

Polish politeness markers as a window into person-feature valuation

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents novel evidence for Polish nominals being phases. The core of the argument comes from the interaction between the size of a nominal domain and the corresponding person-feature valuation. While an *nP*-size nominal structure only exhibits feature valuation within the narrow-syntax module, the *DP*-size nominal structure exhibits interface feature interactions. Since interface interactions can only arise during spell-out, the corresponding nominal domain, i.e., *DP*, must be a phase and *D* must be a phase head that triggers spell-out. The empirical focus of this paper is on a syntactic variation in the domain of politeness markers in Polish (*pan.M/ pani.F*).

KEYWORDS phases · politeness markers · feature valuation · variable agreement · Polish

1 POLISH NOMINAL POLITENESS MARKERS

The politeness marker *pan.M/ pani.F*, i.e., the Polish equivalent of the English ‘Mr/ Sir/ gentleman’ and ‘Ms/ Madam/ lady,’ has a surprising syntactic distribution.¹ The inflectional properties of this item point to *pan.M/ pani.F* being a nominal. The item inflects for number, gender and case as other Polish nominals. In this guise, *pan.M/ pani.F* can be used as a regular head noun, i.e., as the head of a nominal argument, as in (1). In this example, the *pani.F* head noun is modified by a demonstrative, and the extended nominal projection can function as an antecedent of a referential pronoun.

- (1) Nie znam tej pani_i, ale wiem, że ona_i tu nie pracuje.
 not know this lady but know that she here not work.3.SG
 ‘I do not know this lady but I know she does not work here.’

However, the item can function as a nominal modifier as well. As seen in (2), it can modify nouns of profession, (2), and proper names, (3). As the example in (2) demonstrates, nominal modification use requires adjacency between *pani.F* and the head noun, and the modifier must agree in number and gender with the head noun, (4).² The example in (5) demonstrates that *PAN* is a modifier, not a head: when the nominal head (here, cabinet minister) and *PAN* is further modified (here by ‘inadequate’) the structurally higher modifier semantically modifies the head noun ‘cabinet minister,’ not the politeness marker (i.e., the person is inadequate as a cabinet minister; the reading where the person would be inadequate in its gentleman behavior but still adequate as a cabinet minister is not available).

¹This paper solely concentrates on syntactic properties of this item, leaving aside the corresponding politeness interpretation. For a recent in-depth account of cross-linguistic expressions of politeness see Portner et al. (2019).

²An anonymous reviewer inquired whether the adjacency requirement is empirically accurate, providing examples from Slovenian, where another adjective may intervene between the politeness marker and the head noun. As far as we know, corresponding Polish structures are limited to configurations in which the head noun and the additional adjective require an idiomatic interpretation which suggests that the head noun and the immediately adjacent modifier form a structural unit (a compound, or a reused structure in metalanguage uses). For example, *Pani wielka dyrektor* ‘*pani.F* big.F.SG director’ cannot mean a lady who is a sizeable or important director. It can only obtain a wordplay meaning, e.g., when she pretends to be an important director. From the derivational point of view, the adjacency requirement between the head noun structure and *PAN* stated in the main text stands.

- (2) Ta (*pani) nasza (*pani) wspaniała pani dyrektorka kichnęła.
this.F.SG Ms.F.SG our.F.SG Ms.F.SG wonderful.F.SG Ms.F.SG headmaster.F.SG sneezed
'This wonderful headmaster of ours/ Ms. Maria sneezed.'
- (3) Pani Maria kichnęła.
Ms. Maria sneezed
'Ms. Maria sneezed.'
- (4) *pan Maria / *pan dyrektorka
pan.M.SG Maria pan.M.SG headmaster.F.SG
- (5) nieadekwatny Pan Minister
inadequate pan.M.SG minister
'inadequate cabinet minister/secretary'

To complete the list, *pani.M/ pani.F* can also be used as a vocative, (6).

- (6) Szanowny Panie!
respected Mr.VOCAT.M.SG
'(Respected) Sir! ...'

In this regard, *pani.M/ pani.F* parallels the behavior of other honorific and title denoting nominals, such as *doktor* 'doktor' or *profesor* 'professor'. The nominals can also project their own extended nominal projection, can behave like nominal modifiers, and can function as vocatives.

