Fractional proportional partitives (FPP): focus on the variation in European, Asian and African Arabic "one in N" partitives and Agreement

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OUTLINE

Fractional proportional partitives as a term

What is the agreement puzzle?

An experimental pilot study

Closer look at the partitive structures

Languages of the sample:

Three vernaculars of Arabic: (Gulf, Tunisian, Maltese), Hungarian and English.

FOCUS

1 Is there the same variation in the subject verb agreement in "one in three" IS-ARE in Arabic Gulf, Tunisian Arabic, Maltese Arabic and Hungarian as in English?

2 What are the types of partitive structures/ strategies in the languages of Arabic Gulf, Tunisian Arabic, Maltese Arabic, Hungarian and English?

TOWARDS A TERMINOLOGY AND A DEFINITION

There is a missing terminology and definition for partitives "one in N" (e.g., "one in three")

What are one-in-three partitives?

•There perhaps should be a new term created for these cases where "one" can be more than one semantically and pragmatically.

TOWARDS A TERMINOLOGY AND A DEFINITION

There are two structures that have been discussed in the literature:

1. There are the expressions of percentages under partitives.
2. Falco and Zamparelli, 2019 [Out of] partitives.

However, it is neither percentage and also not out of!
It might be a good term for partitives in Hungarian but not in English (Locative/in)
Even in Italian "out of" is not used.
Italian: One on three.

It is vague and needs further study!

FRACTIONAL PROPORTIONAL PARTITIVES (FPP)

It is vague and unclear area with a missing terminology. Thus, I proposed this new term: **Fractional proportional partitives (FPP)**

Good to mention>> The subset and superset (Part-whole) cannot be definite era because they are about fractional and proportion >> It might be the reason for not having a possessive construction "of" because of this indefinite.

WHAT IS THE AGREEMENT PUZZLE?

How would you finish the sentence:

I am applying for a scholarship in Hungary, but I know that

a. **only one in three are lucky to get it**
b. **only one in three is lucky to get it.**

Users are not sure about "one" whether it is "one" or "more than one".

ARABIC EXAMPLE

A-rghab	fi	al-tanafus	l-ilhusool	ala	minha-dirasya	fi	jumhuryat al-majar
1SNG-want	in	DEF-competence	ALL-get	on	scholarship	in	Republic DEF-hungary

'I would like to compete on a scholarship in Hungary.'

(a)

shakhs	wahed	faqat	min	thalath-at	ashkhas	**mahdhoudh-iin**	l-ilhusool	alayha
person	one	only	from	three-POSS	person.PL	**lucky-3PL.M**	ALL-get	it

'only one in three **are** lucky to get it.'

(b)

shakhs	wahed	faqat	min	thalath-at	ashkhas	**mahdhoudh**	l-ilhusool	alayha
Person	one	only	from	three-POSS	person.PL	**lucky.3SG.M**	ALL-get	it

'only one in three **is** lucky to get it.'

On the word **lucky**, you see either **singular** or **plural** agreement marker. (An experiment shows that there is a variation)

EXPERIMENT

An experimental cross-linguistic pilot study on the variation of the English partitive expression "one in N" in Arabic and Arabic speakers of English.

Survey

A forced choice task was administered via snowball sampling by social media in Oman and Tunisia. As a continuation of an expression such as "one in three".

-How would you finish the sentence:

I am applying for a scholarship in Hungary, but I know that

a. only one in three are lucky to get it
b. only one in three is lucky to get it.

Agreng

1. How would you finish the sentence: "I am applying for a scholarship in Hungary, but I know that

○ only one in three is lucky to get it."

○ only one in three are lucky to get it."

Done

AGR

أرغب في التنافس للحصول على منحة.1
دراسية في جمهورية المجر:

○ أ. شخص واحد فقط من بين ثلاثة
أشخاص محظوظ للحصول عليها.

