maria.Gen   one among-AL.M.PL ours
               'one of Mary's   one of ours.

        To conclude, the data we reviewed prove that AL phrases may denote referential phrases, and this explains their occurrence in the standard partitive constructions, but they may also denote properties and this accounts for their occurrence in the possessive partitive phrases.
        There is empirical evidence that in the possessive partitive, the AL-phrase can only have the property reading. A sound argument is provided by nouns which lexically express the concept of quantity and thus can denote parts in the part-whole relation ((*parte* 'part', *sfert* 'quarter', *jumătate* 'half' etc). These nouns are normally followed by NP/DP modifiers which denote the whole. These nouns frequently occur in the standard partitive construction (34), where the DP introduced by the partitive Ps *din/dintre denotes* an individual (34). Quantity nouns may also appear with modifiers introduced by the P *de*, in which case the *de*-phrase is non-referential and it does not identify an object, but some quality (35).
        It is significant, however, that these nouns do not appear in the possessive partitive construction, probably because they denote quantities (measures), not qualities, and as such they cannot form a complex property together with the possessive phrase, as is required by the semantics of the possessive partitive (36, 37).

(34)   a.   Am   bani   pentru o parte din   casă.
               have.I money for   a part   from house
               'I have money for (a) part of the house.'

         b.   Am   bani   pentru jumătate din gradină.
                   have.I money for   half   from garden
                   'I have money for half a garden.'
         c.   S-a   stricat   o   parte din faină.
                   refl-has gone.bad one part   from flour.
                   'Part of the flour has gone bad.'

(35)   a.   Am   bani   pentru o parte/un etaj de casă.
                   have.I money for   a part/story   DE house.
                   'I only have money for part of a house.'
         b.   Am   bani   pentru jumătate de grădină.
                   have.I money for   half   DE garden
                   'I only have money for half of a garden.'
         c.   ?S-a   stricat   o parte   de vin.
                    refl-has gone.bad one part   from wine
                   'Part of the wine has gone bad.'

(36)   a.   *o parte de-al   meu
                   a part   DE-AL.M.Sg mine.
         b.   o parte dintr-al   meu
                   a part   among-AL.M.Sg mine.

(37)   a.   *Jumătate de-al   meu este stricat
                   half   de-AL.M.Sg mine is bad.
         b.   Jumătate dintr-al   meu este stricat.
                   half   from-AL.M.Sg mine is bad.
                   'Half of mine is bad.'

   It is also significant that these nouns reject not only the singular form of the possessive, but also the plural form, a form which normally designates a plural individual. This is confirmed by the use of the plural form in the proper partitive construction (38b). However, after *de*, irrespective of plurality, the complement of DE designates a property.

(38)   a.   *o parte de-ai   mei
                    a part   DE- AL.Pl.M mine
                   'a part of mine.'
         b.   o parte dintr-ai   mei
                   a part out-of-AL.Pl.M mine'
                   'a part of mine.'

   The following results are arrived at: DE in the possessive partitive construction requires a complement that designates a property (atomic or plural). The AL-phrase is used in both the standard partitive and the possessive partitive. This means that the AL-possessive phrase denotes a plural individual in the standard possessive, and it denotes a property (predicate) in the possessive partitive construction.

5. THE SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE OF THE POSSESSIVE PARTITIVE CONSTRUCTION

5.1. The derivation

An important remaining question is why nowadays speakers reject the structure ??*un prieten de-ai mei* 'a friend of mine', although *unii prieteni de-ai mei* 'some friends of mine' is generally accepted and in fact obligatory. From a functional point of view, the singular possessive form disambiguates, it strengthens the contrast between the standard partitive with an obligatory plural complement of the P (38'a'), and the possessive partitive (38' a), where the singular form unambiguously indicates the property interpretation.

(38')   a.   un prieten de-al   meu   a'.   unul **dintre** prietenii   mei
                a friend DE-AL.M.SG mine   one from friends.the mine
                'a friend of mine'   'one of my friends'
        b.   ??un prieten de-ai   mei
                 a friend DE-AL.M.PL mine
                 'a friend of mine'
        c.   unii   prieteni de-ai   mei
                some.the friends DE-AL.M.PL mine
                'some of my friends'

A more convincing reason is the syntax of the partitive, based on Gender/Number concord between the two nominls of the construction, manifest in (38' a) vs (38'c).

An appropriate syntactic analysis of the possessive construction should represent the most important properties discussed above. The most salient characteristic of the possessive partitive is its indefiniteness, [-definite]. The [-definite] feature affects both terms of the construction in different manner. As to the first surface term, it is either an indefinite pronoun (39a), or if it is a lexical NP, it takes only indefinite determiners (39b). Strong determiners (the definite article, demonstrative) are excluded (39'b, c) in strong contrast with the proper partitive construction (40).