One syntactic property, however, distinguishes *pan.M/ pani.F* from other title-denoting and honorific nominals, namely, *pan.M/ pani.F* as a structural subject triggers variable agreement. As we see in (7), the predicate can either 'formally' agree with the nominal, i.e., in 3rd person, or it 'pragmatically' agrees with the hearer, i.e., in 2nd person.

- (7) a. (Szanowny Panie_i), **ma** pan_i papierosa?
respected Mr.VOCAT.M.SG have.3.M.SG Mr.NOM.M.SG cigarette.ACC
- b. (Szanowny Panie_i), **masz** pan_i papierosa?
respected Mr.VOCAT.M.SG have.2.M.SG Mr.NOM.M.SG cigarette.ACC
'Hey Mister, do you have a cigarette?'

This variable agreement is otherwise unattested in similar constructions in Polish. Imposters, as in English (Collins & Postal, 2012), require grammatical agreement in person, as in (8). A proper name cannot trigger 2nd person agreement, unless it is in vocative case, as in (9), neither do title-denoting nominals, (10).³ The structure cannot be an appositive with a *pro*, as suggested by an anonymous reviewer, either because in comparable appositive constructions the pronoun must be overt, or predicates obligatorily agree with the features of the pronoun, as in (11).

- (8) Wasza służa się odważył / *odważył-em / *odważył-eś ...
your servant REFL dared.3SG dared.1SG dared.2SG
'Your humble servant dared ...'
- (9) a. Masz / *Ma Janie papierosa?
have.2SG have.3SG Jan.VOC cigarette?
'Jan, do you have a cigarette?'
- b. *Masz / Ma Jan papierosa?
have.2SG have.3SG Jan.NOM cigarette?
only as 'Does Jan have a cigarette?'
- (10) a. Masz / *Ma doktorze papierosa?
have.2SG have.3SG doctor.VOC cigarette?
'Jan, do you have a cigarette?'

³Contemporary Polish increasingly exhibits a syncretism between the nominative and the vocative form of proper names. Here we use a proper name that clearly morphologically marks the two cases.

- b. *Masz / Ma doktor papierosa?
 have.2SG have.3SG doctor.NOM cigarette?
 only as 'Does the doctor have a cigarette?'
- (11) My lingwiści jesteście pracowici.
 we linguists are.1PM hard-working
 'We linguists are hard-working.'

The complex behavior of *pan.M/ pani.F* described in this section raises the following questions: (i) Does the varied distribution correspond to one or to more than one lexical representation stored in the mental lexicon? (ii) What mechanism underlies variable predicate agreement? (iii) Why is agreement variation restricted to person valuation, and not affecting other ϕ -features (number and gender) as well?

The rest of the paper presents an argument that despite syntactic variability and rareness of the pattern within the language, the sociolinguistic extension we observe in the proper politeness uses of *pan.M/ pani.F*, i.e., the modifier and vocative uses, is strictly based on a regular nominal structure (as in (1)).⁴ That is, the pattern points to a syntactic property which is potentially available within the language but rarely utilized.⁵ In particular, we argue that the pattern provides evidence that a Polish nominal extended projection can contain a phase head, i.e., a head that triggers spell-out and gets licensed by the syntax-semantics interface (CI), and that the observed agreement variation follows from interface interactions of person features, i.e., the only ϕ -feature associated with a phase head.

2 HOW TO VALUE A PERSON FEATURE

The example in (1) demonstrates that *pan.M/ pani.F* can be the head of a regular nominal projection. This projection functions as a nominal argument and can be referred to by an anaphoric pronoun. Furthermore, such a nominal phrase can be coordinated with proper names, as in (12), and can be an answer to an individual-denoting *wh*-word, as in (13).

- (12) [Ten Pan] i Jan kichneli.
 this gentleman and Jan sneezed
 'This gentleman and Jan sneezed.'
- (13) Q: Kto kichnął?
 who sneezed?
 'Who sneezed?'
- A: Ten Pan.
 this gentleman
 'This gentleman.'

The extended noun phrase thus behaves like any other argument noun phrase in Polish. Yet, in the light of recent syntactic theorizing on whether Slavic argument noun phrases are DPs (and phases), and whether the morphological presence of a demonstrative corresponds to a D projection (see, e.g., Bošković 2005, 2009; Despić 2011), one can sensibly ask whether (a) the nominal phrase in (1) is a DP, and (b) if it is a DP, whether it is a phase.

