

Multiple-Agree conspiracy: On PERSON, animacy and copular agreement¹

The empirical focus:

- Czech copular NP-cop-NP clauses with a ϕ -feature deficient pronoun (PERSON feature only) as their structural subject

The configuration of interest:

- the structurally closer – but ϕ -feature deficient – pronoun cannot value all ϕ -features on T
- \Rightarrow Multiple-Agree (Hiraiwa, 2005) between T and two Nominative NPs: the deficient pronoun and a ϕ -complete NP lower in the structure

The puzzle:

- the *grammaticality* of the structure restricted only by the features that the two NPs *have in common* (PERSON only)
- the *interpretation* of the pronoun restricted by *all* features in the Multiple-Agree chain (even if the pronoun itself lacks these features)
- caveat: the restriction on interpretation is modulated by *features on the copular verb* & arises only if the referent of the pronoun is *animate*

The structure of the argument:

- STEP I: PERSON *feature & animacy*
 - both NPs share PERSON feature (Activity Condition)
 - animacy \sim [+PERSON] = [\pm PARTICIPANT]
- STEP II: *features on the copula modulate features in the Multiple-Agree chain*
 - T may inherit additional unvalued features from other verbal functional heads (past participle)
 - the features on T restrict which NP features enter the Multiple-Agree chain
- STEP III: *features at the syntax-semantics interface*
 - the interpretation of the deficient pronoun restricted by GENDER but only if [+PERSON]
 - reason: [+PERSON] pronouns come with a presupposition that may be directly related to ϕ -feature valuation (Heim, 2008; Sudo, 2012, among others)

¹This research would have not been possible without funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Insight Grant #435-2012-1567 (PI: I. Kučerová) and Insight Grant #435-2013-1756 (PI: S. Béjar; co-investigators: I. Kučerová, A. Kahnemuyipour). Furthermore, we would like to thank Susana Béjar, Betsy Ritter and the audience at the Greenwich University Workshop on copulas across languages and the University of Ottawa workshop on “Gender, class and determination” for an insightful discussion and helpful suggestions.

- no additional ϕ -feature contribution if [–PERSON]
- reason: no presupposition associated with [–PERSON]

Theoretical consequences:

1. the representation of PERSON:
 - [+PERSON] feature not restricted to 1st/2nd person
 - 3rd person \sim [+PERSON] but only if animate
 - [+PERSON] \Rightarrow [\pm PARTICIPANT] (Nevins 2007 and literature cited there)
2. features at the syntax-semantics interface:
 - feature geometry for Agree within a phase, that is, without CI labelling, may differ from the feature geometry of features minimally searchable by CI \approx consequence of the Minimalist grammar architecture
 - \Rightarrow ϕ -features within narrow syntax \neq ϕ -features at the syntax-semantics interface

1 Basic facts about Czech NP-NP copular clauses

- NP₁ \Rightarrow NOM
- NP₂ \Rightarrow NOM or INSTR (Bartošová and Kučerová, 2015)
- copula ‘be’ overt; ϕ -feature agreement with NP₁

(1) Já jsem / *je kuchařka.
I.NOM am.1SG / is.3SG cook.NOM

 x

Different tenses \rightarrow different morphological formation and ϕ -features:

- Present and future \Rightarrow inflected main verb
 - agrees in NUMBER and PERSON
- Past \Rightarrow auxiliary ‘be’ and past participle of ‘be’
 - auxiliary: NUMBER and PERSON (‘verbal’)
 - past participle: NUMBER and GENDER (‘nominal’)

(2) a. Já budu kuchařka.
I.NOM will-be.FUT. 1SG cook.NOM.F
‘I will be a cook.’

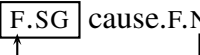
- b. Já jsem byla kuchařka.
I.NOM am.AUX. [1SG] been. [SG.F] cook.NOM.F
'I was a cook.'
- note: 3rd PERSON auxiliary is null
- (3) Marie ∅ byla kuchařka.
Mary.NOM.F AUX.3SG been.SG.F cook.NOM.F
'Marie was a cook.'
- no matching requirement on NUMBER and GENDER of NP₁ and NP₂
- (4) a. Studenti jsou střed našeho zájmu.
students. [PL] are.3PL center. [SG] of-our attention
'Students are the center of our attention.'
- b. Susana byla vítěz závodu.
Susana. [F] was.SG.F winner. [M] of-race
'Susana was the winner of the race.'

