

Syntax and semantics of the faded partitive
construction in Dutch

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Abstract

In this study, several theories concerning the syntax and semantics of the faded partitive construction in Dutch are compared. I present a corpus study of which the results indicate that faded partitive constructions are typically found in informal, spoken Dutch. I argue that the construction can be analysed as having the function of marking that a speaker does not know any straightforward word for the concept she wants to describe and therefore appealing to her own estimate of the hearer and speaker's shared knowledge.

1 Introduction

In Dutch, an interesting construction is possible, in which the preposition *van* ‘of’ turns up rather unexpectedly. It is called the *faded partitive*:

- (1) *dus uh je hebt niet van die uh oneindige discussies wat eigenlijk waar eigenlijk niks uitkomt.*
‘so uh you do not have those uh infinite debates that do not actually solve anything.’
- (2) *maar dan heeft ze van die gebruikte borsten van die van die gebakken borsten heeft ze eigenlijk omdat ze gewoon zo lang in de zon heeft gelegen.*
‘but she has such tanned breasts, you know, those are baked breasts she has, just because she has been tanning for such a long time.’
- (3) *Van die uitslovers die het idee hebben dat ze hun eigen Tour de France aan het rijden zijn.*
‘Those show-offs who think that they are cycling their own Tour de France.’
(De Gelderlander, 20 July 2013, pp. 14–15)

Van is unexpected since it should not be able to be in that position right in front of the nominal phrases (NP), i.e. *die uh oneindige discussies* ‘those uh infinite debates’ without any other constituent requiring it. Is it part of the NP? What does it do syntactically? Furthermore, the semantics of this construction seem to be vague to say the least. Speakers of Dutch report that NPs introduced by *van die* ‘of those’ give them a sense of familiarity and distance at the same time.

In this study I will look at what has already been done in the research of the faded partitive construction and I will propose an explanation for the semantics of the construction using Theory of Mind. In section 2 I will discuss the syntax of the construction: I will look at whether it is an NP or a prepositional phrase (PP), what it looks like in a tree diagram and the forms that the construction can take. I will also discuss the *inverse determiner* analysis and the *lexical government requirement*. Section 3 will be about the semantics of the construction: I will look at the literature on this topic and discuss the *shared knowledge* analysis, the *cells of partitions* analysis and the *kind* analysis. Furthermore I will propose my own analysis using Discourse Representation Theory with which the vagueness of the partitive’s meaning can be explained. In section 4 I will present a corpus study using a corpus of spoken Dutch and discuss implications of its results.

2 Syntax of the faded partitive construction

2.1 Literature overview

In this section I will look at what has been written about the syntax of the faded partitive construction so far. We will see in section 2.1.1 that there are several arguments for claiming that it is an NP, but some of the arguments are rebutted. Section 2.1.2 will be about different forms that the construction can take. In section 2.1.3 I will discuss the possibility of *van van* ‘of of’ sequences. In section 2.1.4 I will present the *inverse determiner* analysis, based on observations by Sturm (1989). Section 2.1.5 will be about unmodified faded partitives being unsolicited when they are preverbal subject, which may be explained by a *lexical government requirement*. Finally I will give an interim summary and formulate a set of concrete hypotheses, that can be tested with the corpus study.

2.1.1 Nominal phrase or prepositional phrase

What seems to be the most discussed question with respect to the faded partitive construction is whether it is an NP or a PP. To some the NP status is disputable because NPs normally cannot begin with a preposition. The PP status is disagreed with because the construction appears in syntactic positions that a PP usually cannot occupy.

Van der Lubbe (1982) states that it is ‘een bijzonder soort woordgroep, waarvan de syntactische bruikbaarheid kennelijk spot met allerlei fundamentele regels van de grammatica’ ‘a special kind of constituent, of which the syntactic usefulness seems to mock several fundamental rules in grammar’ (p. 369). NPs can be among other things subject, direct object and predicative expression. Faded partitives can have those functions too, which makes Sturm (1986) call them ‘een notoire uitzondering’ ‘an infamous exception’ (p. 100). Zwarts (1987) thinks that because of its NP-like distribution the faded partitive is an actual NP. It can even be considered a noun, into which it has been made by means of *van*. He states that *van* has no paradigm and that it turns a nominal constituent into a noun (p. 188). What is meant by *paradigm* in this context is explained by Paardekooper (1986, p. 281): he defines it as a list of words and phrases that can be in the same position within a pattern. When applied to the faded partitive construction this means that *van* cannot be replaced by any other preposition or any other word without changing the construction. In *van die vieze naaktkatten* ‘of those disgusting hairless cats’ the determiner *die* ‘those’ can be replaced by *zulke* ‘such’ for example. It is still a faded partitive. *Van* ‘of’ cannot be replaced by anything. Thus, *van* does not have a paradigm whereas *die* does.

Sturm (1989) warns for a confusion of form and function. An NP is not special with respect to its ability to be subject, direct object or predicate. Sturm (1986, p. 101) provides a list of examples of all kinds of PPs having those functions, see (4–5):

- (4) *naar de dierentuin lijkt me leuker*
‘to the zoo seems more fun to me’
- (5) *vanaf de H is al nagekeken*
‘from H on has already been checked’

De Hoop, Vanden Wyngaerd and Zwart (1990) provide no less than seven syntactic tests to argue that faded partitives are NPs and normal partitives are PPs. Three of these tests are dismissed by Sturm (1989).

Firstly, the NP in an ambiguous partitive construction like in (6) can be replaced by *er* and only the normal, non-faded interpretation remains:

- (6) a. *Hij at van die koekjes.*
Normal interpretation: ‘He ate of those biscuits.’
Faded interpretation: ‘He ate those, you know, biscuits.’
- b. *Hij at ervan.*
Normal interpretation: ‘He ate of them.’

Sturm (1989) provides many examples of ill-formed sentences where a constituent has been replaced by *er* to show that the faded partitive is not the only construction that behaves this way (pp. 539-540), for example (7–8):

- (7) **ik zag van die rare wolken en zij zag er ook van*
 ‘I saw those strange clouds and she saw them as well’
- (8) **dit is van goud en dat is er ook van*
 ‘This is golden_i and that is it_i too’

In (7) the faded partitive *van die rare wolken* ‘of those strange clouds’ is unsuccessfully replaced by *er [...] van*. This is used as an argument that the faded partitive is an NP, since the sentence would have been well-formed if the faded partitive were a PP. However, in (8) the PP *van goud* ‘golden’ is replaced by *er [...] van* and the result is ill-formed. That would either mean that *van goud* is no true PP, or as Sturm (1989) concludes, that this test cannot be used to reliably show any constituent’s PP or NP status.

Secondly, *er* can also replace an entire NP or a faded partitive:

- (9) *Zij zag van die wellustige venten en hij zag er ook.*
 ‘She saw those lewd guys and he saw some as well.’

Sturm (1989) argues that this test too does not prove that faded partitive’s not being a PP, because of a *sloppy identity* problem: *er* may not actually refer to the same thing as the faded partitive or NP it replaces, like in example (10):

- (10) *Ik beluisterde enige sonates en hij beluisterde er ook.*
 ‘I listened to some sonatas and he too listened to some.’

The well-formedness of sentences with *er* does not depend on the form (PP or NP) of the constituent, but on a semantic distinction. *Er* refers to an indefinite amount of other instances of one or more entities that the constituent denotes (p. 542). Consequently, this test cannot be used to reliably show any constituent’s PP or NP status.

Thirdly, as Van der Lubbe (1982, p. 369) notes, faded partitives can be preceded by a preposition, the result being an unusual sequence of two prepositions, like in (11). (Intriguingly, Van der Lubbe rules out *van van*. I will turn to this specific instance in section 2.1.3.) With examples (12) and (13) Sturm (1989, p. 545) shows that double prepositions are not unusual at all, and they cannot be used to test whether a constituent is an NP.

- (11) *een boterham met van die lekkere hagelslag*
 a sandwich with of those tasty chocolate sprinkles
 ‘a sandwich with those tasty chocolate sprinkles’
- (12) *koekjes voor bij de koffie*
 biscuits for with the coffee
 ‘coffee biscuits’
- (13) *Ik ben van na de oorlog.*
 I am from after the war
 ‘I was born after the war.’

Fourthly, De Hoop et al. (1990, p. 82) and Zwarts (1987, p. 184) show that faded partitives can be subject whereas normal partitives cannot, like in (14–15).

- (14) *Er liepen van die eenvoudige marktkooplui over straat.*
 ‘There were some of those simple merchants walking in the streets.’
- (15) *Overal lagen van die lekkere boterkoeken*
 ‘Everywhere there were those tasty butter cakes’

They conclude that faded partitives are NPs, because PPs cannot be subject. This notion is even included in a definition of prepositions, as given by *Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst* (ANS, 1997): prepositional phrases cannot be subject or object (p. 506). Faded partitives are thus listed as nominal phrases, despite their similar appearance to PPs (p. 820).

Sturm (1989) disagrees with this conclusion. He gives two examples (p. 535) of non-NP subjects, here repeated in (16–17):

- (16) *over Groningen is korter*
 via Groningen is shorter
 ‘via Groningen is a shorter route’
- (17) *schuin is mooier*
 ‘slanted looks better’

Sturm also gives a definition of *subject*: ‘Onderwerp van een zin kan zijn iedere constituent die een of meer personen of zaken aanduidt of een or meer standen van zaken waarover middels het bijbehorende predikaat iets gezegd kan worden.’ ‘Any constituent that marks one or more persons or things, or one or more settings of things, about which something can be stated by means of the associated predicate, can be the subject of a sentence’ (p. 538). This definition allows subjects like *over Groningen* because it does not demand subjects be NPs. It just so happens that NPs are highly popular options for having as subject because they are good at marking persons and things.

Leaving aside Sturm’s objections, three arguments discussed in De Hoop et al. (1990) still remain that show that faded and normal partitives are different parts of speech.

First, the partitive construction *van die koekjes* in (18a) can be extraposed (18b). In (18a) the partitive is ambiguous between normal (PP) and faded (NP) and in (18b) only the normal partitive interpretation remains De Hoop et al. (1990, p. 82).

- (18) a. *Jan heeft van die kleffe koekjes gegeten*
 Normal interpretation: ‘Jan ate of those soggy biscuits’
 Faded interpretation: ‘Jan ate those, you know, soggy biscuits’
- b. *Jan heeft gegeten van die kleffe koekjes*
 Normal interpretation: ‘Jan ate of those soggy biscuits’

Second, some verbs like *dragen* ‘to wear’ do not lexically select PPs as their complement, unlike *eten* ‘to eat’. Faded partitives can be such a complement, like in (19). In (19a) the partitive is ambiguous because the verb *eten* ‘to eat’ can select the preposition *van*. In (19b) the partitive is faded because the verb *dragen* ‘to wear’ cannot do that (De Hoop et al., 1990, p. 82):

- (19) a. *Jan eet altijd van die kleffe koekjes*
 Normal interpretation: ‘Jan always eats of those soggy biscuits’
 Faded interpretation: ‘Jan always eats those, you know, soggy biscuits’

- b. *Craig draagt altijd van die malle petten*
 Faded interpretation: ‘Craig always wears those, you know, zany caps’

Thirdly, when a secondary predicate is present, the partitive construction is necessarily an NP (De Hoop et al., 1990, p. 83):

- (20) *Jan eet van die Hollandse kroketjes altijd koud*
 ‘Jan always eats those Dutch croquettes cold’

De Hoop et al. (1990) provide two different tree structures: one for the normal partitive (p. 91) and the other for the faded partitive (p. 97), both here shown respectively in Figure 1 and Figure 2. In the tree for faded partitives *vandie* looks like one word. I will explain this in a later section. Oosterhof (2005) provides another tree structure which represents both normal and faded partitive constructions, shown here in Figure 3.

Figure 1: Tree structure for the normal partitive in the analysis by De Hoop et al. (1990).

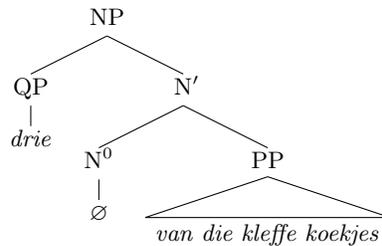
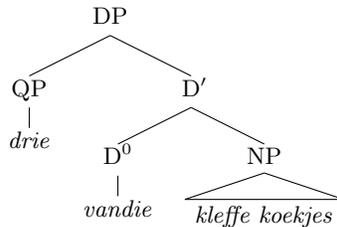


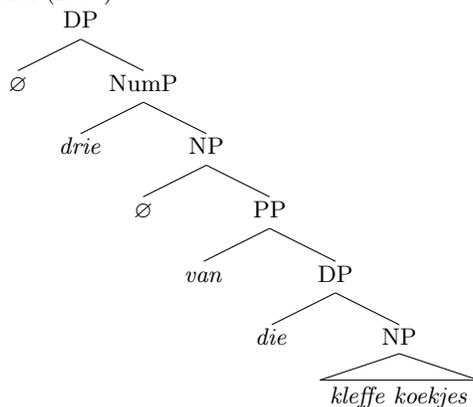
Figure 2: Tree structure for the faded partitive in the analysis by De Hoop et al. (1990).



Broekhuis, Keizer en Den Dikken (2003) state that ‘[o]n their non-partitive reading [...] the *van*-PP has the value of a nominal projection.’ (p. 557) How this PP having a ‘value’ of a nominal projection is any different from the constituent actually being a nominal constituent is not elaborated upon.

In this section we saw that most arguments about the faded partitive’s function point in the direction of it being an NP, even though some of the arguments have been dismissed. However, there are no arguments or tests that explicitly prove that the construction is a PP.

Figure 3: Tree structure for both normal and faded partitive constructions in the analysis by Oosterhof (2005).



2.1.2 Form variations / post-*van* determiners

Opinions are divergent on what can follow *van* in a faded partitive construction. Paardekooper (1981) writes that only *van die* ‘of those’, *van zulke* ‘of such’ and *van dergelijke* ‘of such’ are possible combinations (p. 68). Sturm (1989) limits the post-*van* possibilities to demonstrative pronouns. In Dutch they are *deze*, *die*, *dit* and *dat*. Other determiners like *de* ‘the’ and *mijn* ‘my’ only denote subsets of a bigger set, which is incompatible with the unknown size of the set: the size of the set denoted by a faded partitive is the default value, which is indefinite, thus making *de* and *my* unsolicited in that position, because they are definite (p. 552).

De Hoop et al. (1990) add *van dat soort* ‘of that kind’ to the list of possible determiners, but they also state that *van deze* ‘of this’ is not a possible determiner in the faded partitive. Its interpretation is automatically a normal partitive one. Broekhuis et al. (2003) also exclude *deze* and *dit* because they are proximate determiners (p. 560), and *zulk* ‘such’ (p. 562). In ANS (1997) *dusdanig* ‘such’, *soortgelijk* ‘similar’ and *zodanig* ‘such’ are presented as synonyms of *dergelijk* ‘such’, but they are used in the formal register (p. 314). I conclude that they theoretically belong in the list of possible determiners. In ANS (1997) *deze*, *dit*, *die*, *dat*, *zulk(e)*, *dergelijk(e)*, *dit soort* and *dat soort* are listed as possible forms (p.316).

Oosterhof (2005) shows examples of sentences with *van die*, *van zulke*, *van dergelijke*, *van dat soort*, *van dit soort* and *van deze*, the last one being a counterexample to De Hoop et al.’s (1990) rejection of it (Oosterhof, 2005, §2.1.2). He also states that *van dit/dat soort*, *van zulk(e)* and *van dergelijk(e)* always have the faded partitive interpretation (§3.1.2).

2.1.3 Double *van*

Van der Lubbe (1982, p. 369) notes that faded partitives can follow a preposition, with the exception of *van*:

- (21) **Hij houdt van van die pittige kaas.*
 ‘He loves that kind of spicy cheese.’

In (21) the first *van* is part of the prepositional object of *houden van* ‘to love’. The second *van* is part of the faded partitive. Seven out of eight native speakers of Dutch I asked did not deem this sentence ill-formed. ANS (1997) states that double *van* is theoretically possible in the informal register, but it is avoided in practice (p. 820). Since it should be at least theoretically possible and since most of my informants do not think it is ungrammatical, I expect to find instances of double *van* in the corpus of spoken Dutch, which I will discuss in section 4.

2.1.4 *Van* as an inverse determiner

De Hoop et al. (1990) assume that *vandie* is in fact a syntactic atom: as a faded partitive it is one word that happens to be spelled with a space because of analogy with other occurrences of the sequence *van die*. In contrast with this view, several attempts have been made at identifying separate roles for *van* and the determiner that *van* precedes.

One attractive explanation for the presence of *van* in the faded partitive construction is that of it being an *inverse determiner*: ‘The role of *van* seems to be that of turning a [sic] N-projection with specifier into a specifierless N-projection’ (Haegeman, 1987, p. 65, in Zwarts, 1987, p. 185). This explains why Sturm (1989) thinks that the presuppositional use is limited to the demonstrative pronoun in a faded partitive. (In this context *presuppositional* means that the demonstrative pronoun invokes the hearer’s knowledge. How this works exactly will be discussed in section 3.1.)

Compare the sentences in (22):

- (22) a. *Toen had je nog buizenradio’s* (indefinite)
 ‘In those days you used to have tube radios’
 b. *Toen had je nog die buizenradio’s* (definite and presuppositional)
 ‘In those days you used to have those tube radios’
 c. *Toen had je nog van die buizenradio’s* (indefinite and presuppositional)
 ‘In those days you used to have those, you know, tube radios’

In (22a) the NP *buizenradio’s* is indefinite. If the sentence were uttered without any context, thereafter one would expect an explanation of what tube radios are. The speaker does not assume that the hearer knows what they are. In (22b) the demonstrative pronoun *die* can be interpreted presuppositionally, as Sturm (1989) describes. The speaker assumes the hearer to know this kind of radios and she reminds her of them. By using a demonstrative pronoun, though, the NP *die buizenradio’s* is definite. To express the concept in the presuppositional manner without relinquishing the indefiniteness of the bare noun *buizenradio’s*, it can be turned into a faded partitive like in (22c). The advantage of that is that the NP can be preceded by determiners in this way, where the NP in (22b) cannot, as in (23):

- (23) a. *Toen had je nog drie buizenradio’s*
 ‘In those days you used to have three tube radios’
 b. **Toen had je nog drie die buizenradio’s*
 ‘In those days you used to have three those tube radios’

- c. *Toen had je nog drie van die buizenradio's*
 Faded interpretation: 'In those days you used to have three of those, you know, tube radios'
 (Normal interpretation: 'In those days you had three of those tube radios')

There is also a disadvantage, which can be seen in (23c), where the partitive is ambiguous. As a faded partitive, it means that there is a concept of tube radios that the speaker reminds the hearer of and there were three. However, this construction is now form-wise equal to the normal partitive, in which case the presuppositional meaning is lost: there is a set of tube radios and there are three of them. This leads to ambiguity between normal and faded interpretation.

2.1.5 Violation of lexical government requirement

Consider (24):

- (24) a. **Van die katten brengen geluk*
 'Those cats cause happiness'
 b. *Van die zwarte katten brengen geluk*
 'Those black cats cause happiness'
 c. *Van die katten brengen geluk*
 'Those cats cause happiness'

In De Hoop (2003, pp. 198–199) it is stated that sentence (24a) is ill-formed because unmodified faded partitives like *van die katten* 'of those cats' cannot occur in generic sentences. A modifier is needed, like in (24b), or anything else that can contextually specify the denotation of the faded partitive. For example, in (24c) no modifier is added, but *die* is focussed, which is also a way of specifying which cats are meant. That focussing can be done by pointing at cats, for example.

In Oosterhof (2005, §3.2.3) a similar phenomenon is found. His corpus study results show that few faded partitives are found in subject position, unless they have a pre-*van* determiner, for example *nogal wat van die gasten waren er ook bij* 'quite a few of those guests were there as well', where *nogal wat* 'quite a few' is the pre-*van* determiner. Oosterhof quotes Longobardi (1994, pp. 615–616) who states that bare nouns seem to be excluded in preverbal subject position because of a *lexical government requirement*, which implies that some unmodified constituents seem to be unsolicited in subject position. Oosterhof argues that faded partitives behave like bare nouns in this respect: they violate the lexical government requirement and are unsolicited in subject position. The remedy for the exclusion seems to be a modification of some sort. Oosterhof (2005) predicts that faded partitives without pre-*van* determiner in preverbal subject position will predominantly have a modifier. I will adopt this prediction as a hypothesis.

2.2 Summary

Faded partitive constructions look like PPs but they behave like NPs syntactically. There are seven tests to show that they are NPs, of which four have been dismissed by Sturm (1989).

