



METAPHORICAL READINGS IN THE MULTAL PARTITIVE PARADIGM

Silvia Manoliu

To express non-numerical imprecision, speakers of English can rely on a diverse set of vaguely quantifying items and phrases [1]. With a distribution similar to numbers, some of them are closed-class items that fit in the *vague quantifier* + (non)countable noun pattern and fill in the determiner slot in a noun phrase structure, eg: *little / much* money, *many / several* reasons, *umpteen* jobs, etc. Others, known as *quantifying nouns* (Biber et al, 1999: 252), *partitive nouns* or *partitives* (Quirk et al, 1985: 249; Channell, 1994: 99; Collins Cobuild, 1996: 110-113), are open-class quantifiers that enter *partitive constructions / structures* (Quirk et al, 1985: 249; Channell, 1994: 99; Collins Cobuild, 1996: 110). They are used to refer to a limited or to a large indefinite quantity of both “masses and entities,” which are “specified in a following *of*-phrase” by uncountable mass nouns and plural countables (Biber et al, 1999: 252) that refer to a single item, part of a whole, a collection of items or a group/groups of people. The division of quantifiers into non-phrasal and phrasal partitives is not so strict inasmuch as, except *umpteen*, all the members in the former set, can, for emphatic reasons, be optionally postmodified by a prepositional *of*-phrase in their pronominal function, eg: *many (of the)* [books], *much (of the)* [time], etc.

Conceptually, partition can be expressed both in respect of *quality* (eg: a *kind of* [artist/weapon]; a *sort of* [animal/chocolate/crime/iron]) and in respect of *quantity* (eg: a *bit of* [fun] > *lot of* [fun]). (Quirk et al, 1985: 249) In English, the expression of quantity and of countability, implicitly, is achieved by means of *general* partitive nouns, eg: *piece, bit, item*, which are used with a large number of concrete and abstract noncount nouns, of *typical* or *specific* partitives, which are “more restricted and descriptive” and collocate with “specific concrete noncount nouns” (*idem*: 250), eg: a *grain of* [corn/logic/rice/sand/salt/truth]; a *speck of* [dirt/dust/information/truth], and of *measure partitive nouns* (*idem*: 251)/*standardized measure terms* (Biber et al, 1999: 253), which denote exact measurement, eg: *inch, gram(me), hundred, metre, mile, million, ounce, score, yard, pound*, etc.[2]

Since some of them refer to ‘a (very) small amount or number of’, some to ‘a (very) large amount or number of’, and others are neutral with respect to quantity, non-numerical quantifiers have broadly been categorized as meaning:

- (a) ‘+ *for quantity*’, meaning ‘much or many’, which are used in the plural partitive pattern ‘plural quantifier + of + (non)count noun’, eg: *bags of, loads of, lots of, masses of, oodles of; a great/good/vast deal of; umpteen*;
- (b) ‘- *for quantity*’, meaning ‘few or little’, which fit in the singular partitive pattern ‘a + singular quantifier (+ of + noncount noun)’, eg: *a bit of, a scrap of; a touch of*;
- (c) ‘*neutral for quantity*’, eg: *some, several*. (Cf Channell, 1994: 96)

In Biber et al (1999: 248-252), partitives are subclassified into **quantifying collectives/quantifying collective nouns** and **unit nouns**, which “provide alternative ways of viewing and referring” with respect to countables and uncountables, respectively, tending “to have marked collocational patterns.” (idem: 250) Angela Downing and Philip Locke (1992: 443) distinguish between **expressions of measurement** (eg: *four metres of cloth*), certain **singular** and **plural collective nouns** (meaning ‘many’), eg: *a pack of [lies]*, *a gang of [thieves]*, *a swarm of [photographers]*, *herds of [tourists]*, *loads of [ideas]*, and **small quantities of mass entities** (meaning ‘a little’), eg: *a bit of [cheese/luck]*, *an item of [news]*, *a grain/kernel of [truth]*, etc.[3]

