

Hybrid Nouns and Agreement Zones within DP

Background. Hybrid nouns simultaneously control different agreement values on different targets (e.g., British English, *This_{SG} team prepared themselves_{PL} well*). In line with Corbett’s (1979, 2006) Agreement Hierarchy, “semantic” agreement is frequently found outside the projection of the hybrid noun and rarely within it (for relevant cases, see King and Dalrymple 2004, Ouwayda 2014, Pesetsky 2014). We document a rare example of DP-internal “semantic” (number) agreement in Hebrew and explore its theoretical consequences for configurational theories of DP structure.

Data. The Hebrew noun *be’alim* ‘owner(s)’ is morphologically the plural of *ba’al*, bearing the regular M.PL suffix *-im*. Nonetheless, it is semantically neutral and may denote any combination of number and gender (in Modern and Biblical Hebrew there are a handful of similar nouns).

- (1) hu / hi / hem / hen haya/hayta/hayu ha-be’al-im šel ha-dira.
 he/she/they.M/they.F was.3.SG.M/F/PL the-owner-M.PL of the-apartment
 ‘He/She/They was/were the owner/s of the apartment’

When controlling agreement on an attributive adjective and a verb, a 3/4 pattern emerges: A plural adjective (matching the noun in number) is compatible with either a singular or a plural verb, but a plural adjective (mismatching the noun) requires a plural verb. Importantly, singular agreement forces a singular denotation.

- (2) a. ha-be’al-im ha-kodm-im maxar / maxru et ha-makom lifney šana.
 the-owner-PL the-previous-PL sold.3SG/3PL ACC the-place before year
 ‘The previous owner/owners sold the place a year ago’
- b. ha-be’al-im ha-kodem maxar / *maxru et ha-makom lifney šana.
 the-owner-PL the-previous.SG sold.3SG/*3PL ACC the-place before year
 ‘The previous owner sold the place a year ago’

Theoretical assumptions. To represent the hybrid character of *be’alim*, I adopt the dual feature ontology of Wechsler and Zlatic 2003.

- (3)
- | | |
|---|--|
| <u>CONCORD features</u>
{number, gender, case}
morphologically-rooted
mediated by modification | <u>INDEX features</u>
{number, gender, person}
semantically-rooted
mediated by coindexation |
|---|--|

Nominal categories are doubly specified for CONCORD and INDEX features, while agreement targets may be selective or not (e.g., verbs agree in INDEX, determiners display variation). Following much work on the NumP projection (Ritter 1991, 1992, 1995, Bernstein 1991, 2001, Delfitto and Schroter 1991, Valois 1991, 2006, Koopman 1999, Heycock and Zamparelli 2005), I take the locus of INDEX number to be the Num head. CONCORD number, being determined by the morphology of the stem, resides in N (parallel assumptions can be made for gender).

Within W&Z’s system, the Hebrew facts present two puzzles: (i) How can semantics override CONCORD/morphology in determining the INDEX value of *be’alim*, given that elsewhere morphology prevails (e.g., French *sentinelle* ‘sentry’ is formally feminine, and triggers uniform feminine

agreement even when denoting a male)? (ii) How can attributive adjectives, which are related to the head noun by modification and not by coindexation, exhibit INDEX agreement with *be'alim*?

Analysis. The standard merging position NumP is above the attributive adjectives (Ritter 1992, Valois 1991, 2006, Heycock and Zamparelli 2005, Cinque 2010:63), (4a). Hybrid nouns like *be'alim*, however, may project an alternative structure in which NumP merges immediately above NP, below all adjectives (4b).

- (4) a. Unmarked: [_{DP} D [_{NumP} Num [_{IND}] [**AP** [_{NP} N [_{CON}] ...]]]] → CONCORD agreement
 b. Marked: [_{DP} D [**AP** [_{NumP} Num [_{IND}] [_{NP} N [_{CON}] ...]]]] → INDEX agreement

Assuming that agreement applies as soon as it can, the adjective in (4a) will have to value its number feature against N, since Num is not yet in the structure when the adjective is introduced. This yields CONCORD agreement. In (4b), on the contrary, the adjective will have to agree with Num and not with N, due to locality, producing INDEX agreement. Similar hybrid patterns are attested in Lebanese Arabic (Ouwayda 2014) and Russian (Pesetsky 2014) and are amenable to a parallel treatment.

Option (4b) is made available when the INDEX value of a given feature is independent of its CONCORD value, a special circumstance that applies only with *be'alim*-type nouns (but not with French *sentinelle*, where they match). Verbs, a category which can inflect for [person], are typed with INDEX features, hence cannot show CONCORD agreement. The impossible pattern in (2b) cannot arise as it requires the verb to ignore the [INDEX sg] feature of the subject and agree in [CONCORD pl].

Further evidence for the configurational rendering of (3) is found in mixed agreement on stacked adjectives inside DP. Consistently and without exceptions, the lower adjective displays CONCORD agreement and the higher one INDEX agreement (left-to-right order of attributive adjectives in Hebrew reflects low-to-high hierarchy; Shlonsky 2004). Further confirming data will be presented from Chichewa, Russian, Lebanese Arabic and Finnish.

- (5) a. ha-be'alim ha-pratyi-im ha-axaron šel ha-tmuna
 the-owner the-private-PL the-last.SG of the-painting
 'The last private owner of the painting'
 b. * ha-be'alim ha-prati ha-axron-im šel ha-tmuna
 the-owner the-private.SG the-last-PL of the-painting

Theoretical implications. Notably, the analysis is *configurational* and *derivational*: INDEX features are higher than CONCORD features and introduced later. These properties allow it to capture effects that are not obvious under the declarative (HPSG) framework of Wechsler and Zlatić. Although the analysis shares some features with Ouwayda's (2014) and Pesetsky's (2014) analyses of dual agreement zones within DPs, it differs in some crucial respects, which will be highlighted in the talk.

Selected References

Corbett, G. G. 2006. *Agreement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Ouwayda**, S. 2014. *Where Number Lies: Plural Marking, Numerals and the Collective-Distributive Distinction*. PhD dissertation, USC. **Pesetsky**, D. 2014. *Russian Case Morphology and the Syntactic Categories*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. **Ritter**, E. 1992. Cross-linguistic Evidence for Number Phrase. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics* 37, 197-218. **Ritter**, E. 1991. Two Functional Categories in Noun Phrases: Evidence From Modern Hebrew. In *Syntax and Semantics* 25, ed. by 37-62. New York: Academic Press. **Wechsler**, S., and L. **Zlatić**. 2003. *The Many Faces of Agreement*. Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications.