

Partitive pronouns in intransitive contexts in Italian and Dutch

Petra Sleeman (ACLC, University of Amsterdam)

PARTE lectures

29 October 2021

Introduction

Partitive pronouns (Giusti & Sleeman, in press):

(1) *Ik heb drie boeken* → *Ik heb **ER** drie.*
I have three books I have PART.WK three
'I have three books. → I have three.'

(2) a. ***NE** ho tre.*
PART.CL I-have three
'I have three.'

b. *Hai libri? → Sí, **NE** ho.*
you-have books yes PART.CL I-have
'Do you have books? Yes, I have.'

Introduction

- (3) *J'ai mangé des cerises* → *J' **EN** ai mangé.*
I have eaten PART.DET.PL cherries I PART.CL have eaten
'I ate cherries. → I ate some.'

Bentley (2004): NE typically occurs with the elliptical **direct object** of a transitive verb.
NE can also occur with intransitive verbs, viz. unaccusatives:

- (4) ***NE** arrivano molti.*
PART.CL arrive-3PL many-M.PL
'(Of them) many arrive.'

Introduction

Dutch partitive (quantitative) pronoun ER (Corver & van Koppen, 2018):

It “typically occurs in clausal environments featuring a(n indefinite) **direct object noun phrase** whose nominal head is empty, possibly as the result of movement of the partitive pronoun, and which is introduced by a cardinal or indefinite quantifier”

Introduction

Belletti & Rizzi (1981): in Italian, the partitive pronoun NE is used in combination with noun-less direct objects, but not in combination with noun-less quantified adverbial NPs:

- (5) a. *Gianni trascorrerà tre settimane a Milano.*
Gianni will.spend three weeks in Milan
'Gianni will spend three weeks in Milan.'
- b. *Gianni **NE** trascorrerà tre a Milano.*
Gianni PART.CL will-spend three in Milan
'Gianni will spend three in Milan.'

Introduction

- (6) a. *Gianni è rimasto tre settimane a Milano.*
Gianni is remained three weeks in Milan
'Gianni remained three weeks in Milan.'
- b. **Gianni **NE** è rimasto tre a Milano.*
Gianni PART.CL is remained three in Milan
'Gianni remained three in Milan.'

Belletti & Rizzi account for the difference by claiming that NE can only be extracted from an argument position.

Introduction

- (7) a. *Questo scaffale misura due metri*
this shelf measures two meters
'This shelf measures two meters.'
- b. *?Questo scaffale **NE** misura due*
this shelf PART.CL measures two
'This shelf measures two.' [Belletti & Rizzi, 1981: marginal]
- (8) *?(Di ore) **NE** dorme otto*
of hours PART.CL sleeps.3P.SG eight
'S/he sleeps eight of them, hours.' [Benincà, 1988: non elegant]

Introduction

Barbiers (2017):

- (9) a. *Ik heb twee dagen in Spanje doorgebracht.*
I have two days in Spain spent
'I have spent two days in Spain.'
- b. *Ik heb **ER** twee in Spanje doorgebracht.*
I have PART.WK two in Spain spent
'I have spent two in Spain.'

Introduction

- (10) a. *Ik ben twee dagen in Spanje gebleven.*
I am two days in Spain remained
'I have remained two days in Spain.'
- b. **Ik ben **ER** twee in Spanje gebleven.*
I am PART.WK two in Spain remained

Introduction

However, Will (2019) shows that on the internet the verb *costare* ‘cost’ is frequently attested with NE in all registers of the language:

- (11) *olio greco e spagnolo, che costa poco più di due euro al litro*
oil Greek and Spanish that costs little more than two euros per.the liter
*e ... quello italiano, che **NE** costa invece circa 6.*
and the.one Italian that PART.CL costs instead around 6
‘Greek and Spanish oil, which costs little more than two euros per liter and
... Italian oil, which, in contrast, costs 6 euros.’

Introduction

- (12) a. ?*Il libro* **NE** *è costato* *cinque* (*di dollari*)
the book.MASC.SG PART.CL is cost.MASC.sg five.MASC.SG of dollars
- b. ?*Il libro* **NE** *è costati* *cinque* (*di dollari*)
the book.MASC.SG PART.CL is cost.MASC.PL five. MASC.PL of dollars
'The book has cost five of them, dollars.'

Introduction

- (13) ??*Questi libri **NE** sono costate cinque* (di lire).
these book.MASC.PL of.them are cost.FEM.PL five.FEM.PL of lira.FEM.PL
- (14) **Questi libri **NE** sono costata una* (di lira).
these book.MASC.PL of.them are cost.FEM.SG one.FEM.SG of lira.FEM.SG
'These books have cost one of them, lira.'