Drawing on Quirk et al’s classification of **quantifiers** in terms of antonymy relations[4] and on Biber et al’s framework, phrasal partitives are here approached in terms of two notional paradigms: the **multal partitive paradigm**, which is made up of **quantifying collectives/quantifying collective nouns** that refer to “groups of single entities,” expressing a (very) large amount or large amounts of something in both their singular and plural forms, eg: *heap(s) of [books/money/snow]*, *flock(s) of [birds/sheep/tourists]*, *load(s) of*, *lot(s) of*, *masse(s) of*, *oodles (of)*, etc;[5] and the **paucal partitive paradigm**, which includes **quantifying units [6]/quantifying unit nouns**, that is, count nouns denoting a (very) small quantity/amount or (very) small quantities/amounts of something (eg: *bit(s) of*, *scrap(s) of*, etc). The members of the multal paradigm provide collective, neutral reference for separate entities, collocating with nouns that refer to “a particular type of entity: people (e.g. *crowd* and *gang*), animals (e.g. *flock*, *herd*, *shoal* and *swarm*), plants (e.g. *bouquet* and *clump*), or inanimate objects or entities (e.g. *batch* and *set*.” (idem: 249) Some of them are often used disphorically, eg: *bunch*, *gang* and *pack*. Among the most productive and “flexible with respect to the type of entity they refer to” are *bunch*, *group* and *set*, each of them combining “with over 100 different collocates.” (idem: 248). Characteristically “general in meaning,” and collocating with nouns that specify a type of matter or phenomenon, the paucal partitives “make it possible to split up an undifferentiated mass and refer to separate instances of a phenomenon.” (idem: 250)

Traditionally, the semantics of most of these nominals have been handled in terms of the standard approach to non-numerical quantifiers, which shows that numerical and non-numerical quantifiers alike enter into scalar relationships and create **scalar implicatures**, the choice of any of them implicating “meanings relevant to the others.” (Channell 1994: 96-7) There is in this respect a striking similarity in behaviour between these sets and the adjective, the adverb, the verb and the noun, eg: <*few, some, many, most, all*> ... <*a mouthful of, a cupful of, a barrelful of*> ... <*cold, cool, lukewarm, warm, hot*> ... <*never, seldom, occasionally, sometimes, often, always*>... <*idiot, simpleton, dunce, dullard, fool, ignoramus*> (Cf idem: 97, 116) [7] The **scalar** semantic relations that hold between non-numerical quantifying words and phrases account for the status of **degree words**, which makes it possible to place them on a scale in relation to each other. Channell holds that, with the exception of *oodles* (eg: *oodles (and oodles) of [butter / cream / presents]*), plural non-numerical vague quantifiers and their iterative patterns, eg: *flocks and flocks of sheep*, *masses and masses (of) data*, *pints and pints of milk*, etc, “fall neatly into an analysis as metaphorical extensions from original literal meanings of each word.” While the literal use is “a true measure or partitive, as in *a load of [hay]*, *a bag of [sand]*, *a lot of [goods]*,” the extended, metaphorical uses “maintain the sense of quantifying, but lose the specific physical characteristics – no actual *loads* or *bags* are involved in the vague uses.” (idem: 104)

According to Patrick Hanks, the metaphorical uses of partitives are among the “prototypical syntagmatic patterns” that each word is associated with in our mind.” What contributes “to the meaningfulness of an actual utterance” in a given context is the

the paucal intervals overlap and from where they extend both ways. While the members of the paucal paradigm denote (very) low / little, and sometimes infinitesimal values of the collocate (eg: a *fleck / speck* of [dust]), the members of the multal paradigm denote values within a range from high to the highest of their collocate on the intensification cline. In accordance with my framework for the category of intensification (Manoliu 2007), the literal / neutral, unmarked for intensification meaning of a partitive, in both its singular and plural forms, will be [-I] marked for intensification, by contrast with the metaphorically [+I] marked for intensification singular and plural forms. Compare *bursts/volleys/ a burst / volley of* [automatic rifle fire/water] and *bursts/roars/ a burst roar of* [laughter], *loads / a load of* [wood] and *loads of* [charm/fun/ideas/money/time/work], *bags/a bag of* [cherries] and *bags of* [language/people/time], *tons/a ton of* [fish] and *tons of* [letters].