In this paper we argue for the strong position, i.e., that these nominal phrases are indeed DPs. Our argumentation builds on the insight of Ritter (1995), Béjar & Rezac (2003), among others, that person features are merged as part of the D head. That is to say, we argue that any structure that contains a syntactically active person feature must be a DP. We take the argument a step further and

⁴We are not aware of any other lexical item in Polish that would share the complete syntactic distribution of *pan.M/ pani.F*.

⁵Next section proposes a feature valuation system that parallels that of gender valuation in the domain of nouns of profession in Italian (Kučerová, 2018). Also there, this particular type of valuation arises only in a particular sociolinguistically driven context, namely, the need to create female denoting names of professions in the past restricted to males. The crosslinguistic rarity of this type of valuation suggests that these valuation systems are dispreferred, most likely for reasons of structural economy, but compatible with the syntactic structure of DPs.

argue that if such a person feature is part of the D head and if the D head is a phase head, then the person feature may become subject to interface licensing, specifically, it becomes the locus of CI (syntax-semantics interface) licensing; the logic being that only phase heads and their features can directly interact with the interfaces. The methodology and assumptions about phase heads as the locus of CI licensing and semantic enrichment largely follow the grammar architecture proposed in Kučerová (2018, 2019), and Kučerová (2020).

Our proposal remains agnostic as to whether Slavic, and specifically Polish, has overt determiners, and whether Polish has a Determiner head in the same sense as English or Italian. We do, however, make a claim that Polish nominal expressions are phases. I.e., in our proposal, D stands for a nominal phase head.⁶ The architecture we adopt preserves the Y model and exploits the inherent assumption that spell-out is a window for interface feature interaction with syntactic structure. Specifically, we hypothesize that phase heads are inherently endowed with the ability to license features that can interact with interface operations. The presented argument thus moves from morpho-syntactic properties as the primary toolkit for identifying phasehood to syntax-semantics properties as equally reliable diagnostics for phasehood and spell-out. This methodological extension is critical because most syntactic tests used for determining phasehood utilize locality of syntactic operations and their morphological realizations, and for principled reasons cannot be used within a small domain, such as a single word or minimally modified nominal phrase.⁷

2.1 THE DERIVATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE PERSON FEATURE BEING ON D

To appreciate the derivational consequences of the phase head being the locus of the person feature, it is useful to consider a simplified step-by-step derivation for the phrase *ten pan* ‘this gentleman’. First, the root $\sqrt{\text{PAN}}$ merges with *n*. For concreteness, we assume that *n* is a bundle of unvalued number and valued gender (as in Kramer 2015), (14). In the following simplified derivations, valued features indicate the value, unvalued features are indicated by an empty box (\square).

$$(14) \quad [{}_n n_{[g: M, \text{num}: \square]} \sqrt{\text{PAN}}]$$

In the next step, a Number head, with a valued number feature, merges with *n* (Ritter, 1993; Borer, 2005):

$$(15) \quad [{}_{\text{Num}} \text{Num}_{[\text{num}: s]} [{}_n n_{[g: M, \text{num}: \square]} \sqrt{\text{PAN}}]]$$

By agree, as matching and valuation (e.g., Chomsky (2000); Béjar & Rezac (2003)), number on *n* gets valued:

$$(16) \quad [{}_{\text{Num}} \text{Num}_{[\text{num}: s]} [{}_n n_{[g: M, \text{num}: s]} \sqrt{\text{PAN}}]]$$

D gets merged as a bundle of unvalued ϕ -features plus an unvalued person feature (Ritter, 1995; Béjar & Rezac, 2003):

$$(17) \quad [{}_D D_{[\text{per}: \square, g: \square, \text{num}: \square]} [[{}_{\text{Num}} \text{Num}_{[\text{num}: s]} [{}_n n_{[g: M, \text{num}: s]} \sqrt{\text{PAN}}]]]]$$

D triggers agree with Num and *n*, and, in turn, the unvalued number and gender feature on D gets matched and valued by the valued features on Num and *n*:

$$(18) \quad [{}_D D_{[\text{per}: \square, \text{num}: s, g: M]} [[{}_{\text{Num}} \text{Num}_{[\text{num}: s]} [{}_n n_{[g: M, \text{num}: s]} \sqrt{\text{PAN}}]]]]$$

