

snippets

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Contents

1. Paul Marty. *A note on non-distributive belief ascriptions.*
2. Gesoel Mendes and Marta Ruda. *First conjunct agreement in Polish: Evidence for a mono-clausal analysis.*

First conjunct agreement in Polish: Evidence for a mono-clausal analysis

Gesoel Mendes · University of Maryland

Marta Ruda · Jagiellonian University in Kraków

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In languages such as Polish a verb agreeing with a post-verbal subject &P can reflect either the features of the first conjunct (first conjunct agreement (FCA)) or the resolved features of the &P (full agreement); see (1) from Citko (2004:91).

- (1) Do pokoju weszła/ weszli młoda kobieta i chłopiec.
to room entered-F.SG entered-M.PL young woman and boy
'Into the room walked a young woman and boy.'

A question broadly discussed in the literature is whether FCA arises as a result of agreement with the first conjunct of an NP & NP coordination (mono-clausal analysis) or whether this pattern results from clausal coordination coupled with ellipsis (bi-clausal analysis), as in (2), which can be taken to involve, for example, VP ellipsis with the verb and the adjunct inside the ellipsis site and the subject outside it (see, a.o., Aoun, Benmamoun, and Sportiche 1994, 1999; Bošković 2009, 2010; Citko 2004; Doron 2000; Johannessen 1996; Marušič, Nevins, and Badecker 2010; Munn 1993, 1999 for various types of analyses).

- (2) [&P [IP Do pokoju weszła młoda kobieta] i [IP ~~<VP do pokoju wszedł>~~ chłopiec]].
to room entered-F.SG young woman and to room entered-M.SG boy

Here we would like to suggest two environments which can be employed to distinguish between phrasal and clausal coordination in the relevant set of languages: (i) verb-echo answers to polar (yes/no) questions (see Holmberg 2016) and (ii) polarity reversal responses.

(3) *Verb-echo answer*

- a. [A:] Czy tam na plaży leżała Maria *(i) Jan?
if there on beach lay-F.SG Maria and Jan
'Did Maria and Jan lay there on the beach?'
- b. [B:] leżała/ leżeli/ *leżał.
lay-F.SG lay-M.PL lay-M.SG
'Yes, they did.'

(4) *Polarity reversal*

- a. [A:] Tam na plaży nie leżała Maria *(i) Jan.
there on beach not lay-F.SG Maria and Jan
'Maria and Jan did not lie there on the beach.'

- b. [B:] leżała/ leżeli/ *leżał.
 lay-F.SG lay-M.PL lay-M.SG
 ‘Yes, they did.’

As the plural response pattern (resolved agreement) has a potential alternative derivation based on *pro_{they}* in the subject position rather than a coordinate phrase, for present purposes what is important are the echo responses that show FCA, where coordination is definitely implicated.

If the FCA responses in (3b) and (4b) were derived from a bi-clausal structure, it would be difficult to explain the absence of the coordinator, obligatorily overt in FCA environments in Polish (3a) and (4a), without further stipulation. Including the coordinator in the ellipsis site under the bi-clausal analysis would either require non-constituent deletion, if the verb doesn’t move out of the first clausal conjunct (see (5) for a possible derivation along this line), or would imply a Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC) violation, if it does (see (6)).

- (5) (\otimes non-constituent deletion)
 [IP leżała < tam na plaży t_{leżała} Maria > $\boxed{+}$ [IP tam na plaży leżał Jan]].
 lay-F.SG there on beach Maria and there on beach lay-M.SG Jan
- (6) (\otimes CSC violation)
 leżała < [IP tam na plaży t_{leżała} Maria > $\boxed{+}$ [IP tam na plaży leżał Jan]].
 lay-F.SG there on beach Maria and there on beach lay-M.SG Jan

Notice that appealing to rescue by ellipsis (Lasnik 2001, though see Barros et al. 2014) to salvage the derivation from the CSC violation in (6) creates another problem. Namely, it is unclear what would prevent the verb in the second clausal conjunct from being the one moving out of the ellipsis site, which yields an unacceptable result:

- (7) *leżał < [IP tam na plaży leżała Maria > $\boxed{+}$ [IP tam na plaży t_{leżał} Jan]].
 lay-M.SG there on beach lay-F.SG Maria and there on beach Jan

On the other hand, the mono-clausal approach can straightforwardly deliver the proper verb-echo and polarity reversal responses:

- (8) leżała < [IP tam na plaży t_{leżała} [NP Maria $\boxed{+}$ Jan]] >.
 lay-F.SG there on beach Maria and Jan

In (8) coordination does not affect the placement of the verb, and the coordinator stays inside the ellipsis site, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of the bi-clausal analysis.

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Gesoel Mendes
gmendes@umd.edu
 3416D Marie Mount Hall
 7814 Regents Dr.
 College Park, MD 20742
 USA

Marta Ruda
marta.ruda@uj.edu.pl
 Instytut Filologii Angielskiej
 Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego
 al. Mickiewicza 9a, 31-120 Kraków
 Poland