Specific multal partitives combine with entities or individuals from a diversity of domains, many of which pertain to senses (sight and hearing). Mainly inspired by Biber et al's "collocation types" (1999: 252 - 254), I have grouped quantifying nouns into several classes. Nouns denoting a **multitude**, or **collective partitive nouns**, which make the bulk of this paradigm, may refer to a **large amount** or **amounts** of things, or to a **large number of things** or **participants**, a **group** or **groups**, eg: *army, band, batch, bevy, board, brood, bulk, bunch, bundle, cluster, collection, colony, constellation, convoy, covey, crowd, crew, drove, fleet, flock, gaggle, gang, heap, herd, hive, hoard, horde, host, litter, load, mass, nest, pack, pad, pile, pride, rout, school, shoal, skein, stack, stock, string, stud, swarm, troop, troupe*. There are also nouns that refer to **elements of nature** and to **geographical features**, which often connote the idea of 'remarkably or supernaturally large', eg: *cloud, mountain, ocean, sea*, or to **natural phenomena**, often characterized by force and by 'a sudden and violent release of energy', eg: *burst, explosion, fit, invasion, plague; avalanche, cloud, deluge, flood, rain, shower, storm, stream, surge, torrent*, etc. Others denote **containers** and **shape**, eg: *bag, barrel, crate, keg, pack, packet, pad, sack; cupful, handful, hatful; column, curtain, jet, stick, wad, wall, wedge*, etc, [12] or **standardized measures**, eg: *inch, ounce, pint, ton, yard*. Expressing approximate numbers, such as *dozens, scores, tens, hundreds, thousands, a thousand and one*, etc, **plural numerals** are used in partitive "vague expressions for large numbers" (*idem*: 253), eg: *hundreds / thousands of* [times]; We've bought *tons of* [beer] for the party tonight (CCD).

By lexicalizing intensification to a high, or to the highest degree, the members of the multal paradigm basically mean the same, i.e. 'a lot of, plenty (of)', 'a large quantity of', 'a great deal of', 'a mass of' something. The sense relation of synonymy that obtains between non-numerical quantifiers accounts, for instance, for a great amount of money being referred to as *a lot/bag/bulk/heap/pot of* [money], or as *lot/bags/bulks/heaps/pots of* [money].

The propensity for metaphorization in the multal partitive paradigm in English and Romanian is illustrated in this paper by the class of nouns of multitude that express 'a sudden release of energy'. [13] Conceptually, they may be associated with the MORE IS UP orientational metaphor, in the sense that whatever exceeds the standard limits can either excel at or fail in attaining one's goal. Axiologically, the semantic content of these metaphors implies a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of quantity. While a small quantity usually elicits a favourable appraisal, unless the quantity is felt as insufficient and may generate a devaluating judgment, a large quantity in terms of number, intensity, size, etc, usually elicits devaluating judgments that connote lack of quality.

The transfer of meaning between concrete, physical entities includes mergers of different values. Besides the seme [+QUANTITY], these partitive structures contain variables such as [+/-ANIMATE], [+/-HUMAN], [+/-MOVEMENT], [+SPEED], [+SOUND], [+SHAPE], [+ITERATIVE], etc. The emotive effect of these elements is due

to their evoking the environment or level of style in which they naturally belong. Literally referring to “bodies of water” (Hanks: 18), of snow, of lava, etc, and metaphorically, by degrees, to ‘a very large amount of or a large number of things or of people that occur or arrive at the same time’, the partitives *avalanche*, *deluge*, *flood*, *stream* and *torrent* share in their metaphorical uses semes like [+MOVEMENT], [+SPEED], [FORCE], [+SUDDEN RELEASE], [+/-SOUND]. For example, the idea of [+MOVEMENT] contained in *a stream of*, i.e. ‘a long or continuous line of people, animals, vehicles, etc, travelling in the same direction; a long, continuous series of things; flood’, is further amplified in the meaning of a *torrent of*, which additionally suggests [+SPEED] and [FORCE], i.e. ‘a rushing, violent, or abundant and unceasing stream of anything; a violent, tumultuous, or overwhelming flow’. Compare: *a stream of* [abuse/insults/lies/losses/memories/people/questions/visitors/traffic] and *a torrent of* [abuse/criticism/hair].

An outburst of something, which is either ‘a sudden period of violent activity’ or ‘a sudden and strong expression of emotion, especially anger’, and which contains the semes [+/-SOUND], [SPEED] and [+/-VIOLENCE], has been conceptualized as: *a burst of* (‘a short or sudden period of something’); *an explosion of* (‘a sudden and violent expression of someone’s feelings, especially anger’, ‘a sudden and serious outbreak of political protest and violence’); *a gush of* (‘a sudden plentiful outburst’); *a roar of* (‘a very loud noise’ or ‘a very noisy way of applauding or laughing’); *a storm of* (‘a large amount of comment and criticism made by people who are very angry, indignant, or excited about a particular subject’; ‘a sudden loud expression of people’s feelings, which they show by clapping, laughing, shouting, etc’); *a surge of* (‘a sudden and powerful increase in an emotion or feeling’), *a wave of* (‘a steady increase in a certain feeling, eg: alarm, panic, sympathy, etc, which overwhelms a person, or which spreads through a place or group of people; surge, tide; a sudden increase in a particular activity or type of behaviour, boom, spate’), *a whirlwind of* (‘a situation in which you experience a lot of different activities or emotions one after another’), etc.