The following form variations have been mentioned in connection to the faded partitive: *van die* 'of those', *van dat* 'of that', *van dat soort* 'of that kind', *van*

dit soort ‘of this kind’, *van zulk soort* ‘of such kind’, *van zulk* ‘of such’, *van zulke* ‘of such’, *van zo’n* ‘of such a’, *van dergelijk* ‘of such’, *van dergelijke* ‘of such’, *van dit* ‘of this’, *van deze* ‘of these’, *van zodanig* ‘of such’, *van zodanige* ‘of such’, *van dusdanig* ‘of such’, *van dusdanige* ‘of such’, *van soortgelijk* ‘of similar’ and *van soortgelijke* ‘of similar’.

In the *inverse determiner* analysis an indefinite NP can be referred to in a presuppositional manner by using *die NP*, which however makes the NP definite. That can be undone by using *van die NP*, which yields an indefinite presuppositionally interpreted NP.

Bare nouns violate a *lexical government requirement* when they are in subject position. Faded partitives behave the same way. Adding a modifier to the constituent counteracts this.

2.3 Hypotheses

Based on the literature discussed in the previous sections on the syntax of faded partitive constructions, I pose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 *I expect some faded partitive constructions to be introduced by a lexically selected instance of van, thus producing a van van sequence.*

Hypothesis 2 *Faded partitives do not tend to be subject.*

Hypothesis 3 *Faded partitives typically have a pre-van determiner when they are subject.*

Hypothesis 4 *Faded partitives without pre-van determiner typically have a modifier when they are subject.*

3 Semantics of the faded partitive construction

The meaning of a faded partitive has proved to be elusive to describe or translate. In section 3.1 I will discuss several frameworks in which the semantics of the faded partitive are analysed: the introduction of *shared knowledge* by De Hoop et al. (1990) in section 3.1.1, a closer look at the determiners that can precede *van* in section 3.1.2, and the distinction between entity and set partitives in section 3.1.3. In section 3.1.4 I will argue for an adaptation of the *cells of partitions* analysis by De Hoop (2003) and in section 3.1.5 I will discuss how it compares to the *kinds* analysis by Oosterhof (2005). I will also present an analysis using Theory of Mind in section 3.2. Finally I will give an interim summary and formulate a set of concrete hypotheses, that can be tested with the corpus study.

3.1 Literature overview

In Broekhuis et al. (2003) the meaning is described as being ‘of that well-known kind’ (p. 556) and in ANS (1997) the meaning is described as ‘weet je wel’ ‘you know’ (p. 820). Paardekooper (1981) states that faded partitives denote ‘iets massaals (onbepaalds) en tegelijk vertrouwds’ ‘something massive (indefinite) and at once familiar’ (p. 69). This suggestion of mass is probably inspired by the fact that

the NP within a faded partitive is plural most of the time, but when it is singular it is almost always a mass noun. Paardekooper also mentions that the meaning can be described with ‘je weet wel’ ‘you know’ (p. 69). Van der Lubbe (1982) agrees with Paardekooper’s statements but adds the notion of a value judgement. This judgement is stated or at least suggested (p. 370). This means that the difference between *poppetjes* ‘dolls’ and *van die poppetjes* ‘of those dolls’ includes some kind of implied feeling that the speaker has about the dolls. Van der Lubbe does not expand on this notion.

Sturm (1989) disagrees with Paardekooper (1981) and Van der Lubbe (1982) on their description. For each of their attributive properties *massive*, *indefinite*, *familiar* and *with a certain value judgement* he gives counterexamples of constructions which do not have these properties while still being faded partitives. I will not discuss all of them, but instead I will repeat Sturm’s (1989) example (p. 544) in (25) of a sentence with a faded partitive without any value judgement:

- (25) *Heb je nog van die klemmetjes om de theedoek aan op te hangen?*
 ‘Have you got some more of those clips for hanging the tea towel?’

Sturm (1989) states that post-*van* determiners *die*, *dat* and *zulke* can be deictic, anaphoric or what he calls *presuppositional* (p. 544). The presuppositional use is the one being active in faded partitives: it invokes the hearer’s knowledge or imagination (Sturm 1986, p. 103; 1989, p. 544), as she knows or imagines the things the speaker says. This presuppositional use is however a use of the demonstrative pronoun and not of the faded partitive, as Sturm shows in example (26):

- (26) *Toen had je nog die buizenradio’s met die enorme kasten.*
 ‘In those days you used to have those tube radios with those enormous boxes.’

Indeed, replacing both instances of *die* in (26) with *van die* would not change the presuppositional interpretation. Sturm concludes that the faded partitive is not special when it comes to semantics (p. 545).

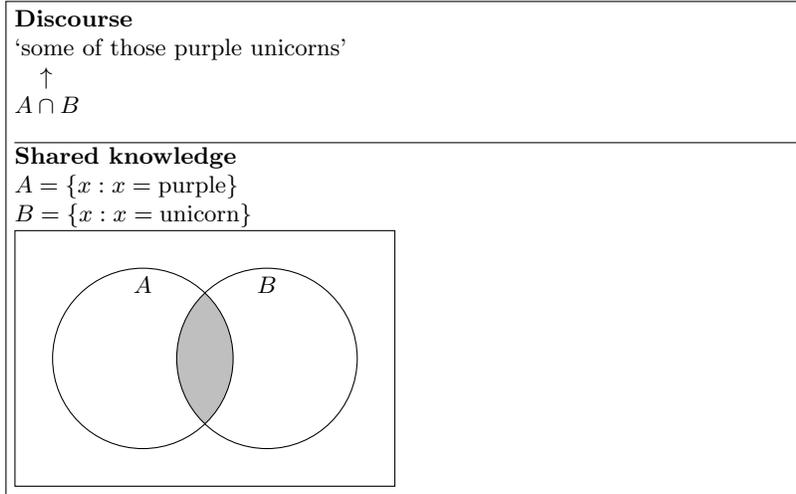
3.1.1 Shared knowledge

In De Hoop et al. (1990), the notion of a concept that everyone seems to know is first described formally. The NP in the faded partitive denotes a set that exists in the *shared knowledge*. Participants in the conversation all know the concept described in the sentence, because it is part of their shared knowledge. Creating a faded partitive with a concept that does not exist in the shared knowledge produces a strange sentence, like in (27) (taken from De Hoop et al., 1990, p. 102).

- (27) *Er liepen van die pimpelpaarse eenhoorns op straat.*
 ‘There were some of those purple unicorns walking in the streets.’

To most speakers purple unicorns will not be a familiar concept, hence the sentence is not ill-formed, but pragmatically strange. ‘The speaker appeals to the hearer’s knowledge store [...] and because such a set does not exist in most hearer’s knowledge-stores, the sentence is odd.’ (De Hoop, 2003, p. 195). De Hoop et al. (1990) provide a schematic representation of the discourse and shared knowledge for (27), shown here in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Schematic representation of discourse and shared knowledge for (27). Adapted from De Hoop et al. (1990)



According to Oosterhof (2005), the *knowledge store* is an archive out of which a hearer or speaker can choose sets (§2.2.1). He notes that it is debatable whether faded partitives denote a set located in the hearer’s *knowledge store*, since the sets in the examples he provides are created in the same discourse or even in the pragmatic context:

- (28) *Fabrieken zijn er over de hele wereld. Ze maken allerlei artikelen, zoals speelgoed, medicijnen, autobanden en verpakkingen. Daarbij gebruiken ze verschillende materialen en houden ze bergen afval over. Dat noemen we ‘gevaarlijk afval’ als er veel giftige stoffen in zitten. Sommige fabrieken weten niet waar ze met die rommel naar toe moeten. De landen waar die fabrieken staan, kunnen het afval vaak niet verbranden, storten of er nieuwe dingen van maken (bij voorbeeld plastic omsmelten tot nieuw plastic). En als dat wel kan, kost het meestal heel veel geld. (...) ‘In Slovenië, dat ligt in het noorden van het vroegere Joegoslavië, zijn ook van die fabrieken,’ vertelt Leo Bersee.*

‘Factories exist all over the world. They produce all kinds of goods, like toys, medicines, tyres and packaging. In the process several raw materials are used and mountains of waste remain. We call it ‘hazardous waste’ if it contains many toxins. Some factories do not know what to do with that rubbish. The countries where the factories are located are often not able to burn, dump or recycle the waste (for example making plastic into new plastic). And even if they are able to, it is usually very expensive. (...) “In Slovenia, that is located in the north of what used to be Yugoslavia, there are these factories,” Leo Bersee explains.’

In (28) the set denoted by the faded partitive, ‘factories that do not know what to do with hazardous waste’, is created entirely in the discourse itself. Oosterhof indicates that the knowledge store as described by De Hoop et al. (1990) should not be able to have that sort of specific set in it. Instead, Oosterhof argues that faded partitives denote a *soort* ‘kind’ (2005, §4.1). This is explicitly mentioned in the form variations *van dit soort* ‘of this kind’ and *van dat soort* ‘of that kind’. What counts as a kind can be determined by two things: it is either built in the context of the discourse, or it was already known. Oosterhof quotes Chierchia (1998): ‘What counts as kind is not set by grammar, but by the shared knowledge of a community of speakers.’ (p. 348). This does not exclude concepts built in the discourse.

3.1.2 Pre-*van* determiners

In De Hoop (2003, p. 197) the interpretation of *weinig van die* ‘few of those’ is analysed. Let us assume a context involving the presence of eight senior linguists, two junior linguists, six non-linguists and the speaker of (29). Everybody except for the speaker is in the pub. The speaker enters the pub, looks around and utters (29):

- (29) a. *Er zitten weinig van de jonge taalkundigen in de kroeg*
‘Few of the junior linguists are in the pub’
- b. *Er zitten weinig van die jonge taalkundigen in de kroeg*
‘There are few of those, you know, junior linguists in the pub’
- c. *Er zitten weinig jonge taalkundigen in de kroeg*
‘There are few junior linguists in the pub’

De Hoop explains that (29a) is false, (29b) may be true and (29c) is true. (29a) is false because *few of them* and *all of them* are incompatible and it is known that the junior linguists in the pub are all junior linguists in the discourse domain. (29b) is false if it is interpreted in this way, in which case *van die jonge taalkundigen* ‘of those junior linguists’ is interpreted as a normal partitive. (29b) is true if *weinig* ‘few’ is interpreted as a comparison with the senior linguists, of which there are more in the pub, or in comparison with junior linguists in general, whom the speaker might expect to visit pubs in numbers greater than two. (29c) is true, because it can get a (normal) partitive reading or an existential reading. Formal definitions for cardinal *few* and proportional *few* are given (p.197), which I will not repeat here.

