

Lecture 9

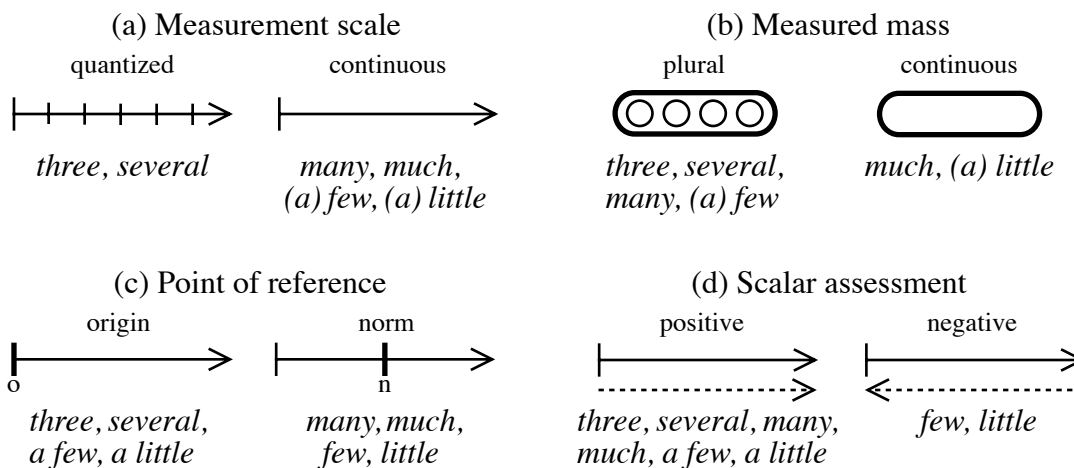
Absolute Quantifiers

- A. Core System
- B. Grounding Use
- C. Measure Constructions
- D. Typology and Change

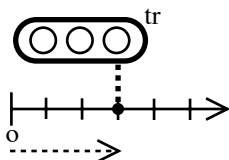
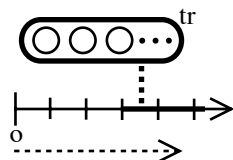
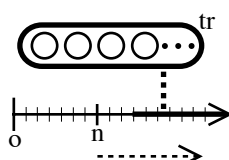
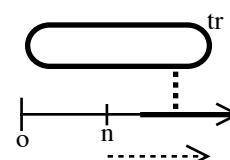
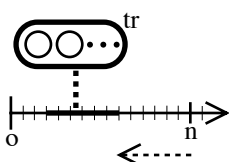
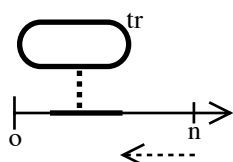
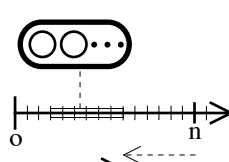
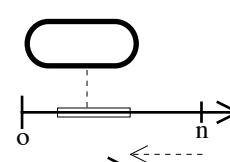
A. Core System

- (1)(a) **Absolute quantifiers:** *many, much, (a) few, (a) little, three, several*
 (b) Occurrence as clausal predicates: *Our problems are {many / few / three / ?several}.*
 (c) Co-occurrence with definite grounding: *those three cats; our many problems; the few houses left standing; the little wine we drank.*
 (d) The nominal referent may be actual: *In the room were many cats.*
 (e) They are characterized with respect to a *scale of measurement*.
- (2)(a) The core quantifiers are part of a massive system whose members differ in degree of entrenchment and grammaticization. There are productive patterns for forming new ones.
 (b) *three > twenty-five > two hundred > four hundred seventy-nine*
 (c) *a lot of X > a gallon of X > several tons of X > four hundred seventy-nine bags of X*
 (d) *A lot of* (compressed to *alotta*) is taking over from *much* and *many* as a core element.
We drank {a lot of / ??much} wine. He can eat {a lot of / ?many} bananas.
- (3) Core elements differ in regard to a number of parameters:
 - (a) The **measurement scale** can either be *quantized*, with discrete values, or *continuous*.
 - (b) The **measured mass** can either be *plural* or *continuous*.
 - (c) The **point of reference** can be the scale's *origin* (o) or a *norm* (n).
 - (d) The **scalar assessment** (direction of mental scanning) can be *positive* or *negative*.

(4)



(5)

(a) *three*(b) *several*(c) *many*(d) *much*(e) *few*(f) *little*(g) *a few*(h) *a little*

(6) *Few* and *little* are generally considered negative because they occur with **negative polarity items**, like unstressed *any* and *give a damn*.

- (a) He really does **not** have *any* friends. [**He really has **any** friends.*]
- (b) I **don't** really **give a damn** about politics. [**I really **give a damn** about politics.*]
- (c) **Few** students {have *any* interest in / **give a damn** about} politics.
- (d) **Little** interest in the topic was shown by *any* students.

