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*Spelling out a covert D: 'slim' DPs and  
article-drop in Fodom locative PPs*

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*A Chiara e alla Gentile Luce - impareremo a leggerla in tedesco*

## Introduction

This thesis studies article-drop in locative PPs in the Ladin (Rhaeto-Romance) variety of Livinallongo/Fodom. The aim is to provide a systematic evaluation of the phenomenon based on original data, and to give a morphosyntactic analysis of its distribution. To the best of my knowledge, Fodom article-drop has never been noticed before in either the descriptive or the formal literature. Its interest comes from the fact that the absence of an overt determiner cooccurs with interpretive properties that arguably indicate an active D-layer in the structure of the bare nominal complement of the adposition. An example is given in (1):

- (1) a. l rucksäck l é davò porta  
the backpack =3Msg be.PRES.3 behind door  
“The backpack is behind the door”  
b. l rucksäck l é davò porta de mia ciauna  
the backpack =3Msg be.PRES.3 behind door of my room  
“The backpack is behind the door of my bedroom”

In a nutshell, Fodom bare nouns in locative PPs like those above can be shown to be possibly interpreted as definite and specific, or instead as generic. In light of Longobardi’s (2005, 2008) identification of D as the structural site for determining the denotation of a nominal expression in Romance, such interpretive options are taken to motivate the active presence of D. This opens the issue of what is responsible for the lack of a determiner.

The solution proposed here is to take the noun itself to be the licensing element. The specific implementation of this idea builds on assumptions on the structure of Romance DPs and on the relation between the noun and its modifiers that are widely shared since their formulation in Cinque (1996, 2005,2010), as well as on a general notion of phrasal Spell-out as introduced in the nanosyntactic literature (cf. Starke (2009), Caha (2009), Pantcheva (2011), Baunaz et al. (2018)). The core of the proposal is to take Fodom bare nouns to spell out features of the D-level as well. This immediately accounts for the lack of a determiner in cases like (1). Moreover, unlike other potential analyses in terms of null article forms or N/NP movement to D, this approach correctly captures the distribution of the phenomenon.

Essentially, article-drop as in (1) is restricted in Fodom to singular, non-modified nouns, with the only exception of PP-arguments of the noun. Building on the standard idea that nominal modifiers require functional structure in order to enter a nominal projection, this incompatibility is interpreted as a reflex of the fact that such additional active nodes prevent the noun from spelling out the relevant D-features as well. With PP-arguments, functional structure is not needed, which accounts for their possible cooccurrence with article-drop, as in (1b). With presence vs. absence of additional active portions of structure being the fundamental divide, the distribution of article-drop can be summarized as always involving ‘slim DPs’, i.e. DPs with no active functional projections in their ‘functional field’ (cf. Alexiadou, Haegeman, and Stavrou (2008), Poletto (2014), Laenzlinger (2015), etc.).

Since article-drop is directly connected to morphosyntactic properties of the nouns entering the construction. In keeping with general assumptions in the nanosyntactic literature, these properties are taken to be encoded in the lexical entry of the nouns in the form of a L(exical)-tree. Thus, whether a certain noun can spell out the relevant D-features, and under what conditions, is directly written in its L-tree. This analysis naturally captures the fact that article-drop in Fodom PPs is attested with any kind of adposition, but only with a specific set of nouns: this is immediately accounted for by



taking only such nouns to bear the required properties in their associated L-tree, which is a naturally expected possibility.

While the analysis proposed here exclusively focusses on Fodom article-drop, the system it exploits (and specifically the notion of ‘slim DP’ combined with phrasal Spell-out) may find application in other phenomena of the nominal domain as well. The general prediction would be that the ‘slimmer’ a DP is, the likelier it is to observe interactions between its head noun and high structural layers, including the DP and beyond (a possibility being e.g. P-drop with specific nouns in Greek, as described by Gehrke and Lekakou (2013)).

The thesis is organized as follows. Chapter 1 provides background information on the Fodom variety, as well as on how the data were collected. Chapter 2 discusses fundamental topics in the literature on the two categories more directly involved in the phenomenon, namely PP and DP, and introduces the fundamental research questions of this thesis against such background. Chapter 3 systematically exemplifies Fodom article-drop, introduces the fundamental idea behind the approach and its general motivations, discusses the general assumptions on which the analysis is built, and details the account, as well as some of the issues it leaves open. Before concluding, the short Appendix in 4 briefly discusses an interesting subregularity observed in the context of Fodom article-drop, and the theoretical challenges it poses.

## Chapter 1

### The empirical basis

#### 1.1. Introduction

This chapter aims at providing background information to serve as reference for the discussion in chapters 3 and 4, where the core data are presented and analyzed. First, Fodom will be situated in the more general landscape of Ladin varieties (1.2.). Section 1.3 then puts locative adpositions under the spotlight and provides a quick overview of the most interesting distributional patterns observed in this domain. The two phenomena that form the empirical core of the thesis, namely article-drop in PPs and P-drop, are exemplified in 1.4. The last section presents practical aspects of the research and gives general information on the questionnaires used for collecting data, as well as on the informants.

#### 1.2. Fodom in the context of Ladin varieties

Traditionally, the study of Ladin varieties has been tightly connected – at least until the last few decades – to the century-long debate around the so-called “Ladin question”, namely the question of whether or not Romansh, Ladin, and Friulan dialects can be said to form an autonomous sub-family in the Romance domain. As is well known, the issue was put forth in this form by G. I. Ascoli’s ground-breaking *Saggi Ladini* (Ascoli 1873), where it was argued that despite the presence of many transitional areas,

showing mixed behavior (cf. e.g. Pellegrini 1987), a linguistic unity had to be identified encompassing the three said subgroups. The thesis was mostly based on a number of shared phonological properties, such as the palatalization of velar stops in front of inherited A, or the preservation of obstruent + L sequences. Ascoli used “Ladin” as a cover term referring to such unity. A few years later, Theodor Gartner (Gartner 1883) came to even more radical conclusions, positing an ethnic substance to the linguistic grouping of Romansh, Ladin and Friulan, and introducing the now wide-spread term “Rhaeto-Romance”. Setting aside an historical account of the debate, suffice it to say that the theory of Rhaeto-Romance unity and independence has been subject to criticism since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, mostly based on the fact that features shared among the three groups are also attested in independent Romance varieties. An example is the preservation of obstruent + L sequences, which is common to Gallo-Romance and is attested in the diachronic development of northern Italian dialects. An alternative view has thus emerged, taking the surface resemblance of the alleged Rhaeto-Romance group to be a case of superficial convergence of conservative and innovative traits in the autonomous development of Romansh, Ladin, and Friulan, whose evolution has taken place in partially analogous conditions (viz. the century-long contact with German-speaking communities, which in varying degrees is common to many of these varieties; a synthesis of the different stages of the “Ladin question” is found in Benincà & Haiman (1992); Pellegrini (1982) and (1987) are two examples of relatively recent expositions of the latter view). Leaving aside the details on this issue, what is relevant for present purposes is that Fodom makes no exception among all Ladin varieties with respect to the predominant historical, phonological, and lexical interest with which it has been studied. A morphological study is Marcato (1987), while a more general grammatical description is found in Pellegrini (1974). To the best of my knowledge, the only formal studies specifically dealing with this variety are Benincà (1999) and Calabrese (2003), both of which focus on the verbal inflectional system that will be quickly exemplified below. In the remainder of this section, a quick overview will be given of some characteristic phenomena of Fodom, before closing in on its

locative adpositional system. Before that, however, some general information on its collocation among Ladin varieties will be provided as a background.

Fodom is spoken in the municipality of Livinallongo del Col di Lana, whose territory comprises the homonymous valley, stretching south-east from the Sella Massif. As a reflex of its complex socio-political and cultural history, the valley – and the local linguistic variety – have distinct names in Italian, German and Ladin. The Italian forms are *Livinallongo* and *Livinallese*, respectively, the German ones *Buchenstein* and *Buchensteinisch*, whereas in Ladin both are referred to as *Fodom*. The latter is the name that has been adopted for this thesis, as it reflects the usage of the local speaking community.

Apart from Fodom, Ladin varieties (sometimes also called Central/Dolomitic Ladin) are traditionally taken to include Gherdëina (Val Gardena), Fascian (Val di Fassa), Badiòt (Val Badia), Marèò (Val Marebbe), and Ampezzano (Ampezzo), although the latter is sometimes left apart based on its partially autonomous features and depending on whether the classification is strictly linguistic or is also guided by historical and cultural considerations (cf. Benincà & Haiman 1992, Salvi 1997, Casalicchio 2020a). For the same reason, other varieties that are more peripheral to this area, such as Nonese (spoken in Val di Non) or the dialects of Val Pettorina and Alto Agordino, may or may not be counted in as “Ladin” as well.

Fodom borders with Val di Fassa on the west, with Val Badia on the north, and with Ampezzo on the east, while the valley is open on the south end along the river Cordevole, towards the Agordino region. Thus, while on three sides Fodom is in direct geographical continuity with Fascian, Badiòt, and Ampezzano, on the south it is in contact with dialects that can be generally thought of as transitional varieties showing mixed features of both Ladin and northern Veneto dialects (cf. Casalicchio 2020a).

Along with this greater exposition to southern varieties, Fodom also differs from other Ladin dialects spoken around the Sella massif in that its territory lies in the province of Belluno, in the Veneto administrative region, whereas Fascian and Badiòt,

Marèò, and Gherdëina are part of the provinces of Trento and Bolzano, respectively. This has meant the latter's recognition as minority languages since right after World War II, while Fodom has not enjoyed any comparable status (cf. Benincà & Haiman 1992, Salvi 1997). Another difference distinguishing Fodom from the other major Ladin varieties lies in the size of its speaking population, which is by far the smallest. In a public census run in 2011, the Fodom municipality counted 1.431 inhabitants, against an approximate of 10.000 inhabitants for Val Badia and Marebbe, Val Gardena and Val di Fassa, respectively (data reported in (Casalicchio 2020b). On the other hand, a sociolinguistic survey conducted by Iannàccaro & Dell'Aquila (2005) reported that 95,9% of the population declared themselves active speakers, while 99,3% of the population claimed to have passive competence of Fodom. For a comparison, the correspondent values are 82,3% and 97,4% for Val di Fassa, and 93,4% and 97,6% for Val Gardena. Thus, all in all the total population of active speakers of Fodom is of a bit more than 1.000 units, which is approximately one eighth and one tenth of communities speaking Fascian and Gherdëina, respectively.

Moving on from these general notes, let us roughly sketch out how Fodom can be descriptively located in the linguistic classification of Ladin varieties. As illustrated in Casalicchio (2020a), the varying distribution of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical properties grants the individuation of three main divides among the five varieties listed above, which in some cases (as e.g. for Badiòt, Marèò and Fascian) also show partial but consistent internal differentiation. The first divide geographically corresponds to a vertical line, roughly grouping Gherdëina and Fascian as "Western Ladin" as opposed to "Eastern Ladin", including Badiòt, Marèò, with Fodom patterning ambiguously with one group or the other. The second divide cuts the Ladin linguistic area along an east-west axis, thus separating "Northern varieties" like Gherdëina, Badiòt and Marèò, from "Southern varieties", which include Fascian, Fodom, and Ampezzano. The third distinction groups Gherdëina and dialects of Badiòt and Fascian as the most conservative ones, with closely neighboring varieties alternatively showing

conservative or innovative traits, and other, furthest varieties more consistently showing distinctive properties.

Now, while these distinctions merely have descriptive value, they help bring to the fore some observations that are relevant for the present general overview of Fodom. First, any such grouping cuts across the other two, so that every variety mentioned above alternatively patterns with some of its neighbors or others, depending on what specific phenomenon is considered. Second, as a consequence, geographical proximity in the Ladin area is not a reliable predictor of the distribution of a given linguistic feature, since, as observed, any two neighboring varieties show similar or distinct behavior with respect to different phenomena. The presence of this articulated overlapping of different groupings and distinctions among Ladin varieties is rather to be traced back to the complex interaction of a number of extra-linguistic factors (cf. Casalicchio 2020a). These include the chronology and the extension of the movements of people that led to the population of the now Ladin-speaking area of the Dolomites, the location of political and administrative borders that divided the Ladin valleys during the course of their history (and in some cases still do, cf. *infra*), and the different exposition to cultural influences from non-Ladin areas, where either German dialects or other Romance varieties (like Veneto) are spoken. Third, the overall picture is one of relative independence of all the Ladin varieties listed above, so that there exists no widespread Ladin *koine*, and every Ladin valley is characterized to some degree by partially distinctive features. Therefore, it is quite unsurprising to find linguistic features and phenomena in a single variety that are utterly absent from all others. As far as the subject matter of this thesis is concerned, this seems to be precisely the case for the distribution of the complex preposition *sun* in Fodom, which can be shown to be in complementary distribution with definite articles (cf. section 1.4 and the Appendix in 4). That is, while other Ladin varieties have counterparts of *sun*, Fodom appears to be the only one where such idiosyncratic behavior is observed.

Although it is far off the scope of the present chapter to give a satisfactory description of Fodom (let alone of Ladin varieties in general), it will be useful for present purposes to add some linguistic substance to these general observations. Again, what follows is merely intended as a piecemeal exemplification of phenomena that are either shared with other Ladin varieties or are distinctive of Fodom alone. This should reasonably suffice to provide some general context as a reference for the more thorough exemplification in chapters 3 and 4.

Starting from shared phonological phenomena, Fodom patterns with “southern varieties” (cf. above) in preserving *cl* and *gl* sequences. As a matter of fact, the lack of reduction of the sonorant in inherited \*CL and \*GL is among the traits that ever since Ascoli (1873) have been held to lend support to the idea of the relative independence of Ladin (and Rhaeto-Romance more in general) from the system of northern Italian dialects (cf. *infra*). In the Ladin area proper, these sequences have been subject to evolution, yielding *tl* and *dl*, respectively, in “northern varieties” like Gherdëina and Badiòt. Thus, one gets contrasts like in (1)<sup>1</sup>:

- (1) Latin CLAVE(M) > Fodom *clé* vs. Gherdëina and Badiòt *tlè*, “key”

Another conservative feature opposing Fodom and other southern varieties to Gherdëina and Badiòt is the retention of unstressed vowels, which are either reduced or neutralized in the latter, as shown in (2):

- (2) Latin FEMINA(M) > Fodom *fëmina*, Fascian *fëmena* vs. Gherdëina *fëna*, “wife”

A third phonological phenomenon is the evolution of long stressed *a*. This time Fodom patterns with other “central” Ladin varieties in having fronting of the vowel, whereas *a* is preserved in other, more “peripheral” varieties like Ampezzano. Cf. (3):

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all following examples are taken from Casalicchio (2020).

- (3) Latin CASA(M) > Fodom *cèsa*, Gherdëina *cěsa* vs. Ampezzano *ciàsa*, “house” (BLad)<sup>2</sup>

Moving on to the morphology, while Gherdëina, Marèò, Badiot, etc. preserve the -s ending of the 2sg. verbal agreement suffix, Fodom has almost completely lost it, apart from 2sg. forms of the present indicative of “be” and “have”, and of the simple future of all verbs (which is historically analytically built with the combination of the Infinitive + present indicative of “have”, as usual in Romance):

- (4) Latin VENIES > Fodom *vegne* vs. Gherdëina *věnies*, Marèò *vénies*, “you come”

A distinctive morphological phenomenon of Fodom is the formation of 1sg. and 2sg. full subject pronouns from the latin forms etymologically corresponding to the oblique forms, as is the case in Veneto dialects, and unlike other Ladin varieties (including the more “peripheral” Ampezzano), which preserve the original nominative forms:

- (5) Fodom *mi*, *ti* < Latin MIHI, TIBI vs. e.g. Gherdëina *ie*, *tu* < Latin E(G)O, TU

As regards Tense and Mood morphology, Fodom shows a peculiar distribution of the three markers of Imperfect Indicative (-*va/-ve*), Present Subjunctive (-*be*) and Imperfect Subjunctive (-*se*, which is also used as an Irrealis marker; cf. Salvi (1997), Benincà (1999), and Calabrese (2003)). As shown in Table 1.1 for Pres. Sbjv. (but effectively the same happens for the other two categories mentioned), the marker attaches to an already inflected form of the verb. This yields a strongly unusual ordering of inflectional affixes, whereby the Person markers precedes Tense/Mood ones. This is only attested for 1pl. and 2pl. for lexical verbs (here exemplified by *cianté*,

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<sup>2</sup> The Banca Lessicala Ladina (BLad) is an open access digital database that allows research into a corpus made up of the digital version of multilingual dictionaries of the major Ladin varieties. For the sake of readability, it will be referred to simply as BLad in the text, whenever specific examples are extracted from there.





from.the.FSG 9 of morning be.3.FUT=3Fsg. the.FSG mass  
 “From nine o’clock in the morning there will be the Mass”  
 b. Dadomán la Mëssa l é da le 9:00 (Fodom)  
 from.morning the.FSG mass =3Fsg. be.3 from the.FPL 9  
 “In the morning the Mass begins at nine o’clock”

Another respect in which “southern varieties” like Fodom and Fascian behave differently from their northern neighbors (and more like other Italo-romance varieties like Veneto dialects) is the syntax of subject clitics. That is, while the former have obligatory clitic doubling with the 2sg. clitic and optional doubling with 3sg./pl. forms, no doubling is possible in the latter in affirmative contexts (cf. Benincà & Haiman (1992), Casalicchio (2020a,b)). This difference in the behavior of subject clitics is also reflected in coordinative structures, where clitics are realized in both conjuncts in Fodom and Fascian, while that is not possible in northern varieties. This is exemplified in (7) for Fodom and Gherdëina:

- (7) a. L va y vën tresora (Gherdëina, ASIt 2.55)  
 =3MSG go.3 and come.3sg. always  
 b. el va e l ven de continuo (Fodom, ASIt 2.55)  
 =3MSG go.3 and =3MSG come.3 of continuous  
 “He keeps on coming and going”

The last syntactic phenomenon to be presented here is distinctive of Fodom among all Ladin varieties and concerns the syntax of possessives. Generally adnominal possessives function as determiners in Ladin and are thus incompatible with definite articles. In Fodom, instead, determiner-use of the possessive is optional, and its cooccurrence with overt definite articles is possible (according to Manzini & Savoia (2005), this optionality is only present when the head noun is plural or modified;

however, Salvi (1997) and Casalicchio (2020) do not mention this split, and the speakers interviewed for this thesis seem to accept both options). This is exemplified in (8)<sup>3</sup>:

- (8) a. è            desmentié    (la)        mia        pëna a cesa  
         have.1sg. forgotten.MSG (the.FSG) my.FSG pen at home  
         “I forgot my pen at home”
- b. capisce            (i)            tuoi        cruzi  
         understand.1sg. (the.MPL) your.MPL worries  
         “I understand your worries

After this general overview, the next section will focus on locative adverbs and PPs, some of which will be extensively discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

### 1.3. Spatial relations and the system of locative adpositions in Fodom

Having provided some background information on Fodom and some of its main features among Ladin varieties, we will now begin to focus more closely on the specific domain of morphosyntax which is the general topic of this thesis, namely the encoding of spatial relations. As seems common for Alpine varieties (cf. Prandi (2015), Irsara (2015), and *infra*), Fodom possesses a quite rich system of locative expressions and combines them productively, yielding various syntactic constructions. The aim of this section is to provide an overview on this area of Fodom syntax. This will help introduce and situate the phenomenon that will be extensively discussed and analyzed in

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<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Fodom examples are drawn from original data collected for this thesis.

chapters 3 and 4, namely the interaction between locative adpositions and determiners.

Starting from adverbial expressions, Fodom has a rich variety of locative adverbs (cf. the list given in Pellegrini (1974), 71 ff.). Such richness is witnessed, for example, by the presence of an articulated paradigm for deictic adverbs. Thus, apart from *ilò* “here” and *chilò* “there”, Fodom also shows an opposition between *ca* and *via*, which denote movement towards/away from the speaker’s location, respectively (an analogous situation is found in Badiòt Ladin, which has *chiò* vs. *dailò*, and *ca*; for other resemblances with Badiòt locatives cf. Irsara (2015) and *infra*).

Fodom locative adverbs can be combined into complex locative expressions, incorporating additional spatial meaning that refers to the orientation of movement or the location of relevant elements. Such information can sometimes add reference to the ‘mode of direction’ (in Cinque’s (2010) terms), as in (9a), or, loosely, to a generic portion of the space, as in (9b):

- (9) a. *vie ca dërt*  
 come.IMP.2sg **here straight**  
 “Come straight in this/my direction” (≠ “Come straight here”)
- b. *l é sunsom el còl e pò scomencia a jì ju pèrt*  
 (TALL)  
 =3Msg be.3 on.top the.Msg hill and then start.3sg to go **down part**  
 “It is on top of the hill and then start to go downwards”

More often, additional locative meaning is encoded by structuring space along several dimensions through a set of oppositions. These are either construed with reference to a vertical axis (*su* “up” vs. *ju* “down”), to the position of the speaker (*ca* “towards the speaker” vs. *via* “away from the speaker”), or the location and structure of some

relevant object or space (*ite* “in/inside” vs. *fòra* “out/outside”). Some examples are given in (10) and (11) below:

(10) La strada che ven **bas ca** la pòrta prò cèsa de Genio  
(TALL)

the.Fsg road that come.3 **low here** =3Fsg bring.3sg near home of Genio

“The road that runs below here brings to Genio’s house”

(11) a. l é resté **sot ite**

=3Msg be.3 remain.PTCP **below inside**

“It/He was stuck underneath”

b. sei passéi **soura via** co la macchina

be.2pl pass.PTCP.PL. **over away** with the.Fsg car

“You ran over it with the car”

Even from a bird’s eye view, there seems to be a great deal of heterogeneity among Fodom locative adverbs (both simple and complex) as regards their underlying syntactic structure and their lexical status. For one thing, not all *a priori* imaginable combinations are acceptable. This can be shown by taking the deictic element *ca* as a specimen. Judging from examples (9a) and (10), we would expect *ca* to be possible both as the first and the second element of a combination. However, native speakers reject combinations obtained by simply swapping, for example, the two elements in (10), as shown below:

(12) *bas ca* vs. \**ca bas*

low here \*here low

Another example can be given with different elements. (13a) below shows that *su* “up” can occur as the first element in a combination. Since *ite* “inside” is the second

element in (11a), one could expect the combination of the two to be possible, but this is contradicted by speakers' judgments, reported in (13b):

- (13) a. l é tomé da **su aut** (TALL)  
=3Msg be.3 fall.PTCP from **up high**  
"He has fallen from a great height"  
b. sot ite (cf. (11a)) vs. \*su ite

Thus, there appear to be some subregularities at play. In this thesis, I will not undertake the task of giving a full list of them, and pinpointing their ultimately structural causes. Still, two general observations can be made at this point that are relevant for later discussion.

First, the productivity of Fodom complex locatives, together with its restrictions, might be accounted for naturally by reference to an articulated syntactic structure as proposed in cartographic literature on spatial PPs (cf. e.g. Cinque 2010 and ch. 2). At the present stage, the point will be made without any qualification in terms of widely used concepts in this branch of syntactic literature, which will be taken up again more thoroughly in chapter 2. Without dwelling on the details, one could explain part of the attested combinations as the product of a derivation analogous to those proposed for German postpositional and circumpositional PPs by van Riemsdijk (1990) and for their Dutch counterparts by Koopman (2000). That is, elements merged in the higher, functional portions of an articulated structure end up last in word order as a product of the derivation. Essentially, it can be argued that in Fodom it is always the case that the prepositional element is that more directly combining with the nominal object, and that additional material, either in circumpositional or in complex prepositional PPs is merged higher in the structure. That is, we could have a more or less uniform basic structure, with additional movement options accounting for linear order in circumpositional PPs.

A second general observation seems well grounded. That is, differences in the combinatorial possibilities and restrictions of the locative elements involved in the expressions at hand, while syntactic in nature, are ultimately to be traced back to their different lexical status, which can be shown to correlate with distributional differences outside locative adverbials.

The likelihood of one such analysis for Fodom locatives seems high at least for expressions involving *ite/fòra/su/ju/ca/via* as their second element<sup>4</sup>. This claim can be justified based on a contrast between examples in (9-10) and in (11). As shown below, the expressions in (11a,b) (repeated for convenience as (14a) and (15a), respectively) can also occur as circumpositional PPs, taking a nominal complement, as in the b sentences in (14) and (15). This possibility is instead excluded for other complex locative adverbials like *ca dërt* and *bas ca*.

- (14) a. l      é      resté      **sot ite**  
           =3Msg be.3 remain.PTCP **below inside**  
           “It/He was stuck underneath”
- b. l      cën l      dormiva      **sot taula ite**  
           the.Msg dog =3Msg sleep.PST.3 **under table inside**  
           “The dog slept under the table”
- (15) a. sei      passéi      **soura via**      co      la      macchina  
           be.2pl pass.PTCP.PL. **over away** with the.Fsg car  
           “You ran over it with the car”

---

<sup>4</sup> An ambiguity inherent in *via* needs to be acknowledged. That is, apart from its use as a deictic element in opposition to *ca*, *via* can also occur as an independent element with an unrelated locative meaning, which can be roughly characterized as denoting locations or movements involving delimited stretches of space, as for English *across*. The latter use is exemplified in (15b) below, where the kids are said to be sleeping *over* a bed, that is, occupying its superficial extension, and not, strictly speaking, *in* bed, which would be expressed with *nte let* (lit. “in bed”). In (15a) an extension of the same meaning could be at play, if one interprets *soura via* as referring to the movement of the car over a certain object for its full extension, thus giving a telic flavor to the sentence.







#### 1.4. The core phenomena: article-drop and P-drop in locative PPs

After introducing some of the main features of Fodom’s system of locative expressions in 1.3, in this section the two phenomena to be investigated in this thesis will be presented. At this point, the exemplification is thought of as merely indicative. The following examples are only included here for completeness and to ease the collocation of the relevant cases in the more general context depicted above. Both phenomena will be much more extensively presented and discussed in chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

Starting from the contexts that are central for the analysis developed in this work, Fodom locative PPs admit productive article drop in their nominal objects. As anticipated in the Introduction, what makes these examples interesting is the fact that the article-less nouns are interpreted as definite, either with a generic or with a strongly referential reading, something which is unexpected under standard assumptions about the Romance DP (cf. e.g. and the discussion in ch.2 and 3). Moreover, the distribution of the phenomenon is subject to purely syntactic constraints, which makes it a promising case-study for the theory of the structural relations between adpositions and their complements, as well as of the highest layers of the nominal domain. While these issues will be taken up extensively in ch.3, at this stage the following examples are meant to show that article drop can be observed in all kinds of PPs attested in Fodom, namely simple PPs (20), circumpositional PPs (21), and complex prepositional PPs (21):

- (20) L      é    tropa      jent    **davánt gliejia**  
      =3Msg be.3 much.3Fsg people before church  
      “There is a lot of people in front of the church”

(21) sen            sté            **davò taula ite**            a trè            a le            chèrte

(TALL)

=REFL.3sg stay.PTCP **behind table inside** at throw.INF at the.Fpl card.pl

“To be seated at the table playing cards”

(22) và            a tò            n puo' de vin    **ju**    **n** ciaunademur

go.IMP.2sg to get.INF a bit    of wine **down in** cellar

“Go get some wine down in the cellar”

The second context to be studied can be construed as a peculiar instance of this general phenomenon of article drop in Fodom PPs. Recall that complex prepositions like those exemplified in (16) and (22) above are obtained by combining elements like *fòra/su/ju/ca/via* with *n* “in”. Now, this construction not only allows article drop as is common for all PPs, it is also sheerly incompatible with the overt realization of the definite article (cf. Pellegrini (1974)). More precisely, it appears that *n* is in complementary distribution with definite articles. However, given that among the items it combines with only *su* “on/up” can occur as a simple P on its own, it is only in contexts with *sun* (*su n*) that the full range of *n*'s distribution can be appreciated. In other words, manipulating sentences with *sun* one can observe the other side of the complementary distribution, namely P-drop affecting *n* in the presence of overt definite articles. Skipping other details, this is shown in (23):

(23) a. l    é    **su n (\*l)**            tèt

=3sg. be.3 **on+in (\*the.Msg)** roof

“He/It is on the roof”

b. i    é    **su(+\*n) i**            tèc

=3pl. be.3 **on(+\*n) the.Mpl** rooves.pl

“They are on the rooves”

The fundamental aim of this thesis is to properly determine the distribution of article-drop and to provide a morphosyntactic account of the phenomenon. The fundamental concerns regard the productivity of the phenomenon, its interpretive correlates, and its interaction with structural properties of the overall construction in which it occurs. The exceptional case of *sun* will instead be dealt with separately, and argued to pose interesting problems, which will however be left as open issues.

## 1.5. Outline of the research

This section concludes the overview on the empirical basis of this thesis by providing general information about practical aspects of the research, including the collection of data, the criteria informing the structure of the survey, and the choice of informants.

From a general point of view, the research was carried on following the method adopted for the construction of the ASIt (Atlante Sintattico d'Italia) database, an atlas of syntactic micro-variation in the Italo-romance domain jointly hosted by the university of Padua and the university of Venice. Thus, dialectal data were collected through a total of three written questionnaires submitted to native speakers of Fodom, who either translated simple Italian sentences in Fodom or gave acceptability judgements on Fodom expressions.

At the beginning of the research, an exploratory survey was conducted which was meant to verify information provided by Pellegrini's (1974) grammatical description, as well as to unearth further sub-regularities in the general areas of Fodom locative adverbs and PPs, phrasal verbs (where most locative items occur as particles), and definite determiners. This first questionnaire included 96 items eliciting phrasal verbs, 38 items investigating the distribution of definite determiners, and 58 fillers. All items



- b. Francesca ha letto il suo ultimo libro (Poss.: singular modified)  
 Francesca have.3sg read the his/her last book  
 “Francesca read his/her last book”
- c. i tuoi scarponi si sono rotti (Poss.: plural)  
 the your boot.pl =3.REFL be.3pl broken  
 “Your boots have broken”
- d. abbiamo fatto colazione al bar (PP: singular non-modified)  
 have.1pl made breakfast at.the bar  
 “We had breakfast at the bar”
- e. c’è poca luce nelle camere (PP: plural)  
 =EXPL be.3sg little light in.the room.pl  
 “There’s little light in the rooms”
- f. è seduto davanti a lei /alla finestra (PP: pronoun vs. noun)  
 be.3sg seated before to her/to.the window  
 “He’s sitting in front of her/the window”

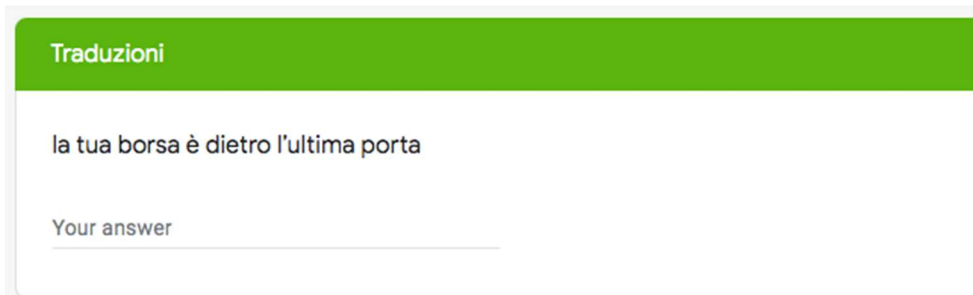
Last, fillers were selected from ASIt’s questionnaire 2 and all lacked phrasal verbs, possessives, and locative PPs, as they were originally realized to study the distribution of subject clitics. All items were presented in a randomized order to informants.

The interviews were conducted in person. Every item of the questionnaire was read by informants, who gave their translations orally. Answers were both transcribed and recorded on an audio file. At the end of the questionnaire, informants were asked to go through a quick oral appendix which was meant to get acceptability judgments on a sample of combinations of locative items as exemplified in 1.2. Speakers were also asked to provide usage examples for any combination they found acceptable. This last part clearly did not aim at a systematic evaluation of these expressions, but only at

verifying the active presence of sub-regularities and constraints on combinatorial possibilities found in Pellegrini's (1974) description.

The second questionnaire focused more specifically on the distribution of definite articles in locative PPs. Different factors constraining the distribution of the article-drop phenomenon were systematically evaluated, including the nature of the prepositions and of the nouns involved, and the different kind of nominal modifiers combining with the noun (prenominal vs. postnominal adjectives, relative clauses, possessives, numerals). A section specifically focused on the interaction between the generic P *n* "in" and different kinds of determiners, including definite articles, demonstratives, possessives, indefinite articles, and quantifiers.

The structure of the questionnaire differed somewhat from the first. Its overall length was much shorter, as it included 74 items. 36 items required the translation of Italian sentences in Fodom, as in the example below:



The image shows a screenshot of a questionnaire item. At the top, there is a green header with the word "Traduzioni" in white. Below the header, the Italian sentence "la tua borsa è dietro l'ultima porta" is displayed. Underneath the sentence, there is a text input field with the placeholder text "Your answer" and a horizontal line for writing.

Figure 1

The questionnaire also asked informants acceptability judgements. Specifically, speakers were presented Italian sentences together with two potential Fodom translations. For any such item, informants had the option to choose one of the two translations, both of them, or none. In the latter case, they were subsequently asked to provide an acceptable translation. This is exemplified below:

The image shows a screenshot of a questionnaire item. At the top, there is a green header with the word "Giudizi" in white. Below the header, the text "c'è poca neve sul tetto" is displayed. Underneath, there are four radio button options: "I é puocia nei sun tèt", "I é puocia nei sun l tèt", "Entrambe", and "Nessuna".

Figure 2

The same structure was used for one last small group of items, where Fodom locative expressions were presented, together with two potential Italian counterparts:

The image shows a screenshot of a questionnaire item. At the top, there is a green header with the word "Traduzioni" in white. Below the header, the text "ite n pais" is displayed. Underneath, there are four radio button options: "in un paese /dentro un paese", "nel paese /dentro il paese / in paese", "Entrambe", and "Nessuna".

Figure 3

This last part was chiefly meant to control for potential interpretative ambiguities for article-less PPs. While the procedure for the administration of the questionnaire was originally meant to be the same as for the first one, safety measures taken by the Italian government to face the Covid-19 pandemic have made it impossible to meet informants in person. Thus, an alternative procedure had to be adopted. A digital



version of the questionnaire was built, and informants completed it on their own. To ease this process, thorough instructions were included, as well as examples illustrating all given options for any item-type.

Questionnaire 3 was administered in the same way. It included some of the contexts of questionnaire 2, but with different preposition-noun combinations, in order to evaluate the productivity of article-drop in PPs. Once again, different kinds of nominal modifiers were included to appreciate their effect on the distribution of the articles. This time, however, all 37 items asked informants to judge Fodom sentences, together with a potential Italian translation. For any item, participants were given three options. They could either choose the translation provided, refuse it, or reject the Fodom sentence altogether. In the second case they were then asked to provide the Italian translation they found most suitable, whereas in the latter case they were presented the Italian version of the sentence again and asked to give its Fodom counterpart. One such item is given below:



Giudizi

L'è puocia lum nte ciaune

c'è poca luce nelle camere

Adeguata

Non adeguata

Non accettabile

Figure 4

This procedure was meant to get more precise results, as speakers could either confirm expectations or invalidate them in such a way that additional information was provided that could serve to refine the initial hypotheses.

The same two informants participated to all three questionnaires, while the last one was also completed by two other speakers. This allowed for a comparison between answers provided to the different questionnaires, and at the same time ensured minimal variation in external factors such as age, place of residence, dialect spoken at home, etc., about which information was collected prior to the submission of the questionnaires. The two speakers who took part to all three questionnaires were approximately of the same age (53 and 63). They declared to use Fodom frequently at home, with friends, and one of them also reported to use it at work. Both of them indicated Fodom as the variety spoken at home by their parents and grandparents. As said, two more informants participated to the third questionnaire. They were both younger (31 and 27), and indicated to have a parent born outside Fodom and speaking an unrelated Italo-Romance variety. For all other respects (frequency and circumstances of use of Fodom, language spoken at home) the profile of these latter speakers coincided with that of the other two. None of the speakers reported to have resided outside the Fodom valley for more than five years.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical background

#### 2.1. Introduction

This thesis deals with a phenomenon of article-drop which is only attested in PPs. The analysis presented in chapters 3 and 4 will thus refer to properties of adpositions, determiners, and the syntactic projections to which they are associated. It seems relevant, then, to provide some context to the following discussion by presenting central notions and problems in the study of PP and DP. In both cases, the literature is vast. The overview in the next sections is structured so as to discuss a selection of topics that will be involved in the discussion of the data, and obviously does not aim at a complete review of the field. Thus, some topics will be mentioned in passing, but not be subject of thorough discussion, such as the relation between Ps and case/Case, the debate on the functional vs. lexical status of Ps, or the formal characterization of the semantic import of the different determiners. As a terminological note, the complement of the adposition will occasionally be referred to as ‘Ground’, or ‘ground DP’. The term is used in Talmy (1975) and in much subsequent literature to identify the argument of a spatial adposition that serves as the reference point for the spatial relation encoded. Since the discussion will mainly focus on spatial PPs, ‘ground DP’ will be used as essentially a synonym of ‘complement DP’.

The chapter is organized as follows. Section 2.2 focusses on the literature on PP, dealing with the question of characterizing their structure and how it connects to fundamental aspects of their meaning. 2.3 is instead dedicated to the category D, starting from the motivation behind the first introduction of the DP-hypothesis (cf. Abney (1987)) and including prominent proposals about the content of D as a

grammatical category, its parametric variation, and its realization in the structure of nominal phrases. 2.4 concludes by summing up the most relevant topics and open issues identified in the chapter, and shows how they connect to the fundamental questions at the heart of the present research.

## 2.2 The structure of PP

### 2.2.1 Two sources for the articulation of PP

It is fairly standard in classic generative grammar to assume Ps as lexical heads projecting a PP and selecting their nominal complement (cf. Chomsky (1970, 1981)). As a matter of fact, this section will show how both properties have been subject to partial revision. Many works in the last decades converge in pointing to an elaborate structure for PPs, and the relation of adpositions to their complements has been argued to be more complicated than one may suspect at a first look.

An early example of an analysis positing internal articulation of PP-structures is found in Van Riemsdijk (1990). The article is meant to address general aspects of X-bar theory, such as the featural endowment of lexical categories and of their functional associates. Specifically, it argues in favor of the Categorical Identity Thesis (CIT), namely the idea that the attested combinations of functional and lexical heads (e.g. D – N) are fixed because the former are specified for the same categorial features as the latter, while the distinction between the two is left to an additional [ $\pm$ F] (=Functional) feature.

This view of the structural organization of extended syntactic phrases is applied to an analysis of German and Dutch PPs. Apart from prepositional phrases, both languages have postpositional and circumpositional structures, as exemplified for German in (1) and (2) (Van Riemsdijk's (1990) (9) and (10)), respectively:

- (26) den Berg **hinauf**  
 the.ACC mountain **up.on**  
 “Up the mountain (-Proximal)”
- (27) **auf** den Berg **herauf**  
**on** the.ACC mountain **up.on**  
 “Up the mountain (+Proximal)”

As discussed by Van Riemsdijk, although the postpositional element can sometimes be separated from the PP and combined to the verbal complex, several tests (including standard constituency diagnostics like movement under wh-fronting, topicalization or extraposition) argue in favor of the underlying structural unity of such constructions. Thus, the question emerges as to what these structure look like. Specifically, the problem is to properly characterize the relations between postpositional elements, nominal complements, and (in circumpositional PPs) prepositions.

Van Riemsdijk’s solution is to propose an articulated PP structure where a lexical P° head projects a PP that is selected by a functional p° head. In light of the closer association between the preposition and the noun with respect to case marking and dislocation (which can sometimes strand the postposition, but never the preposition), P° is identified with the prepositional element, while p° is the position where postpositional elements end up being realized. The structure proposed for a construction like (2) is therefore the following:

- (28) [<sub>PP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> auf [ den Berg ]] hinauf ]

The proposal is then refined by providing a partial analysis of the featural contribution of elements occurring in p°, which can be taken to “to express certain locational dimensions where the lexical prepositional head does not do so itself” (Van Riemsdijk (1990), p. 239). This is captured in terms of a set of features encoding Directionality ([± DIR]), Proximity ([±PROX]), and Orientation ([± OR], further articulated in the two

sub-features [ $\pm$ UP] and [ $\pm$ IN]). From the perspective of the article, this (minimal) articulation of the PP structure follows from the general theory of lexical and functional categories proposed. Moreover, it is claimed to avoid complications with respect to head directionality, as PP and pP are said to be head-initial and head-final, respectively. A postnominal position is thus obtained for postpositional elements in circumpositional (base generation) and postpositional (P-to-p movement) PPs, without having to posit mixed directionality properties.

Setting aside these matters, three general points are particularly relevant to the present discussion. First, the proposed structural articulation partially coincides with the admission of a certain degree of lexical heterogeneity of items entering such structure. Thus, the analysis appears to entail that elements like German *-hin/-her* belong to the lexical portion of the structure, as they encode [ $\pm$ PROX] features. Second, from a broadly cartographic perspective, the move of distinguishing between lexical and functional components of PP already implicitly paves the way for further articulations of the basic structure, once more complex PP constructions are taken into consideration.

Third, the line of reasoning presented above crucially stands on the ground of a very basic and general assumption, namely that P is a lexical category on a par with, say, V and N. This makes it *a priori* plausible to expect that, much like the latter, P too will turn out to head its own extended projection, and to be dominated by a hierarchy of functional projections. Indeed, part of the literature (cf. *infra* the discussion of Koopman (2000) and Den Dikken (2010)) has proposed close correspondences between verbal, nominal, and prepositional extended projections. On the other hand, while the fundamental assumption of P as a lexical category is fairly standard in the generative field, alternative views have been defended (cf. e.g. Grimshaw (2000) and Svenonius (2010)). Ps are thus taken to be rather functional in nature and top off nominal extended projections, much like complementizers do for the verbal ones. As a matter of fact, the debate on how to correctly characterise the categorial status of Ps

is far from settled. Not only have different views been defended as to what category P<sub>s</sub> belong to and to whether they are lexical or functional in nature, there is also no clear consensus even on what diagnostics should be used to decide on the matter (cf. e.g. Zwart (2005), Asbury et al. (2008), Cinque (2010)). While this issue is clearly of crucial importance for the general theory of PP, it will not be central to the discussion and the analysis of Fodom data presented in chapters 2 and 3. Therefore, it will not be subject of close scrutiny in the present chapter, although it will occasionally be touched upon again in the following sections.

Let us now continue this overview by presenting another source of structural articulation that is consistently found in the syntactic literature on PPs. That is, apart from mere distributional evidence, conceptual/semantic and morphological considerations have been used to motivate substantial enrichments of the PP structure. Without dwelling on the details, suffice it to say that significant morpho-syntactic correlates have been found to the conceptually/semantically grounded distinction between elements encoding locative and directional spatial meaning. Typically referred to is work by Ray Jackendoff (cf. e.g. Jackendoff (1983)), who proposed that two basic ontological categories are involved in the meaning of spatial PPs, namely [PLACE] and [PATH]. Moreover, Jackendoff (1983) and much later literature on the semantics of spatial P<sub>s</sub> (although with significant differences) have posited hierarchical relations between [PATH], [PLACE], and the object denoted by the nominal complement, which serves as reference for the individuation of the location denoted by the PP ([THING] in Jackendoff's (1983) terms). That is, [PLACE] is argued to be more intimately related to the noun than [PATH], which instead combines with an already complex unit formed by the other two elements. This can be readily exemplified as in (4) below (Jackendoff's (1983) (9.5a)):

(29) The mouse ran from under the table

[<sub>Path</sub> FROM ([<sub>Place</sub> UNDER ([<sub>Thing</sub> TABLE]))]

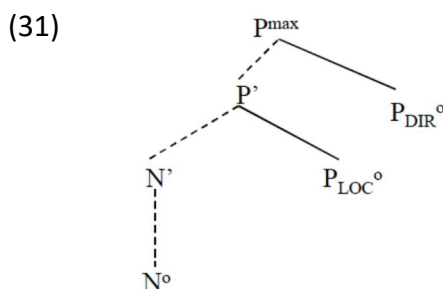
Essentially, the basic idea is that a certain static location *X* is always central to the denotation of a locative PP, the meaning of directional PPs being always construed in terms of motion to/from/via *X*, and variants thereof (cf. e.g. Zwarts (2005) and Pantcheva (2011) for elaborate implementations of the same general approach).

Different contributions have accumulated evidence in favor of a (more or less straightforward) mapping of such hierarchical relations onto the syntactic structure of PPs (cf. (Asbury et al. (2008), Cinque (2010))). Here the proposal developed in Van Riemsdijk & Huybregts (2007) (originally appeared in 2001) is presented as a representative specimen of the line of argument pursued by part of the literature.

The article builds on a general analysis of spatial case morphology in Lezgian, which has a rather rich system of spatial case affixes, as is common for Daghestanian languages. In Lezgian, case affixes encoding locative and directional meaning are combined productively and transparently, as exemplified in (5) below (Van Riemsdijk & Huybregts's (2007) (2)):

- (30) *sew – re – q<sup>h</sup> – aj*  
 bear – augm. – behind – from  
 “From behind the bear”

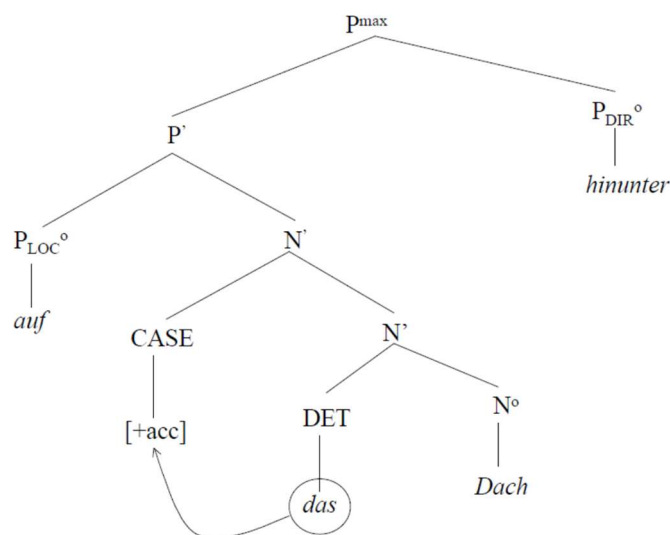
Such cases of morphological stacking are taken as morphosyntactic evidence for a structure like in (6), with  $P_{LOC}$  and  $P_{DIR}$  as notational variants for PLACE and PATH, respectively:



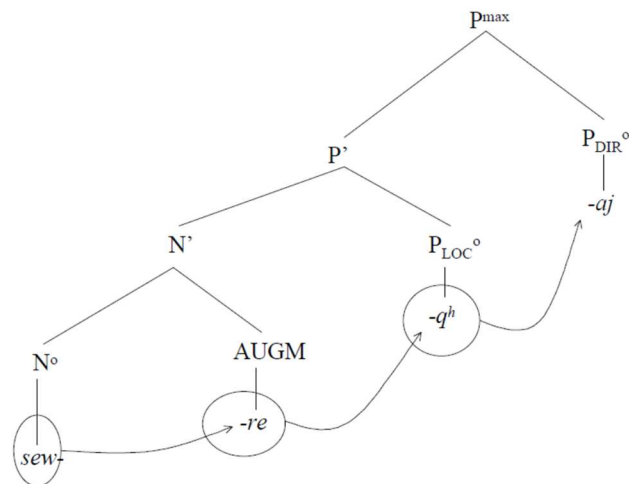


Abstracting away from the notational details specific to the article, what is relevant here is that Loc/PLACE and Dir/PATH are construed as heads sitting in the functional spine of an extended projection, where the latter selects the former as its complement. Van Riemsdijk & Huybregts (2007) go on to show that all potential relations between elements sitting in the structure, such as lexical dependencies governing idiosyncratic combinations of Ps and nouns, can only hold between heads that are adjacent in the hierarchy. That is, a structure like that in (6), together with a general notion of locality, correctly predicts what relations between the different heads involved are attested and what are not. Moreover, the same structure is claimed to account for both “analytical” constructions, where all elements of the hierarchy are realized by independent/free lexical items, and “synthetic” ones, i.e. cases where P<sub>LOC</sub> and P<sub>DIR</sub> are realized by morphemes attaching to the noun. A German circumpositional PP like *auf das Dach hinunter* “down on the roof” is an example of the former structure, while the latter is to be identified with a case like the Lezgian expression in (5). Below a structural analysis of both cases as proposed by is given ((7) and (8) = Van Riemsdijk & Huybregts’ (2007) (13) and (15), respectively):

(32)



(33)



Thus, one and the same structure is taken to underlie a continuum of locative constructions, from a radically morphological to a radically syntactic encoding of the same basic information.

### 2.2.2 Extended projection(s) of P

The previous discussion presented two distinct but parallel paths that have been taken in the literature towards an articulated PP structure, namely the individuation of functional projections and the distinction of at least two morphosyntactic components of locative PPs, corresponding to basic elements of their interpretation. In this section, two prominent proposals (Koopman (2000) and (Den Dikken (2010))) will be discussed that combine these two threads.

Koopman (2000) is a seminal study on the syntax of PPs and represents the first full-fledged proposal advanced in the literature for an elaborate PP structure. Starting from broadly cartographic assumptions, Koopman focuses on the intricate internal and external syntax of Dutch locative PPs. The behavior of different kinds of P-elements is analyzed in terms of a fine-grained structure and different movement possibilities, deriving the different distributional patterns.

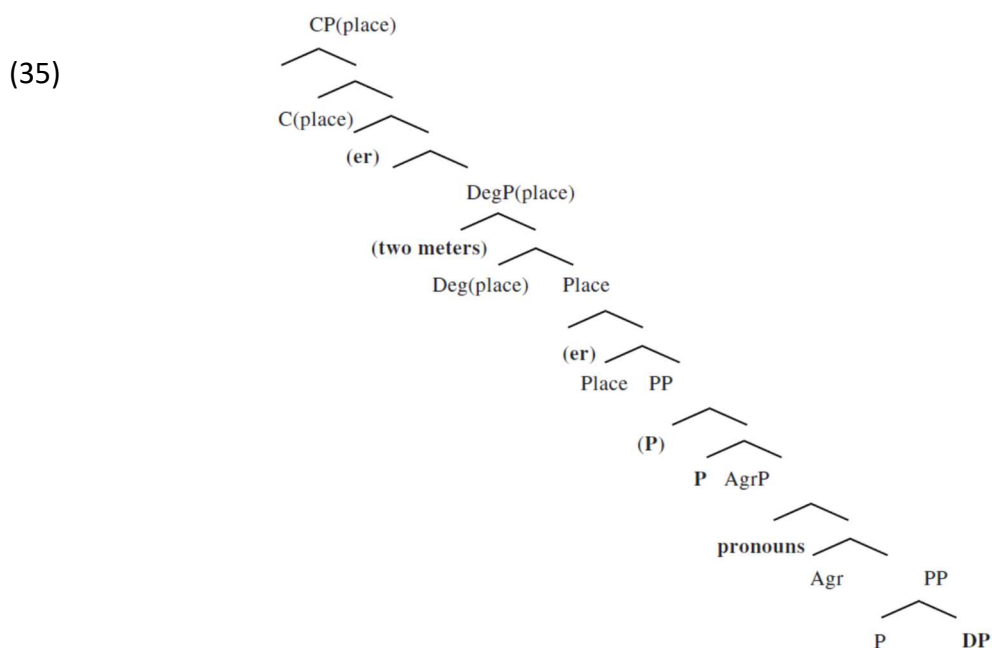
Dutch displays a wide array of word order and distributional phenomena in the PP domain, with one and the same element potentially behaving like a preposition, a postposition, the prenominal element in a circumposition, and a particle. This is exemplified below for *op* “on/up” (taken from Koopman’s (2)):

- (34) a. **op** de tafel  
“On the table”  
b. de berg **op**  
“Onto/up to the mountain”  
c. **op** iemand **af** komen  
“on someone from come”  
“Come toward someone”  
d. Ik heb jou **opgebeld**  
I have you “upcalled”  
‘I called you up’

The formal identity of *op* in the four different cases is taken by Koopman to suggest that the corresponding constructions all share minimally a basic building block, namely an a uniformly head-initial PP headed by the P element (cf. also Asbury et al. (2006) for another proposal of categorial identity between adpositions and particles). Distributional differences among the four cases are then traced back to internal syntactic operations taking place in the course of the derivation of the complex PP structure, as well as to the varying availability of functional layers dominating P. Without going into the (many) details of the argumentation, here the structures proposed by Koopman for the four different constructions will be presented, together with a discussion of how their different behavior is accounted for.

Koopman starts from the observation that all Dutch non-directional PPs are prepositional. Apart from cases where the PP is selected by a verb of motion, the only exception to this generalization is represented by the inanimate object pronouns (the

r-pronouns), which always precede the adposition. This, together with additional distributional contrasts observed with nominal and pronominal DPs and their modifiers, leads to the introduction of four separate projections in the bottom part of the structure (cf. (10) below). The lower PP is where the P element is initially merged and is selected by an AgrP whose Spec is taken to host (personal) pronominal objects and (possibly) nominal DPs. The prepositional order with pronouns and full DPs is then derived by positing head-movement of the P up to the higher P° position in the structure (the label is merely chosen by Koopman “for convenience”). R-pronouns end up preceding the P as they sit in the Spec of a functional Place projection, for whose features they are taken to be lexically specified. In absence of an r-pronouns, Place is licensed by phrasal movement of PP to Spec, Place. Another contrast is thus accounted for, as r-pronouns are able to strand the P because they are visible to further operations, whereas other pronominal and nominal objects are “frozen” within the complex XP in Spec, Place. Simplifying a bit, two more functional projections are posited, namely DegP and CP(place). The former hosts (simple and phrasal) modifiers of the PP, while the latter is taken to top-off the entire structure and make it visible to the external syntax, in an explicit parallel with clausal structure. The resulting structure is shown in (10) (Koopman’s (2.6)):



The different structures of all PP constructions other than non-directional prepositional ones differ from this in essentially two respects. One is the presence of a Path projection which gives directional interpretation, while the other is the potential lack of some or all of the functional projections dominating PP. Thus, directional prepositional PPs have almost the same structure as in (10), with the addition of an empty Path licensed by a verb of motion. In circumpositional PPs, which do not depend on the presence of a selecting verb, the postpositional element is merged in Path°, and the surface order is derived through movement of either DegP or CP(place) to Spec, Path.

Things get a bit trickier with simple postpositional PPs. Since the only overt P element ends up realized in Path°, the structure in this case has to allow for successive head-movement of P up to its final position. However, the previous discussion partially rested on the assumption that P never raises higher than Place° in a structure like (10) (actually, as seen it can only reach Spec, Place in complex XP including its object). That is, P is taken to never reach Deg°(place) or C°(place). Koopman's solution is to posit that postpositional PPs lack these two functional layers. Without intervening projections, P can thus raise through Place° and up to Path°. This simpler structure is claimed to account for the possible incorporation of P in postpositional constructions, which is connected to its final position in the highest head of the structure. However, postpositional PPs allow modifiers as well, which are taken to modify Path and be hosted in a functional Deg(place)P.

Now, such analysis leaves some open issues. It is not clear what prevents Ps to move at least up to Place° in prepositional constructions as well, since they are claimed to be able to do so in postpositional ones. Conversely, the licensing mechanism postulated for Place (PP-movement to Spec, Place) in the former appears simply unavailable in the latter. Moreover, since overt realization of phrasal Deg(path)

modifiers does not block incorporation of the postposition, it would appear that P is able to reach Deg°(path) as well, thus entailing a *prima facie* undesirable asymmetry between functional projections dominating Path and those dominating Place.

Setting these problems aside, the same general approach is extended to particles. Essentially, since they are incompatible with r-pronouns, which are taken to occupy Spec, Place in all other structures, Koopman proposes an even simpler structure for them, with PP directly dominated by Path.

Summing up, the four different PP constructions are assigned specific structures and derivations starting from one and the same fundamental hierarchy, whose projections are individuated strictly based on distributional evidence. Such differences are then exploited to account for a number of differences in both internal and external syntax.

Den Dikken (2010) (first appeared in 2006) develops Koopman's approach for his analysis of Dutch PPs. Based on additional distributional evidence from circumpositional PPs, complex pre- and post-positions, and r-pronouns (which turn out to be incompatible with inherently directional prepositions), Den Dikken argues for the introduction of additional functional projections in the structure of PPs. Specifically, closer correspondence is proposed between the locative and the directional portion of the structure, to the effect that not only Place, but also Path is dominated by a DegP and a CP projection. Another major difference lies in the fact that, while Koopman (2000) only included one lexical head (simply labelled P) at the bottom of the elaborate structure as in (10), Den Dikken takes the locative and directional portions of the structure to be part of the extended projection of two separate lexical heads, termed P<sub>Loc</sub> and P<sub>Dir</sub>, respectively. The resulting structure as its fullest is represented in (11) (Den Dikken's (58)) below:

(36) [CP(path) [DegP(path) [PathP [PdirP [CP(place) [DegP(place) [PlaceP [PlocP [DP ]]]]]]]]]]]

The proposal is then refined by further developing the structural parallel first suggested by Koopman (2000) between the extended projection of P and that of other lexical categories like N and V. Thus, functional projections in (11) are re-labelled so as to emphasize correspondences between the verbal, the nominal, and the prepositional functional spine, as shown in (12) (adapted from Den Dikken's 64):

- (37) [<sub>CP</sub> C<sup>[PATH]</sup> [<sub>DxP</sub> Dx<sup>[PATH]</sup> [<sub>AspP</sub> Asp<sup>[PATH]</sup> [<sub>PP</sub> P<sub>Dir</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> C<sup>[PLACE]</sup> [<sub>DxP</sub> Dx<sup>[PLACE]</sup> [<sub>AspP</sub> Asp<sup>[PLACE]</sup> [<sub>PP</sub> P<sub>Loc</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> DP ]]]]]]]]]]]]

Apart from the presence of C projections, DxP is substituted for Koopman's DegP and apart from hosting modifiers as adjoined XPs it is claimed to find independent justification as the dedicated projection for deictic elements, corresponding to TP and PersonP in the verbal and nominal domain, respectively. Koopman's PathP and PlaceP are kept as functional heads dominating a lexical P projection, but they are reinterpreted as encoding essentially aspectual information, as AspP does in the clausal spine, and NumP in the nominal one. Building on this proposed underlying analogy, the typology of potential complements of P<sub>Dir</sub> is restricted to simple P<sub>Loc</sub>, Dx<sup>[PLACE]</sup>P, and C<sup>[PLACE]</sup>P, much as what happens for clausal complements, which can be VPs, TPs, or full CPs. Moreover, additional restrictions are posited on the extension of the structure dominating P<sub>Dir</sub>, which can be absent altogether when all functional projections of the [PLACE] domain are absent as well, but has to be present whenever P<sub>Dir</sub>'s complements includes functional structure, as the latter is said to require licensing by the higher corresponding projections. With these assumptions in place, the syntactic intricacies of Dutch spatial PPs are treated in terms of different movement options, plus the presence or absence of functional projections dominating both P<sub>Loc</sub> and P<sub>Dir</sub>, much as is Koopman (2000).

Once again, the analysis of simple postpositional constructions ends up facing possible objections. As expected, linear order is derived via movement of the object DP selected by P<sub>Loc</sub> to the left of P<sub>Dir</sub>, which varies depending on whether functional

projections are present or not in the directional portion of the PP. The only P in the structure is said by Den Dikken to originate in  $P_{Loc}$  and to move to  $P_{Loc}$ , thus accounting for its directional interpretation. However, this move does not seem uncontroversial, as it amounts to posit movement of a lexical head into another, that is, a case of incorporation where the host is simply absent, and not just phonetically null. This connects to a more general issue with positing two separate lexical heads  $P_{Loc}$  and  $P_{Dir}$  as in the structure in (12). Essentially, this proposal seems at pains with the close dependence between the locative and the directional head. The latter seems to behave quite unlike a *bona fide* lexical head like V in that it seems forced to select for  $P_{Dir}$  or a projection thereof. For one thing, it cannot directly select for a nominal complement, and its locative counterpart is required to do so. Of course, this issue would vanish under an interpretation of the directional head as functional, as its behavior would be rather connected to that of, say, determiners or auxiliaries, which are forced to select nominal and verbal projections, respectively. Clearly, this is not an option in the contexts of Den Dikken's (2010) analysis, as it would undermine the proposed correspondence between the different extended projections, and deny the possibility of positing corresponding functional projections for the locative and the directional portions of the PP.

Up to now, we have considered analyses of PP structures that crucially build on P's status as a lexical category, dominated by a more or less rich array of functional projections. These are posited to enhance the potential structural variability and derivational power, chiefly to account for distributional data. However, there is at least another angle from which the study of the internal structure of PPs has been approached, which will be discussed in the next section.



### 2.2.3 Further articulations: AxParts and the dissolution of Place and Path

As partially demonstrated by the discussion above, PP constructions exhibit a high degree of variability in their make-up, which calls for an elaborate underlying structure in order to be accounted for. An important addition to the picture outlined above has come originally from the in-depth study of a PP construction that has not yet been discussed in this chapter, namely complex PPs. These are constructions in which locative relations are more precisely encoded than in simple PPs only involving a generic locative P such as *at* or *in*, and typically include an additional, semantically richer locative element.

Based on a crosslinguistic analysis of the striking commonalities shown by this class of locative expressions, Svenonius (2006) defines an autonomous grammatical category, AxPart. Members of this class typically refer to parts of the objects that are defined in relation to major spatial axes like the vertical or the front/back one. AxParts are much frequently of nominal origin, and sometimes may even still behave as regular nouns in different constructions, as for English *front* (cf. (13)). Although diagnostics for the AxPart use may vary across languages, they generally include pluralization, adjectival modification, pronominalization, P-stranding, and the possibility of combining with different prepositions and with measure phrases. This is partially exemplified for English below, where the left part of the examples shows nominal use of *front* and the right part its AxPart use (taken from Svenonius's (2006) (1)-(4):

- (38) a. There was a kangaroo *in the front* of the car vs. *in front* of the car  
b. There was a kangaroo *in the smashed-up front* of the car vs. \**in smashed-up front* of the car  
c. There were kangaroos *in the fronts* of the cars vs. \**in fronts* of the cars

Despite (more or less) detectable differences, there are numerous cross-linguistic indications of close resemblances of AxParts with nouns. For example, they can take nominal class affixes in Kĩtharaka, inflect for case (e.g. in Russian), combine with

nominal modifiers such as demonstratives or quantifiers (e.g. Kĩtharaka, Persian, Korean, Japanese). Another nominal feature of AxPart elements is that their relationship with the object DP is typically marked as a possessum-possessor one, which is frequently identical to the way a noun is related to its DP dependents. However, as Svenonius observes, these analogies cannot count as proofs that AxParts are simply nouns. As a matter of fact, determiners may sometimes combine with AxParts that are not nominal, and AxPart allow article omission where normal nouns would not. Similarly, the distribution of quantifiers seems to be far from free, and often subject to lexical idiosyncrasies of the specific elements involved. Some elements of the AxPart class in one language may lack gender features even when others have them, and plural morphology may trigger a somewhat specific interpretation (cf. Persian). Moreover, adjectival modification is generally impossible with AxParts, and is restricted to cases in which these elements actually display a wholly nominal status, e.g. when introduced by a determiner. Coming to the marking of the relationship between AxParts and nominal objects, the analogy with nominal possession relations is again incomplete, as there are languages where it does not hold (e.g. Korean), and different AxParts may require different marking in one specific language (e.g. Italian, cf. Garzonio and Rossi (2016), and Spanish, cf. Fábregas (2007)). Moreover, as Svenonius (2006) argues, even the superficial identity of the marking does not logically entail that the two relations should be identified. This is because there is typically a one-to-many mapping between morphological cases (or functional PPs, which could be seen as their counterparts in languages lacking case morphology) and the various grammatical relations of which they are exponents.

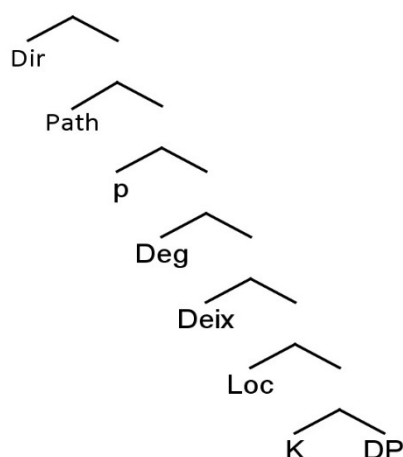
Simply put, evidence indicating analogies between AxParts and nouns is not strong enough to warrant the conclusion that the former *are* nouns. Instead, Svenonius (2006) argues that in light of his cross-linguistic overview AxPart should be awarded the status of an independent class of elements in its own right. As such, the question emerges of how to properly characterize it in structural terms, that is, of what its

collocation is within the structure of PPs and what relations hold between AxParts and other elements entering the same structure.

For the sake of completeness, here the structural proposal put forth by Svenonius (2010) will be presented, where these issues are taken up, together with an elaborate analysis of the structure of locative PPs in general. This will allow us to point to relevant differences between this analysis and the approach developed by Koopman (2000) and DenDikken (2010) discussed in section 2.2.2.

Building on an analysis of locative expressions in English, Svenonius individuates four subclasses of elements, called “Projective”, “Bounded”, “Extended”, and “Particle”. Members of these classes share both distributional and interpretive properties, and, significantly, they do so regardless of their internal complexity, as is the case e.g. for *inside* and *in front of*. Svenonius’s approach is to take this to suggest that such superficially different constructions are underlyingly the same, and to take one and the same functional structure to account for both the syntactic and the semantic properties they share. Thus, the overall meaning of locative PPs is compositionally derived from simple semantic elements, which are mapped onto separate nodes of the functional structure, such that for any step in the semantic computation, there corresponds an autonomous syntactic projection. The structure obtained is presented in (14) below:

(39)



Focusing on the bottom part of the structure, a rough outline of the semantic characterization of the different categories as proposed by Svenonius can be given along the following lines. The object DP is selected by K, whose semantic content in locative constructions is to return for any object the place, or *region*, it occupies. Right above K is AxPart, which denotes a relevant subpart of such region individuating it with respect to different possible spatial axes. The category Place already familiar from the discussion in 2.2.2 is split by Svenonius into two separate nodes, namely Loc and Deg. The rationale for this is mainly related to the specific semantic analysis of degree modifiers adopted. Following Zwarts and Winter (2000), these modifiers are interpreted in terms of a space semantics in which regions are individuated on the basis of vector spaces, as vectors, but not regions, can be described in terms of their length and direction. The semantic-syntactic decomposition is thus modified accordingly, to the effect that Loc takes the subregion which is the output of AxPart and returns a certain vector space, and Deg (hosting measure phrases in its Spec) turns such vector space back into a region. Sandwiched between Loc and Deg is Deix, a projection hosting deictic elements. One additional projection, p, encodes information about the configuration in which the figure object is with respect to the region denoted by lower projections, e.g. whether they are close or in contact with each other. The structure is topped off by Path, for elements encoding directional meaning, and Dir, hosting particles.

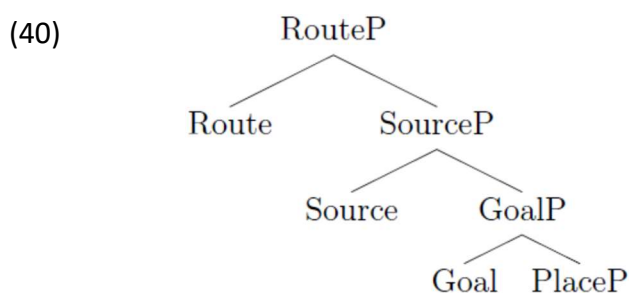
Based on the structure in (14), distributional and interpretive differences between the distinct classes of locative items identified in English (cf. above) are reduced to difference in the stretch of structure that the specific items lexicalize. While going into the details would take us too far afield, two observations are relevant in the context of this chapter.

First, the underpinning hypothesis of Svenonius's approach is that the overall meaning of an expression is calculated on the basis of a universal syntactic and semantic structure, plus the conceptual content of the specific items that realize it. These are thought of as category-neutral elements, whose syntactic behaviour may vary according to which nodes they are inserted into. That is to say that there are syntactic and semantic primitive elements, hypothetically given by UG, that are always present in the computation of a certain expression. Lexical items inserted into this general and abstract structure are associated with conceptual and grammatical properties (e.g., inherent gender features) that are partially independent of what node of the structure they happen to spell out. Applied to AxParts, this might provide the tools to account for their partial analogies with nouns, as nouns with particular conceptual content might serve to denote *regions*, as the category AxPart requests, but this need not be, and the same node might also be realized by adjectives (as for *near*) or other elements. This also seems to leave room for different degrees of grammaticalization, as different expressions might progressively specialize as AxPart elements and lose part of their former grammatical properties. On the other hand, it is not immediately clear how such line of reasoning could properly limit the possible polysemy and plasticity of lexical items. Thus, this approach risks of leaning too heavily on lexical idiosyncrasies in order to preserve a rather uniform analysis.