Interim summary:

- NP₁ determines agreement on the copula
- NP₁ and NP₂ do not need to match in ϕ -features

2 The puzzle

TO-NP₂ copular clauses

- TO: ϕ -feature deficient pronoun; invariably 3.N.SG
 - may refer to a linguistic antecedent of any gender and number (\sim *he, she, it, they*), but also to a proposition or a situation (\sim *it*)
 - [note: Czech TO \neq Polish TO; Polish TO = nominal copula, Czech TO = argument]
 - TO \Rightarrow NP₁ \times no agreement with TO
 - if NP₂ is NOM \Rightarrow agreement with NP₂
 - if NP₂ is INSTR \Rightarrow copula default ϕ -features attested with failed Agree (N.SG)
- (5) Petr potkal nádhernou dívku.
Petr met beautiful girl
'Peter met a beautiful girl.'
- a. To byla příčina jeho rozvodu.
TO was. [F.SG] cause.F.NOM of-his divorce
- 

- b. To bylo příčinou jeho rozvodu.
 TO was. N.SG cause.F.INSTR of-his divorce
↑ x ↓

‘It [=that P. met the girl] was the reason of his divorce.’

Recall:

- if NP₁ triggers agreement, no ϕ -feature matching requirement

- (6) a. Ta sympatická dívka byla vítěz závodu.
 that likeable girl. F.SG was.F.SG winner. M.SG of-race
↑

‘That likeable girl was the winner of the race.’

✓ F → M

- b. Ten sympatický mladík byl zdravotní sestra.
 that likeable man. M.SG was.M.SG health sister. F.SG
↑

‘That likeable man was a nurse.’

✓ M → F

- BUT: if NP₂ triggers agreement, GENDER of the antecedent of TO and the GENDER of NP₂ must match [to be revised]^{2,3}

- (7) Do cíle se přihítla sympatická dívka.
 to finish-line REFL rushed-in likeable girl. F.SG
 ‘A likeable girl rushed across the finish line.’

- a. Byla to zdravotní sestra.
 was.F.SG TO health sister. F.SG

‘She (= the likeable girl) was a nurse.’

✓ F → F

- b. #Byl to vítěz závodu.
 was.M.SG TO winner. M.SG of-race
 intended: ‘She (= the likeable girl) was the winner of the race.’
 [would have been OK as: ‘He was the winner of the race.’]

F → M

- (8) Do cíle se přihítíl sympatický mladík.
 to finish-line REFL rushed-in likeable man. M.SG
 ‘A likeable man rushed across the finish line.’

- a. Byl to vítěz závodu.
 was.M.SG TO winner. M.SG of-race
 ‘He (= the likeable man) was the winner of the race.’

✓ M → M

- b. #Byla to zdravotní sestra.
 was.F.SG TO health sister. F.SG
 intended: ‘He (= the likeable man) was a nurse.’
 [would have been OK as: ‘She was a nurse.’]

M → F

²The same facts hold of NUMBER as well but we leave them aside as they bring non-trivial complications to our analysis. The basic issue is that while with GENDER we can reliably distinguish between GENDER valued within narrow syntax and from CI, we don’t know how to do it with NUMBER in these constructions.

³The word order here differs from previous examples. The reason is that TO morpho-phonologically alternates between a weak and a strong pronoun, and while the strong version surfaces in spec,TP, the weak version is phonologically adjoined to a second position. The weak pronoun is more natural in these contexts; with the strong version and the NP₁ > copula order, the agreement facts would not be altered but some of the examples would sound less natural.

(9) **Descriptive generalization (v. 1)**

- (i) If the copula agrees with NP₁, the GENDER of NP₁ and the GENDER of NP₂ do not need to match.
- (ii) If the copula agrees with NP₂, the GENDER of the antecedent of TO must match the GENDER of NP₂.

- the matching restriction goes away if the copula agrees only in PERSON and NUMBER, but not in GENDER → present and future tense

(10) Do cíle se přičítala sympatická dívka.
 to finish-line REFL rushed-in likeable girl.F.SG
 ‘A likeable girl rushed across the finish line.’

- a. **Je/Bude** to zdravotní sestra.
is/will-be.3SG TO health sister.F.SG
 ‘She (= the likeable girl) is/will be a nurse.’ ✓ F → F
- b. **Je/Bude** to vítěz závodu.
is/will-be.3SG TO winner.M.SG of-race
 ‘She (= the likeable girl) is/will be the winner of the race.’ ✓ F → M

(11) Do cíle se přičítal sympatický mladík.
 to finish-line REFL rushed-in likeable man.M.SG
 ‘A likeable man rushed across the finish line.’