(7) Other absolute quantifiers, including *a few* and *a little*, are evidently positive in nature:

- (a) **Few** guests consumed *any* wine.
- (b) **Little** wine was consumed by *any* guests.
- (c) **A few* guests consumed *any* wine.
- (d) **A little* wine was consumed by *any* guests.
- (e) {**Many** / **A lot of**} guests drank (**any*) wine.
- (f) {**Much** / **A lot of**} wine was consumed by {*the* / **any*} guests.

(8)(a) Any conception of **ordering** or **directionality** consists in *sequenced processing activity* at some level of organization (perhaps on a very small time scale).

- (b) A measurement scale arises through the *summation* of a *series of comparisons*, each registering a value larger than the preceding one. Though below the level of conscious awareness, this *scanning* from value to value gives the scale an **inherent directionality**.
- (c) The directionality inherent in the *scale itself* has to be distinguished from the directionality of the **scalar assessment**—how we *access* the scale to specify a quantity.
- (d) Usually this assessment consists in scanning that **conforms** to the scale's inherent directionality. *Few* and *little* are negative in the sense that the assessment **reverses** it.

(9)

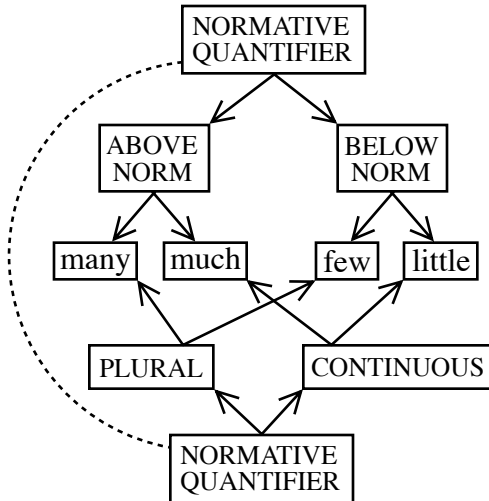
(a) Paradigmatic view

NORM QNT	PL	CONT
ABOVE NORM	many	much
BELOW NORM	few	little

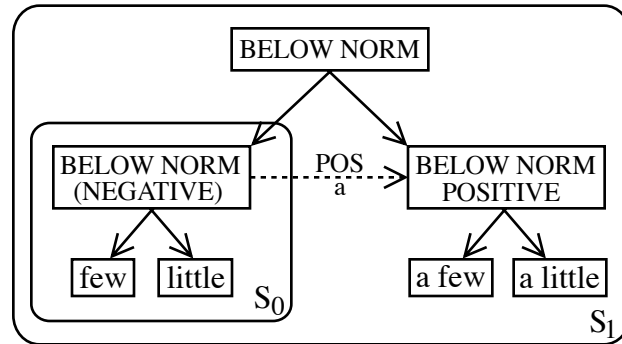
(c) Paradigmatic view

BELOW NORM	PL	CONT
NEG	few	little
POS	a few	a little

(b) Systemic view



(d) Systemic view



B. Grounding Use

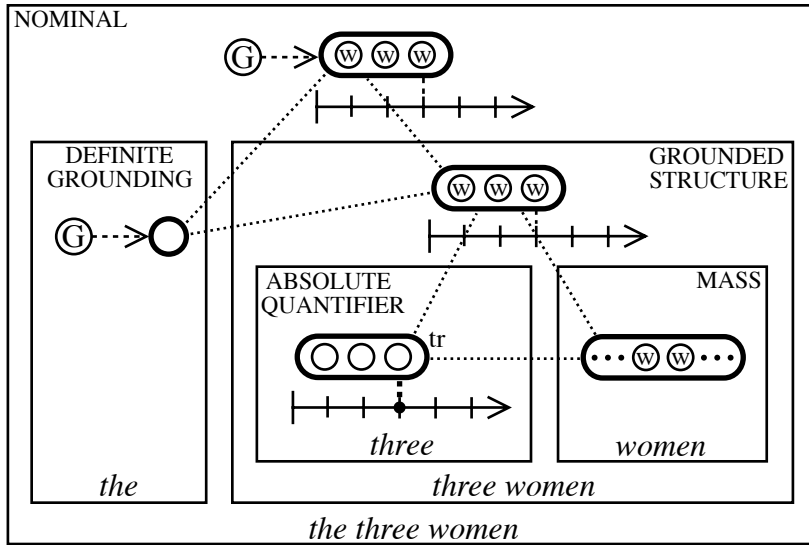
- (10)(a) **A:** *How many women does he like?* **B:** *He likes {three / ?a few / ??most / *all}.*
 (b) **A:** *{What / Which} babies are cute?* **B:** *{All / ?Most / ??Many / *Several} babies are.*

- (11)(a) *our many problems* [?these many problems]
 (b) *the few houses left standing* [?the few houses]
 (c) *the little wine we drank* [??the little wine]
 (d) **the much wine; *our little gasoline; *this [much water]; *that [little juice]*
 (e) *three cats, several boys, many problems, much confusion, few children, little hope*

- (12)(a) Alternatives: (i) analyze absolute quantifiers as grounding elements when they are initial;
 (ii) posit a \emptyset grounding element in such expressions (an indefinite article, like *sm*).
 (b) *{those / \emptyset } three cats; {the / \emptyset } many problems; {his / \emptyset } few children*
 (c) Arguments against positing a zero grounding element:
 (i) Zero elements are theoretically suspect and ought to be avoided.
 (ii) Unlike the putative \emptyset article, *sm* does not occur with absolute quantifiers: **sm three cats; *sm many problems; *sm few children.*
 (iii) The fact that *sm* is mutually exclusive with absolute quantifiers suggests that they, like *sm*, should be considered grounding elements.

