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

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The talk proposes the term "fractional proportional partitives" (FPP) for the "one in N" (e.g., "one in three") partitive structures and examines variation in types (from, in, of, see Luraghi and Huumo 2014) and agreement in European, Asian and African Arabic (one in N *is* or *are*). European, Asian and African Arabic are represented by Maltese, Gulf and Tunisian Arabic. The talk also presents an experimental pilot study on the variation of the English partitive expression "one in N" in Arabic and Arabic speakers of English.

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

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

el-batha
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
one	only	from	three	lucky.SG.M	FUT-get.3**SG**

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'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 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.'

Typological parallels and contrasts are presented with Hungarian (5)-(6) and English (7)-(8).

(5) 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.'

(6) 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**

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

(7) English: locative strategy, singular (grammatical agreement)
only one in three is lucky to get it.

(8) English: locative strategy, plural (semantic agreement)
only one in three are lucky to get it.

Agreement in European, Asian and African Arabic between "one in N *is* or *are*" emerges regardless of the separative ("from", examples 1-4) or optionally locative (4) partitive marking strategy. Hungarian, with a separative marking strategy, does not allow plural agreement with the partitive phrase, (5)-(6). English has variation and a locative marking strategy ("in"), (7)-(8).

The study mainly addresses subject/verb agreement. As an interesting find, in Maltese, there is semantic agreement attested with the dative indirect object, with a separative FPP strategy.

(9) Maltese: **separative** strategy, plural indirect object agreement (semantic agreement)
wieħed minn kull   ħamsa jiġrilhom   hekk
one   from all   five   3.happen.IPFV.SG.M-DAT-**3PL**   like.that
'This happens to one in five.'
 (Maris Camilleri, p.c., email dated 5 Feb 2023)

In the experimental pilot study on the variation of FPPs in Arabic and Arabic speakers of English (Al Siyabi 2022), a forced choice task was administered via snowball sampling via social media in Oman and Tunisia. As a continuation of an expression such as "one in three", 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.

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, but 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.

Acknowledgments

Bibliography

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List of Used Abbreviations

1	first person
3	third person
ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverb(ial)
ART	article
DAT	dative
ELA	elative
FUT	future
INDF	indefinite
IPFV	imperfective
M	masculine
OBJ	objective agreement
PL	plural
PV	preverb
SG	singular
SGM	singular masculine