

Fanselow & Féry (2006): “Prosodic and Morphosyntactic Aspects of Discontinuous Noun Phrases: A Comparative Perspective”

Guido Mensching

Abstract

This contribution in honor of Gisbert Fanselow discusses an unpublished paper from 2006, which Gisbert wrote together with Caroline Féry on the subject of discontinuous nominal constituents (nominal split constructions: split NP/DP/QP). In this broad typological overview with theoretical discussion, the authors report on some substantial interim results of a DFG-funded project on this topic. After reviewing the paper, I use some of my own research to pursue the isolated traces of nominal split constructions in the Romance languages that the two authors take up in their article. In particular, I focus on certain constructions in Italian, Sardinian, French and Catalan, in which a topicalized N(P) appears extracted from a larger nominal constituent, with the left-peripheral N(P) additionally being introduced by the preposition *de/di* and a partitive clitic being attached to the verb

1. Introduction

This contribution is dedicated to an 88 page manuscript by Gisbert Fanselow and Caroline Féry. Though formally unpublished, it has been available on the internet (Fanselow and Féry 2006, henceforth F&F). The paper is an excellent typological introduction to the subject of discontinuous noun phrases, and in particular to “split-NP constructions”, and provides the first results of the DFG-funded project *Morphosyntax und Phonologie von diskontinuierlichen Nominal- und Präpositionalphrasen* (2003–2013), directed by Gisbert Fanselow in close cooperation with Caroline Féry.¹ The project followed up on earlier work, such as, e.g., Fanselow (1988), and produced further publications as it progressed, adding considerably to the body of knowledge reported here (e.g., Féry et al. 2007 and Fanselow 2013). By the time of Gisbert’s shattering death in 2022, there was a book in preparation (Fanselow and Féry in prep.), a project which Caroline Féry will hopefully continue. In what follows, I first summarize and discuss the F&F paper, before turning to some

¹See <https://gepris.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/5402732>.

specific Romance structures that are a subcase of what I have dubbed “partitive dislocation” in Mensching (2020). I will argue that these are a type of split-NP constructions that should be added to F&F’s typology.

After the “Introduction and Overview” (0.), the F&F paper first sets out “[t]he distribution of discontinuous noun phrases” (1.), before turning to “[t]he prosody and tonal pattern of split and other types of discontinuous noun phrases” (2.) and “[m]orphosyntactic factors in the licensing of discontinuous noun phrases” (3). The authors then provide more detail on the two main types of nominal split constructions assumed from the outset in their paper: inverted/non-cohesive discontinuous noun phrases (4.) and simple/cohesive discontinuous noun phrases (5.) (for these types, see §2 of this article). As Section 5 is much shorter, the focus clearly lies on inverted/non-cohesive discontinuous noun phrases, whereas the authors remark concerning the simple/cohesive type that “[w]e have less evidence concerning their grammar.” (F&F:69). The “Conclusion” (6.) is followed by the references and an appendix that contains the questionnaire (see below) and the “[l]ist of languages and external contributors”. In my review, I do not follow this structure, but have divided this paper into §1 “Introduction”, §2 “Basic Types and Areal Distribution of Nominal Split Constructions”, §3 “Syntactic and Morpho-Syntactic Properties”, §4 “A Look on the Romance Languages”, and §5 “Conclusions”.

As the authors explain,

[t]he results presented in this paper are based on an analysis of more than 120 languages, for 86 of which we have (partially) completed versions of the questionnaire given in the appendix. For the other languages, the evidence comes from the published literature (which we also consulted for the questionnaire languages).

(F&F:2)

At the beginning of the paper, the authors recall the well-known distinction between discontinuous nominal constituents as in (1-a) and extractions such as in (1-b):

- (1) a. Bücher über Logik hat er viele gekauft.
books about logic has he many bought

- b. Über Logik hat er viele Bücher gekauft.
 about logic has he many books bought
 ‘He has bought many books about logic.’ (German, F&F:3)

Although – as the authors rightly argue – (1-a) and (1-b) are related structures² and both were part of the project (F&F:3–4), the paper discussed here focuses on the kind of structure illustrated in (1-a), which I henceforth call *nominal split constructions*.³

2. Basic Types and Areal Distribution of Nominal Split Constructions

F&F:4–5 follow Fanselow and Cavar (2002) in assuming two basic syntactic types: “[...] in the normal cases, a simple discontinuous noun phrase preserves the order of elements of the corresponding continuous noun phrase, while an inverted discontinuous noun phrase does not.” Assuming that the underlying nominal constituent in (1-a) is [_{QP} *viele Bücher über Logik*], (1-a) is an instance of the inverted type, as is (2-c), whereas (2-b) corresponds to the simple type:

- (2) a. Marija maje bahato krisel.
 Mary has.got many chairs.GEN.PL
 b. Bahato maje Marija krisel.
 many has.got Mary chairs.GEN.PL
 c. Krisel Marija maje bahato.
 chairs.GEN.PL Mary has.got many
 ‘Mary has got many chairs.’ (Ukrainian, F&F:5)

²As F&F explain, in the earlier days of generative grammar, in which the NP structure in (i) was assumed, only (1-b) could be analyzed as a result of movement.

(i) [_{NP} [_D viele] [_{N'} Bücher [_{pp} über Logik]]]

At present (and already in 2006, when the paper was written), following the DP hypothesis, both (1-a) and (1-b) “can in principle be analysed along the same lines, and that the literature often sets discontinuous noun phrases apart from constructions with a PP extracted from DP could therefore merely have historical reasons. However, the new analytic options that came with the reanalysis of the noun phrase as a cluster of functional (DP) and lexical (NP) projections do not as such eliminate the empirical differences between [...] [(2-a) and (2-b)], and one of the purposes of our comparative survey was to find out whether such differences are an ubiquitous property of natural languages.” (F&F:4).

³Essentially in order to generalize over subtypes such as NP, DP or QP splits.

