

Person and Number Agreement with Exclusive Disjunction in German

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Why disjunction agreement?

- How phi features interact?
- Smash them into each other, i.e. by looking at constructions where two or more features need to fit in one slot:
 - (1) Multi-valuation:
 - a. John is glad that **Mary**, and Bill is proud that **Sue have/has** been to China.
 - b. Yatabe (2003); Kluck (2009); Grosz (2009, 2015); Belk & Neeleman (2018); Shen (2018, 2019)
 - (2) Conjunction agreement:
 - a. A book **and** two notebooks **are** on the table.
 - b. There **is** a book **and** two notebooks on the table.
 - c. Corbett (1991); Aoun et al. (1994); Sabin (1997); Aoun et al. (1999); Munn (1999); Lorimor (2007); Bošković (2009); Marušić et al. (2015); Willer-Gold et al. (2016); Willer Gold et al. (2017); Murphy & Puškar (2018)
 - (3) Disjunction agreement:
 - a. Two books **or** a notebook **was/were** left on the bus.
 - b. You **or** I ***am/*are** going to win.
 - c. Morgan (1972, 1984); Randall (2002); Peterson (2004); Morgan & Green (2005); Haskell & MacDonald (2005); Lorimor (2007); Garley (2008); van Koppen & Cremers (2008); Flouriaki & Kazana (2009); Koeneman (2010); Kazana (2011); Ivlieva (2013); Keung (2017); Keung & Staub (2018); Foppoloa & Staub (2020)

Why agreement with *exclusive* disjunction?

- We know fairly a lot about conjunction agreement.
(4) Two books and a notebook *were*/**was* left on the bus.
- In a language, disjunction usually allows agreement patterns observed in conjunction
(5) Two books or a notebook *were/was* left on the bus.
- The overlap could result from the overlap between the conjunction interpretation and the inclusive disjunction.
(6) *John or Mary are tall enough.* is true even when *John and Mary* are both tall enough.
- Is the plural under disjunction made possible by the inclusive conjunction?

Why person and number in German?

- German is not as impoverished in agreement paradigms as English and not as complex as Slavic/Romance languages.
- There is idiosyncrasy in German conjunction agreement. Will disjunction agreement demonstrate that as well?
- Do person and number interact? If yes, in what ways?
- This study was done when I was working in Germany.

Strategy 1: Resolved agreement

	SG	PL
1	bin	sind
2	bist	seid
3	ist	sind

Table 1: German copula paradigm

- (7) a. Ich und du sind eingeladen.
1SG and 2SG be.1/3PL invited
- b. Ich und mein Freund sind eingeladen.
1SG and my friend be.1/3PL invited
- c. Du und dein Freund seid/sind eingeladen.
2SG and your friend be.2PL/be.3PL invited

- We can see that German conjunction agreement follow the resolution rules:

(8) Number resolution rules

- a. [SG] and [SG] = [PL]
- b. [PL] and [PL] = [PL]
- c. [SG] and [PL] = [PL]
- d. [PL] and [SG] = [PL]

(9) Person resolution rules

- a. [1] and [2] = [1]
- b. [1] and [3] = [1]
- c. [2] and [3] = [2/3]
(see Driemel 2018 for an account)
- d. partial hierarchy: $1 > 2 \geq 3$

- I will label agreement following these resolution rules as RES.
- Disjunction agreement has also been reported to allow RES.

Strategy 2: Closest Conjunct Agreement

Another common pattern found in disjunction agreement across languages is Closest Conjunct Agreement (CCA) as in (10).

- (10) DP1 or DP2 T_{DP2}
Harry's parents or his wife is coming. (Morgan 1972: 28)

What about exclusive disjunction? Survey 1

- Task: list all the acceptable forms:
(11) Entweder DP1 oder DP2 _____ eingelagen.
either DP1 or DP2 _____ invited 'Either DP1 or DP2 is invited.'
- Survey 1 includes subjects with *matching person and number* as well as subjects with *matching person and mismatching number*; 6 participants except for 2PL 2SG (n=7)
- Forms that are not predicted by RES or CCA are in red.