- a. **Je/Bude** to vítěz závodu.
is/will-be.3SG TO winner.M.SG of-race
 ‘He (= the likeable man) is/will be the winner of the race.’ ✓ M → M
- b. **Je/Bude** to zdravotní sestra.
is/will-be.3SG TO health sister.F.SG
 ‘He (= the likeable man) is/will be a nurse.’ ✓ M → F

(12) **Descriptive generalization (v. 2)**

- (i) If the copula agrees with NP₁, the GENDER of NP₁ and the GENDER of NP₂ do not need to match.
- (ii) If the copula **agrees in GENDER** with NP₂, the GENDER of the antecedent of TO must match the GENDER of NP₂.

- if the antecedent of TO is inanimate, a mismatch in GENDER between the NP₂ and the antecedent of TO does not matter, irrespective of the tense

(13) Anna napsala román /knížku /lepolero.
 Anna wrote novel.M /book.F /pop-up book.N
 ‘Anna has written a novel/a book/a pop-up book.’

- a. Byl to propadák.
 was.M.SG TO flop.M
 ‘It [=the novel/the book/the pop-up book] was a total flop.’ ✓ M/F/N → M
- b. Byla to slátanina.
 was.F.SG TO patchwork.F
 ‘It [=the novel/the book/the pop-up book] was a patchwork.’ ✓ M/F/N → F

- c. Bylo to sci-fi.
was.N.SG TO sci-fi. N
'It [=the novel/the book/the pop-up book] was a sci-fi.' ✓ M/F/N → N

(14) **Descriptive generalization (final version)**

- (i) If the copula agrees with NP₁, the GENDER of NP₁ and the GENDER of NP₂ do not need to match.
(ii) If the copula agrees in GENDER with NP₂, the GENDER of **the animate antecedent** of TO must match the GENDER of NP₂.

3 Analysis

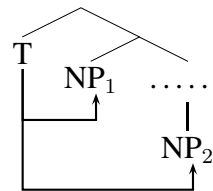
Three components:

- Multiple-Agree configuration
- animacy modelled as [+PERSON]
- CI labelling at the syntax-semantics interface: [+PERSON] gives rise to presuppositions linked to GENDER

3.1 The rise of feature matching: Multiple Agree

Question: Why is there feature interaction between the deficient pronoun and the other NP at all?

- since the T's closest probe is a structurally deficient pronoun, T needs to value at least some of its unvalued features elsewhere: NP₂
- ⇒ Multiple-Agree configuration (Hiraiwa, 2005):



Assumptions:

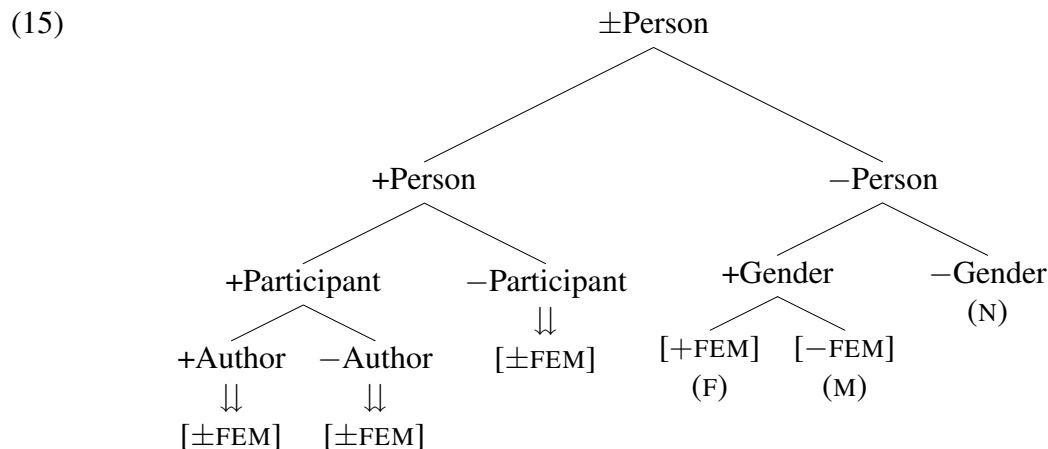
- Agree analysis of ϕ -feature agreement (Chomsky, 2000, inter alia)
- only NOM a source of ϕ -feature valuation⁴

⁴Where morphological NOM results from mapping onto a DP without any additional case layer (Rezac, 2008; Richards, 2008; Pesetsky, 2013; Kučerová, to appear). Which is to say, NOM is the only NP that may be minimally searched for D. Note that even though the agreement seems to be sensitive to the morphological mapping of case, this is a side-effect of the underlying syntactic structure.

3.2 The effect of animacy: Feature geometry for PERSON

Question: Why does animacy play a role?

