The internal syntax of MANY/MUCH and FEW/LITTLE

1. Claims. MANY/MUCH and FEW/LITTLE (Q(uantity)-words; Rett 2016) share features with adjectives, adverbs, nouns, numerals, and quantifiers. I propose to explain these hybrid properties by syntactically decomposing them into the features Q, Div, #, Deg, and Neg. Language variation in this domain is captured by varying the size of lexically stored trees (Starke 2014).

2. Properties of Q-words. *2.1 Adjectival properties.* Q-words can be used as attributive adjectives and in predicative position, (1) (Solt 2015:222); they have comparative and superlative forms, and they share the semantics of gradable adjectives, i.e. their interpretation relies on a contextual dimension, cf. (2) (Partee 1989). *2.2 Adverbial properties.* Q-words can be adjectival and verbal modifiers (3). *2.3 Nominal properties.* Q-words reveal the mass-count distinction (4). English and Swedish show a full set of distinctions in their system of Q-words, whereas German, Dutch and Afrikaans show a syncretism for mass/count, both in the the positive and the negative dimensions. *2.4 Numeral properties.* Q-words are in complementary distribution with numerals (5) (Barbiers 2007, Ruys 2017). *2.5 Quantifier properties.* Q-words can interact scopally (e.g. *Not many arrows hit the target/Many arrows didn't hit the target*).

(1)   a.   John's friends are many/few.
       b.   The many/few students who attended enjoyed the lecture.

(2)   Many arrows hit the target, but many didn't.

(3)   a.   John drove much faster than Sue.
       b.   John sleeps little.

(4)

English	many	much	few	little
Swedish	många	mycket	få	lite
Dutch	veel(e)	veel	weinig	weinig
German	viel(e)	viel	wenig(e)	wenig
Afrikaans	baie/veel	baie/veel	min	min

(5)   these many books/these three books/*these three many books

3. The feature system of Q-words. Q-words are to be decomposed into features that they share with the adjectival and nominal functional domain. The relevant parts of the functional sequence are shown in (6).

(6)

Adj		Deg			SPRL	CMPR	Q	a √
N	Det		#	Div				n √
Q-words		Deg	#	Div	SPRL	CMPR	Q	

Q-words lack a root feature, explaining why they lack rich lexical content. The Q feature contributes gradability (Corver 1997) and is nonselective: it is compatible with adjectival, verbal and adverbial categories (Neeleman et al. 2006).

The features Div(ider) and # capture the mass-count distinction (Borer 2005). Div cuts up mass and the cardinality feature # assigns a specific quantity. Absence of Div and # results in a mass reading.

Dutch (and German) provide support for an additional feature Deg(ree) in the functional sequence of Q-words. Dutch *veel* 'many/much' can combine with count and mass words; *veel-e* only with count nouns (see (7)), yielding an individual unit reading

(8b). Whereas *veel*, like English *many*, is compatible with degree modifiers like *te* 'too' or *nogal* 'rather', *vele* is in complementary distribution with such degree modifiers (Broekhuis 2013, Ruys 2017), (8a). A similar contrast can be observed in Afrikaans, i.e. **te baie/te veel* 'too much/many'.

(7)   a. veel-(*e) water
          much   water
      b. veel-(e) mensen
          many   people

(8)   a. te veel-(*e) boeken/wijn
          too many   books/wine
      b. veel-*(e) beet-je-s   helpen
          many   bit-DIM-PL help

In contrast, *weinig* 'few/little' in Dutch does not take *-e* (unless when preceded by a definite article), and can take degree modifiers. Therefore, I propose that *-e* spells out Deg(ree), another feature of the extended adjectival projection line (Corver 1997).

Evidence for a Neg feature in the negative Q-words comes from a sample of 23 languages from 13 language families. Wolof and Western Armenian (WA) for instance show overt sentential negation in the composition of the negative Q-word.

(9)

Wolof	count	mass	NEG
positive	bëri	bëri	
negative	bëri-wul	tuuti	-u(l)

(10)

WA	count	mass	NEG
positive	ʃad	ʃad	
negative	ki-tʃ	ki-tʃ	tʃ-

4. Analysis. I propose the functional sequence in (11) for Q-words:

(11)   [$_{DegP}$ Deg [$_{NegP}$ Neg [$_{\#P}$ # [$_{(DivP)}$ (Div) Q]]]]

The lexical items for non-syncretic English Q-words and partially syncretic Dutch Q-words are in (12) -(13):

(12)   much   [$_{QP}$]
       many   [$_{\#P}$ [$_{DivP}$ [$_{QP}$]]]
       little [$_{NegP}$ [$_{QP}$]]
       few   [$_{NegP}$ [$_{\#P}$ [$_{DivP}$ [$_{QP}$]]]]

(13)   veel   [$_{\#P}$ [$_{DivP}$ [$_{QP}$]]]
       weinig [$_{NegP}$ [$_{\#P}$ [$_{DivP}$ [$_{QP}$]]]]
       -e   [$_{DegP}$ [$_{DivP}$]]

The paper explains 1) how syncretisms can be captured thanks to the superset principle and how language variation reduces to varying sizes of lexical trees (e.g. (12) -(13)), 2) how lexical items get inserted in syntax and 3) how they capture the distribution of Q-words; in addition, the analysis will be extended to Afrikaans and German Q-words.

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