	1SG 1SG	2SG 2SG	3SG 3SG	1PL 1PL	2PL 2PL	3PL 3PL
RES	n/a	seid	sind	sind	seid	sind
CCA	n/a	bist	ist	sind	seid	sind
Results	n/a	bist*6	sind*5	sind*6	seid*6	sind*6
		seid*2	ist*4			
		sind*2				
	1SG 1PL	1PL 1SG	2SG 2PL	2PL 2SG (7)	3SG 3PL	3PL 3SG
RES	sind	sind	seid	seid	sind	sind
CCA	sind	bin	seid	bist	sind	ist
Results	sind*6	sind*4	seid*6	seid*7	sind*6	sind*5
		bin*2	sind*1	bist*4		ist*2
		ist*1	ist*1	sind*1		

- Predicted forms from both RES and CCA are attested in disjunction agreement.

What about disjunction agreement? Survey 2

- Survey 2 looks at subjects with *matching number and mismatching person* as well as *mismatching number and person*.
- same task, n = 12 (except for 3PL 2PL: n = 13)

	1SG 2SG	1SG 3SG	2SG 1SG	2SG 3SG	3SG 1SG	3SG 2SG
RES	sind	sind	sind	sind/seid	sind	sind/seid
CCA	bist	ist	bin	ist	bin	bist
Results	sind*10	sind*9	sind*8	sind*6	sind*9	bist*6
	bist*6	ist*6	bin*4	ist*6	bin*4	seid*4
			N/A*2	seid*2	N/A*1	sind*4
			bist*1		ist*1	
	1PL 2PL	1PL 3PL	2PL 1PL	2PL 3PL	3PL 1PL	3PL 2PL
RES	sind	sind	sind	sind/seid	sind	sind/seid
CCA	seid	sind	sind	sind	sind	seid
Results	seid *11	sind*12	sind*10	seid*7	sind*12	seid*12
	sind*4		seid*1	sind*7		bin*1
			N/A*1			

Table 2: Number mismatch

- Again, both RES and CCA are attested.
- RES under disjunction works the same way as conjunction including the language specific idiosyncrasy: $2+3 = 2/3$

What about disjunction agreement? Survey 2 cont.

- Table 3 shows conditions with *mismatching number and gender*. n = 12

	1SG 2PL	1SG 3PL	1PL 2SG	1PL 3SG	2SG 1PL	2SG 3PL
RES	sind	sind	sind	sind	sind	sind/seid
CCA	seid	sind	bist	ist	sind	sind
Results	seid *11	sind*12	sind*8	sind*8	sind*11	sind*10
	sind*4		bist*7	ist*7	N/A*1	seid*1
	2PL 1SG	2PL 3SG	3SG 1PL	3SG 2PL	3PL 1SG	3PL 2SG
RES	sind	sind/seid	sind	sind/seid	sind	sind/seid
CCA	bin	ist	sind	seid	bin	bist
Results	sind*6	seid*7	sind*12	seid *12	sind*12	sind*6
	bin*4	ist*6		sind*1	bin*2	seid*5
	seid*3seid*3	sind*3				bist*4
	N/A*1					

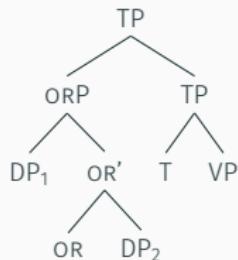
Table 3: Person and number mismatch

- RES and CCA would cover all the cells, except for one.
- Person and number features behave the same way in each sentence, either both show RES or both show CCA.