Second, a general consequence of Svenonius's (2006, 2010) analysis that is worth commenting upon is that it dispenses with a node P as a syntactic primitive, under which various kinds of adpositions are merged. P is shelved as a proper lexical category, and instead an articulated functional structure is posited, sitting on top of the nominal extended projection. Lexical items with varying inherent properties and associated to a certain conceptual/encyclopedic content are thought to spell out different nodes of such structure, whose building blocks contribute different aspects of the overall meaning of a PP construction. This is in stark contrast with Koopman's (2000) and Den Dikken's (2010) proposals discussed in 2.2.2. There, the analysis crucially relied on the presence of (at least one) lexical P node, selecting the object

noun and supporting the functional projections dominating it. Thus, the last two sections presented two alternative views on a central aspect of the architecture of PPs. Clearly, the issue is connected to the more general problem of the status of P as a functional vs. lexical category mentioned in 2.2.1. Since the Fodom data to be discussed in the next chapters do not count as evidence in favor on of the two positions, an adjudication of this open problem in the literature on PPs is far beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, I will limit myself to noting its recurrence in the discussion of the different accounts presented.

In closing this section, it is worth mentioning that of the two central elements in the encoding of spatial meaning identified in the previous sections Place is not the only one to have been subject to decomposition into simpler units. In Pantcheva (2011), Path too is put under the knife. Starting from the general observation that Path comes in three basic flavors, namely motion-to, -from, and -via, its decomposition into three corresponding functional heads (Goal, Source, and Route) is argued for. The proposal is mainly based on a cross-linguistic analysis of patterns of morphological containment and syncretism involving the markers corresponding to the three notions, particularly in languages with spatial case paradigms. The resulting structure is (minimally) as represented in (15) (Pancheva's (27c)), with additional projections optionally present in order to differentiate between the different possible readings that make up the rich typology of Paths:



As common in nanosyntactic literature (cf. Starke (2009), Baunaz et al. (2018)), the different functional heads in (15) are not independent, but the meaning encoded in the higher heads depends on the active presence of lower nodes, so that a motion-via meaning is not simply identified by a Route head in itself, and instead requires Place (or the portion of structure it stands for, cf. above), Goal, and Source as well. Thus, syntactic structure and semantic computation closely mirror each other, as in Svenonius's (2006, 2010) approach.

#### 2.2.4 The relation of P to its complement I – silent PLACE

In previous sections, different approaches were presented all focusing on the question of how rich and articulated the structure of PPs must be in order to account for the complexity and structural variability of locative constructions. The following paragraphs will discuss another fundamental issue in the syntax of PPs, namely the relation of P to its complement.

Analyses presented up to now, although radically differing in their view of P, all subscribed to the simple view that this relation is to be identified structurally with a head-complement one. Thus, either a lexical P selected for a DP much as a verb selects for its arguments, as in Koopman (2000) and Den Dikken (2010), or a hierarchy of functional heads were said to sit on top of the nominal functional spine, as in Svenonius (2006, 2010). This rather simple picture has been complicated by a number of works on locative constructions in different languages (cf. Kayne (2004), Terzi (2010), Botwinik-Rotem (2008), Botwinik-Rotem and Terzi (2008), Pantcheva (2008), Cinque (2010)) converging on the proposal that the relation between adpositional elements and what look like their complements is actually more indirect, and involves the mediation of a silent nominal projection. In what follows, the general hypothesis argued for by this stream of research will be referred to as “the PLACE hypothesis” for convenience. On the other hand, this should not obscure the fact that the specific

implementation of the analyses can differ significantly, so that no one actual “PLACE hypothesis” can be said to be present in the literature. While it is not relevant here to draw systematic comparisons between the various proposals, some of these differences will occasionally be pointed out below.

Recent works subscribing to the PLACE hypothesis all ultimately stem from Kayne (2004). Building on Katz and Postal’s (1964) original proposal that English *here/there* actually correspond to *at this/that place*, Kayne takes *here* and *there* to be underlyingly of the form [THIS/THAT here/there PLACE], where elements in capital letters are taken to be unpronounced. This structure is then said to undergo a series of derivational steps (essentially posited to ensure that both unpronounced parts cooccur), and to require licensing by a (possibly silent) locative adposition, as schematically shown below:

(41) [ AT [[ here PLACE]<sub>i</sub> THIS t<sub>i</sub> ]]

The introduction of a silent nominal component in the structure of locative expressions has been capitalized on by later works to account for the hybrid behavior of some locative expressions. Specifically, as noted in section 2.2.3, in many languages the class of adpositions is inhomogeneous, in that some elements bear partial analogies with nominal elements. In light of the PLACE hypothesis, these ambiguities are interpreted as a reflex of an underlyingly more complex structure, where silent PLACE accounts for the nominal features observed.

A notable example is represented by Terzi’s (2006, 2010) work on Greek locative prepositions. As shown in the articles, locative Ps in Greek can either occur without an overt complement, or with an object introduced by *se* or *apo*, two “light Ps” here only serving as general relators and devoid of spatial meaning. A third possibility is to directly combine locatives with a genitive complement, which however is only possible with clitic pronouns, as shown in ((17a), Terzi’s (2010) (2b)). This contrast is connected

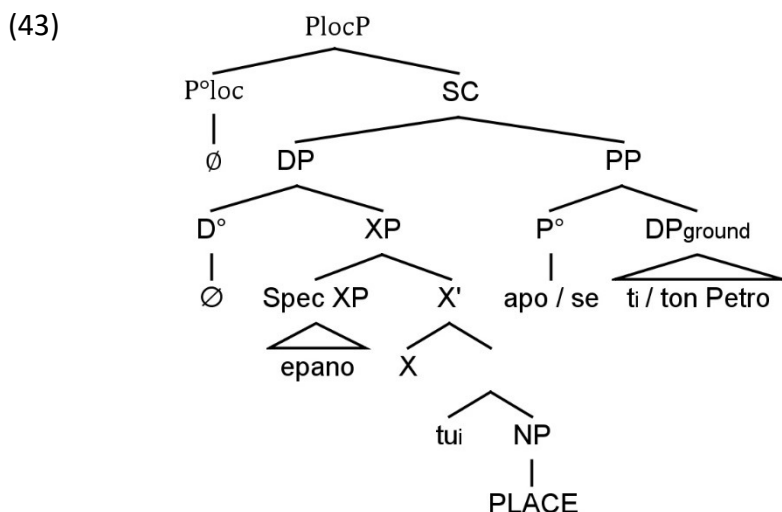


by Terzi to the distribution of genitive clitics and DPs in noun phrases, where DP arguments cannot be prenominal (cf. (17b), Terzi’s (2010) (4b)):

- (42) a. Kathomun epano tu / \*tu Petru  
 sit.IMPV.1sg on =3Msg.Gen/ the Peter.Gen  
 “I was sitting on him/Peter”  
 b. To oreo tu / \*tu Petru spiti  
 the nice =3Msg.Gen/ the Peter.Gen house  
 “His/Peter’s nice house”

The analogy is further motivated on diachronic considerations, as genitive DPs both following locatives and in prenominal position were possible in ancient Greek, and were both lost around the same period (12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century).

Terzi’s proposal is then to explicitly draw a parallel between the two cases: since the distribution of genitive arguments with respect to adnominal adjectives and locatives appears to be the same, locatives too are taken to be nominal modifiers, and to be merged in a dedicated functional projection dominating a null head noun PLACE. Thus, what looks like the object of a locative preposition is to be interpreted as the possessor of PLACE. Moreover, while genitive clitics can raise to an intermediate position between the locative and PLACE, full DPs can only be realized in the complement position of the small clause (tentatively) taken to represent the possession relation. This nominal structure is then topped off by a functional head P<sub>Loc</sub>, which can support PP-modifiers. The result is represented below:



Without going into the details of the analysis, I would like to point out two potential problems with this proposal, both of which are connected to the implications of positing a DP headed by silent PLACE. First, the parallel between Greek locatives and modified DPs established above would seem to lead to a wrong prediction. Consider the contrasts in (19) below ((19a)=Terzi's (2010)(4); (19b)=(17a)/ Terzi's (2010)(1b)):

- (44) a. To oreo **\*tu Petru** spiti **tu Petru**  
           the nice **\*the Peter.Gen** house **the Peter.Gen**  
           “Peter’s nice house”
- b. Kathomun epano **\*tu Petru** / **ston Petro**  
           sit.IMPF.1sg on **the Peter.Gen** / **se+the Peter**  
           “I was sitting on Peter”

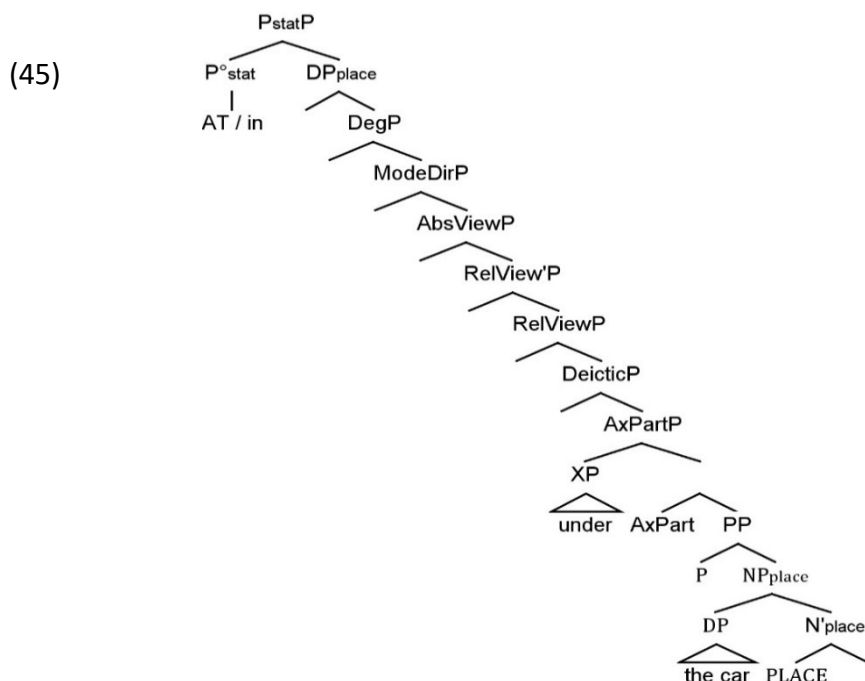
As shown in (19a), genitive arguments can regularly occur after a modified noun. With locatives, the impossibility of genitive DPs can only be explained in this analysis by taking them to correspond to the impossible prenominal “tu Petru” in (19a), thus, to be to the left of PLACE. But if the structural analogy between locatives and nominal projections called for to explain the distribution of clitics (cf. 17 above) is sound, then a genitive argument of a locative is expected to be fine when realized as a regular possessor to the right of the head noun, just as in (19a) “tu Petru” can occur after “spiti”. Of course, the non-realization of PLACE does not allow to differentiate between a prenominal and a postnominal position in locative construction, so we would end up with a genitive argument superficially following the locative, that is, the impossible (19b). Thus, it looks as though an additional condition has to be posited in order to get

the facts right, namely that a possession relation in locatives can only be encoded through a “light P”, as in the structure in (18). To the extent that it is not clear how to derive this additional requirement, the proposed structural analogy between nominal and locative structures remains dubious.

Moving on, similar analyses have been proposed e.g. for Hebrew (Botwinik-Rotem (2008); cf. Botwinik-Rotem and Terzi (2008) for a comparison between Greek and Hebrew), Persian (Pantcheva (2008)), and Italian/Italo-romance varieties (Garzonio and Rossi (2016) and (2017, now in Garzonio and Rossi (2020)), respectively, cf. *infra*). While going through a detailed presentation of the different proposals would not be relevant for the purposes of this chapter, I would like to close this section with a brief discussion of the proposal advanced in Cinque (2010). This will allow us to highlight other important features of the PLACE hypothesis, while at the same time showing how the latter has been combined with perspectives on the functional structure of PPs as those exemplified and discussed in section 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.

Cinque (2010) represents a rich synthesis of previous literature on PPs and builds on data taken from a wide array of typologically different languages. In the spirit of classic cartography, different kinds of locative constructions are taken to derive from one and the same articulated structure, variation been reduced to what projections are lexicalized and to different (independently justifiable) movement operations. Once again, the heterogeneous character of the adpositional class is central. As mentioned in 2.2.1, languages frequently have two recognizable sub-classes of adpositions with a cluster of differentiating properties related to case assignment, possible occurrence without an overt object, and richness in semantic content. As proposed e.g. by Botwinik-Rotem (2008) and Pantcheva (2008), such differences are connected by Cinque (2010) to the different structural position of the relevant items. Thus, the basic architecture of locative expressions is said to involve an extended nominal projection headed by null PLACE and selected by (minimally) a functional  $P^{\circ}_{LOC}$  head. The latter is the merge position of adpositions showing more “functional” properties (like English *at*

or its Italian counterpart *a*), whereas “lexical” adpositions are inserted as phrasal modifiers of PLACE low in the nominal structure, with P°<sub>LOC</sub> optionally silent. As common to all versions of the PLACE hypothesis, the superficial nominal complement of the adposition is reinterpreted as a (typically possessor) argument of the head noun. Much like in Terzi (2006, 2010), case licensing of this ground DP is (possibly) mediated by a “light P”, which however is here taken to sit in the extended projection of PLACE, too<sup>6</sup>. An interesting twist is the introduction of a rich array of projections hosting locative modifiers *within* the functional spine of the silent noun. That is, functional projections dominating the P head in Koopman’s (2000) and Den Dikken’s (2006,2010) proposals (cf. 2.2.2.) are shifted down in the structure. Moreover, their set is significantly enriched, with specific positions for phrases specifying the mode of direction (ModeDirP, mentioned in ch.1) or the ground’s location with respect to different (and crosslinguistically various) conventional spatial dimensions, both absolute and relative (AbsViewP and RelViewP, respectively). The resulting structure is as represented in (20) below (adapted from Cinque’s (2010)(27)):



<sup>6</sup> Actually, Cinque (2010) explicitly envisages another, more elaborate possibility, namely, that the ground is DP actually licensed as in Kayne’s (2001) analysis of prepositions acting as probes. That is, the DP could be attracted to by a higher P, possibly higher than P<sub>LOC</sub>P, with linear order restored through an application of remnant movement to the left of the (silent) P-DP complex (cf. also 2.2.5).

What is evident from the above structure is that DP<sub>place</sub> is special, since it can host projections that are not readily identifiable in regular DPs. Intuitively, their presence is closely related to the general semantic content brought in by PLACE. Still, it is unclear how the theory could account for the presence of functional projections specific to a single “kind” of DP. This observation about the status of DP<sub>PLACE</sub> connects to a general problem faced by analyses subscribing to the PLACE hypothesis. That is, the fundamental motivation for the insertion of null PLACE in locative structures lies in the fact that the latter show a series of analogies with nominal constructions in different languages. However, once the additional nominal projection is in place, it would be predicted, all things being equal, to behave a regular DP, contrary to fact. For example, DP<sub>PLACE</sub> resists adjectival modification and combination with most determiners, and cannot freely occur as the nominal argument of a verb<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, once a seemingly nominal feature of locative constructions in a language is accounted for by positing the universal presence of a DP<sub>PLACE</sub>, the same feature is predicted to be universally available, unless (independently justifiable) conditions prevent it from being observed in other languages. To name two prominent cases, the ground DP frequently, but *not always* is marked as a possessor argument, and regular possessives can combine with some (but not all) “lexical” prepositions in languages like Spanish, but not e.g. in English or Italian (cf. *delante suyo* vs. \*in front his / \* di fronte suo).

Concluding, three more open issues connected to the PLACE hypothesis will be discussed. One is the following: what is the category of “lexical” adpositions merged as modifiers of PLACE? Or, differently put, what is the label of the projection that hosts them? In fact, virtually all proposals mentioned above remain neutral with respect to these questions. Thus, Cinque (2010) retains Svenonius’s (2006,2010) AxPartP, but does not specify the label of the XP headed by the “lexical” P which is taken to be merged in Spec, AxPartP; Terzi (2006,2010) and Botwinik Rotem (2008) simply mention

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<sup>7</sup> It could be suggested that the latter restriction could be accounted for positing that PLACE requires licensing by a (covert/overt) preposition. However, this would invalidate examples sometimes cited in favor of the PLACE hypothesis where a locative construction seems to act as the subject of a regular predication, as in “under the bed is not a good place to leave a dirty dish”.

an XP, while Pantcheva (2008) uses an equally neutral Class2P (i.e. the phrase for adpositions belonging to her Class 2). It looks as though some kind of categorial split is envisaged. This, however, clashes with the fact it is sometimes mentioned among the merits of the PLACE hypothesis that it allows for a more uniform treatment of adpositions, in that seemingly nominal features of “lexical” Ps are attributed to the null noun (cf. e.g. Botwinik Rotem (2008) and Pantcheva (2008)). The problem is that an explanation would still be needed as to why certain adpositions are allowed to be merged as modifiers of the noun, and others are not.

The second point is related to how the PLACE hypothesis is extended to simple PPs introduced by generic (“functional”, in Cinque’s 2010 sense) adpositions like *at* or *in*. Different analyses differ in whether or not they take DP<sub>PLACE</sub> to be present in this case, too. Depending on the answer, different issues could arise. For example, if simple PPs are taken to lack DP<sub>PLACE</sub> altogether, then a different position for functional projections hosting modifiers must be posited in this case, since the latter sit in the extended projection of PLACE in a structure like (20). On the other hand, if DP<sub>PLACE</sub> is present, modification with simple PPs is problematic in another respect, in that (20) would predict modifiers to surface in an intermediate position between the functional P in P°<sub>LOC</sub> and the ground DP. Additional, non-trivial movements would thus be needed to derive a modifier > P > DP order. As a matter of fact, Cinque (2010, p. 7) suggests that “functional” Ps could differ from “lexical” ones in “resisting direct modification”. While this could be on the right track for some cases (e.g. degree modifiers), the problem remains as to how to account for particle-like element as attested e.g. in the Italian sentence (and its English counterpart, for that matter) “l’ho lasciato *su nella* tua vecchia camera”, “I left it *up in* your former room”, where *su/up* would appear to be merged in a RelViewP, below P°<sub>LOC</sub>.

Last, the third issue to be discussed is how the object DP is assigned case (or, more abstractly, is case-licensed) in a PP structure like that in (20). Once again, the problem of the potential non-uniform properties of “functional” and “lexical” Ps is relevant.

From a general standpoint, the presence of a  $DP_{PLACE}$  leads to the interpretation of the overt object DP as an argument of PLACE. The relation between the two elements is typically construed as a possessor-possessum one, in light of the fact that complex PPs featuring a “lexical” P frequently exhibit formal properties of possessive constructions in the specific languages considered. But when more generic, “functional” adpositions (or local case markers, for that matter) are taken into consideration, one might wonder to what extent they can be said to behave in the same way with respect to case marking of the object DP. A crucial aspect to this issue is that case alternations on the object DP in a number of languages (e.g. German, Russian, Czech, cf. Caha (2007), Latin, ancient Greek) correlate with properties of the high  $P^{\circ}_{LOC}$  and  $P^{\circ}_{DIR}$  heads in a structure like (20) above. That is, in these languages morphological alternations typically involving oblique vs. direct case generally correlate with a distinction between stative vs. directional spatial meaning. Arguably, this is in tension with interpreting the object DP as a possessor of PLACE. Nothing else being added, the same basic possession relation would be expected to be marked, irrespective of whether higher projections of the structure host a lexical P as a further modifier of PLACE or a functional P in  $P^{\circ}_{LOC}/P^{\circ}_{DIR}$ . Differently put, if the ground DP is uniformly interpreted as the possessor of PLACE, it is not obvious that it should depend for case-licensing from different elements based on the outcome of later stages in the derivation, since the basic possession relation would still need to be encoded somehow. It thus seems that the PLACE hypothesis needs non-trivial enrichments to deal with these facts.

This concludes this section on the fundamental features of the PLACE hypothesis. The next section will briefly touch upon one major aspect of the study of PPs left aside up to now, namely the status of Case in PPs. While this issue is a crucial one for the theory of PPs, a thorough discussion would fall far outside the purposes of this chapter, as mentioned in 2.1. Therefore, what follows is thought of as an appendix to section 2.2, which will only highlight some of the most relevant aspects of the question.

## 2.2.5 The relation of P to its complement II – concluding notes on P and Case

The question of how to construe the relationship between adpositions and Case is a highly debated one. Many different perspectives have been argued for and supported based on data from highly diverse languages, which opens both theoretical and methodological questions. One source of complication is the fact that basic spatial meaning can be encoded by simple (“functional” in Cinque’s (2010) terms) adpositions or by morphological spatial case in different languages. Both sets of elements can exhibit functional or morphological (i.e., syncretism/containment) relations with markers encoding non-locative grammatical/relational meaning, be it functional adpositions or morphological case.

At least two questions emerge. One is whether or not the relation between functional adpositions and morphological case should be interpreted in terms of underlying identity. To put it in Zwart’s (2005) words, “adpositions and case-markers are two distinct devices potentially serving the same purpose”. This general observation has been subject to different theoretical interpretations (e.g. Fillmore (1968), Den Dikken and Dékány (2019), Van Riemsdijk and Huybregts (2001, 2007), Bayer and Bader (2007), Asbury et al. (2006), (Asbury (2008), Caha (2009), Pantcheva (2011)), all of which converge in challenging the rather standard view in the Principles and Parameters framework of Ps simply assigning Case to their objects as verbal heads do to their arguments. As a sidenote, Kayne’s (2001) proposal can be considered as an alternative version of the latter, since adpositions are said to act as probes and first attract their objects to the Spec position of an AgrP/KP projection, where agreement between the P head and the DP takes place.

The second question is whether there is some regularity at play in the relations between spatial and non-spatial/grammatical markers, and, if there is, whether it is grammatical/morphosyntactic, or semantic. Clearly, the specific answer to this question has to be cast within a more general theory of the relation between morphological case and abstract Case and of the structural representation of the two



notions. To give two relevant examples, Caha (2009) and (2017) and Pantcheva (2011) have argued for an integration of spatial case into the general morphosyntactic Case hierarchy proposed by Caha (2009). On the other hand, Franco and Manzini (2017, 2018) explicitly argue against this approach, mostly based on data that seem to contradict the idea of a systematic, grammatical source for the relevant syncretisms, as well as on a general criticism against postulating abstract functional hierarchies. Their alternative proposal is to reduce the connection between oblique cases like Dative or Instrumental and basic spatial meaning like Location, Goal, and Source to the underlying denotational identity of their markers. Essentially, two fundamental grammatical relations are said to be at play, namely  $\subseteq$  and  $\supseteq$ , each corresponding to a specific structural projection. The specific meanings mentioned are then interpreted as the result of the combination of these two basic denotations with verbal heads encoding different sub-events and with nouns contributing their specific semantic import.

Concluding, a different but related aspect of the relation between Ps and case is how to account for the specific case marking of object DPs observed in adpositional constructions. As mentioned in 2.2.4 above, case alternations can be at play in the encoding of specific meanings (particularly in locative PPs), so a fundamental part of this question is how these patterns can be connected to the general architecture of the PP structures.

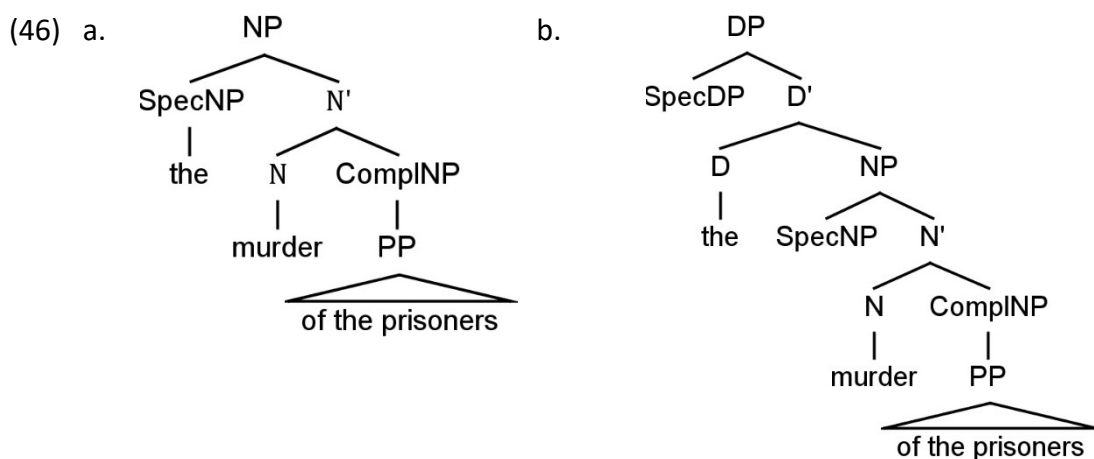
This concludes this general overview on the literature on PPs. Section 2.3 below will deal with the complementary topic of this chapter, namely the status of D as a morphosyntactic category, focusing on some aspects of its structural representation and semantic interpretation.

## 2.3 Perspectives on D

### 2.3.1 Introduction

Ever since the introduction in the late '80s of a functional projection DP topping off nominal structures (cf. Abney (1987)), much work in generative grammar has been devoted to enriching the empirical support for this proposal and evaluating different aspects of its theoretical import. As anticipated in the introduction to this chapter (2.1), in what follows I do not aim at a complete review of the literature on DP. Instead, a quick overview will be given on specific topics that will be more directly relevant to the analysis of the Fodom data in chapters 3 and 4. In partial compensation for the patchy character of the following discussion, some fundamental features of the DP-hypothesis (cf. Abney (1987)) will be illustrated below.

In earlier stages of generative grammar, noun phrases were identified structurally with NPs headed by a lexical head N. In such simple structures determiners like articles, demonstratives or possessives were construed as modifiers sitting in a high Specifier position adjoined to a recursive non-maximal N' node. Based initially on syntactic and morphological properties of English gerundive constructions and possessive agreement in languages like Hungarian and Turkish, Abney (1987) proposes a revised structure, in which NP is the complement of another maximal projection, namely D(eterminer)P, headed by a functional D°, filled by determiners. A basic version of the two structures (21a and b, respectively) is given below for comparison (adapted from Lyons (1999), pp. 42-43):



Essentially, what the DP hypothesis amounts to is that (at least some instances of) noun phrases are not NPs, but rather DPs. This is immediately parallel to the conception of clausal structures that has been standard in generative grammar since Chomsky (1981). There, a VP headed by a lexical head  $V^\circ$  is dominated by two distinct functional projections, IP and CP, to the effect that e.g. a matrix finite clause is identified with a CP in the structure. Thus, the introduction of the DP hypothesis has meant that the task of determining to what extent clausal and nominal structures can be said to be parallel has been on the agenda, and still is.

From a general standpoint, the very idea that nominal structures too were headed by a functional category lead to the expectation that, much like with clauses, D would turn out to be not the only one. As a matter of fact, evidence has accumulated in favor of the presence of richer structure, featuring more functional heads and projections (cf. Lyons (1999), Alexiadou, Haegeman, and Stavrou (2008)). Such evidence has mostly come from two sources. One is essentially morphological/morphosyntactic. Namely, as argued by Abney (1987), phenomena of agreement within nominal phrases like the Turkish and Hungarian facts mentioned above suggest the presence of functional projections in the structure mediating the relation between the agreeing elements, much like IP (and its kin) does in the clause. The other source of evidence is related to movement phenomena within and out of nominal phrases. The fundamental idea is that if elements generated in the nominal structure can be shown to move to another position in the same structure, or in some cases to have been extracted from it, then (functional) projections are required to make room for such dislocations. Prominent examples of this line of reasoning are e.g. Szabolcsi (1983, 1987), Horrocks and Stavrou (1987), Longobardi (1994). Without dwelling on the details, the fundamental structure of the relevant arguments can be presented taking a Greek pattern discussed in Horrocks and Stavrou (1987) as a specimen ((22)= their (34)):

- (47) a. *Mu ipes [CP pos dhjavases [DP to vivlio **tin**os]]?*  
 me-GEN said-2SG that read-2SG the book who-GEN

'You told me you read whose book?'

b. Mu ipes [<sub>CP</sub> pos dhjavases [**tin**os to vivlio t]]?

c. [<sub>CP</sub> [To vivlio **tin**os] mu ipes [<sub>CP</sub> t pos dhjavases t]]?

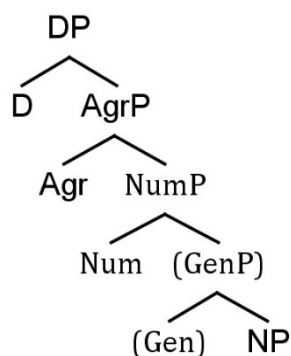
d. [<sub>CP</sub> [**Tin**os to vivlio t] mu ipes [<sub>CP</sub> t pos dhjavases [t ] ] ?

e. [<sub>CP</sub> [**Tin**os ] mu ipes [<sub>CP</sub> t pos dhjavases [t to vivlio t]] ] ?

(22a) is an echo-question, where the possessor argument of the noun surfaces in a postnominal position and thus there is no trace of dislocation. As (22b) shows, the WH-element *tin*os can be fronted to a high position internal to the nominal phrase to the left of the determiner *to*. In either case, the nominal phrase can be WH-fronted to the left periphery of the clause (22c and d, respectively). Moreover, the WH-element can undergo fronting to the CP periphery by itself (22e). This is taken to be made possible by its previous passing through the high position in the nominal phrase also active in (22b). By hypothesis, this position is identified with Spec, DP. Thus, not only do patterns like that above provide strong evidence for the presence of functional projections in nominal phrases, they also give support to the idea that some parallels can be established between DPs and CPs. Specifically, a reasonable analysis of (22e) as sketched above would take Spec, DP to act as an "escape hatch" for the extraction of DP-internal elements, much like in bi-clausal sentences the extraction of elements inside the complement clause is standardly taken to proceed through the intermediate Spec, CP before reaching the periphery of the root clause.

In light of arguments like that just presented, a systematic exploration of the parallel between nominal and clausal structures has identified DP as the counterpart of CP. Moreover, the identification of a number of additional functional projections has led to the enrichment of the structure between the D and the NP level, comparable to that adopted for clausal structure in much literature essentially following Pollock (1989) and Cinque (1999). This is (roughly) exemplified in the structure below (adapted from Lyons (1999), p. 295):

(48)



Thus, the parallel between CPs and DPs has been argued to be closer than initially thought, in that both structures feature a lexical/ “thematic” layer (VP and NP, respectively), a functional “middle field” (for CP, IP and its decomposition; for DP, the portion of the structure hosting intermediate functional projections, possibly including those for adjectives, cf. Cinque (1994)), and a periphery (CP/DP) determining general properties of the entire structure and mediating its interaction with larger structures in which it may be inserted (cf. Alexiadou, Haegeman, and Stavrou (2008)).

As apparent from the discussion up to now, the DP hypothesis was initially motivated and argued for based on the need for one or more functional projection(s) in the structure of nominal phrases. For one thing, Abney (1987) first argued for the presence of a functional XP dominating NP, and then, essentially based on distributional evidence, he proposed that such category should be identified with D, corresponding to the lexical category of determiners. On the other hand, as D got established as a morpho-syntactic category, several questions ensued. To put it in the widest way possible, these concerned the role of the category D in determining the properties of the nominal phrases it headed, both with respect to their syntactic behavior and their semantic interpretation. Thus, having identified a category D, the fundamental question is what its content is.

As recognized e.g. by Lyons (1999) and Alexiadou, Haegeman, and Stavrou (2008), many different views have been expressed in the literature on these topics, and while a set of notions has emerged as particularly relevant, the debate has not reached widely shared conclusions. Among the relevant constructs referred to in the literature are notions like *definiteness*, *referentiality*, *denotation*, *argumenthood*. From a bird's eye view, many of them are connected, but there is no agreement on crucial questions concerning e.g. whether one of them can be shown to be theoretically prior to all others, or whether the properties these notions refer to must be ascribed to the category D itself, or to the determiners that fill it. In keeping with the overall spirit of the present chapter, no systematic review of this branch of the literature will be provided here. Instead, the next section will focus on two prominent proposals advanced in Lyons (1999) and Longobardi (1994, 1996, 2005, 2008). This will allow us to introduce some more specific aspects of the notion of definiteness and referentiality, their association to the category D, and their connection to the semantic interpretation of noun phrases.

### 2.3.2 The content of D I – Lyons (1999)

As mentioned above, different proposals have been put forth concerning the content of D. To be more precise, the question is actually twofold. On one hand, the problem is to properly characterize the information encoded at the D level of nominal phrases. On the other, since D°/Spec, DP have been initially identified as the positions for determiners, a fundamental issue is to determine to what extent such information should be regarded as an independent feature of determiners as lexical items filling D, or instead as the contribution made by D as a morphosyntactic category (cf. Alexiadou, Haegeman, and Stavrou (2008)).

Lyons (1999) proposes an identification of *definiteness* as the content of D (although with some qualifications to be specified below). Essentially, building on a

survey of simple and complex determiners generally classified as definite and indefinite, he concludes that it is *definite* determiners that occupy a position in DP, while indefinite ones do not. That is, definiteness is recognized as the relevant property allowing to draw a distinction between two classes of determiner-like items, correlating with a number of distributional contrasts (the so-called “definiteness effects”, cf. e.g. Milsark (1974)).

As a consequence of such proposal, the complementary distribution between determiners like English *the* and *a* is not due to their occupying the same D° position and has to be connected to independent sources of incompatibility. Essentially, determiners like *a* are taken to primarily encode *cardinality*, and occupy a lower syntactic position (e.g. a CardP/NumP). Thus, ‘indefiniteness’ is not taken as a primitive notion, but only as ‘lack of definiteness’. That is, a nominal phrase will be indefinite whenever there is no definite article introducing it. As a consequence, the incompatibility of *a* with *the* is neither syntactic nor semantic in nature. Rather, a phonological constraint is taken to be active, barring occurrence of ‘weak’ forms like *a* in a non-initial position. Therefore, *a* can never cooccur with definite determiners for phonological/prosodic reasons, and such impossible cooccurrence makes it so that its presence always correlates with lack of definiteness, i.e. (in Lyons’s account) indefiniteness. ‘Indefinite’ determiners are thus taken as actually neutral with respect to definiteness, and a seemingly specialized ‘indefinite article’ like *a* is interpreted as only indirectly associated with indefiniteness.

