

Linking and juxtaposed pseudopartitives: a diachronic approach

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The syntactic and semantic differences between partitives as in (1)a and pseudopartitives as in (1)b are well known (cf. Jackendoff 1977).

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|-----|-----|----|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) | En. | a. | a slice of that cake | (restricted set: partitive) |
| | | b. | a slice of cake | (unrestricted set: pseudopartitive) |

Both constructions superficially appear to consist of two nominals, which are usually designated N_1 and N_2 . In English, both partitive and pseudopartitive constructions are formed with the preposition *of*. However other languages, e.g. Danish, Swedish, Dutch, and German employ different strategies for each, a linking morpheme for the partitive as in (2), and juxtaposition for the pseudopartitive as in (3) (Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2008:318):

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|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------|----|--------------|-------------------|
| (2) | Da. | en | gruppe | af | turisterne | (partitive) |
| | | one | group | of | tourists-DEF | |
| | | | 'one group of the tourists' | | | |
| (3) | Da. | en | gruppe | | turister | (pseudopartitive) |
| | | one | group | | tourists | |
| | | | 'a group of tourists' | | | |

It is not clear why closely related languages would employ different strategies. Alexiadou, Hageman and Stavrou (2007:457) speculate that “a fruitful avenue for future research” is that languages with overt case morphology use juxtaposition and languages without nominal case morphology have a linking morpheme. This would seem to be supported by data from earlier English as in (4) below, where juxtaposition is sometimes employed, (but not supported by the data in (2) and (3) above):

- (4) I bequethe to Marie Tendall, my goddoughter, my peir bedys of calcidenys gaudied with siluer and gilt. ...(1482 copy of will of Margaret Paston)

In this paper I investigate the difference between the two pseudopartitive constructions by tracing the diachronic development of the pseudopartitive in English. Particular attention will be paid to the differences in the restricted sets of nouns that can be N_1 , but which behave differently, genuine quantifiers (*dozen*, *pound*) and “ordinary nouns that are temporarily used as quantifiers” (Delsing 1993: 203) (*box*, *bottle*).

References

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- Delsing, Lars-Olof. 1993. *The Internal Structure of Noun Phrases in the Scandinavian Languages. A Comparative Study*. Lund: University of Lund. Dissertation.
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