



snippets

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4.

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The realization of features in asymmetric agreement in DPs

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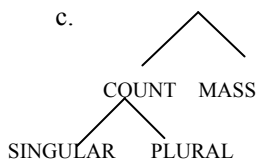
Bonet et al. (in press) devise a system of agreement in DPs that makes two basic predictions: (A) when agreement shows a prenominal-postnominal asymmetry, the prenominal elements are the ones that don't show agreement; (B) non-agreeing elements can be realized either as bare roots or as words inflected for default values. (A) is the result of split agreement, i.e. syntactic agreement between the head and postnominal elements, and morphological agreement at PF that affects, when active, all the elements in the DP. This predicts three typological possibilities: overall agreement, no agreement, and asymmetric agreement, which is predicted to be only postnominal as observed in (1)-(4). (B) results from the interaction of constraints controlling deletion of morphemes and non-matching agreement features. (1)-(3) illustrate the realization of non-agreeing elements as bare roots; the only case presented that shows realization as words inflected for default values is (4).

- | | | | | | |
|--------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|---|
| (1) a. | bon- | professional-s | b.professional-s | bon-s | <i>NE Central Catalan</i> |
| | good- | professional-M.PL | professional-M.PL | good-M.PL | |
| (2) a. | algun(*-o) | pisó | b.pis-o | algun-o | <i>Spanish</i> |
| | some- | apartment-M.SG | apartment-M.SG | some-M.SG | |
| (3) a. | nessun(*-o) | libro | b.nessun-o | | <i>Italian</i> |
| | no | book-M.SG | nobody-M.SG' | | |
| (4) | much-o | agu-a | frí-a | | <i>Spanish (colloquial, some varieties)</i> |
| | much-M.SG | water-F.SG | cold-F.SG | | |

□ In fact, however, (4) is not a real case. This is because, as argued in the paper, there is actually prenominal agreement for masc. sg. caused by an anomalous gender change in a small class of nouns. We could conclude then that there are no cases of split agreement with lack of agreement expressed through words inflected for default values. But Asturian furnishes a clear case. It is also a clearer case of asymmetric agreement, because it is not restricted by other grammatical factors, as in Catalan, or to some specific lexical items, as in Italian and Spanish.

In several Asturian varieties (Arias Cabal 1999, Fernández-Ordóñez 2007) there is a count-mass distinction, count being further subclassified for number (5c). Most adjectives show the inflective paradigm exemplified in (5a). Nouns are inherently masculine or feminine; most masculine nouns (5b) show the count-mass distinction, with count also subclassified for number (feminine nouns and some masculines only show an overt singular-plural distinction; but when singulars are interpreted as mass, they trigger the same kind of agreement).

- (5) a. blanc-u blanc-a blanc-os blanqu-es blanc-o ‘white’
 M.SG F.SG M.PL F.PL MASS
- b. pil-u pel-os pel-o ‘hair’
 M.SG M.PL MASS



There is mass agreement with postnominal elements, but prenominal elements do not show mass agreement: they appear agreeing in gender and show the default singular number.

- (6) a. guap-u fig-u madur-u ‘(individual) nice ripe fig’
 nice-M.SG fig-M.SG ripe-M.SG
- b. guap-os fig-os madur-os ‘(set of) nice ripe figs’
 nice-M.PL fig-M.PL ripe-M.PL
- c. guap-u fig-o madur-o ‘nice ripe fig (mass)’
 nice-M.SG fig-M.MASS ripe-MASS
- d. *guap-o fig-o madur-o
 nice-MASS fig-M.MASS ripe-MASS

These data give real support to the claim that absence of agreement in asymmetric cases can be realized via default feature values; they are also important because they are a clear instance of asymmetric agreement not conditioned by lexical factors.

References

- Arias Cabal, Á. (1999) *El morfema de ‘neutro de materia’ en asturiano*. Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.
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