Once such closer association between D and *definite* determiners is established, a reasonable question is whether it is a matter of coincidence that all determiners capable of occurring at the D level also have the lexical property of encoding definiteness, or instead definiteness should be construed as inherent to D as a morphosyntactic category. As mentioned, Lyons (1999) opts for the second possibility. One relevant argument discussed is the fact that, definite articles aside, definite determiners can be shown not to be inherently definite. Items like demonstratives are

more misleading in this respect, in that their deictic content can be claimed to imply definiteness. The point can be more safely made with possessives, which can be used as (definite) determiners in many languages. For instance, prenominal *mi* yields a definite interpretation in Spanish (24a), but its postnominal counterpart is compatible with both a definite and an indefinite determiner (24b,c):

- (49) a. **mi** amigo  
b. **el** amigo **mío**  
“my friend”  
c. **un** amigo **mío**  
“a friend of mine”

Essentially, Lyons takes such patterns to mean that the definite interpretation of expressions like (24a) does not arise because of the presence of the possessive *per se*. Rather, “definiteness is thus seen as being determined structurally, not lexically” (Lyons 1999, p. 290), and is ascribed to the category D as its content. Thus, according to Lyons, definite determiners need not be strictly speaking *definite*, after all. Moreover, once this picture is generalized, even definite articles are deprived of a lexical specification characterizing them as definite. Since items as *the* (unlike e.g. possessive and demonstratives) do not appear to make any additional contribution, they are then interpreted as mere empty expletives, filling the D level whenever there is no richer item capable of doing so.

The identification of DP as *Definiteness* Phrase makes it crucial for Lyons (1999) to provide a characterization of definiteness as a grammatical category. It is frequently recognized that this proves to be a particularly difficult task. As a matter of fact, determining the proper treatment of the definite article has been a central issue in the literature on natural language semantics and philosophy of language at least since Frege’s *Sinn und Bedeutung* (cf. Frege (1892), Russell (1905), Strawson (1950), Donnellan (1966)). Based on an extensive survey of the literature on the matter, Lyons



(1999) individuates two fundamental components in the notion of definiteness, namely *identifiability* and *inclusiveness*. The first refers to the fact that the definite article signals to the hearer that he/she can identify the referent of the nominal phrase because it is somehow familiar to him/her, because it is physically present in the speech situation, has already been mentioned, is part of the shared knowledge between speech participants, etc. Inclusiveness, instead, refers to the property of definite determiners (and definite articles, more specifically) of signaling that the overall expression denotes the maximal set of (contextually relevant) objects satisfying the nominal predicate. Examples of these two properties are given below for clarity:

(50) a. Could you pass me **the scissors**?

b. I've just been to a wedding. **The bride** wore blue (Lyons 1999, (15))

In (25a), the speaker could be on top of a ladder, and refer to a pair of scissors in the room where the utterance takes place. The referent is here identifiable because it is part of the immediate context. (25b), instead, could be felicitously addressed to someone who did not even know of the wedding, or the identity of the bride. The only relevant fact for the use of the definite article here is that is part of the participants' world-knowledge that weddings typically involve a bride, and so *the bride* denotes the only person in the relevant wedding-situation that satisfies the predicate "bride". This is shown by the fact that if there had been two such people, then *the bride* would not have been felicitous. Instead, *the brides* would have been required, denoting the totality of brides at the wedding.

Leaving details aside, what is relevant here is that while each of such notions has been claimed to be the fundamental one in different proposals, Lyons (1999) argues them to be irreducible one to another, and to be both at play in the semantics of definite articles (at least in certain languages; the same conclusion is reached by Schwarz (2009, 2013), cf.2.3.3). Essentially, definiteness is taken to be a universal category of semantic/pragmatic meaning, which can, but need not be grammatically

encoded in a language. A distinction is then drawn between languages that only have “semantic/pragmatic definiteness” and languages with “grammatical definiteness”. In languages lacking D, this general meaning is expressed essentially through pragmatic means, and the salient property is the identifiability/familiarity of the referent. Thus, where D is instead present, identifiability is taken to be the content it prototypically conveys. Crucially, however, languages with grammatical D may differ with respect to what is its exact range of uses, which may also include uses based on inclusiveness. As noted by the author, since DP is not anymore simply the projection for determiners, this picture “fits in well with the fact that nearly all other proposed functional heads correspond to grammatical or semantic categories rather than to word classes” (Lyons (1999), pp. 298-299).

To sum up, then, definiteness is taken to have a double status in natural language. It is recognized as a universal and general semantic/pragmatic category, and as a grammatical/morphosyntactic category which is only active in certain languages. In the latter case, it is identified with D, which is realized by definite determiners. Indefinite noun phrases lack a D level, and their mostly analogous properties with respect to their external syntax is connected to the fact that in both cases one further node tops off the functional structure, namely KP (cf. Lyons 1999, p. 300).

For the sake of completeness, it should be added at this stage that Lyons goes further and proposes an interpretation of (grammatical) definiteness essentially as a sub-case of the grammatical category of Person. Support for this move is drawn from three facts. First, the expression of Person in nominal phrases (i.e. through pronouns) systematically entails definiteness. Second, Person is said to be more systematically expressed in the verbal domain, and definiteness in the nominal one, so that some degree of complementarity is suggested between the two. Third, pronouns are frequently analyzed as occupying D (cf. e.g. Postal (1970), Abney (1987)), something which fits in well with the idea that Person and Definiteness are underlyingly the same, and that finer distinction between different values for Persons can be represented as

additional featural specifications on the same D head (cf. Lyons (1999), pp. 318 ff.). As a side note, many languages with no article system (and thus, with no grammatical definiteness) still can have a full-fledged pronominal and verbal Person agreement paradigm (e.g. Latin). As recognized by Lyons, then, his analysis entails that a three-way distinction has to be drawn between languages where there is no trace of grammatical D, those in which D is fully active, and those where it is only marked in the pronominal system.

While providing a systematic evaluation of Lyons's (1999) analysis would be of no direct interest here, it is useful to note that such an account leaves some open issues. Essentially, it is not clarified how the selection of certain items as (loosely speaking) exponents of DP comes about. In light of the arguments discussed above, it cannot be that definite determiners are merged in D°/Spec, DP or moved there because of their being specified for e.g. a [+Def] feature. In fact, not even their semantic content can count as a relevant property. It thus looks like a necessary condition is that they are semantically *not incompatible* with definiteness. But then, what is the sufficient condition? That is, since possessives can sometimes occur as surface definite determiners, why cannot they do so in all languages? Analogously, if definite articles are not but fillers, how can their (possible, but not obligatory) cooccurrence with demonstratives in languages like Romanian be accounted for? Nothing else being added, since demonstratives are capable of occurring in DP, they would be predicted to do so whenever they are present. Differently put, it looks as though the need for a morphosyntactic feature to capture the differences in distribution of different kinds of definite determiners cannot be overcome. Incidentally, it could be argued that this too contributes to a closer parallel between D and other morphosyntactic categories like Mood, T, Asp, etc. as argued for by Lyons (1999) himself (cf. above).

### 2.3.3 The content of D II – Longobardi (2005, 2008) and the Romance DP

The second view on the content of D to be discussed is the proposal advanced in Longobardi (2005, 2008). Essentially, in this case definiteness does not play a central role, and rather DP is individuated as the projection where the denotation of (argumental) nominal phrases is determined. Combined with Szabolcsi's (1987) and Stowell's (1989) proposal that nominal arguments are always DPs, this amounts to establishing a reciprocal implication between the possibility of a nominal phrase to act as an argument and the presence in the structure of the projection where nominal phrase acquires its denotation. As will be specified below, such biconditional is taken by Longobardi to hold only in some languages, within an explicit theory of parametric variation in the correspondence between the syntactic structure of nominal phrases and their semantic interpretation.

Based on an ontology that comprises two types of entities, objects and kinds (cf. Carlson (1977)), and sets thereof, Longobardi (2005) distinguishes between 'denotation as a constant/reference', whereby an argument is associated to an individual entity (i.e. an object or a kind), and 'denotation as a variable/quantification', i.e. the association of an argument to a set of entities. Since DP is identified as the projection where the denotation gets fixed, "an argument will denote as a constant or a variable according to the content of its D" (Longobardi (2005), p. 33). Specifically, when D is filled by or linked to an element capable of directly identifying an entity (e.g. object- or kind-naming nouns, or demonstratives), the DP argument will denote as a constant, and thus will have reference. On the other hand, when such referential content is lacking or is not linked to D, the DP will denote as a variable, through the presence of a quantificational operator (a prototypical example being a DP headed by a common noun and filled by a lexical determiner such as a definite article, yielding a 'maximal set'/'inclusive' interpretation, cf. above).

Fundamental support for this approach comes from an analysis of the distribution and the semantic properties of article-less nouns in Italian, which Longobardi takes as representative of all Romance in this respect. Essentially, two types of article-less

nouns constructions are found in Romance. One involves almost exclusively proper names, the other bare common nouns. It has long been noticed (at least since Longobardi (1991)) that the distribution of proper names with respect to definite articles and nominal modifiers suggests that such nouns are capable of undergoing N-to-D head movement. The relevant pattern is exemplified below for a person name ((26)=Longobardi's (1994) (28)) and a city name ((27)=*ibid.* (30)):

- (51) a. **Il mio Gianni** ha finalmente telefonato  
the my Gianni has finally called
- b. \***mio Gianni** ha finalmente telefonato  
my Gianni has finally called
- c. **Gianni mio** ha finalmente telefonato  
Gianni my has finally called  
“My Gianni finally called”
- (52) a. **L’ antica Roma** fu la città più importante del Mediterraneo  
the ancient Rome was the city most important of.the Mediterranean
- b. \***antica Roma** fu la città più importante del Mediterraneo  
ancient Rome was the city most important of.the Mediterranean
- c. **Roma antica** fu la città più importante del Mediterraneo  
Rome ancient was the city most important of.the Mediterranean  
“Ancient Rome was the most important city in the Mediterranean”

Skipping details, PNs can occur without an article, and in that case they must precede all modifiers. This is taken to reflect overt raising of the head noun up to D°. In the context of the overall theory of denotation and its link to DP, such movement can also be taken to account for the specific interpretive properties of PNs. That is, since nouns undergoing such raising inherently name an object individual (e.g. the person or the city bearing the relevant name), their raising to D° results in a DP denoting as a constant, thus making reference to an individual. Essentially, this explains their acting

as ‘rigid designators’ (in Kripke’s (1972) sense), taking the widest possible scope in intensional contexts. As shown in Longobardi (1996, 2005), a language-specific selection of common nouns can undergo the same derivation, too. Thus, the pattern in (26-27) above can be replicated with the noun *casa* “house/home” as below:

- (53) a. **la** mia vecchia **casa** è lì dietro l’ angolo  
the my old home is there behind the corner
- b. \*mia vecchia **casa** è lì dietro l’ angolo  
my old home is there behind the corner
- c. **casa** mia vecchia è lì dietro l’ angolo  
home my old is there behind the corner  
“My old house is there behind the corner”

Distributional and interpretive properties are the same in such cases, which only differ in that they typically require the presence of an overt or understood possessor in order to access the relevant derivation. Moreover, patterns like (28) show that object reference can be acquired derivationally and is not simply an inherent property of certain nominal expression.

The same account can then be extended to the other case of reference to individuals envisaged above, namely kind-reference. Common nouns are taken to be inherently kind-naming, and by present assumption reference to the relevant kind only requires that N be linked to D. In light of the fact that (26a) and (26c) above are equivalent with respect to semantic interpretation, the conclusion is that such link can be established either by overt movement ((26c), N-to-D chain) or by coindexing at LF of N with a D filled by an expletive article<sup>8</sup>((26a), N-to-D CHAIN). Now, common nouns

---

<sup>8</sup> The availability of such expletive article is argued for essentially based on two facts. First, the regular quantificational content of the common definite article is claimed to be incompatible with proper names, which do not provide a suitable range for variables. Second, Catalan varieties have distinct morphological forms for article-like elements combining with proper names. An expletive article is proposed for French by Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992).

contrast with proper names in being incapable of overtly raising to D (*modulo* the exceptions noticed above). Longobardi (2005) argues that this difference can be reduced to the inherent semantic content of the two categories by taking N-to-D raising as a Last Resort strategy to determine the denotation of the DP. That is, as kind-naming expressions, common nouns (but not proper names) always provide a set for a variable to range over, allowing the DP to denote via quantification (cf. above) and bleeding the movement operation. Therefore, only the second option is available for kind-referential DPs, namely N-to-D CHAIN with an expletive article in D°, as shown below:

- (54) a. **la tigre** siberiana è sull' orlo dell' estinzione  
           the tiger Siberian is on.the border of.the extinction  
       b. \***tigre** siberiana è sull' orlo dell' estinzione  
           tiger Siberian is on.the border of.the extinction  
           “The Siberian tiger is on the verge of extinction”

The second type of article-less nouns, namely bare nouns (BNs), is instead interpreted as not involving an N-to-D chain/CHAIN. Romance BNs can only be mass or plural, only allow an indefinite (generic or existential) interpretation, take narrow scope in intensional contexts, and their syntactic distribution is constrained (e.g. they cannot freely occur as regular preverbal subjects: \***acqua** viene giù dalle colline vs. viene giù **acqua** dalle colline, “**water** comes down from the hills” = Longobardi’s (1994) (14a,b)). While the details need not concern us here, Longobardi (2005) takes such restrictions to reflect the presence of an empty D in these cases.

The fact that properties of D turn out to be relevant in determining the behavior of both PNs and BNs points to the essential correctness of the approach, according to which nominal expressions can only act as arguments if their denotation is fixed, and D is the category where denotation is established. Additional support comes from the fact that in contexts where nominal expressions are not arguments the relevant

properties of PNs and BNs mentioned above are not present. Thus, a proper name can avoid N-to-D raising in a vocative expression like (30a) (=Longobardi's (2005)(43a), to be contrasted with (26b), repeated here as (43b)), and bare singular count nouns are allowed in predicative contexts, as show in (31=Longobardi's (2005)(36)):

- (55) a. mio caro **Gianni**, vieni qui!  
my dear Gianni come here!  
b. \*mio **Gianni** ha finalmente telefonato  
my Gianni has finally called

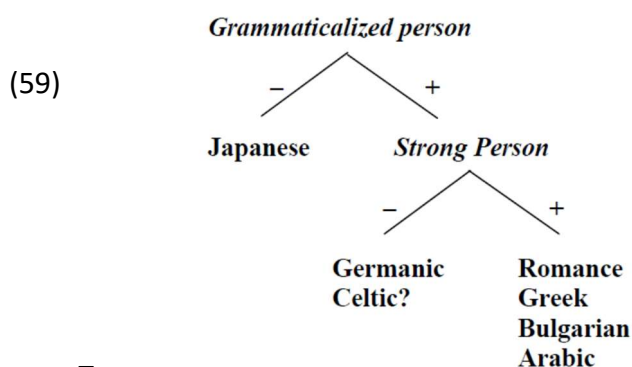
- (56) Gianni è **medico**  
Gianni is doctor  
"Gianni is a doctor"

As mentioned above, this set of generalizations concerning the interpretation of nominal expressions and the realization of D are not universally valid. However, since all of them are taken to be linked, in that they all depend from properties of D in a given language, this approach makes the typological prediction that if e.g. a language does not require overt N-to-D or an expletive article for reference, then also the restrictions observed for Romance BNs should not be active. Such prediction is borne out, as shown in the contrasts below between Italian and English:

- (57) a.\*antica Roma fu la città più importante del Mediterraneo  
(=27b)  
b. ancient Rome was the most important city in the Mediterranean
- (58) a. Madame Curie ha scoperto \*(il) radio (=Longobardi 2008  
(11))  
b. Madame Curie discovered radium



Intuitively, the relevant difference seems to be whether reference is ‘strong’ and requires an N-to-D chain/CHAIN (as in Romance), or ‘weak’, and does not (as in English, where nouns move to D only covertly, and cf. Longobardi (1996). However, much like in Lyons (1999, cf. above), the link between reference and D is reduced to the fact that reference is implied by the encoding of the category Person, by identifying D with Person. To put it in Longobardi’s (2008) words, “denotation of individuals (of which reference to individuals is a subcase) basically consists of associating lexical material, e.g. the individual-naming content of nouns, with person specification, i.e. grammatical person”(pp. 17-18). As a consequence, the observed typological variation in how the morphosyntactic structure of nominal phrases corresponds to their interpretive properties can (actually, must) be connected to more general differences in the status of the Person category in the different languages. In light of this, the following schema of parametrical variation is proposed (Longobardi (2008)(51)):



To conclude this section, I would like to add an observation that will be relevant for the following discussion. In the account presented above, a single functional projection is taken to be relevant, other differences (e.g. reference vs. quantification, definiteness vs. indefiniteness) being tied to properties of the head noun and of lexical items filling D. While this is obviously not a problem for Longobardi’s (2005,2008) account *per se*, it remains an open issue whether the same general explanation could be reformulated within a more articulated theory of the structure of D as emerged in part of the literature. It seems fitting, then, to close this discussion by presenting some such proposals.

### 2.3.4 Structure of D

Different views have been expressed in the literature that converge in proposing a more elaborate structure for D than usually held in the DP-hypothesis. Essentially, two major sources for this kind of proposal can be identified, one syntactic and one semantic. These two will be briefly presented in turn below.

From a strictly syntactic perspective, the hypothesis of an articulated DP level is already suggested by general, theory-internal considerations. As noted in 2.3.1 above, the DP-hypothesis at its very base was partially motivated by the need to account for a number of analogies between the nominal and the clausal domain. As mentioned, Horrocks and Stavrou (1987) argued for the presence of a high position related to focus-/WH-fronting based on patterns like that in (22) (their (34)), repeated below as (35) for convenience:

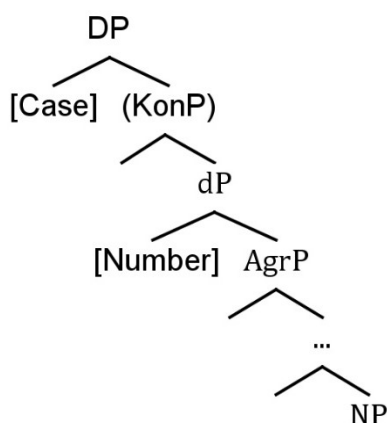
- (60) a. Mu ipes [<sub>CP</sub> pos dhjavases [<sub>DP</sub> to vivlio **tinós**]]?  
me-GEN said-2SG that read-2SG the book who-GEN  
'You told me you read whose book?'
- b. Mu ipes [<sub>CP</sub> pos dhjavases [**tinós** to vivlio t]]?
- c. [<sub>CP</sub> [To vivlio **tinós**] mu ipes [<sub>CP</sub> t pos dhjavases t]]?
- d. [<sub>CP</sub> [**Tinós** to vivlio t] mu ipes [<sub>CP</sub> t pos dhjavases [t ] ] ?
- e. [<sub>CP</sub> [**Tinós** ] mu ipes [<sub>CP</sub> t pos dhjavases [t to vivlio t]] ?

The distribution of the WH element *tinós* was interpreted as reflecting possible movement to a high position within the nominal constituent (cf. (35b)), from which further extraction to the clausal periphery can optionally take place (cf. 35e)). In light

of the DP hypothesis, such position can be identified with Spec, DP. As such, DP comes to closely correspond to CP in the clausal structure.

As mentioned above, it is essentially an extension of this line of reasoning that brought to an approach to the structure of DP as closely parallel to that of CP, including a low projection hosting the lexical head, an intermediate span of functional projections roughly for agreement and modification, and a top level acting as interface with external processes, identified with CP/DP (also cf. Den Dikken's (2006, 2010) proposal discussed in 2.2.2). As evidence accumulated in favor of a 'split CP', with different projections targeted by various kinds of A'-movements (cf. e.g. Rizzi (1997), Benincà and Poletto (2004)), the next logical step is then to ask whether 'DP' too can be shown to correspond to an elaborate structure. This is exactly what is proposed in works like Laenzlinger (2005), Giusti (2006), Poletto (2006, 2014, 2015). Abstracting away from the details of the specific implementations, these proposals converge in taking DP as a phase in Chomsky's (2001) sense, endowed with its own left periphery. As in a split-CP framework, where functional projections related to information structure (e.g. TopP, FocP, etc.) are 'sandwiched' between the two core projections of the CP level (ForceP and FinP in Rizzi (1997)), DP too is split in two basic nodes, with A' projections sitting in between them. More specifically, Laenzlinger (2005) distinguishes a DP<sub>Determination</sub> immediately above the inflectional field and a DP<sub>Deixis</sub> topping off the structure (arguably, this is roughly corresponding to the distinction discussed above between inclusiveness and identifiability (cf. Lyons 1999), or, more generally, between quantification and reference (cf. Longobardi 2005)). The labels adopted in Giusti (2006) and Poletto (2006, 2014, 2015) are instead dP and DP, respectively. For the sake of clarity, the general idea can be exemplified with the structure proposed by Giusti (2006), represented below:

(61)



dP is interpreted as parallel to FinP in the clausal spine, and to encode (semantic) Number (that Giusti distinguishes from morphological number, arising from agreement with the features realized in dP). DP instead corresponds to ForceP, and is identified as the projection where Case features are realized. As in Rizzi (1997), these two heads are thought to split only if the intervening head is present. Support for such split comes from the fact that focused/emphasized APs occur below the determiner in languages like Italian (cf. (37)=Giusti's (2006)(4-5)), while they surface to the left of the head noun in languages like Albanian, where the unmarked order is noun-initial, and the noun can thus be argued to raise to dP ((38)=Giusti's (2006)(12/20)), as shown below:

(62) a. le sue **lunghe** trecce bionde  
           the her long braids blonde

b. le **lunghe** sue trecce bionde  
           the long her braids blonde  
           “Her long blonde braids”

(63) a. gruaja tjetër **e bukur**  
           woman-the other nice

b. **e bukura** grua tjetër  
           nice-the woman other  
           “the other nice woman”

In Poletto (2006, 2014, 2015), the same general approach is brought to bear on cases of DP-internal fronting movements in old Italian. The fact that the correspondent movements are banned in modern Italian is reduced to the fact that in the latter the left periphery of the phase is (loosely speaking) less active, a claim which finds support from a number of well-established differences between the two varieties all related to the progressive loss of a V2-like property still active in old Italian, but now completely lost. This is exemplified by the contrast below, where (39b) shows the unmarked order, which is the only one possible in modern Italian:

- (64) a. Morte villana, **di pietà nemica, di dolor madre** antica (=Poletto (2015)(8c))  
 Death villain of mercy enemy of sorrow mother ancient  
 ‘Villain death, enemy of mercy, ancient mother of sorrow’ (Dante *Vita Nova* 30)  
 b. Morte villana, **nemica della pietà, antica madre del dolore**

In addition, a split-DP framework is adopted e.g. by Cinque (2003, 2015), where the merge site of relative clauses is located in between the high DP and the lower dP. This essentially in light of the fact that languages with consistent head-final and head-initial order in DPs show relative clauses to be merged between demonstratives (Dem, the topmost projection) and numerals (Num), yielding the two mirroring orders Dem – RC – Num – A – N and N – A – Num – RC – Dem, respectively (also cf. Cinque 2005).

To conclude this section, the second source mentioned above for proposals arguing for the internal articulation of D has to be presented, namely the semantic one. The fundamental starting point is a distinction between two basic types of definiteness already discussed in 2.3.2 in presenting Lyons’s (1999) proposal. Essentially, the range of uses of definite articles in languages like English can be characterized by referring to two basic constructs, *identifiability* and *inclusiveness*, neither of which can be satisfactorily reduced to the other (cf. above for discussion and examples). The same distinction is traced with different labels (*familiarity* and *uniqueness*, respectively) by Schwarz (2009, 2013), where the two notions are investigated a crosslinguistic

perspective. The interesting fact is that, as already noted by Lyons (1999), the two types of definiteness can be encoded differently in several languages. Moreover, the different means of encoding them present striking crosslinguistic regularities. That is, languages that formally distinguish the two types present one of the following situations: a) only one article form is attested, and it is employed for identifiability-/familiarity-based uses, while inclusiveness/uniqueness is expressed by bare nominals; b) two distinct article forms are in use, each specialized for one of the two types of definiteness. In the latter case, an additional generalization is that identifiability/familiarity is typically expressed by a morphologically stronger article, while inclusiveness/uniqueness by a weaker, reduced form. That is, a ‘strong’ and a ‘weak’ article are distinguished, and the notions they encode are referred to by extension as ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ definiteness<sup>9</sup> (cf. Schwarz 2013). This situation is attested in several Germanic varieties, including standard German, where however it is only observed in preposition-determiner contraction contexts, as shown below:

- (65) a. Hans ging **zum** Haus (=*Schwarz* (2009) (8))  
       Hans went to-the<sub>weak</sub> house  
       b. Hans ging zu **dem** Haus  
       Hans went to the<sub>strong</sub> house  
       ‘Hans went to the house.’

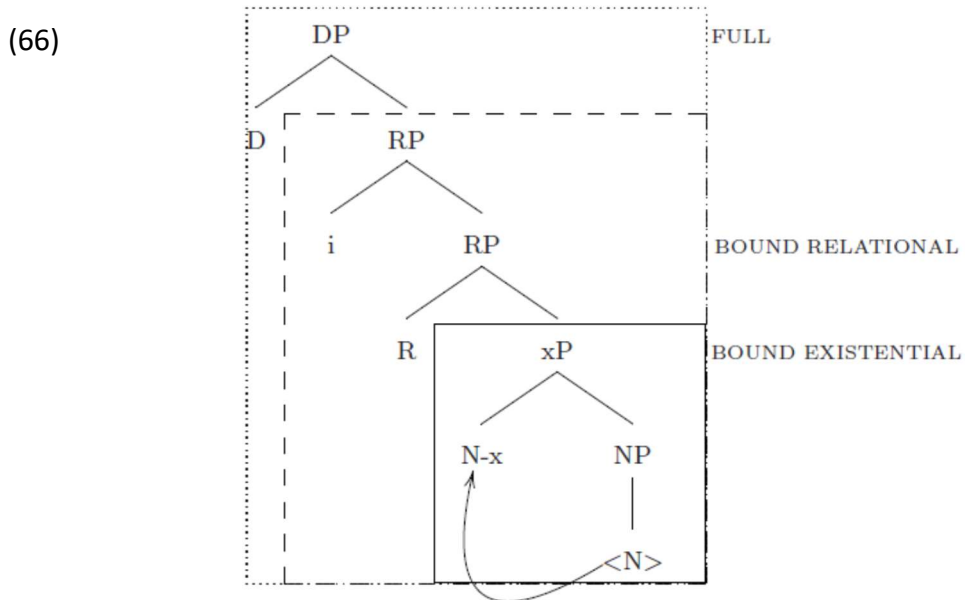
The observed correlation between the distinction of two kinds of definites and the (morphological and/or syntactic) differences in their formal expression has been independently interpreted in morphosyntactic terms in Cheng, Heycock and Zamparelli (2017) and Simonenko (2018). It is impossible to fully do justice to the two analyses here, and a detailed discussion of the arguments would require going into the details

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<sup>9</sup> This notion of ‘weak definiteness’ as synonymous to uniqueness-based definiteness is not to be confused with that of ‘weak definites’ as introduced by Carlson and Sussmann (2005) and Carlson et al. (2006), although the two notions can be argued to be related (cf. ch. 3). At any rate, to avoid confusion, I will refer to Schwarz’s (2009, 2013) notion as ‘uniqueness-based definiteness’, and use ‘weak definiteness’ as in Carlson et al. (2006).

of the formal semantic characterization of the notions involved, something which is well beyond the limits of this chapter. Still, it looks useful to quickly present the key features of the two proposals, to be compared to those discussed above.

In Simonenko (2018), the distinction already proposed in Schwarz (2009, 2013) is further articulated into a three-way opposition distinguishing ‘full’, ‘clitic’, and ‘bound’ determiners. The difference in the morphophonological structure of the article forms is captured in terms of underlying morphosyntactic richness, which is also meant to capture the differences in the information encoded. For the clarity of exposition, the overall typology is represented in (41) below (=Simonenko (2018), p. 23):



Essentially, a ‘full’ determiner is associated to the entire structure in (41), with a topmost D node (whose content is essentially a  $\iota$  operator) dominating a RP, which hosts a pronominal index ‘*i*’ in its Spec position and encodes a generic relation ‘R’ (typically of identity, although the content is partially language-specific) between the index and the denotation of the nominal. The lowest component is xP, which is identified with a projection “a projection that does not involve a maximality

component”, and “only triggers an existential presupposition” (p.22)<sup>10</sup>. ‘Clitic’ determiners instead have a simpler structure, lacking RP. This essentially corresponds to Schwarz’s (2009, 2013) distinction discussed above: ‘full’ determiners are sensitive to the present of an antecedent and of contextually relevant referents, in that they have a pronominal component, and they are formally ‘stronger’. ‘Clitic’ determiners are formally reduced (‘weak’ in Schwarz’s terms) and only encode maximal quantification, i.e. (at the relevant level of abstraction) inclusiveness-/uniqueness-based definiteness. Completing the picture, ‘bound’ determiners are one step down in the scale of formal reduction, in that they are bound morphemes. Simonenko identifies different kinds of bound determiners crosslinguistically, with the major difference related to whether they entail a maximal interpretation (‘bound existential’ in (41)) or instead have some generic relational meaning (‘bound relational’, including RP). Since maximality is not part of the information encoded by bound determiners, such interpretation (which is obligatory in certain languages, like Danish or Swedish) is interpreted as the reflex of the presence of a covert quantificational operator.

The same fundamental idea that more structural levels are involved in encoding the information conveyed by determiners is argued for by Cheng, Heycock and Zamparelli (2017). However, their proposal does not focus on the internal structure of determiners as lexical items. Rather, they split the DP level into two separate positions, s(trong)DP and w(eak)DP, in an explicit parallel to Schwarz’s distinction discussed above. In a nutshell, these two nodes are thought to be active also in absence of explicit determiners, and to be possibly licensed either under lexical government (as proposed by Longobardi (2005) for Romance bare mass and plurals, cf. above) or via

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<sup>10</sup> xP is thought to sit low in the nominal functional spine, below XPs hosting adjectival modifiers. This is motivated essentially by a generalization termed by Simoneko (2018) ‘Edge requirement’: in languages where bound determiners entail a maximal/inclusive interpretation (cf. below), the presence of adjectival modification requires that the higher D node (the ‘edge’ of the structure) be realized by another element. It is unclear whether or not xP is thought to be present in the structure of full (and clitic) determiners. If yes, then this might be problematic for Simonenko’s claim that the different determiner forms can be thought of as spelling out different stretches of structure in nanosyntactic terms, since the relevant stretch would include nodes that are not adjacent.



overt or covert movement of lower elements to the head or the specifier of the empty projection (e.g. a possessor DP/possessive adjective as in English, a Cl(assifier)P in Cantonese, a NP crossing the classifier in Bangla, etc.). Incidentally, such analysis rests on a radically different view of DP than that argued for e.g. by Lyons (1999) or Longobardi (2005, 2008). Both sDP and wDP are thought to be universally present in the structure of nominal expressions, whereas other proposals discussed above thought the presence of DP to be subject to parametric variation.

## 2.4 Conclusion

### 2.4.1 Sum up

This chapter reviewed some fundamental notions in the literature on PPs and on DPs and the category D more in general. Sections 2.2.1 – 2.2.2 discussed how the structure of PPs has been refined with the introduction of projections hosting different kinds of modifiers and the parallel individuation of the two fundamental building blocks of spatial meaning, PLACE and PATH, and their structural realizations. In 2.2.3 and 2.2.4, we saw how this more elaborate PP structure can be used to capture the heterogeneous character of the set of adpositions, allowing a morphosyntactically grounded distinction between those exhibiting a more ‘lexical’ behavior and those with more ‘functional’ properties. Moreover, the discussion touched upon some open issues in the debate on the relation between adpositions and their complements, focusing specifically on what has been here dubbed the PLACE-hypothesis.

The discussion in 2.3.1- 2.3.2 has shown how the DP-hypothesis was originally argued for, and how it has evolved following more general innovations and revisions in syntactic theory in the following decades, specifically with the introduction of elaborate hierarchies of functional heads in the structure of clauses and other syntactic constituents. The shift from a DP identified as ‘the projection for

determiners' to the construal of D as an autonomous grammatical category was shown in 2.3.2 – 2.3.3 to open fundamental questions related to the identification of its content and its universal or parametric availability. The two proposals discussed (Lyons (1999) and Longobardi (2005, 2008)) converge in identifying DP (at least in languages where it is active) as the relevant projection for determining fundamental semantic properties of nominal phrases. Different views can be entertained, however, on how to properly characterize such role, on what are the notions involved, and on whether some of them have to be reduced to more primitive concepts. Finally, section 2.3.4 introduced a further factor of complication, namely the potential split of DP into several projections, motivated either by the parallel with CP in the clausal structure and the need for A' positions at the edge of the nominal phrase, or by the morphosyntactic and semantic distinction of different kinds of determiners.

#### 2.4.2 Research questions

All such topics are more or less directly relevant for the discussion of the Fodom data in chapters 3 and 4. Recall that the phenomenon dealt with in this thesis is a case of productive article-drop which is only observed in PPs. In light of the inherent heterogeneity of the class of adpositions as emerged in the discussion in this chapter, a first question will then be whether or not the nature of the preposition interferes with the distribution of the article. That is, the first step will be to determine if article-drop is restricted by properties of the specific preposition heading the PP, and thus whether it is observed with all or only a subset of prepositions.

A second fundamental question concerns the interpretation of Fodom nouns in the context of article-drop. As seen in 2.3.3, it can be safely assumed that nominal arguments are structurally DPs in Romance. Moreover, this generalization was tied to the well-grounded hypothesis that D is required in order for a nominal phrase to have a reference or denote quantificationally (cf. Longobardi 2005, 2008). In light of these

observations, the interpretation of bare nouns in Fodom PPs can be taken as a first indication of how 'bare' they are. That is, it can be used as a diagnostic to determine whether or not a D level is present in their structure. If articleless PPs turned out to involve DPs after all, this would immediately open the question of how to account for lack of an overt determiner. Different options are *a priori* available, including postulating the presence of a covert article or of an empty D° head licensed by the selecting preposition, or, instead, attributing the phenomenon to properties of the DP and of the head noun.