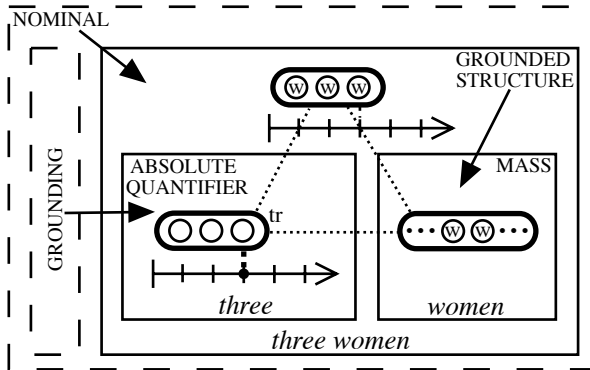
- (13)(a) *Relative quantifiers* are atypical of *grounding elements*, representing an alternative to identification as a means of achieving epistemic control; the referent is always virtual.
- (b) *Absolute quantifiers* are atypical of *modifying adjectives*; they do not specify a property that contributes to identification by narrowing the range of candidate instances.
- (c) *those two women standing at the bar* *those three women sitting at the table*
- (d) **A:** *See those women?* **B:** *Which ones?*
- (i) **A:** *the ones {standing at the bar / sitting at the table}*
- (ii) **A:** *??the {two / three}*
- (14)(a) Relative and absolute quantifiers share the following properties: (i) quantifying masses; (ii) usually being initial in a nominal; (iii) being able to stand alone as full nominals; and (iv) appearing in the construction indicating a contextually relevant extension (RE).
- (b) *most cats, no elephant, every woman, seven potatoes, many nations, little trouble*
- (c) *Some were broken. Each is worth seeing. I bought five. Many complained.*
- (d) *{all / most / none / each / any / two / several / many / few} of those teachers*
- (15) Especially with RE, the two kinds of quantifiers are often quite comparable in their import:
- (a) *It was a fairly easy exam. {Most / Many} students passed.*
- (b) *It was an easy exam, but {some / several} students failed.*
- (c) *It was a very hard exam. {Hardly any / Few} students passed. Almost none.*
- (16) Like demonstratives, numbers occur with classifiers in languages which have them.
- nèi-tiáo niú* *sān-ge rén*
- (17)(a) Relative and absolute quantifiers represent alternate quantifying **strategies**.
- (b) Relative quantifiers are grounding elements: **universality** in ME provides an alternative to identification as a kind of *epistemic status* and a means of *epistemic control*.
- (c) Like other adjectives, absolute quantifiers specify a **scalar property**, but are atypical because the property is quite extrinsic and not very useful for identification.
- (d) Like relative quantifiers, they afford epistemic control in the form of generalizations, but since they do not specify universality the generalizations are weaker.
- (e) Thus absolute quantifiers function as either grounding elements or adjectival noun modifiers. They are non-typical in either capacity.
- (18)(a) Since both are grounding elements concerned with quantity, relative and absolute quantifiers are mutually exclusive (**most many cats, *some several cats, *all much milk*).
- (b) However, absolute quantifiers are sometimes compatible with definite grounding, e.g. *those three cats, our many problems, the few houses I have owned*.
- (c) As the baseline for grounding, the definite grounding element assumes that function. The quantifier is then adjectival (though it does not contribute to identification of the referent).
- (d) The functioning of absolute quantifiers as grounding elements constitutes a productive general pattern: a schematic symbolic assembly based on semantic functions.

(19)

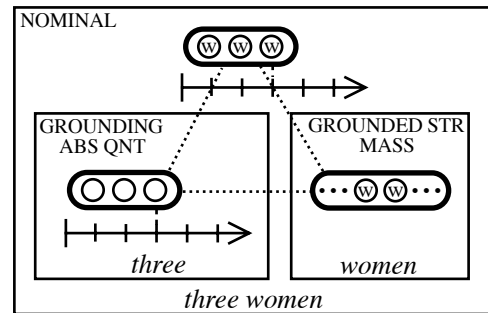


(20) Functional recategorization

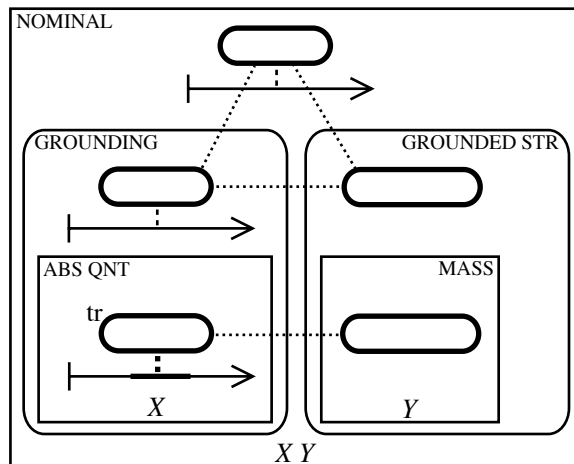
(a)



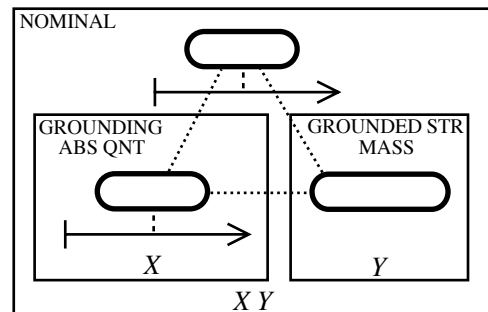
(b)



(c)



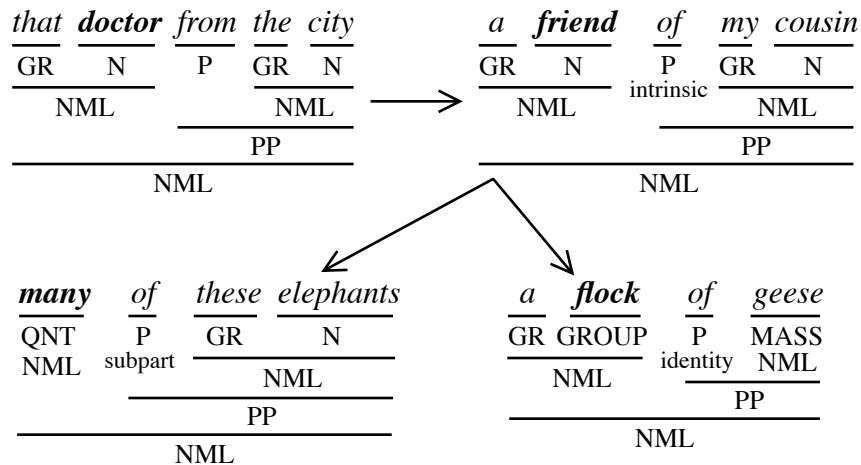
(d)



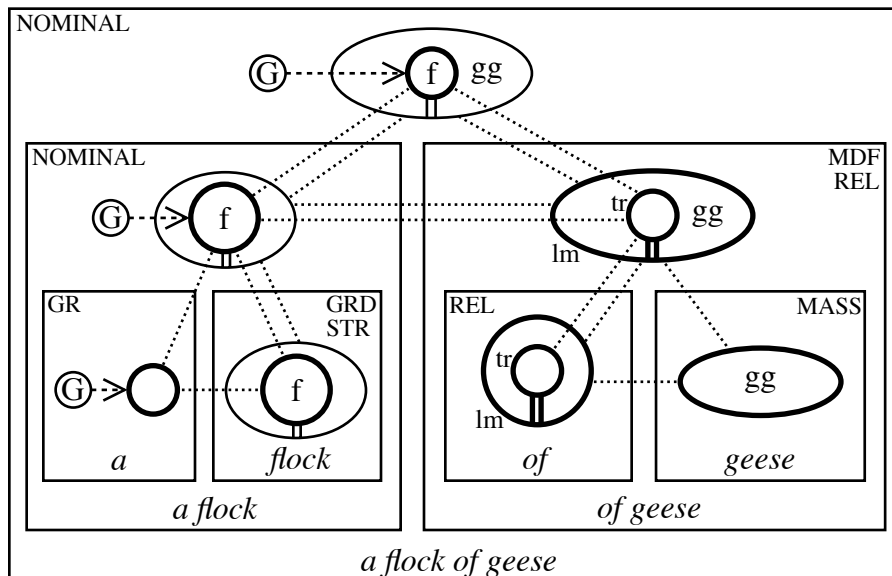
C. Measure Constructions

- (21)(a) GROUP: *a {flock / herd / set / collection / host} of X* [a flock of geese]
 (b) CONFIGURATION: *a {bunch / pile / stack / heap / pool} of X* [a bunch of grapes]
 (c) CONTAINER: *a {can / barrel / bag / cup / box / keg} of X* [several cans of soup]
 (d) MEASUREMENT UNIT: *a {pint / gallon / pound / ton / foot / yard} of X* [two pints of milk]

(22)



(23)



- (24)(a) A **flock** of geese was flying overhead, shaped like a V.
 (b) A flock of **geese** were flying overhead, flapping their wings in unison.
 (c) Three **bags** of fertilizer were sitting in the shed.
 (d) Three bags of **fertilizer** was spread around the garden.
 (e) That **pile** of logs is blocking the road.
 (f) One by one the pile of **logs** were sawed into boards.