F&F also assume two prosodic types, cohesive and non-cohesive (or in-cohesive) discontinuous nominal constituents, where the former type coincides with the syntactically simple type and the latter with the inverted type (F&F:12–14). In the prosodically cohesive type, the whole sentence is one single i-phrase (see fig. 1 for the Lak⁴ sentence in (3-a))⁵, whereas in the non-cohesive type, the fronted element forms its own i-phrase (see fig. 2 for the German sentence in (3-b)).

(3) a. Cohesive split construction in Lak (F&F:16)

H*L H*L H*L LI

[[shama-ri]_P [buwk'-ssa]_P [zhahil-tal]_P]_I

three-COP.3SG came-PART young.man.NOM.PL

‘Three young man came.’

b. Non-cohesive discontinuous noun phrase in German (F&F:17)

H*L L*H H_I H*L L_I

[[Gelbe Bohnen]_P]_I [[hat Maria wenige gemalt]_P]_I

yellow beans has Maria few painted

‘Mary painted few yellow beans.’

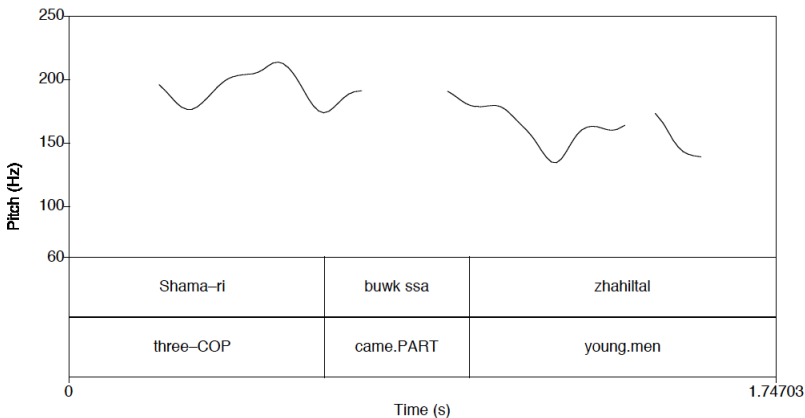


Figure 1: Cohesive split in Lak (F&F:16)

⁴A Dagehestanian language of the Caucasus, cf. F&F:15.

⁵Note that, according to F&F:17, the prosodic phrasing of the canonical word order shown in F&F:15 is preserved in the split construction, but “it is conspicuous that the discontinuous version realizes each p-phrase with a clearer accent pattern than the canonical version.”

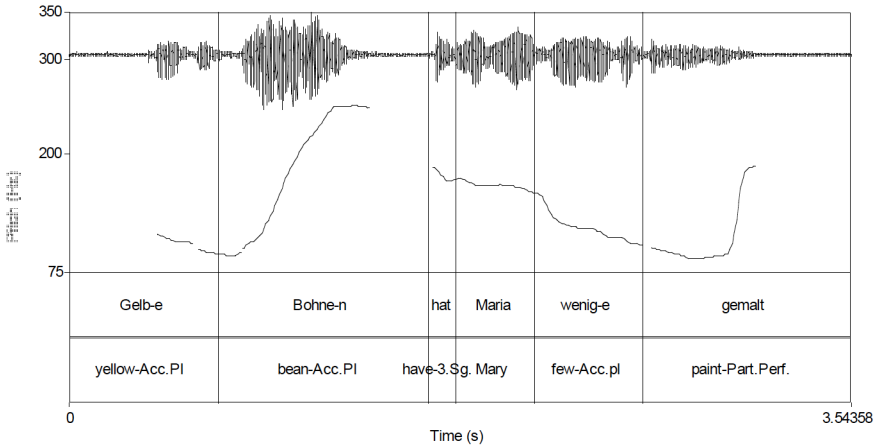


Figure 2: Fig. 2 Non-cohesive split in German (F&F:18)

The two types go along with two different information-structural settings: whereas the cohesive/simple split has narrow focus on the left part with givenness on the right part of the clause, the non-cohesive/inverted split has a contrastive topic on the left part with focus on the right part (F&F:6, 36).

F&F's typological study shows that split nominal constituents are rather frequent in the world's languages, but they are not very common in the Western European languages (F&F:7). Among the Germanic languages, English, Danish, Icelandic, and Norwegian lack such construction types (F&F:8–9), whereas the situation for Romance is unclear (F&F:9–10), see §4 of this paper for discussion. Examples for other European languages that do not seem to allow split NPs, DPs etc. are Basque as well as the Celtic languages (F&F: 9). In Central and Eastern Europe, the situation appears to be different: “the situation changes dramatically when one crosses the river Rhine or the Isonzo:⁶ one enters ‘split country’, which extends to the Pacific Ocean” (F&F:10). Thus, the authors were able to confirm the existence of nominal split constructions in Dutch, German and Swedish, in Romanian (for the latter, see §4 of this article), Albanian and Greek, in all Slavic languages, in the Baltic languages Lithuanian and Latvian as well as in the Finno-Ugric languages. Languages in Asia comprise Altaic languages, languages of the Caucasus (Georgian, Avaric, Circassian, Lak, Mingrelian, Nogai, Ossetic, and Tsakhur),

⁶Italian name of the Soča river in western Slovenia and northeastern Italy.

Indo-European languages of India as well as Dravidian languages, Sino-Tibetan languages (Burmese, Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese, NaXi, Prinmi, Tibetan), Japanese, Korean; Vietnamese; in the Far East: Chukchi, Nivkh, probably also Kolyma (but not Ainu). Splits are also found in the Austronesian languages (Chamorro, Indonesian, Malagasy, Maori, Niue, Tagalog, but not in Nalik and Rotuman). In the Near East and Northern Africa, nominal split constructions possibly exist in Palestinian Arabic, but not in Hebrew; for other Afro-Asiatic languages, Tashlehit Berber seems to have splits (but not Oromo). Elsewhere in Africa, languages with splits are found among the Khoisan languages (but not in Nama), in the Nilo-Saharan Kanuri, and in languages of the Niger-Congo family (Agni, Baoulé, Chichewa, Ega, Guere, Kitharaka, Limbum, Moghamo, Saari, Wobe, not: Ewe and Aghem). In addition, nominal split constructions are known in Australian languages (Gooniyandi, Gunwinjguan, Kalkatungu, Kayardild, Jingulu, Jiwarli, Maung, Nungubuyu Wardaman, Warlpiri (?) and Yidiñ), and, for the Americas, in Algonquin languages (Cree, Fox, Ojibwe, Passamaquoddy), in Tono O'odham, in Greenlandic, in Carib languages (Hixkaryana, Panaré), in Yagua, Mosetén, Quechua and Yucatec Maya (but not in Lakota and Mohawk). For all these languages, see F&F:7-12.

Fanselow and Čavar (2002) had already observed that the inverted split type is more basic than the simple one, and suggested that all languages with simple splits have inverted ones, but not vice versa. However, F&F:43–44 show that the latter claim does not hold, as a few languages of different types that allow simple discontinuous noun phrases lack inverted splits, such as the polysynthetic languages Fox, Cree and Passamaquoddy (Algonquian)⁷, Circassian (possibly also polysynthetic), the agglutinating language Chamorro and the isolating language Niue. Whereas for the latter it seems clear that the lack of leftward topic-fronting blocks the formation of inverted/non-cohesive discontinuous noun phrases (F&F:45), in others such as Circassian and Niue the DP-internal word-order D – N – A might play a role (F&F:46; also see below, §3).

The inverse case, i.e., languages with inverted splits only such as German, is more frequent. Other examples are Kitharaka (Bantu), the Niger-Congo languages (Agni, Baoulé, Limbum, Moghamo, Saari, with the possible ex-

⁷Note that for Baker (1995), the relevant structures in polysynthetic languages are not split constructions but adverbial quantification (F&F:41).

ception of Chichewa), probably all Sino-Tibetan languages as well as Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese (F&F:47–48). The authors provide a reasonable explanation for the lack of inverted splits in these languages.

Thus, there seem to be at least two areas in the world which are virtually free of simple splits, viz. East Asia and Subsaharan Africa, probably because the languages in these areas define dislocated topic positions only, while focusing is not linked to a position at all, or expressed by clefting, an operation that, arguably, cannot yield discontinuous constituents. These syntactic properties may be a consequence of prosody: being tone languages, most East Asian and African languages probably do not possess enough flexibility for handling changes in the p-phrase, as discussed above. Therefore, they cannot have simple discontinuous noun phrases.

(F&F:47–48)

This does not hold for languages outside these areas that also have inverted/non-cohesive splits only: in Europe this property mostly correlates with the obligatoriness of articles (vs. the absence or optionality, see §3, cf. Boškovič 2005), such as in Dutch, German, Swedish, Hungarian, and Romanian (in contrast to the Slavic languages), but this cannot be generalized, as Kyrgyz (Turkic), Malayalam (Dravidian), Nivkh (in Outer Manchuria), and Oryia (Eastern Indo-Aryan) have no articles and nevertheless disallow simple splits (F&F:48).

3. Syntactic and Morpho-Syntactic Properties of Nominal Splits

The broad typological approach has allowed the authors to look into the grammatical properties of the structures under discussion and to search for correlations between the existence or non-existence of nominal split constructions and other factors. One possible correlation examined concerns languages with the canonical DP-internal order D – N – A, which “does not appear to be very split-friendly” (F&F:46): “E.g., with Basque (at least for numerals and certain quantifiers), Hebrew (for quantifiers and certain determiners), Rotuman and the Celtic and Western Romance⁸ languages it characterizes

⁸Western Romance in opposition to Romanian, i.e., not in the sense used in Romance linguistics. As I suggest in §4, however, most Romance languages seem to license nominal splits despite their word order concerning adjectives.

many languages that lack discontinuous noun phrases at all.” An explanation might be that “(D)NA-order blocks inverted discontinuous noun phrases because N-A order arises from the movement of the noun to a higher functional projection” (F&F:46). Nevertheless, the authors observe that this correlation does not seem to hold universally, as both Circassian and Niue have this underlying DP-internal order and yet allow splits.

A more stable correlation seems to hold between the existence of (inverted) split DPs and DPs without a nominal head. The latter property is illustrated in (4) and (5) for a language with and without split constructions, respectively:

- (4) Ich kaufe ein gutes.
 I buy a good
 ‘I buy a good one’ (German, F&F:37)
- (5) a. *I buy a good.
 b. I buy a good one. (English, F&F:37)

In a theory such as that of Fanselow (1988), in which “the left-peripheral nominal projection must bind an empty pronominal in the remnant DP sitting in situ for discontinuous DPs to be possible” (F&F:37), the correlation is explained straightforwardly (if we take the nominal head in (4) to be an empty category), see (6):

- (6) Bücher_i hat er keine *pro*_i gelesen.
 books has he none read
 ‘He did not read any books.’ (German, F&F:37)

For inverted splits, it seems “that the right part must always have the formal properties of an independent autonomous DP” (F&F:37). The authors were able to show the co-existence of both structures in many languages of their sample, while they found other languages that behave like English, e.g., Ainu and the Austronesian languages Nalik and Rotuman, disallowing both nominal splits and noun phrases without overt nominal heads (F&F:38). F&F conclude that “the grammaticality of DPs without overt nominal heads is crucial for the licensing of discontinuous noun phrases” (F&F:41). However, as some languages⁹ “forbid discontinuity for noun phrases, but tolerate DPs without nominal heads, nounless DPs are thus at most a necessary, but

⁹Lezgian, Basque, Hebrew, Icelandic, Nama, Norwegian, Tok Pisin.

not a sufficient condition for the presence of discontinuous noun phrases” (F&F:39).

An observation related hereto is that, in many languages (e.g., Yucatec Maya, Cantonese, Telugu, Japanese), morphological changes occur when an overt noun in a DP is omitted, usually via a nominalization suffix attached to the adjective, and in some of these languages the same suffix occurs when the DP is discontinuous, as in (7):

- (7) *hon-wa Peter-ga omosiroi-*(no-o) yonda.*
 book-TOP Peter-NOM interesting-NL-ACC read
 ‘Peter read an interesting book.’ (Japanese, F&F:38)

Alternatively, the structure in (7) could be interpreted as not involving DP splitting, with *hon-wa* being a free topic. Such an analysis may hold for many languages (see the discussion in F&F Section 4.4), but cannot be generalized on the evidence of other languages, such as, e.g., Yucatec Maya, which uses nominal forms of adjectives in cases such as (7) but does not license free topic constructions.

An interesting question is what happens in languages with obligatory determiners. It turns out that in some of these languages, certain splits (or nominal splits in general, like in Basque) are ungrammatical, while other languages either tolerate them or use repair strategies, such as doubling the determiner (F&F:40). German presents both options, as shown in (8-a),(8-b):

- (8) a. *Einen Wagen kann er sich nur einen billigen leisten.*
 a car can he REFL just a cheap afford
 b. *Wagen kann er sich nur einen billigen leisten.*
 car can he REFL just a cheap afford
 ‘He can only afford a cheap car.’ (German, F&F:40)

Some other factors that the authors examine are: 1. Rich or poor nominal agreement: A correlation of rich nominal agreement morphology and split nominal constituents does not seem to hold, as Altaic languages like Kyrgyz, Nogai, and Turkish license nominal splits in the absence of any agreement within the DP, whereas Icelandic does not license nominal splits despite having rich nominal agreement (F&F:40). 2. Islands: The status of DPs as islands might provide an explanation for the absence of split nominal constituents in Basque (a language that does not allow at all to extract material

from a DP), but it cannot explain the ungrammaticality of nominal splits in languages that tolerate the extraction of PPs out of DPs, such as Icelandic or Norwegian (F&F:39).

The authors conclude:

We could not identify a set of jointly sufficient conditions for the presence of discontinuous noun phrases, because Hebrew, Icelandic, Nama, and Norwegian fulfill all of the criteria one might make responsible for licensing discontinuous noun phrases without actually having them. PPs can leave DPs in these languages (so that there are no island problems), DPs need no nominal head (so that adjustment would not be called for), and movement is licensed by information structure. Furthermore, there is rich DP-internal agreement for grammatical features in Icelandic [...]. Norwegian is a pitch accent language, and Nama a tone language, but the presence of discontinuous noun phrases in languages with the same or similar prosodic qualities (recall that Swedish has discontinuous noun phrases) again shows that these properties alone cannot rule discontinuous noun phrases out (although prosodic restrictions may be fatal for DP discontinuity in Basque, as we have suggested above). Unless further factors are discovered in future research, we must conclude that the licensing of discontinuous noun phrases is independent of the other grammatical parameters. There are necessary but no sufficient conditions.

(F&F:41)

Apart from the search for correlates, the article contains a description of a large number of other grammatical peculiarities. For the inverted type in particular, many properties fall under the category of adjustments:

It has frequently been observed that the shape of the words in a discontinuous noun phrase need not always be identical with what they would look like in a continuous DP. Similarly, there may be differences in word order [...] that suggest that serialization constraints are independently applied to the two parts of an (inverted) discontinuous noun phrase.

(F&F:54)

We have already seen two examples above, namely nominalization suffixes and determiner doubling. Another example concerns case. In some languages, in which case needs to be realized only once in a DP (such as Hungarian, Georgian, Warlpiri, or Quechua), case is marked twice in a split DP, as shown in (9-b) (vs. the canonical structure in (9-a)):

- (9) a. Láttam nagy bicikliket
 saw.I big bike-PL-ACC
 b. Bicikliket láttam nagyokat
 bike.PL-ACC saw.I big-PL-ACC
 ‘I saw big bikes.’ (Hungarian, F&F:55)

In German and Dutch, some quantifiers differ in nominal constituents with and without nouns, and in a discontinuous phrase these take the form that appears when the noun is absent or empty, as witnessed in (10) for German:

- (10) a. Geld hat er keines.
 money has he no-N.PL.
 b. Er hat kein-₁ Geld.
 c. Er hat keines.
 d. *Er hat kein.
 ‘He has no (money).’ (German, F&F:55)

In general, it seems that adjustments are a quite regular phenomenon with inverted discontinuous nominal constituents: their “right part [...] must *always* be adjusted to the requirements of noun phrases without an overt head, and [...] there is an adjustment for the left part in nearly all cases”. In contrast, “simple splits fail to show adjustments in many cases” (F&F:70). This also applies to preposition doubling, which occurs in a number of languages in inverted splits when the discontinuous noun phrase is part of a PP (F&F:58). An example is given in (11) for German (where preposition doubling is optional):

- (11) (In) Schlössern hab ich schon in vielen gewohnt.
 in castles-DAT have I already in many lived
 ‘I have already lived in many castles.’
 (German, adapted from F&F:58)

In simple splits, preposition doubling is either excluded or judged as marginal in many languages. F&F illustrate the lack of preposition doubling with the pattern in (12), which is attested in almost all Slavic languages as well as in Albanian, Estonian, and Lithuanian:¹⁰

- (12) V kakoj on poedet gorod?
 to which he will-go town
 ‘To which town will he go?’ (Russian, F&F:70)

Being a first descriptive and typological overview, the F&F paper was not the place to develop a coherent theory of nominal split constructions. But the authors discuss theoretical views at many occasions in the course of the paper. Based on the data, they tend to suggest that the structures they examine in the paper cannot all be explained in the same way, starting with the two main types: while the adjustments that can be observed in the inverted type can usually be directly – or in any case more easily – explained by using a base-generation account, this line of explanation encounters difficulties with the simple splits, so these can be better explained with a movement account (see, e.g., F&F:46–54, 58–61, 64–76).

4. A Look at the Romance Languages

As for the Romance languages, F&F (8, fn. 13) say that they have questionnaire data for Catalan and Italian, and data from the literature for French and Spanish. In conformity with the general observation that nominal split constructions are rare in Western Europe but rather regularly found in Central and Eastern Europe, it is not surprising that F&F’s Italian and Catalan informants did not accept such constructions (F&F:9) (but see my considerations below), whereas they seem to be well established in Romanian, witness the examples in (13-b) and (14-b):

- (13) a. Petru a citit o carte interesantă.
 P. has read a book interesting
 b. Cărți, Petru a citit una interesantă.
 books P. has read one interesting
 ‘Peter has read an interesting book’ (Romanian, F&F:48)

¹⁰However, preposition doubling was marginally accepted at least by some speakers of Russian as well as “in Macedonian, Ukrainian, Estonian, Lithuanian and probably also Albanian” (F&F:70).

- (14) a. Am luat douăzeci de prosoape.
 have.I taken twenty of towels
 b. Prosoape am luat douăzeci.
 towels have.I taken twenty
 ‘I took twenty (towels).’ (Romanian, F&F:61)

These examples show the typical adjustment phenomena of inverted split constructions, such as the change of the determiner in (13-b) to the form that it takes in isolation (the numeral ‘one’), as compared to the canonical word order in (13-a); also note the number mismatch in (13-b). The examples in (14) show an adjustment that takes place with numerals that occur with the preposition (or case marker, depending on theory, see below) *de* before the NP as in (14-a): the split construction in (14-b) lacks *de*. As F&F remark, this phenomenon resembles a property of the Slavic languages, namely that certain numerals trigger a genitive on the following NP, which does not appear, however, in the corresponding inverted split construction (cf. F&F:60–61). I think that a possible Slavic origin of the Romanian structure might be an interesting question for future research. Or, possibly, the fact that Romanian has the type of nominal split construction illustrated in (13-b) and (14) at all can be explained by its affiliation to the Balkan Sprachbund; all languages that belong to it seem to allow nominal split constructions (Macedonian, Bulgarian, Greek, Albanian, and Turkish are mentioned explicitly in F&F’s paper).

As far as Spanish is concerned, F&F’s judgement that they are “not aware of any deep discussion of noun phrase discontinuity in Castilian Spanish” still seems to hold today, although there are scattered hints in the literature, e.g., the following sentence that they cite from Leonetti (2004: 1997, note 19):¹¹

- (15) Ejercicios, los estudiantes no han leído ni siquiera dos.
 exercises the students not have read not even two
 ‘The students have not even read two exercises.’ (Spanish, F&F:9)

In an informal inquiry that I conducted with four speakers of Spanish, only one speaker accepted (15), whereas two speakers judged this sentence as

¹¹Manuel Leonetti is another dear and much appreciated colleague who, to our great sadness, passed away in 2022.

marginal or strange, and one speaker judged it as ungrammatical. I asked the same speakers to judge the acceptability of (16-a)–(16-d):¹²

- (16) a. Gatos (,) tengo muchos.
 cat-M-PL have.1SG many-M-PL
 ‘I have many cats.’
- b. Gatos (,) tengo tres.
 cats have.1SG three
 ‘I have three cats.’
- c. ??Peras (,) tengo buenas.
 pear-F.PL have.1SG good-F.PL
 ‘I have good pears.’
- d. Libros interesantes (,) tengo muchos.
 book-M-PL interesting-PL have-1SG many-M-PL
 ‘I have many interesting books.’ (Spanish)

Only one speaker accepted all of them – he remarked, however, that in (16-c) the absence of the intonational break indicated by the comma slightly degrades the sentence; for this speaker (15) was acceptable only with an intonational break after *Ejercicios*. For the other three speakers, (16-c) turned out to be problematic (two * and one ?).¹³ While all four speakers accepted (16-a) and (16-b), one speaker found (16-d) rather strange. Considering that in a language such as German with regular inverted nominal split constructions sentences parallel to those in (15) and (16) would all be grammatical, we might either conclude that Spanish allows nominal splits in a very restricted way or that the grammatical sentences in (16) are not split constructions but something else, e.g., hanging topic constructions.

As for French, F&F:8–9 discuss structures such as those in (17-a), but some speakers also seem to accept (17-b), with bare *de* instead of *des* and

¹²As I made this inquiry in written form, I preferred to leave the presence or absence of a prosodic break open, hence the notation “(,)”.

¹³A future study of this type of construction in Spanish should include a prosodic analysis. The presence or absence of an intonational break alone does not say much about how to analyze these sentences, given that, in non-cohesive split constructions, “[t]he fronted part forms its own i-phrase and *can* be separated from the remaining of the sentence by a short break.” (My italics.)

without past participle agreement (see Cardinaletti and Giusti 2006: 64 & 88 for similar examples):¹⁴

- (17) a. Des livres Marie en=a lus trois.
of-the books Mary PRTV=has read-PL three
‘As for books, Mary has read three.’ (F&F:8)
- b. De livres, Marie en=a lu trois.
of books, Mary PRTV=has read three
‘As for books, Mary has read three.’ (French)

The sentence in (17-a) may be seen as the result of PP extraction from the QP *trois des livres* ‘three of the books’. It would then be a real partitive construction, referring to a subset of three from a given set of books. However, both (17-a) and (17-b) are usually interpreted in the sense of ‘As for books, Mary has read three’. In this case, *des* in (17-a) must be interpreted as the so-called partitive article, which is obligatory for indefinite nouns. But this presents the problem that – if these are split constructions – they would have to be derived from or at least related to the canonical sentence structure in (18), which, unlike (17-a) and (17-b), does not contain *de(s)*, a phenomenon to which I will return.

- (18) Marie a lu trois (*des/*de) livres.
Mary has read three of(-the) books
‘Mary read three books.’ (French)

In any case, F&F:9 remark concerning the structure at issue that they are “reluctant to classify [...] [it] as a discontinuous noun phrase, because of the unclear status of the partitive preposition [...], heading the left XP and because of the obligatory presence of the clitic *en*.”

In Mensching (2020), I argued in favor of (17-b) as a nominal split construction. Before summarizing my analysis, let us see some properties of this structure. First, it is important to note that all Romance languages that have a partitive clitic (such as French, Italian, Sardinian, and Catalan) allow this kind of structure, see the following examples in addition to the French example (17-b):

¹⁴In (17-a), “=” was added by me to mark the item *en* as a clitic; PRTV = partitive clitic. F&F’s gloss for *en* in (17-a) is “there”.

- (19) a. De turistas, nde=sunt arribados chimbe.
of tourists PRTV=are arrived five
‘Five tourists have arrived.’ (Sardinian, Mensching 2020: 817)
- b. Di sedie, ne=abbiamo portate molte nel magazzino.
of chairs PRTV=have-1PL brought many in.the warehouse
‘We brought many chairs into the warehouse.’
(Italian, cf. Benincà 1988: 165)
- c. De mitjons, en=tinc molts.
of socks PRTV=have.1SG many
‘I have many socks.’ (Catalan, cf. Martí 1995: 252)

Second, the preposition *de/di* is not restricted to cases such as those in (17-b) and (19), but also appears when an indefinite singular non-count or a plural noun is left dislocated, such as in the following Italian examples, where (20-a’) and (20-b’) represent the canonical word order:¹⁵

- (20) a. Di vino, non ne=bevo.
of wine not PRTV=drink-1SG
- a’. Non bevo vino.
not drink-1SG wine
‘I don’t drink wine.’
- b. Di cani, non ne=ho visti.
of dogs-M.PL not PRTV=have-1SG seen-M.PL¹⁶
- b’. Non ho visto cani.
not have-1SG seen dogs
‘I haven’t seen any dogs.’ (Italian)

These structures (which I call “partitive dislocation” in Mensching 2020) are clitic left dislocation (CLLD) structures (see Rizzi 1997, among many others, for the better-known cases of definite direct objects), in which the partitive clitic is the appropriate doubling element, as such clitics substitute or dou-

¹⁵Except for Sardinian, the languages at issue can (or in the case of French must) use so-called partitive articles for indefinite nouns, see Italian *Non bevo del vino* as an alternative to (20-a’). However, the dislocated variant of this sentence would have the same shape as in (20-a), if the reading ‘Wine, I don’t drink’ is intended. If the partitive article is dislocated together with the noun (*Del vino, non ne bevo*), the sentence gets a true partitive reading.

¹⁶The past participle agreement here is not specific to this construction, but occurs whenever a direct object is placed in a position preceding the verb.

ble many kinds of PPs headed by *de/di*. The use of the clitic is therefore explained straightforwardly, unlike the rather enigmatic appearance of the preposition.

Third, as Cardinaletti and Giusti (1992) remark, the preposition *di* is optional in Italian sentences such as those in (19-b) and (20), and this is also the case for Catalan and Sardinian. Importantly, the two authors argue that the sentence initial nominal constituents, when they lack the preposition (and only then), are hanging topics. The other way around, this would amount to saying that – unlike for the Spanish examples in (15) and (16) – we cannot explain away the cases in (17-b), (19), (20-a) and (20-b) by considering them as hanging-topic constructions. By contrast, the French structure in (17-a) is compatible with a hanging-topic analysis, given that bare nouns are ungrammatical in French and must therefore be preceded by the partitive article. Finally, it also seems doubtful that the initial nominal constituents are free topics, because *de* is not a marker for free topics in the languages under discussion (which use expressions such as Fr. *quant à*, It. *in quanto à* (lit. ‘(in) how much to’)).

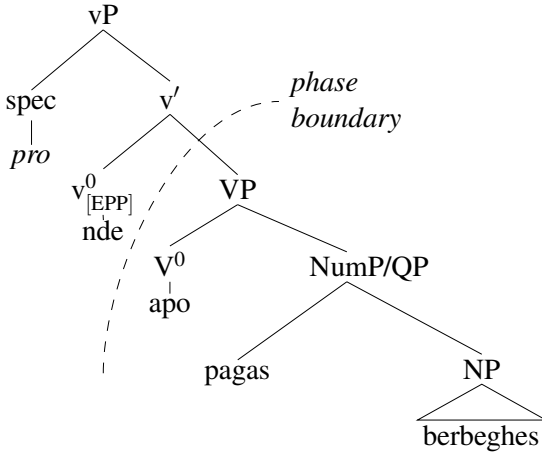
In Mensching (2020), I adopted a minimalist movement analysis, the basic idea of which is sketched in (22-a) and (22-b), for the Sardinian sentence in (21) (from Mensching 2020:826).

- (21) De berbeghes, nde=apo pagas.
of sheep PRTV=have-1SG few
‘Sheep, I have few.’

