Special nouns or prepositional intruders?
Article-drop in locative PPs in Fodom

Tommaso Mattiuzzi, University of Padua

Fodom (Ladin) shows a case of productive article-drop in locative PPs attested with a specific set of count nouns. An additional twist is observed with the generic locative preposition *n* ("in"), which is idiosyncratic in being in complementary distribution with definite articles. This presentation describes the distribution of both phenomena and provides arguments in favor of a specific morphosyntactic account, which focusses on the Spell-out properties of the complement nouns and of the idiosyncratic *n*. The aim is to enrich the landscape of P-D interactions in Romance with Fodom data, not previously discussed in the literature, and to show that at least in this case reference to internal structural properties of the complement DP is needed to account for the facts.

Bare nouns in Fodom PPs can get a definite reading and allow pronominal resumption. In light of well-established generalizations on D in Romance (cf. e.g. Longobardi 2005), these interpretive properties are taken to argue against interpreting them as simple NPs and point to the active presence of a D-layer. Moreover, article-drop is structurally restricted: plural marking and almost all kind of nominal modifiers block it, to the effect that the omission is only attested with singular nouns, with PP-arguments as their only possible modifier. This distribution is partially exemplified below:

(1) a. l rucsòch l é **davò porta**
    the backpack =3Msg be.3 **behind door**
    "The backpack is behind the door"
   b. **nte almièrch de mia ciauna** è bele cialé
      in wardrobe of my room have.1sg already watch.PTCP
    "I have already checked behind my bedroom closet"

(2) a. l é na cariega **davánt *(l) ultima porta**
       =3Msg be.3 a chair **before *(the) last door**
    "There's a chair in front of the last door [e.g. in a hallway]"
   b. l rucsòch l é **davò *(la) porta rossa**
      the backpack =3Msg be.3 **behind *(the) door red**
    "The backpack is behind the red door"
   c. è ciapé chëst **sot (a) *(l) let coi lenzuoi bles**
      have.1sg found this **under (to) *(the) bed with.the sheets blue**
    "I found this under the bed with blue sheets"

While allowing article-drop under the same structural conditions (cf. 3a), complex prepositions built with *n* "in" also show incompatibility with definite articles, and lose *n* whenever the article is realized (cf.3b):

(3) a. l é su n (*l) tët
       =3p.sg. be.3p. on+in (*the) roof.M.sg.
    "He/It is on the roof"
   b. l é ***su n / su l** ultimo tët
      =3p.sg. be.3p. ***on+in / on the** last roof
    "He is on the last roof"

I argue: i) that a general notion of Spell-out of non-terminals (as used e.g. in the nanosyntactic literature, cf. e.g. Starke 2009, Baunaz et al. 2018), combined with widely-shared assumptions on the structure of Romance DPs (cf. e.g. Cinque 2010b) is sufficient to account for the distribution of article-drop, if we take the relevant set of Fodom nouns to be able to realize an active D-layer under specific structural conditions; ii) that the specific incompatibility of n "in" with definite articles (but not with all other determiners) is not easily captured in terms of idiosyncratic properties of a P° head filled by n, and thus represents an empirical difficulty for analyses in which adpositions and their objects are construed as strictly independent elements in the structure (e.g. Koopman 2000, Kayne 2001, Den Dikken 2010, Cinque 2010a). An alternative is tentatively devised by hypothesizing n to be a prepositional 'intruder' in the D-domain, i.e. to be able to realize D-features as well. Under this view, incompatibility with definite articles is a result of Spell-out competition. All other determiners, instead, are correctly not involved in such interaction, as they can be independently distinguished based on either featural content (e.g. indefinite determiners) or internal complexity (e.g. demonstratives, possessives).

References

Baunaz, L., Haegeman, L., De Clercq, K., & Lander, E. (Eds.). (2018). *Exploring nanosyntax.* Oxford University Press.

Cinque, G. (2010a). Mapping spatial PPs: an introduction. In G. Cinque, & L. Rizzi (Eds.), *Mapping Spatial PPs. The Cartography of Syntactic Structures* (Vol. 6, p. 3-25). Oxford University Press.

Cinque, G. (2010b). *The syntax of adjectives: A comparative study* (Vol. 57). MIT press.

Den Dikken, M. (2010). On the functional structure of locative and directional PPs. In G. Cinque, & L. Rizzi (Eds.), *Mapping spatial PPs: The cartography of syntactic structures* (Vol. 6). Oxford University Press.

Kayne, R. (2001). Prepositions as Probes, ms. *New York University.*

Koopman, H. J. (2010). Prepositions, postpositions, circumpositions, and particles: the structure of Dutch PPs. In G. Cinque, & L. Rizzi (Eds.), *Mapping spatial PPs: The cartography of syntactic structures* (Vol. 6). Oxford University Press.

Longobardi, G. (2005). Toward a unified grammar of reference. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft, 24*, 5–44.

Starke, M. (2009). Nanosyntax: A short primer to a new approach to language, ms.