Case assignment in the pseudo-partitives of Standard Albanian and Arbëresh.
A case for micro-variation

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0. Introduction

Pseudo-partitive constructions have always been a challenge for linguistic research since earlier studies in generative grammar (cf. Selkirk (1977), Jackendoff 1977)). In this paper we deal with a specific point regarding these constructions, namely case assignment and/or case agreement between the two nouns. We do this on the empirical basis of two very near and poorly studied languages, namely standard Albanian and the Arbëresh variety spoken in Southern Italy. We believe that the case assignment/sharing found in the two Albanian varieties is directly relevant to decide about general issues arising with these constructions, namely headedness and structural configuration.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 1 presents the data and highlights two different ways to realise the pseudo-partitive semantics. Section 2 briefly reviews the case system of Albanian and contrasts it with the less rich system of Arbëresh. In section 3, we observe the behaviour of the two different pseudo-partitive constructions in oblique case assigning contexts. In section 4, we concentrate on the occurrence of modifiers in these constructions, with unexpected results. In section 5, we sketch a

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1. This paper was presente at the 4th FASSBL conference in Sofia, Dec. 2002. We thank the audience for constructing criticism in particular Petja Assenova, Mila Dimitrova-Vulchanova, Iliyana Krapova and Melita Stavrou.

2. For the Albanian data we thank Gjilda Alimhilli, Gëzim Gurga, Josif Mita, Shezai Rrokaj. The Arbëresh data come from the variety spoken at S. Nicola dell’Alto, in the province of Crotone, which is the native language of Giuseppina Turano and her family.
propose. For the sake of space, we dispense with a review of previous approaches since they are quite numerous and well known. For a recent, general discussion we refer to Vos (1999) and Stavrou (2003).

### 1. The data

Both Albanian and Arbëresh have two ways of expressing the part-whole or the quantity-whole relation. One way is to merge the noun referring to quantity and the noun referring to the substance as two adjacent nominals. The other way is to connect the quantity noun and the noun referring to the substance with the preposition *me* (“with”). Following the generative tradition we call the first “pseudo-partitive” and the second “partitive” construction. The examples are given in (1)-(2) and in (3)-(4):

(1) a. një shishe verë 	(Albanian)
b. një butijë verë 	(Arbëresh)
   a bottle wine

(2) a. një tufë lulesh 	(Albanian)
b. një macë lule 	(Arbëresh)
   a bunch flowers

(3) a. një shishe me verë 	(Albanian)
b. një butijë me verë 	(Arbëresh)
   a bottle with wine

(4) a. një tufë me lule 	(Albanian)
b. një macë me lule 	(Arbëresh)
   a bunch with flowers

As is clear from a first contrast between (1a) and (2a), case morphology on the second noun differs in Standard Albanian according to the quantity noun. In (1a) the case on *verë* is the same as that on *shishe*, namely nominative/accusative, while in (2a) the case

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3. In Van Riemsdijk (1998) and Vos (1999) these structures are called Direct Partitive Constructions.
on *lulesh* is ablative. Arbëresh does not display such a contrast: the ablative form *luleve* (which exists in Arbëresh but occurs in other contexts) cannot appear in (2b).

As is typical of pseudo-partitive constructions across languages, the head of the construction is always ambiguous between a quantity reading and the object referring reading, as is clear from the examples in Albanian (5)-(6) and Arbëresh (7)-(8):

(5)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(Albanian)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Piva një shishe verë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I drank a bottle wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Prisha një shishe verë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I-broke a bottle wine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(6)  

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Mblodha një tufël lulesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I-picked a bunch flowers.ABL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Bëra një tufël lulesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I-made a bunch flowers.ABL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(Arbëresh)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Kam pitur një butijë verë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I-have drunk a bottle wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Kam çar një butijë verë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I-have broken a bottle wine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(8)  

|   | |
|---|-
| a. | Kam mbjedhur një macë lule |
|    | I-have picked a bunch flowers |
| b. | kam bon një macë lule |
|    | I-have made a bunch flowers |

The different case morphology on N2 can be either indication of a trivial difference in case assigning by different classes of N1 or the result of a different relationship between N1 and N2. We try to investigate these two alternative analyses and argue for the second one. In particular, we will argue that in structures like (1a) displaying case-sharing between N1 and N2, a sort of syntactic compound noun is created, whereas in structures like (2a) the relation between N1 and N2 differs. In these structures, the ablative case is assigned by a functional head ABL° to its complement N2, whereas its specifier is occupied by N1 after NP-movement. For the sake of clarity, we first give a short review of the Albanian case morphology in the following section.
2. A brief sketch on case morphology in Albanian

Albanian is a highly inflected language. Nouns are declined for number (singular and plural), gender (masculine and feminine) and case (nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, ablative). Each noun in Albanian has a double form: indefinite and definite. Definite forms are obtained by agglutination of the postpositive article. We will see them in turn.

(9) illustrates the indefinite declension:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nom</td>
<td>(një) burrë ‘a man’</td>
<td>(ca) burra ‘some men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acc</td>
<td>(një) burrë</td>
<td>(ca) burra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gen</td>
<td>i (një) burri</td>
<td>i (ca) burrave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dat</td>
<td>(një) burri</td>
<td>(ca) burrave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abl</td>
<td>(një) burri</td>
<td>(ca) burrash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is apparent from (9), Nominative and Accusative have the same forms: we can refer to them as a unique Direct Case label. The same holds for Genitive/Dative/Ablative singular, and for Genitive and Dative plural. Ablative plural is realised by the affix –sh.

Genitive differs from Dative in that it must be preceded by a proclitic article agreeing with the head of the embedding noun:

(10)  a. një libër i një burri  
      a book the a man.GEN

      b. I jap një libër një burri  
         [CL] give a book a man.DAT

In (10a) i is the genitival article which is obligatory and agrees with libër (“book”). The definiteness on the head noun does not interfere with the presence or absence of the genitival article. There is a relationship between the form of the article and the definiteness of the noun, parallel to what is found with adjectival articles cf. (13)-(16).

Arbëresh indefinite declension is identical to the Albanian one, except that in Arbëresh plural ablative forms are identical to genitive and dative forms cf. burrave. In Arbëresh, it is therefore impossible to distinguish Dative from Ablative in any context.
Definite nouns in Albanian are characterised by the postposition of the definite article to the noun. The article forms are -i or -u for masculine singular; -a for feminine singular; and -t for plural nominative⁴:

(11) singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine 1</th>
<th>Masculine 2</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>burri ‘man-the’</td>
<td>shoku ‘friend-the’</td>
<td>vajza ‘girl-the’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>burrin</td>
<td>shokun</td>
<td>vajzën</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>i burrit</td>
<td>i shokut</td>
<td>i vajzës</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>burrit</td>
<td>shokut</td>
<td>vajzës</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>burrit</td>
<td>shokut</td>
<td>vajzës</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(12) plural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine 2</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>burrat ‘men-the’</td>
<td>vajzat ‘girls-the’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>burrat</td>
<td>vajzat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>i burravet</td>
<td>i vajzavet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>burravet</td>
<td>vajzavet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>burravet</td>
<td>vajzavet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accusative singular is different from Nominative singular in the definite form, contrary to the indefinite declension seen in (9). Oblique cases are identical both in the singular and in the plural, differently from what was found in the indefinite plural declension in (9). The Arbëresh definite declension is identical to that of Albanian.

Albanian adjectives are obligatorily postnominal.⁵ Adjectives can be divided into two different classes according to their morphological properties: pre-articulated adjectives like *i mirë* ‘good’ and articleless adjectives like *përtac* ‘lazy’. The preposed article which characterises one class of Albanian adjectives agrees for gender, number, case and definiteness with the noun. In the indefinite declension, the adjectival article only has two forms, one for nominative singular (masc. *i*, fem (*e*) and one (*të*) for all other cases: (13)-(14):

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⁴ The article -i appears after consonants other than velars k, g, h, whereas the article -u appears after velars k, g, h and finally stressed.

Case assignment in the pseudo-partitives of Standard Albanian and Arbëresh

(13) **indefinite masculine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>një burrë i mire ‘a good man’</td>
<td>ca burra të mirë ‘some good men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>një burrë të mirë</td>
<td>ca burra të mirë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>i një burri të mirë</td>
<td>i ca burrave të mirë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>një burri të mirë</td>
<td>ca burrave të mirë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>një burri të mirë</td>
<td>ca burrave të mirë</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(14) **indefinite feminine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>një vajzë e mire ‘a good girl’</td>
<td>ca vajza të mira ‘some good girls’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>një vajzë të mirë</td>
<td>ca vajzave të mira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>i një vajze të mirë</td>
<td>i ca vajzave të mira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>një vajze të mirë</td>
<td>ca vajzave të mira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>një vajze të mirë</td>
<td>ca vaizash të mira</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Arbëresh the singular adjectival article in masculine indefinite nouns is *i*, generalised for all cases, whereas in feminine indefinite nouns the singular adjectival article is *e*, generalised for all cases. In the plural it is identical with Albanian, both in masculine and feminine nouns. Notice that the adjective may also have a suffix which distinguishes feminine (*mira*) from masculine (*mirë*) in the plural.

