

# Juxtaposed pseudo-partitives old and new

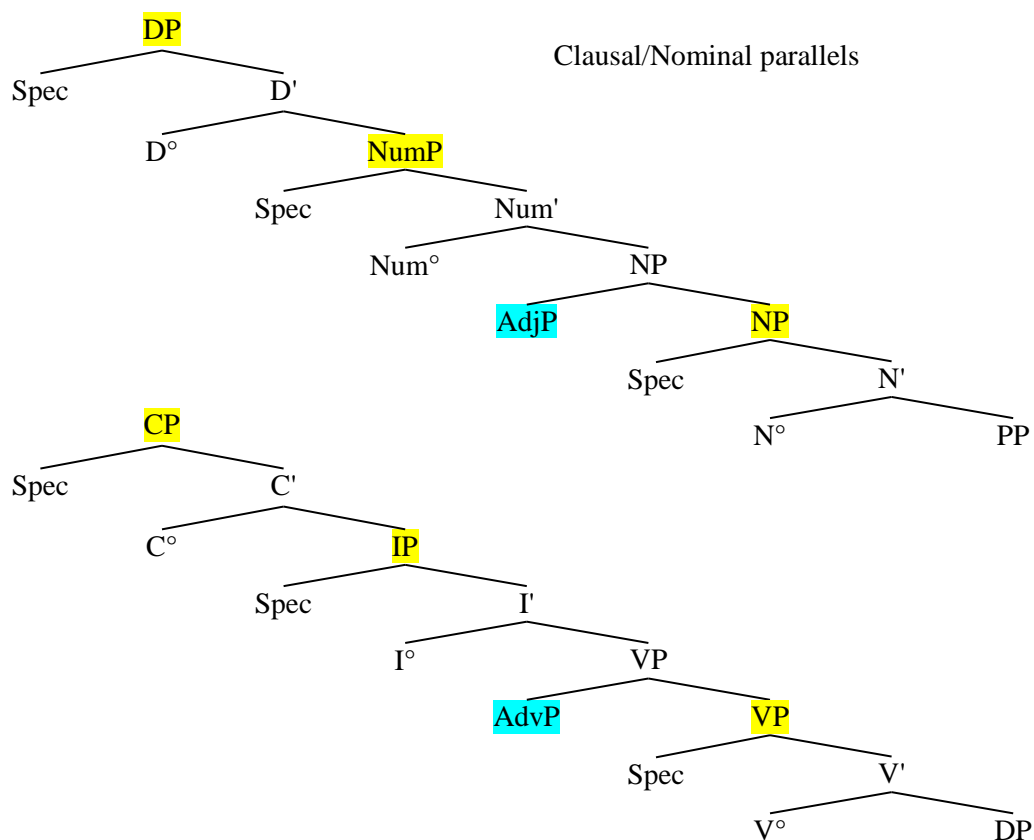
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Although English is a member of the Germanic language family, it is often noted to be a typological outlier. In this paper, I focus on two related topics that have long interested me when comparing English with other Germanic languages, the structure of pseudo-partitives and the grammaticalisation of measure phrases.

Pseudo-partitives are nominal expressions containing two nouns, designated  $N_1$  and  $N_2$ , where  $N_2$  is either non-count or plural. Although most modern Germanic languages optionally juxtapose  $N_1$  and  $N_2$  to form pseudo-partitives in the Direct Partitive Construction (DPC), present-day English requires a preposition, termed the Indirect Partitive Construction (IPC) (van Riemsdijk 1998:11).

- (1) Da. *en spand vand*  
En. \*a bucket water  
En. a bucket of water

With respect to present-day English, it is sometimes claimed that there is a general trend towards loss of *of*, meaning that English is now developing a DPC (Selkirk 1977:308, Klockmann 2017). Anecdotal evidence for this invariably references *couple*. I present evidence showing that change is confined to this one item and is not a general trend. With respect to Middle English, it has been claimed that English used to have a DPC in container/measure expressions (Grestenberger 2015). I show that there is little evidence to support the claim that the DPC was widespread in Middle English and subsequently lost.



## Outline

1. Introduction: empirical and theoretical questions
2. Partitives and pseudo-partitives: cross linguistic differences
3. Nominal structures
4. Language change and *couple*
5. Language change and *lot*
6. Conclusion

### 1. Introduction

In pseudo-partitive constructions, linking *of* is one of the immediately apparent differences between Present Day English (PDE) and many other Germanic languages. In Danish, German and Dutch, two nouns, usually designated N<sub>1</sub> (a portion or container) and N<sub>2</sub> (that which is contained or portioned) may be juxtaposed. English is different and requires a linker, *of*.

- (1) Da. a. *en gruppe turister*  
          a group of tourists  
      Du. b. *een plak kaas*  
          a slice of cheese  
      Ge. c. *ein Bund Rosen*  
          a bunch of roses  
      En. d. \*a group tourists  
          e. a group of tourists

#### Prior claims about the presence *of* as a linker:

- In Middle English, Mustanoja (2016 [1960]) notes *of* was not always used e.g. *no morsel breed*; Grestenberger (2015) says *of* was not always used in container/measure constructions.
- Kjellner (2007: 304) concludes that: ‘Prepositionless’ constructions have remained in the language since Old English.
- In Present-Day English *of* is optional/disappearing: e.g. with *couple of* (Selkirk 1977:308, Klockmann 2017:216).

#### Prior claims about the function of *of*.

- Jackendoff 1977: a grammatical formative with no specified function
- Selkirk 1977: a functional morpheme with no specified function
- Abney 1987: a preposition
- van Riemsdijk 1998: a “dummy” preposition
- Löbel 1999: a case marker for partitive case
- Alexiadou et al. 2007: a problem
- Stickney 2009: a functional node introducing a phrase type (e.g. *for*, *to*)
- Klockmann 2017: a nominal marker

### Theoretical question:

Why is *of* needed in English pseudo-partitives but other Germanic languages can juxtapose two nouns?

I take up the idea that *of* is a nominal marker and suggest the relevant difference between English and other Germanic languages is that nouns in English do not have gender.

### Empirical questions:

Can anecdotal claims that *of* is disappearing (from Present-day English) be substantiated?

I show that in Present-day English (PDE) *of* is being lost with respect to *couple*, evidence of grammaticalisation to a quantifier.

## 2 Partitives and pseudo-partitives

### 2.1 Cross linguistic differences

Partitives consist of two nominals, which are usually designated  $N_1$  (a portion or container) and  $N_2$  (that which is contained or portioned). Partitive constructions semantically express the relation between an individual or set of individuals and a part of that set.

- partitive elements → make sets accessible for quantification

The literature generally makes a distinction between ordinary partitives and pseudo-partitives (Selkirk 1977, Jackendoff 1977, Koptjevskaja -Tamm 2001, Stickney 2004, Alexiadou, Haegeman & Stavrou 2007).

- ordinary partitives → involve restricted or contextually bound sets
- pseudo-partitives → involve unrestricted or unbounded entities

In an ‘ordinary’ partitive the embedded nominal,  $N_2$  is definite; in a pseudo-partitive  $N_2$  is either non-count or plural.

- |     |     |  |                    |
|-----|-----|--|--------------------|
| (2) | En. | a. five pounds of the/those/her apples | (partitive)        |
|     |     | b. five pounds of apples               | (pseudo-partitive) |
| (3) | En. | a. a glass of this wine                | (partitive)        |
|     |     | b. a glass of wine                     | (pseudo-partitive) |

Cross linguistically in Germanic there are different strategies for forming pseudo-partitives: juxtaposition, preposition and case.

- surface structure [ $N_1 N_2$ ] (Juxtaposition of  $N_1$  and  $N_2$  and no special case marking)
- surface structure [ $N_1$  *of*  $N_2$ ] (Preposition preceding  $N_2$ )
- surface structure [ $N_1 N_{2CASE}$ ] (Juxtaposition of  $N_1$  and  $N_2$  and special case marking<sup>1</sup>)

In English *of* cannot (usually) be omitted in the pseudopartitive

- |     |     |                              |             |
|-----|-----|------------------------------|-------------|
| (4) | En. | a. a group of those tourists | (partitive) |
|-----|-----|------------------------------|-------------|

---

<sup>1</sup> The case marking is genitive in Germanic but not necessarily in other languages.

- b. group of tourists (pseudo-partitive)
- c. \*a group tourists

A third strategy uses case; in Germanic the case is usually genitive. In (Standard) German, N<sub>1</sub> has the case of the governing verb or preposition. N<sub>2</sub> either shares the case of N<sub>1</sub> or takes genitive case.

(5) Ge. *nach zwei Flaschen rotem Wein*  
after two bottles-DAT red-DAT wine

(6) Ge. *nach zwei Flaschen roten Weins*  
after two bottles-DAT red-DAT wine-GEN

Old English typically used genitive case: (Mitchell 1985:546) See also Allen (2008:85-87).

(7) OE. *Ælc wifmon hæfde ane yndsan goldes & an pund seolfres.*  
Each woman had one ounce gold-GEN and one pound silver-GEN  
'Each woman had one ounce of gold and one pound of silver' (OED: 800)

## 2.2. Examples of typical N<sub>1</sub>s

For reference, Table 1 shows examples of the types of nouns that typically appear as N<sub>1</sub>

**Table 1:** Types of quantity/measure nouns (N<sub>1</sub>)

	<b>Quantifier (QN)</b>	<b>Measure (MN)</b>	<b>Part (PartN)</b>	<b>Container (ConN)</b>	<b>Collective(ColN)</b>	<b>Quantums (mass nouns)</b>	<b>Forms (mass and count nouns)</b>
<b>En</b>	<i>number</i>	<i>pound</i>	<i>slice</i>	<i>bottle, box</i>	<i>swarm</i>	<i>lump, drop</i>	<i>pile, bunch</i>
<b>Du</b>	<i>aantal, paar</i>	<i>liter</i>	<i>snee</i>	<i>fles, krat</i>	<i>kudde</i>	<i>druppel</i>	<i>bos</i>
<b>Da</b>	<i>antal, par</i>	<i>liter, kilo</i>	<i>stykke</i>	<i>kasse</i>	<i>sværm</i>	<i>dråbe</i>	<i>bunke</i>

Table 1 is based on Delsing (1993:203), Van Riemsdijk (1998:17), Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001:530) Alexiadou, Haegeman & Stavrou (2007:402), Grimshaw, (2007:202) and others.

Both Delsing (for Swedish) and van Riemsdijk (for Dutch) distinguish two types of N<sub>1</sub>s.

The two left most columns are '**genuine**' **quantifiers** prototypically used as quantifiers: *antal, dussin, kilo, liter* [number, dozen, kilo, litre]. They occur without a linker.

- (8) Da. a. *en liter (\*af) vand*  
a liter of water
- b. *et kilo (\*af) smør*  
a kilo of butter
- d. *en masse (\*af) penge/mennesker*  
a lot of money/people

The other columns show **ordinary nouns** that are temporarily used as quantifiers: *flaska, låda, bunt, hop* [bottle, box, bunch, crowd] (Delsing 1993: 203).

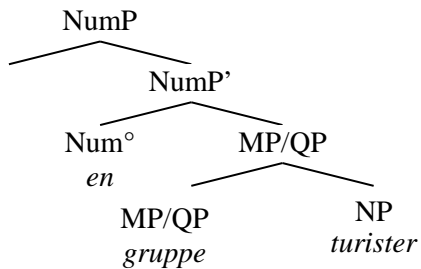
## 2.3 Structural differences

Many analyses of the pseudo-partitive from Selkirk (1977) and Jackendoff (1977) on argue it is one nominal projection, with a single referent, not two, despite the presence of two nouns. This is termed the mono-projection approach.

The mono-projection tree is straightforward for the languages that juxtapose  $N_1$  and  $N_2$  but what to do with *of* in English is a challenge.

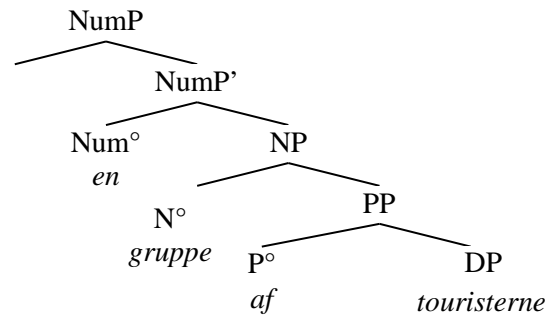
(9)

a.



**Pseudo-partitive: Danish**

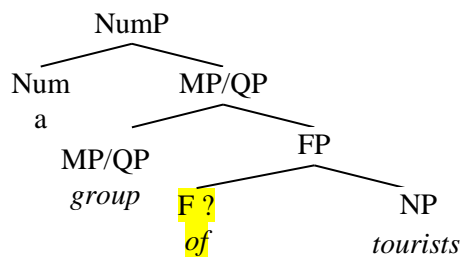
b.



**Partitive: Danish**

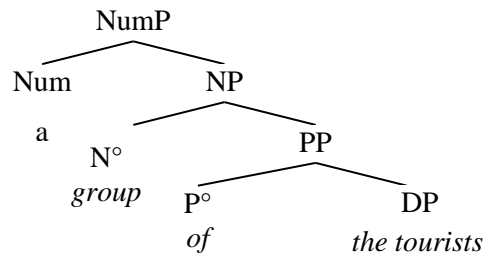
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a.



