√, *Th*, *n* and *num*/K in Romance nouns: a cross-linguistic account

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“Totum vero quod in Europa restat ab istis, tertium tenuit ydioma, licet nunc tripharium videatur: nam alii oc, alii oil, alii si affirmando locuntur, ut puta Yspani, Franci et Latini”
Dante Alighieri, *De vulgari eloquentia*, I.8,6.

1. Introduction

Preliminaries

I assume the well known idea that Romance nouns derive diachronically from LA¹ ACC nouns (cf. Meyer-Lübke 1974).

(1) Singular Latin & Romance nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LA</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>PO</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>RU</th>
<th>FR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM pons</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>[pô]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC pontem</td>
<td>[ponte]</td>
<td>[pôntə]</td>
<td>[pwente]</td>
<td>[pod]</td>
<td>[pô]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This general pattern accounts for an overwhelming number of singular nouns in Romance.

(2) Plural Latin & Romance nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LA</th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>PO</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>RU</th>
<th>FR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOM lupī</td>
<td>[lupi]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>[lupi]</td>
<td>[lu]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC lūpōs</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>[lobˈʃə]</td>
<td>[lobos]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>[lu]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast, plural forms display a well known case of isogloss:
- Western Romance (SP, PO, etc..) pluralizes using /s/ (and thus continuing ACC case);
- Eastern Romance (IT, RU, etc..) pluralizes using /i/ (and thus continuing NOM case).

Theoretical background

The general framework


The Syntax-Phonology interface

A phonological tier (CVCV..) is associated to syntactic terminals (Lowenstam 2008). Bendjaballah & Haiden (2008) propose a typology of Spell-Out:

(3) a. segmental (floating) b. skeletal c. segmental & skeletal d. silence

\[ \begin{array}{c|c}
\text{ka} & \text{k}\ a \\
\text{CV} & \text{CV} \\
\end{array} \]

¹ I use the following abbreviations: Latin LA; Italian IT; Portuguese PO; Spanish SP; Rumanian RU; French FR; nominative NOM; genitive GEN; dative DAT; accusative ACC; vocative VOC and ablative ABL.
Goals of the paper

- To demonstrate that at least four functional categories are needed to account for NP’s
- To show how parameters on Spell-Out account for cross-linguistic diversity.
- To propose an explanation for the morphological isogloss.

2. Latin

Latin nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>rosae</td>
<td>rosae</td>
<td>lupus</td>
<td>lupus</td>
<td>ovum</td>
<td>pax</td>
<td>dux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>rosae</td>
<td>rosae</td>
<td>lupus</td>
<td>lupus</td>
<td>ovum</td>
<td>pax</td>
<td>dux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DAT</td>
<td>rosa</td>
<td>rosa</td>
<td>lupus</td>
<td>lupus</td>
<td>ovum</td>
<td>pax</td>
<td>dux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>rosam</td>
<td>rosam</td>
<td>lupum</td>
<td>lupum</td>
<td>ovum</td>
<td>pax</td>
<td>dux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VOC</td>
<td>rosa</td>
<td>rosa</td>
<td>lupe</td>
<td>lupe</td>
<td>ovum</td>
<td>pax</td>
<td>dux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>rosā</td>
<td>rosā</td>
<td>lupōs</td>
<td>lupōs</td>
<td>ovōs</td>
<td>pace</td>
<td>duce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- There is gender predictability for declensions I and II, but not for declension III.
- Number and Case are morphologically realized by a single suffix.

(4) Latin nouns structure

a. KP
   numP
   num
   CV
   n
   Th
   CV
   CV
   [m [-f] e p o n t]
b. num/KP
   num
   n
   Th
   CV
   CV
   [s [-f] o l u p]

(5) The representation of *pontem* ‘bridge’ and *lupōs* ‘wolves’
Linearization

A projection KP for Case (Bittner & Hale 1996)
A projection numP for number.
Operations at PF: (i) fusion between $K$ and num², and (ii) $Th$ is required as adjunct to $n^3$.

- Internal merger applies in order to linearize the morphemes.
- $n^0$ only bears the gender feature.
- The shape of the root is lexical, thus the length of the template depends on the number of segment the root is made of⁴.

3. Proposal

Morphological change (diachronic differences)
The morphological change occurred from Latin to Romance nouns is the combination of:
- Phrase or head loss (morpho-syntactic change).
- CV units loss⁵ (morpho-phonological change).