- the effect of animacy formally corresponds to $[\pm\text{PERSON}]$ feature
- since T probes for PERSON, animacy makes a difference in valuation
- inanimate 3rd person NPs $\Rightarrow [-\text{PERSON}]$
- 1st/2nd and animate 3rd person NPs $\Rightarrow [+PERSON]$ (formally, $[\pm\text{PARTICIPANT}]$)⁵
- if a DP has a $[+PERSON]$ feature, that is $[\pm\text{PARTICIPANT}]$, GENDER-features may be free-riders on this PERSON feature⁶



3.3 The effect of verbal morphology: features on T

Question: Why does verbal morphology matter?

- T determines what features enter the Multiple-Agree chain
- T agrees with other functional verbal heads that may bring in additional unvalued features
- different verbal morphology \sim different features T probes for

Technically (see the appendix for details):

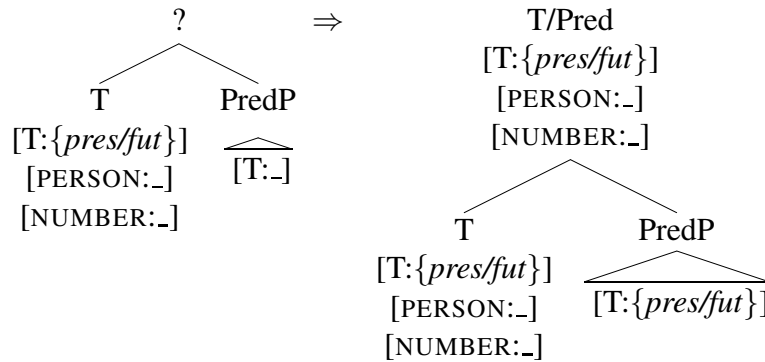
- as part of Merge/c-selection, T agrees with Pred (Adger, 2003; Roberts, 2010; Wurmbrand, 2012)
- T inherits ϕ -features from Pred in the process

⁵Ormazabal and Romero (1998, 2007); Adger and Harbour (2007); Nevins (2007); Trommer (2008); Lochbihler (2012); Ritter (2014); Ritter and Wiltschko (2014); Welch (2014); Lochbihler and Oxford (2015)

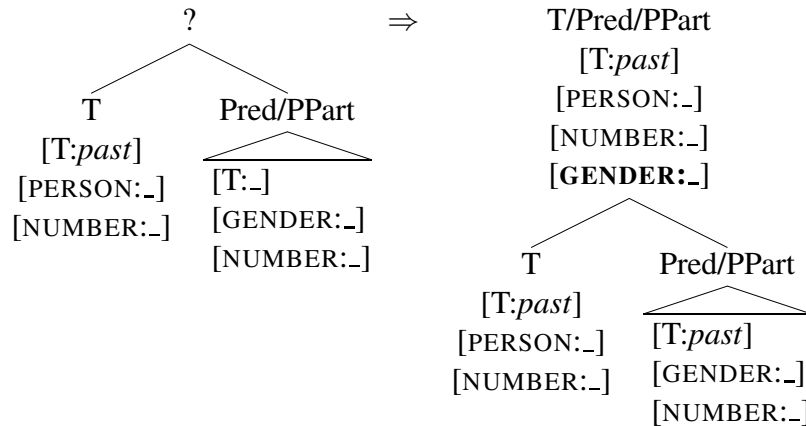
⁶The intuition here is that PARTICIPANT related GENDER feature corresponds to semantic gender. Formally, this gender information is accessed via a referential index associated with D. See Kučerová (2015) for a technical implementation.

- the Pred-formation of past participles more complex
- if Pred = participle feature bundle (Pred/PPart) \Rightarrow T inherits unvalued GENDER