**Pseudo-partitive: English**

b.



**Partitive: English**

Researchers don't agree on what to call the phrase that hosts  $N_1$ :

- a measure/classifier/ in a QP (Löbel, 1989)
- or a M(easure)P (Stickney: 2009)
- or CP/MP: classifier/measure (Alexiadou, Haegeman & Stavrou 2007)
- nP Hankamer & Mikkelsen (2008)
- Q-noun Klockmann (2017)

But all the different analyses come to similar conclusions:

- The  $N_1$  noun is 'semi-lexical' (van Riemsdijk 1998) or quasi-functional (Borer 2005:100), somewhere between a lexical noun and a (quantifier-like)functional head .
- There is at least one projection between DP and NP that hosts  $N_1$ .
- $N_2$  is smaller than a DP.
- *of* is not a preposition

## 2.4 Pseudo-partitive: syntactic tests:

**Movement** from (Selkirk 1977: 304; Stickney 2009:52)

In the pseudo-partitive, moving the *of*-phrase leads to ungrammaticality.

- |      |   |                    |
|------|---|--------------------|
| (11) | a. A lot of that leftover turkey has been eaten.      | (partitive)        |
|      | b. A lot_____ has been eaten of that leftover turkey. |                    |
| (12) | a. A lot of leftover turkey has been eaten.           | (pseudo-partitive) |
|      | b. *A lot_____ has been eaten of leftover turkey      |                    |
| (13) | a. I ate a pile of those apples.                      | (partitive)        |
|      | b. Of those apples I ate a pile _____.                |                    |
|      | c. These are the apples that I ate a pile of _____.   |                    |
| (14) | a. I ate a pile of apples                             | (pseudo-partitive) |
|      | b. *Of apples I ate a pile _____                      |                    |
|      | c. *These are apples that I ate a pile of _____       |                    |

## Extraction

The *of* phrase is not a barrier for extraction:

- |      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| (15) | a. John wanted [a picture of a man from France]         |  |
|      | b. *Where did John want [a picture of a man from_____]? |  |
| (16) | a. John wanted [a basket of cheese from France].        |  |
|      | b. Where did John want [a basket of cheese from _____]  |  |

### Agreement: Number agreement with N<sub>2</sub>

In the quantifier construction number agreement is with N<sub>2</sub>.

- (17) a. A lot of books were made to be read once.  
b. \*A lot of books was made to be read once (in the quantity reading)
- (18) a. You know, a bunch of leftists are going to read this.  
b. \*You know, a bunch of leftists is going to read this (COCA: spoken)

The mono-projection structure works well for e.g. Danish, Dutch i.e. all the juxtaposition examples. BUT what do we do with *of* in English? Some researchers suggest that *of* is a nominal marker (Stickney 2009; Klockmann 2017).

Even if we assume the nominal marker analysis for English, the question still is why would English nominals need to be marked as ‘nominal’ but other Germanic languages do not?

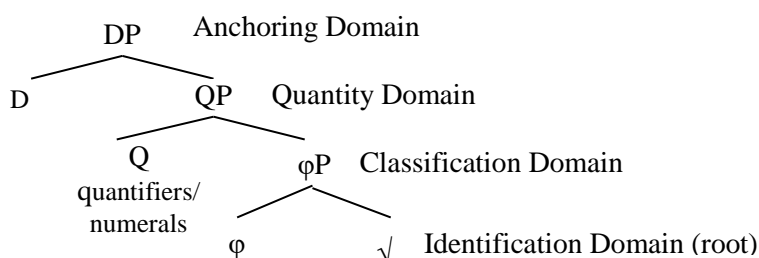
I suggest that in English *of* is needed because English lacks gender, a *phi*-feature that identifies the construction as nominal.

### 3. Nominal structure

A fine grained structure for the nominal Klockmann (2017: 40):

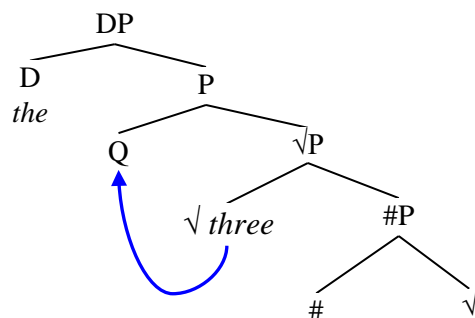
Identification domain:	where roots are inserted	(NP)
Classification Domain:	classifies the root as a noun	(NumP)
Quantity Domain:	hosts quantifiers and numerals e.g. <i>many</i>	(NumP)
Anchoring Domain:	demonstratives, determiners e.g. <i>the</i>	(DP)