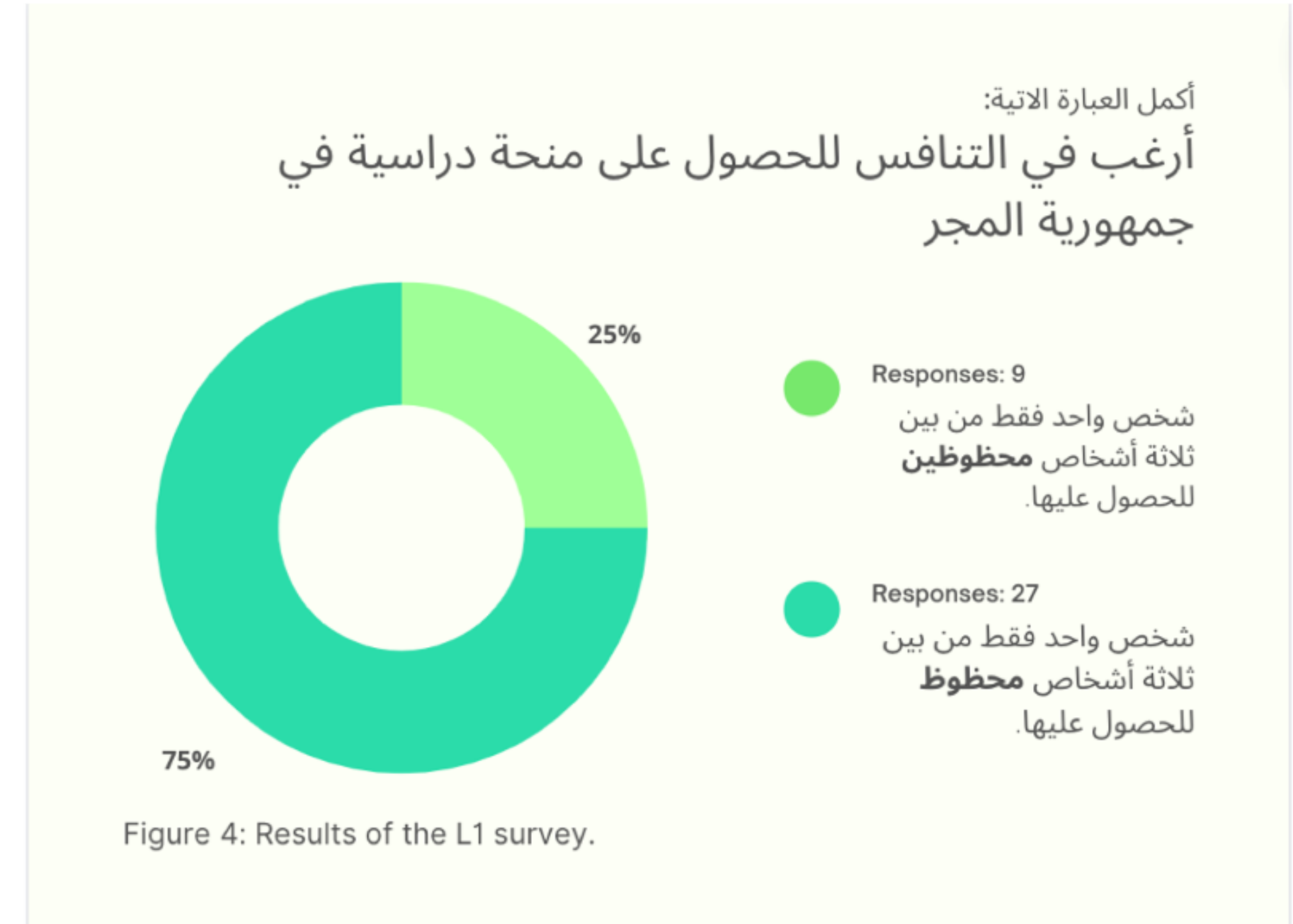○ ب. شخص واحد فقط من بين ثلاثة
أشخاص محظوظين للحصول
عليها.