(6) A typology of morphological change

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³ Embick & Noyer (2006:305-310) propose an adjoined $Th$ to $v^0$ and to $n^0$ to account for Theme vowel in both Latin verbs and noun (called “Ornamental Morphology”): in their account, too, $n^0$ is empty. In addition, Oltra-Massuet (2000) proposes an adjoined $Th$, to all major categories in Catalan.
⁴ Faust & Lampitelli (2009) discuss the issue of the shape of roots in Modern Hebrew and in Italian.
⁵ This idea has been first developed in Lampitelli (2008a, 2008b).
Parentheses point to the fact that language-specific parameters allow or disallow the CV unit loss.

As far as case is concerned, a fourth theoretical configuration is possible, in which \( K^o \) still holds: I won't investigate this path in this paper\(^6\).

**Synchronic differences**
The cross-linguistic difference in Romance stems from the parametric interpretation of the Spell-Out of each terminal node.

### 4. Romance nouns

**French**

(7) French nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V# 

‘wheel’ ‘wolf’ ‘(she) friend’ ‘(he) friend’

C# 

‘battery’ ‘wire’ ‘university’ ‘peak’

- Nouns in (7) are morphologically invariable in number\(^7\).
- Gender is lowly predictable\(^8\).
- Comparing to Latin nouns, strong phonetic erosion occurred.

**Hypothesis**

French has lost KP, \( Th^o \) and all CV units but the ones still associated to the root (cf. 6.b).

- Notice that in the liaison contexts, a morpheme [⁰] appears to be the plural marking\(^9\).

(8) **Liaison contexts**

a. \( \text{un enfant} \)  
   \( \text{a kid} \)  
   ‘a kid’

b. \( \text{des petit[⁰] enfants} \)  
   \( \text{Det little kids} \)  
   ‘(some) little kids’

c. \( \text{[lami] italien} \)  
   \( \text{the.friend Italian} \)  
   ‘the Italian friend’

d. \( \text{[lez.amiz.it]aliens} \)  
   \( \text{the.friends.Italian} \)  
   ‘the Italian friends’

---

\( \text{RU displays morphological case on nouns: it may be the case that the projection KP must be kept into the structure to account for RU nouns.} \)

\( \text{There are some exceptions to this general pattern: nouns such as cheval ‘horse’ have a distinct form for plural chevaux ‘horses’.} \)

\( \text{There are some exceptions: for instance, the nouns ending in [ō], [o], [e] and [ē] are all masculine, as noted by Lowenstamm (2008).} \)

\( \text{The literature on this topic is very vast. Among the most important, see Dell (1973).} \)
July 2nd, 2009

(9) French nouns

**Syntactic structures**

a. \( \text{numP} \)

```
  \( \text{num} \)
  \( \sqrt{\text{n}} \)
  \( \text{CV} \)
  \( \text{[s-f]} \)
  \( \text{lu} \)
```

b. \( \text{numP} \)

```
  \( \text{num} \)
  \( \sqrt{\text{n}} \)
  \( \text{CV} \)
  \( \text{[s-f]} \)
  \( \text{lu} \)
```

**Linearization**

- Spell-out in French:
  - a. \( \sqrt{\text{ }} \) \( \rightarrow \) segmental & skeletal
  - b. \( n^{\circ} \) \( \rightarrow \) silence
  - c. \( \text{num}^{\circ} \) \( \rightarrow \) silence (sg.) and segmental (pl.)

**Spanish**

(10) Spanish nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V#  | [rweda] | [rwedas] | [lobo] | [lobos] | [fwente] | [fwentes] | [pwente] | [pwentes] |
|‘wheel’ | ‘wolf’ | ‘source’ | ‘bridge’ |

C#  | [mar] | [mares] | [pan] | [panes] | [paθ] | * | [sal] | * |
|‘sea’ | ‘bread’ |‘peace’ | ‘salt’ |

- The nouns are always morphologically marked in plural by [s].
- Gender is highly predictable if the noun ends in a vowel.
- A noun can end in a single C [+coronal] ([r], [l], [n], [θ], [s], [ð]).

(11) Roots ending in C [+coronal]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[+cor]#</td>
<td>[faro]</td>
<td>[faros]</td>
<td>[rana]</td>
<td>[ranas]</td>
<td>[laðo]</td>
<td>[laðos]</td>
<td>[palo]</td>
<td>[palos]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘lighthouse’</td>
<td>‘frog’</td>
<td>‘side’</td>
<td>‘stick’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 The same generalization applies to Portuguese and Catalan, too.
11 Harris (1992) calls these vowels ‘word class markers’.