(25)(i) [[a **flock**]_{NML} [of geese]_{PP}]_{NML} (ii) [[a flock of]_{QNT} **geese**]_{NML}

- (26)(a) **A:** How many geese did you see? **B:** A whole flock (*of).
 (b) **A:** How much fertilizer did you use? **B:** Three bags (*of).
 (c) She has a bunch—in fact, a whole flock—of geese.
 (d) She has a bunch (30 to be precise) of geese.
 (e) *She has a bunch of (30 to be precise) geese.

(27)(i) [[a **flock**]_{NML} [of geese]_{PP}]_{NML} (ii) [[a flock]_{NML} [of **geese**]_{PP}]_{NML}

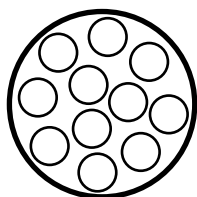
- (28)(a) **Metonymy:** an expression has *alternate profiles* on the *same conceptual content*.
 (b) Highly prevalent and seldom even noticed, it amounts to alternate ways of *accessing* the content for different purposes.
 (c) In (29)(e)–(f) the same nominal has two interpretations reflecting its *functions* in the matrix and relative clauses. Each imposes its own construal on the nominal content.
 (d) This is unproblematic in *symbolic assemblies*, where the same element can participate in multiple structures reflecting different dimensions of organization.

- (29)(a) **Picasso** died in 1973. [famous painter]
 (b) That **Picasso** sold for a record amount. [a painting by Picasso]
 (c) **Picasso** is upstairs. [collection of paintings by Picasso]
 (d) **Picasso** is on the bottom of this stack. [catalog of Picasso paintings]
 (e) I spread **the three bags of fertilizer** that were sitting in the shed.
 (f) We ate **the cans of soup** that were stacked in the pantry.

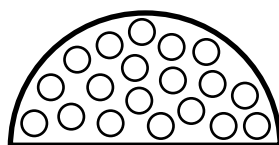
- (30)(a) In (21), the metonymic alternation is facilitated by the two nouns being **co-extensive**.
 (b) The metonymic shift is also facilitated by the second noun being the one of greater practical interest—its referent is what we **actually use**, most typically.

(31)

(a) GROUP



(b) CONFIGURATION



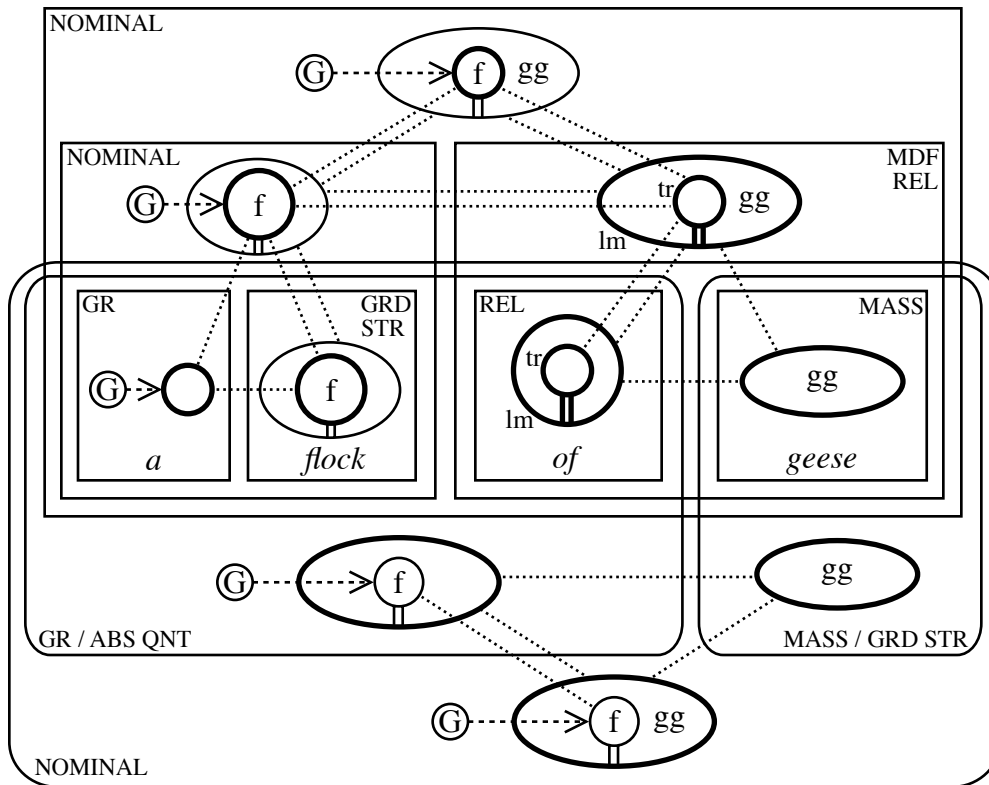
(c) CONTAINER



(d) MEASURE UNIT



(32)



