

# Disjunction Agreement patterns in a constraint-based framework

Maria Flouraki (SOAS) and Despina Kazana (University of Essex)

Disjunction is no longer viewed as the mirror image of Conjunction. Taking this as a starting point, we are going to explore two issues connected to Disjunction: The first issue deals with the agreement of the verb phrase when the coordinate phrase consists of disjuncts, which are of the same or mixed number and person. The second issue refers to the semantics of the disjunct *or*.

The agreement patterns between disjunctive NPs and verbs is shown in data from Modern Greek (MG), where the verb form, that is inflected for person and number, is not consistent in terms of these features when it is found in a disjunction environment.

In (1a), the disjuncts are singular while the number resolution on the verb is plural. This is not the case in (1b) and (1c), where quantifiers are introduced and influence the number resolution on the verb which in this case is singular.

- (1) a. To agori i to koritsi ine  
the.SG.NEUT boy.SG.NEUT or the.SG.NEUT girl.SG.NEUT be.PL  
kourasmena apo to diavasma.  
tired.PL.NEUT from the studying  
'The boy or the girl are tired from studying.'
- b. Kanena agori i koritsi de tha pari meros sto  
no.SG.NEUT boy.SG.NEUT or girl.SG.NEUT not will take.SG part in.the  
diagonismo.  
competition  
'No boy or girl will take part in the competition.'
- c. Kathe agori i koritsi pano apo 10 hronon ehi dikeoma  
every boy.SG.NEUT or girl.SG.NEUT over from 10 years have.SG right  
simetohis ston agona.  
participation in.the race  
'Every boy or girl over 10 years old has the right of participation in the race.'

The analysis available for these types of constructions involves preference strategies, which have to do with whether the disjuncts are in plural number in which case the PL(ural) WINS strategy is employed or whether the disjunct closer to the verb is singular or plural in which case the PROX(imity) strategy is employed (Peterson 1986, Eggert 2002).

The introduction, however, of the quantifiers in (1b) and (1c) seems to play an important role as well in the choice of agreement. The quantifiers force a distributive reading on the disjuncts, which leads to singular agreement on the verb. This is not the case in (1a) where there is a collective reading and the number resolution on the verb is plural.

Hence, the aim of this analysis is to see what are the interrelations between the disjuncts and the verb and how this interrelation influences the semantics of *or* and the agreement patterns. In order to be able to interpret these interrelations we follow Eggert(2002) who supports that *or* is not the dual for *and*. It is rather a subset function (a function from sets to subsets), which either selects one of the disjuncts or both of them.

For the formalisation of the analysis Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG)(Dalrymple, 2001) and Glue Semantics (Dalrymple, 1999) will be employed, where we will try to provide a preliminary representation of the semantics of disjunction.