According to De Hoop et al. (1990) *één* ‘one’ cannot precede faded partitives (p. 92). The same goes for definite determiners like *de meeste* ‘most’ and *sommige* ‘some’ (p. 96). Their explanation is that faded partitives are inherently indefinite, which is incompatible with the definiteness that these determiners are trying to exert on the NP. This explanation is compatible with the *inverse determiner* analysis by Sturm (1989). Oosterhof (2005) shows with an example that *één* ‘one’, *de meeste* ‘most’ and *sommige* ‘some’ are possible determiners (§2.1.2), but in his corpus study he finds that all three of these determiners significantly less often introduce faded partitives than they introduce normal partitives (§3.1.3). He also finds determiners *een deel* ‘a part’, *een derde* ‘a third’, *de helft* ‘half’ and *20%* to precede normal partitives only. These determiners have in common that they can only be combined with NPs that denote entities, in contrast to numerals, which

are combined with NPs that denote sets, which I will discuss in the next section. I will adopt expectations of similar results as hypotheses for my corpus study.

3.1.3 Entity partitives and set partitives

In De Hoop (1997, pp. 157–164; 2003, pp. 184–186) a distinction between two types of partitive construction is introduced: *entity partitives* and *set partitives*. Some determiners take entities as their domain of quantification, like Dutch *de helft (van)* ‘half’ in (30) and *een deel (van)* ‘a part’. Some determiners take sets as their domain of quantification, for example Dutch *enkele* ‘some’ in (31) or numerals.

(30) *de helft van het koekje*
‘half of the biscuit’

(31) *enkele koekjes*
‘some biscuits’

(32) a. *alle rijst* (entity)
‘all of the rice’
b. *alle koekjes* (set)
‘all biscuits’

Some determiners can take both entities and sets of entities as their domain of quantification, like Dutch *veel* ‘many/ much’ and *alle* ‘all’ in (32). These determiners I will call *flexible determiners* from now on. The entity, set or flexible status of a determiner is a lexical and language-specific property, which accounts for why Dutch *veel* can be translated in English as both ‘many’ and ‘much’: in English, the former is a set determiner and the latter is an entity determiner. De Hoop (1997) states that partitives introduced by entity determiners are entity partitives. Partitives preceded by set determiners are set partitives. The number of the NP does not automatically indicate its status as either entity or set. This is because groups can be considered to be entities themselves. Compare (30–32) with (33):

(33) a. *de helft van de koekjes*
‘half of the biscuits’
b. *de helft van alle koekjes*
‘half of all biscuits’
c. **de helft van koekjes*
‘half of biscuits’

In (33a) the plural noun *de koekjes* ‘the biscuits’ denotes a group entity which *de helft van* ‘half of’, as an entity determiner, takes as its domain. In (33b) *koekjes* ‘biscuits’ denotes a set which *alle* ‘all’, as a flexible determiner, takes as its domain and *alle koekjes* ‘all biscuits’ denotes a group entity which *de helft van* ‘half of’ takes as its domain. In (33c) *koekjes* ‘biscuits’ denotes a set which *de helft van* ‘half of’ cannot take as its domain, leaving an ill-formed phrase.

In Oosterhof (2005) this framework is used to analyse faded partitives by distribution data for several Dutch determiners. It appears that faded partitives are set partitives (§4.2.2). His corpus study results show that entity determiners like *de helft (van)* ‘half (of)’ and *20% (van)* ‘20% (of)’ do not precede faded partitives (§3.1.3). That being said, Oosterhof objects to the analysis that faded partitives

denote set partitives because of two reasons. Firstly, he states that in this analysis there is no actual use for *van*. He does not elaborate on why this is the case, but in the next section we will see that a use for *van* does in fact exist in this analysis. Secondly, he argues that faded partitives denote *soorten* ‘kinds’. Kinds are usually considered entities, in which case it is illogical that entity determiners do not precede faded partitives (§4.2.3). The first objection can be disputed by considering faded partitives as *cells of partitions*, which I will discuss in the next section. The second objection is resolved by Oosterhof’s explanation of *kinds*, as it fits well in his analysis of *van* turning kind entities into sets, which I will discuss in the section after that.

3.1.4 Cells of partitions

De Hoop (2003) claims that ‘the function of *van* in a faded partitive is to give access to a cell of a partition of the set denoted by *die* (A) N ’ (p. 198). This requires some clarification. *Partitions* are formally defined in (34) by Partee et al. (1993, quoted in De Hoop, 2003, p. 198):

- (34) *Given a non-empty set A , a partition of A is a collection of non-empty subsets of A such that (1) for any two distinct subsets X and Y , $X \cap Y = \emptyset$ and (2) the union of all the subsets in the collection equals A . The notion of a partition is not defined for an empty set. The subsets that are members of a partition are called cells of that partition.*

An example might clarify. If there is a set A such that $A = \{1, 2, 3\}$ then all possible partitions of A are $\{\{1,2\},\{3\}\}$; $\{\{1\},\{2,3\}\}$; $\{\{1,3\},\{2\}\}$; $\{\{1\},\{2\},\{3\}\}$; and $\{\{1,2,3\}\}$. A valid partition of A contains sets containing all items of A in some way. All items that are in A should be in the partition of A and no items can occur more than once. The sets in a partition are called *cells*. No item is in two cells and no cell is empty.

De Hoop (2003) does not state whether faded partitives are set or entity partitives, as their being set partitives was found by Oosterhof (2005, §4.2.2). In this thesis I analyse a faded partitive *van die hysterische kinderen* ‘of those hysterical children’ slightly different: *hysterische kinderen* denotes a set. *Die hysterische kinderen* denotes a cell in a partition of that set. This cell is a group entity: we cannot put a set determiner like *enkele* ‘some’ in front of it: **enkele die hysterische kinderen* ‘some those hysterical children’. *Van* ‘of’ turns this group entity into a set, so that it is accessible for set determiners, for example. The difference between the entire set denoted by *hysterische kinderen* and the cell denoted by *die hysterische kinderen* can be explained by the presuppositionality discussed in section 2.1.4: *hysterische kinderen* is not presuppositional, that is, there is nothing in the phrase that explicitly marks that the hearer’s knowledge is invoked. The cell *die hysterische kinderen* does mark that.

In De Hoop et al. (1990) *van die* is analysed as one word (a syntactic atom), but in this analysis we see that there are separate roles for *van* and *die* indeed. Hence, Oosterhof’s (2005) first objection, that there is no use for *van*, does not hold. His second objection, that faded partitives are set partitives while kinds are entities, does not hold either, as the cell can be considered an entity just like the kind, after which *van* makes it a set.

3.1.5 Kinds and generic operator

As Oosterhof (2005) argues that *van* in De Hoop’s (2003) analysis has no function, he proposes a different analysis. Consider (35), taken from Oosterhof (2005, §4.2.3):

- (35) *De reuzenpanda eet bamboe.*
GEN[$C(\uparrow \text{giant-panda})(x)$]; [to-eat-bamboo(x)]
‘The giant panda eats bamboo.’

In (35) the NP *de reuzenpanda* ‘the giant panda’ refers to a species (‘species’ and ‘kind’ are both *soort* in Dutch) instead of a single animal, because the sentence is generic. The second line gives a representation as described by Cohen (1999). In this representation, x is any single entity. $\uparrow y$ is the kind that corresponds to the property denoted by y . $C(z)(x)$ connects the kind z with its instances x . The generic operator GEN[a]; [b] connects the property denoted by b to the kind denoted by a . In (35) *de reuzenpanda* could be regarded as a single animal: this would be the first x . Now C connects this single animal to the kind $\uparrow \text{giant-panda}$. What C does is ensuring that we can refer to the giant panda species as a whole just by saying *de reuzenpanda* ‘the giant panda’. *to-eat-bamboo(x)* represents the predicate which is still about that single animal: ‘ x eats bamboo’. The generic operator GEN connects this single animal’s eating bamboo to the kind that C just established. In other words, GEN ensures that the predicate *eet bamboe* ‘eats bamboo’, which is about a single x eating bamboo, can be connected to the kind $\uparrow \text{giant-panda}$, which is denoted by a single x being a giant panda where C connects this single x to its kind.

How can this notion explain the faded partitive? Oosterhof (2005) states that C in (35) is an implicit relationship: it is not overtly mentioned. Consider (36):

- (36) *Van die zeldzame Chinese beren eten bamboe.*
GEN[$C(\uparrow \text{rare-Chinese bears})(x)$]; [to-eat-bamboo(x)]
‘Those rare Chinese bears (you know) eat bamboo.’

Note that in (36) x is not a single animal, but the plural does not automatically make it a kind either. It is just an indefinite plural NP. Oosterhof (2005, §4.2.3) argues that C in (35) is implicit (there is no word or morpheme for C), but in (36) it is explicit: in faded partitives *van* is an explicit marker of the relationship C between the NP and its kind. This kind is an entity, but *van* converts it into a set, so that it is accessible to quantifiers (§4.2.2). Therefore Oosterhof’s second objection (the incompatibility of kinds, which are entities, with set partitives) is resolved.

3.2 Theory of Mind

The analyses by De Hoop et al. (1990) and Oosterhof (2005) have in common that they both end in something described in the shared knowledge of speakers: in the former analysis, this is the set denoted by the faded partitive; in the latter analysis, this is a kind. The difference is that a kind can also be introduced in the discourse. To explain more formally why faded partitives can denote concepts built in the discourse, we can look at how the discourse is represented formally. Speakers’ and hearers’ different view of shared beliefs can play a role in the use of certain words.

Consider (37–39), conversations found in various forums on the internet:

- (37) a. (Over panty's:) *In de winter draag ik 60denier maar dat zijn van die "gekleurde"*
 (About tights:) 'In winter I usually wear 60denier but those are the "coloured" ones, you know'
- b. *Wat bedoel je met van die "gekleurde"? 60denier klinkt namelijk wel goed*
 'What do you mean by *the "coloured" ones*? Because 60denier sounds good'

(Puntuit.nl forum, http://www.puntuit.nl/interessant/forum?group_id=19.151725&forum=19.151752&page=3)

- (38) a. *Wij verkopen van die cassettebandjes zodat je via de kop een aux genereerd.*
 'We sell those cassette tapes with which you can generate an auxiliary through the recording head.'
- b. *wat bedoel je met van die cassettebandjes?*
 'What do you mean by *those cassette tapes*?'