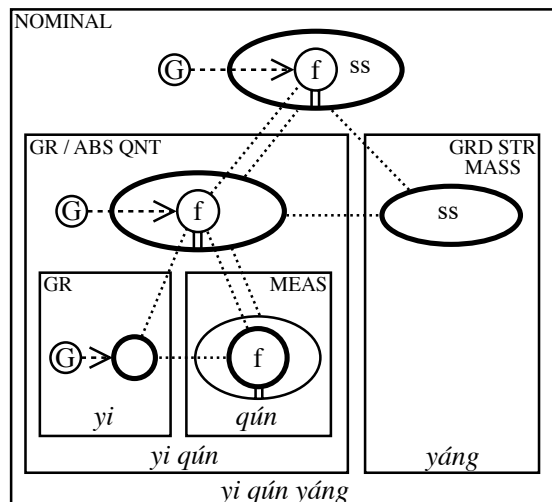
- (33)(a) In symbolic assemblies, the same elements are grouped simultaneously in alternate ways. Groupings vary in regard to factors like salience, entrenchment, and symbolization.
- (b) Not every semantic grouping is symbolized by an independently recognizable phonological structure. [*look up the number* vs. *look the number up*]
- (c) In *a flock of geese*, the semantic function of grounding quantifier is symbolized only by adjacency, phonologically less evident because the prosodic grouping conflicts with it.
- (d) While discrepancies are common and unavoidable, demands of processing efficiency result in an overall tendency for groupings based on different factors to coincide.

D. Typology and Change

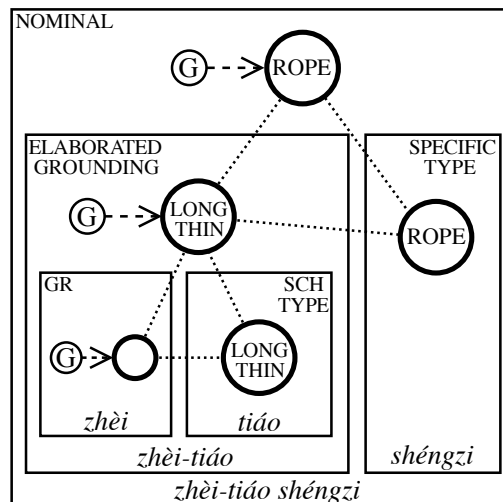
- (34)(a) **Measure construction:** *yì qún yáng, nèi duī lǎxī, yì guó fàn, sān jiālún qìyóu*
- (b) The relation between the two nouns is one of *co-extension*.
- (c) **Classifier construction:** *zhèi-tiáo shéngzi, sān-ge rén*
- (d) As *schematic* and *specific* descriptions of the same entity, the two nouns are *co-extensive* in the strongest sense. This particular kind of co-extension is not limited to masses.

(35)

(a)



(b)



(36)(a) The construction in (21) allows an open-ended set of quantifying expressions, which conventionalize and grammaticize to varying degrees.

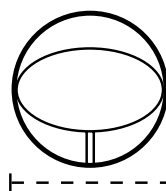
(b) They provide a diachronic source for new absolute quantifiers, e.g. *a lot of*.

(c) Factors include a loss of analyzability (*a lot of* > *alotta*), the realignment of constituency with semantic function, and possible entry into the core quantifier system.

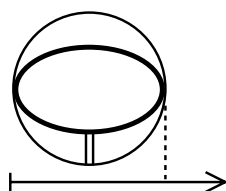
(d) A key step is the development of group, configuration, and especially container nouns into measurement units. E.g. *gallon* < 'pail'; *lot* < 'group of items for sale or auction'.

(37)

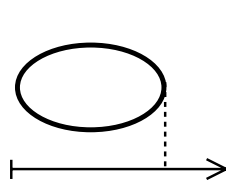
(a) container



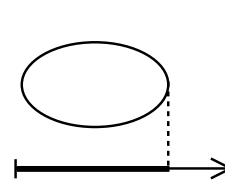
(b) content



(c) mass



(d) abstract



(38)(a) I put the **bottle** in the wine rack.

[container]

(b) I drank the whole **bottle**.

[content of container (mass)]

(c) They drank a whole **gallon**.

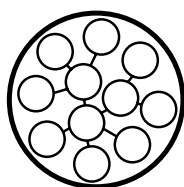
[mass (no container)]

(d) A **gallon** is four quarts.

