Syntax and semantics of the Luxembourgish partitive

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The Luxembourgish language shows a commonly used partitive system that consists of partitive pronouns and partitive articles. Until now those partitives have only been described on the surface. This study is based on a large corpus of spoken and written Luxembourgish (about 80 m. tokens) and aims at giving a profound insight into the syntactic and semantic properties of this system. Partitives exist in two distinct forms: där/der (for uncountable feminine singular nouns or plurals) and däers/es (for uncountable masculine and neuter singular nouns). Each pronoun has a strong (där [dɛːɐ], däers [dɛːɐs]) and a weak (der [dɐ], es [əəs]) variant. When it comes to partitive articles, only the strong forms are available (där, däers). The data shows that partitive pronouns serve as indefinite anaphoric pronouns (ech wëll es ‘I want some’), whereas partitive articles mostly denote specificity (där Mëllech hu mer keng ‘we haven’t got that kind of milk’).