

Mass Determiners in Old Ibero-Romance

a Ph.D. project at the crossroads of historical linguistics and contact linguistics

D.P. Gerards (Ph.D. supervisors: Prof. J. Kabatek, Prof. E. Stark)

1. Getting started: What the project is all about ...

- The French/Italian *du/del*-elements, commonly (mis)named 'partitive articles', codify 'mass' and are best to be analyzed as nominal classifiers (Herslund 2008, Stark 2008):

(1) fr. *je mange *(du) miel*
1SG eat MASS.DET honey

(2) it. *(io) mangio (del) miele*
1SG eat MASS.DET honey

- Mass determiners are absent in modern Ibero-Romance. (NB. Modern Cat. does not have mass det. Its "partitive" *de*: usually imprecise syntactic analysis!)
- However, they are attested in older stages of Spanish (Eberenz 2008) and Portuguese (Crispim 1996) until the 16th/17th century:

(3) pt. *depois filhem da manteiga*
afterwards take.3PL.IMPER MASS.DET butter
queente conujnhauellmente ou do azeite
hot conveniently or MASS.DET olive oil
ou do oloyo
or MASS.DET (regular) oil
(*Livro d'Alveitaria*, 1318; cf. Fig.1)

- Many historical grammars mention them too, but tend to confuse them with related phenomena (true partitives).
- No mention as for Old Catalan.



2. Research questions

I.) Syntax/Semantics: distribution, meaning and function?

- verbs (verb classes) *del / do* occur with, also in subject function?, scope properties ...
- + Eberenz (2008) suggests strong lexical preferences. True?

II.) What kinds of texts are affected and to what extent?

- Is there a preference for culinary texts in particular and, more generally speaking, *technical prose* as mentioned by Eberenz (2008)?
- Role of language contact, multilingual authors and discourse traditions, understood as traditions beyond the level of a single language (cf. e.g. Kabatek 2008)?

III.) Correlations: Why are there no mass det. today?

- Different hypotheses: complementary distribution with DOM (Körner 1981) vs. complementary distribution with overt, unequivocal nominal plural marking (Stark 2008). Do our findings support any of these hypotheses?

E des y evoluãno bem e çilhem aquell pano desta coberta e esté assy com elle ataa que a suar seia sumjda toda delle e tolheya depois **filhem da manteiga queente** conujnhauellmente ou **do azeite** ou **do oloyo** e esfreguemhe com el per mujtas vezes no dia 35. as pernas e os braços. // Ou façam feruer as palhas do trijgo e as

Fig.1: Three occurrences of the non-specific, indefinite mass determiner *doda* in the *Livro d'Alveitaria do Mestre Giraldo* (1318). (ex. (3)), one of the most affected texts of Old Portuguese.

ed. Gabriel Pereira, *Revista Lusitana* XII, 1-60.

3. Preliminary methodological remarks

- Data collection is extremely difficult due to various reasons:

a) Ibero-Romance mass determiners are a low-frequency phenomenon.

→ Lots of texts are needed.

b) Syntactically annotated corpora are small, very few and methodologically insufficient for our purposes. They do not facilitate data collection much.

→ b) in combination with a) leads to time-consuming manual work, based – whenever possible – on digitalized data.

4. Available corpora

| Spanish | Portuguese/Galician | Catalan |
|--|--|---|
| <i>CORDE</i> (Corpus Diacrónico del Español, RAE) | <i>Corpus do Português</i> (M. Davies / Brigham) | <i>Corpus Informatizat del Català Antic</i> (Joan Torruella / U. A. de Barcelona) |
| <i>Corpus del Español</i> (M. Davies / Brigham) | <i>Tesouro Medieval Informatizado da Língua Galega</i> (ILG / Santiago) | <i>Corpus Històric del Català</i> (U. A. de Barcelona) |
| <i>Corpus de la Bíblia Medieval</i> (A. Enrique / U. Illes Balears) | <i>Corpus Informatizado do Português Medieval</i> (Universidade Nova de Lisboa) | |
| <i>Corpus de la Sintaxis Històrica de la Lengua Española</i> (C. Company) | <i>Colonia Corpus of Historical Portuguese</i> (Martin Becker / Universität zu Köln) | |
| <i>Corpus Diacrónico y Diatópico del Español de América</i> (C. Company / AML) | <i>Tycho Brahe</i> (UNICAMP) | |
| <i>CHARTA</i> (Uni Alcalá de Henares) | | |

*NB. Corpora in red color do not provide full-text access.

5. Work in progress: a blended approach

- Corpora with full-text access: checking of all occurrences of *del / do* or cognates in a subcorpus.
- Corpora without full-text access (mainly CORDE for Spanish): checking for occurrences of *del / do* + most frequent nouns according to Eberenz (2008)
→ second step: digitalization of affected text; then a)
- Additional data collection: examples from historical grammars → digitalization of affected text; then a)



6. Historical grammars, frequencies and 'cultural space'

- According to our first findings: mass determiners somewhat more frequent in Old Sp. when compared to Old Port..
- HOWEVER: Historical grammars of / introductions to Old Portuguese mention them about twice as often (13/26 = 50%) as Old Spanish ones (8/31 = ca. 25%).

| | OPort. | OSp. |
|---------------------|--------|------|
| Frequency | - | + |
| Historical Grammars | + | - |

Hypothesis: Portugal has always been more Francophile than Spain and this is reflected in its scientific models, even today!



- Saliency of a phenomenon does not necessarily coincide with frequency but also depends on language external factors (such as imitation of 'foreign' models, here: grammatico-graphy models).

Preliminary findings / challenges

Eberenz' first impressions seem to be borne out:

- *Technical prose* is more affected than literary prose/poetry. However, mass determiners also occur in the latter.
- Full-text searches of *del / do* confirm that the affected lexical class is small and comprises mainly nouns denoting edible or drinkable substances, such as 'water', 'honey', 'vinegar', 'milk', 'wine', 'oil', 'bread' ...

Translated texts are more likely to have mass determiners, but they do occur in other texts, too (cf. *Cantigas de Santa Maria*).

Interestingly, up to now we have not found any attestations in Old Catalan, which makes the contact hypothesis somewhat less probable.

Contact

David Paul Gerards
davidpaul.gerards@uzh.ch
http://www.spur.uzh.ch/aboutus/Personen/postdocs/davidgerard_s_en.html

References

- CRISPIM, Maria de Lourdes. 1996. "Artigos definidos e demonstrativos num corpus do séc. XIII", in: Ivo Castro (ed.): *Actos do XII Encontro Nacional da Associação Portuguesa de Linguística. Vol.II: Linguística Histórica. História da Língua*. Lisboa: Associação Portuguesa de Linguística, 79-90.
- EBERENZ, Rolf. 2008. "Ninguno quiere del agua turbia beber: sobre construcciones partitivas y su representación en algunos géneros textuales del español preclásico", in: Johannes Kabatek (ed.): *Sintaxis histórica del español y cambio lingüístico. Nuevas perspectivas desde las Tradiciones Discursivas*. Madrid / Frankfurt a. M.: Iberoamericana / Vervuert, 151-172.
- HERSLUND, Michael. 2008. "Articles, definite and indefinite", in: Henrik Hæg Müller / Alex Klinge (eds.): *Essays on Nominal Determination: From morphology to discourse management*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, 27-43.
- KABATEK, Johannes. (ed.) 2008. *Sintaxis histórica del español y cambio lingüístico: Nuevas perspectivas desde las Tradiciones Discursivas*. Frankfurt am Main/Madrid: Vervuert-Iberoamericana.
- KÖRNER, Karl-Hermann. 1981. "'Teilungsartikel' im Französischen und 'präpositionaler Akkusativ' im Spanischen: komplementäre Lösungen des gleichen syntaktischen Problems", in: Manfred Kohrt / Jürgen Lenerz (eds.): *Sprache: Formen und Strukturen. Akten des 15. Linguistischen Kolloquiums*, Bd. I. Tübingen: Narr, 151-160.
- STARK, Elisabeth. 2008. "The role of the plural system in Romance", in: Ulrich Detges / Richard Walerit (eds.): *The Paradox of Grammatical Change. Perspectives from Romance*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, 57-84.