The partitives *cascade*, *cloud*, *rain* and *shower* involve different types of [+MOVEMENT], i.e. ‘a floating, flowing, or a falling mass of something’: *a cascade of* is ‘an amount of something that falls or hangs down in large quantities’. Compare: Her hair fell over her shoulders in *a cascade of* [curls] ... her golden *torrent of* [hair] (LDCE); ‘a mass of dust, smoke, gas, etc, moving or floating in the air, or ‘a very large number of birds or insects flying through the air together’ make a *cloud*, eg: Way off in the distance she sees *a cloud of* [smoke]. (CCD) ... *Clouds of* [birds] rose from the tree-tops. A large number of things may ‘fall from above at the same time and with great force’ in a *rain*, eg: Like *a rain of* [bullets], blobs of sulphur would pour down on us. (CCD) ‘A falling movement of lots of light things’, on the other hand, makes a *shower*, eg: *a shower of* [abuse/(falling) leaves/sparks].[14]

The partitives in this class share a whole range of positively, negatively or neutrally loaded [+/-ANIMATE] and [+/-HUMAN] collocates, eg: *avalanche/deluge of* [politicians/tourists/volunteers; applications/data/(mis)information/opportunity], *flood/floods of* [people/refugees], *avalanche/torrents of* [debris/trash]. Complaints/letters/petitions come in a *deluge* or in *floods*, attacks and drugs in an *avalanche* or in *waves*, electrons in an *avalanche*, *stream* or *torrent*, errors in a *burst* or an *avalanche*, (un)truths in an *avalanche*, *burst*, or *stream*. While the force of applauses is lexicalized in partitive phrases such as *roars/rounds/storms/whirlwinds of* [applause], strong protest is expressed in an *avalanche*, *cascade*, *storm*, *torrent* or *wave*. One may experience a *deluge* or *droves of* [trouble], a *burst*, *gush* or *whirlwind of* [activity].

Further contextual intensification is provided by the modification of partitive phrases or, less common, of the collocate only, by descriptive adjectives, which contain the

semes [+QUANTITY], [+DURATION] and [+SOUND]. To illustrate this I have selected the partitives within the range of *applause*, eg: (huge/massive/total/tremenduous/endless/deafening/loud/thunderous) *roar of* [applause], (big/great/huge/polite/respectful/wild) *round of* [applause], (ceaseless/long/never-ending/thunderous/wild) *storm of* [applause]; Another (wild) *round of* [applause] rose... A *storm of* (wild) [applause] followed. In informal use, it is not uncommon for partitives to be also premodified by intensifiers such as *whole*, eg: ... *a* (whole) (new) *way of* [life]... This turn of events opened *a* (whole) (new) *vista of* [troubles] for me. (CCD).

In Romanian also, the collocational ranges of this class of specific partitives often overlap, eg: *cascadă / explozie de* [ciocolată]; *avalanșă/explozie de* [canale TV/cancere/case/prospețime]; *explozie/torent de* [informații/bucurie/lumină]; *potop/puhoi/groază/puzderie/val de* [bani/lume/oameni]; *potop de* [amenințări/critici/invective/înjurături/reproșuri]; *puhoi/groază/puzderie/sumedenie de* [conestații/credincioși/dușmani/filme/inamici/informații/microbiști/nenorociri/nereguli], etc. [15] Crosslinguistically, a shared conceptual space will enable comparisons, equivalence in form and/or content being a matter of degree rather than of meaning. The partitive class under examination reveals much overlapping both in form and collocational ranges between English and Romanian. The English specific partitives *avalanche, flood, deluge, wave, stream* and *torrent of*, and their general partitive equivalents *a lot of, lots of, masses of, oodles of* and *tons of*, have as Romanian counterparts the partitives *avalanșă, șuvoi, torent, val de* and the rather archaic nouns *potop, puhoi, puzderie, groază de*, eg: *avalanche/deluge of* [applications/notifications/jobs]–ro. *avalanșă/puhoi/torent/val de* [cereri/conestații]; *avalanche of* [costs/events/sales] – ro. *avalanșă de* [costuri/cumpărături/evenimente/scumpiri/vânzări]; *avalanche/ wave of* [accidents/suicide/tourists]–ro. *avalanșă/val de* [accidente/evenimente rutiere/cumpărături / scumpiri/vânzări/sinucideri/candidați/turiști]; *explosion of* [colour/rage]–ro. *explozie de* [sunet, lumină și culoare/talent și culoare/mânie/prețuri]; *flood/torrents/volley of* [words/oaths] [16] -ro. *cascadă/potop/șuvoi/torent de* [cuvinte/înjurături/vorbe]; *flood/gush of* [tears] –ro. *puhoi / șuvoi de* [lacrimi]; *flood of* [news] vs. *potop de* [știri]; *wave of* [love/violence] - ro. *val de* [afecțiune/dragoste/(acte de) violență]; *avalanche/stream/torrent/wave of* [protest] -ro. *avalanșă/val de* [proteste]; a *stream of* [cars/people] - ro. *puhoi/șuvoi de* [mașini/oameni]; *rain of* [bullets] - ro. *ploaie de* [gloanțe], etc. In both speech and writing, the Romanian counterparts of these partitives vary between use and abuse. A *burst/peal/ roar/round/storm/thunder/volley/wave of* [applause], (out)*burst/peal/roar/storm of* [laughter], *flood/whirlwind of* [emotions], etc, are lexicalized in Romanian as *furtună / ropot de* [aplauze], *hohot de* [râs] and *val de* [compasiune], but also improperly rendered as ?*rafală de* [aplauze], ?*ropot de* [fluierături / râs]. [17]