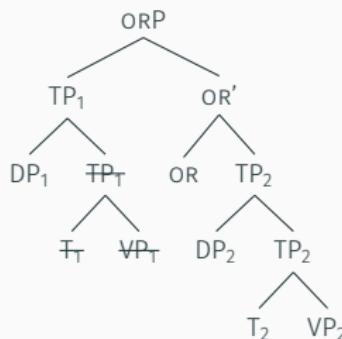
What we can learn from the results: structure(s)

- At least two possible structures have been proposed for conjunction: one where two DPs form a constituent, and one involving conjunction reduction i.e. ellipsis. Same structures can be assumed for disjunction:

(12) [DP₁ or DP₂]



(13) Disjunction reduction



- It's been argued that (12) can generate both CCA and RES while (13) can only generate CCA.
- The existence of both RES and CCA argues that either both structures are possible, or at least (12) is possible, the jury is still out on (13).
- (13) cannot be the only available structure. (see also Arsenijević et al. 2019)

What we can learn from the results: RES

Feature resolution is possible even under exclusive disjunction for all the feature combinations. The inclusive interpretation cannot be the precondition for RES.

- (14) a. Entweder ich oder du sind eingeladen.
either 1SG or 2SG be.1/3PL invited

'Either I or you are invited.' (sind * 10, n=12)

- b. Entweder du oder ich sind eingeladen.
either 2SG or 1SG be.1/3PL invited

'Either you or I are invited.' (sind * 8, n=12)

- (15) a. Entweder ich oder die Frau sind eingeladen.
either 1SG or the woman be.1/3PL invited

'Either I or the woman are invited.' (sind * 9, n=12)

- b. Entweder die Frau oder ich sind eingeladen.
either the woman or 1SG be.1/3PL invited

'Either I or the woman are invited.' (sind * 9, n=12)

Both conjunction and disjunction observe the 2+3=2/3 rule.

- (16) a. Entweder du oder die Frau sind/seid eingeladen.
either 2SG or the woman.3SG be.1/3PL/be.2PL invited

'Either you or the woman are invited.' (sind * 6, seid * 2, n=12)

- b. Entweder die Frau oder du sind/seid eingeladen.
either the woman.3SG or 2SG be.1/3PL/be.2PL invited

'Either you or the woman are invited.' (sind * 4, seid * 4, n=12)

What we can learn from the results: CCA

CCA is also possible for all the feature combinations, even without feature mismatch.

- (17) a. Entweder der Junge oder die Frau ist eingeladen.
either the boy or the woman be.3SG invited
'Either the boy or the woman is invited.' (ist * 4, n=6)
- b. Entweder ich oder du bist eingeladen.
either 1SG or 2SG be.2SG invited
'Either I or you are invited.' (bist * 6, n=12)

It's possible that the CCA under disjunction results from ellipsis.

- (18) Entweder ich ~~bin eingeladen~~ oder du bist eingeladen.

Ellipsis in general allows sloppy identity + morphological mismatch (SIMM) as in (19).
(20) shows that disjunction with CCA doesn't allow SIMM,

- (19) Frank hat sein bestes gegeben, und Mia ~~hat~~ auch ~~ihr~~ Bestes
Frank₁ have.3SG his₁.MSG best do, and Mary₂ have.3SG also her₂.FSG best
~~gegeben~~.
do
'Frank has done his best, and Mary too.' (n=2)

- (20) *Entweder Sally oder Frank hat sein bestes gegeben.
either Sally or Frank have.3SG his.MSG best do
'Either Sally or Frank did their best.' (n=2)

Ideally, we should show that **backward** ellipsis in German allows SIMM. But backward clausal ellipsis in German is hard to come by. So ellipsis is still possible for CCA with disjunction.

What we can learn from the results: RES+CCA

- The strategies that number and person use must be the same in one sentence: either both RES or both CCA. Mismatch between strategies is **not** allowed:
 - (21) a. Entweder du oder die Frau bist eingeladen.
either 2SG or the woman.3SG be.2SG invited
person RES, number CCA (bist * 1)
 - b. Entweder ich oder du seid eingeladen.
either 1SG or 2SG be.[2PL] invited
number RES, person CCA (seid * 0)
- This is compatible with the hypothesis that RES and CCA involve different structures, though that's not the only possible account.

A third option? Survey 3

Remember there were 3 participants who chose $seid_{2PL}$ for 2PL OR 1SG? I wanted to see if that's real.