(16) *T merges with a main-verb Pred (Present & Future tense):*



(17) *T merges with a past participle Pred (Past tense):*

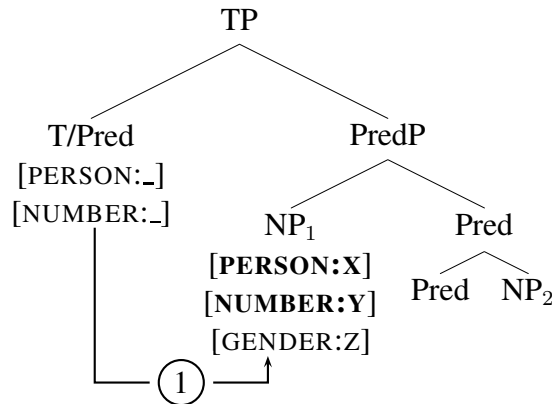


3.4 How it works

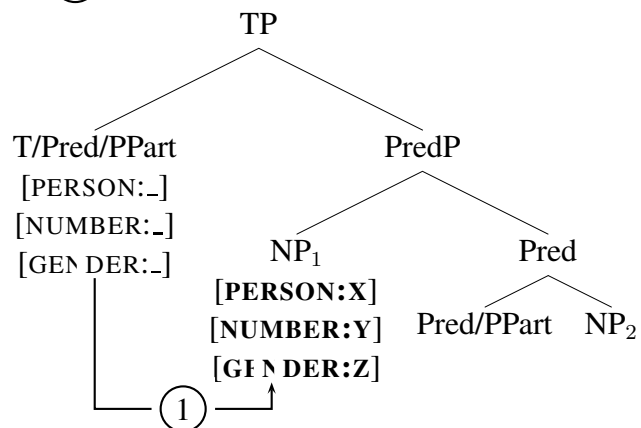
Case I: simple chain: T agrees with NP₁

- if copula = main verb, the T-Pred bundle probes only for PERSON/NUMBER
- if copula = (aux) + participle, the T-Pred bundle probes for PERSON/NUMBER/GENDER
- if NP₁ ϕ -feature complete, T-Pred probes NP₁ \Rightarrow complete matching & valuation; feature deactivation \rightarrow link ① [features that contribute to valuation are in bold]

- (18) *Agreement with NP₁:*
 a. *Main verb only:*



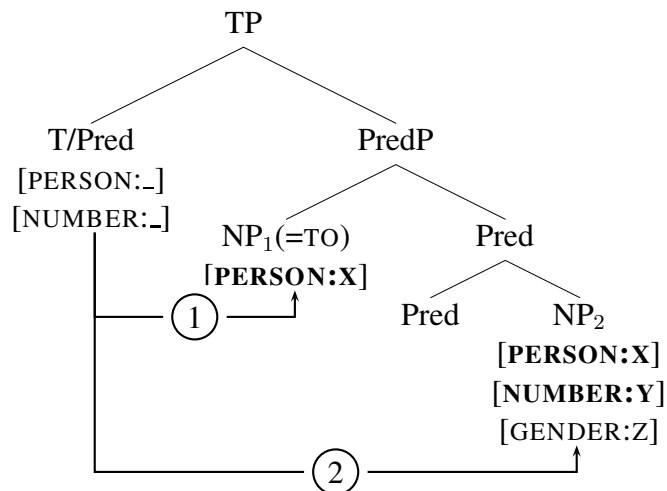
- b. *(AUX +) past participle:*



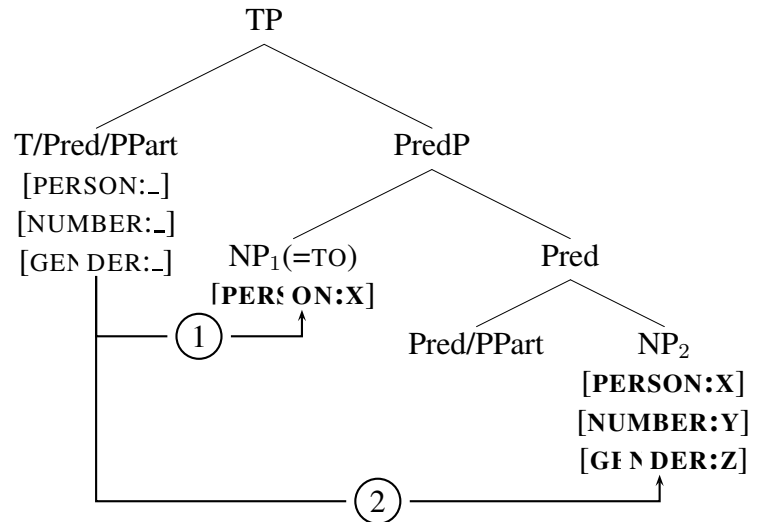
Case II: Multiple Agree chain: T agrees with NP₁ & NP₂

- if NP₁ ϕ -feature deficient (TO):
 - T-Pred probes NP₁ \implies matching and valuation for PERSON only: ①
 - T-Pred probes NP₂ \implies matching for PERSON, matching & valuation for GENDER and NUMBER: ②

- (19) *Agreement with NP₁ (= TO) & NP₂:*
 a. *Main verb only:*



b. (AUX +) *past participle*:



3.5 Predictions

- Multiple-Agree chain matching and valuation (Hiraiwa, 2005) successful only if no feature clash
- if NP₁ is the only goal \implies no ϕ -feature matching requirement
- if both NP₁ and NP₂ are the goal, then
 - if T-Pred probes for PERSON/NUMBER \implies match in PERSON only (recall, the deficient pronoun has no other valued features)
 - if T-Pred probes for PERSON/NUMBER/GENDER \implies match in PERSON

Borne out:

- match in PERSON both for animate and inanimate necessary

(20) To je střed našeho zájmu.
 TO is center.INAM.M.SG of-our attention
 OK: 'It is the center of our attention.'
 #He/she is the center of our attention.'

