I. What are partitives?

- Dedicated cases: Fennic and Mordva, Basque, Russian (‘second’ genitive)
- Partitive genitives: various IE languages
- Articles: Romance languages, Oceanic languages
- particles: Oceanic languages

2. ‘Typical’ functions of partitives

- Imperfectivity
- Low affectedness
- Indefiniteness (quantification)

⇒ Which comes first?

In Mordva languages Erza and Mokša, “partitive occurs on indefinite bare plural or mass noun objects of a small class of verbs, most commonly “eat”, “drink”, and “smoke”, less often transfer verbs like “give”, “bring”, “take”, and “steal”. It does not indicate imperfective aspect (this is indicated by the inessive case on the direct object, see Kiparsky 1998, Grünthal 2007), but it marks the object of some low transitivity verbs (perception and emotion, such as 'fear' and 'see' Itkonen 1972: 170–171)

Mordva (from Kiparsky 1998)

(1) jarða-n kal-do. sima-n vei-ře. mon. aða, sim-í-fan
eat-1SGSubj fish-Part drink-1SGSubj water-Part. OK. fine. drink-caus-1SGSubj/2SGObj
vina-do.

vodka-Part

“I’m eating fish and drinking water. OK, so I’ll let you drink some vodka.”

Mordva (Erzya) (Itkonen 1972: 171)

(2) son a pazdo, a šajando a p'el'i
he NEG God-ABL NEG devil-ABL NEG fear-3SG

‘He fears neither God, nor the devil’

Ancient Greek (Hom. Il. 16.182)

(3) tēs dē kratūs argeiphontēs ērāsat(o)
DEM.GEN.SG.F PTC mighty: NOM slayer.of.Argus: NOM love:AOR.3SG

‘Mighty Hermes loved her.’

3. Partitives from ablatives

Mordva and Fennic: Uralic ablatival case ending *-tA (Wickman 1955: 27; Bjarnadóttir & De Smit 2013), possibly also cgnate of plural object case, Proto-Saami *-dē

- Finnish, Estonian --> when the ablative became grammaticalized as partitive it lost its local function. The present elative and ablative cases are formed by compound endings -s-ta and -l-ta
Mordva languages have a distinct definite/indefinite declension for nouns --> the quantifying function of the partitive is an inherited feature, but does not undergo an extension comparable to Fennic.

**Partitive constructions:**

Finnish (from Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001)

(4) *pala* tätä hyvästä kaku-sta
    bit:NOM this:ELA good:ELA cake:ELA
    ‘A bit of this good cake.’

Finnish

(5) *pala* hyväää kakkua
    bit:NOM good:PAR cake:PAR
    ‘A bit of good cake.’ (an indefinite cake, not a quantity of a previously identified whole).

Finnish

(6) *pala* tätä hyvä-ää kakku-a
    bit:NOM this:PAR good:PAR cake:PAR
    ‘A bit of this good cake.’

“Note, however, that in this construction it is more typical for the partitive to have the indefinite meaning, and that the part-whole reading in (6) is triggered by the occurrence of the demonstrative ‘this’. ... In fact, even example (6), in spite of its demonstrative, allows the alternative reading where the partitive phrase tätä hyväää kakkua refers to a particular type of cake (‘this kind of good cake’), not necessarily a certain individual cake, as the elative construction in(4).” (Luraghi & Huumo 2014)

**Pseudopartitives**

Finnish (from Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001: 523)

(7) säkki peruno-i-ta
    sack:NOM potato:PL.PAR
    ‘A sack of potatoes.’

**Basque:**

Diachronic and diatopic variation of the ablative-partitive suffix(es) (from Aritzimuño 2014)

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Archaic uses of the Basque partitive:
alde-rik alde ‘from one side to the other, right through’
esku-rik esku ‘from hand to hand, hand in hand’
herri-rik herri ‘from town to town’
egun-ik egun ‘day by day, from day to day’

Partitive constructions:
Basque
(8)  Tarta horren zati bat
cake that:GEN piece one
‘A piece of that cake.’
(9)  Tarta horretatik zati bat
cake that:ABL piece one
‘A piece of that cake.’

Pseudopartitives
(10) Tarta zati bat
cake piece one
‘A piece of cake.’

Partitives from genitives
In the IE languages in which the genitive functions as a partitive, it also retains its functions as a genitive (e.g. modification).
In some IE languages (Greek, Balto-Slavic) the genitive merged with the ablative at a pre-literary stage. In these languages, the partitive genitive also functions as an ablative.

Partitive and pseudopartitive constructions
Greek (Napoli 2010, Conti & Luraghi 2014)
(11) Kuxarês kai hoí pareóntes daitumónes tôn
Cyaxares: NOM and ART.NOM.PL be.present:PTCP.NOM.PL guest:NOM.PL ART.GEN.PL
kreón toútōn epásanto
flesh:GEN.PL DEM.GEN.PL eat:AOR.MID.3PL
‘Cyaxares and the guests who were with him ate of that flesh’ Hdt. 1.73.6
(12) en hósoisi toû liparou̲ enên
in INDEF.DAT.PL ART.GEN fat:GEN be:IMPF.3SG
‘There was fat even in them (sc. the bones)’14 (Hp. Carn. 4.6)

Latvian (from Koptjevskaja Tamm 2001: 540)
(13) ikhthu̲ōn dê oû sphi éxesti pásasthai
fish:GEN.PL PTC NEG 3PL.DAT may:PRS.3SG. eat:AOR.INF
‘They may not eat fish.’ (Hdt., 2.37. 18–19)
Russian

- GENITIVE: PARTITIVE CONSTRUCTION, INDEFINITE OR PSEUDOPARTITIVE

(15) a. *Ja s’uel kusok piroga*  
   1SG.NOM eat:PST.F piece:ACC cake:GEN  
   ‘I ate a piece of cake’

b. *Ja s’uel kosok etogo piroga*  
   1SG.NOM eat:PST.F piece:ACC DEM.GEN cake:GEN  
   ‘I ate a piece of that (specific) cake.’

(16) *Ja vypil vody*  
   1SG drink:PST.PFV.M.SG water:GEN  
   ‘I drank (some) water.’

- DEICTIC + DEMONSTRATIVE: PARTITIVE CONSTRUCTION

c. *Ja s’uel kosok von togo piroga*  
   1SG.NOM eat:PST.F piece:ACC PTC DEM.GEN cake:GEN

- Functional merger of ablative, genitive and partitive

  - Type a. Balto-Finnic, Basque: partitive ≠ genitive ≠ ablative
  - Type b. Indo-Iranian, Latin: partitive = genitive ≠ ablative
  - Type c. Greek, Balto-Slavic: partitive=genitive=ablative (--> original situation = type b)

4.1. Rise of a new partitive case: the Russian second genitive (Daniel 2014)

Genitive ending of the -u declension

- -u- and -o- decletion merged
- some of the former -u stems (typically mass nouns) preserved the older genitive while also acquiring the new one
- old genitive acquired the special meaning of partitive
- second genitive extended to nouns which were not original -u- stems based on similar lexical features

--> Exaptation (see Lass 1990): the -u stem genitive, which had lost its function following the disappearance of the inflectional class to which it belonged, was so to speak re-cycled, and acquired a new function, for which there was previously no dedicated morpheme (Luraghi & Kittilä 2014)

5. Partitives from prepositions: From the Late Latin partitive construction to the Romance partitive articles

Late Latin (Luraghi 2013)

(17) *et misit ad agricolas in tempore servum ut ab agricolis acciperet de fructu vineae*  
and send:PF.3SG to peasant:ACC.PL in time:ABL servant:ACC for from peasant:ABL.PL collect:SUBJ.IMPF.3SG from fruit:ABL vineyard:GEN  
“At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard.” Mark 12.2;

(18) *probet autem se ipsum homo et sic de pane illo edat*  
examine:SUBJ.3SG indeed REFL.ACC:ACC self:ACC man:NOM and so from bread:ABL DEM.ABL eat:SUBJ.PRS.3SG  
“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread.”, 1 Corinthians 11.28.

Old French

(19) *Il trova i. ostel en selve clere: De sains moines i a de sa contree Qui por*  
he found there dwelling in forest sparse of saint monks there have from his land that for
l’amor de Dieu bien l’ostelerent.
the love of God well him lodged
“He found a dwelling in a sparse forest: there were of holy monks from his land that lodged him for God’s sake.” (12 century, adapted from Carlier 2007: 14)

From Old to Middle French (from Carlier 2007: 26):
1. The notion of partition set fades away.
2. The notion of a non-specified quantity remains.
3. The partitive article acquires the new property of marking indefiniteness.

Old Italian
(20) Ela mançà del pomo qe li de’ un serpente
she ate of+the apple that her gave a snake
“She ate of the apple that a snake gave her”, Uguccione da Lodi, (beginning of 13. century)

(21) Del mal fa quel asai sì ke no g’è mensura.
of+the evil does she much so that not there is measure
“She does so much evil that it cannot be measured” Pietro da Bescapè, 1274

(22) che del ben non vi sia
that of+the good neg there is
“that there is not some good” Ubertino del Bianco d’Arezzo, a. 1269

Two different developments!!

Latin: ablative → replaced by de
French de
Italian de-ab → da

The Italian partitive article comes from the GENITIVE preposition
Resulting patterns:

- **French**: partitive=genitive=ablative (cf. Type b)
- **Italian**: partitive = genitive ≠ ablative (cf. Type c)

Partitive construction

Italian
- Del < di(prepost) + il(art) can be analyzed as representing two different items:
  - preposition for adnominal modifiers + article (La casa del mio amico)
  - indefinite/partitive article (< transcategorization)

(23) Mangio del pane
I.eat indef.art bread
“I’m eating some bread.” (indefinite)

(24) Mangio un pezzo del pane che hai comprato ieri
I.eat a piece of.the bread that you have bought yesterday
“I’m eating a piece of the bread that you bought yesterday.” (partitive construction)

Apparently, the same form occurs as partitive/indefinite article and in partitive constructions, but in fact in (23) del can no longer be analyzed as containing the preposition for nominal modifiers, as there is no nominal head to which it should be attached.

Pseudopartitive

(25) Mangio un pezzo di pane
I.eat a piece of bread
“I’m eating a piece of bread.” (pseudopartitive)

**Prepositions in transition?**

Dutch *van* as so-called ‘faded partitive’

Dutch (De Hoop 1998: 194)

(26)  

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{Er} & \text{lagen} & \text{van} & \text{die dikke boeken} \\
\text{there} & \text{lay:PRS.PL} & \text{of} & \text{DEM.PL thick:PL} \\
\text{op} & \text{de} & \text{tafel} & \text{on ART table} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘Some thick books lay on the table.’

The effect of *van* in this construction is to cancel the meaning of the determiner *die* ‘those’ --> the phrase *van die boeken* functions as a bare plural (Zwart 1987).

6. **Oceanic partitives**

**Case markers**

Proto-Oceanic *ta* < Proto-Malayo-Polynesian *ta*, sometimes called accusative in descriptive grammars. More correctly, this was the ending marking indefinite undergoers of antipassive constructions.

(These languages showed ergative alignment with S and the O in the absolutive, and A in the genitive. The O of a regular ergative clause could only be definite. Antipassive intransitive verbs indicating activity (as ‘I am eating’) could take an undergoer argument. The latter was indefinite (non-specific), and was marked as an oblique, nowadays called accusative (Ross p.c.).

Toqabaqita (from Budd 2014)

(27)  

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{Kuki} & \text{ta} & \text{kafo} & \text{cook some water} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘Boil some water.’

**Prepositions**

Locative preposition *i*:

Tongan (from Clark 1973: 600)

(28)  

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{Na’e kai} & \text{a e ika ‘e he tamasi’i}. & \\
PST & eat & ABS REF fish & ERG REF boy \\
\end{array}
\]

‘The boy ate (up) a fish.’

(29)  

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{Na’e kai} & \text{a e tamasi’i i he ika}. & \\
PST & eat & ABS REF boy in REF fish \\
\end{array}
\]

‘The boy ate some (of a) fish.’

**Serial verb constructions**

“Bierebo *ja* seems likely to be an accreted form of *gicha*, a variant form which occurs in some more conservative dialects of the language. In turn, *gicha* can be diachronically analyzed as *gi-cha*, where *gi* is a serial verb meaning ‘take time’ which is still productive in the contemporary language and *cha* is perhaps a phonologically-conditioned variant of *ta*. What seems likely here then, is that a modified serial verb with a literal meaning of ‘take a little time’ has developed into a more general VP partitive meaning ‘do a little’. It remains to be seen whether this analysis would be valid for other Vanuatu languages with VP partitives.” (Budd 2014)
Indefinite articles
In some Polynesian languages the numeral ‘one’ (Proto-Malayo-Polynesian *esa) developed into an
indefinite marker and further into a partitive morpheme.
Māori (Bauer 1997: 294)
(30)  *Kawe-a  atu he  wai  ki  a  au
bring-PASS away a water to  PERS 1SG
‘Bring me some water.’
⇒ Contrary to developments seen thus far:
|| Romance: preposition > partitive article > indefinite article (plural)
|| Polynesian: numeral ‘one’ > indefinite article > partitive article

7. Partitive objects and partitive subjects

Russian - Direct object cf. (16)
Russian - Subject
(31)  Nočju  snega  naivalilo!
night:INS snow:(M).SG.GEN piled.up:N
‘During the night, there fell piles of snow!’
Estonian - Subject
(32)  Taigna  sees  on  pipar-t
batter.GEN in be:PRS.3SG pepper-PAR
‘There is (some) pepper in the batter.’
Avestan - Subject
(33)  uruuaranqm  zairi, gaonanqm  zaramaēm  pai ti  zəmāδa  uzuxšiietti
‘Yellow-colored plants grow forth again across the earth in the spring.’ (Avestan, Yašt 7.4)
Vedic Sanskrit - Direct object
(34)  pácanti  te  vṛṣabhām  ātī  tēsām
cook:PRS.3PL 2SG.DAT bulls:ACC eat:PRS.3SG 3PL.M.GEN
‘They cook bulls for you, you eat (some) of them.’ (Vedic Sanskrit, Rigveda X 28.3)
Araki - Subject
(35)  ... co  de  re  huira  co  roho  ro  raholo  lo  cada  di  ...
1IN:1 say PRTV octopus 3S:1 stay PRG straight LOC place ANA
“(if you go to the sea) suppose that some octopus is right in that place…”
Araki - Direct object
(36)  No-ku  tu,  o  vodo  re  ḫaka-ku,  re  vina-ku.
POSS-1S dad 2S:1 make PAR bow-1S, PAR arrow-1S
“Dad, could you make me a bow, make me some arrows?”
⇒ Which came first?

Partitive object > partitive subjects with existentil ‘be’ > partitive subjects in presentative constructions
7. Further developments of partitives

INFERENCES ARISING FROM THE PARTITIVE CONSTRUCTION

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<th>PARTITIVE</th>
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<td>“A PART OF A REFERENT UNDERGOES THE EFFECTS OF AN ACTION/PROCESS”</td>
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ACTION/PROCESS IS PARTIAL

- EVENT UNBOUNDED
- LOW TRANSLIVITY

ONLY A PART OF A REFERENT IS INVOLVED

- PART INVOLVED NOT SPECIFIED
- INDEFINITYNESS

Left branch

Only a part of a referent is affected --> implicature that affectedness is partial --> the feature of partiality is profiled --> use of partitive in low transitivity contexts

- Low transitivity
  - imperfective aspect
  - non-assertive modality
  - negation
  - ...

Right branch

Only a part of a referent is affected --> implicature concerning identifiability: “a non-specified quantity is necessarily non-uniquely identifiable to the hearer.” (Carlier 2007: 27) --> the feature of non-specificity is profiled --> pragmatic implicature becomes more prominent than the original notion --> indefinite article

(see Traugott & Dasher 2002; Luraghi & Kittilä 2014)

References


Bonifaci, Maria. 2010. The case for the partitive case. Transactions of the Philological Society 108/1, 15-40