(19)

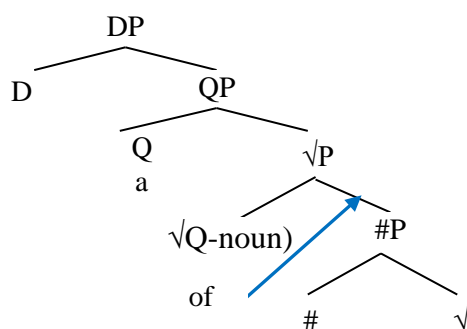


Basic structure of the English DP  
Klockmann (2017: 40) based on  
Wiltschko (2014) and  
Hachem (2015) the  
Universal Spine.

The classification domain refers to the *phi*-features associated syntactically with a root. Roots get their category in the syntax (which for nominals in English is only number). Numerals and quantifiers occur in the extended projection of the noun.



Structure for a low numeral in English Klockmann (2017: 257)



Basis structure for a pseudo-partitive in English Klockmann (2017:260)

Measure nouns (N<sub>1</sub>) and quantifiers occur in the extended projection of N<sub>2</sub>

- Measure nouns are inserted as roots; they have a classification domain
- The measure noun, N<sub>1</sub>, does not move to the QP; QP is lexicalised by 'a'
- The N<sub>2</sub> does not project higher DP material

For English, Klockmann (2017: 217) suggests that *of* is sensitive “to the presence of a classification domain. If there are two classification domains in a particular locality, the nominal associated with the lower classification domain is marked by *of*.”

### Why don't other Germanic languages need *of*?

I suggest that in the Germanic languages other than English, an additional *phi*-feature is available; nouns have gender. That is sufficient to identify the construction as nominal. Identification with *of* is not needed.

In English the shift from grammatical to natural gender was more or less complete by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. There is some variation (3 possibilities) but the partitive genitive is no longer used by the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It looks as if gender was lost earlier than or around the same time as genitive

(20) *He of his likame lette ænne drope blod* (MED c. 1225 Layamon Caligula MS)  
He from his body shed one drop blood

(21) *He of his likame lette one blodes drope* (MED c. 1272 Layamon Otho MS)  
He from his body shed one blod-GEN drop.



- (22) *nouȝt o drope of blode*  
not one drop of blood

(MED c.1300 South English Legendary)

“The particle *of* is triggered by the presence of a classification domain; if the classification domain is what creates nominality, then grammaticalization might be expected to target the classification domain early on, leading to the disappearance of *of* (and in this regard the variation between *a couple X* and *a couple of X* is interesting). (Klockmann 2017:216 fn.5).

## 4. Language change and *couple*

[W]e might be seeing evidence for a grammaticalization path from noun to quantifier. In particular, if this is grammaticalization, it affects the availability of *of* before the indefinite (Klockmann 2017:216)

- (23) a couple of books > a couple books?  
a lot of books > a lot books?

Anecdotal evidence referencing *couple*, as an aside, or footnote:

Selkirk (1977:308 “[T]he measure phrase *a couple* optionally permits *of* to be absent”.

- (24) a. Can I borrow a couple (of) sheets of paper? (pseudo-partitive)  
b. Can I borrow a couple sheets of paper? (pseudo-partitive) (colloquial)  
(Selkirk 1977. ex. (82))

Corpus examples showing the meaning is more than two:

- (25) WINFREY: OK. Terence, you've had multiple affairs?  
TERENCE: I had a couple affairs, three affairs.  
WINFREY: So when you say a couple, a few, what does that really mean? (COCA: spoken)
- (26) What you got is a lame-duck session in which a couple of things are going to happen. You get homeland security through, you get terrorism insurance through, you get some judges through.  
COCA, 2002, CNN)

Language log thread: 19 October 2014: ‘Couple without *of*’ (filed under ‘peeving’) Speculations:

- I have no problem saying something like, "Yeah, I've done that a couple times", and I don't think of that as dropping "of" at all.
- I hardly say "couple of", for me the word is "couplea" (or "cupla"). I think that "couple" and "couplea" both have the same syntax for me but I'm not sure.

Can the anecdotal data be confirmed? Is something happening to *couple of*?