The following selection from our corpus illustrates the metaphorical uses of some English and Romanian partitives in this class:

Ski vendors give advertizers *an avalanche of* [opportunity]. (www.usatoday.com/money/advertising/adtrack) ... Thanks to *an avalanche of* [email] I've added a bunch of new items to ... He had set off a (terrible) *avalanche of* [(world) events]. (CCD)... *an avalanche of* [misogyny] directed at Hillary Clinton (http://atypicaljoe.com/index.php/site/comments/an_avalanche_of_misogyny_directed_at_hillary_clinton/)... *Flames of* [suspicion] leapt up in the breast of each man. (F / PI: 117);

A TV show ... was halted after *a flood of* [complaints] ... *a* (raging) *flood of* [doubts]... There followed *a* (great) *flood of* [indignation] in the newspapers (CCD) ... She received *a flood of* (grateful) [telegrams and letters] (CCD) ... She shed *floods of* [tears] ... A *storm of* [laughter] arose... the *storm of* [applause] that greeted the actors ... The decision

provoked *a storm of* [criticism] from Conservative MPs. (CCD) ... They uttered *a stream of* (nasty) [curses] ... He sat dumb for several minutes while the *stream of* [insults] continued ... “The Media Repeats *Streams of* [Lies] about Obama.”... These ideas have been hammered into their heads by *a stream of* [movies, plays and books] ... *Stream of* [nonsenseness] by Adrian Jimenezb... *a (steady) stream of* [contributions] on a weekly basis ... *a (steady) stream of* [questions] ... There was *a (constant) stream of* [people] going both ways ... The research adds weight to *a stream of* [studies] that have found obesity and other health problems ... (MIKE STOBBE, AP Medical Writer *Wed May 7, 11:06 AM*) (Relentless) *stream of* [untruths] ... *A (mounting) wave of* [dislike and anger] rose within me... *waves of* [fun] (C22: 153)... In the (general) *wave of* [panic], nobody thought of phoning for an ambulance.(CCD)... In Paris in May 1968 there was *a (massive) wave of* (student) [riots]... the recent *wave of* [bombings] (CCD)... There was *a (strong) wave of* [applause] punctuated with cheers... *Waves of* [applause] like ripples from a slow-grinding fracture.. permeated the subterranean gloom... (<http://www.qbsaul.demon.co.uk>)... *Waves of* [applause] washed over Nicola, swelling her with pride. (www.asstr.org/~knickers/haremd2html)... *a (new) wave of* [innovation] for teaching and learning... *a (fresh) wave of* [measles] ... *Waves of* (sapphire)[mist] spread from it in the dusty fog... He has been trading *a (new) wave of* [sanctions];

In the 1920s, *a Burst of* American [Art and Expression] Takes Form. (<http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/2006-06-14-voa4.cfm>)... After *a burst of* [(initial) publicity], all seems to have quietened down on this front (*The Financial Express*, Friday, April 04, 2008)... The ingredients in this shot lead to *a burst of* [flavor] you wouldn't expect... Jack Kerouac, fuelled by inspiration, coffee and Benzedrine, set down at his typewriter and in one *burst of* [creative energy] wrote the novel that would make him the voice of his generation. (Kerouac's *On the Road*) (<http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/patc/ontheroad>) (5April 2008)... Verheugen's visit triggers *a burst of* [commentaries] ... She felt *a surge of* [affection] for him... There has been *a surge of* [people];