The third question to be investigated is whether the distribution of article-drop is restricted by properties of the nominal phrase, and specifically the presence of different kinds of nominal modifiers. This last question crucially connects to the first two, in that it will help establish whether the observed lack of determiners is only due to properties of prepositions or (alternatively) of the D layer, or if instead structural features of the nominal phrase more globally are involved.

## Chapter 3

### Article-drop in Fodom PPs

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will extensively discuss Fodom article-drop. Section 3.2 will systematically address different aspects of the phenomenon from a descriptive perspective. The examples provided will allow us to highlight features of article-drop like the kind of adpositions and nouns with which it is observed, the semantic and structural factors constraining its distribution, and fundamental interpretive properties of the construction, focusing on the reading of the bare nouns. As anticipated in 2.4 above, this will enable us to unearth interesting subregularities and set the stage for the theoretical interpretation of the data. In 3.3, the analysis will be presented in a structured way. First, we will present and discuss the central idea underlying the account, together with a comparison with potential alternatives. Then, we will present the system of general assumptions about the structure of DPs and fundamental syntactic mechanisms on which the analysis is built. The account is detailed in 3.3.3, where we will see how the system proposed allows us to capture the desired restrictions on the distribution of the article-drop phenomenon. In 3.3.4, we will show how the interpretive properties of Fodom bare nouns can be captured in a

straightforward way on the basis of the structural analysis proposed. Finally, 3.4 addresses some open issues of the present account, and discusses some speculative ideas about how these could be tackled, together with some hints on possible more general consequences of such tentative hypotheses.

## 3.2 Presentation of the data

### 3.2.1 Overview of the section

This section will provide a systematic exposition of the properties and the distribution of the phenomenon of article-drop in Fodom PPs. The immediate aim is to show how the data collected from the informants relate to the empirical side of the three research questions presented in 2.4 above. This will allow us to highlight the main features of the phenomenon and to set the stage for the analysis in 3.3, where the theoretical correlates of those questions will be taken up and discussed more thoroughly.

For the clarity of exposition, each of the three issues will be addressed separately. Thus, in 3.2.2 the core contexts where article drop is observed are exemplified, together with an overview of the data that allow to determine to what degree the phenomenon can be said to be productive. Moreover, the paragraph will deal with the issue of whether article drop is observed with all or only a subset of Fodom adpositions. The question of the interpretation of nouns under article-drop will be taken up in 3.2.3, where I will argue that the data point to an interpretational ambiguity. Descriptively, bare nouns in Fodom PPs seem to oscillate between a generic and a definite/specific one, although a concrete proposal about how to capture such ambiguity is postponed to section 3.3. Finally, 3.2.4 will discuss the third question presented above, namely to what extent the distribution of article-drop interacts with

structural properties of the nominal phrase involved. As it turns out, this is a crucial issue in characterizing the phenomenon, and it will play a fundamental role in motivating the analysis proposed in 3.3.

In the following paragraphs data from all three questionnaires will be presented. For the sake of readability and ease of exposition, references to the questionnaires and the number of the specific items presented will not be indicated here. The reader is referred to chapter 1 for general information about the structure of questionnaires, and to the Appendix for a complete presentation of the data.

### 3.2.2 Productivity of article-drop

Let us start from the first question discussed in 2.4, namely whether article-drop in Fodom PPs can be regarded as a productive phenomenon calling for a grammatical characterization. Schematically, the alternative would be to consider it nothing but the remnant of a no longer productive strategy, only observed in fixed, idiomatized expressions. At first sight, it could well be the case that frequent, or pragmatically salient combinations of prepositions and nouns got fixed as unitary items in the lexicon. Speculatively, the lack of the article could be connected to the fact that idiomatization could have taken place in a diachronic stage when the distribution of article was more restricted, or alternatively to some process of phonological reduction in sequences no longer analyzed as syntactically complex.

A first indication against the latter approach comes from the fact that article drop is attested not only with simple prepositions ((1a)), but also in the other two possible types of locative PPs in Fodom, namely circumpositional PPs ((1b)) and complex prepositional PPs ((1c)), as mentioned in chapter 1:

- (67) a. l rucksäck l é davò porta  
the backpack =3Msg be.PRES.3 behind door

“The backpack is behind the door”

b. L cián l é jù sot let ite  
the dog =3Msg be.PRES.3 gone under bed in

“The dog has gone under the bed”

c. Daideme a destrè la tovaia sun taula  
help.IMP.2sg=1sg. to spread the tablecloth on.in table

“Help me spread the tablecloth on the table”

Clearly, this is not yet decisive, and it would only make the analysis of article-less PPs a bit more theoretically costly. The point, however, can be significantly strengthened. Indication that these are not just idioms essentially comes from two facts. The first is that the same nouns can appear in articleless combinations with many different adpositional elements. This is shown in (2-4) below, which show as a specimen two additional combinations with the same three nouns in (1a-c), namely *porta* “door”, *let* “bed”, and *taula* “table”, respectively:

(68) a. no sté ilò prò pòrta, vié a te senté ju  
not stay.INF there near door come.IMP.2sg to =2sg. sit.INF down  
“Don’t stand there at the door, come take a seat!”

b. tò la cariega che l é davánt pòrta  
take.IMP.2sg the chair that =3sg be.PRES.3 before door  
“Take the chair in front of the door”

(69) a. l é soura let via  
=3sg be.PRES.3 over bed away  
“(S)he/It is on/all over the bed”

b. vegnì fora de longo da sot let fora  
come.IMP.2pl out right.away from under bed out  
“Come straight out from under the bed!”

(70) a. davò cëna son levèi su a ciantè (di)ntourn taula

after dinner be.PRES.1pl rise up to sing around table  
 “After the dinner we started singing standing around the table”  
 b. il lampadario che l é soura taula l é nuof  
 the chandelier that =3Msg be.PRES.3 over table =3Msg be.PRES.3 new  
 “The chandelier over the table is new”

A second argument against interpreting these PPs as lexically fixed expressions comes from a specular observation. That is, not only the same nouns can occur in different articleless PPs, but also adpositions can combine with different bare nouns. To prove this, let us consider the adpositions exemplified in (1-4) above, namely *davò* “behind”, *prò* “near”, *davánt* “in front of”, *sot (ite/fòra)* “under”, *sun* “on”, *(di)ntourn* “around”, *soura* “over”. For all these, the following sentences exemplify their combination with two other nouns in addition to those with which they were shown to combine above:

- (71) a. jon ad ombrià davò ciampanil  
 go.PRES.1pl to shade behind bell.tower  
 “Let’s go in the shade behind the bell tower”  
 b. i pacchi podéi i lascé davò usc  
 the box.pl can.2pl =3pl leave.INF behind door  
 “You can leave the boxes behind the door”
- (72) a. (dam)prò ciampanil l é n elber  
 near bell.tower =3Msg be.PRES.3 a tree  
 “There is a tree near the bell tower”  
 b. per rué prò gliejia, jì davò strada  
 for arrive.INF near church go.Imp.2sg behind road  
 “Follow the road (=walk along the road) to get to the church”
- (73) a. l é senté davánt viere de cesadafuoch  
 =3Msg be.PRES.3 sit.PTCP before window of kitchen  
 “He’s sitting in front of the kitchen window”



- b. I eva tropa jent davánt gliejia  
 =3Msg be.IMPf.3 much crowd before church  
 “There were a lot of people in front of the church”
- (74) a. I cián I dormiva sot taula ite  
 the dog =3Msg sleep.IMPf.3 under table inside  
 “The dog was sleeping under the table”
- b. ilò sot strada I eva la cèsa de mia mèda  
 there under road =3Msg be.IMPf.3 the house of my aunt  
 “Over there below the road was my aunt’s place”
- (75) a. son jus sun tèt per vedei le stèle  
 be.PRES.1pl gone on.in roof for watch.INF the star.pl  
 “We went on the roof to watch the stars”
- b. vinc chi che se met per prum sun cariega  
 win.PRES.3 who that =3.REFL put.PRES.3 for first on.in chair  
 “The winner is whoever gets first on the chair”
- (76) a. I é na bela sié ntourn gliejia  
 =3Fsg be.PRES.3 a nice hedge around church  
 “There is a nice hedge around the church”
- b. I é na sié ntourn cèsa  
 =3Fsg be.PRES.3 a hedge around home  
 “A hedge runs around (our/the) house”
- (77) a. I é valgugn uciei che sgola soura ciampanil  
 =3Msg be.PRES.3 some bird.pl that fly.PRES.3 over bell.tower  
 “There’s some birds flying over the bell tower”
- b. M è desmentiè la fana soura fuoc  
 =1sg have.PRES.1sg forget.PTCP the pan over fire  
 “I left the pot on the stove”

Now, it is pretty clear from examples (1-11) that we are not dealing with just a handful of fixed expressions. Rather, it looks like Fodom has a productive mechanism yielding articleless PPs. In passing, note that, beside the possible combination of different nouns with different adposition, another fact pointing to this conclusion is that the meaning of the expressions exemplified above looks straightforwardly compositional. Not in one of the 33 combinations above is the overall spatial meaning different from that obtained combining the meaning of the adposition with that of the noun (abstracting away from the exact interpretation of the noun, on which see 3.2.3). A fundamental question is then to what extent the phenomenon can be held to be productive.

As a matter of fact, it appears that some qualifications are in order. Up to now, I have not precisely characterized the items entering the construction. From the adpositional side, it looks like nothing much needs to be said. Recall from 2.4 that a crucial issue was to determine whether there was any restriction of the kind of adpositions involved in articleless PPs. Data reviewed above indicate that not only the type of PP, but also the identity of the specific adposition entering the construction is neutral with respects to possibility of dropping the article. Taking Pellegrini's (1974) list of Fodom spatial adpositions as a reference, original data collected for this thesis integrated with textual searches on the TALL database (cf. ch. 1) support the claim that virtually any Fodom spatial PP is compatible with article-drop in its complement. Thus, as mentioned above and in chapter 1, the phenomenon is attested with simple and complex prepositions and with circumpositions. Moreover, no significative difference is observed in simple prepositional PPs between 'lexical'/AxPart-like and 'functional'/generic items (cf. ch. 2 for the distinction). Thus, not only 'lexical' Ps like those e.g. in (5-11), but also a generic locative P like *nte* "in" allow article-drop, as shown below:

(78) a. co l a scomencé l temporal sonva duc nte let  
 when =3Msg have.PRES.3 begin.INF the storm be.IMPF.1pl all.pl in bed

“When the storm began we were all in bed”

b. nos son            bele    chilò nte boteiga  
we be.PRES.1pl already here in shop

“We’re already here in/at the shop”

c. l        ava            da jì        fora nte stala  
=3Fsg have.IMPF.3 to go.INF out in stable

“She had to go out to/in the stable”

On the other hand, the same insensitiveness is not observed when considering the nominal part of the construction. To this point, I have simply referred to “bare nouns”. However, recall from the Introduction that, more precisely, the relevant construction involves count singular nouns not introduced by an overt determiner. Obviously, this has to be distinguished from bare mass or plural nouns, which are frequently possible in Romance with an indefinite/generic interpretation (cf. Longobardi (2005, 2008) and ch. 2). At the same time, it turns out that not all singular count nouns are allowed to enter Fodom articleless PPs. For one thing, there seem to be some general semantic constraints. For instance, nouns with animate referent, either human or not, seem to be banned from the construction. This is exemplified in (12) below:

(79) a. l Luca    l        é            chël davánt a \*(l)    preve  
the Luca =3Mmsg be.PRES.3 that before to \*(the) priest

“Luca is that one in front of the priest”

b. nsëra    l        s            a            ndormenzé    soura \*(l)    cián  
last.night =3Mmsg =3.REFL have.PRES.3 get.asleep.PTCP over \*(the) dog

“Last night he fell asleep over the dog”

As a side note, this seems to be paralleled by cases like that in (13) below. Person names in Fodom are systematically used with a(n) expletive, according to Longobardi (1994) and ff.) definite article, which cannot be dropped in the context of a locative PP:

- (80) adès no te l veighe, l é davò \*(l) Marco  
 now not =2sg =3sg see.PRES.2sg =3Msg be.PRES.3 behind \*(the) Marco  
 “You can’t see him/it now, he/it is behind Marco”

Thus, it looks like only a subset of nouns can occur as bare complements of Fodom PPs. Moreover, examples like those in (12-13) point to some kind of semantic restriction. As a matter of fact, both data collected in the questionnaires and the information given in Pellegrini’s (1974) description suggest that there are essentially two semantic types of nouns recurring in the construction. Roughly, their referent is either a) an object which is prototypically a part of a conventional location, like the table and the stove in a kitchen, the bed and the wardrobe in a bedroom, the door for any kind of room, etc., or b) a place or space which is prototypically part of the landscape (at least in the Fodom valley), like a salient part or building of a village (e.g. the main square, the church, etc.), or a landmark (e.g. the wood, the road, the bridge, etc.)<sup>11</sup>. This is exemplified in (14a) and (14b) respectively, with a list of nouns attested in articleless PPs:

- (81) a. SALIENT OBJECTS: *porta/usc* “door”, *tèt* “roof”, *let* “bed”, *almièrch* “wardrobe”, *taula* “table”, *fuoch/fornèl* “stove”, *vière* “window”, *ciauna* “room”, *solè* “terrace”, *cujina* “kitchen”, *ciaunademur* “cellar”, *majon* “stable” ...  
 b. SALIENT PLACES/SPACES: *plaza* “square”, *cèsa* “house”, *gliejia* “church”, *scòla* “school”, *boteiga* “shop”, *strada* “road”, *bòsch* “wood” ...

The two lists of nouns are represented as open classes. The rationale behind this is that, to the extent that the rough characterization above proves to be on the right

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<sup>11</sup> Descriptively, nouns identifying specific rooms could potentially be part of either list, as they can be construed as parts of the house as well as salient locations. Given the observational character of this general characterization, this issue will be set aside in what follows.

track, the null hypothesis is that any noun fitting either of the two descriptions is a potential candidate for entering the articleless PP-construction. Clearly, determining the exact list of nouns capable of doing so would require a systematic investigation on a very high number of items, something which is out of the present possibilities. Moreover, it is arguably not central to the analysis of the phenomenon whether or not a specific lexical entry turns out to be part of the list or not, once the deeper, abstract regularities have been unearthed. Rather, it proves more interesting to focus on what is not possible. Consider the following two examples:

- (82) a. *vie*                    *ju*    *da*    \*(*l'*)    *altalena*  
           come.IMP.2sg down from \*(the) swing  
           “Get down from the swing!”
- b. \**son*                *che* *rue*                    *da*    *bar* *ju*  
           be.PRES.1sg that come.PRES.1sg from bar down  
           “I’m coming down from the bar”

The ungrammaticality of article-drop in these two sentences is interesting in the context of the present discussion. That is, both *altalena* “swing” and *bar* “bar” could be argued to fit the two semantic types outlined above. A swing can be construed as an object which is a prototypical part of a location, e.g. a playground or a private garden, and a bar is one of the shops typically present even in a small town or village. Nonetheless, they resist article-drop where other nouns of comparable semantic class allow it. I thus take these examples to argue in favor of considering the lexical semantics of the specific nouns involved as a guiding criterion, and not as a source of explanation. Rather, I argue that what is central in determining the distributional behavior of the relevant group of nouns is to be identified with grammatical/morphosyntactic properties. Clearly, there could be independent factors at play, e.g. the fact that they are most likely loans from standard Italian. But since, as seen, there are good reasons to take these PPs not to be simply stored in the lexicon as

such, these observations arguably point to the same conclusion, namely that we are dealing with a list of nouns sharing some morphosyntactic properties. Different factors can be relevant in favoring or disfavoring the membership of a specific noun to such list, but they are insufficient as explanations in themselves.

This brings us back to the central question of this paragraph, namely whether or not article-drop in Fodom PPs can be regarded as a productive phenomenon. In light of the discussion above, I suggest that a dichotomy between idiomatic expressions and fully productive constructions is too rigid to apply to the case at hand. The conclusion for which I have argued is that our phenomenon cannot be regarded as a merely lexical one. Since I do not aim at a precise collocation of Fodom article-drop along an explicit scale of productivity, this is sufficient for present purposes. The crucial point is that there are solid arguments in favor of taking grammatical regularities to be at play. The fact that these can (descriptively) interact or correlate with specific lexical semantic content is of no surprise, considering e.g. the exceptional distributional properties of specific common nouns like *casa* “house/home” (cf. e.g. Longobardi (1996), Rossi (2016)).

Summing up, the data reviewed in this paragraph show that the same noun can occur articleless with different kinds of adpositions, and that the identity of the specific adposition does not interfere with article-drop. All the combinations presented were shown to have a straightforwardly compositional meaning. Moreover, although the nouns occurring in the construction show interesting analogies with respect to properties of their referent, whether or not a noun allows article-drop was proved to be not simply a matter of lexical semantics. I take these arguments to justify the morphosyntactic approach to the analysis of Fodom articleless PPs developed in this thesis. In the next paragraph, we will begin to review data that allow more precise claims about the structural properties of the construction.

### 3.2.3 Bare nouns and their interpretation

Based on the above discussion, we can safely claim that an analysis of articleless Fodom PPs needs to focus on the morphosyntactic properties of the construction. Moreover, since the kind of PP and the nature of the adposition were shown to be neutral with respect to the distribution of the phenomenon, we now know that it is properties of the nominal component that we should focus on. As anticipated in 2.4 and in 3.2.1 above, this is precisely what we will do in this and the following paragraphs.

The first step to be made is also the most obvious one. Namely, since no overt determiner is observed in the construction at hand, should we take a D level to be absent from the structure altogether? It is necessary to address this question by putting it in a wider context. In other words, since much variation is observed across languages in the availability of overt determiners and their interpretive correlates, the issue has to be connected to the more general properties of determiners and of the D category. This is where the discussion in 2.3.3 on Longobardi's (1994, 1996, 2005, 2008) work on D comes in handy. The relevant point is that Romance nominal phrases allow solid generalizations on the relation between their structural make up and their semantic interpretation. Slightly simplifying, such generalizations are elegantly reduced by Longobardi (2005, 2008) to the following biconditional:

(83)  $D \leftrightarrow$  denotation ('reference' or 'quantification')

This reciprocally connects the presence of a D level in the structure of a nominal phrase with its possible interpretation as a referential expression, i.e. as directly identifying an object (as with proper names), or as a quantificational one, through the mediation of an operator (as e.g. in DPs introduced by a definite article).

In the context of this discussion, such association allows some general expectations with respect to the possible interpretation of the noun in articleless Fodom PPs. That

is, given (17), if a D level is absent (as the lack of a determiner superficially suggests), we expect it to be impossible for the noun to have a ‘denotation’ in the above sense. Namely, in light of the reciprocal implication between an active D, reference, and quantification, a Romance nominal phrase lacking a D-level is expected to be severely limited in its distribution and range of possible interpretations. Paired to the bone, the line of reasoning pursued here is the following: if these expectations are not fulfilled, then, even in absence of a precise and explicit characterization of the semantic interpretation of Fodm bare nouns one can take a D-level to be somehow active<sup>12</sup>. Now, the former prediction would appear to be borne out, in that article-drop is only attested in PP constructions in Fodm. Crucially, however, the latter does not. Building on Longobardi’s generalizations, a nominal phrase lacking D should behave essentially as an open predicate. This expectation is contradicted by several arguments.

The first argument is a general one. For the sake of concreteness, let us call the hypothetical D-less nominal phrase in articleless Fodm PPs an NP. Now, it can be safely assumed that any common noun minimally projects an NP, and that at that level it will denote a property (or, alternatively, the set of elements bearing that property), i.e. it will be semantically a predicate (cf. e.g. Longobardi 2005, 2008). This is standardly conceived of as an inherent feature of common nouns, independent of their semantics and of the syntactic context. Therefore, if the bare nouns observed in Fodm PPs were NPs, the construction should be in principle accessible to any common noun, contrary to fact (cf. (13) and (16) above). Clearly, one could take a semantic restriction to be at play, but, as shown above, the list of nouns that can occur in Fodm articleless PPs cannot be satisfactorily individuated on the base of their lexical semantics alone. As argued, this points to morphosyntactic properties as the relevant factor. However, it is unclear how such differences could be effective if Fodm bare nouns involve no functional structure on top of NP. Therefore, this

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<sup>12</sup> Clearly, the validity of the argument crucially hinges on the biconditional above. cf. below for a general argument in favor of this approach.



argument can be taken to support the presence of additional functional projections in articleless Fodom PPs.

Moving on, consider (18) below. The example shows that bare nouns in articleless PPs allow resumption by a pronoun in Fodom:

- (84) chi élo                      che l    a                      metù    i    ciaužèi sun **let**?  
 who be.PRES.3=3sg that =3sg have.PRES.3 put.PTCP the shoe.pl on.in bed  
 L    é                      dut paz!  
 =3sg be.PRES.3 all dirty  
 “Who’s put the shoes on the bed? It’s all dirty!”

Moreover, all informants agree in accepting the sentence under the interpretation that the clitic pronoun in the second sentence refers to ‘that specific bed just mentioned’. Arguably, both facts are unexpected if the bare noun is nothing but a free predicate. On the contrary, it looks like *let* in (18) is capable of introducing a referent in the discourse, something which in Romance can be assumed to require a D level.

The third argument strengthens this conclusion, and at the same time allows us to be a bit more precise about the interpretation of Fodom bare nouns. In principle, a new referent could be introduced either by a definite or by an indefinite nominal phrase. Examples like those below, however, strongly suggest that the noun gets a definite interpretation:

- (85) a. l                      é                      senté    davánt viere    de cesadafuoch                      (=7a)  
 =3Msg be.PRES.3 sit.PTCP before window of kitchen  
 “He’s sitting in front of the kitchen window”  
 b. nte almièrch    de mia ciauna è                      bele    cialé,  
 in wardrobe of my room have.PRES.1sg already watch.PTCP  
 tuo guánt no l                      eva

your dress not =3sg be.IMP.F.3

“I have already checked behind in the wardrobe in my bedroom, your dress wasn’t there”

c. per vedei le stèle i é jus sun tèt de cèsa  
for watch.INF the star.pl =3pl be.3 gone on.in roof of home  
“They went up on the roof of the house to watch the stars”

In these sentences, the articleless noun is modified by an ‘argumental’ PP (cf. the discussion in 3.2.4 and 3.3 below). The object identified by the different nouns is construed as specific element, the only of that kind to be part of the object/space indicated by the PP argument. Thus, (19a) refers to the only window in the kitchen, (19b) to the (obviously) unique roof of the house, and (19c) to the only wardrobe that is found in the speaker’s bedroom. This is supported by the fact that all informants accepted (19a-c) as translations of Italian sentences featuring a definite article that are only felicitous under a definite and specific interpretation of the PP. More precisely, given the shared uniqueness presupposition, it looks like Fodom articleless PPs can at least sometimes get a definite interpretation, and that the relevant notion of definiteness is that based on uniqueness/inclusiveness (cf. 2).

It seems safe to conclude that these facts strongly argue against taking Fodom bare nouns to be structurally NPs. Moreover, there are good reasons to take a definite interpretation to be available, which again arguably points to the presence of an active D-layer, despite appearances. This conclusion can be argued for based on theoretical economy. That is, article-drop with countable nouns in Fodom PPs is, as seen, a restricted phenomenon. On the other hand, the biconditional in (17) above about the general properties of Romance DPs is supported by much wider patterns and interlinguistic comparisons (cf. e.g. Longobardi (1994, 1996, 2005)). Therefore, since the presence of bare count nouns with a definite reading seems to contradict a well-established generalization, it looks *a priori* preferable to thoroughly check whether it is possible to find an independent explanation. That is, before claiming that Fodom data

invalidate the pan-Romance association between D and reference/quantification (in Longobardi's (2005) sense, cf. above), we should first check whether it is possible to 'explain away' the apparent contradiction. The most immediate way to do so is to attribute the source of the problem to some specific property of the constructions at hand. This would allow us to claim that a D-level is indeed present despite appearances, and that it is a specific property of Fodom article-less PPs that they somehow license/identify it without any overt element realizing it. This is essentially the line of reasoning at the basis of the analysis proposed in 3.4.

To provide further support to this approach, let us discuss a potential alternative. As said, Fodom data arguably show definite interpretation without an overt realization of DP. While still assuming Longobardi's (2005/2008) generalizations to hold for Romance or, at the very least, for Western Romance, there is at least another possible way one could go. While denying that the Fodom data fundamentally contradict the generalization, one could place their exceptional character in the mechanisms of semantic interpretation. That is, one could hypothesize that articleless Fodom PPs are exceptional in that they allow some kind of semantic operation to take place, taking the denotation of a truly bare NP and yielding the observed interpretation. I believe that there are essentially two arguments making this second option less preferable. First, even stressing the exceptional character of the required semantic operations, positing them would still mean allowing the generally valid biconditional to be 'suspended' in this specific case. Arguably, this looks a heavier assumption than the one opted for here. Second, an entirely semantics-based account would open the issue of how to properly restrict the application of the relevant operations to the specific constructions at hand, which seems difficult without recurring to *ad hoc* solutions. Moreover, as will be shown in the next paragraph, the distribution of article drop is subject to clear structural restrictions. This is telling, as it points once again to the fundamentally morphosyntactic nature of the phenomenon. Thus, all things being equal, it looks preferable to keep the well-established biconditional in (17) in place, and look for a structural interpretation of the facts, as will be done in 3.4.

Closing this paragraph, another relevant aspect of the interpretation of Fodom articleless PPs has to be mentioned for completeness. That is, data indicate that there is at least another interpretation admitted by Fodom bare nouns. Apart from the definite reading, a generic reading appears to be available as well. Support for this claim comes from the fact that informants sometimes explicitly choose an interpretation which presupposes sloppy identification under ellipsis (cf. e.g. Carlson and Sussmann (2005) and Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2011) for a discussion of this test). For instance, consider (20):

- (86) I Carlo I a desmentié I rucsòch davò porta de ciauna,  
 the Carlo =3sg have.3 forgotten the backpack behind door of room  
 e la Martina ence  
 and the Martina too  
 “Carlo forgot his backpack behind the bedroom door, and Martina did too”

All informants accept an interpretation of the sentence according to which Carlo and Martina forgot a backpack each, and the two backpack are each behind the door of their respective bedroom (an example of a possible usage context was given, mentioning that Carlo and Martina are two siblings, each with her/his own bedroom). Arguably, if a definite specific interpretation were the only one possible for Fodom articleless PPs, the only option available would be to interpret (20) as involving only one bedroom door. This observation is paralleled by cases like (21) below, where the most salient interpretation of the sentence (and of its Italian counterpart, from which it was translated) is one where each person included in the first-plural pronoun was in their respective bed:

- (87) co I a scomencé I temporal sonva duc nte let (=12a)  
 when =3Msg have.3 begun the storm be.IMPF.1pl all.pl in bed  
 “When the storm began we were all in bed”

Again, this contrasts with what was observed for the examples above, showing a definite interpretation of the bare noun. If the same interpretation were applied to *nte let* in (21), the only possible reading would be that all people mentioned were in one specific bed, which is particularly odd, given the presence of the universal quantifier *duc*. Thus, it looks like we have to acknowledge an interpretive ambiguity of Fodom bare nouns, which can be argued to allow both a definite and specific reading, and a generic one.

This claim can be supported by two arguments. Intuitively, a possible generic interpretation of Fodom bare nouns fits well with the fact mentioned in 3.2.2 that the nouns allowed to enter the construction are characterizable as identifying objects and places typically used as spatial references. That is, it has been observed (cf. Krifka et al. (1995), Carlson and Sussmann (2005), Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2011), Aguilar-Guevara et al. (2014), etc.) that the two interpretive features mentioned above, i.e. the possibility of a sloppy identity reading and number neutrality, are frequently associated to generic uses of nouns that presuppose shared information about the typical properties of their referent. This observation will be capitalized upon in the analysis in 3.3, and we need not dwell on the details here. Still, the relevant point is that the referents of Fodom bare nouns share the property of acting as prototypical points of spatial reference in domestic or external space, and this can be argued to favor the possibility of a generic interpretation.

The second argument more directly comes from the examination of the answers given by the informants. If Fodom bare nouns are indeed potentially ambiguous between a definite and specific interpretation and a generic one, as suggested above, then it is reasonable to expect that where the pragmatic context or some other factor does not favor one over the other, some oscillation in the judgements is observed. This prediction is borne out. For instance, (22) below was presented together with a question asking whether it could be interpreted as referring to a specific table.

- (88) L é meio no mëte i pòc pesòc sun taula, la se rompe  
=3sg be.3 better not put.INF the boxes heavy on.in table =3Fsg =3REFL break.3  
“It’s better not to put heavy boxes on the table, or it will break”

As expected, both positive and negative answers were given. Arguably, the fact that a speaker answered ‘no’ to the question above indicates that a generic, non-specific reading is available as well. Moreover, note that the speaker giving this answer agreed with the others on the judgements above. Thus, a reasonable way to make sense of this result is to hypothesize that the potential ‘generic’ flavor of the overall sentence might have rendered a generic reading of the bare noun particularly salient for some speakers, to the point that one informant refused a specific/definite reading, probably as pragmatically odd. Obviously, this is speculative, and no quantitative support for this interpretation can be given. Still, I believe that the very fact that one gets mixed results in contexts like (22) but not in others suggests that indeed an interpretive ambiguity is at play.

Summing up, this paragraph has reviewed arguments against taking Fodom articleless PPs to involve simple NPs. Moreover, interpretive properties of bare nouns in the construction were discussed that point to the presence of a D-layer in their structure. Given the lack of an overt determiner, the fundamental question is then what realizes/identifies the relevant D. Since the discussion up to now has pointed to the morphosyntactic nature of the phenomenon, a crucial step will be to better examine its distribution, in order to identify the syntactic variables at play.

### 3.2.4 Structural restrictions on article-drop

As seen above, the type of PP construction and the identity of the adposition are neutral with respect to the distribution of article-drop, since the phenomenon is

attested in all possible frames and with all P items. On the other hand, structural properties of the nominal component of the construction clearly restrict the possibility of dropping the article. Up to now, we have only considered singular, non-modified bare nouns, with the exception of nouns with argumental PP-modifiers presented in (19). As it turns out, these are the only possible cases where article-drop is attested. That is, article-drop is banned whenever the complement of the adposition is a plural noun or is modified (again, with the exception of argumental PPs). In this paragraph we will systematically examine the relevant contrasts.

Let us start with non-modified plural nouns. In (23-25) below, examples ‘a’ show article-drop with a singular, non-modified noun, while examples ‘b’ show how the same nouns cannot occur bare in their plural forms:<sup>13</sup>

- (89) a. l      é      na sié      ntourn cèsa      (=10b)  
           =3Fsg be.3 a    hedge around home  
           “A hedge runs around (our/the) house”
- b.i    orsi no i    rua      daspès damprò \*(le) ciese  
           the bears not =3pl arrive.3 often    near    \*(the) houses  
           “Bears don’t often come close to the houses”
- (90) a. mio fiol l      é    ju    sun    ciauna  
           my son =3Msg be.3 gone up.in room  
           “My son went upstairs in his room”
- b. l      é    puocia lum nte \*(le)    ciaune  
           =3Msg be.3 little    light in    \*(the) room

---

<sup>13</sup> With the relevant definite interpretation. That is, bare plurals are allowed in Fodom as in many Romance languages but are only interpreted as specific or generic indefinites (cf. Longobardi (2005)). In the examples above the two cases can be kept distinct, as all judgements were given on Fodom sentences paired with their Italian translation, which isolated the relevant interpretation. Moreover, note that interpreting the nouns above as bare plurals would be particularly unnatural, in lack of pragmatic context or further modification, as e.g. in “it’s better not to sit behind doors *that large*” (which would be a more natural context for a bare-plural reading of (25) above).

“There’s little light in the rooms”

(91) a. l rucksäck l é davò porta  
the backpack =3Msg be.PRES.3 behind door

“The backpack is behind the door”

b. l é meio no se senté davò \*(le) porte / \*(i) usc  
=3Msg be.3 better not =3REFL sit.INF behind \*(the) doors / \*(the) doors

“It’s better not to sit behind doors”

As predictable, article drop is also incompatible with nouns introduced by numerals (for the ease of exposition, in the next examples the singular non-modified version of the correspondent noun is omitted):

(92) l é tropa mufa davò \*(le) doi almierch  
=3Msg be.3 much mold behind \*(the) two wardrobes

“There’s a lot of mold behind the two wardrobes”

(93) i lenzuoi i è metus su i doi lec / \*sun doi lec  
the sheets =3Mpl have.1sg put.pl on the two beds / \*on.in two beds

“I left the sheets on the two beds”

(94) l eva n gran polver sot (a) \*(i) doi lec  
=3Msg be.IMPF.3 a large dust under (to) \*(the) two beds

“There was a lot of dust under the two beds”

Coming to adjectival modification, article-drop is impossible whenever the noun is modified by either a prenominal (cf. (29-30)) or a postnominal (cf. (31-32)) adjective:

(95) 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 corridor]”

(96) i lenzuoi i è metus su l ultimo let / \*sun ultimo let  
the sheets =3Mpl have.1sg put.pl on the last bed / \*on.in last bed



“I left the sheets on the last bed [e.g. in a row]”

(97) te l ciape sot \*(l) let pico ite  
=2sg =3sg find.2sg under \*(the) bed little inside  
“You’ll find it under the small bed”

(98) l rucsòch l é davò \*(la) porta rossa  
the backpack =3Msg be.PRES.3 behind \*(the) door red  
“The backpack is behind the red door”

The fact that the restriction is attested independently from the pre- or post-nominal position of the adjective is interesting, as it can be argued to provide additional information about the structure of the nominal complement in Fodom articleless PPs. In light of Cinque’s (2010) distinction of two structural sources for adjectival modification (i.e. merge in the Spec of a functional XP dominating NP or as a reduced relative clause structure in a position still higher in the nominal projection), we can take (29-32) to indicate that overt material in both merge sites is incompatible with article-drop in Fodom. Moving on, article-drop is also banned when the noun is modified by a relative clause:

(99) l on compré nte \*(la) boteiga che i a giourì nte plaza  
=3sg have.1pl bought in \*(the) shop that =3pl have.3 opened in square  
“We bought it in the shop they opened in the square”

(100) l cián l dorm dagnëra sot \*(la) taula che n ei scinché  
the dog =3Msg sleep.IMP.3 always under \*(the) table that =1pl have.2pl given  
“The dog always sleeps under the table you gave us”

Under the assumption that all different kinds of relative clauses are underlied by one and the same basic structure (cf. Cinque 2003, 2015), the contrast observed with restrictive relative clauses as in (24) can be taken as representative of relative clauses

more in general. In the context of this discussion, generalizing this observation is sufficient, since we are essentially focussing on the structural position where the different kinds of nominal modifiers interfering with article-drop belong. As mentioned above, this is essentially used as a diagnostic tool to unearth structural properties of Fodom bare nouns in the articleless PP construction, which will then provide the basis for the analysis in 3.4.

