

### Can agreement with the linearly closest conjunct be derived in syntax proper?

The recent literature on South Slavic conjunct agreement can be roughly divided into two camps: those trying to model the cases of agreement with linearly closest conjunct, as in the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) example in (1) (taken from Bošković 2009), within syntax (Bošković 2009, Puškar & Murphy 2015 a.o.) and those claiming this agreement is a result of a postsyntactic operation that occurs after linearization and hence is sensitive to the linear distance between two syntactic elements (among these, Bhatt & Walkow 2013, Marušič et al 2015).

- (1) a. Juče su uništena sva sela i sve varošice. (BCS)  
 yesterday are destroyed<sub>NEU.PL</sub> all village<sub>NEU.PL</sub> and all town<sub>FEM.PL</sub>  
 'All villages and all towns were destroyed yesterday.'  
 b. Sva sela i sve varošice su juče uništene.  
 all village<sub>NEU.PL</sub> and all town<sub>FEM.PL</sub> are yesterday destroyed<sub>FEM.PL</sub>

We present a strong argument against strictly syntactic theories of conjunct agreement that leverages experimental work on BCS conjunct agreement and builds on data in Aljović & Begović (2015).

*Purely syntactic theories* of Closest Conjunct Agreement (CCA) rely either on some mechanism that is able to bring the features of the hierarchically lower conjunct to the ConjP level, where they can be seen by the verbal probe (as in Puškar & Murphy 2015) or use a mechanism that makes the features of the structurally higher first conjunct invisible (as in Bošković 2009). In both cases, if any relevant features are present at the ConjP level, they have to be the first available goal the verbal probe sees. For Puškar & Murphy (2015) the verbal probe only sees the ConjP level, while for Bošković (2009), the mechanisms that ultimately result in preverbal CCA are only invoked if the ConjP does not have the features that could trigger masculine plural agreement.

Typically, there is no way to know what features, if any, sit in ConjP, as we are only able to detect them indirectly from verbal agreement. However, as Aljović & Begović (2015) point out, we can also try to peek into ConjP via agreement on a preceding adjective. Adjectives that are understood to scope over both conjuncts they precede are very common (2), but can easily be analyzed as a result of ellipsis with the adjective actually sitting inside the first conjunct as sketched in (3).

- (2) Drage gospođice i gospoda (BCS)  
 dear<sub>F.PL</sub> lady<sub>F.PL</sub> and gentleman<sub>M.PL</sub>

- (3) [<sub>ConjP</sub> [<sub>DP1</sub> dear ladies ] [ and [<sub>DP2</sub> ~~dear~~ gentlemen]]]

More revealing are cases like (4), where the adjectival phrase contains a reciprocal which in order to be interpretable needs to modify a plural noun phrase, and needs to be adjoined at the level of ConjP (and the coordination must be at the level of NP (or another phrasal level below DP)) as shown in (5):

- (4) drug na drugega ponosna oče in sin (Slovenian)  
 other on other proud<sub>M.DU</sub> father<sub>M.SG</sub> and son<sub>M.SG</sub>  
 'father and son proud of each other'

- (5) a. \* [<sub>ConjP</sub> [<sub>DP1</sub> father proud of each other ] [ and [<sub>DP2</sub> son proud of each other]]]  
 b. [<sub>DP</sub> proud of each other [ and [<sub>ConjP</sub> [<sub>NP1</sub> father ] [ and [<sub>NP2</sub> son]]]]

Similarly, when two plural nouns are conjoined, elliptical analysis does not result in ungrammatical conjuncts but it nevertheless predicts different interpretation, as (6a) and (6b) are not synonymous.

- (6) a. drug na druge ponosni očetje in sinovi (Slovenian)  
 other on other proud<sub>M.PL</sub> father<sub>M.PL</sub> and son<sub>M.PL</sub>  
 'fathers and sons proud of each other'  
 b. drug na druge ponosni očetje in drug na druge ponosni sinovi  
 other on other proud<sub>M.PL</sub> father<sub>M.PL</sub> and other on other proud<sub>M.PL</sub> son<sub>M.PL</sub>  
 'fathers proud of each other and sons proud of each other'

These cases are thus comparable to the collective predicates from Munn (1999), that show CCA is not derived from clausal conjunction via ellipsis (Aoun et al. 1994). When feminine and neuter nouns are conjoined as in (7-8), these preceding "collective" adjectives can agree with the closest noun—feminine in (7-8). The problem that syntactic theories of conjunct agreement face is related to the fact that regardless of adjectival agreement, CCA on the verb is still possible, as shown in (7-8) where two distinct probes end up with different agreement.