Introduction

According to Bennis (1986), ER has to be used both with a direct object and with a quantified adverbial NP :

- (15) a. *Hoeveel heb jij *(ER) gekocht?*
how-many have you PART.WK bought
'Have many did you buy?'
- b. *Van die vier weken ben ik *(ER) twee in Milaan gebleven*
of those four weeks am I PART.WK two in Milano remained
'Of those four weeks I remained two in Milan.'

Introduction

Research questions:

- May extraction from quantified adverbial NPs be more acceptable than has generally been claimed in the literature, at least with some verbs?
- Does a sentence like **Gianni NE è rimasto tre a Milano* become more acceptable if no periphrastic perfect is used, avoiding an agreement judgment?

Methodology

- A Grammaticality Judgment Task was submitted to native speakers of Italian and Dutch.
- Recruited by means of social media.
- Google Forms.
- Correct - Incorrect

- For Italian: 23 native speakers, 90 sentences.
- For Dutch: 30 native speakers, 75 sentences.
- Dutch post-hoc test: 28 native speakers, 28 sentences.

Results for Italian

Intransitive verb with NE (coordinated sentences)

- (16) *[Rimarrò quattro giorni a Roma] e **NE** rimarrò due a Napoli. (65%)*
'I will stay four days in Rome and I will stay two in Naples.'
- (17) *[Eva ha dormito otto ore,] ma Claudia **NE** ha dormite solo quattro. (87%)*
Eva has slept eight hours, but Claudia has slept only four.
- (18) *[Ieri ho nuotato due chilometri] e oggi **NE** ho nuotato uno. (78%)*
'Yesterday I have swum two kilometers and today I have swum one.'

Results for Italian

Intransitive verb without NE (coordinated sentences)

- (19) *[Rimarrò quattro giorni a Roma] e rimarrò due a Napoli. (26%)*
- (20) *[Eva ha dormito otto ore,] ma Claudia ha dormito solo quattro. (13%)*
- (21) *[Ieri ho nuotato due chilometri] e oggi ho nuotato uno. (4%)*

Results for Italian

Rimanere (non-coordinated sentences)

- (22) [*Gianni è rimasto tre settimane a Milano*] - Gianni **NE** è rimasto **o** tre a Milano. (13%)
- (23) [*Gianni è rimasto tre settimane a Milano*] - Gianni **NE** è rimaste **e** tre a Milano. (26%)
- (24) [*Gianni è rimasto tre settimane a Milano*] - Gianni è rimasto tre a Milano. (0%)

Results for Dutch

Intransitive verb with ER (coordinated sentences)

- (25) *[Ik zal vier dagen in Rome blijven] en ik zal **ER** twee in Napels blijven. (83%)*
'I will stay four days in Rome and I will stay two in Naples.'
- (26) *[Iris heeft acht uur geslapen,] maar Koen heeft **ER** maar vier geslapen. (77%)*
Eva has slept eight hours, but Claudia has slept only four.
- (27) *[Gisteren heb ik één kilometer gezwommen] en vandaag heb ik **ER** twee gezwommen. (93%)*
'Yesterday I have swum two kilometers and today I have swum one.'

Results for Dutch

Intransitive verb without ER (coordinated sentences)

- (28) *[Ik zal vier dagen in Rome blijven] en ik zal twee in Napels blijven. (20%)*
- (29) *[Iris heeft acht uur geslapen,] maar Koen heeft maar vier geslapen. (30%)*
- (30) *[Gisteren heb ik één kilometer gezwommen] en vandaag heb ik twee gezwommen. (13%)*

Results for Dutch

Intransitive verb with ER (non-coordinated sentences) in post-hoc test

- (31) *[Ik ben twee dagen in Spanje gebleven.] - Ik ben **ER** twee in Spanje gebleven.*
(68%)
- (32) *[Koen heeft maar vier uur geslapen] - Koen heeft **ER** maar vier geslapen.*
(46%)
- (33) *[Ik heb twee kilometer gezwommen.] Ik heb **ER** twee gezwommen. (86%)*

Discussion

May extraction from quantified adverbial NPs be more acceptable than has generally been claimed in the literature, at least with some verbs?

Yes, both in Italian (77%) and in Dutch (86% in the coordinated sentences and 67% in the non-coordinated sentences).

Discussion

Does a sentence like **Gianni NE è rimasto tre a Milano* become more acceptable if no periphrastic perfect is used, avoiding an agreement judgment?

- (34) [*Rimarrò quattro giorni a Roma*] e **NE** rimarrò due a Napoli. (65%)
'I will stay four days in Rome and I will stay two in Naples.'
- (35) [*Gianni è rimasto tre settimane a Milano*] - Gianni **NE** è rimasto tre a Milano. (13%)
- (36) [*Gianni è rimasto tre settimane a Milano*] - Gianni **NE** è rimaste tre a Milano. (26%)
- (37) [*Eva ha dormito otto ore,*] ma Claudia **NE** ha dormite solo quattro. (87%)
Eva has slept eight hours, but Claudia has slept only four.