Albanian definite masculine declension of the adjectival articles is identical to the indefinite one in the oblique cases, and in the nominative singular, but it differs from it in the other direct cases (*e mirë*) in (15) vs. (*të mirë*) in (13):

(15) **definite masculine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>burri i mire ‘the good man’</td>
<td>burrat e mirë ‘the good men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>burrin e mirë</td>
<td>burrat e mirë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>i burrit të mirë</td>
<td>i burravet të mirë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>burrit të mirë</td>
<td>burravet të mirë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>burrit të mirë</td>
<td>burravet të mirë</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Arbëresh the masculine adjectival article occurring in definite nouns may either be identical with Albanian or it can have *e* in the oblique cases.
Albanian definite feminine declension of adjectives is identical to the indefinite one in the oblique plural cases, and in the nominative singular, but it differs in the oblique singular cases (së mirë in (16) vs. të mirë in (14)) and in the plural direct cases (e mira in (16) vs. të mira in (14)):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Definite Feminine</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom</td>
<td>vajza e mirë ‘the good girl’</td>
<td>vajzat e mira ‘the good girls’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc</td>
<td>vajzhën e mirë</td>
<td>vajzat e mira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen</td>
<td>i vajžës së mirë</td>
<td>i vajzavet të mira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat</td>
<td>vajžës së mirë</td>
<td>vajzavet të mira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abl</td>
<td>vajžës së mirë</td>
<td>vajzavet të mira</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arbëresh lacks the oblique singular form së and generalises e in the singular oblique cases. In the plural e may also covary with të.

3. Pseudo partitives and oblique case.

In (1)-(2) above repeated here as (17)-(18) we observe two possible constructions in Albanian which correspond to a single construction in Arbëresh:

| (17) | a. një shishe verë është mbi bankë | bottle.NOM wine.DIR is on [the] table |
|      | b. një tufë lulesh është mbi bankë | a bunch.NOM flowers.ABL is on [the] table |

| (18) | a. një butijë verë osht sipr bankës | bottle.NOM wine.DIR is on the table |
|      | b. një macë lule osht sipr bankës | a bunch.NOM flowers.DIR is on the table |

We call the construction in (17a) the “Direct pseudo-partitive”, and the construction in (17b) the “Ablative pseudo-partitive”. 
The state of affairs in (17)-(18) presents two issues, one internal to the syntax of Albanian and one relevant to the comparative syntax of the two cognate languages:

- Is the different case on N2 in Albanian due to a different case assigning property of N1, or is it due to a different relationship between N1 and N2 instantiated by a different lexical status of N1 in the two constructions?
- If the latter is the case, as we argue, is the Arbëresh case in (18b) a covert parallel of (17b) or is it a perfect parallel of (18a)?

In order to answer these questions, we observe the case morphology that appears in the two types of constructions when they occur in oblique case assigning contexts. If the case on N2 remains invariable across the paradigm, we have evidence that N1 is the lexical head of the construction. If the case on N2 changes according to the case assigned to the whole construction, we show that the lexical head of the construction is not N1 but N2, or more precisely a complex constituent formed by N1 and N2. This section is devoted to presenting the data.

When Albanian pseudo-partitive constructions appear in an accusative case assigning context, the case on N2 remains the same we would find in nominative case assigning contexts or in isolation:

(19)  
(a) piva një shishe verë  
I drank a bottle.ACC wine.DIR  
(b) mbloðha një tufë lulesh  
I picked a bunch.ACC flowers.ABL

When they appear in a position where genitive or other oblique case is assigned, oblique may occur on N2 in both kinds of pseudo-partitive constructions. Consider the paradigm in (20) which displays a genitive context and the one in (21) which displays a dative context:

(20)  
(a) shija e një shisheje verë / vere  
the flavour of a bottle-GEN wine.DIR/OBL

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6. The different cases appear to be related to different generations of speakers. Elder speakers prefer the Direct case while younger speakers prefer the oblique case. Our analysis, to be motivated below in the text is that no speaker spreads the oblique case of N1 onto N2. Elder speakers keep direct case on N2,
b. aroma e një tufe lulesh
   the smell of a bunch-GEN flowers.ABL

