

On the role of PERSON in the ϕ -feature labelling of DP coordinations

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Most of the current literature agrees that the label of a conjoined DP is determined both by semantic and morpho-syntactic features (Farkas and Zec 1995, King and Dalrymple 2004, Heycock and Zamparelli 2005, a.o.), even though strictly morpho-syntactic (e.g., Marušič et al. 2015) and semantic approaches have been proposed as well (e.g., Lasersohn 2013). Less is known about the formal connection between the morpho-syntactic and semantic features. This paper provides novel empirical evidence that the connection at the level of the CI interface is established via PERSON, modeled as [\pm PARTICIPANT] (Nevins 2007). The formal connection between syntactic PERSON and semantic PARTICIPANT allows for a direct CI association of a PERSON feature with an index. The data comes from DP coordinations with numeral constructions in Slavic, primarily Czech.

The puzzle: Farkas and Zec (1995) observe that the conjoined DP ϕ -features (as identified by predicate agreement) are identical to ϕ -features of a pronoun anaphoric to the coordination. The pattern shows that there is a connection between a pronominal ϕ -feature resolution and ϕ -feature resolution on coordinated DPs. Czech (but also Polish and Slovenian) numeral constructions with 5 and above (5&up) are a striking exception. Even though their coordination yields obligatory singular agreement (failed agree; Preminger 2009), the corresponding anaphor is in plural, (1).

- (1) Pět chlapců a pět dívek se sešlo/ *sešli v klubu. *Ono/ oni...
five boys.GEN and five girls.GEN REFL met.N.SG/ *M.PL in club it.SG.N/ they.M.PL
'Five boys and five girls got together in the club.' DEFAULT AGREE

5&UPS are also the only DPs that in coordination optionally trigger closest conjunct agreement (CCA), (2). If, however, the other conjunct is 1st or 2nd person, the agreement must be plural, (3).

- (2) Děvčata a pět chlapců šli/ šlo/ *šla do ZOO.
girls.N.PL and five boys gone.M.PL/ N.SG/ N.PL to ZOO
'Girls and five boys went to the ZOO.'
- (3) Já/ty a pět chlapců jsme/jste šli/ *šlo do ZOO.
I/you and five.NOM boys.GEN.PL AUX.1/2.PL gone.M.PL/ gone.N.SG to ZOO
'I/you and five boys went to the ZOO.' CCA OR PLURAL PLURAL

The proposal: I argue that the key to the pattern lies in the observation (i) that 5&UPS are not labeled for ϕ -features (they trigger only a default agreement; their anaphoric pronouns must agree in semantic features, never in N.SG; they cannot licence secondary predicates; data omitted for reasons of space), and (ii) plural agreement (based on boolean conjunction) arises only if the other conjunct provides a PERSON feature (obligatory for [+PERSON], optional for [-PERSON]).

I follow Farkas and Zec (1995) and others in that features of a coordinated DP are computed as a combination of semantic and morpho-syntactic features. The primary semantic feature is PERSON, modeled as [\pm PARTICIPANT] (Nevins 2007), which allows for a direct CI association with an index (obligatory for [+PERSON]/[+PARTICIPANT]). Semantic coordination is based on indices associated with individual conjuncts (matching indices \Rightarrow SG; non-matching \Rightarrow PL). Semantic plurality is obligatory if at least one of the conjuncts is [+PERSON]. 5&UPS lack a PERSON feature but if they combine with [+PERSON], agreement is still PL because the [+PERSON] conjunct provides an index, and there is no matching index on the 5&UP conjunct, (3). If the coordination consists solely of 5&UPS, there is no PERSON feature to compute semantic agreement. In addition, since 5&UPS are numberless, the system cannot calculate the number from morpho-syntactic features either, and the only plausible agreement is post-syntactic agreement with the closest conjunct (Bhatt and Walkow 2013), (1). If one conjunct is [-PERSON], the system can either track the PERSON feature (\Rightarrow PL; syntactic agree), or morpho-syntactic features (\Rightarrow CCA; post-syntactic), (2).