- note that if there was no representation of [-PERSON], the pattern in (20) would remain unexplained

Not accounted for!:

- if both NP₁ and NP₂ are the goal, then
 - if T-Pred probes for PERSON/NUMBER \implies match in PERSON/NUMBER
 - if T-Pred probes for PERSON/NUMBER/GENDER \implies match in PERSON/NUMBER/GENDER
 - [note: in our analysis we put NUMBER aside]

- (21) Je to vítěz závodu.
is.3SG TO winner.M.SG of-race
'He/she is the winner of the race.'
- (22) Byl to vítěz závodu.
was.M.SG TO winner.M.SG of-race
OK: 'He was the winner of the race.'
'She/it was the winner of the race.'

3.6 The missing piece: labelling/minimal search by CI

Question:

How come GENDER plays a role in the interpretation of the deficient pronoun & how come it does only for animate NPs?

The problem:

- there is only one instantiation of valued GENDER feature in the Multiple-Agree chain
- no valued GENDER feature on TO \implies no feature clash can arise

The solution:

- effect of the syntax-semantics interface (CI labelling)
- only [+PERSON] associated with presuppositions that link PERSON to GENDER (Heim, 2008; Sudo, 2012)
- no presupposition with [-PERSON]

Technically:

- the locus of the potential issue is the past participle because of its unvalued GENDER feature
- even though TO has deficient ϕ -features, once it enters Multiple-Agree link, it becomes part of an Agree chain with a valued GENDER feature
- the GENDER feature cannot crash the derivation (technically there is no clash) but it restricts the potential antecedent of TO at the syntax-semantics interface
- How? pronominal GENDER features associated with [+PERSON] come with a presuppositional requirement on their antecedent (Heim, 2008; Sudo, 2012, among others)
- if the Multiple-Agree chain associated with TO will be valued for GENDER, TO will inherit the presupposition associated with the GENDER feature in the Agree chain
- more precisely, the interpretive component will interpret TO as being M or F, which is to say, the referential index corresponding to the [+PERSON] feature will be interpretable only if the antecedent is going to be a male or a female person, respectively:

- (23) (modeled after Heim and Kratzer 1998; Sudo 2012)
- a. $\llbracket [\text{GEN:f}_i] \rrbracket^{w,g} = \llbracket [\text{she}_i] \rrbracket^{w,g} = \llbracket [\text{herself}_i] \rrbracket^{w,g} = g(i)$ if $g(i)$ is female in w , undefined otherwise
- b. $\llbracket [\text{GEN:m}_i] \rrbracket^{w,g} = \llbracket [\text{he}_i] \rrbracket^{w,g} = \llbracket [\text{himself}_i] \rrbracket^{w,g} = g(i)$ if $g(i)$ is a male person in w , undefined otherwise

- thus, if NP₂ is M, TO presupposes existence of a male person as its antecedent
- if NP₂ is F, TO presupposes existence of a female person as its antecedent
- consequently, if the antecedent is male but the GENDER feature is valued as F, the derivation will yield presupposition failure
- analogically, if the antecedent is female but the GENDER feature is valued as M, the derivation will yield presupposition failure as well

Is this really a presupposition issue, instead of a feature valuation clash?

- note that the structures are grammatical; only their interpretations are not felicitous in the given context
- furthermore, the presupposition survives in presupposition projection environments, such as embedding under sentential negation:

- (24) To nebyl vítěz závodu.
TO not-was.M.SG winner.M.SG of-race
'He/#she was not the winner of the race.'

Prediction

- since inanimate NPs are [-PERSON], there is no presupposition, hence no effect of GENDER, irrespective of tense

- (25) a. Je to propadák.
is.3.SG TO flop.M
'It [=the book.F/the pop-up book.N/the novel.M] is a total flop.'
- b. Byl to propadák.
was.M.SG TO flop.M
'It [=the book.F/the pop-up book.N/the novel.M] was a total flop.'

4 Conclusions and open questions

- [+PERSON] feature not restricted to 1/2 person
- 3rd person ~ [+PERSON] but only if animate
- [+PERSON] \Rightarrow [\pm PARTICIPANT] (Nevins 2007 and literature cited there)
- why a connection to PARTICIPANT?