14 participants from Vienna on 7 combinations.

n=14	1SG OR 2SG	2PL OR 1SG	2PL OR 1PL	1PL OR 2PL	2SG OR 3SG	3PL OR 2SG	2PL OR 3SG
RES	sind	sind	sind	sind	sind/seid	sind/seid	sind/seid
CCA	bist	bin	sind	seid	ist	bist	ist
Results	bist*11	bin*10	sind*14	seid*12	ist*9	sind*8	seid*10
	sind*9	sind*8		sind*6	seid*5	bist*7	ist*7
	bin*1	seid*2			sind*4	seid*5	sind*2
	ist*1				ist*1		

Table 4: Survey 3 (n=14)

The third option

- Table 5 combines Survey 2 and 3, bringing the n to 26.

n=26	1SG 2SG	2PL 1SG	2PL 1PL	1PL 2PL	2SG 3SG	3PL 2SG	2PL 3SG
RES	sind	sind	sind	sind	sind/seid	sind/seid	sind/seid
CCA	bist	bin	sind	seid	ist	bist	ist
Results	sind*19	bin*14	sind*24	seid*23	ist*15	sind*14	seid*17
	bist*17	sind*14	seid*1	sind*10	sind*10	bist*11	ist*13
	bin*1	seid*5	n/a*1		seid*7	seid*10	sind*5
	ist*1	n/a*1			ist*1		

Table 5: Survey 2 and 3, n=26

- seid* in 2PL OR 1SG : 5 out of 34 responses from 26 participants.
- 14.7% of the responses and 19.23% of the participants.
- Other unpredicted forms: 2.6% - 3.8% of the responses and 3.84% of the participants.
- If this is indeed a real option, what does it mean? (If you are not convinced, ignore the next four slides.)

The third option

- (22) a. Entweder *ihr_{2PL}* oder *ich_{1SG}* *sind_{1PL}* eingeladen. (RES)
b. Entweder *ihr_{2PL}* oder *ich_{1SG}* *bin_{1SG}* eingeladen. (CCA)
c. Entweder *ihr_{2PL}* oder *ich_{1SG}* *seid_{2PL}* eingeladen. (third option)
either 2PL or 1SG be.2PL invited
'Either you.pl or I are invited.'

- Ellipsis cannot generate (22c).
- Highest/first conjunct agreement (HCA) can, but makes wrong predictions:

- (23) a. Either *1SG* or *2SG* *V_{1SG}**1 invited. (n=26)
b. Either *2PL* or *1PL* *V_{2PL}**1 invited. (n=26)
c. Either *2SG* or *3SG* *V_{2SG}**1 invited. (n=26)
d. Either *1SG* or *2PL* *V_{1SG}**0 invited. (n=12)

- It seems to be agreement with the first conjunct **only when** the first conjunct is PL and the second conjunct is SG.

The third option in Slovenian

A similar pattern is found in Slovenian conjunction agreement (Marušič et al. 2015).

- When both conjuncts are PL:
 - Number: plural; gender: RES to M, HCA, or CCA.
(24) FPL and NPL $V_{PL,M/F/N}$
- When conjuncts mismatch in number: one PL one SG
 - Option 1 — number: RES to PL, gender: RES to M;
(25) FPL and NSG $V_{M,PL}$
 - Option 2 — number: RES to PL, gender goes with the PL conjunct
(26) FPL and NSG $V_{F,PL}$
 - but not — number RES to PL, gender goes with the SG conjunct
(27) *FPL and NSG $V_{N,PL}$
- gender depends on number — Consistency Principle in Slovenian:
 - $C1_{[NUM:A,GEN:X]}$ and $C2_{[NUM:B,GEN:Y]}$ $T_{[NUM:A \rightarrow GEN:X]}$
 - $C1_{[NUM:A,GEN:X]}$ and $C2_{[NUM:B,GEN:Y]}$ $T_{[NUM:B \rightarrow GEN:Y]}$

Back to the third option in German

- (28) a. Entweder *ihr_{2PL}* oder *ich_{1SG}* *sind_{1PL}* eingeladen. (RES)
b. Entweder *ihr_{2PL}* oder *ich_{1SG}* *bin_{1SG}* eingeladen. (CCA)
c. Entweder *ihr_{2PL}* oder *ich_{1SG}* *seid_{2PL}* eingeladen. (third option)
either 2PL or 1SG be.2PL invited
'Either you.pl or I are invited.'