5
- Notice that nouns ending in C [+coronal] + [e] do not exist in Spanish.
- Data in (11) show that some roots ending in C [+coronal] do allow the final vowel.

**Hypothesis**
Spanish has lost KP and re-interpreted Th as an adjunct (not all the nouns display it).

(12) Spanish nouns (with Th)

**Syntactic structures**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{numP} \\
& \quad \text{num} \\
& \quad \text{n} \\
& \quad \text{Th} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CVCV} \\
& \quad [-f] \\
& \quad o \\
& \quad l o b \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b.} & \quad \text{numP} \\
& \quad \text{num} \\
& \quad \text{n} \\
& \quad \text{Th} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CVCV} \\
& \quad [-f] \\
& \quad o \\
& \quad l o b \\
\end{align*}
\]

**Linearization**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{c.} & \quad \text{CVCV} \\text{CV}_{n} \text{CV}_{th} \text{CV}_{num} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad [-f] \\
& \quad o \\
& \quad \text{lob} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{d.} & \quad \text{CVCV} \\text{CV}_{n} \text{CV}_{th} \text{CV}_{num} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad [-f] \\
& \quad o \\
& \quad s \\
\end{align*}
\]

(13) Spanish nouns (without Th)

**Syntactic structures**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{numP} \\
& \quad \text{num} \\
& \quad \text{n} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad [+f] \\
& \quad \text{ma r} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b.} & \quad \text{numP} \\
& \quad \text{num} \\
& \quad \text{n} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad [+f] \\
& \quad \text{ma r} \\
\end{align*}
\]

**Linearization**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{c.} & \quad \text{CVCV} \\text{CV}_{n} \text{CV}_{num} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad [+f] \\
& \quad \text{ma r} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{d.} & \quad \text{CVCV} \\text{CV}_{n} \text{CV}_{num} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad \text{CV} \\
& \quad [+f] \\
& \quad \text{ma r} \\
& \quad s \\
\end{align*}
\]

- Spell-out in Spanish:
  a. $\checkmark \rightarrow$ segmental & skeletal.
  b. $n^\circ \rightarrow$ skeletal.
  c. $Th^\circ \rightarrow$ segmental & skeletal or silence.
  d. $num^\circ \rightarrow$ skeletal (sg.) or segmental & skeletal (pl.).
Italian nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
<th>sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V#  
- [rwota]  ‘wheel’
- [rwote]  ‘wolf’
- [lupo]   ‘source’
- [lupi]   ‘bridge’

C#  
- *  

- Nouns are **always** morphologically marked by a final vowel.
- Gender is predictable if the noun ends in [a] or [o].
- C# are not allowed except in loanwords.

**Hypothesis**

Italian has lost KP and reinterpreted $Th^o$ as an independent projection ThP between the root and nP. Moreover, it has lost the CV units associated to $num^o$ and $n^o$.

Italian nouns structure

**Syntactic structures**

- a. numP
  - num
  - nP
  - n
  - √P
  - $Th_1$
  - CV
  - CV
  - i

- b. numP
  - num
  - nP
  - n
  - √P
  - $Th_1$
  - CV
  - CV
  - i

**Linearization**

- c. CVCV $\sqrt{CV}$
  - r o s
  - [+f]

- d. CVCV $\sqrt{CV}$
  - r o s
  - [+f]

- $Th^o$ bears lexical information associated to the quality of the final vowel.
- Spell-out in Italian:
  - a. $\sqrt{}$ → segmental & skeletal.
  - b. $n^o$ → silence (only a feature).
  - c. $Th^o$ → segmental & skeletal.
  - d. $num^o$ → silence (sg.) or segmental (pl.).

---

12 This analysis has been developed in Lampitelli (to appear) in a much more detailed way.
- Apophonic path\textsuperscript{13}: zero $\rightarrow$ i $\rightarrow$ a $\rightarrow$ u $\rightarrow$ u.
- The Theory of Elements\textsuperscript{14} proposes an analysis of vowels in matrix Elements: /A/, /I/ and /U/: in these terms, [e] = /A.I/.

**French plural vs. Italian plural**

Both FR and IT lack a CV in their $num^o$: this should correspond to a null plural in both languages. But this is not the case as:
- FR has a floating /s/ pl. morpheme;
- IT has a floating /i/ pl. morpheme.

**Proposal**
The difference is caused by the status of $Th^o$:
- FR lost $Th^o$ (cf. 9): thus no information about theme vowel is bore anymore. There is no available C-slot for plural morpheme /s/.
- IT still has $Th^o$ (cf. 14): as a consequence, theme vowels are spelled-out. But there’s no more place for a consonantal plural /s/ (cf. 15.d). The apophony is the only strategy to occupy the CV associated to $Th^o$.

