Laboratoire de recherche sur les asymétries d'interfaces

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Defaults, Coordination and Clausal Subjects

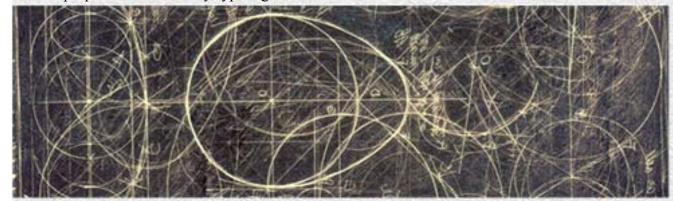
The conjunction of singular nominal subjects normally triggers plural agreement in verbal or adjectival predicates ("Karl and Marc are tall/have arrived"). This is however not the case with sentential subjects ("that IP and that IP is strange/puzzles me"), and other types of (mostly, non-nominal) subjects.

A possible approach is based on the idea that plurality can emerge from the conjunction of elements endowed with a Number feature. Sentential subjects would not have any phi-feature (Number, Gender, Person), so they could not trigger plurality. The resulting singular agreement would be the result of a "default agreement" strategy. Independent evidence for the lack of phi-features in clauses comes from their inability to license *pro* in certain conditions.

After reviewing these cases, I will address two unresolved issues:

- (i) the notion of "default" agreement is at odds with the mechanism for agreement percolation (*Agree*).
- (ii) in a well-defined class of cases, plural predicate agreement with conjoined sentences is indeed possible.

The solution to the latter problem will be based on the point of application of a type-shifting device to turn propositions into entity-type arguments.



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Roberto Zamparelli is a researcher in linguistics at CIMEC/DISCOF, University of Trento, Italy. He obtained a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Rochester, NY, and has been a Marie Curie Post-doc Fellow at the University of Edinburgh; he has taught at the universities of Bergamo and Trento, Italy. He has worked extensively on the syntax/semantics interface of noun phrases, on coordination and on kind-denoting nominals.

Selected Publications

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