



Francoprovençal: what a spatial analysis of 'partitive articles' reveals about number marking on nominals

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1



Outline

1. Introduction
2. State-of-the-art
 - 2.1 Francoprovençal
 - 2.2 Number marking in NP in Romance
 - 2.3 Our hypotheses
3. Data and Methodology
 - 3.1 The data
 - 3.2 The methods
4. Results and maps
5. Discussion
6. Conclusion

Research project "Distribution and Function of 'Partitive Articles' in Romance (DiFuPaRo): a microvariation analysis," (<https://www.rose.uzh.ch/de/seminar/wersindwir/mitarbeitende/stark/DiFuPaRo.html>), directed by E. Stark and C. Poletto, funded by the *Swiss National Science Foundation* (project number 100012L_172751) and the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (project number: PO1642/8-1).

2



1. Introduction

Objectives of the presentation

- Investigate whether the presence/absence of **partitive articles (PA)** correlates with phonologically overt number marking on the noun in **Francoprovençal (FrPr)**
- Show the spatial distribution of PAs/invariable DE and overt number marking on nouns in the Swiss and Aosta Valley (Italy) varieties of FrPr

Main findings

- No general spatial correlation between the distribution of overt number marking on N and the availability of PAs
- Correlation between presence of *overt sigmatic* number marking and absence of PA in Evolène (Valais, Switzerland)

3



2. State-of-the-art

2.1 Francoprovençal

Plural morphology on nouns

	Francoprovençal (in general)	Francoprovençal in Evolène (Valais)	Standard French	Spanish
Masc. N	<i>Uninflected:</i> 'dzor / 'dzor 'day/s'	<i>Phonologically realized sigmatic suffix:</i> 'zɔ / 'zɔʃ 'day/s'	<i>Uninflected:</i> ʒur / ʒur 'day/s'	<i>Phonologically realized sigmatic suffix,</i> 'día / 'días 'day/s'
Fem. N	<i>Phonologically realized non- sigmatic plural:</i> 'pɔm:a / 'pɔm:ə 'apple/s'	<i>Phonologically realized non-sigmatic plural:</i> mata / 'matɛ 'daughter/s'	<i>Uninflected:</i> fij / fij 'daughter/s'	<i>Phonologically realized sigmatic suffix,:</i> niña / niñas 'daughter/s'
	<i>Also, uninflected:</i> 'ɲɔi / 'ɲɔi 'walnut/s'	<i>Also, uninflected:</i> 'mɑ:ɛ / 'mɑ:ɛ 'mother/s'		

Paciaroni/Ihsane/Stark, in prep.

4



2. State-of-the-art

2.2 Overt number marking in NP in Romance

- On both, noun and determiner (e.g., Spanish, cf. Cyrino/Espinal 2020, a. o.):

(1)	a. <i>el libro</i>	/ el 'liβro /	'the.sg book'
	b. <i>los libros</i>	/ los 'liβros /	'the.pl books'
- On the determiner (e.g., French, cf. Bouchard 2002, a.o.):

(2)	a. <i>le livre</i>	/ lə livʁ /	'the.sg book'
	b. <i>les livres</i>	/ le livʁ /	'the.pl books'
- Why do we find PAs (e.g. in French)? One possibility in the literature: to compensate the absence of overt number marking on the noun (Delfitto/Schroten 1991, Stark 2006, Gerards/Stark 2020, Pinzin/Poletto, 2021, 2022, a.o.; for a diachronic perspective Mathieu 2009, Carlier/Lamiroy 2014).
- Francoprovençal, where PAs are found in a specific geographic zone (FrPr A, roughly in the north, Kristol 2016)?