تم

Results

Roughly one in four chose for continuing the sentence with plural agreement on the verb. Three fourths of the respondents chose the continuation with singular agreement.
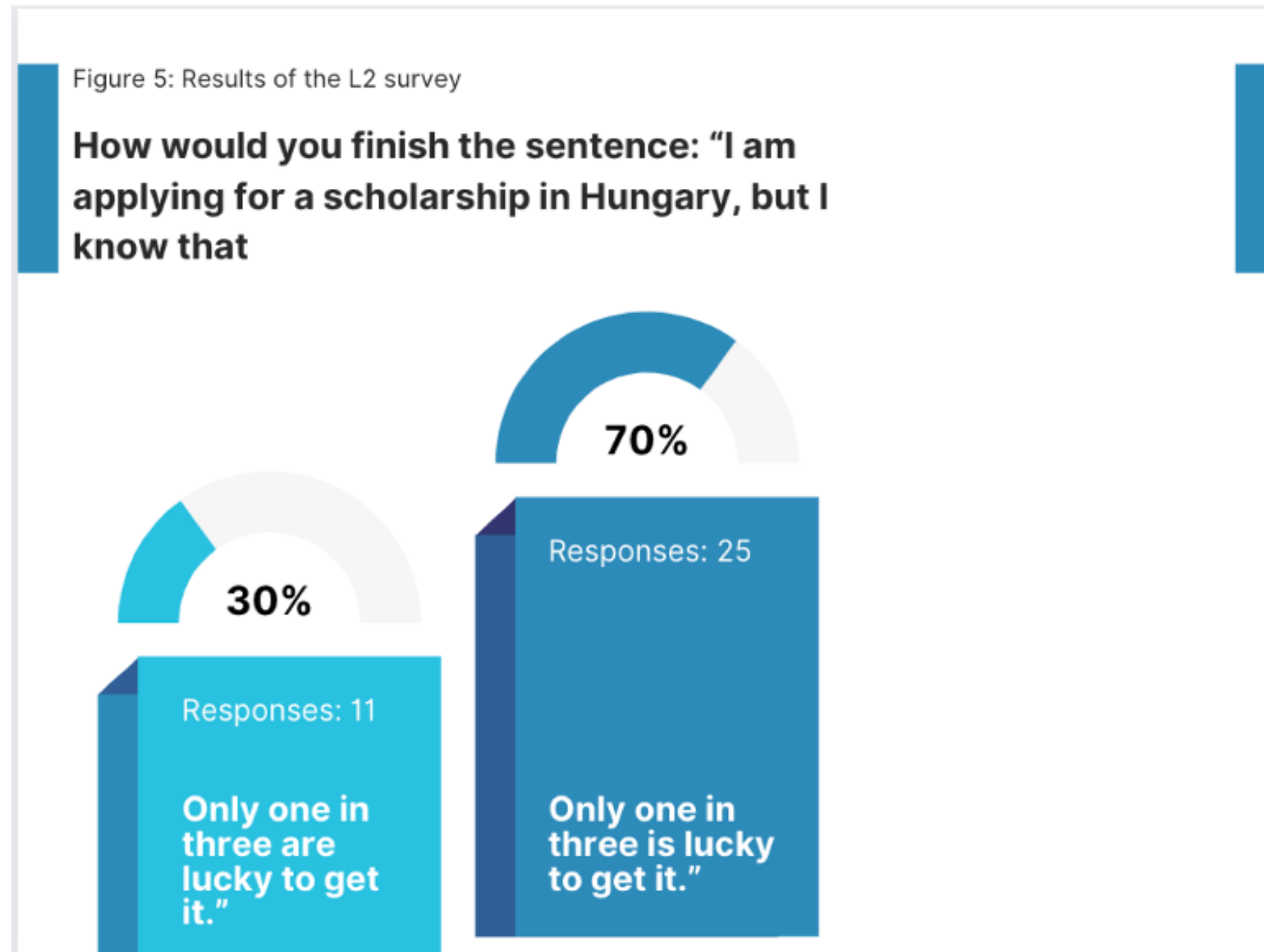
Results of the L2 survey.

Results of the L1 survey.

Examples In three vernaculars of Arabic: European, Asian and African

(1) Asian Arabic (Gulf): separative strategy, plural (semantic agreement)

wahed	bas	min	thalatha	**mahthoth-iin**	**ba-yhaslu**	el-batha
one	only	from	three	lucky-PL.M	FUT-get.3PL	ART-scholarship

'only one in three are lucky to get it.'

(2) Asian Arabic (Gulf): separative strategy, singular (grammatical agreement)

wahed	bas	min	thalatha	**mahthoth**	**ba-yhasl**	el-batha
one	only	from	three	lucky.SG.M	FUT-get.3SG	ART-scholarship

'only one in three is lucky to get it.'

(3) African Arabic (Tunisian): separative strategy, plural (semantic agreement)

ken	wehed	**men**	tletha	**andhom**	el-zhar	bish	yekhdhouh
ADV	one	ADV	three	have.**3PL.M**	ART-luck	to	get.3PL.M.INDF

'only one in three **are** lucky to get it.'

(4) African Arabic (Tunisian): locative and separative strategy, singular (grammatical agreement)

ken	wehed	**fi/men**	tletha	**andou**	el-zhar	bish	yekhedhou
ADV	one	ADV	three	have.**3SG.M**	ART-luck	to	get.3SG.M.IDNF

'only one in three **is** lucky to get it.'

As an interesting find, in Maltese, there is semantic agreement attested with the dative indirect object, with a separative FPP strategy.

(5) Europe (Maltese): separative strategy, plural indirect object agreement (semantic agreement)

wieħed	minn	kull	ħamsa	jiġrilhom	hekk
one	from	all	five	3.happen.IPFV.SGM-DAT-**3PL**	like.that

'This has happened to one in five.'

(6) Europe (Maltese): separative strategy, singular (grammatical agreement)

raġel	minn	kull	tlieta	lest iqatta' ...
man	from	all	three	ready.**SG.M** 3M-spend.IPFV

'a man from every three is ready to spend ...'

(Maris Camilleri, p.c., email dated 5 Feb 2023)

Dative case indicates an indirect object agreement
...
Study
Object verb agreement with partitives!

Typological parallels and contrasts with Hungarian (7)-(8) and English (9)-(10).

(7) Hungarian: separative strategy, singular (grammatical agreement)

a	három-ból	csak	egy	olyan	szerencsé-s	hogy	meg-kap-ja.
the	three-ELA	just	one	so	luck-ADJ	that	PV-get-OBJ.3SG

'Only one in [out of] three is lucky to get it.'

(8) Hungarian: separative strategy, **NO plural (NO semantic agreement)**

*a	három-ból	csak	egy	olyan	szerencsé-s-ek	hogy	meg-kap-ják.
the	three-ELA	just	one	so	luck-ADJ-**PL**	that	PV-get- **OBJ.3PL**

*Intended to mean: 'Only one in [out of] three are lucky to get it.'

(9) English: locative strategy, singular (grammatical agreement)

only one **in** three **is** lucky to get it.

(10) English: locative strategy, plural (semantic agreement)

only one **in** three **are** lucky to get it.

CONCLUSIONS

•The variation in agreement equally affected Arabic and Arabic speakers of English.
•This variation in agreement is partly semantically motivated in English and Arabic varieties.

•However, in several other languages, only grammatical factors play a role in agreement (i.e., only singular is allowed with "one" in Hungarian).

•The type of FPP (from, in, of) is not found to correlate with the optional variability of singular vs plural agreement.

CONCLUSIONS

•English language in the proposed example has a locative partitive [in].

•The glossing in Arabic Gulf and Hungarian languages showed separative partitive [from].

•The Arabic Tunisian surprisingly showed both locative partitive [in] and separative partitive [from].

CONCLUSIONS

Agreement in European, Asian and African Arabic between "one in N is or are" emerges regardless of the separative ("from", examples 1-6) or optionally locative (4) partitive marking strategy.