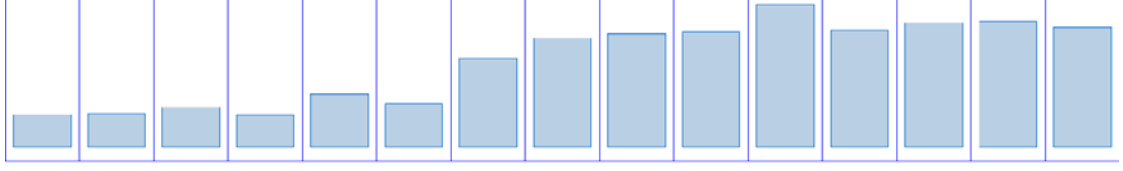
### 4.2 Historical data: *couple* [NOUN]

#### 1910-2000 (COHA) spoken and written

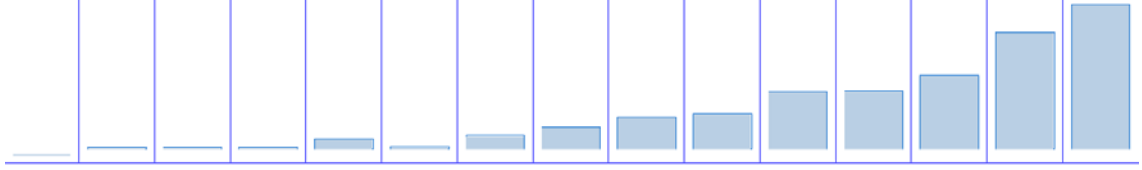
The data from The Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) show that examples of *couple* overall are infrequent in earlier years and gradually increase over the years, becoming more stable in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The data show that *couple* expressions without *of* are fairly recent, first attested in COHA in 1839 (27) and 1876 (28). There are sporadic examples without *of* before 1910.

**Table 2: *a couple of* [NOUN] expressions 1910-2010 (COHA)**

SECTION	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
FREQ	337	373	449	392	681	620	1358	1660	1806	1863	2285	1932	2291	2434	2357
WORDS (M)	18.8	20.1	20.4	22.0	23.1	25.7	27.7	27.4	28.7	29.1	28.8	29.9	33.1	34.8	35.5
PER MIL	17.94	18.59	21.98	17.84	29.48	24.12	49.01	60.58	63.01	63.97	79.26	64.72	69.11	69.90	66.48
															
	<i>a couple of</i> [NOUN]														

**Table 3: *a couple* [NOUN] expressions 1910-2010 (COHA)**

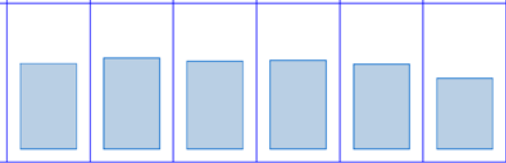
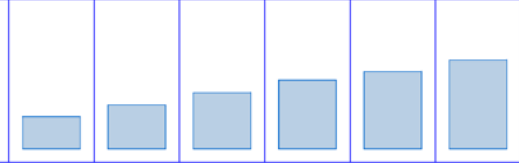
SECTION	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
FREQ	0	5	1	5	35	7	59	96	146	165	266	281	397	661	833
WORDS (M)	18.8	20.1	20.4	22.0	23.1	25.7	27.7	27.4	28.7	29.1	28.8	29.9	33.1	34.8	35.5
PER MIL	0.00	0.25	0.05	0.23	1.51	0.27	2.13	3.50	5.09	5.67	9.23	9.41	11.98	18.98	23.50
															
	<i>a couple</i> [NOUN]														

- (27) "Then why don't you call for a couple pieces of pie, and a couple glasses of beer?" said the stranger  
(COHA: 1839)
- (28) . . . a couple pounds of which we used last night making scouse.  
(OED: 1876 C. H. Davis *Polaris Expedition*)
- (29) Will you mind waiting outside just a couple seconds?  
(COHA 1951)

### 1990-2019 (COCA) spoken and written

The data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) show that although the number of 'a couple of [NOUN]' expressions remained stable (or even decreased) 'a couple [NOUN]' showed a steady increase, from 9.67 instances per million in 1990-94 to 26.97 in 2015-19.

