

The Italo-Romance DP: inflection markers and their distribution

This talk aims at giving an overview over the patterns found in the Tuscan dialects *Bedizzano*, *Mulazzo*, *Filattiera* and *Colonnata* with respect to number marking inside the determiner phrase (DP) as well as at elaborating a formal appropriate analysis of these data. The overall motivation is that the different non-canonical agreement patterns of these varieties, showing thus internal morphological mismatches which are not or scarcely considered in the discussion of agreement, are of considerable empirical, typological and theoretical relevance and contribute to the understanding of grammatical interfaces in general.

With respect to plural marking inside the DP, we can distinguish at least two language types. Standard-Italian, for example, belongs to those languages where plural is marked on each element able to inflect for number (cf. It. *l-e tre ragzz-e bell-e* ‘the three beautiful girls’). For these languages, it is commonly said that the determiner and the attributive adjective agree with the head noun in number (and gender). The presence of a numeral does not impinge on plural marking / plural agreement. In contrast, the main characteristic of the other language type is that the head noun of the lexical NP is not marked for plural when combined with an element that already expresses plurality. In Basque, for example, there is an unmarked singular form and a marked plural form for nouns (cf. *etxe-a*_{def} ‘house’ vs. *etxe-ak*_{def.pl} ‘houses’), yet in combination with a numeral the noun cannot bear the definite plural marker *-ak* (cf. *hiru etxe* ‘three houses’, literally ‘three house’ vs. **hiru etxe-ak*) (cf. Ortmann 2000, 2004). Moreover, there is no plural agreement at all inside the DP, cf. *etxe gorri handi ederr-ak* ‘the red huge beautiful houses’, where the plural marker appears only once, in this specific case as a ‘phrasal suffix’ on the last element of the DP (cf. Ortmann 2000, 2004).

In my talk I want to discuss four Tuscan dialects of the region *Massa-Carrara* which present a challenge for any theory of agreement. At first glance, it seems that these dialects pattern with the Basque data, i.e. plural seems to be marked morphologically only once inside the DP. In *Filattiera*, for example, full plural agreement inside the DP is clearly ungrammatical, whereas simple plural marking on the determiner is possible (cf. **k-ja*_{f.pl} *dɔnn-ja*_{f.pl} *bɛl-ja*_{f.pl} vs. *k-ja*_{f.pl} *dɔnn-a*_f *bɛl-a*_f ‘those beautiful girls’; Manzini & Savoia 2005:619). Furthermore, when combined with a numeral, neither the noun nor the adjective are overtly marked for plural: *do brav-a*_f *dɔn-a*_f ‘two good girls’ (Manzini & Savoia 2005:619). However, these dialects still differ from Basque in many respects: (1) lack of plural agreement is restricted to feminine DPs, (2) the plural marker *-ja* is not a phrasal suffix, it rather appears, depending on the dialect, on the determiner or on a lexical category (A or N) and (3) some dialects allow also plural marking on two DP-elements at the same time (i.e. on the determiner and on the adjective) and/or plural marking in combination with a numeral. Especially the cases of multiple plural marking raise the question whether we are confronted, after all, with the Standard-Italian agreement pattern, lack of agreement then being due to some kind of postsyntactic deletion rules. In my talk, I pursue this question and analyse these non-canonical agreement patterns at the interface between syntax and morphology. I argue that these Romance varieties which apparently belong rather to the Basque type of language than to the Romance one, show syntactically speaking a standard agree relation. In difference to those Romance languages which have full number agreement inside the DP, the morphological realization of syntactic agreement is governed by postsyntactic morphological rules which lead to the avoidance of plural marking in some special cases. In this context, I also discuss whether the dialects in question have a cumulative exponent for number and gender, as it is the case for Standard-Italian, or whether they have, as Manzini & Savoia (2005) and Taraldsen (2009) assume, a separate exponent for each category.

Bibliography

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