5



2. State-of-the-art

2.3 Our hypotheses

- **Hypothesis 1 (weak)**
There is a spatial correlation of the distribution of overt number marking on nouns and the availability of PAs in our Francoprovençal data. (Delfitto/Schroten 1991, Stark 2006, Pinzin/Poletto, 2021, 2022, Mathieu 2009, Carlier/Lamiroy 2014)
- **Hypothesis 2 (strong)**
There is a spatial correlation of the distribution of overt *sigmatic* number marking on nouns and the availability of PAs in our Francoprovençal data. (Stark 2016, Gerards/Stark 2020)
- Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 represent the weak and strong versions of the same issue, respectively.

6



3. Data and Methods

3.1 The data

DiFuPaRo database (<https://difuparo.linguistik.uzh.ch/>): 20'294 NPs

- structured around 'partitive nominal groups'
- tagging of 83 different morphosyntactic features (e.g., nominals marked by a PA, tagged for syntactic function, gender, number, case; occurring with a quantifier, with a sentential negation, etc.)
- Data from three existing databases: 16'308 noun phrases
 - ASIt (<http://svrims2.dei.unipd.it:8080/asit-enterprise/>) for the Northern Italian Dialects
 - **ALAVAl** (<http://alaval.unine.ch/>) for Francoprovençal
 - OFROM (<http://www11.unine.ch/>) for colloquial Swiss French
- Data from fieldwork, gathered with/in different methods/discourse types (e.g., free speech, grammaticality judgment tasks, and translations/questionnaires): 3'986 noun phrases
 - In Northern Italian Dialects
 - **In Francoprovençal: 1'664 noun phrases:**
 - in 2017 in the Aosta Valley (see Stark/Gerards 2020)
 - in 2019 in Evolène (see Davatz/Ihsane/Stark accepted)

➤ **For our study: 2'608 FrPr nominal phrases**

7



3. Data and Methods

3.1 The data

- Different (sub-)samples for spatial analyses (here only data from questionnaires)
 - All nominal groups (2'608 nominals)
 - Nominal groups in positive contexts, without quantifiers (1'744)
 - Nominal groups in positive contexts with quantifiers (420)
 - Nominal groups in negative contexts, without quantifiers (413)
 - Nominal groups in negative contexts with quantifiers (31)

8

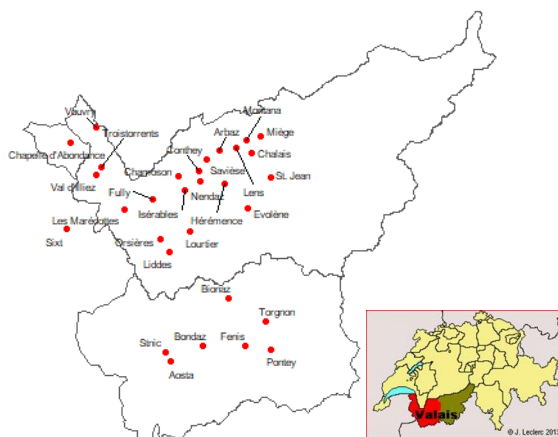


3. Data and Methods

3.1 The data - locations

- 30 Francoprovençal varieties
 - Aosta Valley (I)
 - Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (F)
 - Valais (CH)
- Different branches of Francoprovençal
 - Western Valais
 - Eastern Valais
 - Valdostean
- At least 2 speakers (M+F) per location


Francoprovençal varieties considered




3. Data and Methods

3.2 Methods - Spatial analyses

- Dependent variables
 - **Absence/ presence of partitive article (relative frequency)**
 - **Phonologically overt number marking vs. null number marking on noun (relative frequency)**
- Independent variables
 - Number (SG vs. PL)
 - Gender (M vs. F)
- Calculation
 - Mean of phenomena per location (mean of all speakers' mean)
- Graphic representation (in Rstudio)
 - Voronoi polygons
 - Grey (0%), tomato red (highest relative value)



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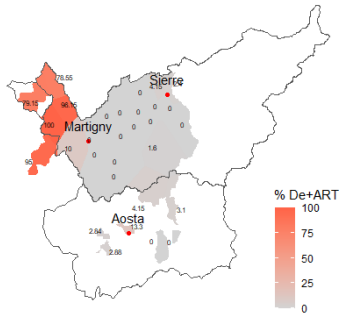