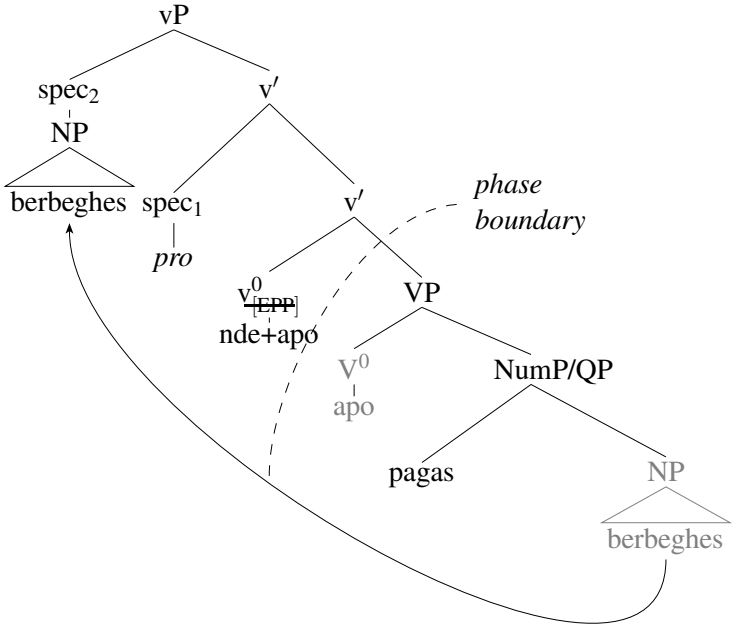
The idea is based on my analysis of CLLD in Mensching (2012), according to which the clitic introduces an [EPP]-feature into the derivation. Thanks to this feature, the constituent at issue can move to the edge of vP (more precisely, to a second, outer specifier). As the preposition *de* is not present in (22-a), I take it to be realized post-syntactically, hence it is not represented in (22-b).

(22-a) shows the underlying structure and the insertion of the clitic, which comes with an [EPP]-feature in v^0 . To overcome the phase boundary, in (22-b), the [EPP]-feature attracts the item that ultimately will move to spec,CP.

(22) a.



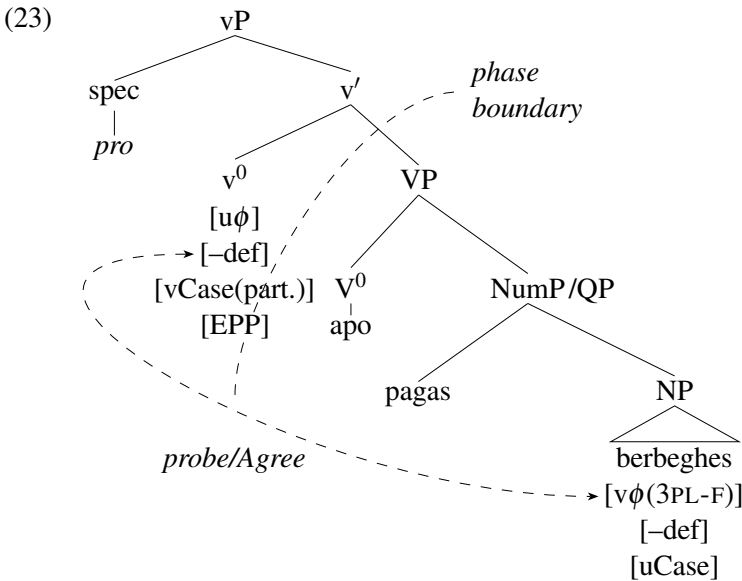
b.



Now, once we consider this structure to be a genuine split construction, F&F's data and explanations reported in §3 suggest that the element *de/di* is an adjustment phenomenon. As an explanation, several possibilities come to mind. One would be to consider *de* as a kind of dummy article, given the fact that bare nominal constituents are usually banned from the clause initial

position in the Romance languages.¹⁷ This would fall in place with F:F’s:59 observation that “certain dialects [of German] insert an indefinite determiner into the left part of the discontinuous noun phrase, a process signalling ‘re-generation’ in the terminology of van Riemsdijk (1989).”

However, in Mensching (2020), I adopted another approach, which is partially based on the fact that some occurrences of Romance *de/di* have been considered as the expression of case in the literature. For genitive case, see Mensching (2019) and the literature cited there, but for the kind of structures at issue here, Martí (1995) as well as Giusti (1991, 1992, 1993) and Cardinaletti and Giusti (1992) assume that *de/di* is an expression of partitive case (see Belletti 1988). The basic ideas of my approach are sketched in (23) (from Mensching 2020: 828):



Under this analysis, what surfaces as the partitive clitic is a feature bundle (of unvalued phi-features, plus an additional indefiniteness feature [-def]), which acts like a probe in the sense of Chomsky (2000, 2001), whose target is the NP, which values the features of the probe via Agree. In turn, the special

¹⁷That *de/di* should be able to function as an article would not be surprising, in view of the fact that, in French, the partitive article (see note 15) has *de* as an allomorph that appears when the NP contains an adjective.

probe in *v* (ϕ -features+[-def]+[EPP]) values [uCase] on the NP as partitive case. At PF, a clitic with the feature [-def] is spelled out as *nde* (in Sardinian), and the partitive case on the NP surfaces with *de*. If we consider the Romance structure under discussion as an instance of a split construction (as I actually do), this behavior falls in place in light of the adjustment processes reported in §3, which partially involve case. The fact that the mechanism in (23) is not restricted to nominal splits but is also found in cases such as (20-a) and (20-b) does not contradict the status of these structures as split constructions, as F&F's findings show that certain adjustments that occur in nominal splits are often shared with other structures. But in Italian, there is actually one property that rather seems to be specific for split constructions, illustrated in (24):

- (24) Di pere, Luigi ne=ha di belle.
 of pears-F.PL, Luigi PRTV=has of beautiful-F.PL
 'As for pears, Luigi has beautiful ones.'

(Italian, Mensching 2020: 819)

Whenever the noun is extracted from an NP that contains an adjective, the element *di* is doubled on the adjective, which reminds us of languages such as Hungarian (see ex. (9-b) in §3). This holds for French and Catalan as well. But unlike Italian, in French, the preposition (or case marker in my view) is also present in the base structure (*de belles poires*, see note 17), whereas in Catalan, *de* also appears in DPs with an indefinite article when the noun is covert (*un de molt petit* 'a very little one', see Wheeler et al. 1999: 143) – this is also an option in French.

5. Conclusions

The paper by Gisbert Fanselow and Caroline Féry that I have discussed in this article can be considered as a milestone in the description of nominal split constructions, providing a broad typological overview and important theoretical considerations. Apart from being an excellent basis for further studies on this subject (by the two authors and others, neither of which I have been able to report on here given the limited scope my small contribution), it is also a brilliant introduction to the subject of discontinuous nominal constituents, with a special focus on split constructions.