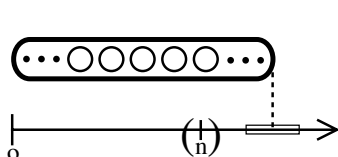
[abstract; measurement unit]

(39)

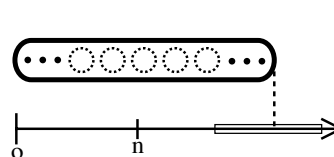
(a) bunch (configuration)



(b) bunch (plural mass)



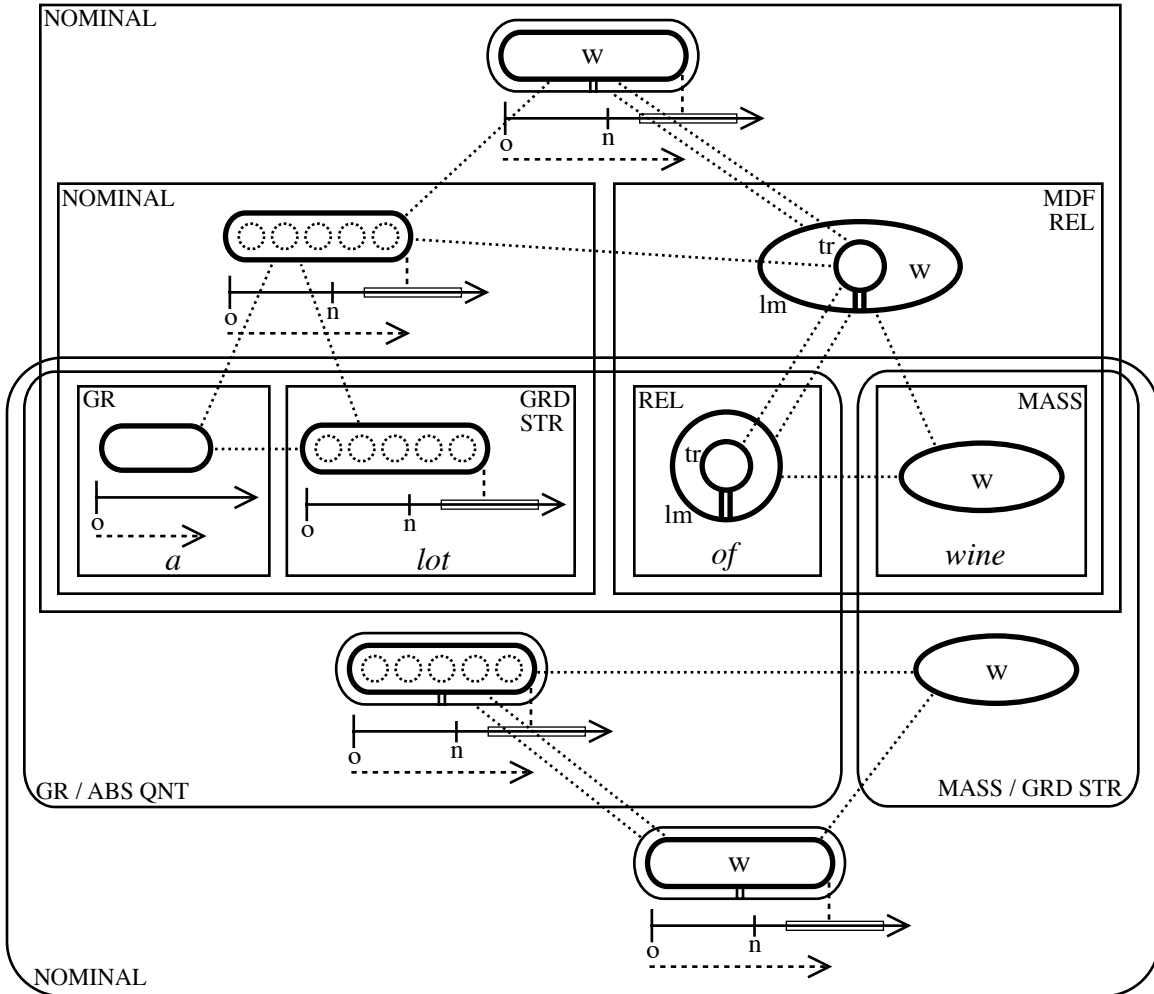
(c) lot (mass)



- (40)(a) *She cut a **bunch** of grapes off the vine.* [configuration]
 (b) *She owns a **bunch** of hotels.* [plural mass]
 (c) **She drank a **bunch** of wine.* [non-plural mass]
 (d) **A **lot** of paintings was sold.* [group; no longer in general use]
 (e) *A **lot** of paintings were sold.* [plural mass]
 (f) *A **lot** of wine was consumed.* [non-plural mass]

