SILENT SEMI-LEXICAL CLASSIFIERS IN ROMANIAN

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Abstract: This paper addresses the question of classifiers in Romanian, i.e. a language with plural morphology. I will propose that pseudo-partitive constructions consist of a classifier-noun sequence, where the classifier is a semi-lexical or functional noun. The ClasP will be conceived of as emerging above NumP in all 'count' situations (Kayne 2003). The head of the ClasP in languages with plural morphology may be filled with semi-lexical material (van Riemsdijk 1998, 2003) – as in the case of pseudopartitive constructions – or, building on Kayne's (2003) proposal, with an abstract noun NUMBER.

1. Classifiers in 'plural' languages

According to the way they express grammatical number, languages are thought to fall into two categories:

a) classifier languages, i.e. languages with a classifier morpheme ranging over the noun (areal feature of languages in Asia and Southeast Asia).

(1) a. Qianmian turan tiao chulai yi zhi laohu (Chen 2003)
front suddenly jump out one CL tiger
'Suddenly a tiger jumped out in front of us.'
b. Ta mai le yi zhuang fangzi
he buy $_{\text{perf.asp}}$. one CL house

b) languages with plural morphology

(2) doi studenți (Romanian)
two students

In Borer (2005), the absence of plural inflection correlates with the existence of classifiers. In traditional analysis, classifiers were considered a subclass of measure phrases, which provide units of mensuration. In languages with plural morphology, such measure phrases are required by mass nouns in order to be countable, i.e. in order to be rendered countable, mass nouns need to be individuated. Examples in (3) show such classifiers at work in English and Romanian:

(3) a. two grains of sand / three drops of whisky / a loaf of bread
b. două boabe de orez / trei pahare de lapte / un cub de zahăr
two grains of rice / three glasses of milk / a cube of sugar

What I would like to claim in this paper is that pseudo-partitive expressions are the same as classifiers in Chinese. The major difference is that classifiers in Chinese are required both for what is generally called 'mass' nouns (like 'rice', 'water, etc) and for count nouns ('pen', 'book', etc.) while in languages like English and Romanian they are required only for mass nouns.

Another major claim of the paper is that classifiers project universally; in this respect, languages can be parameterized as (i) Classifier Languages (Chinese, Japanese, etc) and (ii) Plural-Classifier Languages (Romanian, English, etc). In the second group of languages,

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when there is classifier inflection, it occupies ClasP; when there is no classifier inflection, the head of ClasP is occupied by silent semi-lexical nouns.

The analysis relies on the following empirical and theoretical facts (for an extensive discussion, see Tănase-Dogaru 2006, Tănase-Dogaru 2007a,b):

a) the similarity between cardinal constructions and pseudo-partitive constructions in Romanian, which select a 'de'-complement:

(4) a. douăzeci de studenți
two-tens of students
'twenty students'
b. trei sticle de vin
three bottles of wine

b) the cross-linguistics analysis of cardinal constructions which shows that they often select NP-complements in the genitive case, indicating that there is a connection between the genitive and the partitive (which holds across languages). In Romanian, 'de' in pseudo-partitive constructions is a former partitive-assigner that has become grammaticalized[1]. In UG, the pseudo-partitive and the partitive are two semantic values of the Genitive Case.

(5) pjat' mašin pod" exalo k vokzalu (Russian, Franks 2005)
five cars.gen drove-up.n to station

c) the presence of semi-lexical categories in Romanian and English, a proposal that can handle variation in agreement, selection by the main verb, modification and sub-extraction phenomena (see Tănase-Dogaru 2007a,b). It is to semi-lexical nouns that the next section turns to.

2. The semi-lexical nature of classifiers in Romanian

Starting from Emonds' (1985) discussion of grammatical nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions, or 'disguised lexical categories', van Riemsdijk (1997) and Corver and van Riemsdijk (2001) turn their attention to SEMI-LEXICAL heads, conceived as hybrid categories, i.e. categories exhibiting both lexical and functional/grammatical features.

There are many candidates for the semi-lexical status: the category P, auxiliary verbs, (cf. Emonds 1985), certain verbs featuring in verb clusters in Germanic Verb Raising (cf. van Riemsdijk 2002), certain verbs that allow restructuring in Italian, like *sembrare* (cf.

[1] In some languages (Fino-Ugric), the partitive is a case encoding the part-of relation. In Latin, the partitive is a value of the genitive case as in *parum frumenti* / *very little wheat*. The inflectional partitive has been gradually replaced by prepositional means of indicating the part-of relation. One can speak about a surviving partitive value in French as in *boire du lait* / *drink part. milk*, where *du* is a partitive article. In Romanian, the plural indefinite article can have a partitive value as in *mănânc nişte pâine* / *eat* $_{1st.ps.sg.}$ *some bread* (see Dicționar de științe ale limbii, 1997).

What is of interest at this point is the close connection between the genitive case and the partitive case / value. In Romanian there are several types of genitives: AL-genitives, bare genitives and DE-genitives. If the genitive DP is a bare NP, the assigner is the preposition *de* as in *pierderea de vieți omenești* / *loss-the of lives human* (cf. Cornilescu 2003). Recall that *de* is the same preposition used in Romanian pseudo-partitive constructions. Therefore, in older stages of Romanian, the preposition *de* was involved in expressing both the genitive and the partitive (see above examples). Gradually, the two specialized partitive prepositions have emerged and *de* has become grammaticalized. In other words, it has become a functional preposition marking the boundary between the lexical and the semi-lexical or functional domains of the nominal group.

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Haegeman 2005), etc. For the nominal domain, Emonds (1985) refers to the pro-form 'one' in *the good ones*, the reflexive 'self'/'selves', and 'thing' in *something good*.

We are now in a position to add classifiers like the Chinese 'ge' in *san ge ren* (three CL person). The nouns used as N_1 in pseudo-partitive constructions have semi-lexical status. The next sections endeavor to gather evidence in favor of this claim.

2.1 What makes the difference between functional and (semi)lexical categories – a peek at agreement

Linguists have treated classifiers as either lexical instantiations of functional categories (Löbel 1997, Li 1999) or as semi-lexical heads which exhibit both functional and lexical properties (Van Riemsdijk 1998). In Van Riemsdijk (1998), quantifier nouns such as 'number' in 'a number of examples' and 'pair' in 'a pair of shoes' are considered to be functional heads, by virtue of their being closed-class items, while other type of nouns which may be used in pseudopartitive constructions (measure nouns, partitive nouns, container nouns, collective nouns, kind nouns) are semi-lexical heads. The difference between functional and semi-lexical heads is reflected in verb agreement and gender agreement with the determiner. As Löbel (2001) points out, especially agreement is taken as evidence that some measure nouns 'may waver between functional and semi-lexical status' (Van Riemsdijk 1998); in (6a), the measure noun 'kilo' is functional, in (6b) it is semi-lexical:

(6) a. Er zit drie kilo heroine in die zak (Dutch)
there sits three kilo heroin in that bag
b. ?Er zitten meerdere kilo's heroine in die zak
there sit several kilos heroin in that bag

What seems to be decisive for the status of 'number' as a functional head is its use as a relational noun (a number of examples) (cf. Löbel 2001). This argument also applies to container nouns such as 'bottle (of wine)'. These nouns may be used both as semi-lexical nouns (a bottle of wine) and in a non-relational fashion (a green bottle).

2.2 N_1 in pseudo-partitives as semi-lexical heads

According to Löbel (2001), the terminology used in the literature on classifiers, namely 'mensural' classifiers for nouns such as *pound* or *lump* in (7a) and 'sortal' classifiers such as *con (living being)* or *qua (fruit)* in (7b) suggests that, despite differences, there is a major similarity, since constructions such as **two gold* are ungrammatical both in plural languages and in classifier languages:

(7) a. môt cân cá / hai cuc vàng (Vietnamese)
one pound fish / two lump gold
'a pound of fish / two lumps of gold'
b. môt con cá / hai qua cam
one living being fish / two fruit orange
'one fish' / 'two oranges'

What the Vietnamese and English examples have in common is that, although they consist of two constituents, on the level of semantic interpretation they show 'the behavior of single projections rather than dual projections' (van Riemsdijk 1998).

The most relevant features of N_1 are the following:

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(i) most nouns that are involved in pseudo-partitive constructions (where they have functional status) also appear as full lexical nouns. Consider the following examples from English and Romanian:

(8) a. a green bottle / o sticlă verde
b. a bottle of wine / o sticlă de vin
c. *a green bottle of wine / *o sticlă verde de vin[2]

Therefore, a first characteristic of semi-lexical and functional heads emerges: they become semi-lexical (a feature linked to semantic 'bleaching') when they are used as relational nouns. This idea is reinforced by Cheng and Sybesma (1998, 1999) who, in discussing cases like (9), point out the interpretational differences between *de* and *de*-less structures:

(9) a. san bang (de) rou (Chinese)
three CL pounds DE meat
b. liang xiang (de) shu
two CL box DE book

In the absence of *de*, *xiang* (box) receives a more concrete interpretation, relating to its being an actual box, while in the context of *de* a measure interpretation is favored, i.e. boxful. We may conclude, therefore, that *de* signals when the noun is used as relational.

(ii) in the case of nouns used as heads of pseudo-partitives, they presuppose a 'somewhat reduced lexical meaning in comparison to the quantified noun to which they are a sister' (Löbel 2001). Thus in the Romanian examples in (10), the noun 'vârf' used in a pseudo-partitive construction becomes semantically 'bleached', i.e. does not retain its original meaning of 'summit / peak'[3]:

(10) a. am ajuns în vârf(ul muntelui)
I have reached in peak (the mountain-the$_{GEN}$)
b. am pus la mâncare un vârf de sare
I have put at food a little salt (lit. a peak of salt)

(iii) features that are known to pertain to semi-lexical categories (cf. Emonds 1985, Bhattacharya 2001). Thus, they constitute a closed class, i.e. they are limited in productivity[4], possess a small number of members and do not encourage novel coinages. Similarly, classifiers are universally derived from nouns, which enables one to view them as disguised nouns. Yet, some classifiers belonging to this closed class can have unique usage and meaning. For example, quantifier nouns like 'pereche' / 'pair' are mostly employed to quantify over lexical plurals. The plural form of these nouns denotes pairs:

[2] The ungrammaticality of (8c) relates to cases where 'bottle' / 'sticlă' is a quantity-designating noun, i.e. a container of wine

[3] - Bhattacharya (2001) also acknowledges the fact that a criterion for the functional character of the classifier is the lack of descriptive content. 'This holds as well for the complex (i.e. the Num-Cla complex) as it does not pick out a class of objects but elaborates some property of the complement noun' (Bhattacharya 2001)

[4] One may wonder whether Romanian nouns used as N_1 *in pseudo-partitive constructions are really limited in productivity as there are clear differences between the restricted distribution of a purely functional noun (e.g. pereche/pair) and the freer distribution of a semi-lexical noun like sticlă/bottle*. However, it is precisely this distinction in terms of distribution that allows for different degrees of lexicality.

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(11) pantaloni / chiloți / ochelari / ițari / ghilimele / blugi / foarfece(i) / cleşti
trousers / knickers / spectacles / peasant trousers / quotation marks / blue-jeans/ scissors / tongs

Other examples would include the English *loaf of bread*, *bunch of flowers* or the Bengali *du-khana ru-Ti / two pieces of bread*.

(iv) despite their defectiveness, the nouns that head the first constituent of pseudo-partitive constructions sometimes trigger the selectional restrictions on the verb and agreement in number (which signals lexicality):

(12) a. Two pounds of sugar *was / were strewn / thrown on the floor
b. Two lumps of sugar were *strewn / thrown on the floor.
c. două kilograme de zahăr erau / *era vărsate / *vărsat pe podea
two $\text{kilos}_{\text{FEM-PL}}$ of $\text{sugar}_{\text{MASC-SG}}$ were / *was $\text{spilled}_{\text{FEM-PL}}$ / *$\text{spilled}_{\text{MASC-SG}}$ on floor.

To conclude this section, a noun that exhibits both lexical (agreement) features and functional (closed set, semantic 'bleaching') characteristics may be best viewed as semi-lexical.

3. Silent classifiers

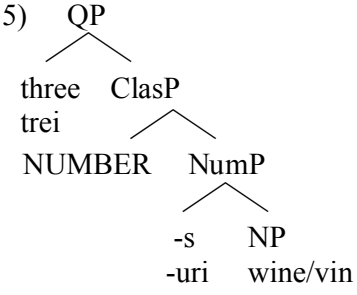
It was Kayne's idea (2003) to conceive of NUMBER as an abstract silent noun, which occurs with numerals, in classifier-like fashion:

(13) John has three NUMBER books.

Extending his analysis of 'few' and 'many' as adjectives of a silent noun NUMBER (13), nouns in 'plural-classifier' languages can be conceived of as projecting a NumP – which is responsible for divisibility – and a ClasP – which is responsible for identifying the portions divided by NumP, before they interact with numerals.

(14) John has few books = John has few NUMBER books.

(15)



The postulation of unpronounced NUMBER in (13) is supported by the fact that the adjective 'few' can also modify the overt noun 'number' (16a); in the same way, the overt 'number' may sometimes appear in exclamative constructions (16b), which otherwise contain an empty classifier head (16c):

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(16) a. John has too few a number of books / the fewest number of books.
b. Ce număr mare de maşini sunt aici!
what number big of cars are here
'What a great number of cars!'
c. Ce de maşini sunt aici!
what of cars are here
'What a great number of cars!'