Finally, as mentioned, PP-modifiers have mixed effects. In some cases (cf. (35)=(19) above) they are compatible with article-drop, while in others they do not (cf. ((36-37)):

(101) a. l                      é                      senté              davánt viere              de cesadafuoch  
 (=19)

=3Msg be.PRES.3 sit.PTCP before window of kitchen

“He’s sitting in front of the kitchen window”

b. nte almièrch de mia ciauna è                      bele              cialé,  
 in wardrobe of my room have.PRES.1sg already watch.PTCP  
 tuo guánt no l              eva  
 your dress not =3sg be.IMP.3

“I have already checked behind in the wardrobe in my bedroom”

c. per vedei              le stèle i              é              jus sun tèt de cèsa  
 for watch.INF the star.pl =3pl be.3 gone on.in roof of home  
 “They went up on the roof of the house to watch the stars”

(102) i              piac i              é              su \*(la) taola coi              piesc de fiern  
 the dishes =3Mpl be.3 on \*(the) table with.the feet of iron

“The dishes are on the table with iron legs”

(103) 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”

As suggested above, there is a way to make sense of this alternation. As a matter of fact, the two cases can be independently distinguished on the basis of the relation holding between the noun and the PP-modifier. That is, in (35) the PPs encode a possession/mereological relation, and is thus possibly interpretable as ‘argumental’ (cf. e.g. (Alexiadou, Haegeman, and Stavrou (2008) for a ‘possessor argument’ in the nominal projection). On the other hand, other PP-modifiers like those in (36-37) may be construed as parallel to adjuncts in the clausal spine. To the extent that this structural distinction in the merge site of different kinds of PP-modifiers (which once again builds on the parallel between clausal and nominal structure) is tenable, it can form the basis of a principled analysis of their mixed effect with respect to article-drop. Moreover, this line of reasoning fits well with the general approach to the Fodom data delineated in this section, which points to a morphosyntactic (and ultimately structural) origin of Fodom article-drop.

This concludes the descriptive overview of the data. In the next section, the issues raised up to now will be taken up and integrated in a uniform picture in the analysis of the phenomenon.

### 3.3 Analysis – Fodom bare nouns as ‘slim’ DPs

#### 3.3.1 Summary of the explananda

For the sake of clarity, it is useful to recall the key features of article-drop in Fodom locative PPs individuated in section 3.2.3, before diving into the analysis. As argued above, article-drop in Fodom locative PPs should be regarded as a productive phenomenon. This is because articleless PPs are not fixed P-N sequences stored as such in the lexicon, since a single noun and a single adposition allow multiple (not clearly restricted) combinations. There thus appears to be some grammatical regularity underlying the construction, which will be captured in the analysis. At the same time,

not all nouns can appear as bare complements of spatial PPs. Essentially, two general classes of suitable nouns can be descriptively identified based on the (extralinguistic) properties of their referent. On the other hand, lexical semantics is not sufficient, as some nouns that seem to be part of such classes still resist article-drop. This points to the conclusion that what bare nouns in Fodom PPs share is a specific morphosyntactic property, specified in the lexicon.

As regards the structural properties of the construction, we argued against identifying the complements of articleless PPs with a simple NP, based on two facts. First, if the construction involved NPs, we would have no clear way to capture the morphosyntactic difference between nouns that allow article-drop and those that do not. It is reasonable to assume that all common nouns minimally project an NP, and there would be no functional projections for the relevant differences to become effective. The second argument is based on the fact that bare nouns in the construction at least sometimes allow resumption by a pronoun and identify a specific and unique referent in the relevant context. Both properties are not compatible with the open-predicate interpretation expected for Romance NPs. Thus, assuming Longobardi's (1994, 1996, 2005, 2008) generalizations on D to hold for all Romance, these features were argued to indicate the presence of additional functional structure in Fodom bare nouns, including a D-layer. Moreover, the structural restrictions on the distribution of article-drop identified in 3.2.4 are particularly informative on the structure of Fodom bare adpositional complements. As seen, article-drop is allowed only with singular nouns. Moreover, the noun can only be modified by what we referred to as 'argumental' PPs. On the other hand, pre- and post-nominal adjectives, numerals, relative clauses, and 'non-argumental' PPs make article-drop impossible.

As for the semantic properties of the construction, Fodom bare nouns show an interpretive ambiguity. Alongside the definiteness/specificity properties mentioned above, they also allow a generic interpretation, as shown by the fact that they are sometimes compatible with sloppy identification under ellipsis and number neutrality.

To sum up, we can then identify the following properties as the main points that our analysis will have to address:

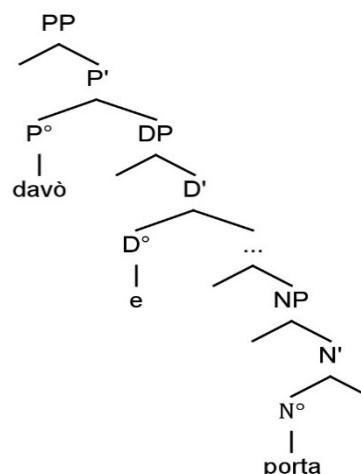
- (104) a. Article-drop with count nouns in Fodom PPs is productive, but only with a specific set of nouns
- b. Interpretive properties indicate an active D-layer, but with no overt realization
- c. Article-drop is incompatible with plural Number and nominal modifiers, except ‘argumental’ PPs
- d. Bare nouns in Fodom PPs are ambiguous between a definite and a generic reading

### 3.3.2 The fundamental idea and how to execute it: sorting the toolbox

The next paragraph will systematically take care of (38a-d). But first, I would like to lay out the fundamental idea underlying the analysis, and to explicit the fundamental assumptions on which it is developed. As discussed above, we have good reasons to take a D layer to be active, even in absence of an overt determiner. This immediately raises the question of what realizes/licenses D in Fodom articleless PPs. The idea I will argue for is that the noun itself does, under a specific structural configuration (i.e. in absence of plural Number features and nominal modifiers other than argumental PPs, cf. above). Recall that we identified the source of Fodom article-drop with some morphosyntactic properties shared by all and only the set of nouns capable of entering the construction. The proposal is then to identify such property with the fact that these specific nouns can license a D node as well. At this stage, I use ‘realize as a neutral term. To anticipate, the specific implementation of the idea I will argue for involves feature-spell out as the relevant mechanism. Before discussing the details, however, I would like to compare this general approach to two immediately imaginable alternatives.

In fact, positing certain nouns to be able to ‘realize’ higher functional nodes like D may at first sight seem an unnecessary complication. Two more conservative options come to mind, which exploit tools already available in syntactic theory. The first alternative could be to take the P° head to play a central role. That is, the adposition could select its nominal complement and simultaneously license an empty D°. Interestingly, an analogous proposal is advanced in terms of incorporation of empty D° into P° by Mardale (2006) for article-drop in Romanian PPs, which seems to share some of the properties in (38)<sup>14</sup>. A schematic representation of how the idea would work for Fodom is given in (39) below:

(105) Option 1 – P° licensing empty D°:



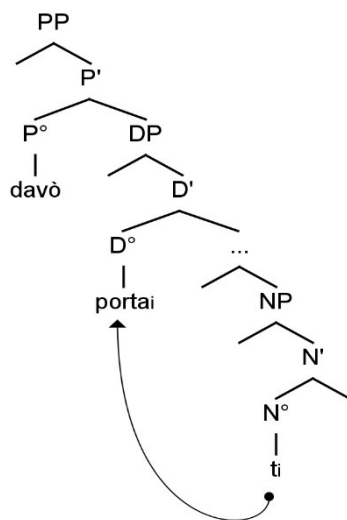
A problem with this is that it contradicts another well-established generalization identified by Longobardi (2005, 2008), namely that such empty-D licensing in Romance is only available for bare mass and plurals and entails a generic or specific indefinite reading. This starkly contrasts with the properties of Fodom bare nouns as discussed above. Thus, leaving aside other features of the constructions, pursuing an account along the lines of (39) would seem to require additional *ad hoc* assumptions to account for this deviation in this specific case, and no other. Moreover, such an analysis would focus exclusively on properties of P and D, so specific conditions would need to be

<sup>14</sup> But, crucially, not all of them (cf. also 3.4).

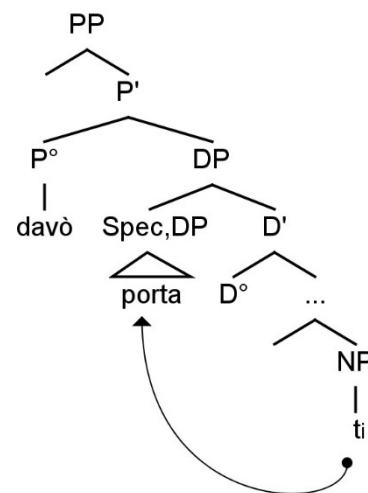
added in order to accommodate the fact that article-drop is only available with specific nouns, and not with others.

There is at least a second possible option that would have no problems with this. That is, one could hypothesize that the relevant mechanism licensing covert D in Fodm articleless PPs is movement of the noun to the D-level. Thus, said restriction (cf. (38a)) would be reduced to the specific property that some nouns have to be able to raise higher than other common nouns in their extended projection. Specifically, this hypothesis could be implemented with either N-to-D movement ((40a)), or NP-movement to Spec, DP ((40b)):

(106) a. Option 2 – N-to-D:



b. Option 2 – NP-to-Spec,DP:



Both kinds of movement have been proposed in the literature on DP. For instance, N-to-D movement involving specific common nouns is proposed by Longobardi (1996), while NP is taken to be able to move to Spec, DP for licensing requirements in languages with enclitic articles like Romanian by Cinque (2004). However, both implementations fail to capture a fundamental aspect of Fodm article-drop, namely its interaction with nominal modifiers (cf. 38c). Taking (head- or phrasal-) movement to be subject essentially to locality restrictions, there is no obvious explanation as to why

the licensing movements in (40a or b) should be impossible in presence of e.g. numerals, pre- and post-nominal adjectives, etc. As a matter of fact, other proposed instances of such movements like those just mentioned are not subject to comparable restrictions<sup>15</sup>. Thus, for instance, the noun *casa* “home” in a Romance language like Italian can raise higher than all modifiers (cf. 2.3.3), and actually it is precisely this fact that supports an analysis in terms of N-to-D. Without dwelling on the details, the relevant difference is clear, and makes a movement analysis unsuitable for bare nouns in Fodom PPs.

Thus, I propose to implement the idea of N ‘realizing’ D in a different way. As mentioned above, I take such ‘realization’ to involve essentially the spell-out of functional features (including those of the D-layer) by the head noun. More specifically, the analysis involves the notion of spell-out of multiple structural nodes, as emerged in nanosyntactic literature (cf. e.g. Starke 2009, Baunaz et al. (2018)). Thus, before going on with the discussion of the account, it is useful to lay out the fundamental assumptions on which it is built.

In nanosyntax, syntactic structures correspond to sequences of hierarchically ordered privative features. Each such feature is merged in the structure as an atomic entity in its own syntactic terminal. The functional sequence (henceforth, fseq) is built derivationally through recursive application of this operation, dubbed Merge-f. The order in which each feature enters the structure is fixed, thus accounting for the substantial underlying universality of syntactic hierarchies as described by cartography. Nanosyntax pursues the strong hypothesis that all variation can be ultimately reduced to how this abstract fseq is overtly realized by language-specific lexical entries stored in a post-syntactic lexicon (Starke 2011). Thus, much attention is directed to how this operation takes place.

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<sup>15</sup> Actually, Cinque (2004) analyzes the impossibility of encliticization of the article to the noun in the presence of prenominal adjectives in terms of a locality constraint. However, this does not affect the point made in the text, as other modifiers interacting with Fodom article-drop would still be left out of the picture.

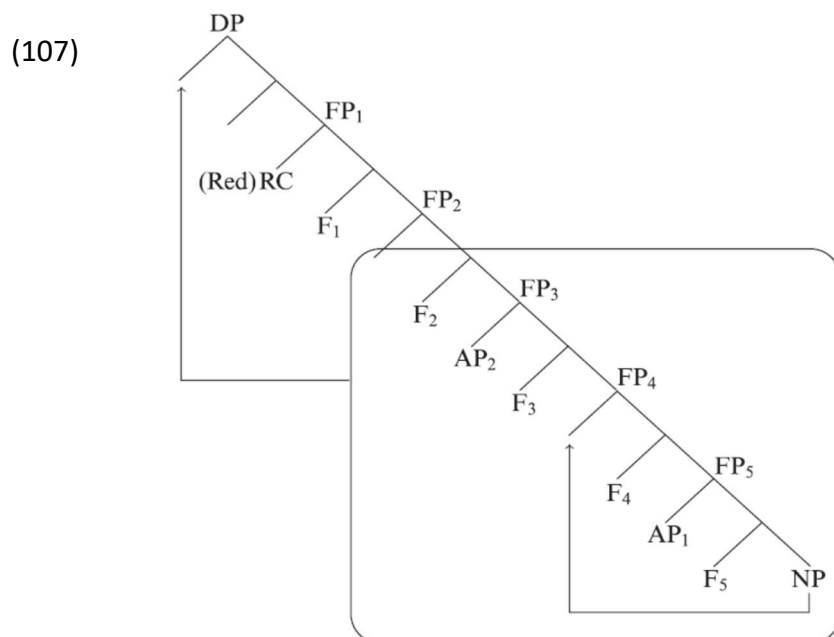


Spell out is construed as a cyclic operation, performed right after each occurrence of Merge-f. By assumption, the lexicon contains entries made up of a phonological string, conceptual/encyclopedic information, and a lexically stored syntactic tree (L-tree). At each point in the derivation spell out amounts to matching what the syntax has built to an overt exponent, which is identified through the L-tree it is associated to. Specifically, this matching is governed by the Superset Principle and the Elsewhere Condition. This means that a lexical item can spell out a certain portion of structure only if its L-tree contains that structure as its subset. It should be mentioned that there is debate in the nanosyntactic literature on how such superset-subset relation should be encoded, and whether or not it should only target proper constituents (cf. e.g. Baunaz et al. (2018), Taraldsen (2018), Vanden Wyngaerd (2018)). However, this aspect will not be relevant for the analysis, and I will not discuss it further. On the other hand, the Elsewhere Condition warrants that whenever more items are potential candidates for spell out, the system selects the most specific one (that is, the one whose L-tree contains the least unused features).

Of course, not all such ‘matching’ attempts are successful at the first try, otherwise a single lexical item would be able to realize the entire fseq (or, minimally, the entire sequence corresponding to a phase). In case of failure, the fseq can be manipulated by operations aiming at isolating the problematic features in order to find a match. These take place in a specific order, according to the so-called “Spell out algorithm”. Abstracting away from the technical details, this is what allows the reduction of surface variation to lexically specified properties. This is because how the fseq is manipulated ultimately depends on how different portions of structure are “packaged” and stored as L-trees associated to lexical items. For present purposes, what is relevant is that there are no specific constraints on how big the L-trees are. That is, there is no pre-specified limit on what features a lexical entry can spell out, provided that the ‘matching’ requirements are fulfilled. This means that idiosyncratic syntactic properties of a certain item can be traced back to the fact that its L tree is unusually poor or unusually rich with respect to other items of the same category.

We are now in a position to make the above claim that Fodom bare nouns ‘realize’ D more explicit. The general nanosyntactic assumptions outlined above neatly accommodate the idea that the specific nouns capable of entering the construction share a morphosyntactic idiosyncrasy. That is, one can rephrase this proposal by taking the relevant nouns to be lexically associated to a richer amount of structure than usual, including the portion of the D-layer responsible for their interpretive properties. Since a lexical entry realize portion of structures smaller than their L-tree, this allows Fodom nouns to lead a double life as regular common count nouns and as bare nouns in the relevant construction. Clearly, more needs to be said to capture the fact that the second option is restricted to PP contexts. This is a crucial point (and a particularly hard one), on which more will be said in the next paragraph. For the moment, I would like to underline the fact that strictly speaking my proposal does not hinge on specific nanosyntactic tools. Paired to the bone, what is required is that a single lexical entry can lexicalize multiple nodes in the structure, and that this is mediated by properties encoded in the lexicon.

Coming to other assumptions underlying the analysis, following essentially Cinque (2010b) I take adjectives to be merged in functional projections above NP, exploiting two possible options. ‘Direct modification’ adjectives sit in lower positions right above NP, whereas ‘indirect modification’ ones are merged higher as reduced relative clause structures. In Romance, the NP can move (via roll-up movement, pied-piping the adjectival projection to its right, not represented in (41) below) to an intermediate position between projections hosting ‘direct modification’ adjectives, and a larger constituent including all ‘direct modification’ adjectives and the head noun moves via roll-up movement to a position higher than ‘indirect modification’ ones, as shown below (= Cinque’s (2010) (6,5)):



Following Cinque (2005), I take the base position of Numerals to be higher than that of all adjectives. As for relative clauses, I take them to be merged in a high position in the nominal spine, intermediate between those occupied by Numerals and Demonstratives (cf. Cinque (2003,2015)). Moreover, as mentioned above, I assume PP-modifiers to be of two types, differing in their base position. ‘Argumental’ PPs are merged low in the NP, whereas other PP-modifiers are higher in the functional spine of the DP. While I will not explicitly argue for this distinction, I believe it can be motivated by the CP-DP parallelism. That is, a reasonable way to construe the relation between the verb/noun and its modifiers is to take arguments of the lexical head to sit in the ‘thematic level’ corresponding to VP/NP, and all other modifiers in higher functional projections (cf. 2.3.1).

Finally, with these assumptions on the structure of DP in place, I would like to introduce the descriptive notion of ‘slim’ DP. The general idea behind this is that morphosyntactic complexity as encoded by formal features and structural extension strictly mirror each other. Simply put, I propose that an extended projection is structurally more or less elaborate depending on the specific values specified for the

morphosyntactic categories active in the functional spine and the presence or absence of modifiers. Thus, for instance, nominal projections specified for unmarked featural values and lacking modification will be structurally simpler/ 'smaller' than their counterparts specified for marked values and featuring different kinds of modifiers. To be concrete, I propose to call 'slim' DP a nominal extended projection of the former type, and that bare nouns in Fodom articleless PPs are 'slim' DPs in this sense.

Clearly, this requires some discussion. I believe the above proposal can be motivated along the following lines. Morphosyntactic categories are generally taken to allow different values. Assuming a distinction between 'default' and 'marked' values (cf. e.g. in Cinque (1999)), it is reasonable to take the latter to correspond to more articulated featural specifications than the former. Now, morphosyntactic features are by definition somehow represented in the functional structure. Regardless of whether one takes them to form complex bundles in a single terminal node (e.g. Halle and Marantz (1994) and following literature) or hierarchies of privative features (as in nanosyntax, cf. above), the consequence is that more marked values will correspond to more articulated structural representations, that is, larger bundles or larger hierarchies. For convenience, I will develop the point assuming the second option, but I believe that analogous observations can be made in terms of feature bundles.

Based on the above, we can claim that when all functional projections are specified for the simplest/default values, this affects the structure of the overall extended projection in two alternative possible ways. In the first one, the hierarchical ordering is preserved, but for each "zone" of the structure, only the basic feature is present. As an alternative, the correspondent projections can be taken to be simply absent. This has been proposed e.g. by Starke (2004). For simplicity, I opt for the second approach, although it can be argued that nothing crucial hinges on this choice.

Now, let us consider how the above applies to Fodom bare nouns. Let us assume singular to be the default value for Number, and modifiers like adjectives, numerals, relative clauses, and non-argumental PPs to require the presence of functional

projections in order to enter the structure. Then, a singular non-modified noun will head a nominal extended projection that is structurally ‘at its simplest’. If argumental PPs are merged within NP, then their difference with respect to other modifiers can be reduced to the fact that they do not require additional structure, in that minimally NP can be taken to be always projected by any noun. Thus, given Fodom bare nouns are always singular and non-modified (except for argumental PPs), we can identify with ‘slim’ DPs.

### 3.3.3 Deriving the structural restrictions

Recall that the goal we set for the analysis is to account for the four properties of Fodom article-drop listed in (38), repeated below as (42) for convenience:

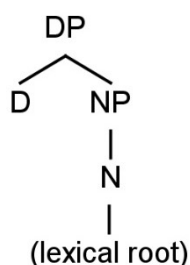
- (108) a. Article-drop with count nouns in Fodom PPs is productive, but only with a specific set of nouns  
b. Interpretive properties indicate an active D-layer, but with no overt realization  
c. Article-drop is incompatible with plural Number and nominal modifiers, except ‘argumental’ PPs  
d. Bare nouns in Fodom PPs are ambiguous between a definite and a generic reading

As anticipated, the approach outlined in 3.3.2 allows us to jointly account for (42a,b). Fodom articleless PPs indeed feature a DP complement, and the lack of the article is due to the fact that the noun heading the complement spells out the relevant D-features (42b). On the other hand, by present assumptions, such capability is directly encoded in the lexical representation of the relevant set of nouns in the form of a L(exical)-tree. Such L-tree is exceptional in that, apart from the amount of structure typically spelled out by common nouns (minimally, an NP), it also includes a D-level (cf. above). The consequence is that the relevant derivation, yielding the observed lack of

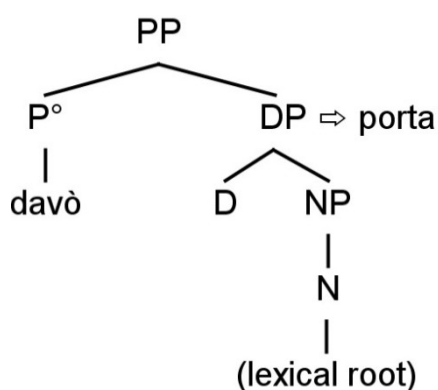
overt determiners, is only accessible if the noun heading the complement of the PP is lexically associated to one such exceptionally large L-tree. This captures the fact that article-drop in Fodom PPs is indeed a grammatical phenomenon but restricted to a limited set of nouns (42a). (43a) below shows how such L-tree would look like, while (43b) gives the structural representation of a representative articleless PP like *davò porta* “behind the door”. As anticipated above, I do not include nodes corresponding to the default value for a certain morphosyntactic category. Thus, I omit a NumberP encoding singular number. If the alternative approach were pursued, it would require enlarging the syntactic tree, and, by the same token, the L-tree. Arguably, this would not affect the point, but would result in a more cumbersome structure. I also abstract away from the representation of Gender in DP (cf. below) and from details of the PP structure, since they are not relevant for present purposes, and only include a PP taking DP as its complement.

(109) a. L-tree for *porta*<sup>16</sup>:

*porta*:



b. Structural representation for *davò porta*



Let us now turn to (42c). The representations in (43) clarifies what are the consequences of taking Fodom articleless PPs to involve ‘slim’ DPs in the above sense. The projection headed and lexicalized by the noun *porta* is a DP structure paired to the

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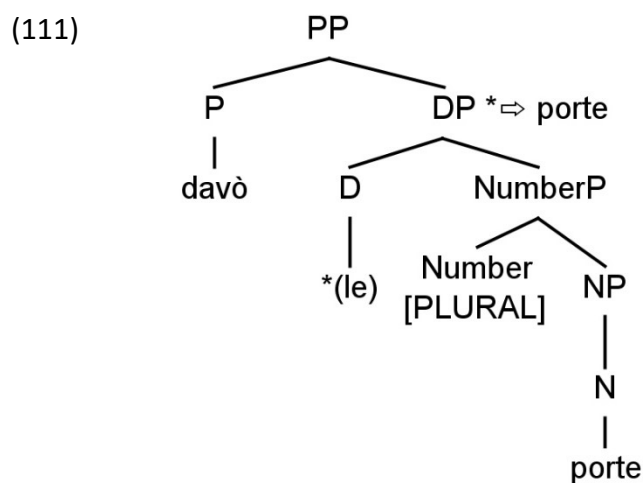
<sup>16</sup> As will be clarified in the following discussion, both representations could be subject to revision in specific details, which however do not affect the main point.

bone. The crucial aspect of the proposal is that, given the L-tree in (43a), any additional node in the nominal extended projection will disrupt the configuration needed for *porta* to be able to spell out the entire DP, without an overt determiner lexicalizing D. As we will try to demonstrate below, this is all we need to derive the observed restrictions on the distribution of article-drop.

By present assumptions, plural is a marked Number value as opposed to singular. Taking the encoding of plural to require the realization of a NumberP in the nominal functional spine, this accounts for the fact that article-drop is not possible with plural nouns, as in (44=25b):

- (110) |      é    meio   no   se      senté   davò   \*(le)   porte   /   \*(i)    usc  
           =3Msg be.3 better not =3REFL sit.INF behind \*(the) doors / \*(the) doors  
 “It’s better not to sit behind doors”

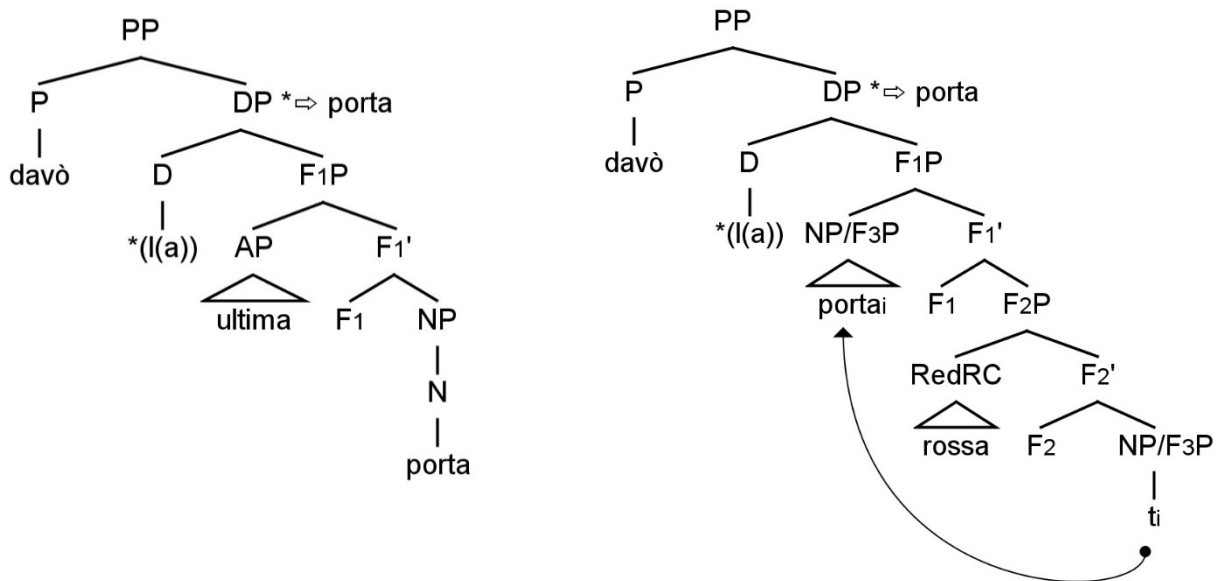
The additional projection needed for plural Number prevents the noun from lexicalizing the entire DP. This is so because the L-tree associated to the lexical entry of the noun (e.g. (43a)) is not able to match the resulting syntactic structure, as shown below:









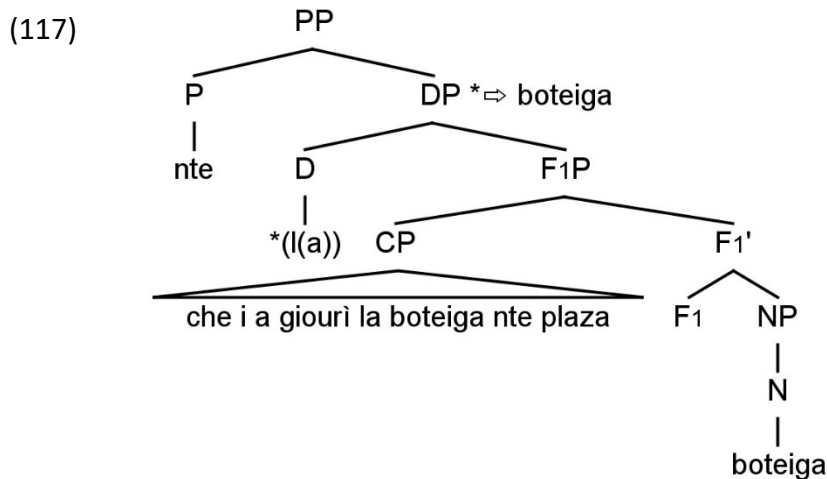


Assuming Cinque’s (2003, 2015) analysis, all relative clauses involve the same basic structure, where the modifying clause is merged in a high position in the extended projection of the head noun, possibly between DP and dP in a split-DP framework (cf. 2.3.4). Regardless of the details of the following derivation, the very presence of such higher projection would make it impossible for the noun to lexicalize the full DP structure, thus capturing the ungrammaticality of (50):

- (116) I on compré nte \*(la) boteiga che i a giourì nte plaza  
 =3sg have.1pl bought in \*(the) shop that =3pl have.3 opened in square  
 “We bought it in the shop they opened in the square”

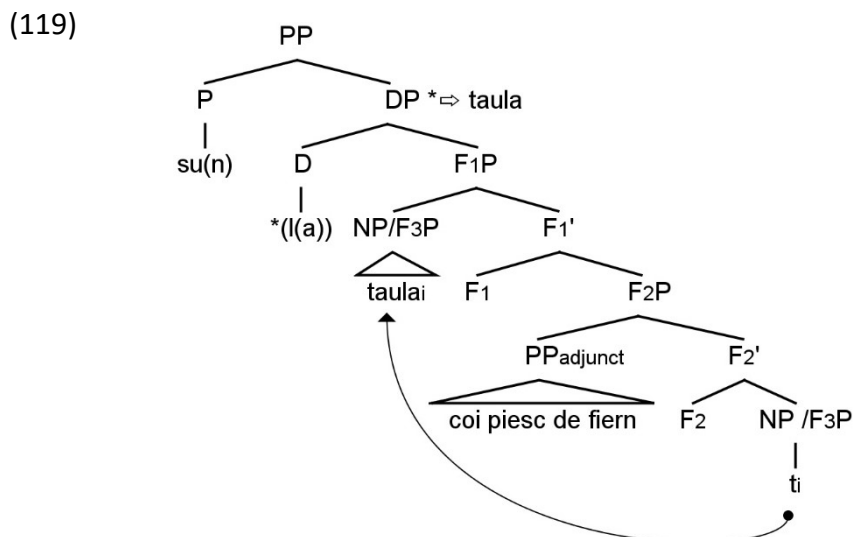
Even if the merge site of the relative clause were above the highest node lexicalised by N, there would still be the need for an additional D layer ‘closing off’ the resulting structure. The noun could not lexicalize such node, and as a result an overt determiner would be needed for the derivation to converge. This is schematically represented in (50) below. Here I abstract away from the details of the derivation of the relative clause (which may involve raising of a projection including the head noun above the merge site of the RC) and from the identity of the projections of the D-layer

immediately below and above the merge site of the CP. An explicit proposal about which features of the D-level are lexicalized by Fodom bare nouns will be laid out below. Here, the issue is not central, because, as said, all we need to derive the desired restrictions on article-drop is the presence of additional functional structure.



The status of PP modifiers can be captured in essentially the same way, but the argument is less straightforward. As mentioned above, I assume a distinction between ‘argumental’ and ‘non-argumental’ PPs. The second can be taken to be merged outside NP and in the ‘functional field’ of the nominal extended projection. Thus, their incompatibility with article drop (cf. (48)) can be accounted for as for other modifiers like e.g. adjectives:

(118) i piac i é su \*(la) taola coi piesc de fiern  
 the dishes =3Mpl be.3 on \*(the) table with.the feet of iron  
 “The dishes are on the table with iron legs”



More problematic is the issue of how to account for the possible presence of ‘argumental’ PPs.

(120) nte almièrch de mia ciauna è bele cialé, (=35b)

in wardrobe of my room have.PRES.1sg already watch.PTCP

tuo guánt no l eva

your dress not =3sg be.IMPF.3

“I have already checked behind the wardrobe in my bedroom, your dress wasn’t there”

It should be added that while some N-PP combinations are readily accepted by all speakers, in other cases mixed judgements are obtained:

(121) a. l é senté davánt viere de cesadafuoch → all speakers (=35 c)

=3Msg be.PRES.3 sit.PTCP before window of kitchen

“He’s sitting in front of the kitchen window”

b. per vedei le stèle i é jus sun tèt de cèsa → all speakers (=35c)

for watch.INF the star.pl =3pl be.3 gone on.in roof of home

“They went up on the roof of the house to watch the stars”

c. per vedei le stèle i é jus sun tèt de na cèsa → 1 / 4 speakers

for watch.INF the star.pl =3pl be.3 gone on.in roof of a house

“They went up on the roof of a house to watch the stars”

d. son jus a mëssa nte gliejia d’ Andrac → all

speakers

be.1pl gone to mass in church of Andrac

“We went to mass in the church of Andraz”

e. son jus a mëssa nte (la) gliejia del paisc → 1 / 4 speakers

be.1pl gone to mass in (the) church of.the village

“We went to mass in the church of the village”

f. son jus a mëssa nte (la) gliejia de n paisc dilongia Bolsán → 2 / 3 speakers<sup>17</sup>

be.1pl gone to mass in (the) church of a village near Bozen

“We went to mass in the church of a village near Bozen”

The source of such mixed judgements is unclear, especially because no speaker is consistent in refusing an argumental PP in the context of article-drop. It looks like this is a case of optionality in the realization of the article. Tentatively, I speculate that the grammar of Fodom allows combination of bare nouns with argumental PPs, and that our results are due to interfering factors. One such variable could be the overt realization of the article in the complement, as suggested by the fact that (55a, b, and d) are unanimously accepted, whereas (55c, e, and f) are not. Clearly, more data would be needed to support this idea. However, the very fact that at least some of the above cases are soundly attested requires explanation, given that, as seen, no other nominal modifier is allowed in Fodom articleless PPs. Thus, a distinction between argumental PPs and all other cases needs to be captured, regardless of what underlies the alternations in (55).

