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Nanosyntactic Explanation of Syncretism in Polish Pseudo-partitive and Counting Contexts

In Slavic languages, syncretism occurs in the context of partitive and counting phrases. Partitive phrases (Polish: *kawałek jabłk-a* – *a piece of apple*) refer to a subset of a unit (Falco & Zamparelli 2019). Counting phrases express the quantity of counted items (Bultnick 2005). These phrases can be subdivided into those denoting low (Polish: *dwa jabłk-a* – *two apples*) and high (Polish: *pięć jabłek-0* – *five apples*) quantity (Franks 1994). This talk investigates syncretism patterns observed in Polish, focusing on the structure of main nouns (i.e., *apple* in the examples above). Using Nanosyntax, features MASS, CL, PAUC, and QUANT are employed to describe the structure of the nouns in each context. The reason for choosing these four features instead of working with concrete categories of case and number is the ability to use this analysis cross-linguistically with languages with caseless morphology (e.g. Bulgarian, Macedonian). The MASS feature is contained in nouns in partitive phrases as these nouns are structurally minimal, lacking a specified atomic layer (Borer 2005). If partitives are similar to small mass nouns (Rothstein 2010), counting phrases require a new syntactic head, CL, to render a mass noun countable (Caha 2022). This is also supported by classifier languages, where CL heads are mandatory to enumerate nouns (Allan 1977). This, however, does not address the distinction between low- and high-counting phrases as paucal and plural appear in them. CL makes nouns countable but does not bring the grammatical number, hence, following Pesetsky (2013), or Franks (1995), two new features PAUC and QUANT are introduced, to differentiate these two types of phrases. The talk aims to explain the observed syncretism and its distribution.