(15) Plural isogloss

**Syntactic structures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French</th>
<th>Italian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. numP</td>
<td>b. numP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>num</td>
<td>num</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\sqrt{\text{CVCV}}$</td>
<td>$\sqrt{\text{CV}}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>zero $\rightarrow$ i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[+f]</td>
<td>[+]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R o z</td>
<td>a r o s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Linearization**

c. CVCV

\[\sqrt{\text{R o z s}}\] there is no space for /s/

d. CVCV

\[\sqrt{\text{r o s a}}\] [e] (apophonic vowel)

---

\textsuperscript{13} See Guerssel & Lowenstamm (1993).
5. Cross-linguistic predictions

The structures in (6) make the following three cross-linguistics predictions:

1) The position of Th° w.r.t. the structure entails different word final syllables.
2) A CV unit associated to num° entails no restrictions on plural marking.
3) The presence of a bigger number of CV-units associated to functional categories entails a rich suffixal morphology.

Prediction 1

SP and IT both have Th°: its presence entails a vocalic ending on nouns.
- If Th° is an adjunct, as in SP, it can be absent: this means that a noun can end in C.
- If Th° is lexically present within √P, as in IT, it cannot be absent, and then nouns will strictly end in a V.
- If the language lacks Th°, as FR does, then the final segment on nouns depends on root segments (thus totally unpredictable).

(16) Final syllable on Romance nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>FR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>always Th°</td>
<td>optional Th°</td>
<td>never Th°</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. CV#</td>
<td>[roza]</td>
<td>‘rose’</td>
<td>[rosa]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. C#</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>[sintesis]</td>
<td>‘synthesis’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prediction 2

SP has a CV associated to num°: this entails that the plural morpheme /s/ can be associated to any noun having the projection numP. In contrast, IT lacks such a unit, and then only nouns having a lexical Th° can pluralize.

(17) Pluralizing in SP and IT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IT</th>
<th>SP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no CV in num°</td>
<td>a CV in num°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sg.</td>
<td>[roza]</td>
<td>[rosa]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl.</td>
<td>[roze]</td>
<td>[rosas]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. core nouns</td>
<td>‘rose’</td>
<td>‘rose’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. loanwords</td>
<td>[lider]</td>
<td>[lider] [*lideri]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘leader’</td>
<td>‘leader’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. oxyton words</td>
<td>[re]</td>
<td>[re] [*ri] or [*re]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘king’</td>
<td>‘foot’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. abridged words</td>
<td>[moto] cicletta</td>
<td>[moto] [*moti]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘moto’</td>
<td>‘moto’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- In IT, plural depends on Th° and its CV, and then it has lexical restrictions.
- In SP, plural depends on the CV in num°, that’s why it has no restrictions.
Prediction 3
The increasing number of CV-units associated to the terminals, points to a rich suffixal morphology.
- In FR, none of the functional categories are provided with a CV.
- In contrast, IT and SP have structural positions for a rich suffixal morphology: $\text{Th}^\circ$ can be the site of realization of diminutivization or augmentativization in both SP and IT\textsuperscript{15}.

(18) Diminutives in SP and IT

Syntactic Structures

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Italian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>numP</td>
<td>numP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>num</td>
<td>num</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Th\text{DIM}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CV</td>
<td>CV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CV</td>
<td>CV</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[-f]</td>
<td>[-f]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g a t</td>
<td>i n + o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Linearization

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<td>c.</td>
<td>CVCV, CV\text{num}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g a t [+f] i t o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>CVCV, CV\text{Th}</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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6. Conclusions

*I showed that Romance noun structures share the same functional categories ($\text{num}^\circ, n^\circ, \text{Th}^\circ$ and $\backslash$). In addition, Romance nouns can be derived by a unique structure which underlies Latin nouns.*

- Within Romance, the difference is given by different types of Spell-Out of each terminal node.
- The observed plural isogloss is the consequence of the proposed architecture of nouns.
- Three cross-linguistic predictions on Romance nouns finally are borne out.

\textsuperscript{15} Lampitelli (To appear) and De Belder, Faust & Lampitelli (2009) propose a low diminutive/augmentative for Italian.
References


Marantz, A. 1995. “Cat as a phrasal idiom”. Ms. MIT.


Marantz, A. 2001. “Words and Things” Ms. MIT.