(Jeepeforum.nl, <http://www.jeepeforum.nl/topic/16420-aux-ingang-van-je-autoradio/>)

- (39) a. *net gaan kijken bij ons, maar daar verkopen ze niet van dat voer. Ik woon in België*
 'Just went and looked for them, but they do not sell that kind of fodder over here. I live in Belgium.'
- b. *wat bedoel je met 'van dat voer'?*
 'What do you mean by *that kind of fodder*?'

(Hondenforum.nl, <http://www.hondenforum.nl/plaza/viewtopic.php?t=179584&p=3785654>)

In every conversation in the above examples there is confusion about what the faded partitive denotes. The speakers have managed to refer to concepts that should be in the shared knowledge, but they are not, otherwise the hearers would have understood them. The concepts also have not been introduced in the discourse. To explain what is going on we will first look at an analysis of the Dutch word *eigenlijk* first.

In Van Bergen et al. (2011), the analysis of the Dutch discourse marker *eigenlijk* involves the notion *Theory of Mind*. '[T]he speaker acknowledges or understands that, from the position of the hearer, the sentence containing *eigenlijk* is unexpected.' (p. 3881). It is a particular feature of *eigenlijk* that it indicates that the speaker thinks that what the hearer is thinking is incorrect but understandable. To that she reacts when using *eigenlijk*.

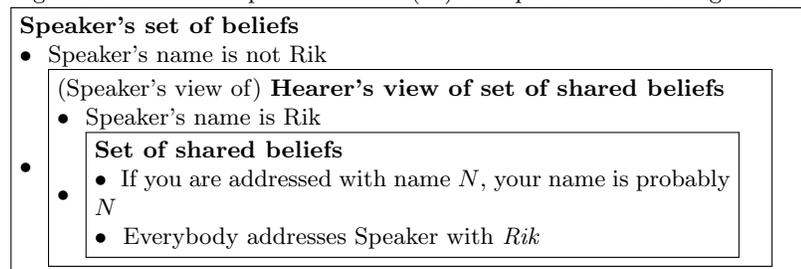
Van Bergen et al. (2011) present context representations which involve nested sets of beliefs. In Figure 5 is shown their context representation for example (40):

- (40) *Ik heet eigenlijk Erik.*
 'Actually, my name is Erik.'

The outermost box shows the speaker's set of beliefs. In this set are two things: firstly, the speaker knows that his name is not Rik, since he knows his own name is Erik. Secondly, the speaker has a view of the hearer's view of the set of shared

beliefs. This view is the middle box. In this box are two things: firstly, that the speaker's name is Rik; secondly, a view of the set of shared beliefs, which is the innermost box. Note that the middle box does not represent the hearer's actual set of beliefs! It shows what the speaker thinks that the hearer thinks. In the innermost box are those things that the speaker thinks that the hearer thinks is the set of their shared beliefs. This slightly complicated set-up is necessary for explaining *eigenlijk*, as it shows the speaker's reasons for predicting that the hearer has a false but understandable belief state.

Figure 5: Schematic representation of (40). Adapted from Van Bergen et al. (2011)



What part of this is useful for explaining the meaning of the faded partitive construction? The speaker has a set of beliefs. In this set is a subset which contains the things the speaker thinks the hearer believes.

The speaker cannot actually know them for she is not the hearer. This is an important point, as because of it I conclude that there exists no such thing as either shared knowledge or a kind set by the community of speakers. They may exist in the form of an illusion that can be comfortably positioned in the nested sets of beliefs. To phrase it more clearly, both participants in a conversation have a personal set of beliefs. In both sets exist sets of assumed shared beliefs and assumed sets of beliefs of the other participant.

An example: Anna and Brad are having a conversation.

- Anna has her own knowledge, and she uses Theory of Mind to assume knowledge in the mind of Brad and to estimate what they are likely to both know.
- Brad has his own knowledge, and he uses Theory of Mind to assume knowledge in the mind of Anna and to estimate what they are likely to both know.

I called shared knowledge an 'illusion' because in Anna and Brad's situation there is not one collection of shared knowledge: rather, there are two minds making separate predictions about which things are likely to be shared knowledge.

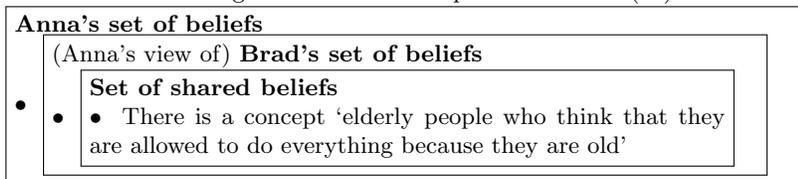
Now Anna says (41):

- (41) *Van die bejaarden die denken dat ze alles mogen omdat ze al zo oud zijn, ik heb daar zo'n hekel aan*
 'Those elderly people who think that they are allowed to do everything because they are old, I hate them so much.'

What happens is the following: there is a concept *bejaarden die denken dat ze alles mogen omdat ze al zo oud zijn* 'elderly people who think that they are allowed

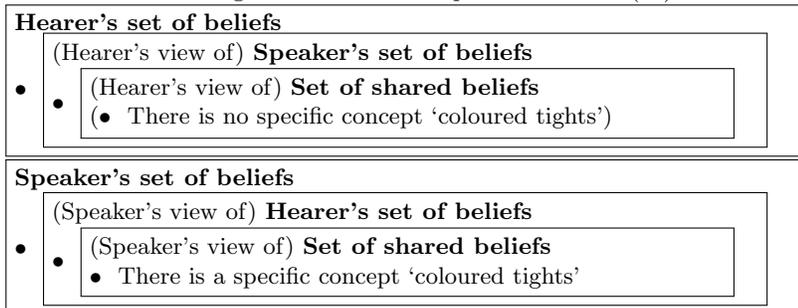
to do everything because they are old'. This concept obviously exists in Anna's knowledge. She assumes it exists in Brad's knowledge and thus in their shared knowledge. *Van die* can be considered to mark Anna's assumption that they both know this concept. An adaptation for this situation of the context representation by Van Bergen et al. (2011) is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Schematic representation for (41)



A possible objection immediately arises: for language to function all words should be in sets of shared knowledge. Why are all of those words not marked for being there, but the concepts denoted by faded partitives are? It would be highly impractical and useless to mark every word or every concept with something that says *I assume you know this concept*. Faded partitives however denote concepts that are at risk of **not** being in the shared knowledge. In Anna's example this risk is signalled by her elaborate relative clause *die denken dat ze alles mogen omdat ze al zo oud zijn* 'who think that they are allowed to do everything because they are old'. Her utterance is not about normal elderly people or all elderly people, it is specifically about elderly people who think that they are allowed to do everything because they are old. Anna needs to add this relative clause because her language does not straightforwardly have a word that conveys this exact meaning. The risk of not being in the shared knowledge is real. It explains why the hearer in (37–39) did not understand the speaker: the speaker had incorrectly estimated that the concept were in the hearer's knowledge. The speaker did not know that the concepts were not there, because the speaker did not have access to the hearer's actual brain. In Figure 7 I give a schematic representation for (37).

Figure 7: Schematic representation for (37)



Concepts that do not have their own word are likely not to be universal concepts. To indicate the speaker's awareness of this she uses the faded partitive construction. This awareness may also be explicitly stated with interjection-like

phrases such as *je kent dat wel* ‘you know’ and *je weet wel* ‘you know’.

In the corpus study I expect to find relatively few examples of faded partitives that are not modified in some way.

3.3 Summary

According to De Hoop et al. (1990) the concept denoted by faded partitives is in the shared knowledge of the speaker and the hearer. According to Oosterhof (2005) faded partitives refer to *kinds* which may be in the shared knowledge of a language community or only in the discourse itself.

De Hoop (1997) states that partitives can be entity partitives or set partitives. Oosterhof (2005) presents distribution data for pre-*van* determiners and concludes that faded partitives are usually set partitives. De Hoop (2003) states that the NP (including the post-*van* determiner) within a faded partitive denotes a cell of a partition. *Van* gives access to this cell. I argued for an adaptation of De Hoop’s (2003) analysis: the cell is a complex entity. In faded partitives, *van* ‘of’ turns the cell entity of a partition of the set the NP within a faded partitive denotes into a set. In Oosterhof’s (2005) analysis, *van* is an explicit marker of the relation between an NP and the kind it refers to. I combine these views by stating that the cell corresponds to this kind.

I argued that faded partitives are used when the speaker wants to describe a concept that has no straightforward word to refer to it. This means that the concept may not be universally known. The speaker guesses that the concept is in the hearer’s knowledge anyway and uses the faded partitive to mark this manoeuvre.

3.4 Hypotheses

With regard to the semantics of faded partitive constructions, I pose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5 *Definite pre-van determiners and één ‘one’ less often introduce faded partitives than they introduce normal partitives.*

Hypothesis 6 *Pre-van entity determiners (like een deel ‘a part’, een derde ‘a third’, de helft ‘half’ and 20% less often introduce faded partitives than they introduce normal partitives.*

Hypothesis 7 *Pre-van set determiners (like veel ‘many’ and numerals) introduce faded partitives more often than they introduce normal partitives.*

Hypothesis 8 *I expect faded partitive constructions to be modified by an adjective or a relative clause more than normal partitive constructions.*

Hypothesis 9 *I expect utterances with faded partitives to have a greater amount of interjections like je weet wel and zeg maar than utterances with normal partitives.*

4 Corpus study

4.1 Method

To test my hypotheses, I conducted a corpus study. I designed it to be similar to Oosterhof’s corpus study so the results can be easily compared. Oosterhof’s data consist of written Dutch texts with various degrees of formality. He finds that more faded partitives are found in informal texts than in formal texts. That led me to expect even more instances of the construction in spoken Dutch. Therefore, my source material is informal spoken Dutch only. This has two merits: firstly, since some of Oosterhof’s findings are not significant because of very low frequencies, I might be able to reproduce those findings with larger amounts. Secondly, I can now compare Oosterhof’s entire data set with mine to look at the differences between written and spoken Dutch with respect to the faded partitive construction.