(21)  a. vë çdo gotë pranë një shisheje vere / *verë
    [I] put a glass near a bootle.DAT of wine.OBL/*DIR
b. I shtie ujë një tufe lulesh
    CL-DAT [I] put water a bunch.DAT flowers.ABL

In the “Direct pseudo-partitive” in (20a) and (21a), we must wonder whether the
oblique case displayed by N2 is the genitive/dative that percolates from N1 onto N2, or
whether it is an ablative thereby obliterating the difference between the two
constructions. We must also inquire why the genitive context (20a) allows the direct
case to remain on N2, while the dative assigning context forces N2 to display oblique
case as in (21a). As for the “Ablative pseudo-partitive” in (20b) and (21b), we see that
ablative case remains on N2 even when the whole construction is in a different oblique
case, namely dative. Notice that ablative lulesh is different from genitive/dative luleve.
This shows that there is no case sharing between N1 and N2 in the “Ablative pseudo-
partitives”.

In order to check whether this is also the case in the “Direct pseudo-partitive” (20a), we
must imagine a bottle full of a countable substance e.g. bizele “peas”, which allows us
to distinguish between ablative (bizelesh) and genitive/dative (bizeleve):

(22)  a. *shija e një shisheje bizeleve
       flavor-the a bottle.GEN peas.OBL
b. shija e një shisheje bizelesh
       flavor-the a bottle.GEN peas.ABL

In (22a) we see that case sharing is not possible in the “Direct pseudo-partitive”.
Instead, we observe in (22b) that the “Direct pseudo-partitive” in an oblique case
assigning context turns into an “Ablative pseudo-partitive”.

Arbëresh pseudo-partitives are all realised as “Direct pseudo-partitives”. We see an
instance in nominative case in (23) and accusative case in (24):

while younger speakers turn the “direct pseudo partitive” into an “Ablative pseudo partitive” in oblique
case assigning contexts.
Case assignment in the pseudo-partitives of Standard Albanian and Arbëresh

(23)  a. një butijë verë osht sipr bankës  
     a bottle.NOM wine.DIR is on the table  
   b. një macë lule osht sipr bankës  
     a bunch.NOM flowers.DIR is on the table  

(24)  a. kam pitur një butij verë  
     I have drunk a bottle.ACC wine.DIR  
   b. kam mbjedhur një macë lule  
     I have picked a bunch.ACC flowers.DIR  

When the Arbëresh pseudo-partitive is assigned oblique case, N2 always remains with Direct case. Consider the paradigms in (25) which displays a genitive context and (26) which displays a dative context:

(25)  a. sapuri i një butije verë  
     the flavour a bottle.GEN wine.DIR  
   b. ghurduri i një maci lule  
     the smell of a bunch.GEN flowers.DIR  

(26)  a. voj një biker ndandiz një butije verë  
     put a glass near a bottle.DAT wine.DIR  
   b. voj fotografin ndandiz një maci lule  
     [I] put the foto near to a bunch.DAT flowers.DIR  

Up to this point we have observed that neither Albanian nor Arbëresh display a genuine instance of case sharing between N1 and N2 in any pseudo-partitive construction. What we have seen up to now is that Arbëresh has a very generalised instance of “Direct pseudo-partitive” which can appear in any case assigning context, while Albanian presents some instability. It can realise a pseudo-partitive in two different ways. In direct case assigning contexts, the choice between the two possibilities is determined by the lexical properties of N1. In oblique case assigning contexts, the “Direct pseudo-partitive” is ruled out (with minor variation as regards the genitive, cf. the variation in (20a) and the comment in fn.6). In these cases, the “Ablative pseudo-partitive” is generalised to all kinds of N1.
We propose that all cases of “Ablative pseudo-partitives”, even those generalised to those N1s that do not display this construction in direct cases, have the same structure, namely the one that appears with nominal modifiers of the noun as in (27):

(27)  
\begin{itemize}
  \item a. një autor dramash \hspace{1cm} \text{(Albanian)}
       a author dramas.ABL
       “an author of dramas”
  \item b. një sallatë domatesh
       a salad tomatos.ABL
       “a tomato salad”
  \item c. një triko leshi
       a sweater wool.ABL
       “a wollen sweater”
\end{itemize}

Notice that this pattern is also found in Arbëresh in nominal modifiers, as in (28) even if crucially not in Arbëresh pseudo-partitives:

(28)  
\begin{itemize}
  \item a. një autor dramave \hspace{1cm} \text{(Arbëresh)}
       a author dramas.ABL
       “an author of dramas”
  \item b. një ncahat pumadori
       a salad tomatos.ABL
       “a tomato salad”
  \item c. një majë leshi
       a sweater wool.ABL
       “a wollen sweater”
\end{itemize}

Compare the different interpretation that we find in Arbëresh nominal modifications in (29) and the parallel partitive constructions in (30):

(29)  
\begin{itemize}
  \item a. një thes miahi
       a sack flower.ABL
       “a sack for flower”
  \item b. një tac qumështi
       a cup milk.ABL
       “a cup for milk”
\end{itemize}
In (29), the ablative N2 indicates the type of N1, not the content. In (30) we see the pseudo-partitive construction, where N2 indicate the content of N1.

The generalization here is that Arbëresh distinguishes clearly between a pseudo-partitive construction with a direct case on N2, and a modification structure with an ablative on N2. Albanian, on the contrary, is losing the “Direct pseudo-partitive” starting from certain classes of N1 and is generalizing the “Modification Construction” in the Ablative to all kinds of N1 in structurally complex cases, such as the oblique case assigning contexts and the merging of modifiers of both N1 and N2 which we are going to observe in section 4.

Before proceeding to a structural analysis of the two types of nominal constructions let us observe the distribution of adjectival modifiers in both.

4. The distribution of adjectives in pseudo partitive constructions.

Remind that descriptive adjectives are always postnominal both in Albanian and in Arbëresh. It is trivially expected that a modifier of N2 appears in the rightmost position in any kind of construction in both languages:?

(31) a. një shishe (*të kuqe) verë (të kuqe) (Albanian)

7. Notice that N2 can be modified by different classes of descriptive adjectives, contrary to what Stavrou (2002) notices for Greek:

(i) një shishe verë e mirë
    a bottle wine good

(ii) ??ena bukali thavmasio krasi
    a bottle great wine
a bottle wine.DIR red.DIR
b. një tufë (*të freskëta) lulesh (të freskëta)
   a bunch flowers.ABL fresh.ABL

(32) a. një butij (*të kuq) verë të kuq
    a bottle wine.DIR red.DIR
b. një macë (*frishki) lule frishki
    a bunch flowers.DIR. fresh.DIR

Despite this general parallelism, we find crucial differences between the two constructions in Albanian with respect to adjectival modification of N1. This is expected by the empirical generalization made above according to which the two pseudo-partitive structures are actually instances of different constructions.

In Albanian the modifiers of N1 may appear in two different positions. In the “Direct pseudo-partitive” the only position the adjective can occupy is after N2, as in (33). In the “Ablative pseudo-partitive”, the adjective may appear either between the two nominals or after N2, as in (34). In both cases, the inflected adjective agrees with N1:

(33) a. një shishe verë e vogël
    a bottle wine small
b. *një shishe e vogël verë
   “a small bottle of wine”

(34) a. një tufë lulesh e madhe
    a bunch flowers.ABL big
b. një tufë e madhe lulesh
   “a big bunch of flowers”

In other Ablative structures we have the same results. An adjective following N1 can only modify and agree with N1 (35a), but an adjective following N2 can either modify and agree with N1 (35b) or with N2 (35c):

(35) a. një autor i njohur dramash
    a author.DIR famous-DIR dramas.ABL
b. një autor dramash i njohur
   a author.DIR dramas.ABL famous.DIR
   “a famous author of dramas”

c. një autor dramash të njohura
   a author.DIR dramas.ABL famous.ABL
   “an author of famous dramas”

Interestingly, the adjective modifying N1 must intervene between the two nouns if the
content noun is not in Direct but in Ablative case, as in (36a):

(36) a. një shishe e vogël vere
    a bottle small wine.ABL

b. *një shishe vere e vogël

(36) looks as if the direct pseudo-partitive turns into an Ablative construction, as we
will argue in section 5.
This would be unexpected if the choice for the “Direct/Ablative pseudo-partitive” was
open. But we have already noticed that nouns such as shishe enter the “Direct pseudo-
partitive” as a default choice. What must be explained is why they can enter the
“Ablative pseudo-partitive” in specific cases and why this alternative is not available in
Arbëresh with any N1:

(37) a. *një butij e vogle vere (Arbëresh)
    a bottle small wine.OBL

b. *një macë i madhë luleve
    a bunch big flowers.OBL

Remind that Arbëresh only displays the “Direct pseudo-partitive”. It can never turn it
into an “Ablative pseudo-partitive”, as shown in (37).
We have now sufficient empirical evidence to attempt a theoretical analysis in the
following section.
5. A bare phrase structure analysis

The generalizations to be made so far are the following:

- the “Direct pseudo-partitive” behaves as if N1 and N2 form a constituent in both Albanian and Arbëresh.
- In Albanian, where the “Direct pseudo-partitive” is loosing in favour of the Ablative pseudo-partitive, the “Direct pseudo partitive” turns into an Ablative pseudo-partitive in two cases:
  a) when the whole pseudo-partitive is assigned an oblique case (with a degree of optionality when genitive is assigned);
  b) when N1 is modified by an immediately postnominal adjective.

The latter two conditions are only apparently heterogeneous; in fact, in both cases the numeration contains a higher number of items than what is allowed in a “Direct pseudo-partitive”.

Let’s assume that in the “Direct pseudo-partitive”, N1 and N2 form a sort of “syntactic compound noun”, we call it CN (complex noun). This assumption is corroborated by the observation that N2 cannot be referential, as shown in (38)-(39):

(38)  a. *një shishe kjo/këtë verë  (Albanian)
      a bottle this.NOM/ACC wine
    b. *një shishe kjo/këtë
      a bottle this
(39)  a. *një butij kjo/këta verë  (Arbëresh)
      a bottle this.NOM/ACC wine
    b. *një butij kjo
      a bottle this

If referentiality is expressed in the syntax by the projection of functional heads, we expect that N2 which is a subpart of the C(omplex) N(oun) cannot have such a projection, given that the CN is the syntactic compounding of two NPs. In order to project referential features on N2, Albanian and Arbëresh use the (prepositional) partitive constructions in (3)-(4), for example, (40)-(41) parallel to (38)-(39):
(40)  a. një shishe me këtë verë (Albanian)
      a bottle with this.ACC wine
b. një shishe me këtë
      a bottle with this.ACC

(41)  a. një butij me këta verë (Arbëresh)
      a bottle with this.ACC wine
b. një butij me këta
      a bottle with this

The formation of CN in the syntax blocks any movement of N1 across a modifying adjective leaving N2 in place, as represented in (42a), which derives the ungrammaticality of (33b). Instead, CN must move as a constituent, as represented in (42b), which corresponds to the grammatical sentence in (33a). CN can also move across a modifier of N2, as represented in (42c) thereby obtaining the contrast in (31a):

(42)  a. *një [[N1-shishe] X°[e vogël [[CN [N1-shishe]\] N2 verë]]]
   b. njê [[CN-shishe verë] X° [e vogël [CN [shishe]\] [N2 verë]]]
   c. njê [[CN-shishe verë] X° [të kuqe [CN [shishe]\] [N2 verë]]]

We must assume that in (42), X° can copy the φ-features of either N1 or N2 thereby allowing the AP to agree with either of the two accordingly. However, the merging of two different functional heads copying the features of N1 and N2 is ruled out, as in (43):

(43)  a. *një [[CN-shishe verë] Y° [e vogël [CN shishe verë] X° [të kuqe [CN [shishe]\] [N2 verë]]]]
   b. *njê [[CN-shishe verë] Y° [të kuqe [CN shishe verë] X° [e vogël [CN [shishe]\] [N2 verë]]]]

In other words, (43) is ruled out by the fact that in order to merge a modifier, we need to copy the functional features of either N1 or N2. Being in one and the same functional structure the functional heads merged one on top of the other must share functional features. The ungrammaticality of the two structures in (43) is due to the mismatch of functional features in X and Y.
As we have noticed several times, Arbëresh can express pseudo-partitives only with the “Direct pseudo partitive”. The structures in (42a-b) derive the contrasts in (44), parallel to the Albanian example in (33) but differently for the Albanian example in (34):

(44)  a. një butij (*e vogle) verë (e vogle)  
       a bottle (*small) wine (small)  
   b. një macë (*i madhë) lule (i madhë)  
       a bunch (*big) flowers (big)

The different result in the two languages is directly derived by the proposal that Albanian “Ablative pseudo-partitive” are actually instances of the more general (Ablative) Modification structure. The structure in (42c) derives the contrasts of Arbëresh (32). As expected, parallels of (43) are ruled out in Arbëresh as shown by the ungrammatical (45):

(45)  a. *një butij verë e vogle të kuq  
       a bottle wine small red  
   b. *një butij verë të kuq e vogle  
       a bottle wine red small