Therefore, it is conceivable and theoretically intuitive to allow a classifier projection above the number projection. What is still missing is some evidence as to the existence of a silent semi-lexical noun in its head.

3.1 Silent nouns and exclamatives – evidence for NUMBER

The claim that this section makes is that exclamative constructions in Romanian contain a silent noun NUMBER. The presence of the silent noun is linked with the presence of the 'de'-element, which is analyzed as a functional preposition making the transition between the functional and the lexical domains of a partitive construction.

(17) a. Ce case au unii!
what houses have some (people)
'Some have such big/beautiful houses!'
b. Ce de case au unii!
what of houses have some (people)
'Some have so many houses!'

(17a) can only be an exclamation about some salient property of houses, for example their being large or beautiful; on the other hand, (17b) exclaims about the relatively large number of the houses in question.

In this respect, Romanian differs from languages like English or Dutch, where what-exclamatives are consistently ambiguous between an interpretation where the number of elements is involved and an interpretation some other 'relatively excessive property' (van Riemsdijk (2005)) is marveled at:

(18) a. Wat heft die auto een deuken! (van Riemsdijk, 2005)
what has that car a dents
'What dents that car has!'

(18) may be uttered to exclaim either about the relatively large number of car dents or about the type of dents, i.e. their large size or their deformation. In contrast, in the case of Romanian what-exclamatives what seems to make the difference is the element 'de / of'.

Starting from an analysis of the *wat voor* construction and the spurious indefinite article (19) in Dutch, German, Yiddish, Leu (2005) proposes that there is a silent noun KIND that is present in the *wat voor* construction. In his view the example in (19a) has the structure in (19b):

(19) a. Wat voor (een) jongens zijn dat?
what for (a) boys are that?
'What kind of boys are those?'

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b. Wat voor (een) SORT jongens zijn dat?
what for (a) KIND boys are that
'What kind of boys are those?'

The indefinite article, which unexplainably shows up with plural count nouns (19a) receives a natural interpretation as being an associate of the silent noun KIND. Extending Leu's analysis of silent nouns in *wat voor* constructions to two other types of structures involving the spurious indefinite article, i.e. exclamatives and N-of-an-N constructions, van Riemsdijk (2005) postulates another silent noun – TOKEN. In (20a) with the answer in (20b), the presence of the spurious indefinite article signals the presence of the silent noun KIND, while in (21a) with the answer in (21b), the ban on the article signals the silent noun TOKEN:

(20) a. Wat voor een musea heb je bezocht?
what for (a) museums have you visited
'What kind of museums did you visit?'
b. Musea voor moderne kunst
museums of modern art

(21) a. Wat voor *een musea heb je bezocht?
what for *a museums have you visited
'What kind of museums did you visit?'
b. het Rijkmuseum en het Van Gogh museum
the Rijkmuseum and the Van Gogh museum

The *wat voor* questions either ask for a KIND / TYPE or for TOKENS of that kind. The TOKEN interpretation is only possible when the spurious indefinite article is absent, which is plausible on the assumption that TOKENS is a plural.

Coming back to Romanian exclamatives, it seems safe to assume that the 'de' construction involves the silent noun NUMBER while the 'de'-less construction may be viewed as containing the silent KIND / TYPE / SORT. Moreover, whenever the overt 'number' is present, *de* is obligatory:

(22) a. Ce de băieți la petrecere! = Ce de NUMBER băieți la petrecere.
what of boys at party = what of NUMBER boys are at party
'There are so many boys at the party'
b. Ce băieți sunt la petrecere! = Ce KIND boys are at party (tall, handsome)
what boys are at party! = What KIND boys are at party
'The boys at the party are really handsome, tall, etc.'
c. Ce număr mare *(de) băieți la petrecere!
what number big *(of) boys at the party

The same can be noticed when mass nouns are involved. There are two patterns: one involving 'de' and presumably, a silent noun, which can be paraphrased as AMOUNT (cf. Kayne, 2005) and a 'de'-less pattern, which exclaims about some relevant property of the noun (and not its amount):

(23) a. Ce de vin a băut! = ce AMOUNT de vin a băut
what of wine he drank = what AMOUNT of wine he drank
'What an amount of wine did the guy drink!'

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b. Ce vin au avut la petrecere! = ce KIND vin au avut la petrecere (good, etc)
what wine they had at party = what KIND wine they had at party
'What a good wine they had at the party!'