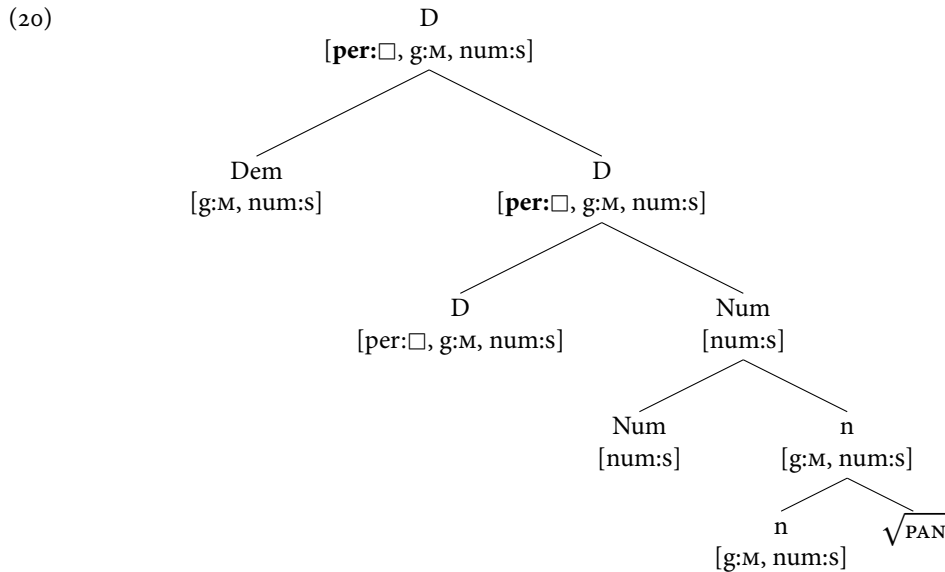
The demonstrative gets merged in the specifier of D and its unvalued gender and number features get matched and valued by the D head’s gender and number features:

$$(19) \quad [{}_D \text{Dem}_{[\text{num}: s, g: M]} [{}_D D_{[\text{per}: \square, \text{num}: s, g: M]} [[{}_{\text{Num}} \text{Num}_{[\text{num}: s]} [{}_n n_{[g: M, \text{num}: s]} \sqrt{\text{PAN}}]]]]]$$

⁶This could even be a non fixed head, as in Bošković (2014).

⁷An anonymous reviewer raised the question whether other syntactic points confirm that *pan.M/ pani.F* is a phase. As far we have been able to establish no existing test can be used to analyze the phasehood of *pan.M/ pani.F*.

The complete DP is spelled-out with a label (Chomsky 2013, 2015) that represents the DP in the next course of the derivation, e.g., as a goal of agree with T. The complete tree structure is given in (20).



Crucially, the person feature on D remains unvalued. The question is what the different modules, i.e., syntax, the syntax-morphology interface, and the syntax-semantics interface, will do with this unvalued narrow-syntax feature?

2.2 UNVALUED PERSON IN SYNTAX

We follow Béjar (2003) in that matched but unvalued syntactic features do not crash a derivation; instead, they are realized as a morphological default (cf. Preminger 2014 for a similar proposal). Consequently, a DP with an unvalued person feature can get spelled-out without any difficulties. The morphological default, i.e., 3rd person, does not manifest in the morphological realization of the DP itself, but we see its reflexes in other morphological processes, such as in predicate agreement with the nominal.⁸ Irrespective of the ongoing debate about whether subject-predicate agreement involves narrow-syntax agree, or whether it is a post-syntactic process (see, e.g., Bobaljik 2008b), the result is the same. If agreement is based on agree in narrow syntax, the unvalued person feature of the predicate will match the unvalued person feature on the nominal. The morpho-syntactic interface will realize the unvalued person feature on the predicate as 3rd person. If agreement properties of the predicate are solely based on morphological mapping of narrow-syntax features, the predicate will also be morphologically realized as the morphological default, i.e., 3rd person. Thus, irrespective of which theoretical assumption we adopt, we expect the argument usage of *pan.M/ pani* to correlate with 3rd person agreement on an agreeing predicate. This is precisely what we've seen in (7-a), repeated below as (21).

- (21) (Szanowny Panie_i), ma pan_i papierosa?
 respected Mr.VOCAT.M.SG have.3.M.SG Mr.NOM.M.SG cigarette.ACC
 ‘Hey Mister, do you have a cigarette?’