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4. Results and maps

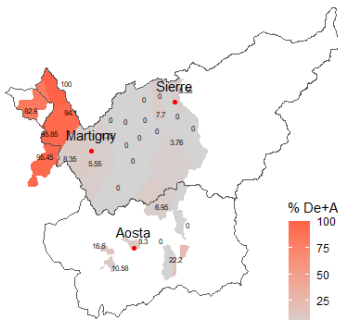
Relative frequency of PA with M and F - dependent variable 1 (presence/absence of PAs)

Percentage of De+ART masculine - QUEST (POSIT)



Map 1. PA with M (SG + PL) (POS).

Percentage of De+ART feminine - QUEST (POSIT)




Map 2. PA with F (SG + PL) (POS).

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A spatial analysis of partitive articles and their variant in Francoprovençal

Page 11

11



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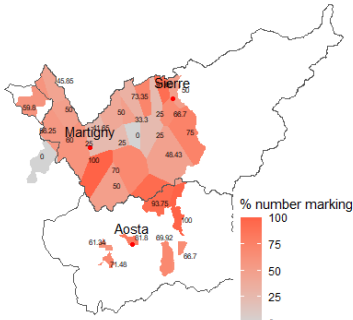


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4. Results and maps

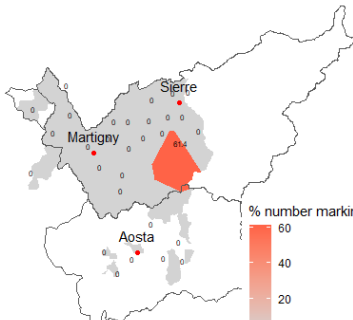
Relative frequency of phonologically overt plural marking on N - dependent variable 2 (overt/ no overt number marking on N)

PL marking at N with F - QUEST (all)



Map 3. Phonologically overt F.PL marking.

Percentage of plural marking at N with M - QUEST (all)



Map 4. Phonologically overt M.PL marking.

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A spatial analysis of partitive articles and their variant in Francoprovençal

Page 12

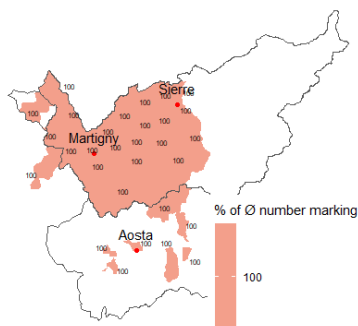
12



4. Results and maps

Relative frequency of 'singular null marking' (M) on N - dependent variable 2 (overt/ no overt number marking on N = no paradigm where singular form is clearly opposed to plural form)

Null marking of singular at N with M - QUEST (all)



Map 5. Null M.SG marking.

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A spatial analysis of partitive articles and their variant in Francoprovençal

Page 13

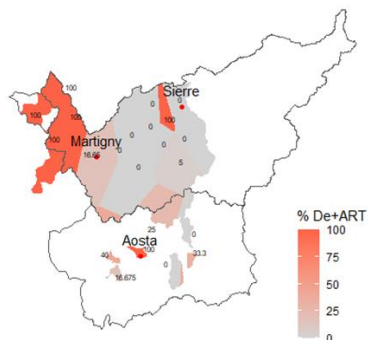
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4. Results and maps

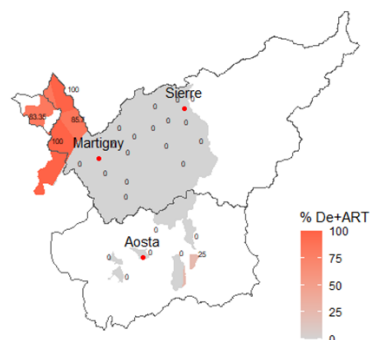
Relative frequency of PA (with phonologically overt marking) - combination of the 2 dependent variables

% of De+ART (with overt N SG) - QUEST (POSIT)



Map 6. PA with specific singular form.

