

GENDER-FLUID COORDINATION

The puzzle: Agreement with nominal constituents that do not have inherent phi-features (conjunctions, disjunctions and similar structures) has been a topic of much research. Setting aside cases where agreement is with just one member of the coordination (closest conjunct agreement, highest conjunct agreement) and focusing on gender, prior research (Citko 2004, van Koppen and Rooryck 2008, Bošković 2009, Croitor and Giurgea 2009, Bhatt and Walkow 2013, Johnson 2014, Giurgea 2014, Begović and Aljović 2015, Marušič, Nevins and Badecker 2015, Despić 2016, Prazmowska 2016, Mitić and Arsenijević 2019, among many others) has revealed that gender resolution, as in (1), is (a) language-specific (the same values of gender on the conjuncts may yield different results in different languages, (2) vs. (3)) and (b) subject to variation (4).

- (1) Jedan dečak i jedna devojčica su došli/*došle. Serbian
one.M.SG boy and one.F.SG girl AUX.PL arrived.M.PL/F.PL
One boy and one girl arrived. Despić 2016
- (2) Kladivo in dleto sta ležali/ležala na mizi. Slovenian
hammer.N and chisel.N AUX.DU laid.M.DU/laid.N.DU on table
A hammer and a chisel were laying on the table. Marušič and Nevins 2010
- (3) Naše selo i celo jedno brdo su izgoreli/*izgorela u požaru. Serbian
our village and whole one hill AUX.PL burned.M.PL/N.PL in fire
Our village and one whole hill were burned in the fire. Despić 2016
- (4) Breza i topola su se videle/%videli iz velike daljine. Slovenian
birch.F and poplar.F AUX.PL REFL seen.F.PL/M.PL from large distance
A/the birch and a/the poplar could be seen from far away. Mitić and Arsenijević 2019

Experimental work on the subject (Croitor 2008, Croitor and Giurgea 2009, Willer-Gold et al. 2016, etc.) also suggests that resolution may be non-deterministic, pace such approaches as Despić 2016, which argue for resolution towards a language-specific default.

I will examine gender agreement with coordinated singulars in several languages (Polish, SerBo-Croatian, Slovenian, Romanian and Albanian) arguing that a single two-step algorithm can be used to account for the observed patterns, with cross-linguistic variation attributed to the interpretability of gender features and individual variation linked primarily to semantic factors. Most importantly, I will argue that gender resolution is achieved on the basis of the denotation of the coordinated NP rather than by a feature percolation algorithm of any kind.

Polish and the relevance of the comitative: In Polish, the usual three genders in the singular (FMN) are resolved to two in the plural: the virile ([+ human], [+ masculine]) and non-virile (the residue), I will first show that gender resolution in the coordinate structure cannot be due to some coordination-specific algorithm: indeed, the Polish comitative construction, where a plural individual is constructed by using the comitative preposition (5), also requires gender resolution. It seems obvious that the internal structure of such a plural comitative is different from that of coordination and therefore any algorithm based on usual agreement mechanisms would not extend from the former to the latter.

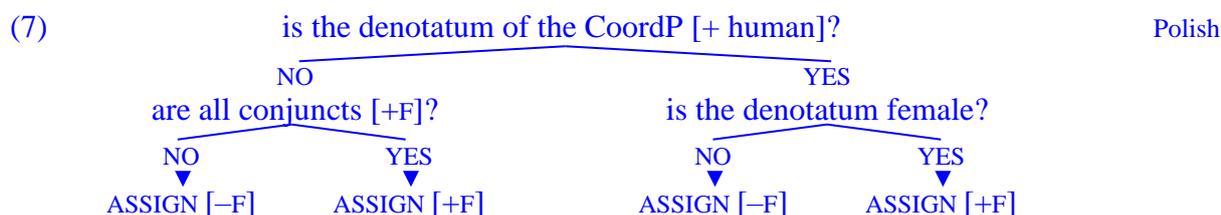
- (5) a. Matka z ojcem wrócili. Trawinski 2005
mother.F with father.M.INS came back.V.PL
The mother and the father came back.
- b. Ewa z Marią poszły na spacer. Dyla 1988
Eve.NOM. with Maria.INS went.NV.PL for walk
Eve and Mary went for a walk.

Description: The feature [human] is essential for Polish gender resolution, but only when the features [feminine] and [neuter] cannot be applied to both conjuncts. If they can, as in (5b),

then Vocabulary Insertion rules neutralize the difference between [feminine] and [neuter]. If not, the feature [human] (or more precisely, [sentient]) may be assigned to the coordinate structure. This happens on purely semantic grounds, and so (6) may be regarded as involving a sentient or a non-sentient subject.

- (6) Bratowa i tort byli/były już w drodze. Zieniukowa 1979
 sister-in-law.F and cake.M were.V/NV already on way
The sister-in-law and the cake were already on the way.

Two options may be envisaged as the formal algorithm for this intuition: the interpretability of features assigned to the agreeing element (along the lines discussed above) or semantically based feature-assignment to the coordinate structure. Adopting the latter approach for reasons to be detailed in the next section, I propose for Polish the algorithm in (7) and the VI rules in (8). Note that no specification for neuter is needed.



(8) **Polish gender realization in the plural**

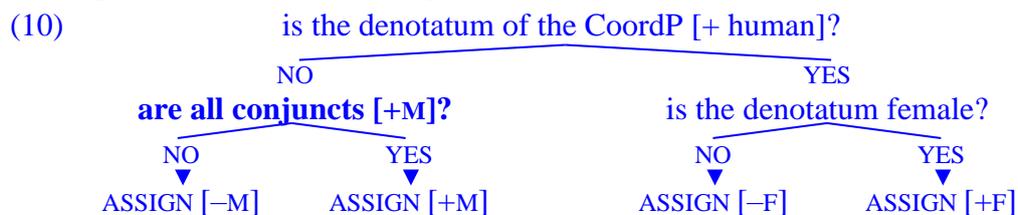
- a. virile ending \Leftrightarrow [+HUMAN, -F]
 b. non-virile ending otherwise

SerBo-Croatian and the neutralization of the neuter: Despite the existence of the plural neuter in SBC, coordination of two neuter NPs does not trigger neuter agreement (3); in fact, masculine plural is triggered by any combination of genders, but F+F (Despić 2016). Had we opted for the interpretational approach, these facts would be impossible to explain, but as we didn't, the algorithm in (7) can be also used for SerBo-Croatian in combination with the VI rules in (9). Once again neuter is not assigned in coordination, but in genuine plural neuters (9b), being more specific, bleeds (9c).

(9) **SerBo-Croatian gender realization in the plural:**

- a. feminine ending \Leftrightarrow [+F]
 b. neuter ending \Leftrightarrow [-M;-F]
 c. masculine ending otherwise

Romanian (and Albanian): Romanian is known (Bazell 1937ff., Hall 1965, Jakobson 1971, Mallinson 1984, Hoffman 1989, Croitor and Giurgea 2009, Giurgea 2014, among others) to have three classes of nouns: masculine, feminine and heteroclite, a.k.a. neuter or ambigeneric, with [-F] syncretism in the singular and [-M] syncretism in the plural. Romanian thus needs both gender features for its resolution rules and I will motivate both the assignment rules in (10) and the choice of the locus of variation in contrast to the minimally different Albanian, where plural neuters and the conjunction of neuters do not behave the same.



Extensions: I will argue that the feature [\pm human] reflects an empirical divide in heteroclite coordination. I will further discuss the application of this algorithm to Slovenian, where all three genders are active in the plural, and provide independent evidence for both gender sub-features, [\pm F] and [\pm M].