Hungarian, with a separative marking strategy, does not allow plural agreement with the partitive phrase, (7)-(8). English has variation and a locative marking strategy ("in"), (9)-(10).
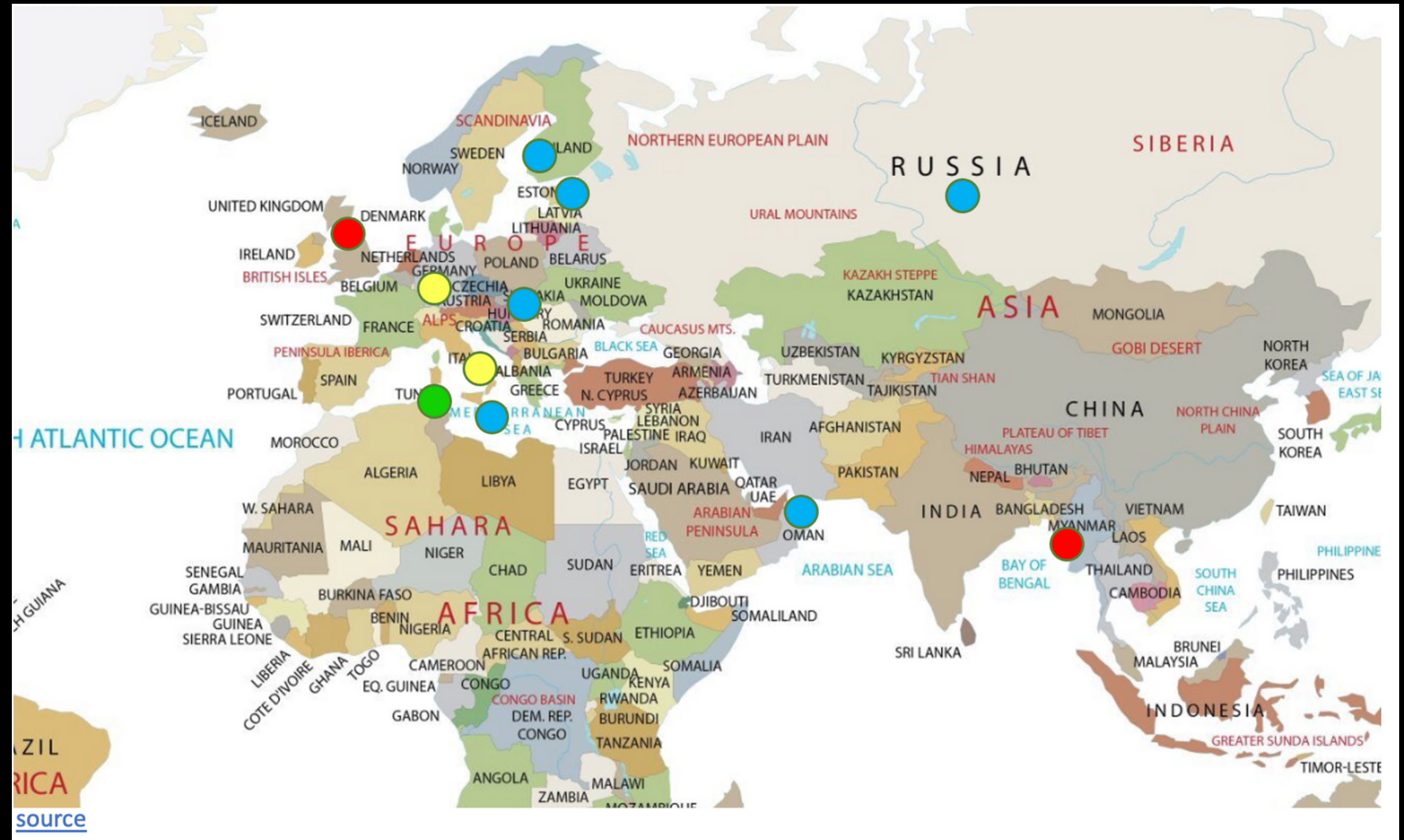
values of Partitive structure

Legend:
- Locative /in (red)
- Separative /from (blue)
- Locative /on (yellow)
- Separative and Locative (from/in) (green)

Questions:

What causes the agreement variation, semantics or the structure of partitives?

Hungarian do not have the variation. The reasons are different (and not clear what precisely). This brings me to the question: is it semantic or grammatical?

Like the question of:
 "The police is vs the police are" in correct English? No grammatical agreement, but SEMANTIC.)

Grammatically singular
But
Semantically plural

One in three is grammatically singular, because it is ONE, semantically plural, because it is MORE than 1. **(How?)**
Example:

If there is a scholarship where one in three wins it, is not the case that there are 3 candidates and one wins, but there are maybe hundreds or tens and that is why we call it fraction in a proportion.
So semantically is more correct to use plural agreement.

Questions?

Is there a correlation: is there variation with the locative strategies but not in the separative ones, and what to expect from the possessive strategies?

Questions?

Or is it all about semantics?

No correlation.
Arabic, English > semantic, although different partitive structure types (Arabic: separative, English: locative)

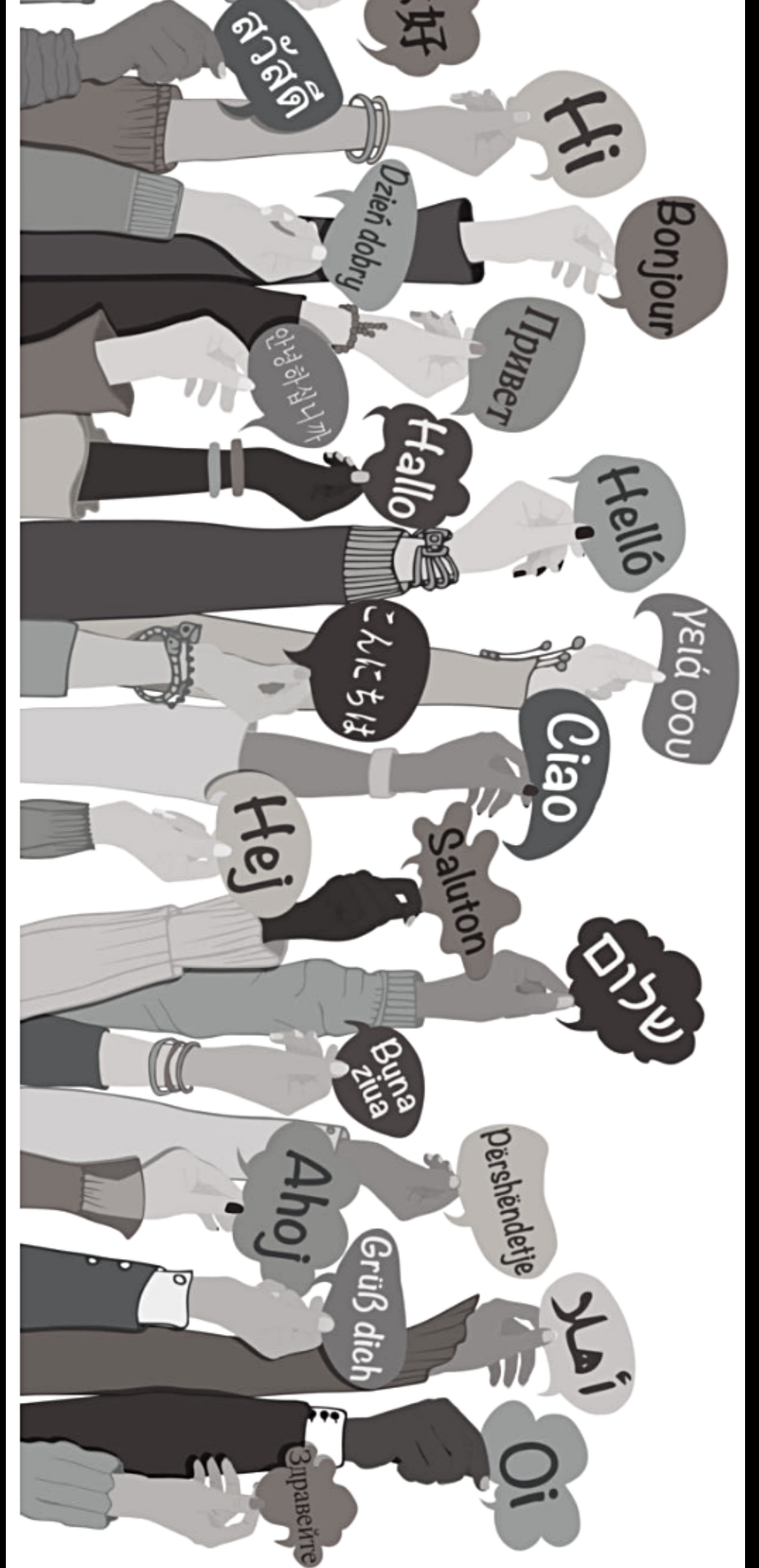**Hungarian> grammatical (separative, but does not pattern with Arabic)!**

- **Languages can have genealogical similarity.**

But

- **It does not mean necessarily typological similarity.**

Because

- **Tunisian and Gulf Arabic are genealogically close, but typologically still different!**

THANK YOU

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Oman