Discussion

If we assume that Belletti & Rizzi's (1981) analysis of the use of the partitive pronoun is essentially correct, the fact that native speakers accept the combination of the partitive pronoun with an elliptical adverbial NP may be interpreted in two ways:

1. The participants may unconsciously or consciously have compared the variants with and without the partitive pronoun. Since leaving out the partitive pronoun is not an option, the speakers may have accepted the use of the partitive pronoun.
2. There may be variation w.r.t. grammars between speakers. There are speakers who analyze quantified adverbial NPs as non-arguments and others who analyze them as arguments.

Discussion

- Circumstantial adverbials place, time, manner and the like follow the verb's complement within the VP and they are typically realized in prepositional form or in a bare NP form (Cinque 1999).
- (38) *Les souffrances que ce travail m' a coûtées.*
the sufferings that this work me has cost
'The sufferings that this work has cost (caused) me.'
- (39) *Les trois mille euros que ce meuble m' a coûté.*
the three thousand euros that this furniture me has cost
'The three thousand euros that this furniture has cost me.'

Discussion

In Majorcan Catalan, there can only be (optional) agreement with the following complement if it is an argument, but not if it is an adverbial complement (Salvá 2017):

- (40) *En Joan ja ha {pesades/pesat} ses patates.*
ART Joan already has weighed{FEM.PL/M.SG} the potatoes.FEM.PL
'Joan has already weighed the potatoes.'
- (41) *Es meló ha {*pesades/pesat} vuit lliures.*
the melon has weighed {FEM.PL/M.SG} eight pounds.FEM.PL
'The melon has weighed eight pounds.'

Discussion

In Korean and English, the domain of direct case assignment is expanded to include measure expressions (Wechsler & Lee 1996; Stroik 1990):

- (42) *Tom-un twu sikan-tongan-ul tali-ess-ta*
Tom-TOP two hour-period-ACC run-PST-DEC
'Tom ran for two hours.'

Discussion

- In Dutch, attributive passive participles combine with a noun that is interpreted as their internal argument, which may be the internal argument of a transitive or an unaccusative verb (Elffers, de Haan & Schermer 2014):

(43) *de geïnvesteerde minuten*

‘the invested minutes’

(44) *de gestorven soldaten*

the died soldiers

Discussion

(45) *de geslapen uren* (82,5%)
the slept hours

(46) *de gezwommen meters* (96,3%)
the swum meters

(47) ??*de te lang gebleven minuten* (51,9%)
the too long stayed minutes

Conclusion

- Violation of syntactic constraint on the extraction of partitive pronoun from adverbial NPs by native speakers of Italian and Dutch;
- Belletti's & Rizzi's judgments may have been influenced by perfect tense;
- If violation is only apparent, two explanations:
 - Use of partitive pronoun is better than leaving it out;
 - Analysis of adverbial NP as direct object;
- More research is needed.

References

- Barbiers, Sjef. 2017. Kwantitatief *er* en *ze*. *Nederlandse Taalkunde* 22(2). 163-187.
- Belletti, Adriana & Luigi Rizzi. 1981. The syntax of “NE”. Some theoretical implications. *The Linguistic Review* 1(2). 117-154.
- Benincà, Paola. 1988. L'ordine degli elementi della frase e le costruzioni marcate. In Lorenzo Renzi (ed.), *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione*, vol. 1, 115-227. Bologna: il Mulino.
- Bennis, Hans. 1986. *Gaps and dummies*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Bentley, Delia. 2004. Ne-cliticisation and split intransitivity. *Journal of Linguistics* 40(2). 219-262.
- Cinque, Guglielmo. 1999. *Adverbs and functional heads. A cross-linguistic perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Corver, Norbert & Marjo Koppen, van. 2018. Dutch. In Jeroen Van Craenenbroeck & Tanja Temmerman (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of ellipsis*, 721-764. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Elffers, Els, Sies de Haan & Ina Schermer. 2014. Het voltooid deelwoord in het Nederlands: beperkingen op het attributief gebruik. *Nederlandse Taalkunde* 19(1). 47-76.
- Giusti, Giuliana & Petra Sleeman. In press. Partitive elements in the languages of Europe: An advancement in the understanding of a multifaceted phenomenon. In Petra Sleeman & Giuliana Giusti (eds.), *Partitive determiners, partitive pronouns and partitive case*, ix-xxxviii. (Linguistische Arbeiten 580). Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Stroik, Thomas. 1990. Adverbs as V-sisters. *Linguistic Inquiry* 21. 654-661.
- Wechsler, Stephen & Yae-Sheik Lee. 1996. The domain of direct case assignment. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 14(3). 629-664.
- Will, Kimberly Page. 2019. *The semantic and pragmatic functions of partitive clitic NE in Italian*. PhD dissertation, Cornell University.