On indefiniteness, (anti-)specificity and partitivity in Romance: a novel approach

1. In Romance (R), indefiniteness, specificity and partitivity are expressed in different ways:

(1) Indefiniteness	
a. *Ho visto (dei) ragazzi.* [I] have seen dei children 'I saw children.'	b. *Eu vi meninos.* [BP] I saw children 'I saw children.'
(2) Specificity	
a. *Ho visto dei ragazzi.* [I] have seen dei children 'I saw some children.'	b. *Eu vi uns meninos.* [BP] I saw some children 'I saw some children.'
(3) Anti-specificity	
a. *Ho visto alcuni ragazzi.* [I] have seen some children 'I saw some children.'	b. *Eu vi alguns meninos.* [BP] I saw some children 'I saw some children.'
(4) Partitivity	
a. *Ho visto alcuni dei ragazzi.*[I] have seen some of.the children 'I saw some of the children.'	b. *Eu vi alguns dos meninos.*[BP] I saw some of.the children 'I saw some of the children.'

Note that (1) to (4) contain plural expressions in I(talian) (some exs. come from Cardinaletti & Giusti 2016) and B(razilian) P(ortuguese). The semantic literature has been very active on these topics. Still, to our knowledge, a common analysis that accounts for how these different meanings as syntactically constrained has not yet been provided. In this paper, we present a syntactically-driven analysis that proposes that the availability of the indefiniteness, (anti-)specificity and partitivity readings in R can be derived in a compositional way.

2. We assume, following Cyrino and Espinal (2019), that within the nominal domain, by default, the PLURALIZER in R is syntactically adjoined to D (i.e., a categorized *d* root) and is syntactically opaque; hence, the newly formed object has the same label as its host (D) (5).

(5) [$_D$ PLURALIZER D]

In our proposal, indefinite expressions as (1) are derived by adjoining an operator DE to the structure in (5), as in (6), which shifts a definite reading of the pluralized nominal to an indefinite one, and introduces a type-shifting from <e> to <e,t> type expressions.

(6) [$_D$ DE [$_D$ [iPLURALIZER: PL] D$_{def}$]]]

This operator can be overtly or covertly instantiated at the time of vocabulary insertion (*des/de* in F(rench), *dei/di* in I, and bare plurals in BP, C(atalan) and S(panish)) (Nevins 2012). In our presentation we will address the fact that an overt *de* conveying indefiniteness can also precede definite mass nouns in F and I (Cardinaletti & Giusti 2018).

3. Quantificational specificity (expressed by *un(s),* among other quantifiers) is obtained by postulating a quantifier (Q) that is inherently specific (e.g., *certains* in F, *cierto* in S, *un* in R) or non-specific (e.g., *plusieurs* in F, *varios* in S), which selects a DE-phrase (7) and turns an <e,t> type expression into a generalized quantifier of type <<e,t>t>.

(7) [$_Q$ Q [$_D$ DE [$_D$ [iPLURALIZER:] D$_{def}$]]]

Note that the Q head hosts determiners/quantifiers that can also be modified by a PLURALIZER, in such a way that their singular and plural number marking is guaranteed.

4. The anti-specificity reading (associated with *alcuni* (I) / *algun(o)s* (BP, C, S); Giannakidou & Quer 2013, Etxeberria & Giannakidou 2017 / *quelques* (F)) is derived by adjoining an abstract operator ALG that introduces referential vagueness and an anti-singleton function to this quantifier (Alonso-Ovalle & Menéndez-Benito 2011). In other words, this operator turns a closed set onto an open set of entities, and type-shifts a generalized quantifier into a modified generalized quantifier (type <<<e,t>t>,<<e,t>t>>).

(8) [$_Q$ ALG [$_Q$ [iPLURALIZER: {SG, PL}] [$_Q$ Q [$_D$ DE [$_D$ [iPLURALIZER:] D$_{def}$]]]]]

5. Finally, partitivity is analyzed as a *part* (QP) – whole (plural definite DP) bi-relational structure whose head is an abstract RELATOR (spelled-out by *de*) in the languages we investigate.

(9) [$_{RP}$ QP [$_R$ RELATOR [$_{DP}$ [$_D$ [iPLURALIZER: PL] D$_{def}$] [$_{NP}$]]]]

6. We highlight that the role of the operator DE with respect to definiteness is parallel to the role of ALG with respect to specificity; in other words, whereas indefiniteness builds on definiteness, anti-specificity builds on specificity. This is a desirable result since the existence of operators that apply to certain structures and have the effect of cancelling certain properties have also parallels in the verbal domain (see Kratzer 2002, who postulates that a TELIC operator creates telic predicates in interaction with the lexical meanings of atelic verb stems). The output of our analysis is an indefiniteness hierarchy that is syntactically grounded.

7. We present some of the many empirical and theoretical arguments that support our proposal. **(i)** Fronted indefinite expressions (10) and Clitic Left Dislocations (11) must be accompanied by *de* (in languages as C, I and F:

(10)a. ***De bisbes, en van assistir diversos.***	b. ***(Di) ragazzi*** Gianni *ne* ha visti.
de bishops *en* past attend several	de boys Gianni ne has seen
'Bishops, several of them attended.'	'Boys, Gianni saw some.'
(11)a. ***De galetes***, en Joan n'ha menjat cinc.	b. ***Des biscuits***, Jean n'a mangé cinq.
de biscuits D Joan *en*.has eaten five	*des* biscuits Jean *en*.has eaten five
'Biscuits, Gianni ate five.	'Biscuits, Jean ate five.

(ii) When full quantified indefinites (with an overt or a covert Q) are topicalized, accusative definite clitics must be used, as illustrated in (12) for C and I, showing their specificity value.

(12) a. ***Unes galetes de llimona***, en Joan	b. ***Dei biscotti***, Gianni **li/*ne** ha mangiati
some biscuits of lemon D Joan	*dei* biscuits Gianni them/*ne* has eaten
les/*n' ha menjades	[Q [dei biscotti]]
them/*en* has eaten	*dei* biscuits
[unes [de galetes de llimona]]	
some de biscuits of lemon	

(iii) The two types of indefinites in (13) cannot be coordinated (Ihsane 2008) because, whereas the former has an indefinite reading (6), the latter corresponds to a partitive expression (9):

(13) a. *beaucoup de cigarettes*	b. *beaucoup **des cigarettes***
many de cigarretes	many of.the.pl cigarretes

(iv) *De-* is not a partitive article (cf. Chierchia 1998, Arsenijevic 2006, Carlier 2007, Zamparelli 2008, a.o.; and in support of Kayne 1977, Delfitto 1993, Storto 2003, Ihsane 2005, C&G 2016). If *de-* were an article, (14a) should be grammatical, since articles can precede cardinals, (14b).

(14)a. ****Dei** dieci ragazzi sono arrivati.*	b. *Sono arrivati **i** dieci ragazzi.*
dei ten boys are arrived	are arrived the ten boys
	'The ten boys arrived.'

(v) *Un* is not an (indefinite) article either, but an existential quantifier (Dobrovie-Sorin and Beyssade 2012; a.o.). If it were an article, it should show scopelessness, but *un* may have wide and narrow scope with respect to other quantifiers and operators. Furthermore, if *un* were an article, it should be excluded from the specifier position of overt partitive indefinites. However, unlike the definite article and similar to other quantifier expressions, *un* is allowed in such a position.

8. Although an indefiniteness hierarchy has been postulated in the semantic literature (Martí 2008, 2009) to account for the various meanings of indefinite expressions, we emphasize that our syntactically-driven analysis provides a more comprehensive understanding of the compositionality that indefinite expressions have at the syntax-semantics interface.

Selected References: Cardinaletti, A. & G. Giusti. 2016. The syntax of the Italian indefinite determiner *dei. Lingua* 181: 58-80. **Cyrino, S. & M.T. Espinal**. 2019. On the syntax of Number in Romance. *Studia Lingüística*, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/stul.12123. **Dobrovie-Sorin, C. & Beyssade, C. 2012.** *Redefining indefinites*. Dordrecht, Springer. **Den Dikken, M. 2006.** *Relators and linkers*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. **Martí, Luisa. 2009.** Contextual restriction on indefinites. In *Quantification, Definiteness and Nominalization,* A. Giannakidou and M. Rathert (eds.), 108–132. Oxford: Oxford University Press.