% of De+ART (with overt N PL) - QUEST (POSIT)



Map 7. PA with phonologically overt PL marking.

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A spatial analysis of partitive articles and their variant in Francoprovençal

Page 14

14

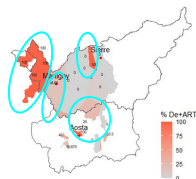


5. Discussion

Hypotheses 1 and 2

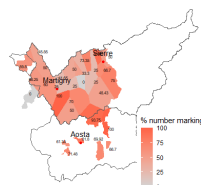
Presence/absence of PAs: PAs in 4 zones

% of De+ART (with overt N SG) - QUEST (POSIT)



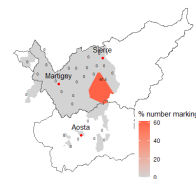
Map 3. Overt F.PL marking.

PL marking at N with F - QUEST (all)



Map 4. Overt M.PL marking.

Percentage of plural marking at N with M - QUEST (all)



- With FEM Ns: the 4 logically possible options are available:

	+ overt PL	- overt PL
+ PA	yes	yes
- PA	yes	yes

➤ No correlation between presence/absence of PA and presence/absence of overt PL marking on N.

- With MASC Ns: overt PL marking only in Evolène, where there are no PAs.
 - The PL suffix does not cooccur with PAs, and no variety with PAs also has unambiguous sigmatic plural marking on nouns.

24.06.2022

Page 15

15



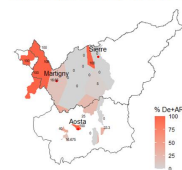
5. Discussion

Combination of the two dependent variables

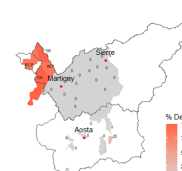
(Un-)availability of PAs in correlation with number marking on N (for BOTH genders)

- **In general:** no complementary distribution of PAs and overt number marking on N.
- **Ns with specific singular form:** use of PAs in 100% of the cases in some varieties but not in all. Having a dedicated **singular** form is probably not functionally linked to the existence of PAs: PAs indicate a **mass** reading.
- **Ns marked for PL:** use of PAs in 100% of the cases in some varieties but not in all. I.e. DE is found in inverse proportions to PAs in FrPr A (+ FrPr B).
 - No spatial correlation between availability of PAs and distribution of overt number marking on N.

% of De+ART (with overt N SG) - QUEST (POSIT)



% of De+ART (with overt N PL) - QUEST (POSIT)



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Francoprovençal: what a spatial analysis of 'partitive articles' reveals about number marking on nominals

Page 16

16



5. Discussion

Overt number marking in Noun phrases

In FrPr:

- Some NPs are overtly marked for number twice: on N and on the PA:
 - Double marking of PL: only with PA and FEM nouns.
 - Double marking of SG: only with PA and FEM nouns.
 - Some NPs are not overtly marked for number at all: typologically striking and semantically strongly marked
 - DE + unmarked Ns (fem or masc)
- PAs do not compensate the absence of number marking on the noun.



6. Conclusion

Hypothesis 1 (weak)

There is a spatial correlation of the distribution of overt number marking on nouns and the availability of PAs in our Francoprovençal data.

- Overt plural marking on FEM N: 4 logically possible options → +/- PAs and +/- overt PL marking
- Combination of our two dependent variables
 - **No correlation: Hypothesis 1 has to be rejected.**

Hypothesis 2 (strong)

There is a spatial correlation of the distribution of overt *sigmatic* number marking on nouns and the availability of PAs in our Francoprovençal data.

- Evolène, with overt sigmatic, unambiguous PL marking on (Masc) nouns: the PL suffix does not cooccur with PAs, and no variety with PAs also has unambiguous sigmatic plural marking on nouns.
 - **Correlation in Evolène: Hypothesis 2 is confirmed.**



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