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Person–Number Interaction: An Underspecification Approach to Fula

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1. Introduction

(1) Person Feature System

a. Privative (Harley and Ritter 2002)

[speaker], [hearer], [participant]

b. Partially Privative (Harbour 2006)

[±speaker], [hearer], [±participant]

c. Binary

[±speaker], [±hearer], [±participant]

(2) Person Systems with the Inclusive/Exclusive Distinction

	a. Privative	b. Partially Privative	c. Binary
1 (+3)	[speaker]	[+speaker]	[+speaker, –hearer]
1+2 (+3)	[speaker, hearer]	[+speaker, hearer]	[+speaker, +hearer]
2 (+3)	[hearer]	[–speaker, hearer]	[–speaker, +hearer]
3	[]	[–speaker]	[–speaker, –hearer]

(3) Semantic Interpretation of Person Features

The positive value (plus or presence) is interpreted as containment of the relevant participant.

=> straightforward person–number interaction in semantics (Harbour 2011)

2. Fula Subject Markers

(4) Fula relative past active ‘washed’ (Arnott 1970, p. 191)

sg	1	lootu-mi	pl	1	excl	min-looti
					incl	lootu-dɛn
	2	lootu-daa		2		lootu-dɔn
	3	’o-looti		3		ʃe-looti

(5) ’o-’yamet-e kò shoodu-mi (Arnott 1970, p. 319)

he-will.ask-you what bought-I

‘He will ask you what I bought.’

(6) Fula relative future active ‘will wash’ (Arnott 1970, p. 192)

sg	1	lootay-mi	pl	1	excl	min-lootata
					incl	lootet-en
	2	lootat-aa		2		lootot-on
	3	'o-lootata		3		6e-lootata

—> relative tenses forming a natural class

—> individual specification of position not desirable given that relative past and relative future pattern together

(7) Fula subjunctive active ‘wash’ (Arnott 1970, p. 192)

sg	1	mi-loota	pl	1 excl	min-loota
				incl	loot-en
	2	loot-aa		2	loot-on
	3	’o-loota		3	6e-loota

—> relevance of [(±)hearer]

—> special status of 1sg in relative tenses

(8) Fula general past active ‘got lost’ (Arnott 1970, p. 180)

sg	1	mi-majjii	pl	1 excl	min-majjii
				incl	’en-majjii
	2	’a-majjii		2	’on-majjii
	3	’o-majjii		3	6e-majjii

3. Analysis

3.1. Underspecification of the morpho–syntactic representation

Observation: Some feature values are predictable in person–number interaction.

(9) Combination of Person and Number Features

1 (+3)	[+speaker, (–hearer), +singular]	[+speaker, –hearer, –singular]
1+2 (+3)		[+speaker, +hearer, (–singular)]
2 (+3)	[(–speaker), +hearer, +singular]	[–speaker, +hearer, –singular]
3	[–speaker, –hearer, +singular]	[–speaker, –hearer, –singular]

Proposal 1: The predictable [–hearer] value is omitted in relative tenses by a post-syntactic morphological operation (impoverishment/obliteration).

(10) Subject Marker Placement in Relative Tenses and Subjunctive

The subject marker appears preverbally if it is [–hearer]. Otherwise, it appears postverbally.

(11) Underspecified Feature Representation in Relative Tenses

1 (+3)	[+speaker, +singular]	[+speaker, <u>–hearer</u> , –singular]
1+2 (+3)		[+speaker, +hearer, –singular]
2 (+3)	[–speaker, +hearer, +singular]	[–speaker, +hearer, –singular]
3	[–speaker, <u>–hearer</u> , +singular]	[–speaker, <u>–hearer</u> , –singular]

3.2. Morphological preposing of the [–hearer] subject marker

Proposal 2: Preposing of the [–hearer] subject marker takes place as an instance of Local Dislocation after the deletion of the predictable [–hearer] value.

- (12) 'o-'anndaa ko miin 'anndu-mi (Arnott 1970, p. 144)
he-know.neg what I know-I
'He doesn't know what I know.'

—> the inflected verb not raised to the CP domain

- (13) a. $[V * [T * \Phi]] \Rightarrow$
b. $[[V \oplus T] * \Phi] \Rightarrow$
c. $\Phi \oplus [V \oplus T]$

Assumption: Local Dislocation turns V+T into an impenetrable unit (Embick & Noyer 2002).

3.3. Dialectal data

— Kaceccereere dialect (McIntosh 1984)

(14) a. Ko mi-'anndi wondon.

What I-know is

'It's what I know.'

b. Ko 'anndu-mi wondon.

What know-I is

'It's what I know.'

—> preverbal placement of the subject marker possible for 1st singular in relative tenses

4. Conclusion

- evidence for the person feature system
- evidence for Local Dislocation
- syncretism vs. other morphological processes
 - ⇒ mixed placement not common (Cysouw 2003, 11), but free from a noise like accidental homophony

References

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