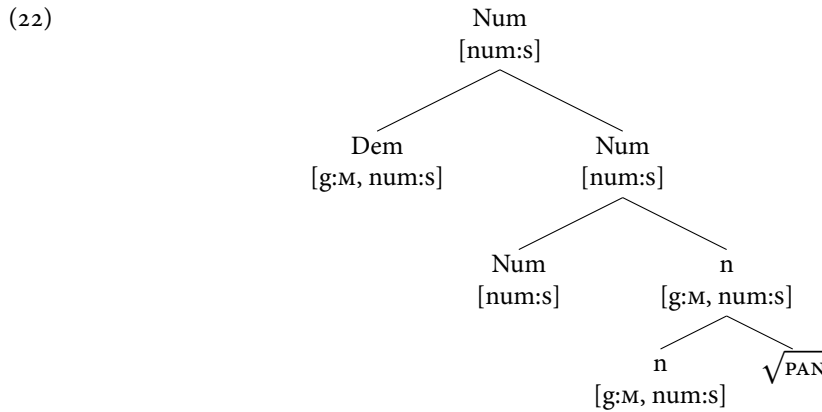
The lack of person valuation does not cause any issues at the syntax-semantics interface either. We argue that in such a case, the syntax-semantics interface treats the unvalued person feature as [–participant]. Since the person feature has not been valued, the syntax-semantics interface cannot

⁸See, e.g., Bobaljik (2008a) for an extensive argument why there is no valued 3rd person feature in morphology, and Kučerová (2019) for a discussion of person feature valuation in narrow syntax being distinct from feature valuation in morphology.

assign the interpretation directly. Instead, following the logic of Sauerland (2003) and Heim (2008), we argue that the [–participant] interpretation arises as an implicated presupposition.⁹

We have just derived all the relevant properties of the argument use of *pan.M/ pani.F*, as in (1). However, the proposed derivation is far from innocuous. We have demonstrated that all relevant modules of the grammar can trivially deal with the person feature being unvalued. However, since the demonstrated behavior critically relies on default morphological realizations and default semantic derivation, we would have obtained exactly the same result if the extended nominal projection did not contain any person feature at all. Let us quickly review this possible counterargument.

Let's say, for the sake of the argument, that the structure of interest is not a DP but it is an nP (or NumP), and the demonstrative is attached as an adjunct to nP/NumP (see, e.g., Despić 2011 for an argument in this direction). The corresponding structure of *ten pan* 'this gentleman' would be as in (22).



Such a nominal would get spelled-out without any difficulty (Polish nominal morphology does not have a designated morphological realization of the person feature). Predicate agreement could only be based on failed agree, but since failed agree is a theoretically possible option (Béjar, 2003; Preminger, 2014), the structure would still converge and the predicate would get realized as the corresponding morphological default, i.e., 3rd person. The argument extends to the CI interface, although one might have to employ some form of a type-shift mechanism to obtain an individual-like interpretation from the nP/NumP nominal projection.^{10,11}

In short, while the facts considered so far are compatible with a person feature being part of the representation of *ten pan* 'this gentleman,' i.e., this type of nominal being a DP, the argument is not conclusive. If the person feature doesn't do anything, we cannot tell whether it is unvalued or entirely missing.¹² The next subsection turns to the more interesting case, that is, to the case when we start seeing effects of the syntax-semantics interface. We argue that these CI interface effects confirm that the structure must be a DP.

2.3 VALUED PERSON AT THE CI INTERFACE

As we discussed in section 1, the argument use of *pan.M/ pani.F* comes with unexpected predicate agreement properties. While typically the person feature of an agreeing predicate is uniquely determined by the person feature of the corresponding nominal, the argument use of *pan.M/ pani.F* allows for variable agreement, as in (7), repeated below as (23).

⁹I.e., in the absence of a specified [+participant] value, the comprehender reasons that the argument DP must correspond to a [–participant].

¹⁰See, e.g., Winter (2000).

¹¹By extension, this reasoning implies that if Slavic 3rd person nominal phrases are smaller than DPs, at least 1st and 2nd person pronouns must still be DPs.

¹²See, e.g., the argumentation in Ormazabal & Romero (1998); Nevins (2007); Lochbihler & Oxford (2015) that exactly for this reason isolates effects of person in marked environments. Cf. Kučerová (2019) for an argument why narrow-syntax feature values cannot be induced solely from morphological realizations.

