

Among English, Swedish, and Polish indefinite quantifiers, i.e. words which serve to convey imprecise quantitative assessments, there are items which originally function as partitive nouns, referring to parts, portions, and (sub)sets. For instance, the English noun *heap* in the phrase *three heaps of rubble* functions partitively, i.e. it imposes conceptual discreteness on the reference of the associated nominal, whereas in *a whole heap of time*, the discussed item functions quantificationally, i.e. it only stands for a (subjectively assessed) large quantity of the said abstractum.

Importantly, some of such quantifiers may also perform the function of adverbs, e.g. while *odrobina* ‘crumb; piece; a bit, a little’ in *odrobina mleka* ‘a little milk’ refers to a small amount of the relevant substance, in *odrobinię niecierpliwą* ‘a bit impatient’ and *odrobinię poczekać* ‘to wait a bit’ the form *odrobinię* ‘a bit’ points to a low degree of intensity of a feature and a small temporal extent of an action, respectively. Particularly significant in the context of the planned study is the fact that although the numeralization of partitive nouns has attracted a fair share of attention in the linguistic literature, the subsequent progression of numeralized elements to adverbial functions remains an under-researched phenomenon, especially in a cross-linguistic perspective and with the use of extensive corpus-derived material. The proposed project will therefore set out to determine, on the basis of an analysis of empirical data from English, Swedish, and Polish, the factors licensing the adverbialization of numeralized partitives. According to the primary research hypothesis, the synchronic level of the analysed items’ numeralization should be correlated with the extent of their expansion to adverbial uses. In other words, the higher the proportion of a given item’s quantifier uses to its partitive ones, the greater the probability of its adverbialization.

Since the adverbialization of numeralized nouns may be fuelled by analogy to prototypical items functioning both quantificationally and adverbially in a particular language, it is also expected that adverbialized quantifiers will display differences in collocability with particular classes of lexemes. For example, the standard Polish quantifier *dużo* ‘a lot’ used adverbially may only co-occur with comparative forms of adjectives and adverbs (e.g. *dużo szybszy* ‘much quicker’, *dużo szybciej* ‘much more quickly’), whereas its Swedish counterpart *mycket* ‘much; very’ additionally exhibits compatibility with positive forms of adjectives and adverbs (e.g. *mycket snabb* ‘very quick’, *mycket snabbt* ‘very quickly’) as well as verbs lexicalizing a scale of intensity (e.g. *älska någon mycket* ‘to love someone a lot/very much’).

The above hypotheses will be verified based on corpus-derived data. An analysis of the attestations of the scrutinized items in a corpus sample will enable the determination of their respective levels of numeralization. The next step will consist in searching for adverbial uses of particular items involving verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs in the corpora. Also conducted will be a questionnaire investigation, in which native speakers of English, Swedish, and Polish will assess the acceptability of sentences containing each of the analysed nouns employed adverbially, the assumption being that sentences with the items that have been shown to display the lowest degrees of numeralization in the corpus-based study should likewise be assessed as either unacceptable or less acceptable than those with the more numeralized ones.

As already mentioned, the adverbialization of nominal quantifiers has not yet been cross-linguistically examined by means of empirical methods. Thus, by filling a significant lacuna in linguistic research, the planned project will, first and foremost, contribute to grammaticalization theory, which deals with meaning schematization of lexical items and their gradual shift towards a different grammatical category, since the results of the study will offer a better insight into the interrelations between particular stages of the pertinent process. Notably, the inclusion of an acceptability judgement task will constitute a novelty in the research on the functional evolution of partitives, and will compensate for potential deficiencies of the corpus-based investigation, such as the lack of attestations of an on-going language change, thereby shedding further light on the phenomenon at issue.