**Table 4: Comparison of *a couple of* [NOUN] vs a couple [NOUN] expressions 1990-2019 (COCA)**

SECTION	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19
FREQ	8155	8972	8645	8606	8257	6829	1171	1653	2118	2571	2893	3311
WORDS (M)	121.1	125.2	124.6	123.1	123.3	122.8	121.1	125.2	124.6	123.1	123.3	122.8
PER MIL	67.34	71.66	69.37	69.94	66.94	55.63	9.67	13.20	17.00	20.89	23.45	26.97
												
	<i>a couple of</i> [NOUN]						<i>a couple</i> [NOUN]					

**4.3 Regional comparison US, Canadian and UK English, spoken only**

- A search in the approximately 10 million word spoken section of the British National Corpus (BNC) (1980s-1993) reveals that *of* is omitted in 1.3% of the total examples.
- A search in the 95.5 million word spoken section of COCA reveals that *of* is omitted in 19.4% of the total examples.
- A search of the 6 million word spoken part of the Corpus of Canadian English (CCE) finds the construction is more frequent than in British English but less frequent than in US English, 6.38% of the total.

The figures for each 5 year interval in US English are shown as the percentage of examples without *of*, out of the total number of examples (100%). The figures for British English and Canadian English are included for comparison. This trend appears to be a change in progress in US English, with the construction becoming more frequent. The table below shows the percentage of examples with omitted *of* in COCA, broken down into 5 year intervals.

**Table 5. Percentage omission of *of* in US, Canadian and British English:**

	COCA					CCE	BNC
	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2012	1970s-2000	1980s-1993
<i>couple</i> [NOUN] tokens per million words	3.3	5.48	6.43	7.39	9.11	11.71	2.1
<i>couple of</i> [NOUN] tokens per million words	30.54	31.24	29.81	30.45	33.15	171.77	159.38
Total examples possible	33.84	36.72	36.24	37.84	42.26	183.48	161.48
% <i>couple</i> [NOUN] out of total possible	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>17.54%</b>	<b>17.74%</b>	<b>19.53%</b>	<b>21.56%</b>	<b>6.38%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

Is there a phonological/prosodic effect?

**Table 6 Most frequent nouns following *a couple of*, *a couple* and *a few***

a couple of [NOUN]	a couple [NOUN]	a few [NOUN]
hours (11,154)	hours (3,194)	years (41,756)
days (8,246)	days (2,462)	days (30,290)
weeks (7,734)	weeks (2,440)	months (21,520)
months (4,567)	months (1,570)	weeks (121,387)
hours (4,205)	hours (1,560)	minutes (20,871)
times (2,460)	times (1,408)	hours (12,351)

As Table 6 shows, almost identical complements occur, regardless of the presence or absence of *of*.

What about *coupla*? Scattered written examples. No noticeable trend:

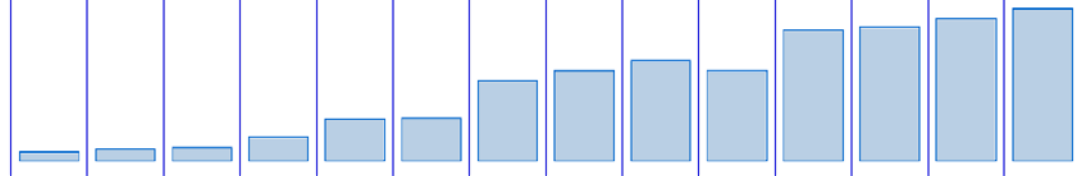
(30) I'd tried it once or twice before, a coupla times when I was younger (BNC: written)

(31) Spend a coupla days away and let things cool off. (COCA written)

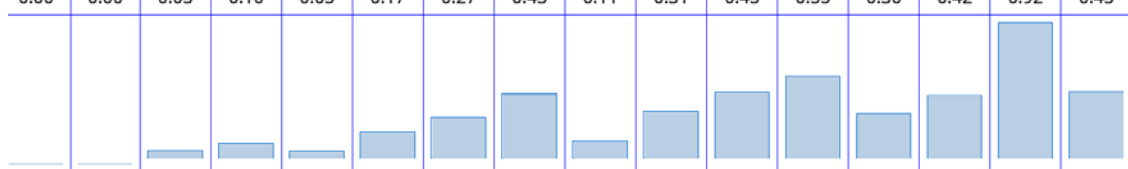
## 5. Language change and *lot*

*Lot* is a prototypical example of a grammaticalized measure noun. See the claim that for expressions such as *a lot of* “the quantifier use has become the near-exclusive one” (Brems 2015: 91) If this were a general trend we might expect *lot* to be losing *of*.