- (23) a. (Szanowny Panie_i), **ma** pan_i papierosa?
 respected Mr.VOCAT.M.SG have.3.M.SG Mr.NOM.M.SG cigarette.ACC
- b. (Szanowny Panie_i), **masz** pan_i papierosa?
 respected Mr.VOCAT.M.SG have.2.M.SG Mr.NOM.M.SG cigarette.ACC
 ‘Hey Mister, do you have a cigarette?’

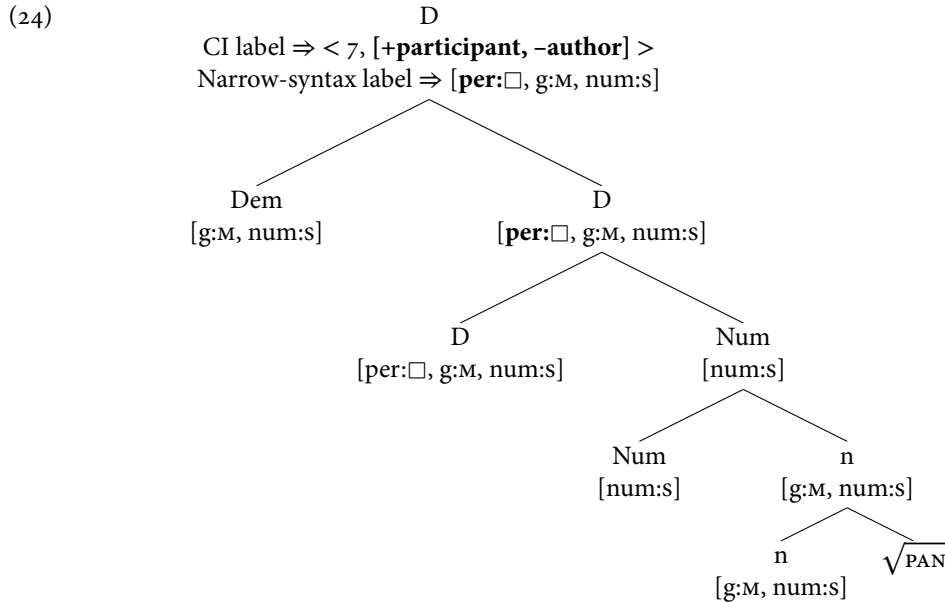
The question is what the structural underpinning of the 2nd person agreement is. We argue that the 2nd person agreement results from a semantic enrichment of the unvalued person feature at the label of the *pan.M/ pani.F* nominal. Specifically, we argue that the enrichment arises when the nominal – a DP – is transferred to the syntax-semantics interface as part of spell-out of the DP phase. The logic of the argument and the implementation closely follows the analysis of other cases of syntax-semantic mismatches that stem from the lack of feature valuation in narrow syntax attested with gender and number (for example, in Czech and Italian, as in Kučerová 2018, 2020).

We follow recent literature on person (e.g., Ritter & Wiltschko 2014; Pancheva & Zubizarreta 2018) in arguing that person features require special CI-interface licensing where person on a phase head is anchored to an event participant ([+participant]/[±speaker]). That is, if there is a person feature in the phase label, such a person feature must be licensed by the syntax-semantics interface. Kučerová (2018) argues that the licensing procedure is part of mapping the narrow-syntax representation of person onto a semantic index. Technically, a semantic index is an ordered pair of person and a random numeral that allows the semantic index to acquire an interpretation via an assignment function (and also allows tracking of individuals as participants within a discourse, as in Heim 1982). Crucially, such an index can carry presuppositional indices (for interpretable gender and number; see, e.g., Sudo 2012). As Kučerová (2018) demonstrates, these presuppositional indices can be used by the syntax-morphology interface: if the spelled-out structure lacks a valued feature, e.g., gender, and the semantic index includes a gender specification, morphology can realize this additional presuppositional specification, modulo the Maximize Presupposition principle of Heim 1991. The principle requires that if the language has a morphological realization that faithfully reflects the presuppositional content of a lexical item, such a morphological representation should be used instead of a morphological realization without the presuppositional content.¹³ We follow the logic of Kučerová (2018) and argue that the syntax-semantics interface can enrich the label of the DP phase label by the presuppositional content of a person feature as well, i.e., [±speaker].