(39)   a. mulți/ puțini/unii/câțiva de-ai   lui Matei/de-ai   mei
           many/few/ some/ a few   DE AL.M. PL Matei/   DE AL.M. PL mine
        b.   mulți/puțini/unii/câțiva prieteni de-ai lui   Matei.
                   many/few/ some/ a few friends DE AL.M. PL Matei
(39')   a.   un prieten de-al   meu   'a friend of mine'
                a friend   DE AL.M.SG mine
        b   *prietenul de-al meu   'the friend of mine'
        c.   *prietenul **acela** de-al   tău de care   mi-ai   vorbit
                friend.the that   DE AL.M.SG yours of whom me-have.you talked
                'that friend of yours of whom you talked to me'
(40)   a.   unii dintre noi
                some among us
        b.   aceia dintre noi
                those among us
        c.   aceia dintre noi care iubesc gramatica
                those among us who love grammar

The fact that only indefinite [-definite] determiners are possible for the part-constituent is important, since it allows one to analyse these indefinites as quantificational adjectives, inside the lexical projection, as in (Cardinaletti & Giusti, 2002).

As to the second term of the possessive partitive construction, its ultimate head is the preposition DE which selects a necessarily indefinite DP complement, realized as an AL-phrase. Within the AL-phrase, AL-remains indefinite, which means that it doesn't reach the Spec, DP prenominal position, a position where AL can check definiteness and turns into a definite determiner, so that the AL-phrase denotes an object, not a property, as in (41).

(41)   Îl   vreau   pe   al tău.
        him.Acc.CL   want.I   DOM AL.M.Sg yours
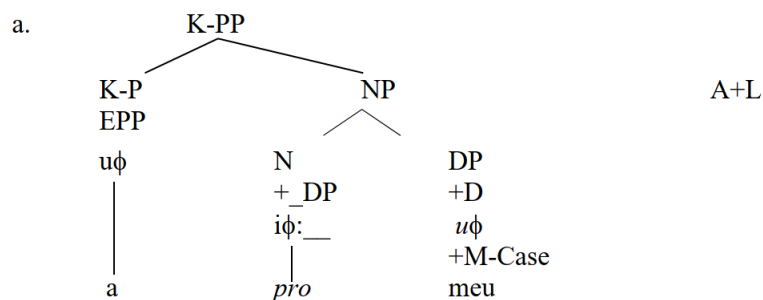   'I want yours.'

To block the [+definite] interpretation of the possessive, the D-position must be explicitly specified as [-definite]. We proposed, as early as Cornilescu (2006), that in the possessive partitive construction, the D position of the phrase is actually occupied by the preposition DE itself, where DE is a functional head spelling out indefiniteness.

The starting point of the possessive partitive is an ordinary genitive construction which provides for the obligatory possessive constituent (42a). The head noun is modified by some indefinite quantifier (such as the indefinite article in the example discussed), as in Cardinaletti and Giusti, 2002.
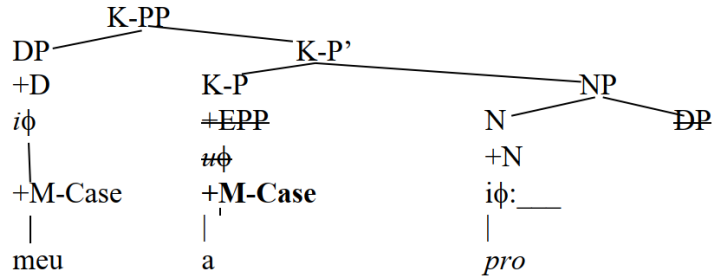
The derivation al steps are as follows: a) checking the Gen case, in (42a–b), obtaining the Gen marker AL, where A is the Gen Romance Preposition, and -L is an agreement head.
b) The determiner head D is merged, and the Preposition DE is inserted as the realization of the strong definite feature in D. The DP as a whole is indefinite. This prevents movement of the AL-phrase to the SpecDP position, since the AL-phrase (due to its L-morphology), can only be attracted by a definite determiner. Secondly the indefinite determiner forces the movement to Spec, DP of an indefinite phrase, more precisely the nominal phrase containing the indefinite quantifying adjective, as in (42c).
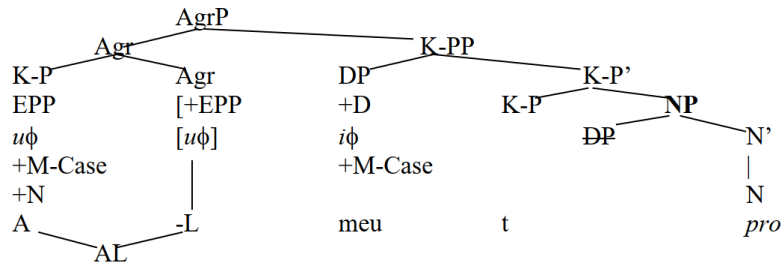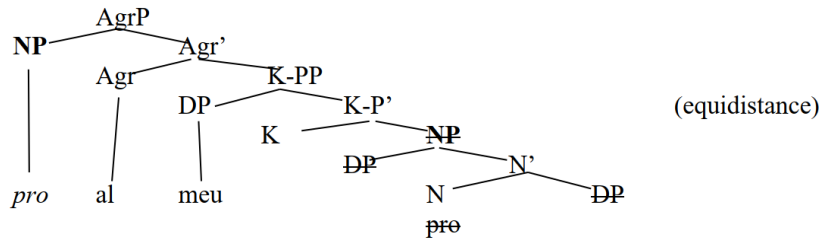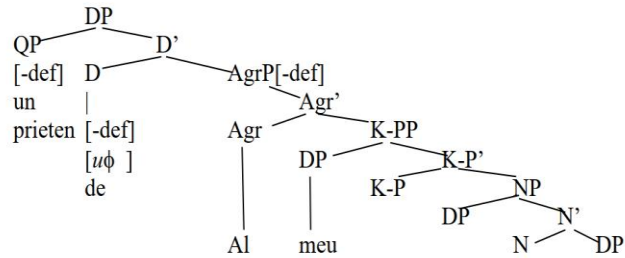
(42)