**Table 7 *a lot of* [NOUN] 1870-2000 (COHA)**

SECTION	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
FREQ	122	195	224	446	854	969	2000	2224	2581	2354	3401	3610	4259	4800
WORDS (M)	18.8	20.1	20.4	22.0	23.1	25.7	27.7	27.4	28.7	29.1	28.8	29.9	33.1	34.8
PER MIL	6.49	9.72	10.97	20.29	36.96	37.70	72.18	81.17	90.05	80.83	117.97	120.93	128.48	137.84
														
<i>a lot of</i> [NOUN]														

**Table 8 *a lot* [NOUN] 1870-2000 (COHA)**

SECTION																
FREQ	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
WORDS (M)	0	0	1	2	1	4	7	12	3	9	13	16	9	14	32	16
PER MIL	16.9	18.8	20.1	20.4	22.0	23.1	25.7	27.7	27.4	28.7	29.1	28.8	29.9	33.1	34.8	35.5
	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.10	0.05	0.17	0.27	0.43	0.11	0.31	0.45	0.55	0.30	0.42	0.92	0.45
																

**Table 9: Comparison of *a lot of* [NOUN] vs *a lot* [NOUN] expressions 1990-2019 (COCA)**

SECTION	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19	SECTION	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19
FREQ	24782	27801	28292	29725	32239	31850		78	116	116	148	144	147
WORDS (M)	121.1	125.2	124.6	123.1	123.3	122.8		121.1	125.2	124.6	123.1	123.3	122.8
PER MIL	204.63	222.03	227.02	241.57	261.37	259.47		0.64	0.93	0.93	1.20	1.17	1.20
													
	<i>a lot of</i> [NOUN]							<i>a lot</i> [NOUN]					

Some speakers appear to analyse *a lot of* as *lotta*.

(32) I hadda do a lotta talking to get her to come

(OED 1945)

(33) A lotta people are hurting, you know

(COCA: spoken)

**Table 10: Comparison of *a lot of* [NOUN] vs *a lotta* [NOUN]**



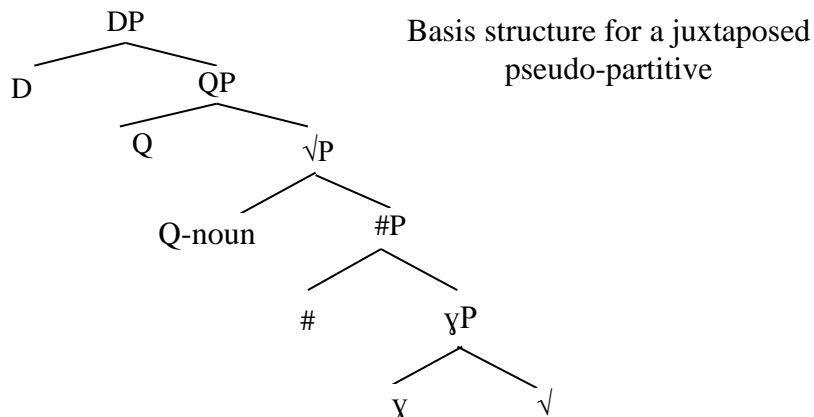
SECTION	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19	SECTION	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19
FREQ	24782	27801	28292	29725	32239	31850		45	57	62	53	45	51
WORDS (M)	121.1	125.2	124.6	123.1	123.3	122.8		121.1	125.2	124.6	123.1	123.3	122.8
PER MIL	204.63	222.03	227.02	241.57	261.37	259.47		0.37	0.46	0.50	0.43	0.36	0.42
													
	<i>a lot of</i> [NOUN]							<i>a lotta</i> [NOUN]					

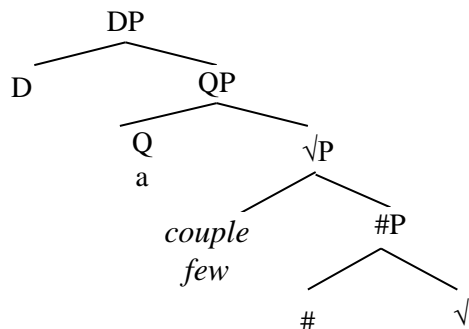
Table 10 shows *a lot of* compared with *lotta*. There is no apparent increase.

## 6. Conclusion:

I suggested that Germanic languages other than English are able to mark a nominal with gender and therefore do not need a linking *of* as English does.



I showed data supporting the anecdotal reports that *of* being lost from *couple* expressions in English. For some speakers *couple* is now a quantifier not a noun, similar to *few*: *a few /couple books*. This is an example of grammaticalisation from noun to quantifier.



### Data sources

1500 Middle English Dictionary (MED)

Oxford English Dictionary (OED)

Helsinki Corpus (HC).

1470s-1690s Early English Books Online (EEBO).

1810-present Corpus of Historical American English (balanced) (COHA).

1980s British National Corpus (BNC)

1990-2019 Corpus of Contemporary American English (balanced) (COCA).

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