German disjunction:

- ① number and person: RES;
- ② or: number and person: CCA;
- ③ or: number: RES or CCA to x, person goes with the DP with the x value
 - but only if there is a number mismatch: *2PL or 1PL V_{2PL}
 - Person depends on number — Consistency Principle in German:
 - $C1_{[NUM:A,PER:X]}$ and $C2_{[NUM:B,PER:Y]}$ $T_{[NUM:A \rightarrow PER:X]}$ ($A \neq B$)
 - $C1_{[NUM:A,PER:X]}$ and $C2_{[NUM:B,PER:Y]}$ $T_{[NUM:B \rightarrow PER:Y]}$ ($A \neq B$, subset of CCA)

Back to the third option in German

- Why only 2PL OR 1SG? In fact, all the combinations that can show the third option in German did:

(29) 1SG OR 1PL = 1PL (CCA)
 1SG OR 2PL = 2PL (CCA)
 1SG OR 3PL = 3PL (CCA)
 2SG OR 2PL = 2PL (CCA)
 2SG OR 1PL = 1PL (CCA)
 2SG OR 3PL = 3PL (CCA)
 3SG OR 1PL = 1PL (CCA)
 3SG OR 2PL = 2PL (CCA)
 3SG OR 3PL = 3PL (CCA)

(30) 1PL OR 1SG = 1PL (RES)
 1PL OR 2SG = 1PL (RES)
 1PL OR 3SG = 1PL (RES)
 2PL OR 2SG = 2PL (RES)
 2PL OR 1SG = 2PL (**unambiguous**)
 2PL OR 3SG = 2PL (RES)
 3PL OR 1SG = 3PL (syncretic)
 3PL OR 2SG = 3PL (RES)
 3PL OR 3SG = 3PL (RES)

Summary

What we know:

- Person and number agreement with exclusive disjunction in German allow resolved agreement following the same rules as the conjunction agreement.
 - Disjunction agreement cannot be entirely reduced to ellipsis.
 - RES is not made possible by the inclusive reading.
- Disjunction agreement additionally allow CCA, even without feature mismatch.
- Number and person agreement can be separated (number \gg person), if the two conjuncts differ in number,

What we don't know:

- Why does disjunction make CCA possible?
- Whether the third option is real (It's 5 speakers out of 26)
 - more participants, with more lexical variations.
 - other languages with less syncretism and more strict resolution rules. (Icelandic and Slovenian come to mind.)
- What makes the third option possible and how wide spread it is?
- Is Disjunction agreement part of grammar or not? How would we tell?
- How did children learn this? Or did they learn this?

For more on gender agreement in exclusive disjunction in Slovenian

Marušič, Franc Lanko and Zheng Shen. 2020. Gender Agreement with
Exclusive Disjunction in Slovenian.

Sept. 24, 2020 – 6pm UTC+9

The thirteenth conference on Syntax, Phonology, and Language Analysis
(SinFonIJA 13)

<http://www.nytud.hu/sinfonija13/index.html>

The research is partially supported by
the DFG grant *Toward a General Theory of Multi-Valuation*.

Workshop on Agreement in Multivaluation Constructions

Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

May 19-20, 2021

Invited Speakers:

Barbara Citko (University of Washington)

Paula Fenger (University of Connecticut/Harvard University)

Caroline Heycock (University of Edinburgh)

Franc Marušič (University of Nova Gorica)

Alan Munn (Michigan State University)

Jana Willer-Gold (University College London)

Now accepting abstracts.

Deadline: Nov. 15, 2020

Thank you!

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