- [+PERSON] as part of labelling/minimal search by CI \Rightarrow discourse/interpretive effects
- feature geometry for Agree within a phase, that is, without CI labelling, may differ from the feature geometry of features minimally searchable by CI \approx consequence of the Minimalist grammar architecture
- \Rightarrow features within narrow syntax \neq features at the syntax-semantics interface
- Lochbihler (2012); Welch (2014); Lochbihler and Oxford (2015): evidence for [+PERSON] possibly without labelling \rightarrow cross-linguistic variation in the representation of PERSON?

A Further predictions: Expletive pronouns

- any GENDER valued element as part of the Multiple-Agree chain with TO should introduce a restriction on the GENDER of NP₂ and the antecedent of TO – even in the absence of the past participle
- this prediction is borne out
- subject expletive pronoun at Spec, TP \Rightarrow matches the ϕ -features of T (Rezac, 2004) & valued for GENDER
- if NP₁ is ϕ -feature-complete, these ϕ -features value the ϕ -features of the expletive via T:

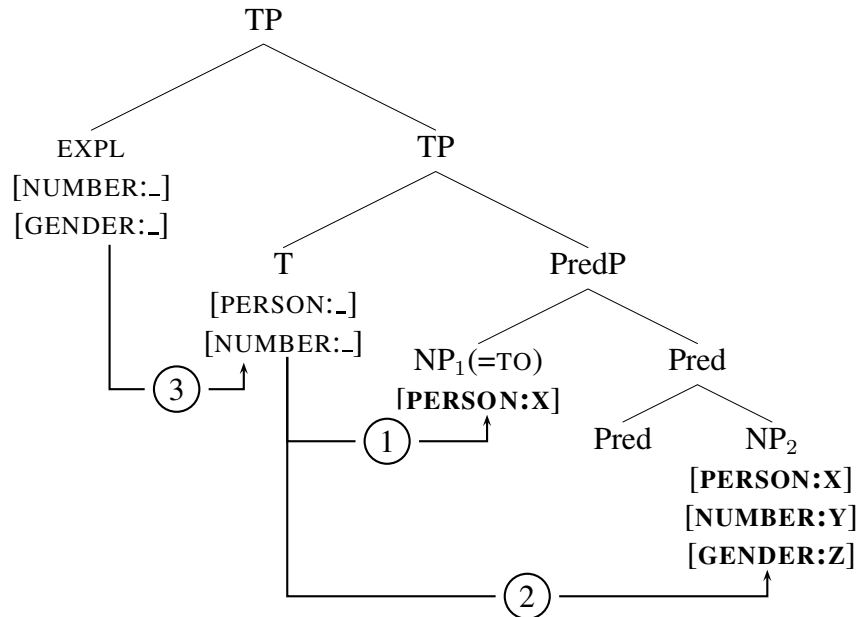
(26) Ona je Susana vítěz závodu.
EXPL.F is.3SG Susana.F winner.M of-race
'Susana was the winner of the race.'

- if NP₁ is ϕ -feature deficient (TO), the expletive gets its ϕ -features valued from NP₂:

(27) a. On je to vítěz závodu.
EXPL.M is.3SG TO winner.M of-race
'He is the winner of the race.'

b. *Ona je to vítěz závodu.
EXPL.F is.3SG TO winner.M of-race
intended: 'She is the winner of the race.'

(28) *Subject expletive in TO-NP₂ copular clauses:*



- as predicted the GENDER of NP₂ and the GENDER of the antecedent of TO must match
- but only if TO is [+PERSON] :

(29) On je to vítěz závodu.
 EXPL. [M] is.3SG TO winner. [M] of-race
 ‘He/*She is the winner of the race.’ [+PERSON]: M → ✓M / #F

- if TO is [-PERSON], there is no GENDER-matching requirement

(30) On je to propadák.
 EXPL.M.SG is TO flop.M
 ‘It [=the book.F/pop-up book.N/novel.M] is a flop.’ [-PERSON]: M → ✓M / F / N

B T meets Past Participle: feature sharing in a complex-head configuration

- the core of the proposed analysis: T gets unvalued GENDER feature from the participle head
- why should it be the case?

Reason I:

- T selects for the participle head (or a complex of Pred and the participle head⁷)
- if Merge/c-selection modelled as Agree, T inevitably agrees with Pred (Adger, 2003)

⁷The participle formation is more complex. See, for example, Veselovská (1998); Veselovská (2003) for Czech.

