A special kind – countability of abstract objects and related CPs

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This paper investigates countability and individuation in the domain of abstract objects like beliefs and possibilities. Such objects can be realized by nominal or clausal structures or by a combination of both. However, CPs in German and English lack number and countability for both syntactic and semantic reasons: syntactically, CPs cannot enter agreement relations and are not specified for number and semantically, as this paper argues, they refer to unique objects, e.g. kinds of beliefs or cases (linking kinds to number, cf. Borik & Espinal 2020). Nouns associated with those CPs provide a solution for both: syntactically, they provide phi-features, and semantically, they can provide countable particulars.

The uniqueness constraint of the CP can be circumvented in two ways, both of which involve (often silent) prepositions. First, prepositions may introduce an instantiation relation for the kind, like in *two dogs of this kind*, *two cases of Covid*, *zwei Fälle ?(davon), dass* 'two instances of the case that' (cf. Sæbø 2019). This way of counting is similar to that of pseudo-partitives (cf. Selkirk 1977).

The other way comes into play if the noun does not refer to the clause or an instance of the clause at all, but stands in an argumental relation to it, which can be made visible by a preposition in the German translation. This relation can be introduced from inside the clause, (1cd). The same holds for non-finite clauses as well, cf. (2), where quantification forces an argument reading of the non-finite clause.

(1)　　a.　Kant adduces two reasons that aesthetic ideas deserve their name.
　　　　b.　Kant führt zwei Gründe ?(dafür) an, dass sie ihren Namen verdienen.
　　　　c.　He adduces two reasons why they do.
　　　　d.　Er führt zwei Gründe (dafür) an, warum das so ist.

(2)　　a.　Es gab immer noch die Möglichkeit, die Flasche zu öffnen.
　　　　　'We still had the possible option of opening the bottle.'
　　　　b.　Es gab mehrere Möglichkeiten (dafür), (/ um) die Flasche zu öffnen.
　　　　　'There were several possible ways to open the bottle.'

In both cases, the instantiation and the argument relation, this relation is typically realized by a preposition.

References: • Borik, O. & M. T. Espinal (2020). Numberless kinds: Evidence from Russian. *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* 19, 231-260. • Sæbø, K. (2019). The explicative genitive and close apposition. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 37(3). 997-1027. • Selkirk, E. (1977). Some remarks on noun phrase structure. In: P. Culicover, T. Wasow & A. Akmajian (eds.), *Formal syntax*, 285–325. New York: Academic Press.