4.2 Construction and annotation of data set

The *Corpus Gesproken Nederlands* ‘Corpus of Spoken Dutch’ is a large corpus of spoken Dutch, annotated for various purposes. It consists of several different components in varying degrees of spontaneity. For my data set I selected the following components containing spontaneous speech:

- Spontaneous conversations (face-to-face)
- Interviews with teachers of Dutch
- Spontaneous telephone dialogues (recorded via a switchboard)
- Spontaneous telephone dialogues (recorded on MD with local interface)
- Lessons recorded in a classroom
- Live (eg sport) commentaries (broadcast)

This selection resulted in a corpus consisting of 5 867 417 words. In this I searched for utterances containing each of all form variations in the list discussed in section 2.2. An undergraduate student of Linguistics who is a native speaker of Dutch annotated 2 000 utterances and I annotated 2 035 utterances. We annotated for the following factors (levels are shown in Table 1): partitivity, pre-*van* determiner, post-*van* determiner, syntactic function, position relative to the verb, whether there is an actual NP inside the partitive construction, grammatical number of that NP, whether there is an AP modifying the NP, and whether there is a relative clause modifying the NP. Afterwards I combined the AP factor and Relative Clause factor into a new factor for Elaborating expression: when an item has an AP, a relative clause, or both, then an elaborating expression is present.

The annotation revealed a total number of 1 973 utterances with a partitive construction. We relied on annotator intuition for deciding between normal, faded and ambiguous partitives. To determine the trustworthiness of this method, both annotators annotated the Partitivity factor for 266 items (which make up 6.6% of the entire data set) and an interrater reliability analysis was performed using the kappa statistic. For this 6.6% subset it was found to be $\kappa = 0.89$ ($p < 0.001$). Even though the faded partitive’s meaning has been hard to describe, let alone translate, this interrater agreement result, based on intuition, indicates that there is a homogeneous interpretation among speakers of Dutch.

Table 1: Factors annotated for and their levels. Factors marked with an asterisk are also found in Oosterhof's (2005) study.

Factors	Levels
Partitivity*	non-partitive
	partitive/non-partitive ambiguous
	normal partitive
	normal/faded partitive ambiguous
	faded partitive
Pre- <i>van</i> determiner*	(open category)
Post- <i>van</i> determiner*	(open category)
Syntactic function*	subject
	direct object
	predicative expression
	following a preposition
	independent
	repetition
	unclear
Position relative to the verb*	postverbal
	preverbal
	in-between two verbs
NP within partitive construction	(open category)
Grammatical number of that NP	singular
	plural
AP modifying that NP	absent
	present
	more than one present
Relative clause modifying that NP	absent
	present
	present, but with ambiguous word order

4.3 Results

Frequency data for partitive constructions are in Table 2. *Ambiguous* here means ‘ambiguous between normal and faded partitive’. Items ambiguous between being partitive or not and other non-partitive items were excluded from further analysis since they are not what this study is about. In Table 2 we see that faded partitives make up the majority of partitives with 82.3%.

Table 2: Frequency data for partitive constructions.

Total word count in corpus	5 867 417	
Total number of partitive constructions	1 973	(100.0%)
Normal	248	(12.6%)
Faded	1 624	(82.3%)
Ambiguous	101	(5.1%)

Frequency data for form variations are in Table 3.

Table 3: Frequency data for form variations of faded partitive constructions

	Faded partitives	
<i>van die</i>	1 437	(90.7%)
<i>van dat</i>	111	(6.8%)
<i>van dat soort</i>	27	(1.7%)
<i>van dit soort</i>	5	(0.3%)
<i>van zulk soort</i>	4	(0.2%)
<i>van zulke</i>	3	(0.2%)
<i>van zo’n</i>	1	(0.1%)
<i>van dergelijke</i>	0	
Total	1 624	(100.0%)

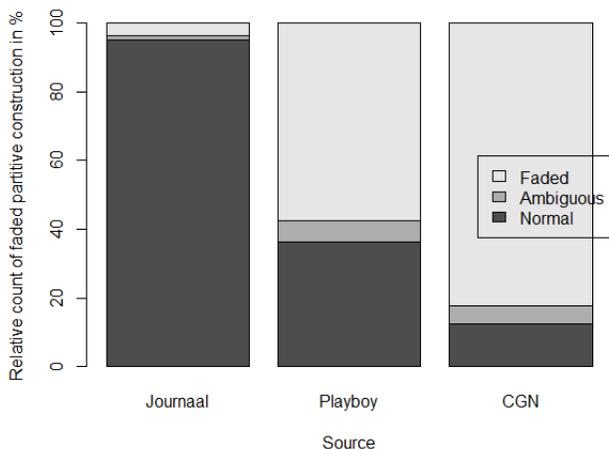
In Table 3 we see that constructions with the canonical form *van die* ‘of those’ represent 91.5% of all partitives and 90.7% of all faded partitives. Furthermore we see that other forms I found are *van dat* ‘of that’, *van dat soort* ‘of that kind’, *van dit soort* ‘of this kind’, *van zulk soort* ‘of such kind’, *van zulke* ‘of such’ and *van zo’n* ‘of such a’. *Van dergelijke* ‘of such’ was only found once and it was deemed ambiguous between normal and faded partitive.

4.3.1 Formal and informal style

Oosterhof (2005, §3.1.3) notes that faded partitives are a characteristic of informal style. This is shown by the fact that faded partitives appear significantly more in *Playboy* magazine than in news texts. Comparing these amounts to the amount of faded partitives found in spoken language is a logical next step, as my corpus consists only of informal and spontaneous speech. Figure 8 shows the relative amounts of partitives per source of data. Note that *Journal* (news texts) and *Playboy* are not the only components of Oosterhof’s data set.

I compared Oosterhof’s entire corpus of written Dutch with my corpus of spoken Dutch. Results indicated a higher amount of faded partitives in spoken Dutch than in written Dutch (Fisher’s exact test, $p < 0.000$). Even though the difference is

Figure 8: Relative amount of partitives per source of data. Light grey is faded, grey is ambiguous and dark grey is normal partitive. *Journal* and *Playboy* are components of Oosterhof’s corpus and *CGN* is my entire corpus.



highly significant, we cannot be completely sure that Oosterhof’s annotating and mine have been done exactly in the same way.

4.3.2 Subject position

Another comparison with Oosterhof’s results I would like to make has to do with syntactic function and position of the faded partitive. He notes that preverbal subject position is the canonical position. Postverbal subject position gives the construction an existential reading (Oosterhof, 2005, §3.2.1). My hypotheses concerning this matter are repeated here. An overview of syntactic functions for faded partitives can be found in Table 4. The *Subject* row in Table 4 is broken down into pre- and postverbal subject positions in Table 5.

Hypothesis 2 *Faded partitives do not tend to be subject.*

Hypothesis 3 *Faded partitives typically have a pre-van determiner when they are subject.*

Hypothesis 4 *Faded partitives without pre-van determiner typically have a modifier when they are subject.*

Oosterhof found a relatively small number of faded partitives in preverbal subject position (21.1%). I found an even lower percentage: 9.1%. This supports Hypothesis 2. Furthermore, he found significantly more faded partitives as subjects when they have a pre-*van* determiner than when they do not. In

Table 4: Syntactic function of faded partitives

Syntactic function	With pre- <i>van</i> determiner	Without pre- <i>van</i> determiner	Total
Unclear	1	4	5
Direct object	92	432	524
Repetition	13	68	81
Predicative expression	32	137	169
Following a preposition	19	169	188
Subject	57	92	149
Independent	78	430	508
Total	292	1 332	1 624

Table 5: Subject positions of faded partitives. The *Total* row corresponds to the *Subject* row in Table 4.

Subject position	With pre- <i>van</i> determiner	Without pre- <i>van</i> determiner	Total
No verb	0	7	7
Postverbal	49	64	113
In-between two verbs	1	1	2
Preverbal	7	20	27
Total	57	92	149

my results I found the same pattern ($\chi^2 = 45.727, df = 1, p < 0.0005$). This supports Hypothesis 3. There is no significant difference between faded partitives and normal partitives appearing in preverbal and postverbal subject position (Fisher’s exact test, $p < 0.2$). Most partitives are postverbal when they are subject ($\chi^2 = 6.3527, df = 1, p < 0.02$). This contradicts Oosterhof’s finding on this matter, though that was not significant.

Finally, Oosterhof predicts that faded partitives without pre-*van* determiners are subject when there is also a modifier to remedy the violation of the lexical government constraint. I found that faded partitives without pre-*van* determiners were modified by an AP slightly more often when they are subject (35.9%) than when they have a different function (30.5%). This would support Hypothesis 4, but the difference is not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.164, df = 1, p < 0.3$).

4.3.3 Pre-*van* determiners

Pre-*van* determiners can be found in Table 6. I categorised some of them based on similarity: exact numerals like *twee* ‘two’ and *vijftien* ‘fifteen’ have been combined into ‘exact numeral’, except for *één* ‘one’. Vague numerals like *ongeveer honderd* ‘about one hundred’, *drie of vier* ‘three or four’ have been combined into ‘vague numeral’. Variations like *veel* ‘much’, *heel veel* ‘very much’, *zeer veel* ‘very much’ and *erg veel* ‘very much’ have been combined into ‘(AdvP) *veel*’. I also included whether each determiner is a set determiner, entity determiner or flexible

determiner.

Table 6: Pre-*van* determiners for faded, normal and ambiguous partitives

Determiner	Status	Partitivity					
		Faded		Normal		Ambiguous	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
∅		1 334	82.1%	228	91.9%	5	5.0%
<i>allemaal</i>	flexible	160	9.9%	0		0	
exact numeral	set	33	2.0%	4	1.6%	29	28.7%
(AdvP) <i>veel</i>	flexible	24	1.5%	4	1.6%	12	11.9%
(<i>een</i>) <i>paar</i>	set	13	0.8%	3	1.2%	13	12.9%
(<i>een</i>) <i>beetje</i>	entity	10	0.6%	0		0	
<i>alleen maar</i>	flexible	9	0.6%	0		0	
(AdvP) <i>meer</i>	flexible	8	0.5%	0		4	4.0%
(AdvP) <i>wat</i>	flexible	6	0.4%	0		5	5.0%
vague numeral	set	5	0.3%	0		3	3.0%
<i>één</i>	set	4	0.2%	4	1.6%	18	17.8%
(<i>een</i>) <i>aantal</i>	set	4	0.2%	1	0.4%	3	3.0%
<i>al</i>	*	4	0.2%	0		0	
<i>een stel(letje)</i>	set	2	0.1%	2	0.8%	0	
<i>een / nen hoop</i>	flexible	2	0.1%	0		1	1.0%
<i>een heleboel</i>	flexible	2	0.1%	0		0	
<i>de helft</i>	entity	1	0.1%	0		0	
<i>een hele berg</i>	flexible	1	0.1%	0		0	
<i>een hele hoop</i>	flexible	1	0.1%	0		0	
<i>verscheidene</i>	set	1	0.1%	0		0	
<i>de meeste</i>	flexible	0		1	0.4%	0	
<i>geen (enkele)</i>	flexible	0		1	0.4%	0	
<i>genoeg / zat</i>	flexible	0		0		2	2.0%
<i>sommige(n)</i>	set	0		0		2	2.0%
<i>bepaalde</i>	set	0		0		1	1.0%
<i>hoeveel</i>	flexible	0		0		1	1.0%
<i>minder</i>	flexible	0		0		1	1.0%
<i>zo 'n partij</i>	flexible	0		0		1	1.0%
Total		1 624		248		101	

*The entity/set status of *al* is unclear. Note that *al* was only found in Flemish examples.