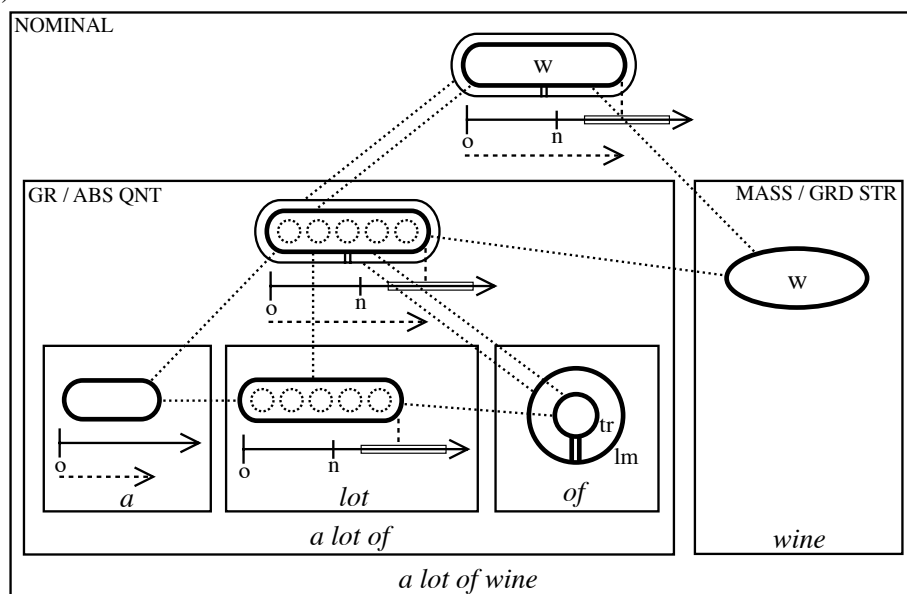
- (41)(a) [[a lot]_{NML} [of wine]_{PP}]_{NML}
 (b) **A:** *How much wine was consumed?* **B:** *A lot (*of).*
 (c) *She has a lot—in fact, a whole flock—of geese.*
 (d) **She has a lot of—in fact, a whole flock—geese.*
 (e) *She has few ducks, but of geese she has a lot.*
 (f) *She has a lot—of geese, that is.*
 (g) **She has a lot of—geese, that is.*

(42)

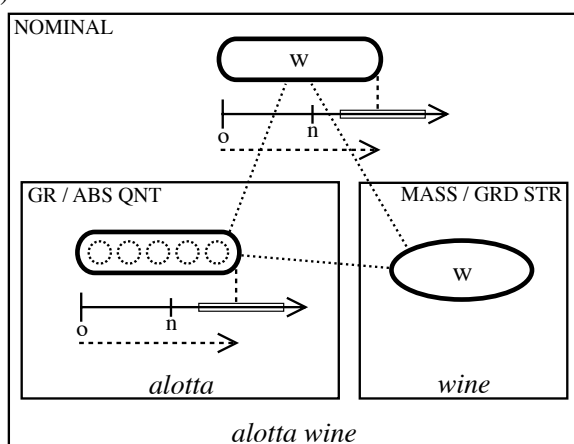


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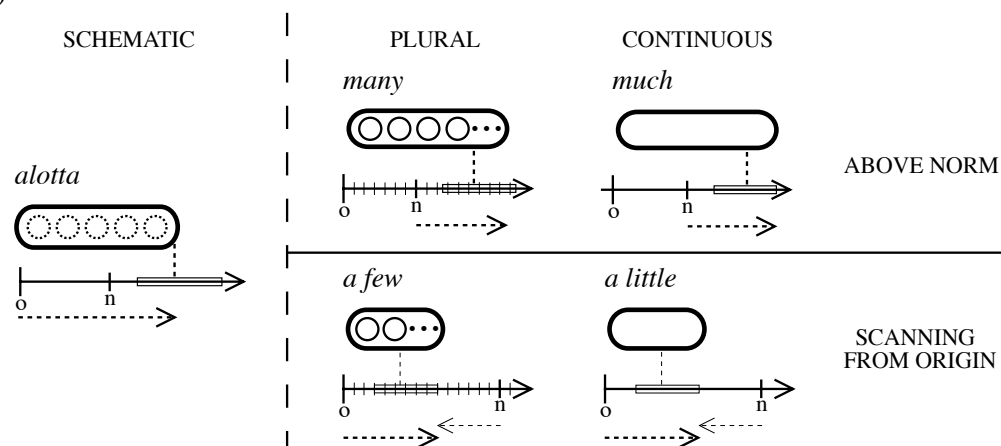
(a)



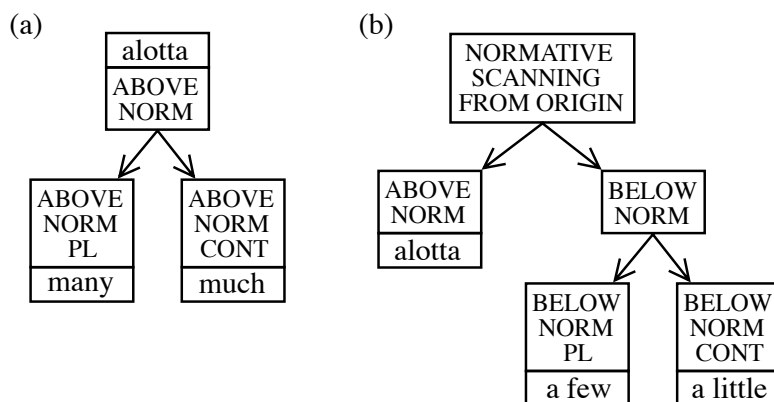
(b)



(44)



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