Deluge of (Digitally Distributed) Drama ... *a deluge of* [firms] in Dubai ... *a deluge of* [petitions] to the vice-chancellor ... World faces *deluge of* (human) [trafficking] ... Rising Miss. River tricky for *deluge of* [barges] headed downstream ... *A deluge of* (new) [trouble]... he has released *tons of* [songs] for the consumption of the masses. (Biber et al 1999: 253);

Istoria ne-a rezervat o *cascadă de* [cacealmale]. (*Jurnalul Național-online*, 15.06.2006)... o *explozie de* [populism și de necunoaștere] ... *Explozie de* [copii] în lumea artistică / la Hollywood în 2007... *explozie de* [bebeluși] în România ... *explozie de* [sinucideri] care sperie medicii (*Ziarul de Iași*)... *explozie de* [bere] în centrul Sucevei (*Crai Nou*);

Soprana Mariana Nicolesco, care a declanșat *furtuni de* [aplauze] cu liedurile enesciene ... stârnind o *furtună de* [aplauze] în rândurile celor 3.000 de spectatori (www.onlinegallery.ro/raducanu_tavitian.html) ... fiecare apariție a sa stârnește un freamăt care anunță *furtuna de* [aplauze] din final;

?*Rafale de* [aplauze] la “Chicago” (*Cotidianul*) ... au urmat câteva aplauze discrete, anemice și neconvingătoare. După dans însă, au izbucnit ?*rafale de* [aplauze]... Din ziua aia salatele fură înecate în ?*potop de* [oțet] acru de mere.

Well aware of the fact that approaching metaphoricity in the partitive paradigms involves dealing with extensive corpora,[18] I have discussed the multal metaphorical partitive structures in terms of general and specific semes, which turn them into expressive markers

of intensification, focusing on collocational ranges and regularities of partitives, as well as on abuse in the use of some Romanian multal partitive nouns.

The study has revealed some basic issues concerning the semantics and the metaphorical uses of multal partitives:

- The meaning of the multal metaphorical partitives is a combination of the common semes [+PLURAL] / [+QUANTITY] which are “intrinsic to the semantic matrix of collective nouns” (Cf. GA. I: 109) and of specific semes like [+/-MOVEMENT], [+SPEED], [+SOUND], etc, which convey the idea of exaggeration or of excess.
- Since the semantics of partitives is a function of contiguity, varying with the semantic load of the collocates, the paradigm members cannot simply be divided into neutral, positively loaded and negatively loaded items. They have a very wide distribution, combining with nouns containing the semes [+/-HUMAN] and [+/-ANIMATE], with neutral, epiphoric and disphoric connotations;
- It is more difficult to establish differences in meaning between individual partitives than between cognitive paradigms; they can more profitably be grouped into semantic classes and subclasses in accordance with the semantic domain they belong to;
- Even though English and Romanian may not have perfectly matching lexicalized counterparts, their shared conceptual space makes possible crosslinguistic comparisons, which show that equivalence in form and / or content is a matter of degree rather than of meaning.

It may be held that metaphorical partitives are cases where “... that inner core of signification which the word calls up even in isolation includes affective factors,” their real significance being “as much emotional as it is conceptual.” (Stephen Ullmann, 1967: 99) It is by evoking the environment or level of style to which they naturally belong that conveys the emotive effect. The speaker’s / writer’s choice in achieving a stylistic effect (i.e. familiar, pejorative, jocular, slangy or archaic) is, however, the keynote of any metaphorical or emotional reading.

Notes

[1] Speaking about “the inherent vagueness in non-numerical quantifiers,” Joanna Channell (1994: 99) has pointed out that they are vague in the sense that they are “in some ways rather weak as quantifiers,” saying “nothing absolute about the quantities involved.”

[2] The general partitives *bit of*, *item of* and *piece of* are invariably rendered in Romanian by the general partitive *bucată de*, in collocation with concrete nouns, eg: *bucată de* (cărbune / cretă / hârtie / metal / pământ), and specific partitives such as *felie de* [prăjitură / tort], *articol de* [îmbrăcăminte]. Note the countability of the Romanian abstract nouns *informație*, *știre*, *șfat*, *cercetare*, etc, which do not need reclassification by partition.

[3] Noun collocates are typed between square brackets, whereas modifiers are placed between round brackets.

[4] They classify *much*, *many*, *several* and *a lot* as **multal quantifiers** and *a little*, *a few*, respectively, as **paucal quantifiers** with a universal or a partitive meaning (1985: 384-6).

