Agreement alternations and Defective Probes in Dutch

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The phenomenon

Position Dependent Agreement (PDA) in dialects of Dutch:

(1) a. Jij leef-t
    youSG live-AGR
    Standard Dutch

b. Leef-∅ jij
    live-AGR youSG

(2) a. Gellie leef-t
    youPL live-AGR
    Mol Dutch

b. leev-∅ gellie
    live-AGR youPL

(3) a. Wiej leew-t
    we live-AGR
    Losser Dutch

- SAND data leven (‘to live’), 267 dialects (Barbiers et al. 2006)
- 19 robust patterns of PDA

Background

Dutch clause structure:

- In SV structures the verb is in I; in VS structures the verb is in C
  (Zwart 1997)
- Both I and C are ϕ-Probes (Carstens 2003, Van Koppen 2005, i.a.)

The make-up of ϕ-features:

- ϕ-features are binary (Halle 1997, Nevins 2007, i.a.)
- ϕ-features can have a default value (Harley & Ritter 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>+ Author</th>
<th>− Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>− Group</td>
<td>+ Author</td>
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<td>− Group</td>
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Table 1: Inventory of ϕ-features

Proposal

- PDA is the result of a Defective Probe in C: one or more ϕ-features are missing
- Principle of Default Morphological Interpretation: if a Probe is Defective, use the default value of the missing feature(s) for Morphological Insertion (MI)

Defective Probe: [u Participant] [u Group]

- Accounts for 4 patterns of PDA
- [Participant] and [Group] Agree; [+ Author] is used for MI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SV</th>
<th>VS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.P.SG</td>
<td>∅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.P.SG</td>
<td>-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.P.SG</td>
<td>-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.P.PL</td>
<td>-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.P.PL</td>
<td>-t</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.P.PL</td>
<td>-t</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Affix inventory:

[+ Participant] [+ Author] [− Group] ⇔ ∅
[− Participant] [− Author] [− Group] ⇔ -t
Elsewhere ⇔ -n

Towards a ϕ-feature geometry

- Given 3 features, there are 6 possible Defective Probes; only 3 are attested:
  - [Participant] [Group] not attested
  - [Author] [Group] not attested
  - [Participant] [Author] not attested
  - [Group] not attested
- Distribution can be captured with a ϕ-feature geometry (Harley & Ritter 2002), where Probe Defectivity is a way to reduce complexity (Harley 1994)

Conclusions

- Novel analysis of PDA in Dutch, taking into account dialect data
  - PDA results of the interplay between a Defective Probe and the affix inventory
- Novel argument for a ϕ-feature geometry, based on the distribution of Defective Probes
- The study of micro-variation corroborates and adds to results of typological studies

References