In (42b-c) above, CN moves as an XP in a roll-up fashion. This movement must be distinguished from N-to-D movement in Albanian. Apparently, CN cannot undergo N-to-D movement, contrary to what can happen when N1 is in a (prepositional) partitive construction. Notice that there is no ban to definiteness per se on N1, since the demonstrative is perfectly acceptable in (46c):

(46)  a. *shishja verë  
       bottle-the wine  
   b. shishja me verë  
       bottle-the with wine  
       “the bottle of wine”  
   c. kjo shishe verë  
       this bottle wine

As for the impossibility for the “Direct pseudo-partitive” to occur in oblique case assigning positions, let’s assume, as is plausible, that the realization of oblique case
morphology requires the merging inside the nominal phrase of a functional head to which Oblique case is assigned, call it K. Such a functional head is projected in a bottom-up fashion by a “regular” NP but not by a CN. In other words a CN can only realise a “default” case, while if N1 realises an oblique case it must move alone into a position in KP.\(^8\)

Oblique case can be realised on N1 inside the CN in Arbëresh (47a) where the “Ablative pseudo-partitive” is not available, but not in Albanian (47b) which generalises the “Ablative pseudo-partitive” to all kinds of N1 in this case.

(47) a. voj një biker ndandiz një butije verë / *vere (Arbëresh)
   put a glass near a bottle.DAT wine.DIR /*OBL

   b. vë çdo gotë pranë një shisheje vere / *verë (Albanian)
      [I] put a glass near a bootle.DAT of wine.OBL/*DIR

The contrast in (47) can be reduced to a general contrast in morphological richness of the nominal pattern in Albanian and Arbëresh, where the latter is less rich. We suggest that in Arbëresh the oblique case head K is “weak” in the well known sense and does not require movement of N1 into it. As a consequence, in Arbëresh, N1 can enter the numeration already inflected for oblique case and as such can be compounded with N2 in CN. This is not possible in Albanian which has “strong” inflection that triggers movement of N1 to check the case morphology.

Let us now turn to the “Ablative pseudo-partitive”. We assume here that Ablative case is assigned to NP2 by a low functional head projected by N1, which we call ABL°. This is the case in all Ablative constructions which include the Albanian “Ablative pseudo partitive” and the Modification Construction in both Albanian and Arbëresh. The structure is given in (48):

(48) a. një [ABLNP \[NP_{1} tufe\] ABL° [[NP_{2} lulesh] \[NP_{1} tufe\]]]

   b. një [ABLNP \[NP_{1} autor\] ABL° [[NP_{2} dramash] \[NP_{1} autor\]]]

In (48), after merging of ABL°, NP1 moves to the left of NP2 (in SpecABLNP) and obtains the observed word order. In this construction we have two separate NPs, each of which

\(^8\) This can take place by either by head movement to K or by NP movement to SpecKP. It is not crucial to decide between the two possibilities here.
can merge its own modifiers. Let us start with the case of a modifier of NP2. In this case the modifier builds a constituent with NP2 and excludes NP1, as in (49).

(49) a. një [AABL [NP1 tufë] ABL° [NP2 lulesh të freskëta] [NP1 tufë]]
   a bunch flowers ABL.PL fresh ABL.PL

b. një [AABL [NP1 autor] ABL° [NP2 dramash të njohura] [NP1 autor]]
   a author dramas ABL.PL famous ABL.PL

In (49), we disregard the obvious movement inside the constituent indicated here (for expository purposes) as NP2 which is a much more complex constituent than a simple NP (most probably a DP), since it contains an N, its modifier, and a landing site which allows for the N to appear at the left of the modifier.

Let us now see what happens when we merge an adjective modifying NP1 in Albanian. If it is the only adjective, it can appear either between N1 and N2 or after N2. This former case can be analysed as movement of the sole NP1 to the left of the functional head X°, as in (50a). The latter case can be analysed as movement of the whole ABLP to the same position as in (50b):

(50) a. një [[[NP tufë] X° [e madhe [NP tufë] ABL [NP lulesh] [NP tufë]]]
   a bunch.DIR big.DIR flowers.ABL

b. një [[[AABL tufë lulesh] X° [e madhe [AABL [NP tufë] ABL [[[lulesh] tufë]]]]]
   a bunch.DIR flowers.ABL big.DIR

We can combine the structure in (49) and (50), in the sense that the merging of a modifier in NP2 does not block merging of a modifier of NP1, as in (51):