[5] Each combining with “well over 100 different collocates,” unit nouns (eg: *bit of* and *piece of*) are “characteristically general in meaning” and, in a way, “the opposite of collective nouns: rather than providing a collective reference for separate entities, they split up an undifferentiated mass and refer to separate instances of a phenomenon. Both types of noun provide alternative ways of viewing and referring, collective nouns with respect to countables and unit nouns with respect to uncountables.” (Biber et al 1999: 250; Cf also Quirk et al 1985: 249) Moreover, as context-sensitive items, partitives, like intensifiers, can connote divergent values of their collocates. When used to mean the opposite of what it says, an expression of quantity indicates a violation of Grice’s maxim of Quality. Just as the diminisher *a bit of* appears to indicate a large quantity, *loads of*, i.e. ‘a lot of something’, may mean ‘a (very) small amount of something’. Compare: She’s done *(a few) bits of [shopping]* (‘a small amount of shopping’ vs. ‘quite a lot of shopping’) ... He’s done *loads of [work]* (‘has done a lot of work’ vs. ‘has hardly done anything’).

[6] The classifying tag “quantifying units” has been coined on analogy to Biber et al’s “quantifying collectives.”

- [7] The bidirectional ordering of gradable items in our intensification framework is the reverse of Channell's scaling, where the highest in degree values are marked counterclockwise, i.e. leftwards, eg: <all, most, many, some, few>, <a barrelful of, a cupful of, a mouthful of>, etc (See Manoliu 2007: 26)
- [8] We have preserved the boldface in Hank's examples.
- [9] According to Pustejovsky, there are "four essential aspects of a word's meaning" that define the qualia structure: CONSTITUTIVE (i.e. the relation between an object and its constituent parts), FORMAL (i.e. which distinguishes an object within a larger domain), TELIC (i.e. the purpose and function of the object) and AGENTIVE (i.e. factors involved in the origin or "bringing about" of something) (*idem*:7)
- [10] Since, in terms of the category of intensification and its markers, they all pertain to feelings, these metaphorical classes may, however, be approached as "storms of emotion" which denote different intensity values along a bidirectional intensification scale.
- [11] Iorgu Jordan (1975: 333) calls this process „semantic derivation.”
- [12] To form a quantifying noun, the suffix *-ful* can be added to nouns denoting different types of container ...” (*idem*: 254)
- [13] Our corpus has been culled from fiction and media, mainly from <http://www.google.ro>
- [14] Note also the intensifying elliptical prepositional phrases *in clouds, in droves, in spate, in waves*, etc, eg: The mosquitoes were coming up *in clouds*... They would come *in droves* to see Australia's natural wonder. (CCD)
- [15] Note that *of* is almost invariably rendered into Romanian by the preposition *de*.
- [16] A *volley of* [words / questions / figures] is 'a lot of words, questions, etc, which someone says very quickly and in an aggressive way, without giving anyone else a chance to reply'. Remember also *a sea of* [words]. (Pârlog 1995: 115)
- [17] Such collocations abound in the media, eg: *?rafală de* [cuvinte / moțiuni / oferte / ritmuri / sentimente], *?șuvoi de* [compasiune / dubii / picături / victime], *?cascadă de* [apartamente], etc.
- [18] A great amount of computed data from many spoken and written sources compensate for the scant attention that partitives receive in lexicographic studies. It is beyond the scope of this paper to determine the grammatical role of the partitive / quantifier and of its collocates or to give a full-scale record of the collocational ranges of these partitives. We cannot but agree in this respect with Hanks, who holds that "[I]t would take a full-scale lexicographical study ... to determine exactly how many words are used as metaphorical partitives and what semantic features they share."

REFERENCES

- Academia Română, Institutul de Lingvistică "Iorgu Jordan – Al. Rosetti" (2005). *Gramatica limbii române. I Cuvîntul*, București: Editura Academiei Române (GA. I)
- Biber, D., et al. (1999). *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber et al), London: Longman
- Channell, J. (1994) *Vague Language*, OUP
- Downing, A., Locke, Ph. (1992). *A University Course in English Grammar*, Prentice Hall International
- Hanks, P. <http://www.dcs.shef.ac.uk/research/ilash/Seminars/Hanks.doc>.
- Manoliu, S. (2007). *Intensification of Meaning. Central Markers*, Iași: Casa Editorială Demiurg
- Pârlog, H. (1995). *The Sound of Sounds*, Timișoara: Hestia Publishing House
- Quirk, R., et al. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, London: Longman

DICTIONARIES

- Academia R.S.R. Institutul de Lingvistică din București (1975). *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, București: Editura Academiei R.S.R. (DEX)
- Benson, M., Benson, E., Ison, R. (1990). *The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English*, John Benjamins Publishing Company. (BBI)
- Chambers Thesaurus*. (1991). W & R Chambers Ltd. (CT)
- Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*. (1994). Harper Collins Publishers. (CCD)
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, Third Edition. (1995). London: Longman. (LDCE)

CORPUS

- (F/PI) Forster, E.M. (1989). *A Passage to India*, Penguin Books
- (JH/C22) Heller, J. (1979) *Catch-22*, London: Thirty Bedford Square

Abstract

Part of the series of articles on peripheral marks of the category of intensification, the current paper approaches the semantics the partitive-amplifying paradigm, the most significant segment which furnishes partitive metaphor in English and Romanian. Reference is mainly made to the metaphorization of collective specific partitives with a metaphorical meaning 'the sudden relief of an impressive quantity of energy' such as **avalanche, deluge, flood, stream, torrent, burst, explosion, gush, roar, storm, wave of**, which denote abundance and excess, which indicate, depending on the collocation a quantitatively neutral, favourable or unfavourable evaluation. As in the case of intensifiers, it is more simply to establish meaning differences between cognitive partitives and the partitives themselves. A wider distribution, quite common collocations and associations quite often surprising provide metaphorical meanings with extreme hyperbolic valences to these quantitative-non-numerical phrases. Romanian, which possesses most of the lexicalizations of the English vocabulary, also reveals the presence of a set of partitives with an archaic flavour, such as **groază/potop/puhoi de**, etc., also shows a tendency to improperly borrow English partitives. The corpus was extracted from dictionaries, literature, mass media and on-line sources.

Résumés

S'inscrivant dans la série d'articles consacrés aux marques périphériques de la catégorie de l'intensification, ce travail se veut une approche sémantique du **paradigme partitif-amplificateur**, le segment le plus significatif fournisseur de la métaphore partitive en anglais et roumain. Nous faisons surtout référence à la métaphorisation des partitifs collectifs spécifiques à sens métaphorique, « la livraison brusque d'une quantité considérable d'énergie », telles que : « avalanche, déluge, flood, stream, torrent, burst, explosion, gush, roar, storm, wave of », qui dénotent de l'abondance et de l'excès et indiquent, en fonction de la collocation, une évaluation quantitative neutre, favorable ou défavorable. On peut constater, tout comme dans le cas des intensificateurs, qu'il est plus facile à établir les différences de sens entre les paradigmes cognitifs qu'entre les partitifs eux-mêmes. Une distribution ample, des collocations souvent communes et des associations parfois surprenantes, tout confère à ces expressions quantitatives-non numériques des sens métaphoriques, à valences extrêmes, hyperboliques. Dans la langue roumaine, où on retrouve une grande partie des lexicalisations du vocabulaire anglais et on remarque la présence d'une série de partitifs à résonance archaïque, tels que **groază / potop / puhoi de**, etc., se manifeste la tendance d'emprunter d'une manière impropre des partitifs de l'anglais. Le corpus illustratif a été sélectionné des dictionnaires, de la littérature, des mass media et des sources internet.

Rezumat

Înscriindu-se în seria de articole dedicate mărcilor periferice ale categoriei intensificării, lucrarea de față abordează semantica **paradigmei partitiv-amplificatoare**, cel mai semnificativ segment furnizor de metaforă partitivă în engleză și română. Se face în principal referire la metaforizarea partitivelor colective specifice cu sensul metaforic 'eliberarea bruscă a unei cantități impresionante de energie', precum **avalanche, deluge, flood, stream, torrent, burst, explosion, gush, roar, storm, wave of**, care denotă abundență și exces, indicând, în funcție de colocație, o evaluare cantitativ neutră, favorabilă sau nefavorabilă. Se constată, ca și în cazul intensificatorilor, că este mai lesne de stabilit diferențe de sens între paradigmele cognitive decât între partitivele înseși. O distribuție amplă, colocații adesea comune și asocieri nu rareori surprinzătoare conferă acestor expresii cantitativ-nonnumerice sensuri metaforice, cu valențe hiperbolice extreme. În limba română, unde se regăsesc mare parte din lexicalizările din vocabularul englez și se remarcă prezența unui set de partitive cu rezonanțe arhaice, precum **groază/potop/puhoi de**, etc, se manifestă tendința de a prelua impropriu partitive din limba engleză. Corpusul ilustrativ a fost selectat din dicționare, beletristică, mass media și surse online.