- (7) [Ene na drugih ležeče [žage in kladiva]] so bila umazana.  
 one on other lying<sub>F,PL</sub> saw<sub>F,PL</sub> and hammer<sub>N,PL</sub> AUX were<sub>N,PL</sub> dirty<sub>NEU</sub>  
 'On each other lying saws and hammers were dirty.'  
 (Slovenian)
- (8) [Jedne na drugima ležeče [žage i kladiva]] su bila prljava.  
 one on other lying<sub>F,PL</sub> saw<sub>F,PL</sub> and hammer<sub>N,PL</sub> AUX were<sub>N,PL</sub> dirty<sub>NEU</sub>  
 'On each other lying saws and hammers were dirty.'  
 (BCS)

Theories of syntactic conjunct agreement predict that given the structure in (5b), the entire DP should also carry feminine gender features—either because the inner ConjP carries them (as in Puškar & Murphy 2015) or else because the derivation resulted in feminine features being copied to the adjective (Bošković 2009). Regardless of the derivation, the subject's gender features should be visible to the verbal probe as well and necessarily trigger feminine gender agreement in (7-8), contrary to fact.

Theories of post-syntactic CCA do not face this problem as both adjectival and verbal agreement could look for the linearly closest goal, which is the first conjunct for the adjective and the last for the verb. This argument against syntactic theories of CCA is similar to the one presented by examples like (9) ((17) from Marušič et al. 2008), where two verbal probes on opposite sides of the subject end up realizing featurally different agreement, which is in both cases agreement with the closest conjunct. Whatever syntactic mechanism one considers, only one set of features should be visible to the verbal probes, which should both realize the same agreement.

- (9) Včeraj so bile [krave in teleta] prodana. (Slovenian)  
 yesterday aux been<sub>F,PL</sub> [cow<sub>F,PL</sub> and calf<sub>N,PL</sub>] sold<sub>N,PL</sub>  
 'Yesterday cows and calves were sold.'

The same logical argument comes from Dutch complementizer agreement, where the C agrees with only one singular conjunct, while the lower verb agrees with the whole ConjP:

- (10) Ich dink de-s [toow en Marie] kump. (Dutch)  
 I think that-2<sub>SG</sub> you<sub>SG</sub> and Marie come<sub>PL</sub>  
 'I think that you and Marie will come.'  
 (Haegeman & van Koppen 2012)

In sum, closest-conjunct agreement cannot be the result of computation purely within the ConjP and agreement Probes interfacing only with the ConjP level, as such Probes can potentially access individual conjuncts within the ConjP, in a way crucially sensitive to postsyntactically-determined linear order.

Aljović, N. & M. Begović. 2015. Morpho-Syntactic Aspects of First Conjunct Agreement. Paper presented at AAB conference Zadar, Croatia. Aoun, J., E. Benmamoun & D. Sportiche. 1994. Agreement, word order, and conjunction in some varieties of Arabic. *LI* 25:195–220. Bhatt, R. & M. Walkow. 2013. Locating agreement in grammar: An argument from agreement in conjunctions. *NLLT* 31:951–1013. Bošković, Ž. 2009. Unifying first and last conjunct agreement. *NLLT* 27:455–496. Haegeman, L. & M. Van Koppen. 2012. Complementizer agreement and the relation between C<sup>o</sup> and T<sup>o</sup>. *LI* 43.3: 441–454. Marušič, F., A. Nevins, & A. Saksida. 2007. Linear Agreement in Slovene Conjuncts. In R. Compton et al. (eds) *FASL* 15. Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publ. 210–227. Marušič, F., A. Nevins, & B. Badecker. 2015. The Grammars of Conjunction Agreement in Slovenian. *Syntax* 18.1:39–77. Munn, A. 1999. First conjunct agreement: Against a clausal analysis. *LI* 30: 643 – 683. Puškar, Z. & A. Murphy. 2015. Closest conjunct agreement is an illusion. Ms. University of Leipzig.