I will discuss the results in Table 6 in order of the hypotheses that they can tell us something about.

Hypothesis 5 *Definite pre-*van* determiners and één ‘one’ less often introduce faded partitives than they introduce normal partitives.*

As shown in Table 6, I only found four faded instances of *één* ‘one’. No partitives introduced by *de meeste* ‘most’ or *sommige* ‘some’ were faded partitives. All other determiners introducing faded partitives are indefinite. The scale of these findings is too small to say anything about Oosterhof’s statements, who showed with grammaticality judgements that *sommige* ‘some’ and *de meeste* ‘most’ in faded partitives are deemed possible by some native speakers of Dutch (Ooster-

hof, 2005, §2.1.2). I conclude that faded partitives can still be considered inherently indefinite.

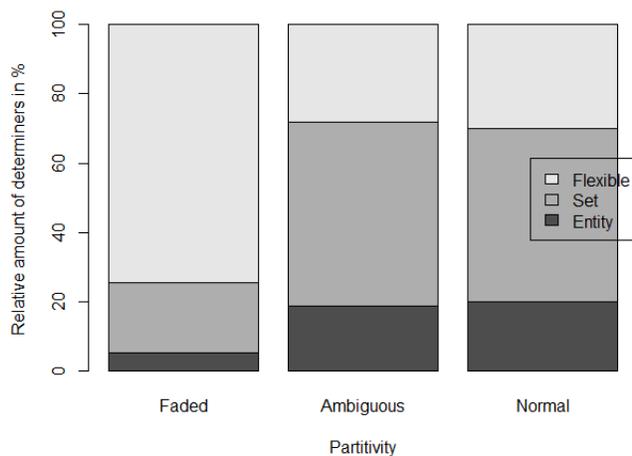
Oosterhof also observes that *tig* ‘lots’, *allemaal* ‘all’ and \emptyset typically introduce faded partitives. I found no occurrences of *tig*, but I did find *allemaal* to introduce faded partitives significantly more often than it did normal partitives ($\chi^2 = 26.717, df = 1, p < 0.0005$), see Table 6. Interestingly, the results for \emptyset are the opposite of Oosterhof’s findings: I found \emptyset to precede normal partitives significantly more than it did faded partitives ($\chi^2 = 14.931, df = 1, p < 0.0005$).

Hypothesis 6 *Pre-van entity determiners (like een deel ‘a part’, een derde ‘a third’, de helft ‘half’ and 20% less often introduce faded partitives than they introduce normal partitives.*

Hypothesis 7 *Pre-van set determiners (like veel ‘many’ and numerals) introduce faded partitives more often than they introduce normal partitives.*

Regarding entity and set determiners, there is no difference between ambiguous partitives and normal partitives, but there is a significant difference between faded partitives on the one hand and normal and ambiguous partitives on the other ($\chi^2 = 74.5, df = 2, p < 0.000$), see Figure 9. There is no significant difference in amount of set determiners between normal and faded partitives ($\chi^2 = 0.0321, df = 2, p < 0.86$).

Figure 9: Relative amounts of set determiners, entity determiners and flexible determiners introducing partitive constructions.



We have seen that the corpus study has been unable to show any significant difference in whether definite determiners introduce normal or faded partitives. There is a difference between normal and faded partitives in that flexible determiners introduce faded partitives in significantly higher amounts.

4.3.4 Elaborating expressions

I combined the numbers for presence of an AP and presence of a relative clause into a new factor marking the presence of an elaborating expression. That means that if any item is modified by an AP, by a relative clause, or by both, an elaborating expression is present.

Hypothesis 8 *I expect faded partitive constructions to be modified by an adjective or a relative clause more than normal partitive constructions.*

Faded partitives in general are more often accompanied by such expressions (38.1%) than normal partitives are (14.9%). This result is significant ($\chi^2 = 50.623, df = 1, p < 0.0005$). This finding supports Hypothesis 8.

Hypothesis 9 *I expect utterances with faded partitives to have a greater amount of interjections like *je weet wel* and *zeg maar* than utterances with normal partitives.*

The data seem to suggest that interjection-like phrases *je weet wel* ‘you know’ and *zeg maar* ‘you can say’ are often found with faded partitives, but the difference with normal partitives is not significant ($\chi^2 = 0.14, df = 1, p < 0.5$). Therefore the suggestion of the results supporting Hypothesis 9 must be treated with caution.

In the next section I will discuss implications of the results for the theoretical approaches discussed in the previous section.

5 Discussion

5.1 Formal and informal register

Significantly more faded partitives were found in spoken language than in written language. This result can be explained by the vagueness of the concept the faded partitive denotes. Having an adequate and precise description of the concept one is trying to describe may be a typical feature of formal register, especially in written language, since the writer has enough time to find a fitting word. In spoken language this time is usually not available. In informal register it is allowed to circumvent this search by using a faded partitive construction. It can also be used to buy some time, a use it shares with *uh*, as in (42):

(42) *ja allemaal van die uh van die dingen.*
‘yeah all of those uh of those things.’

In (42) the speaker cannot think of any word that could aptly describe the *dingen* ‘things’. She uses not only *uh* but also *van die* to think a bit longer about it.

5.2 Syntax

5.2.1 Form variations / post-*van* determiners

Results show that there are several different forms the faded partitive construction can take: *van dat* ‘of that’, *van dat soort* ‘of that kind’, *van die* ‘of that/those’, *van dit soort* ‘of this kind’, *van zo’n* ‘of such a’, *van zulk soort* ‘of such kind’ and *van zulke* ‘of such’. Oosterhof (2005) states that this amount of possible forms makes De Hoop, Vanden Wyngaerd and Zwart’s (1990) *syntactic atom* analysis a very

improbable analysis. Oosterhof supposes that *vandie* is a special case, but now we have to accept the existence of at least seven special cases (*zulk* and *zulke* are tokens of the same type), which Oosterhof believes is a problem (Oosterhof, 2005, §2.3.3). I disagree with his statement. Imagine the discovery of a word that has certain properties that linguists had not seen before in a word. The word may be called *special* because of this property. It would be strange to state that this word can be the only word with this property. In fact, the discovery of this property should lead us to believe that it may play a role in influencing the behaviour of any other word, phrase or construction. If *vandie* really is a syntactic atom, that can certainly be a special case to the extent that we have not yet found out precisely how it works. Nevertheless, that does not mean other words like it should not be able to exist. In contrast, its existence marks the possibility of an entire group of words like it. I therefore do not think that the existence of form variations of the faded partitive construction renders the *syntactic atom* analysis improbable.

5.2.2 Subject position

Faded partitives are not usually subjects. Their tendency to be postverbal when in subject position can be explained by the fact that partitive constructions are heavy constituents. Like in extraposition and shifting, there is a tendency for heavy constituents to move out of their canonical position.

Significantly less faded partitives are subjects when they do not have a pre-*van* determiner. As predicted in Oosterhof (2005, §3.2.3) this is caused by a violation of the lexical government requirement: faded partitives need to be modified when in subject position. Though not significant, there is a numeric trend of faded partitives in this position being modified more than normal partitives.

5.2.3 Double *van* and syntactic ellipsis

101 instances of an ambiguous partitive construction have been found. These are ambiguous in the sense that it is hard to determine whether the construction is a normal partitive or a faded one. This phenomenon may be explained by means of a syntactic ellipsis occurring at the site of a double preposition.

When we assume the faded partitive is indeed an NP, this means it can follow a preposition, as shown by examples (43) and (44):

(43) (*van die van die papierkes weet de niet van die blok*) *blokskes met van die papierkes in.*

‘small cubes that have those small sheets of paper in them.’

(44) *ja ik kan 't me wel voorstellen want ik ben een paar op van die ROC's geweest en het zijn me toch ook als je daarnaartoe belt uh vijf zes zeven locaties vaak in één plaats dan soms.*

‘Yeah I can imagine, because I’ve been a couple at some of those regional education centres and there appear to be, when you call them, five, six, seven places, often in one town.’

In (43) and (44) the *van* prepositions serve their function of creating a faded partitive and the other prepositions (*met* and *op*) have a different function which is completely unrelated to the faded partitive.

Since *van* is a preposition we can expect it to appear in this unrelated position as well, thus being positioned next to a second *van*. This is what Hypothesis 1 predicts:

Hypothesis 1 *I expect some faded partitive constructions to be introduced by a lexically selected instance of van, thus producing a van van sequence.*

Such items have been found, as shown in (45–48):

- (45) *nee ze heeft helemaal geen last **van van** die mensen.*
 ‘no, such people do not bother her at all.’
- (46) *en daar stonden theeglazen en die waren ook wel heel mooi, gewoon dik glas, dus niet van dat enge dunne, maar wel gewoon een normaal sjiek model, in plaats **van van** die lompe meteen.*
 ‘and there were tea cups and they were quite nice as well, just a thick kind of glass, so not that scary thin kind, but just a normal elegant type, instead of, you know, those clumsy ones.’
- (47) *en dan hou ik ook zo wel eigenlijk **van van** die superklassieke klassieke dingen zoals Schubert.*
 ‘and actually I also like those superclassical classical things like Schubert.’
- (48) *hoort ge toch weer **van van** die die kinderdieven en zo meer.*
 ‘Again you hear about those child abductors and more like that.’