(51) a. një [[[NP tufë] X° [e madhe [NP tufë] ABL [NP lulesh të freskëta] [NP tufë]]]
   a buch.DIR.SG big.DIR.SG flowers.ABL.PL fresh.ABL.PL

b. një [NP1 autor] X° [i ri [AABL [NP1 autor] ABL° [NP2 dramash të njohura] [NP1 autor]]]
   a author.DIR.SG young.DIR.SG dramas ABL.PL famous ABL.PL

As expected, Arbëresh “Ablative modification constructions” also display this property:

(52) a. një ncahat e madhe pumadoreve të kuqë
   a salad.DIR.SG big DIR.SG tomatoes.ABL.PL red ABL.PL
Notice that even though the Arbëresh structure in (52b) is syntactically correct, it is semantically anomalous since only the modification interpretation is available with the Ablative in Arbëresh and it is difficult to imagine context appropriate for a white cup for fresh milk. The more natural pseudo-partitive interpretation for a white cup of fresh milk is not compatible with the Ablative in Arbëresh and it is excluded.

6. Some conclusions

If we project our preliminary study onto a more general cross-linguistic perspective, we can observe that the pseudo-partitive semantics may be realised in the syntax with constructions that are parasitic to a modification relation, as in English and Italian and differently from German:

(53) a. Engl. a cup of coffee a cup of ceramics
b. It. una tazza di caffè una tazza di ceramica
c. Germ. eine Tasse Kaffee ein Tasse aus Keramik / eine Keramiktasse

This variation is also found in the microvariation between Albanian and Arbëresh. In the latter the pseudo-partitive and the modification construction are completely differentiated, while in the former, the situation is unstable. The differentiation is only found with a subsection of container nouns and only in direct cases, with restrictions on the occurrence of modifiers, but the modification construction which is expressed with Ablative case on the modifying noun can be used to express the pseudo-partitive semantics every time the restrictions are not obeyed.

This unstable state of affairs produces a high degree of uncertainty among speakers in less idiomatic cases, such as the cases in which we add one or even two modifiers or in cases in which the pseudo partitive is itself in an oblique case assigning context. In Arbëresh the situation is perfectly stable, with the Ablative only used for modification, and the pseudo-partitive displays all the restrictions found in Albanian with no possibility of escaping them. There is nothing “deep” in this kind variation, but only the
fact that the Albanian system is less stable with respect to this construction than the Arbëresh.

This brief study has a second, more theoretical goal, in that it crucially makes use of a bare phrase structure procedure to capture in a unified way the different behaviour found between the Direct and the Ablative pseudo-partitive. We believe that the parallelisms and the differences between these two constructions could not be expressed in the more traditional X-bar system, even in one of its more recent versions which distinguishes between a possible lexical vs. functional status of N1 in the spirit of van Riemsdijk’s (1998), as in Vos (1999) for Germanic and Stavrou (2003) for Greek. That line of approaching the issue predicts case sharing to occur between N1 and N2 in the case N1 has functional/quantifying status. This prediction is contradicted by the data of the two Albanian variety analysed here. In these languages, the “Direct pseudo-partitive” never displays case sharing. In oblique case assigning contexts it either keeps the Direct case, as is the case of Arbëresh, or it turns into an “Ablative pseudo-partitive” as is the case of Albanian. This matter of fact shows that even the case sharing in Direct case assigning contexts is only apparent, and that the Direct case on N2 is not simply percolation of case features through a transparent N1 but possibly a default case assigned to both component of the syntactic compound noun (CN).

Another crucial difference between our proposal here and those previous accounts is that we do not state an asymmetry between N1 and N2 by attributing headedness to one of them in the pseudo-partitive reading, since the head of the pseudo-partitive noun phrase is CN. The particular structure of CN also derives the “defective” character of the construction in the realization of the modification field and of the determiner field.

For reasons of time and space we leave for further research a comparative discussion of a second line of previous analysis which treats pseudo-partitives as predicate structures, as in Corver (1998) and the reference quoted there. We believe that our analysis, although apparently distant from this latter line of research has some common aspects with it, in that N2 is taken as an intermediate projection (not a head N, but not a DP either) which is merged with N1 to build a complex constituent.

A last remark on the obvious lack of macro comparative research of this study. We hope that our proposal can be extended to well studied languages which display case sharing such as German (cf. Löbel 1989) and the other languages analysed by Vos (1999) and Stavrou (2003) among many others.
References


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