Another interesting pattern has to do with abstract nouns. Consider (24):

(24) a. Ce tristețe / bucurie e aici! = ce AMOUNT tristețe / bucurie e aici
what sadness / joy is here = what AMOUNT sadness / joy is here
'What sadness/joy!'
b. ?? Ce de tristețe / bucurie e aici = ce NUMBER tristețe / bucurie e aici
what of sadness / joy is here = what NUMBER sadness / joy is here

Since the *de*-element is taken to indicate the presence of silent NUMBER, (24b) is odd. The oddity comes from the fact that abstract nouns and NUMBER do not go together. The mass interpretation of an abstract noun like 'sadness' is coerced by NUMBER into a count interpretation.

In conclusion, exclamatory constructions in Romanian show evidence of a silent noun NUMBER.

3.2 Silent classifiers and 'grocerese'

A type of construction which is amenable to an analysis in terms of silent classifiers is what Borer (2005) calls 'grocerese' or 'restaurantese'. Examples from Romanian, Dutch and English are given in (25):

(25) a. trei Tiramisu (la masa 5) / cinci ciorbă de burtă / patru salam de vară (Romanian)
three tiramisu (at table 5) / five tripe soup / four salami
'three Tiramisu cakes / five tripe soups / four salamis'
b. twee melk / drie pils / vier erwtnesoep (Dutch)
two milk / three beer / four pea-soup
c. three wine / four mushroom soup / two sandwich (English)

In such cases, the numeral is a plural one but the noun is in the singular. What is implied in each case is a 'standard measure or container noun' like 'bottle' etc. (cf. van Riemsdijk, 1998, Vos 1999).

(26) a. trei bucăți de Tiramisu / cinci farfurii de ciorbă de burtă / patru felii de salam de vară (Romanian)
'three pieces of Tiramisu / five plates of tripe soup / four slices of salami'
b. twee pakken melk / drie glazen pils / vier borden erwtensoep (Dutch)
two packs milk / three glasses beer / four plates pea-soup
c. three bottles of wine / four plates of mushroom soup (English)

Therefore, what is implied is a silent classifier which can be conceived of as either a silent variant of the concrete container nouns or as a more generic type of noun, such as UNIT or TOKEN.

3.3 Classifiers and *one*-insertion

One-insertion is a last resort mechanism used to support the number affix, much in the manner of *do*-insertion in English. Llombart-Huesca (2002) observes that anaphoric *one* is

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only possible with [+count] nouns, thus reminding of the behavior of classifiers in languages like Chinese.

(27) She likes her new furniture *and I like my old.

In cases of ellipsis of an NP headed by a count noun, a quantifier, a plural demonstrative or a string possessor license the empty Num^0.

(28) a. All the students took the exam but many failed.
b. [[[$_{QP}$ many [$_{NumP}$ *ec* [$_{NP}$ *ec*]]

When there is no proper licenser or when an adjective blocks licensing of Num^0, Num^0 needs to be overt. The number affix is stranded and *one* is inserted. In Llombart-Huesca's words 'so-called anaphoric *one* would then be the English overt counterpart of Chinese classifiers, with the appropriate meaning of {unit}' (Llombart-Huesca 2002).

Romanian *unul / una* is inserted in the number head to support the number affix and the complex acts as a classifier. It classifies both count and mass.

(29) a. El a cumpărat un pix roşu iar eu am cumpărat unul verde.
he has bought a pen red and I have bought one green.
'He bought a red pen and I bought a green one'.
b. Ea a cumpărat un vin roşu iar eu am cumpărat unul alb.
she has bought a wine red and I have bought one white.
'She has bought a red wine and I have bought a white one.'

4. Conclusions

In 'plural languages', i.e. languages with plural morphology, NumPs and ClasPs are not in complementary distribution, as implicit in Borer (2005). Languages can be parameterized as:

1. 'classifier' languages, i.e. Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai, etc.
2. 'plural-classifier' languages, i.e. English, Romanian, Italian, etc.

The languages in the first group project a ClasP, which conflates the roles of the morphologic number and that of the classifier. A ClasP in such languages is responsible for dividing the stuff denoted by the noun and making it syntactically visible for countability (cf. Doetjes 1997, Sybesma 2006).

The languages in the second group project both a ClasP and a NumP. The head of the ClasP may be filled with semi-lexical material (cf. van Riemsdijk 1998, 2003) – as in the case of pseudopartitive constructions – or, building on Kayne's (2003) proposal, with an abstract noun NUMBER.

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