a.

b.

```
            K-PP
      DP          K-P'
      +D      K-P            NP
      iɸ      +EPP        N        DP
              uɸ          +N
      +M-Case +M-Case     iɸ:___
      |       |           |
      meu     a           pro
```

c

```
                    AgrP
              Agr              K-PP
      K-P          Agr    DP          K-P'
      EPP          [+EPP  +D      K-P      NP
      uɸ           [uɸ]   iɸ          DP       N'
      +M-Case             +M-Case              |
      +N           -L                          N
      A                  meu      t            pro
         AL
```

d.

```
            AgrP
      NP          Agr'
            Agr       K-PP
                  DP        K-P'
                      K          NP
                         DP         N'
                                N       DP
      pro     al    meu         pro
```

(equidistance)

e.

```
                DP
      QP            D'
      [-def]  D         AgrP[-def]
      un      |              Agr'
      prieten [-def]   Agr        K-PP
              [uɸ ]         DP          K-P'
              de                  K-P      NP
                              DP       DP       N'
                              Al    meu      N       DP
```

The functional head [de]$_{D0}$ is endowed not only with a indefiniteness feature, but also with [$u\varphi$] features, which are respectively in the head complement and the head specifier relation. In this way one secures the number gender agreement between the two nominals of the derivation. The possessive phrase (the AL phrase) agrees with its head (D), while the features of D, are valued by the first term.

5.2. Consequences of the derivation and conclusions

Firstly, the analysis categorizes the possessive partitive as a DP and this is an agreement with its occurrence in both argumental and predicative positions.

(43)   a.   Un prieten de-al Mariei nu vine.
                       'A friend of Mary's is not coming.'
          b.   Îl consider pe Matei un prieten bun de-al Mariei.
                       'I consider Matei a good friend of Mary's.'

Secondly, the analysis of DE as a determiner mediates Gender-Number agreement between the two terms of the construction.

Importantly, the specifier of the construction, in other words the term which expresses the part is often phonologically null. Even in such cases, the possessive phrase continues to behave as (an indefinite non-specific) DP, not as a PP. It continuous to appear in all argumental positions, even with prepositional verbs, though there are many understudied restrictions on prepositional verbs. The interpretations are indefinite, collective, and approximative.

(44)   a.   De-ai Mariei n-au venit.
                       'People from Mary's group did not come. (approx.)
          b.   N-am văzut de-ai Mariei la ședință. /Bea (vin) de-al meu.
                       'I haven't seen any of Mary's guys at the meeting.'/ Drink some of mine/my wine.
          c.   Depind/mă ocup de-ai Mariei, pâna se întorc ai mei.
                       'I depend on Mary's group/family, until my folks/my group are back.' (approx.)

Finally, we could also make an essential diachronic remark. The plural form of the possessive i.e. *ai mei*, appears in standard partitive, as well as in the possessive partive, with a change of prepositions.

(45)   a.   mulți dintre ai   mei
                       many from AL.M.PL mine
                       'many of mine'
          b.   mulți de-ai   mei
                       many DE-AL.M.PL mine
                       'many of mine'

The plural form had an essential role in the emergence and the development of the possessive partitive, as demonstrated, in Professor Frâncu's (1983) diachronic analysis.

Having a double interpretation (individual denotation and property denotation), the plural form was able to be re-analyzed. It developed from initially denoting a definite term with a referential interpretation to the status of an indefinite term with a property reading, a denotation which could also be expressed by the singular form. And the singular became the distinctive property of the possessive partitive. The linguistic innovation which singularizes Romanian among Romance languages is to have the singular form for expressing the property and generating a set on this basis.

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