

On prominence scale interactions in agreement

Doreen Georgi (Universität Potsdam)

I provide an argument for the use of weights à la Harmonic Grammar (HG) in morphosyntax. It is based on multidimensional scale effects in agreement where several prominence scales (e.g. the person and the number scale) interact in determining (i) the agreement controller or (ii) the order of agreement affixes. I present examples for (i) and (ii) in which the individual *scales are ranked*, i.e. scale S_1 outranks scale(s) S_2 ($S_1 \succ S_2$) in case of conflicting preferences. Such interactions are unexpected under the widely held assumption that person and number probe separately. Furthermore, the data seem to require the reverse scale ranking ($S_2 \succ S_1$) in certain contexts. An implementation of (reverse) scale rankings in Optimality Theory (OT) leads to a ranking paradox; possible solutions require (a) context-sensitive constraints for particular scenarios or local conjunction. Neither of them derives the exceptions; local conjunction undermines the strict dominance property of OT and introduces a complex type of constraints. I show that the apparent exceptions fall out as *cumulative effects*, known from phonology, once the individual scales (and their members) are weighted according to their prominence, and scale interactions are modeled by adding the weights of individual scales. The agreement / ordering rules can refer to the harmony score resulting from the added weights. As a result, the rules are simple and without exception. There is no need for reversing scale rankings, context-sensitive rules or concepts like local conjunction to capture the facts.