The main goal of this presentation is to characterise partitive nominals (e.g. *two of those books, many of my friends*) and provide an analysis that accounts for their particular properties but at the same time reflects the similarities with other indefinite non-partitive nominals (known as quantitatives: *two books, many friends*). The comparison between partitives and quantitatives is very useful for determining the properties of the former and especially relevant is the study of two constructions that have been considered as partitives in the literature, but which here will be solidly argued to be quantitatives instead: nominals in which the quantifier is followed by a noun as in *dos llibres d’aquells* (‘two books of those’) and indefinite nominals that express partition through the preposition *entre* (‘among’), such as *una novel·la d’entre els llibres que em vas deixar* (‘a novel among the books you lent me’). Catalan data is crucial in this study given the restrictions this language shows on the type of quantifiers allowed in partitives (in contrast with quantitatives) and the presence of a preposition *de* (‘of’) preceding *entre* in the *among* construction (in parallel with other constructions involving locative prepositions such as *darrere* ‘behind’, *sota* ‘below’, etc.), which leads to the following conclusions: partitives have a single-noun structure and only the preposition *de* (and not *entre*) forms true partitives. Moreover, Catalan has more instances of overt *de* in quantitatives than other languages (*una dotzena de llibres* ‘a dozen books’, *molts de dies* ‘many days’, *tres de petits* ‘three small ones’), which suggests that *de* is part of their basic structure as it is in partitives. A unitary analysis for partitives and quantitatives is defended according to which quantifiers are lexical elements that select a noun (projected into a Determiner Phrase (DP) in partitives or a Noun Phrase (NP) in quantitatives) and that are generated in a low position in the nominal structure. The preposition *de* has the same status and role in partitives and in quantitatives: it is a functional category that licenses the noun. The quantifier moves to the left just as it does in other cases of inversion in nominals (e.g. qualitative predicate inversion as in *l’idiota d’en Joan* ‘the idiot of Joan’). The advantage of this analysis is that the same basic structure accounts as well for predicational uses of quantifiers in the clausal domain—as predicates in copular sentences (*My students are many*) and as secondary predicates (*Els colons arribaven a milers* ‘Colonists arrived by the thousand’)—or even within nominals such as *we two* or *the three books*. The differences among all these constructions derive mainly from the lexical features quantifiers have and from the type of nominal projection they select (NP or DP).

REFERENCES:


