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NOMINAL PARAMETERS AND THEIR NATURE ACROSS LEVELS AND INTERFACES

Bare Nouns (BNs) distribute interlingually (and intralingually) in ways that point to interesting clues of how parametrization in the N domain can be conceived and described. Overt varieties, on the other hand, complement covert ones, and hence the study of the latter in isolation is unlikely to be sufficient to provide a global picture of how interacting parameter options can be set up. I examine various sources of parametric variation available to grammars, and show how they are instantiated through the overt/covert nominal distributions typically found in Arabic, but also in English and Romance, among other languages to be considered. Some of these sources are widely explored in the literature, others less so. A first source concerns *f-lexical variation* (FLv, i.e the number and identity of the functional items (FI) driven from the f-lexicon). A second source concerns the processes through which FIs are merged or moved in the syntax, the levels at which they merge, etc; call it *CFv*, C for computational. Both FLv and CFv are at play in the *covert/overt* nature of the traditional *N-to-D movement*, often coupled with a generalized DP hypothesis for arguments. But other FIs than D are appealed to, notably Nb (number), Cl (classifier), Num (numeral), but also Sm (weak 'some'), Gen (generic), etc. A third source is whether CF is morphological or syntactic; call it *synthetic/analytic* variation (SAv). A fourth source is the *polyfunctionality* of FIs, i.e. their variable content (called also ambiguity). In addition to these sources, I claim that a particularly important source of variation is to be found at the grammar-lexicon interface (presumably interfacing the f-lexicon, which containing FIs, and the l-lexicon, which contains LIs, on the one hand, and the grammar and the lexicon as a whole, on the other hand). One dimension of this interface is *conceptual* (and/or ontological) in nature. It concerns the ingredients around which both FIs and LIs are organized, and made available to grammars at the CI interface. The other dimension is phonological (at the PF interface), but I will not be dealing with it here.

Consider the classification of Ns, found in traditional grammars, into kinds (Ks), masses (Ms), collectives or groups (Gs), and individuals (Is). Take this classification to represent 'natural' classes of Ns, which are organized through a *mereology*. I define an *N part-whole relation* and an *N integrity property* of parts-wholes, and two attribute-value feature complexes that cross-classify these N classes. The *[± atomic]* feature distinguishes atoms (I, G) from non-atoms (K, M). The *[± singulative]* feature distinguishes entities which have only N-integral wholes as their parts (I, K) from those which have parts with no N-integrity (i.e. can be further partitioned). These features mirror cumulative/distributive reference effects, as well as traditional mass/count distinctions, although they appear to be more linguistically anchored. There is evidence that specific grammars mark these N-classes morphologically and/or syntactically. I claim e.g. that English marks K via plural morphology, and Arabic derives I from K via gender/classifier morphology. Likewise, singular indef(inite) articles are often analytic markers of [+ atom] (or K alternatively), plural indef article [- atom] (or K

alternatively), etc. Furthermore, each class interacts in distinct ways with quantifiers, predicates, modifiers, and anaphora, among other things. Significant properties of the various kinds of generics and definites/indefinites are partly determined by classifier settings, and the various readings of plurals and singulars can be predicted.

Consider a sample of the variation to be characterized. In English, BNs are K or M, which can be interpreted as Gen (or kind-denoting) args, without any indef or def article. The complement of this distribution is that I and G must take an indef (or def) marker. In Arabic, all N classes can be bare. They are then indefs, which are (normally) interpreted as (weak existential) Sm, or (weak) Num, in both their singular (Sg) and plural (Pl) forms. But they cannot be (K) denoting, nor (readily) interpretable as Gen, unlike English BNs. The overt/covert sets in the two languages can be properly predicted only if a K parameter is postulated, making inverse uses of the [± sing] values. The Num Parameter, making use of SAv, is behind scopal differences between Arabic and English BNs. The Gen parameter makes use of CFLs (L for level). In Romance, there are basically no BNs (except under restricted syntactic conditions), and plural indef args must have an indef article, just like sgs. Romance pl indefs can be Gen. I adopt the view that Romance, like Arabic, can form Gen via modified BNs, but it differs from Arabic in that the set of Gen bares is limited to Pl, while it extends to sgs in Arabic. Hence the set of Romance Gen BNs is a sort of intersection set of Arabic and English Gen BNs, a distribution which can be explained only if Romance form K through the plural morphology. Brazilian Portuguese is taken as an instance of K forming via any Nb morphology, be it Pl or Sg. Sg Is in this language must have an indef article too, an instantiation of the K/I split found in Romance and English through SAv. Hebrew will be shown to be a mixed language with regard to its bareness, being like Arabic at the low L, and like English at the high L. It appears then that the classification independently motivated for lexical Ns (LIs) carry over to FIs, and the variation choices in the f-lexicon can be significantly narrowed down through the interface requirement.