F&F's data and precise descriptions of the grammatical properties of nominal split constructions in the world's languages as well as their generalizations have proved particularly revealing for the analysis of certain Romance constructions, which I have discussed in Section 4. The structures at issue, which are – as it seems – shared by all those Romance languages that have partitive clitics – show a dislocated bare N(P) preceded by the preposition *de/di*, a stranded quantifier or adjective (in the latter case also accompanied by *de/di*) in the lower part of the sentence as well as a partitive clitic attached to the verb. In light of F&F's thorough descriptions and generalizations, the additional elements that appear in such structures (and in particular the item *de/di*) can be interpreted as adjustment phenomena, which typically appear in inverted (non-cohesive) nominal split constructions, to which I therefore argue our Romance cases should belong. Under this perspective, a whole set of languages, which F&F had to leave out or discard in this first overview based on their questionnaire and the existing literature, must actually be counted among the languages that allow split nominal constituents. Thus, the border of “split country” (see §1) shifts, within Europe, towards the west, now including also Italian, Sardinian, French, Catalan, and – as I suggest in Menschling (2020: 821–822) – Occitan and Aragonese. For the peripheral areas of the Romance languages, including Spanish and Portuguese in the west as well as Romanian in the east, the situation is less clear. Lacking partitive clitics, these languages also lack partitive dislocation structures, and we might suspect that they do not allow nominal splits in the proper sense at all. F&F's Romanian data therefore seem surprising, and it might turn out in future studies that they are, in reality, hanging topic constructions, as I also argued might be the case for the few Spanish examples that I have discussed; for Portuguese, as far as I know, a study is still lacking, but my impression is that it rather works like Spanish. To these and other future studies on the intriguing topic of discontinuous nominal constructions, Gisbert Fanselow has made a fundamental contribution.

References

- Baker, Mark (1995): *The polysynthesis parameter*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Belletti, Adriana (1988): ‘The Case of unaccusatives’, *Linguistic Inquiry* **19**, 1–34.
- Benincà, Paola (1988): L'ordine degli elementi della frase e le costruzioni marcate. In: L. Renzi, G. Salvi and A. Cardinaletti, eds., *Grande grammatica italiana di consultazione*. 3rd edn, Vol. 1, il Mulino, Bologna, pp. 115–270.

- Boškovič, Željko (2005): 'On the locality of left branch extraction and the structure of NP', *Studia Linguistica* **59**, 1–45.
- Cardinaletti, Anna and Giuliana Giusti (1992): Partitive *ne* and the QP-hypothesis: A case study. In: E. Fava, ed., *Proceedings of the XVII meeting of Generative Grammar*. Rosenberg & Sellier, Turin, pp. 121–141.
- Cardinaletti, Anna and Giuliana Giusti (2006): The syntax of quantified phrases and quantitative clitics. In: M. Everaert and H. v. Riemsdijk, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Syntax*. Vol. 5, Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 23–94.
- Chomsky, Noam (2000): Minimalist inquiries: The framework. In: R. Martin, D. Michaels, J. Uriagereka and S. J. Keyser, eds., *Step by step: Essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 89–155.
- Chomsky, Noam (2001): Derivation by phrase. In: M. Kenstowicz, ed., *Ken Hale: A life in language*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 1–52.
- Fanselow, Gisbert (1988): 'Aufspaltung von NPn und das Problem der "freien" Wortstellung', *Linguistische Berichte* **114**, 91–113.
- Fanselow, Gisbert (2013): Morphological mismatches in discontinuous noun phrases. In: H. Härtl, ed., *Interfaces of Morphology*. Akademie Verlag, Berlin, pp. 11–26.
- Fanselow, Gisbert and Caroline Féry (2006): Prosodic and morphosyntactic aspects of discontinuous noun phrases: A comparative perspective. Ms., University of Potsdam. https://user.uni-frankfurt.de/~cfery/publications/Prosodic_and_morphosyntactic_aspects_of_discontinuous_NPs.pdf.
- Fanselow, Gisbert and Damir Čavar (2002): Distributed deletion. In: A. Alexiadou, ed., *Theoretical Approaches to Universals*. Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 65–07.
- Féry, Caroline, Alla Paslavska and Gisbert Fanselow (2007): 'Nominal split constructions in Ukrainian', *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* **15**(1), 3–48.
- Giusti, Giuliana (1991): 'The categorial status of quantified nominals', *Linguistische Berichte* **136**, 438–454.
- Giusti, Giuliana (1992): *La sintassi dei sintagma quantificativi*. Dissertation, Università di Venezia, Venice.
- Giusti, Giuliana (1993): *La sintassi dei determinanti*. Unipress, Padua.
- Leonetti, Manuel (2004): 'Specificity and direct object marking in Spanish', *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* **3**, 75–114.
- Martí, Núria (1995): 'De in Catalan elliptical nominals: A partitive case marker', *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* **3**, 243–265.
- Mensching, Guido (2012): Old Romance word order: A comparative minimalist analysis. In: C. Galves, S. Cyrino, R. Lopes, F. Sandalo and J. Avelar, eds., *Parameter theory and linguistic change*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 21–42.

- Mensching, Guido (2019): Extraction from DP in French: A minimalist approach. *In: L. Franco, M. M. Moreno and M. Reeve, eds., Agreement, case and locality in the nominal and verbal domains*. Language Science Press, Berlin, pp. 249–277.
- Mensching, Guido (2020): ‘On “partitive dislocation” in Sardinian: A Romance and Minimalist perspective’, *Linguistics* **58**, 805–835.
- van Riemsdijk, Henk (1989): Movement and Regeneration. *In: P. Benincà, ed., Dialectal Variation and the Theory of Grammar*. Foris, Dordrecht, pp. 105–136.
- Wheeler, Max, Alan Yates and Nicolau Dols (1999): *Catalan: A comprehensive grammar*. Routledge, New York/London.