- related proposals: Roberts (2010); Wurmbrand (2012)
- Agree as feature sharing? labelling (Chomsky, 2013)
- \Rightarrow head-head Agree as an exocentric configuration: both heads contribute unvalued features

Reason II:

- If there is no overt AUX, Pred moves to T (Veselovská 2003; see also Roberts 2010)
- feature sharing

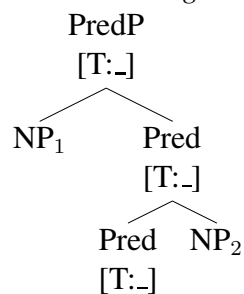
Reverse Agree?

- Wurmbrand (2012): agreement properties of past participles are determined only after T is merged (or wherever the relevant Tense/Aspect auxiliary resides)
- for Wurmbrand, there must be Reversed Agree; since v-V/Pred is part of the same Agree chain, matching and valuation of NUMBER and GENDER automatically takes place without the participle probing the NOM goal
- in our analysis what appears to be Reverse Agree is a side-effect of the existing link between T and v-V/Pred
- note however, that we preserve the basic insight of Wurmbrand's analysis: there is no feature valuation before T is merged

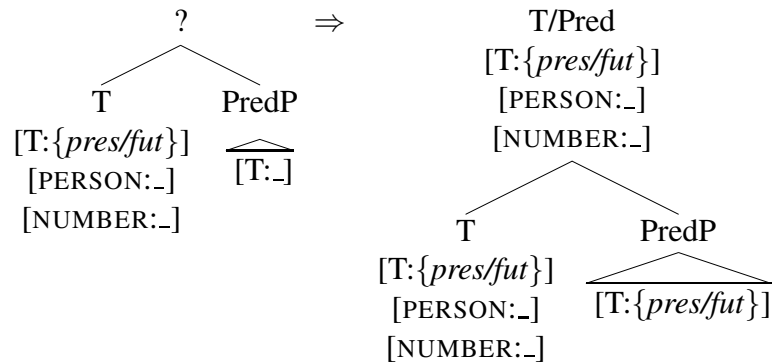
Technically:

(31) *T merges with a main-verb Pred:*

a. *PredP labelling:*

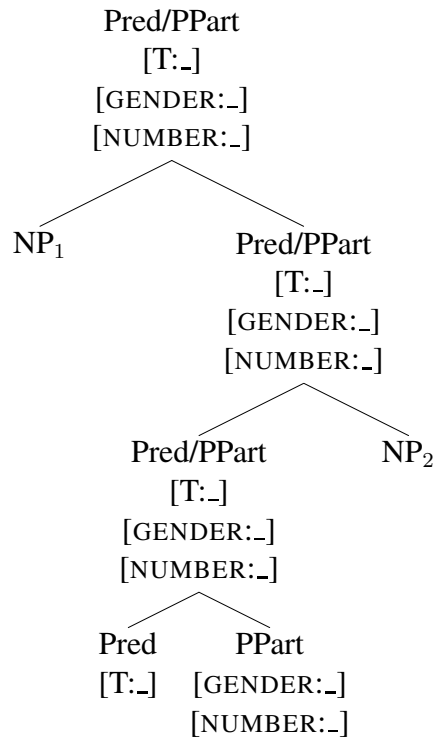


b. *Merge of T with Present/Future Pred: feature sharing and valuation*

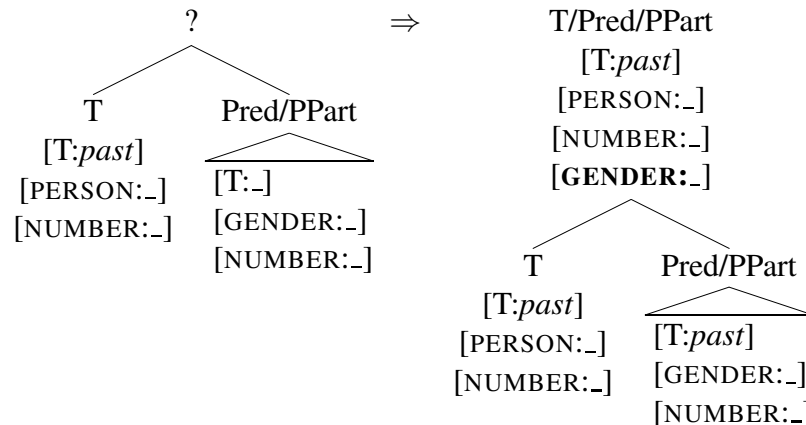


(32) *T merges with a past participle Pred:*

a. *PredP labelling:*



b. *Merge of T with Pred-PastPart: feature sharing and valuation*



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