In example (45), the first *van* follows *last* to create a construction *last hebben van* ‘to be bothered by’. In (46), the first *van* follows *plaats* to create a construction *in plaats van* ‘instead of’. In (47), the first *van* is part of a construction *houden van* ‘to love’, ‘to like’. In (48), the first *van* is part of a construction *horen van* ‘to hear about’. In all these examples, the first instance of *van* is part of a construction that is unrelated to the faded partitive that uses the second *van*. The *vans*’s appearing next to each other is coincidental. These examples also refute Van der Lubbe’s (1982, p. 369) statement that double *van* is not possible.

This unrelatedness means that theoretically the first *van*’s construction may be a (normal) partitive, for the partitive construction in Dutch requires the use of *van*. The practical effect hereof is a quantification (expressed by a normal partitive) of a concept (denoted by a faded partitive), resulting in a *van van* sequence. This possibility is manifested in examples (49) and (50):

- (49) *wil ik best wel jou in tegemoet komen in in één **van van** die uh **van die** onderdelen.*
 ‘I would make a concession to you regarding one of those uh of those parts.’
- (50) *nu ken ik heel weinig **van van** die zaken.*
 ‘Now I know very few of such cases.’

In (49) the normal partitive and its quantification is *één van* ‘one of’ and the faded partitive is *van die*. In (50) the normal partitive and its quantification is *heel weinig van* ‘very little of’ and the faded partitive is *van die*. In both utterances the combination of a normal and a faded partitive results in a succession of two separate instances of *van*.

In this construction the quantifier and the noun are stressed, but both instances of *van* are not. Thus, ellipsis might occur in rapid speech, and it would result in one instance of *van* serving both purposes: it would be a normal and a faded partitive in one form. This is challenging to prove because there is no visible proof of a second instance of *van* having existed before elision, but it would adequately explain the cause of the ambiguity in ambiguous partitive items in the corpus. (51–55) are examples of such ambiguous items.

- (51) *en en ja heel veel van die internetbedrijven bijvoorbeeld die zitten in die categorie in die lage categorie.*
 ‘and and yeah and quite a lot of those internet companies for example are in that category, in the lower category.’
- (52) *maar ik uh ik 'k lust sowieso niet heel veel van die chocoladerepen.*
 ‘but I cannot appreciate many of those chocolate bars anyway.’
- (53) *d'r zijn uh d'r zijn tien van die apparaten in omloop.*
 ‘there are ten such devices in circulation.’
- (54) *ja dat zijn alle mensen die stage gedaan hebben die doen daar een praatje over en dan moet je vijftien van die dingen mee-uh-maken ja.*
 ‘yeah that are all the people who did an internship; they give a talk about it and you have to attend fifteen of those things, yeah.’
- (55) *net zoiets als Kosovo ze weten dat er een oorlog is maar 't hoe en wat uh als het niet bij geschiedenis of maatschappij of of één van die vakken aangekaart wordt dan uh denk ik niet dat ze weten hoe of wat 't zit.*
 ‘just like Kosovo: they know there is a war going on, but the technicalities; if they aren’t treated in history or civics class or one of those classes, then I do not think they will know about them.’

We see that *van* in ambiguous partitives might be analysed as having a double function, being part of both a normal and a faded partitive construction.

5.3 Semantics

5.3.1 Set determiners and entity determiners

De Hoop (1997) states that normal partitives are either set or entity partitives. Oosterhof (2005) states that faded partitives are set partitives. Therefore I expected them to be introduced by set determiners. Results show however that faded partitives are generally introduced by *flexible* determiners. Faded partitives may be introduced by flexible determiners because of the vagueness of the concept that the NP in the faded partitive denotes. If the word for that concept is not precisely known, then it is conceivable that it is also unknown whether that word denotes a set or an entity.

This explanation is mostly, but not entirely, compatible with my adaptation of De Hoop’s (2003) *cells of partitions* analysis: in my analysis *van* makes the constituent a set. Flexible determiners can refer to both entities and sets, so in that aspect there is no problem. However, some entity determiners like *een beetje* ‘a bit’ and *de helft* ‘half’ have been found to introduce faded partitives, contrary to what my analysis predicts. *De helft* ‘half’ was found only once. Note that *de*

helft ‘half’ cannot actually appear without *van* at all: **de helft het koekje* ‘half the biscuit’, **de helft rijst* ‘half the rice’. Thus, as a determiner *de helft* ‘half’ can only be used in partitives. (56) is the utterance in which *de helft* appears:

- (56) *me met de helft van dat soort mensen gingen we ook een weekend naar naar de Ardennen.*
‘with half of that sort of people we also went to the Ardennes for a week-end.’

This partitive construction is theoretically ambiguous, since the entity determiner *de helft* ‘half’ indicates a normal partitive, but the faded interpretation arises specifically due to the very prominent post-*van* determiner *dat soort* ‘that kind’. Theoretically this construction is ambiguous, but in practice the post-*van* determiner *dat soort* ‘that kind’ does enough to give it a faded interpretation. If the construction were *de helft van die mensen* ‘half of those people’ then the partitive would get a normal interpretation. I conclude that entity determiners are allowed in faded partitives under the condition that there is at least one other element in the construction that boosts the faded interpretation.

5.3.2 Definiteness

De Hoop et al. (1990) note that definite determiners like *de meeste* ‘most’ and *sommige* ‘some’ do not introduce faded partitives. The *inverse determiner* analysis by Sturm (1989) predicts the same, as *van* undoes the definiteness of the post-*van* determiner. Only two instances of *sommige* ‘some’ have been found and both partitives they introduce are ambiguous. Only one instance of *de meeste* ‘most’ has been found and it introduces a normal partitive. These amounts are too small to confirm or disprove the *inverse determiner* theory.

5.3.3 Elaborating expressions

Compared to normal partitives, faded partitives are significantly more often modified by an adjective, relative clause, or both. This supports the view that faded partitives typically denote concepts that do not have a straightforward word, not limited to concepts in the shared knowledge. There is a numeric trend in that utterances with faded partitives have a greater amount of interjections like *je weet wel* ‘you know’ and *zeg maar* ‘you can say’ than utterances with normal partitives, but the difference is not significant. It is possible that speakers, when failing at finding the right word or even a description, use interjections instead. A future study might specifically explore possible forms of such interjection phrases to answer this question more thoroughly.

5.4 General

How do the analyses account for the results in general? My adaptation of the *set/entity determiner* analysis by De Hoop (2003) and the *inverse determiner* analysis by Sturm (1989) are remarkably similar when it comes to the syntax of faded partitives. There are two main differences: in Sturm’s analysis, *van* returns the NP into its originally indefinite state after it had been made definite for the sake of presuppositionality by the post-*van* determiner. In my analysis, *van* returns

the NP into its original set status after it had been made an entity for the sake of selecting a cell from the partition of the set the NP denotes.

The first difference is the one between definiteness on the one hand and set/entity status on the other. These are of course not the same things. My corpus study results do not favour any of these explanations, but allow them both: there are no significant results on definiteness, and the pre-*van* determiners in faded partitives are generally flexible determiners. That they are flexible does not exclude the possibility of them being definite or indefinite.

The second difference is that the NP within the partitive does not have to be a set to begin with. It may be an entity as well. In Oosterhof's (2005) analysis, *die (A) N* denotes a kind, which is always an entity. The syntactic function of *van* is that it turns this entity into a set. In this regard the analysis is virtually equal to mine.

There are more differences to be found in the analyses of the semantics of the faded partitive construction. In Oosterhof's (2005) analysis the faded partitive denotes a kind, which can be specified in the discourse or be already present in the shared knowledge of participants. Oosterhof states that '**het belangrijkste kenmerk** van NP's die naar een soort verwijzen, is daarbij dat ze gebruikt kunnen worden in argumentposities van soortpredikaten zoals *uitgestorven*' '**the most important property** of NPs that refer to a kind, is that they can be arguments of kind-specific predicates like *extinct*' (§4.1, bold print by me, CC). Oosterhof deems this the most important property, but there are examples that do not adhere to it, as in (57):

- (57) *d'r lag van die aarde in de broodrooster.*
'there was this ... soil in the toaster.'

(57) shows the faded partitive in a generic context, which is incompatible with kind-specific predicates: **er is van die aarde uitgestorven* 'there is this soil extinct'.

As discussed earlier, Oosterhof has two objections to De Hoop's (2003) *cells of partitions* analysis, which are his main reasons for presenting the *kind* analysis. I argued that an adaptation of the *cells of partitions* analysis can be used to resolve those objections.

Oosterhof presents the argument that in post-*van* determiners *dit soort* 'this kind' and *dat soort* 'that kind', the reference to kinds is explicitly mentioned. This need not be a requirement for calling faded partitives a kind. When a speaker does not know an exact word for a concept, it is natural to reach for such words like *soort* 'kind', *type* 'type', *aard* 'disposition'. It is a logical move to state at least which kind of thing it is, and *van dat soort* 'of that kind' is more powerful in this respect than *van die* 'of those'. It might even be considered a small form of elaborating expression, as discussed in section 5.3.3.

In Sturm (1989) the purpose of the post-*van* determiner is presuppositional: the speaker appeals to the hearer's knowledge or imagination. In De Hoop et al. (1990) the concept that the NP in the faded partitive denotes is found in the shared knowledge of the participants in the discourse. In De Hoop (2003) the phrase *die NP* denotes a cell of a partition of the set that the NP denotes. De Hoop (2003) does not explain exactly what is in this cell, but it can easily be connected to the presupposed concept.

6 Conclusions

I conclude that an adaptation of De Hoop's (2003) *cell of partition* analysis suits best the observations in this study. The cell, denoted by *van*, can be seen as a specific concept that the speaker is trying to find a fitting word for because that word is not in her language or she does not know it. In spite of that it is considered by the speaker to be something that the hearer knows, even though that does not have to be the case—hence the examples of misunderstanding in (37–39). The post-*van* determiner is presuppositional: it marks the speaker's invoking her own estimate of the hearer's knowledge or imagination. Presumably it is usually definite. *Van* is an inverse determiner: it makes the constituent indefinite again.

In my adaptation of De Hoop's (2003) analysis, the NP within a faded partitive is a (group) entity. *Van* turns this entity into a set. The claims about set/entity status and definiteness having the functions I ascribe to them are not proven or disproven by my corpus study results, as I found faded partitives to be generally introduced by flexible determiners that can precede both entities and sets. They may be explored further, with larger corpora, or perhaps through experiments with specifically and carefully chosen set or entity determiners and definite and indefinite determiners.

References

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