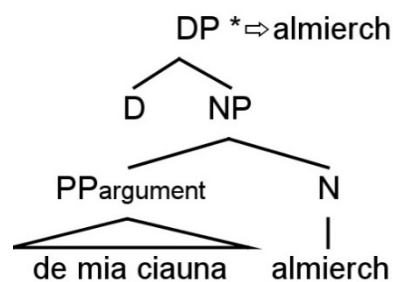
As anticipated, the solution proposed here is to take argumental PPs not to require additional projections that would disrupt the configuration needed for matching. This is a consequence of the idea that argumental PPs are merged within NP, which is always independently lexicalized by the head noun. However, there remains an open issue. That is, if we took PP arguments to simply sit in, say, Spec, NP, they would still represent additional material other than what the head noun with an L-tree like (43a) can lexicalize. This is represented for the PP in (56a) by the diagram in (56b) below:

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<sup>17</sup> The fourth informant gave an alternative translation, but omitting the relevant *nte (la) gliejia*, so it is not clear whether there was a specific problem with article-drop, or the judgement is due to a different structural analysis of the sentence.

- (122) a. davò almièrch de mia ciauna è bele cialé  
 behind wardrobe of my room have.1sg already watched  
 “I already checked behind the wardrobe in my bedroom”

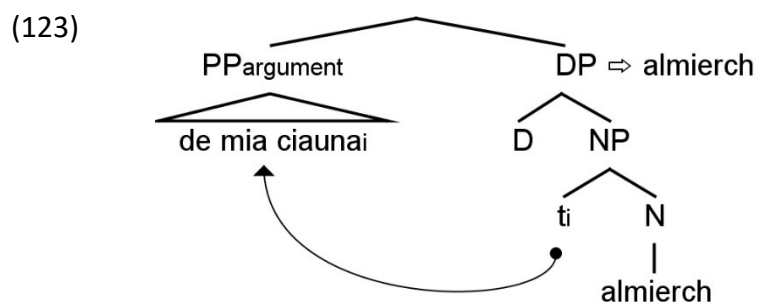
b.



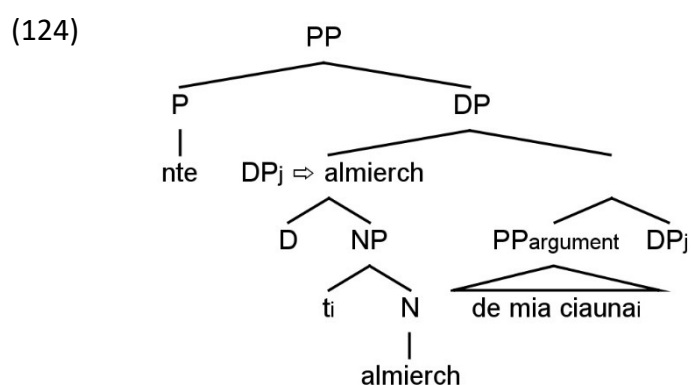
The answer to this is more tentative. Our case recalls an analogous problem noted by Cinque (2005) in the context of his derivation of the attested linear orders of nominal modifiers like Demonstratives, Numerals, Adjectives with respect to the head Noun. Essentially, the problem is that a fundamental assumption of his analysis is that no head-movement of N is allowed. Thus, whenever one observes displacement of the noun, it has to be interpreted in terms of NP-movement. But this contrasts with the observation that such NP-movement does not involve PP-arguments, which are expected to be merged in a NP-internal position. The solution proposed in Cinque (2005, 2010) is cast in terms of ‘extraposition’ of the arguments. That is, the observed ‘indifference’ of argumental PPs to the NP movements required by the analysis is interpreted as the result of movement operations displacing them from the NP. Such ‘extraposition’ movements are connected by Cinque (2005,2010) to the role of the P introducing the arguments. This is based on Kayne’s (2001) proposal of Ps acting as probes, and thus attracting their objects to their Spec, possibly followed by head-movement of the P° head and remnant-movement of the complement to a higher position to derive linear order. Thus, what look like argumental PPs are in fact nominal arguments merged within Spec, NP, which are then attracted to a high position (in Cinque (2010), possibly outside D) to get licensed by a P. Now, from a general point of view, I would like to underline the fact that the problematic residue in our account of

argumental PPs is not strictly speaking specific to the present proposal. Thus, for the moment we could be content with saying that whatever mechanism accounts for the general distributional properties of argumental PP-modifiers in DPs, it can also be assumed to take care of our more specific case. However, this could not be sufficient. That is, unless one takes said ‘extraposition’ movements to target a landing site outside D (which is one of the proposed options, cf. above), other accounts still require the presence of DP-internal functional projections (cf. e.g. Laenzlinger (2005, 2015)). However, such projections would end up replicating the problem noted above for all other modifiers, as the head noun would not be able to lexicalize them.

Tentatively, I suggest that the needed evacuation could be connected not to Ps acting as probes, but to operations triggered by Spell out requirements, along the lines of many proposals in nanosyntactic literature (cf. above, e.g. Caha (2009), Patcheva (2011), Baunaz et al. (2018), Starke (2018)). As mentioned above, such works assume specific procedures manipulating functional structure triggered by the need to find a match between what the syntax has produced and an L-tree associated to a lexical item. One such operation is indeed sometimes termed ‘extraposition’ (cf. Caha (2018)) and involves displacing a Specifier intervening between two nodes in order for the latter to be spelled out together. Now, let us see how this could work in the case of Fodom bare nouns modified by an argumental PP. Starting from a base structure like (56b), the PP-argument would be ‘extraposed’ to a higher position. Since such displacement is directly connected to the attempt to find a single ‘match’ for both the NP and the DP in the structure, the landing site is placed above DP. This is represented below:



By assumption, the position acting as a landing site is vacuous with respect to morphosyntactic operations and semantic interpretation. It is thought of as a counterpart of functional projections that are the landing sites of ‘meaningless movement’ in e.g. Cinque (2005, 2017). Here this fact is represented by not specifying a label. Another possibility is to iterate the D node, and to take Spell out to be sensitive to categories, and not to segments, as done in Pantcheva (2011). For convenience, I abstract away from these details. The crucial point is that ‘extraposition’ restores a structural configuration that allows the head noun (*almierch* in (57)) to spell out both the NP and the DP. This is possible because, as assumed by much nanosyntactic work, Spell-out is assumed not to be sensitive to traces. As a consequence, an NP with no argument and a remnant NP with the trace of an extraposed argument are not distinguished. Thus, ‘extraposition’ allows us to capture the fact that argumental PP are not problematic for article-drop, because, unlike all other modifiers, they do not require additional functional structure between NP and DP. Having reached this stage, the remaining problem is to account for the observed linear order, i.e. P – N – PP<sub>argument</sub>. A possible solution is to derive it via successive roll up movement of the constituent lexicalized by the noun to a position higher than the landing site of the argumental PP, as below:





Speculatively, this additional operation may be connected to labeling requirements. That is, ‘extraposition’ in (57) creates a constituent with no label. In more minimalist terms, it would be an instance of Internal Merge creating a new unordered set. A Labeling operation then needs to be performed in order for this set to receive its label, and thus be hierarchically ordered. The additional requirement would then be to posit that such labeling involves a specific structural configuration. Since Fodom is a Romance language with a typical head-initial character, such configuration would involve the head-like element (i.e. the one providing the label) on the left. All this is clearly highly speculative. To put it in context, it can be construed as a way to rephrase in ‘more nanosyntactic’ terms Cinque’s (2017) approach to the derivation of linear order. His proposal involves generalized phrasal movement starting from the lowest phrase in the structure and exploiting one of two possible pied-piping options, or none. Interestingly, Cinque (2017, n. 19) envisages the possibility to connect the relevant movement options to labelling requirements. Much more work is needed to evaluate whether such reduction is indeed tenable. Here I would only like to go as far as to argue that if this general approach turned out to be on the right track, then the derivation above would be an expected option.

### 3.3.4 The (not so) Odd Couple – Interpretive ambiguity as the reflex of an active D-layer

We saw how the assumptions laid out in 3.3.2 can be used to work out an analysis of Fodom article-drop that accounts for its restriction to a specific set of nouns, the active presence of a D layer in the structure, and the fact that the phenomenon is incompatible with all nominal modifiers except argumental PPs. To complete the picture, we need to address point (38d). Namely, we have to articulate the claim that the presence of a D layer is sufficient to account for the interpretive properties of Fodom bare nouns as individuated in 3.2.3. Recall that an important feature in this respect is the fact that our construction shows an ambiguity in its interpretation. On

the one hand, examples like those below make it clear that the noun has a possible (and maybe sometimes necessary) definite and specific reading:

(125) a. l                      é                      senté      davánt viere      de cesadafuoch  
 (=19)

=3Msg be.PRES.3 sit.PTCP before window of kitchen

“He’s sitting in front of the kitchen window”

b. nte almièrch de mia ciauna è                      bele      cialé,  
 in wardrobe of my room have.PRES.1sg already watch.PTCP

tuo guánt no l      eva

your dress not =3sg be.IMPF.3

“I have already checked behind in the wardrobe in my bedroom, your dress wasn’t there”

c. per vedei      le stële i      é      jus sun tèt de cèsa  
 for watch.INF the star.pl =3pl be.3 gone on.in roof of home

“They went up on the roof of the house to watch the stars”

As seen above, the relevant notion of definiteness seems to be one based on the unicity of the referent. For convenience, I will refer to this as ‘uniqueness-based definiteness’ (cf. ch 2) for discussion). Another feature of bare nouns in Fodom PPs connected to this definite interpretation is the fact that they allow resumption by a pronoun, as discussed in 3.2.3 and shown below:

(126) chi élo                      che l      a                      metù      i      ciazèi sun **let?**      (=18)

who be.PRES.3=3sg that =3sg have.PRES.3 put.PTCP the shoe.pl on.in bed

**L**      é                      dut paz!

=3sg be.PRES.3 all dirty

“Who’s put the shoes on the bed? **It’s** all dirty!”

On the other hand, we saw that Fodom bare nouns can also have an interpretation which allows sloppy identification under ellipsis (cf. 61a)) and number neutrality (cf. (61b)):

(127) a. I Carlo I a desmentié I rucsòch davò porta de ciauna,  
(=20)

the Carlo =3sg have.3 forgotten the backpack behind door of room

e la Martina ence

and the Martina too

“Carlo forgot his backpack behind the bedroom door, and Martina did too”

b. co I a scomencé I temporal sonva duc nte let  
(=21)

when =3Msg have.3 begun the storm be.IMPF.1pl all.pl in bed

“When the storm began we were all in bed”

It may very well be that independent factors like pragmatic context, or the generic/episodic nature of the overall sentence might favor one reading over the other, to the point that one of the two is not considered acceptable by speakers. At the same time, as seen in 3.2.3, we sometimes observe mixed judgements, which supports the idea that we are dealing with a true case of ambiguity. In previous paragraphs we saw how the availability of the uniqueness-based interpretation can be argued to entail the presence of a D layer, and how assuming an active D in the structure of Fodom bare nouns can be used to capture the distributional properties of article-drop. What we need, then, is to find an account of the possible generic properties of bare nouns that fits well with this general picture. The least expensive move would be to connect them to the presence of an active D, as well. Differently put, the ideal case would be to find independent justification for a connection between definite and generic readings as attested for Fodom bare nouns. As a matter of fact, support for this approach can be found in the literature. As a disclaimer, I

would like to acknowledge the fact that such argument would require explicit semantic formalization to be developed properly. Here I will limit myself to note relevant points of convergence between already existing proposals, which arguably could be used to work out an account for the semantic side of Fodom data. To anticipate, the fundamental ingredient for the analysis is to interpret generic features of Fodom bare nouns in terms of kind-reference<sup>18</sup>, and to exploit a general connection between reference to kinds and definiteness noted in the relevant literature.

As a starting point, recall from the discussion in ch. 2 that among the cases of N-to-D chain/CHAIN envisaged by Longobardi (2005, 2008), one is kind-reference. This involves a low common noun and an expletive article filling D. Leaving aside Longobardi's motivation for taking the determiner to be a mere form in this case, what is interesting to note is that such void form coincides with the regular definite article. Similar considerations can be made about an analogous proposal by Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992) for inalienable constructions in French. Moving on, "seemingly indefinite" features of certain definite noun phrases are unearthed by Carlson and Sussmann (2005), who coin the term 'weak definites' for this case. Interestingly, among the defining properties of 'weak definites' are the possibility of sloppy identification in ellipsis contexts and number neutral interpretation<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, only a specific set of nouns admit these interpretive possibilities, which share the fact that their referent is typically associated to some salient extralinguistic information, as shown below:

(128) Fred went to **the store**, and Alice did, too. (OK as different stores) (=C.&S. (2005)(3))

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. ch. 2 and Carlson (1977) for the relevant distinction between objects and kinds.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. also Aguilar-Guevara, Le Bruyn, and Zwarts (2014) for a discussion of these two interpretive properties as part of the cluster of phenomena also referred to as 'weak referentiality'.

Interestingly, such ‘weak definites’ are interpreted as kind-referential in Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2011). The authors argue that such approach allows a more uniform semantic analysis of the definite article. Essentially, the determiner would have its usual denotation, which would be licensed by “the uniqueness of the kind” (*ibidem*, p. 186). More in general, an association between ‘genericity’ and kind-reference is also posited by Krifka et al. (1995), where in addition ‘kind-reference’ is almost exclusively reserved for definite noun phrases<sup>20</sup>. Among the arguments supporting this distinction is the fact that (unlike bare mass or plurals) singular noun phrases with a definite article in their generic use require that there be a ‘well-established kind’, i.e. that their referent be part of the encyclopedic knowledge shared by the speakers. That is, while the mechanism yielding kind-reference is a general one, whether or not a specific noun can be used as kind-referential is partly tied to pragmatic and extralinguistic factors. Note in passing that this fits well with the lexical restrictions on the phenomenon studied by Carlson and Sussmann (2005).

Let us now see how the noted connections between features proper of genericity, kind-reference, and definiteness might be brought to bear on our case. Recall that starting from Schwarz (2009) a distinction has been proposed between two rather independent notions of definiteness in natural language (cf. ch.2). One is based on familiarity/identifiability, while the other on uniqueness/inclusiveness. Moreover, this distinction has been captured in morphosyntactic terms by different proposals like Cheng, Heycock, Zamparelli (2017), and Simonenko (2018). What is relevant for us is that some languages the two are encoded with formally different means. In such languages, the formal means used to encode uniqueness-based definiteness are also used for kind-reference (cf. Schwarz (2014)). Now, we have seen how Fodom bare nouns can be argued to spell out D as well, and that the relevant notion of definiteness in their interpretation is the uniqueness-based one. In light of the discussion above,

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<sup>20</sup> Indefinite NPs are considered not kind-referential, except in taxonomic uses, as in “a large cat is on the verge of extinction”, where reference is made to an indefinite subkind of large cats). This specific case is not relevant for present purposes.

then, a plausible hypothesis is that the ambiguity of Fodom bare nouns stems from the fact that they can also achieve a kind-referential reading, accounting for the possible generic properties of their interpretation. Since the latter case would involve features of the D-layer as well, the conclusion is that one and the same morphosyntactic mechanism can be taken to underlie both possible readings.

A conceptually independent issue is then related to what features exactly are responsible for the two different readings. Assuming an active D in both cases, the two logical options are that they either involve the same featural specification, or two distinct values for the same D category. However, this aspect is essentially neutral with respect to our analysis. That is, in either case we have independent crosslinguistic evidence for taking uniqueness-based definiteness and kind-reference to be morphosyntactically associated. So, provided that this association is somehow captured, whether they are taken to be underlyingly identical or just relatively similar *vis à vis* familiarity-based definiteness makes no sensible difference, as the same assumption would extend to Fodom bare nouns and their L-trees.

Further support for the approach comes from the observation that proposals mapping Schwarz's (2009) distinction onto morphosyntactic structure like Cheng, Heycock, Zamparelli (2017) and Simonenko (2018) agree in taking uniqueness-based definiteness as structurally simpler than its familiarity-based counterpart. Within the system presented in the previous paragraphs, this has the consequence that uniqueness-based definiteness (and, by association, kind-reference) can be structurally isolated together with the lower end of the noun phrase (thus, minimally NP) from the topmost D-nodes, corresponding to familiarity-based definiteness. This immediately explains why a noun breaking its ordinary (spell-out) boundaries and reaching the D-level 'from below' gets the former interpretations, and not the latter, as it can be argued to happen to Fodom bare nouns.

### 3.4 Open issues— This *might* be the PLACE

#### 3.4.1 Some loose ends

We have seen how taking Fodom bare nouns to be able to spell-out features of the D-level allows us to account for both structural restrictions on article-drop and for the active presence of a D-layer, which can then also explain the observed ambiguities between a definite and a generic interpretation. Moreover, this approach naturally accommodates the observation that the construction is only available with certain nouns and not others. As discussed above, this is because it crucially leans on a specific morphosyntactic property specified in the lexicon. It is an expected possibility that a lexical property be shared by certain items and not all, since arguably the lexicon is exactly the place where irregularities and subregularities are encoded. I believe that to the extent that the general assumptions underlying the analysis are tenable, this set of results is not a trivial one.

There are, however, two remaining issues. First, we have argued that our analysis easily accounts for the fact that article-drop is only observed with a certain set of nouns. But a different issue is why it is precisely *that* specific set of nouns that enters the construction. That is, we may ask why *porta* “door” or *gliejjia* “church” able to also spell out D-features, and *altalena* “swing” or *bar* “bar” are not (cf. 3.2.2). Second, if our set of special nouns are able to occur as bare complements of PPs with all the properties discussed above (cf. (42)), we should expect them to be readily available as bare arguments of verbs as well. Now, data presently at our disposal do not allow us to thoroughly evaluate the issue, but they do suggest that article-drop as we discussed it in this chapter is indeed limited to PP contexts. Unfortunately, we do not have data positively supporting this claim, but only negative evidence coming from systematic researches on the TALL textual database. That is, for all of the relevant nouns for which the issue was evaluated, no occurrence as bare verbal argument was found. Obviously, this is but a suggestive indication. Still, I believe that a single property may be argued

to underlie both the well-grounded observation about what nouns allow article-drop and the potential restriction of the phenomenon to PPs.

The idea I would like to tentatively argue for is that the silent PLACE might play a role. Recall from the overview in chapter 2 that several proposals on the structure of locative PPs subscribe to the proposal that functional PPs combine with a DP headed by the silent noun PLACE. Thus, this DP<sub>PLACE</sub> is the ‘true’ complement of PPs, while the superficial object of the adposition (or ‘Ground’) is interpreted as a possessor argument of the silent noun. Moreover, observed differences between ‘functional’ and ‘lexical’ adpositions are reduced to the idea that either the latter involve such DP<sub>PLACE</sub> and the former don’t, or ‘lexical’ adpositions are not merged in P°, but rather as (phrasal) modifiers of PLACE. Interestingly, Caha and Pantcheva (2018) have recently suggested a revision of the general hypothesis that can be argued to overcome some of the issues discussed in 2.2.4. In a nutshell, the crucial move is to posit PLACE to act not as the head of an extended projection hosting all other elements as modifiers, but rather as a modifier element in itself, sitting in a Spec position. While some aspects of their proposal are specific to their analysis of locative expressions in the Bantu languages Shona and Luganda, I would like to propose a speculation about what consequences this general revision could have for our discussion of Fodom bare nouns.

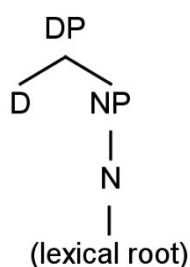
I tentatively pursue the hypothesis that this revised version of PLACE might be cast in terms of PLACE acting as a classifier-like element. As a matter of fact, arguments have been put forth e.g. by Taraldsen (2018) or Caha and Pantcheva (2018) in favor of classifiers involving complex phrasal structures including silent nouns in languages that have noun-classifiers. Interestingly for our purposes, the proposal has been put forth in the literature that even languages with no overt classifier-like elements may feature the corresponding structures in their nominal phrases (cf. Cinque (2006)). Moreover, Svenonius (2007) argues for a decomposition of the structure of DP as represented below:



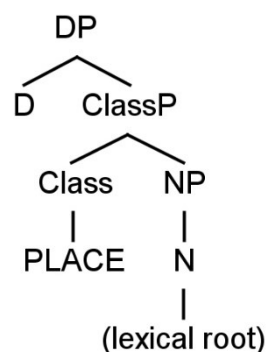
(129) Dem > Art > Num > UNIT > Pl/Sort > Adj > *n* > N

Skipping details, the relevant aspect is that different nodes potentially hosting Classifier elements are included in the functional spine of nominal expressions. Given general cartographic assumptions about the underlying universality of functional structure, a licit expectation is that the same nodes can indeed be active even in languages where they do not have an overt expression. By hypothesis, let us take these observations to mean that elements like PLACE and its kin are present in the extended projection of Fodom nouns. These are generally null elements, so they are autonomous for the purposes of Spell-out (i.e. they are matched with a corresponding item that lacks phonological realization). In some specific cases, however, a regular noun may show classifier-like behavior, likely due to its semantic content (this is essentially Cinque's (2006) proposal e.g. for nouns expressing time units, etc.). In present terms, this could be captured by taking these nouns to be special in that they are also able to spell-out the relevant projection where classifier-like elements sit. For convenience, let us call this projection with a generic label like ClassP. Now, how would this apply to the Fodom case? Suppose that such a ClassP is involved in the structure of Fodom bare DPs. Then, in light of the above discussion, we might capture their behavior by modifying the L-tree proposed in (43) (here as (64a)) as shown in (64b):

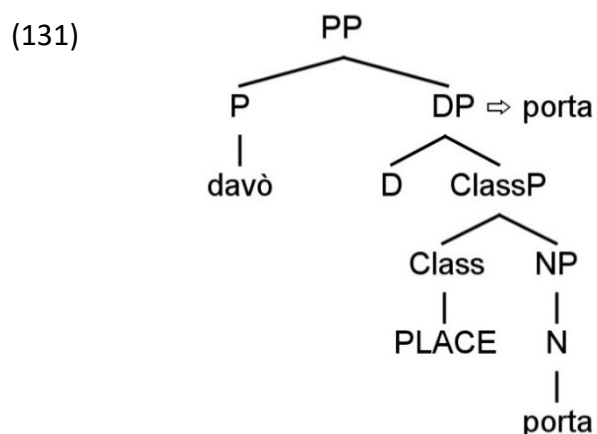
(130) a. L-tree for e.g. *porta* in (43):



b. Revised L-tree including PLACE:



The resulting structure for a PP like *davò porta* “behind the door” would be as following:



Now, this revision would change nothing with respect to the account discussed above, so we would still capture the restrictions on nominal modification as desired. On the other hand, we could gain a way to address the two open issues raised above. One question was why article-drop is observed precisely with the specific set of nouns we described in 3.2.2, and not with others. Recall that an interesting feature of such nouns is that they seem to form a natural class with respect to their semantic content. That is, their referents can be construed as prototypical points of spatial reference. At the same time, we observed that lexical semantics alone is not enough: a noun may comply with this semantic characterization, but still resist article-drop (as e.g. for *bar* “bar”). In 3.2.2 we argued that this indicates that, while semantic content clearly is a factor, the relevant distinguishing property is morphosyntactic in nature. Our account in terms of Spell-out naturally captures the latter point, in that such property is written directly in the lexical representation of the relevant nouns. With PLACE entering the picture, we can get the same result while at the same time addressing the role of semantic content. That is, we can hypothesize that said semantic features of these nouns are a precondition for acquiring the morphosyntactic property encoded in (64b). Simply put, we can speculate that these nouns, *because* they mean what they mean,

have diachronically acquired the capability of Spelling-out PLACE as well. But, again, this is crucially written in the L-tree associated to the single lexical items of the relevant nouns, so we still disentangle the two aspects. Some nouns, even if they potentially satisfy the semantic precondition, may have not been subject to the morphosyntactic process, possibly for pragmatic or extralinguistic reasons, like the fact of being loans from Standard Italian, etc.

Even more tentatively, we may capitalize upon the introduction of PLACE also to account for why article-drop might be restricted to PPs. The relevant aspect could be that a classifier-like element like PLACE might be required in the structure of a PP. A suggestive option would be to connect this to the distinction of different ‘sortal domains’ in the semantic ontology of natural language as in Svenonius (2012), Ramchand and Svenonius (2014). Specifically, Svenonius (2012) proposes a distinction between a domain of objects, associated to DP structures, and one of locations, identified with the stretch of functional structure corresponding to his decomposition of the Place category (cf. ch. 2). Departing from the details of his proposal, one might speculate that the presence of elements like PLACE could be required to perform the transition between the two different ‘sortal domains’ associated to the DP and whatever kind of PP it combines with. The upshot would be that a more abstract and ‘conceptually neutral’ structure could be maintained for PPs in general, with the relevant differences between, say, locative and temporal PPs captured by the presence of elements like PLACE and the like. For instance, we might have more uniform denotations for Ps like Fodom *davò*, which means both *behind* and *after*. Interestingly, these observations can be connected to the fact that article-drop is also sometimes observed with specific nouns in temporal PPs like the following:

- (132) ntán marëna / scòla / mëssa  
during meal / school / Mass

Potentially, the same analysis as above could be extended to non-locative PPs *modulo* the presence of a different classifier, e.g. TIME. In these cases too the bare noun could be analyzed as indicating a prototypical ‘time’ or ‘moment of the day’, like the time for meals, or spent at school / Mass. Strong support for this would come if the same restrictions on modification observed in 3.2.4 turned out to apply to cases like (65) as well. Of course, establishing whether or not this extension is tenable needs further investigation.

Concluding, I would like to provide some context to the above speculations. In the work cited above, Caha and Pantcheva (2018) discuss an interesting possible consequence of their revision of the PLACE hypothesis. That is, they suggest that AxPart elements could be interpreted not as members of an autonomous category (as in Svenonius (2006), cf. ch. 2), but as elements realizing a complex Spec including silent PLACE. Now, if Fodom bare nouns are associated to an L-tree like in (64b), it could be that their possible generic interpretation prefigures a potential development towards their use as AxPart-like elements. Differently put, one could speculate that present-day AxParts that clearly show nominal origin have undergone a gradual process towards their specialization/specialized use as “functional” elements in locative constructions. From fully regular nouns selected by an adposition they might have gone through intermediate stages where they could be used without the article/modification. The latter could then have favored their reanalysis as “functional” elements. Essentially, part of Fodom data could be said to bear analogies with the initial stages of other well-known diachronic developments of nouns towards more specialized/functional elements, as e.g. in the domain of negation (cf. discontinuous negation e.g. in Romance, where the postnominal element is typically of nominal origin and sometimes becomes a fully specialized functional item, possibly used as the only negative marker, e.g. PASSU(M), MICA(M), etc., in French or many Gallo-italic varieties). It would be interesting to test this speculation with a diachronic study of the development of AxPart elements in languages/varieties where this is possible. What we would predict is that there be an initial stage where such elements show possible definite

interpretation even in absence of an overt determiner, with restrictions on modification as observed in Fodom.

## 4 Appendix

### The distribution of *sun*

#### 4.1. What is so special about *su n*?

Before concluding, I would like to add a synthetic discussion of a subregularity emerged in the investigation of Fodom article-drop. This has to do with peculiar properties of the P-element *n*. The aim of this brief appendix is to show that, while some aspects of its distribution are immediately covered by the analysis in ch.3, others pose intriguing questions as regards the structural interaction between Ps and their complements. As will be argued below, these are particularly complex issues, which will have to be left open here. Still, it seems useful to point out potential interesting theoretical consequences of these non-trivial data.

Recall from chapters 1 and 2 that the phenomenon is observed in all locative PP constructions attested in the variety. These include simple prepositional PPs, circumpositional PPs, and complex prepositions. The latter result from the combination of two spatial markers, where the first is one of a closed list of particle-like elements (*fòra* “out”/*su* “up”/*ju* “down”/*ca* “here/towards the speaker”/*via* “away (from the speaker)”<sup>21</sup>), and the second one a P encoding generic locative meaning, either *n* “in” or *a* “at”. Combinations involving the latter seem more restricted, and it could be that they represent a slightly different case. Be it as it may, there is independent motivation for us to focus specifically on complex prepositions built with *n*. This is because such specific construction, apart from allowing article-drop, also shows a surprising incompatibility with definite articles. Differently put, the element *n*

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Ch. 1 n. 4 for discussion of a semantic ambiguity which seems inherent in *via*.

can be shown to be in complementary distribution with definite articles. There are essentially two facts supporting this claim. The first is that Fodom has three elements potentially meaning “in/inside”. Apart from *n*, there is also *n̄te* “in”, used as a regular simple P, and *ite*, which in addition can occur as a particle-like element in circumpositional PPs and phrasal verbs. Interestingly, the following contrast is observed in the translation of a PP like “in the rooms”:

- (133) I      é      puocia lum n̄te (/ \*n) le ciaune      (=ch. 3 (24))  
           =3Msg be.3 little    light in (/ in ) the rooms  
 “There is little light in the rooms”

Thus, given that the basic meaning of *n* and *n̄te* is the same, in presence of an overt definite article *n* cannot be used, and *n̄te* ‘steps in’ instead. Even more telling are cases like in (2):

- (134) a. I      é      sun tēt  
           =3sg be.3 on.in roof  
           “He/It is on the roof”  
       b. i      é      su(\*n) i tēc  
           =3pl be.3 on(\*in) the roof.pl  
           “‘They are on the rooves”

Examples like (2a) look like straightforward cases of article-drop, as discussed in chapter 3. (2b) makes it clear, however, that this specific construction brings something more to the table. Where the article is realized, the preposition *n* is dropped. In the development of this thesis, given the rather restricted distribution of the phenomenon, it seemed preferable to focus on the more general case of article-drop in locative PPs. Ideally, it should be possible to extend the analysis proposed above to this case as well, and find a compatible account for quirky alternations like in

(2). In the remainder of this appendix, we will focus on the distribution of *n* by examining a specific construction, namely *sun*, resulting from the combination of *su* “up” with *n*. This choice is virtually forced by the fact that, for independent reasons, it is only by looking at *sun* that the full distribution of *n* can be appreciated. To see that, let us compare (2) with other cases of complex prepositions with *n*:

- (135) a. *te vade via n stala* (= ch. 1 (16))  
 =2sg go.2sg away in stable  
 “You go out in the stable”  
 b. *è metù la lesciva fora n solè*  
 have.1sg put.PTCP the.Fsg linen out in terrace  
 “I put linen out on the terrace”

There are two related differences to be noted. First, consider the alternation in (2). Glossing *sun* as “on.in” is only meant to identify the two Ps in the examples, but such stacking is not reflected in the translation. Note also that *n* is present in (2a) and not in (2c), but the only difference in meaning between the two sentences lies in the number of the object noun. This suggests that in both cases *su* encodes the spatial meaning, while *n*, descriptively, is completely bleak in its semantic contribution. On the other hand, in constructions like those in (3), elements combining with *n* only make the spatial relation denoted by *n* more precise. Thus, *vian stala* may be paraphrased as “in the stable, which is away from here”, whereas *sun tèt* means “on the roof”, and not “in the roof, which is higher than here”<sup>22</sup>. As a matter of fact, what elements like *via*, *ju*, *ca*, *fora* share is that they all introduce a presupposition on where the Ground of the spatial relation encoded by the PP is located with respect to a certain point of view, which is contextually determined, much like what has been proposed for English particles in locative and directional PPs by Svenonius (2010)(cf. also discussion in ch.

<sup>22</sup> Strictly speaking, this claim is supported by the considerations above about the alternation in (2), while there would be no clear way to discern the two readings in (2a).



1). I propose to reduce this to another difference between *su* and other elements listed above. Specifically, I posit that while *su* is able to merge in (or, put differently, lexicalize) the bottom, head-like projection of the articulated PP, *via*, *ju*, *ca*, *fora* fail to do so, and instead enter the structure as modifiers in a higher, functional level (the two most obvious candidates being Svenonius' 2010 DirP, or Cinque's 2010 RelViewP, cf. ch. 2). Support from this hypothesis comes from the fact that *su*, but not the other elements, can occur as the head of a simple PP, as illustrated below:

(136) I è ju su / \*via / \*fora / \*ju / \*ca i təc  
 =3sg be.3 gone on / \*away/\*out /\*down/\*here(dir.) the rooves  
 "He/It has gone on the rooves"

As a consequence of these two differences, only *sun* among Fodom complex prepositions allows us to get minimal pairs like in (2). That is, since *su* can occur as a P head, it allows us to appreciate both the presence and, crucially, the *absence* of *n* in contexts like (2b).

Building on the general structural distinction posited in the last paragraph, we can highlight further properties of the *sun* construction. As a matter of fact, sometimes - differently from what has been shown for previous examples - the meaning contribution of *su* and *n* in a complex preposition (their division of labor, so to speak) can directly parallel that observed in cases like (3a,b). That is, apart from the generic locative reading "on" already presented, *sun* can sometimes be paraphrased as "in X, which is higher than here", as shown below:

(137) mio fiol I é ju sun ciauna (=ch. 3 (24))  
 my son =3Msg be.3 gone up.in room  
 "My son went upstairs in his room"

We thus have to acknowledge an ambiguity of *su*. If the structural analysis above on the right track, this means that sometimes *su* can merge in a high functional projection (or, alternatively, lexicalize its features) in a PP headed by *n*, just like what arguably happens with *fora n*, *ca n*, *ju n*, *via n*. This looks compatible with the conceptual content of *su*, which could be equally well translated as “on” or as “up”, depending on the context. Moreover, this would fit nicely with the fact that, like e.g. *fora*, *su* too can occur in verb-particle constructions, either with a transparent locative meaning or in partially idiomatized expressions, as shown in (6):

(138) tra i doi guanc è cheri fora chest

between the two dress.pl have.1sg chosen out this

“Between the two dresses I have chosen this”

b. l é tomé e i l a daidé a levé su

=3sg be.3 fallen and =3pl =3Msg have aided to rise up

“He fell and they helped him up”

c. i lenzuoi i li fé su dagnëra lori

the sheets =3pl =3Mpl do.3 up always them

“It’s always them who fold up the sheets”

For the sake of clarity, let me descriptively dub these two different cases as ‘particle’ use and ‘proper-P’ use. What I have shown in this paragraph, then, is that elements entering in a complex preposition construction with *n* can either do so in their particle use, as happens for *fora*, *ju*, *ca*, *via* (which seem to be restricted to this use), or else be ambiguous between a particle use and a proper-P use, as is the case for *su*. Now, while particle use of an element in combination with proper-P *n* (exemplified in (3) and (7)) simply falls out from structural assumptions previously sketched out, this is clearly not the case for the construction in (2). By parity of reasoning, we are forced to admit that *su* in those contexts occurs in its proper-P use, witness the fact that it is the only P left in (2b), i.e. it directly combines with a plural object DP.

The problem is, then, what is *n* in (2a)? It seems fair to exclude that it might be a regular prepositional head. Suppose that we adjusted the theory as much as to allow for a rather peculiar combination of lexical heads as would be required to account for this case. Even then, we would still face the problem of explaining why *n* is dropped in the context of a plural object. Thus, we can reformulate the question as: how can *n* be capable of behaving as a round-of-the-mill locative preposition and at the same time occur in a complex PP where its presence or absence does not affect the meaning of the overall phrase, and correlates with the number of the object DP? Arguably, this issue is to be related to the other peculiar property of *n* shown in (2), namely its complementary distribution with definite articles. However, to find support to this approach, we have first to evaluate other potential analyses of the basic alternation between *n* and articles.

## 4.2 Why it is not phonology

Let us consider again the contrast in (7), parallel to that in (2):

- (139) a. l    é    sun    taula  
           =3sg be.3 on.in table  
           “He/It is on the table”
- b. i    é    su(\*n)    le    taule  
           =3pl be.3 on(\*in) the table.pl  
           “They are on the tables”

At first sight, one could hypothesize that behind (7) is a phonological constraint, banning *n-l* sequences. Now, we already know from ch. 3 that article-drop as in (7a) is an independent phenomenon. So, if anything, a phonological explanation could be imagined for the lack of *n* in (7b) in cases where the definite article is realized. In other words, there could be a phonological rule repairing the illicit sequence via cancellation

of *n* whenever the article cannot be dropped, as is the case with plural or modified nouns (cf. 3.2.3). However, this account would be insufficient. For one thing, it is clear that the problem cannot be the *n – l* sequence in itself, since it is fully acceptable in cases like (8a) below. Moreover, the hypothesis would fail to capture the contrast in (8b), where *n* dropped even in absence of a following *l*:

- (140) a. *l é sun let*  
 =3Msg be.3 on.in bed  
 “it’s on the bed”
- b. *i lenzuoi i è metus su(\*n) i doi lec (=ch.3 (27))*  
 the sheets =3Mpl have.1sg put.pl on(\*in) the two beds  
 “I left the sheets on the two beds”

Thus, it rather looks like *n* cannot cooccur with any definite article, whatever its phonological form is. Therefore, it is once again morphosyntactic properties of the elements involved that we should look at.

### 4.3 Laying out the puzzle: why *n* is not just a regular P

Let us evaluate possible hypotheses about the syntactic underpinnings of the phenomenon. In chapter 3 we argued against interpreting Fodom bare noun as simple NPs, essentially based on their interpretive properties. The latter lead us to posit an active D-level even in absence of overt determiners. As seen, article-drop with *sun* is but a specific case of the more general phenomenon studied in this thesis. This alone could be taken as an argument against interpreting alternations in (7) by positing that *sun* can only combine with bare NPs. But even if we were not satisfied with that, there is independent evidence for taking *sun* to be able to combine with DP complements. As shown in the examples below, *sun* can cooccur with basically any Fodom determiner, apart from definite articles:

- (141) a. mio neodo l ciapa tres fonc sun sto teriol  
 my grandson =3Msg get always mushrooms on.in this path  
 “My grandson always finds mushrooms on this path”
- b. mètelo sun chèl let  
 put.IMP.2sg=3sg on.in that bed  
 “Put that on that bed”
- c. i tosac i dorm sun mio let  
 the kid.pl =3pl sleep on.in my bed  
 “The kids are sleeping on that bed”
- d. l ucel l é jù sun en ram  
 the birds =3sg be.3 gone on.in a branch  
 “The bird flew on a branch”
- e. sun troc tëc l é ncora la nei  
 on.in many.pl roof.pl =3sg be.3 still the snow  
 “There’s still snow on many rooves”
- f. sun chèlche let l eva i lenzuoi pac  
 on.in some bed =3sg be.IMP.3 the sheets dirty  
 “On some bed there were dirty sheets”
- g. sun dute le taole l é ncora i goc da nsera  
 On.in all the table.pl =3sg be.3 still the glasses from last.night  
 “On all the tables there were still the glasses from last night”

Thus, *sun* is compatible with proximal and distal demonstratives (9a,b), possessives (9c), indefinite articles (9d) and quantifiers (9e,f), and universal quantifiers (9g). Now, what these different cases share is that they do not feature an element with the categorial or featural characteristics of a definite article. That is, the item introducing the nominal phrase in the examples above either behaves as a determiner as a secondary property, so to speak (as for demonstratives, which primarily encode deixis,



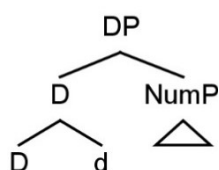
movement (which instead would be clearly compatible with the present hypothesis) was that it failed to capture the restrictions on nominal modification observed. Since article-drop is a much more general phenomenon than the bizarre distribution of *n*, it seems methodologically sound to interpret the latter in light of what has been proposed for the former, and not the other way around. Still, even if we somehow found a way to recast the general proposal in order to make such reconciliation possible, our analysis would still have its shortcomings.

First and foremost, it would fail to address the issue highlighted in 4.1, namely the fact that *n* is at least sometimes semantically vacuous, as in alternations like (2) or (8). That is, we should aim at finding a uniform account for both the fact that *n* is dropped in the context of a definite article and, crucially, the fact that it ‘leaves without a trace’ (cf. the discussion above). Intuitively, the behavior of *n* can be described as that of an item which interacts with fine-grained structural characteristics of its object, and sometimes loses its adpositional features (i.e. it does not contribute spatial meaning, and in such contexts it can be dropped without interpretive reflexes). In keeping with general assumptions as laid out in 3.3.2, this could be interpreted as the reflex of the fact that *n* is sensitive to properties of more than one node in the structure by taking its L-tree to be the locus where its idiosyncrasy is encoded. That is, one could speculate that *n*, apart from a portion of PP structure, can also (potentially) lexicalize nodes in the highest portion of the nominal domain. While still highly speculative in nature, this approach would at least allow us a chance of capturing the ‘non adpositional’ behavior of *n* sometimes observed.

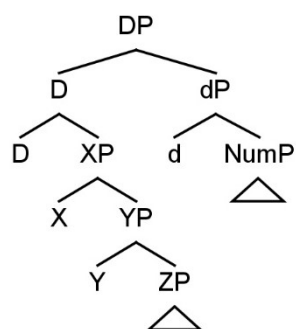
With this change of perspective, a different way would be needed to isolate definite determiners from all other determiners as the only items incompatible with *n*. A possibility could be to build on Cinque (2017a,b), who tackles the problem of dispensing with a distinction between “heads” and “Specifiers” while still capturing relevant differences. Essentially, he distinguishes between “core” and “non-core” projections (the former corresponding to traditional functional heads, the latter to

modifiers). In the second article, he defines this difference by assuming that core projections are those whose (silent) head “selects for a category distinct from their own”(p. 563). The basic idea is that core projections are those that drive the derivation, by selecting other projections and being selected in turn. Non-core projections, instead, are merely merged in the structure by matching their label to that of the correspondent core ones. Arguably, this proposal can be rephrased in ‘more nanosyntactic’ terms. I assume that “functional heads” are the elements that realize different (adjacent) features along the main functional spine, while the merge site of “Specifiers” is only determined on the basis of the features they can spell out via some sort of “matching”, which is independent of the internal complexity of the constituents involved. This is illustrated in the schematic representation below, where the generic D and d labels are used to represent an articulated DP for convenience (cf. ch. 2):

(143) a. ‘Core’ projection of the D-level:



b. ‘Non-core’ projection of the D-level:



In present terms, a functional head in the D-level would be an element exclusively spelling out adjacent features on the fseq, namely D-d (11a). Instead, a Specifier would enter the structure at the D-level (or would be moved there) for the only reason that it features a D-layer, and irrespective of the fact that it also contains features that do not naturally belong to that portion of the structure (11b). If definite articles in Fodom are “functional heads” in the above sense, then we could have a way to distinguish them from all other determiners, as the latter would either be ‘non-core’ projections, or else spell-out different features altogether. More in general, the fundamental ingredients



for such an analysis would be the individuation of the exact features involved and a better understanding of the mechanism behind the selectional relation between adpositions and their complements. As anticipated above, the aim of this section was to point at an interesting open problem. An exploration of these speculative considerations is thus left for future work.

## Conclusion

In what follows, I will briefly summarize the main features of the article-drop phenomenon in Fodom, as well as the fundamental aspects of the proposal I advanced to account for them, and the issues left open.

Let us start with the list of properties we individuated after the discussion of the data in chapter 3:

- (144) a. Article-drop with count nouns in Fodom PPs is productive, but only with a specific set of nouns
- b. Interpretive properties indicate an active D-layer, but with no overt realization
- c. Article-drop is incompatible with plural Number and nominal modifiers, except ‘argumental’ PPs
- d. Bare nouns in Fodom PPs are ambiguous between a definite and a generic reading

(1a) is motivated by the fact that multiple adposition – noun combinations are observed, to the effect that for every noun attested in article-drop constructions there are no clear restrictions on the P-elements it can cooccur with. On the other hand, only a subclass of nouns allows article-drop. These were seen to share the property that their referent can be used as a prototypical point of spatial reference, either in domestic (e.g. *porta* “door”) or external (e.g. *glieja* “church”) space. But since there are nouns sharing such property that still resist article-drop, the conclusion argued for

in 3.2.3 was that the phenomenon has to be connected to morphosyntactic properties lexically specified for the specific set of nouns occurring in articleless PPs.

Fodom bare nouns were argued not to fit an analysis as simple NPs, and to involve additional structure, namely an active D-level. This was supported by the fact that an analysis in terms of NP would have been at pains with the observation above that the construction is not available with all nouns, as instead would have been expected under the plausible assumption that all nouns minimally project an NP. More importantly, in light of the general characteristics of Romance DPs as formulated e.g. in Longobardi (2005, 2008), an NP-analysis is contradicted by the interpretive properties of Fodom bare nouns, which allow both a definite/specific and a generic reading. These were instead accounted for by positing an active D-layer. More specifically, the two possible readings were identified with a definite interpretation based on uniqueness/inclusivity ('weak article definiteness' in Schwarz's (2009, 2014) sense) and a kind-referential one. This accounts for the interpretive properties observed and naturally accommodates the ambiguity, since the two readings have been described as both involving structural nodes where definiteness is encoded, and as typologically associated (cf. Krifka et al. (1995), Longobardi (2005, 2008), Schwarz (2009, 2014), Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2011)).

Thus, an active D-layer was posited even in absence of overt determiners. Since the phenomenon is attested with all Fodom PPs and properties of the complement noun must independently be considered, the intuitive solution was to take the N itself to be the licensing element. As indicated in (1c), the distribution of article-drop interacts with the Number features of the noun and the presence of nominal modifiers. More specifically, the article can be missing only with non-modified singular nouns, except for the possible presence of 'argumental' PPs. An analysis in terms of N/NP movement to the D-layer was argued not to be equipped to capture these restrictions. Instead, an account in terms of the mechanism of Spell-out as in use in the nanosyntactic literature (cf. Starke (2009), Caha (2009), Pantcheva (2011), Baunaz et al. (2018)) was

proposed. This proves superior in at least two respects. For a start, it provides an explicit formalization of how the morphosyntactic properties determining possible article-drop are encoded in the lexical entry of the specific set of nouns that occur in the construction. Moreover, the structural restrictions on the distribution of the phenomenon directly follow from widely-shared assumptions on the structure of DPs in Romance and on the fact that the relation between the N and different kinds of nominal modifiers is mediated by functional projection in the nominal phrase (cf. e.g. Cinque (1996, 2005, 2010), Laenzlinger (2005, 2015), Alexiadou, Haegeman, and Stavrou (2008)). This is because the active presence of such functional nodes intermediate between NP and the D-layer can easily be argued to block the possible spell-out of D-features on the part of the head noun. Essentially, the only assumption specific to this hypothesis lies in positing D-features to be part of the L(exical)-trees associated to the lexical entries of the relevant nouns. All results follow from how this proposal interacts with other mechanisms and general assumptions independently present and widely used in the literature. As an example, the exceptional status of PP-arguments as opposed to all other kinds of nominal modifiers tested is connected to the plausible assumption that they are merged within NP (thus needing no additional nodes), and are then ‘extraposed’ in Cinque’s (2005, 2010) and Caha’s (2018) sense.

Several issues are left open. The first regards how to capture the fact that nouns capable of occurring as bare complements of Fodom locative PPs are part of a recognizable semantic class, i.e. names of spatial reference points. Speculatively, I proposed that this could be connected to the presence of a classifier-like element, PLACE, possibly to be interpreted as a semi-functional noun encoding an ‘ontological category’ in Baunaz and Lander’s (2018) sense. In a nutshell, PLACE could be part of Fodom articleless PPs, and specifically sit in a DP-internal projection, spelled out by the head noun as well. Thus, the nouns for which article-drop is attested could be characterized as those that are capable of spelling out PLACE, which is a morphosyntactic encoding of the observations made above on the shared properties in their semantic content. A suggestive consequence of this idea would be to connect

Fodom article drop with these 'PLACE'-nouns to the diachronic emergence of Axial Parts, in light of Caha and Pantcheva's (2018) recent proposal that the latter could be interpreted as internally complex nominal elements featuring PLACE in their structure.

Another open issue is represented by the surprising distributional properties of a Fodom preposition, *n* "in", which was shown to be in complementary distribution with all definite articles. That is, *n* allows article-drop as all Fodom adpositions, but is exceptional in that whenever an overt article is present, *n* is dropped. This can be observed only in a specific complex preposition, *sun*, because only in that case the remaining element *su* "up" can autonomously head the PP. There are reasons not to connect this idiosyncratic case of P-drop to a phonological phenomenon, and thus a morphosyntactic account is called for. As argued in the Appendix in 4, *n* poses two fundamental problems. First, it shows specific structural interaction with elements of the nominal domain. Second, it occurs in PP constructions where it is semantically vacuous, to the point that P-drop in presence of a definite article produces no sensible differences in the overall interpretation. I tentatively suggested that the two properties are connected, and that they could be potentially reduced to a uniform source of idiosyncratic behavior if *n* is able to spell out multiple terminals, including features of the D-domain. Then the specific incompatibility with definite articles could be connected to their featural specification and/or structural status as opposed to all other determiners. On the other hand, semantic vacuity could possibly be made to follow from the possible non-realization of P-features on the part of *n*. Needless to say, much more work would be needed to test this potential approach.

As a concluding note, it could be interesting to connect Fodom article-drop and its proposed interpretation to other phenomena in different languages. One potential counterpart could be article-drop in PPs in Romanian and Albanian, where similar structural restrictions and interpretive properties are observed (cf. Mardale (2005)). However, two important differences are that no restrictions on the nature of the noun are observed in the latter case, and that PP-modifiers are excluded even from

argumental positions, unlike what happens in Fodom. Another parallel can be noted with P-drop in Modern Greek, where the generic locative P *se* “at” can drop in presence of non-modified occurrences of specific nouns denoting places/spaces, like “gym”, “school”, “museum”, etc. (cf. Gehrke and Lekakou (2013)). More in general, it would be interesting to evaluate to what extent the analysis proposed for Fodom bare nouns in PPs can be extended or adapted to the much more widespread case of so-called ‘Bare PPs’ as studied e.g. in Stvan (1998), Carlson and Sussmann (2005) (cf. Longobardi (1997) for a focus on locative bare PPs in Italian). The latter bears interesting resemblances with Fodom bare nouns in that lexical restrictions on the specific nouns entering the construction are active, which again correlates with strict restrictions on nominal modification. Since Bare PPs typically show characteristic ‘weak referentiality’ properties, the parallel could be drawn more specifically with Fodom bare nouns in their generic interpretation. If at least some of these potential parallels turned out to be well grounded, strong support would come for the proposal developed here. If this were the case, a uniform approach exploiting reciprocal connections between Spell-out properties of the head noun, the structural articulation of its extended projection, and general mechanisms of structure building (and possibly labeling) could be able to capture a rich array of phenomena involving the highest layers of the nominal domain (prototypically, D) and perhaps even higher categories like K/P.

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## Appendix - Questionnaires

### Q. 1

1. Parti subito?
2. Non so chi laverà i piatti
3. C'è poca luce nelle camere
4. Tutti i giorni passo giù dal giornalaio (simpatico)
5. Francesca ha letto il suo ultimo libro
6. I pacchi lasciateli pure lì dietro la porta
7. Oggi mangiamo in trattoria
8. Bisogna partire
9. Vado anch'io con loro?
10. Verrà tua sorella
11. Ho passato una bella serata con il mio amico
12. È caduto e lo hanno aiutato ad alzarsi
13. Non bisogna arrivare tardi
14. Piove
15. Carlo ha fatto tutti i compiti
16. Non è arrivato nessuno
17. Ho incontrato i tuoi colleghi austriaci
18. Scendete giù dagli alberi, vi fate male!
19. Qualcuno telefonerà al professore
20. Di solito do via i vestiti che non mi stanno più
21. Questi fiori sono così belli, mi dispiace lasciarli morire!
22. Hanno venduto la loro bella macchina
23. Sono arrivato dopo di te solo perché mi hanno trattenuto (a forza)
24. Lascia giù le buste, le prendo io!

25. Arrivate sempre tardi
26. Ogni tanto guarda(ti) indietro per essere sicuro che ti seguano tutti
27. Da quanto è che hai i tuoi due gatti?
28. Cosa facciamo adesso?
29. Qualcuno arriverà in ritardo
30. Il torrente scorre giù per la valle (che ora è in ombra)
31. Se vai così veloce non riesco a starti/tenerti dietro
32. Dimmi chi viene stasera
33. È meglio che gli mostri tu come si fa
34. Il tavolo è troppo grande, occupa tutta la stanza
35. Le lenzuola le piegano sempre loro
36. Sono caduto dalla bici e sono quasi stato travolto da/finito sotto a una  
macchina
37. Scendete dalle sedie (di legno), si rompono!
38. Fra i due vestiti ho scelto questo
39. Non abbiamo fatto niente
40. La vostra sala da pranzo mi piace molto
41. Gli orsi non si avvicinano spesso alle case
42. Dimmi cosa mangia Maria
43. Da piccolo mio nonno doveva spesso badare alle bestie
44. Continui a ripetere quello che dico!
45. Sta male, ha anche vomitato
46. Nessuno ha mangiato la minestra
47. Prendi pure uno di questi dolci
48. Su, sbrigati!
49. In una settimana ha speso tutto quello che aveva guadagnato
50. Non riesco a tirare (in) qua il letto
51. È stato davvero un brutto periodo, per fortuna mi avete aiutato voi!
52. Non mangia mai frutta, quella ragazza



53. Tu parli troppo e loro parlano troppo poco
54. Siamo ancora sparcchiando
55. Arrivano sempre in ritardo
56. Sto tornando giù dal negozio (di fiori) in cima alla strada
57. Ci vuole un po' per riscaldare il salotto
58. Chi piange di là?
59. Bisogna indagare sul/cercare di capire il motivo dell'incendio
60. I panini sono qui/lì nei sacchetti (di carta)
61. Sono dovuto tornare indietro alla macchina
62. Questa storia l'avete portata avanti per troppo tempo
63. La festa era noiosa e ce ne siamo andati presto
64. Questa maglietta si è ristretta e non mi sta più
65. Per caso ti hanno dato/consegnato una lettera per me?
66. Ho trovato questo sul tavolo della cucina
67. È seduto davanti a lei/alla finestra (della cucina)
68. Non si dice così
69. Ha recitato una bella poesia
70. Per arrivare da questa parte dovete passare sotto quel tronco
71. Ho messo/infilato tutto nella busta
72. Maria parte domani
73. I miei nipoti mi stanno sempre appiccicati
74. Non so cosa faccia Gianni
75. Abbiamo caricato i mobili sul furgone e siamo partiti
76. Assomigli tanto a tua madre
77. Entri sempre (in casa) con le scarpe sporche!
78. Abbiamo fatto colazione al bar
79. Non fa mica freddo qui!
80. Le nostre pentole le abbiamo comprate lì
81. Hai l'aria di chi non ha dormito abbastanza

82. Ci siamo distratti e abbiamo superato
83. È inutile continuare a discuterne/discuterci su
84. Tira (qui) la palla!
85. Purtroppo ci rimette sempre Marco
86. Dove vanno?
87. Cadono le foglie
88. Bisogna aggiungere un po' di pepe
89. Cosa fate?
90. Se non piove, venite da noi?
91. Ci siete passati sopra con la macchina
92. È troppo pesante: rischia di affondare nella neve
93. La signora che hai incontrato ieri è mia zia
94. Dobbiamo finire di mangiare in fretta, o faremo tardi
95. Noi siamo già dentro il/al negozio (in piazza)
96. Chi mangia le patate?
97. Gli ho detto di smettere, ma continua
98. Ci hanno detto di seguirli
99. Non piove più
100. Hanno preferito venire loro (qui) da noi
101. Non si origliano le conversazioni degli altri!
102. Vado a casa
103. Per non finire fuori strada, hai quasi travolto me!
104. Scendi giù dall'altalena (più alta), ti fai male!
105. Non vogliono andarci.
106. Paolo ci precedeva di qualche metro/camminava qualche metro davanti  
a noi
107. Arriva il postino
108. È stato zitto/ha ascoltato in silenzio mentre lo rimproveravano
109. Questa macchina l'ho comprata da un mio amico

110. Non mi ha visto nessuno
111. Non credo che si presterà/sia disposto a fare una figura del genere
112. Mario vuole far aggiustare il suo cappotto
113. La compri o non la compri?
114. Non stare a guardare, dammi una mano!
115. Si dice così
116. Compro il pane io, oggi?
117. Tutta la farina si è rovesciata per terra
118. Qui non c'era niente
119. Per arrivare alla chiesa, seguite la strada/camminate lungo la strada
120. Mi è caduto il mestolo e ho dovuto raccoglierlo da dentro la pentola
121. C'è un bambino
122. Noi partiamo oggi, voi partirete domani
123. Il cane dormiva sotto di lui/il tavolo (dove pranzavamo)
124. (pagando)Prendi il resto!
125. Intorno a noi ci sono diverse case di amici/C'è una siepe intorno alla  
casa
126. Dimmi chi ha preso il quadro
127. Ci apprestiamo a/stiamo per partire
128. Bisogna sempre tenerlo d'occhio/sorvegliarlo
129. Chi viene al posto tuo?
130. Continuano a rinfacciarci la sconfitta
131. Ti sto parlando, non guardare da un'altra parte!
132. Le tue due sorelle si assomigliano molto
133. Arriva un bambino
134. Ti ho scritto tutto nella lettera che ti ho mandato
135. Siamo saliti sul tetto per vedere le stelle
136. Ho dimenticato la mia penna a casa
137. Gianni preferisce sedersi accanto a te/all'uscita (della sala)

138. Ho messo il bucato fuori in terrazza, così si asciuga prima
139. Quanto è alto!
140. In cinque minuti abbiamo finito di sparecchiare
141. Mangio la mela
142. Hai visto tuo zio?
143. Se nella tua valigia non entra tutto, dai pure qualcosa a me!
144. Vi aspettiamo qui nelle macchine (che sono ancora accese)
145. Alla fine hanno dovuto cedere
146. Lo zaino è dietro di te/la porta (della mia camera)
147. Dice sempre male di tutti
148. Va e viene continuamente
149. Durante il giorno le sue figlie piccole sono a scuola
150. Puoi informarti sugli orari dell'ufficio?
151. Il mio vestito blu non va bene per stasera
152. Sto (ri)cercando quei documenti
153. Dove lo metti?
154. Mi piaceva molto ricamare
155. Per entrare nel negozio ho dovuto legare il cane al palo
156. Sono rimasti seduti in poltrona per tutta la sera
157. Chi ho dimenticato?
158. Uscite subito da lì sotto/da sotto il letto!
159. Piano piano si sta abituando al nuovo lavoro
160. Qui il soffitto è basso, tieni giù la testa
161. Finalmente ho scoperto chi ha comprato la casa davanti alla vostra
162. Paolo è (ancora) via, torna stasera
163. È caduto tra i rovi
164. Ho insaponato i piatti, ma bisogna ancora risciacquarli
165. Hanno strappato il manifesto dal muro
166. Nostro figlio si è addormentato tra di noi/tra i (due) cuscini (rossi)

167. Per sbaglio ho pestato la coda al cane
168. (direzioni o indicazioni stradali) Gira a sinistra
169. Il lampadario che è sopra di noi/la tavola (della sala da pranzo) è nuovo
170. È un bambino intelligente, capisce tutto subito
171. Capisco i tuoi dubbi
172. I tuoi scarponi si sono rotti
173. Ho sempre ammirato la tua fantasia
174. Stamattina mi hanno consegnato un pacco per te
175. Il mio orologio va indietro di due minuti
176. Il rifugio è in cima al monte (che si vede dalla finestra)
177. Non c'è nessuno qui
178. Hanno preso casa a Belluno
179. Continuate/andate avanti ancora un po' per questo sentiero
180. Io sono qui (a casa), tu dove sei?
181. Dove hai mangiato?
182. Il formaggio avanzato lo mettiamo da parte per stasera
183. Nessuno mi capisce
184. I bambini mangiano le caramelle
185. E io, cosa mangio?
186. Vogliono appendere dei quadri alle pareti della camera
187. Ha assistito a un incidente
188. Il vostro umorismo non piace a tutti
189. La slitta è scivolata giù per la discesa e abbiamo dovuto tirarla indietro  
fino in cima
190. In questa foto ci sono i miei nonni da giovani
191. Hanno messo le luci per le strade del paese
192. Le loro idee sono sempre diverse dalle vostre

## Q. 2

1. vieni a sederti qua in terrazza!
2. vai a prendere del vino giù in cantina
3. l'ho lasciato di là in cucina
4. da giovane mio nonno era sempre nel campo a lavorare
5. mio figlio è andato su in camera
6. [mia nonna aveva tanti fratelli e da ragazza per avere un po' di pace] doveva andare fuori nella stalla
7. [La casa era sporchissima: per terra c'era del fango,] *sun taula e let l eva massa polver vs. su la taula e l let l eva massa polver vs.* nessuna delle due. [sul tavolo e il letto c'era tantissima polvere]
8. c'era molta gente davanti alla chiesa
9. quando è iniziato il temporale eravamo tutti a letto
10. aiutami a stendere la tovaglia sopra il tavolo
11. dopo cena ci siamo messi tutti in piedi a cantare intorno al tavolo
12. vicino al campanile c'è un albero
13. Luca è quello davanti al prete
14. adesso non lo vedi, è dietro Marco
15. [a mio figlio piacciono molto gli animali] leri sera si è addormentato steso sopra il cane
16. [in questo gioco dovete mettervi in cerchio introno a una sedia e correre finché non vi faccio un segno, poi] vince chi si mette per primo sulla sedia
17. [ogni anno un uccello fa il nido su un ramo che si vede dalla finestra della mia camera] è incredibile, ogni anno arriva sul ramo e fa il nido
18. ogni casa ha una stanza sotto il tetto
19. [la cucina era molto sporca:] dietro il forno c'era molta polvere
20. ha sempre una macchia sulla camicia
21. [stavo cucinando, ma mi hanno chiamato e] ho dimenticato la pentola sul fuoco
22. il gatto mi si è addormentato sulla pancia
23. Gr. *l é puocia nei sun tèt vs. \*sun l tèt*
24. Gr. *l cën l dormiva sot taula ite vs. l cën l dormiva sot taula*
25. Gr. *sa ciampanil vs. sa l ciampanil vs. sun ciampanil*
26. Gr. *l é sa let vs. l é sa l let vs. l é sun let*
27. [in osteria] ci sono sempre briciole sotto i tavoli
28. è meglio non sedersi dietro le porte
29. Gr. *l é puocia nei sui tēc vs. \*sun i tēc*
30. c'era molta polvere sotto i due letti
31. Gr. *i lenzuoi i è metus sui doi lec vs \*sun i doi lec*
32. la tua borsa è dietro l'ultima porta

33. Gr. *i lenzuoi i è metus su l ultimo let vs. \*sun ultimo let*
34. lo zaino è dietro la porta rossa
35. Gr. *nnier è dormì su l let nuof vs. \*nnier è dormio sun let nuof*
36. Gr. *te l ciape sot let nuof ite vs. te l ciape sot l let nuof ite*
37. la valigia è sotto il letto di camera mia
38. Gr. *è ciapé chëst sun taula de cujina vs. \* è ciapé chëst su la taula de cujina*
39. i piatti sono sul tavolo con le gambe di ferro
40. Gr. *mio fradel l dorm sul let a mán dërta vs. \*mio fradel l dorm sun let a mán dërta*
41. Dormi pure sul letto che vuoi
42. il cane dorme sempre sotto il tavolo che ci avete regalato
43. Gr. *i tosac i dorm sun mio let vs. i tosac i dorm sul mio let*
44. Gr. *l ucel l é jù su nen ram vs. \*l ucel l é jù su en ram*
45. mio nipote trova sempre funghi su questo sentiero
46. Gr. *mëtelo sun chël let vs. \*/? mëtelo su chël let*
47. su molti tetti c'è ancora la neve
48. su qualche letto le lenzuola erano sporche
49. su alcuni tavoli mancano i piatti
50. per sbaglio ho rovesciato la farina su tutto il tavolo
51. su tutti i tavoli ci sono ancora i bicchieri di ieri sera
52. Come tradurrebbe *ite n pais?* (“nel paese” vs. “in un paese” vs. entrambe)
53. Come tradurrebbe *n te n auto?* (“in macchina/nella macchina” vs. “in una macchina” vs. entrambe)
54. sa ciampanil

### Q. 3

1. no sté ilò prò pòrta, vié a te senté ju  
non stare lì sulla/alla porta, vieni a sederti
2. tò la cariega che l é davánt pòrta  
prendi la sedia che è davanti alla porta
3. jon a l'ombrià davò ciampanil  
andiamo a metterci all'ombra dietro il campanile
4. ilò dilongia strada l é na fontana  
lì accanto alla strada c'è una fontana
5. nte ciampanil l é na sciala per jì fin sunsom  
nel campanile c'è una scala per salire fino in cima
6. l é na bela sié ntourn gliejia  
c'è una bella siepe intorno alla chiesa
7. ilò sot strada l eva la cèsa de mia mèda  
lì sotto la strada c'era la casa di mia zia
8. l é valgugn uciei che sgola soura ciampanil  
ci sono alcuni uccelli che volano sopra il campanile
9. è ciapé chëst sot let de mia ciauna  
ho trovato questo sotto il letto della mia camera
10. è ciapé chëst sot let coi lenzuoi bles  
ho trovato questo sotto il letto con le lenzuola blu
11. son jus a mëssa nte gliejia d'Andrác  
siamo andati a messa nella chiesa di Andraz
12. son jus a mëssa nte gliejia del paisc  
siamo andati a messa nella chiesa del paese
13. per vedei le stële i é jus sun tët de cèsa  
per vedere le stelle sono saliti sul tetto di casa
14. per vedei le stële i é jus sun tët de la cèsa che l é davò la vòsta  
per vedere le stelle sono saliti sul tetto della casa che è dietro alla nostra



15. son jus a mëssa nte glieja de n paisc dilongia Bolsán  
siamo andati a messa nella chiesa di un paese vicino a Bolzano
16. per vedei le stële i é jus sun tèt de na cèsa  
per vedere le stelle sono saliti sul tetto di una casa
17. de sciòlito i tosac i pò ence soghé nte scòla elementare  
di solito i bambini possono anche giocare nella scuola elementare
18. I é na cariega davánt ultima pòrta (\*)  
c'è una sedia davanti all'ultima porta
19. mëtelo nte almièrch grana (\*)  
mettilo nell'armadio grande
20. I on compré nte boteiga che i a giaurì nte plaza(\*)  
l'ho comprato nel negozio che hanno aperto in piazza
21. I è tropa mufa davò doi almièrch(\*)  
c'è molta muffa dietro i due armadi
22. I é puocia lum nte ciaune (\*)  
c'è poca luce nelle camere
23. nnier è vedù doi machine ciariade de bici de corscia sun tèt  
ieri ho visto due macchine cariche di bici da corsa sul tetto
24. vigni cesa l'à na ciauna sot tèt  
ogni casa ha una stanza sotto il tetto
25. per cialé daite I a mpoié l'ogle damprò da busc de la clè  
per vedere dentro ha appoggiato l'occhio al buco della serratura
26. no me plèsc jì coi schi sun nei burta come chësta  
non mi piace sciare su neve brutta come questa
27. no me plèsc caminé sun teriòdi che no cugnësce  
non mi piace camminare su sentieri che non conosco
28. i eva duc sentèi sun carieghe portade da cèsa  
erano tutti seduti su sedie portate da casa
29. ntourn taula de cujina I é impossibile mète plu de cinch carieghe

30. nte almièrch de mia ciauna è bele cialé, ma tuo guánt no l eva
31. sun tèt de mia cèsa no son mèi ju
32. l Carlo l a desmentié l rucsòch davò porta de ciauna, e la Martina ence  
Carlo ha dimenticato lo zaino dietro la porta di camera, e Martina anche  
[la frase è accettabile se gli zaini erano dietro due porte diverse?]
33. Chi élo che l a metù i ciazèi sun let? L é dut paz!  
Chi è che ha messo le scarpe sul letto? è tutto sporco!  
[è accettabile per indicare che quel letto in particolare è sporco?]
34. L é meio no mète i pòc pesòc sun taula, la se rompe  
è meglio non mettere i pacchi pesanti sul tavolo, si rompe  
[è accettabile per parlare di una tavola in particolare?]
35. [l eva tropa jent a la festa, e i ava mossù porté trope taule. L Marco l eva senté  
prò na taula massa grana co na bela tovaia bláncia]. Sun taula l eva trope bòze de vin  
[c'era molta gente alla festa, e avevano dovuto portare molti tavoli. Marco era seduto  
a un tavolo molto grande con una bella tovaglia bianca]. Sul tavolo c'erano molte  
bottiglie di vino  
[è accettabile per indicare che c'erano tante bottiglie tutte sul tavolo dove era seduto  
Marco?]
36. l cián l é ju sot a let  
il cane è andato sotto al letto
37. l é senté davènt a viére de cesa da fuoc/cujina  
è seduto davanti alla finestra della cucina