We thus argue that when the syntax-semantics interface associates the unvalued person feature in the label, i.e., the feature projected to the label in narrow syntax, with a semantic index, this semantic index will be enriched by the presuppositional content of the person feature in the given common ground, and will map the unvalued person feature on the appropriate person value. In our case, the unvalued person feature, more precisely, the corresponding semantic index, will be enriched as [+participant, –author].¹⁴ Thus, after the DP structure, such as that in (20) gets licensed by the syntax-semantics interface as part of transfer, the label in addition to the features projected from narrow syntax will contain the corresponding semantic index as well. A simplified structure of CI-licensed *ten pan* ‘this gentleman’ is given in (24). For concreteness, we set the random numeral in the index as 7. The two distinct person representations, i.e., the unvalued person feature from narrow syntax, and the specified person value in the CI label, namely, within the corresponding semantic index, are in bold.

¹³The original formulation does not talk about morphological realizations, instead the principle regulates a choice of lexical items. Since the present paper assumes a realizational morphology, i.e., morphological input is late inserted and reflects syntactic structures (Halle & Marantz 1993 and subsequent work), the formulation in the main body of the text is updated accordingly to reflect that lexical selection cannot be separated from morphological realization.

¹⁴Alternatively, we could treat 2nd person as [+participant, +hearer]. Both versions would do equally well for our current purposes.

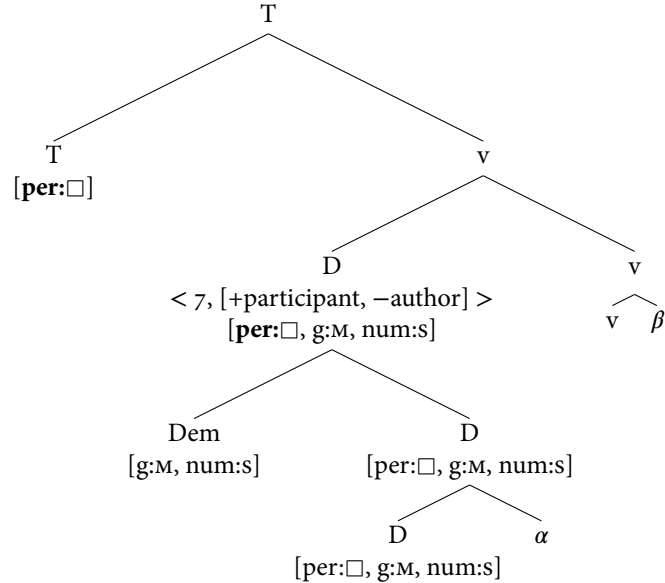


What happens when such a CI-labeled DP becomes the goal of agree with a predicate? Before we can answer this question, we have to clarify one important point regarding derivational timing. We strictly assume the so-called Y-model, i.e., it is critical that semantics cannot feed into narrow syntax. How then could agree in narrow syntax, or agreement as a post-syntactic process, be in any way sensitive to information introduced as part of phase transfer to the syntax-semantics interface? We argue that the CI information is effectively ‘smuggled’ in the derivation via an inherent asynchrony of spell-out to the syntax-morphology interface and transfer to the syntax-semantics interface (see Kučerová 2018, 2019 and Kučerová 2020 for a detailed discussion). Although CI transfer and the corresponding CI labeling algorithm targets the DP maximal projection, only the complement of D is sent to the syntax-morphology interface. The so-called edge of the phase thus remains for the derivation of the next phase and becomes incorporated into the narrow syntax derivation of that next phase. However, since the edge of the phase whose complement has been spelled out has been already labeled by the syntax-semantics interface, the semantic enrichment that yields the formation of the semantic index referring to [+participant, –author] is part of the label, and in turn is present in the derivation.

What does this mean for predicate agreement? When the label of the DP becomes a goal for an agree relation with T, where T probes for a person feature, the unvalued person feature on the DP *ten pan* ‘this gentleman’ gets matched with the unvalued person feature on the T head probe. Since neither feature is valued, the person feature in the narrow-syntax agree chain remains unvalued. The corresponding derivation is shown in the schematic representation in (25). The morphologically spelled-out complement of D is marked as α . For concreteness, we assume that the DP argument becomes the goal of agree in its base-generated position (spec,vP). If the DP moves to spec,TP (for example, to satisfy the EPP), the corresponding A-movement builds on the primary downward probing relation between T and the DP in the specifier of vP. Since at this stage of the derivation, the complement of v has been spelled out as well, we mark the morphologically spelled-out complement as β .¹⁵

¹⁵Since both the complement of D and the complement of v have been spelled-out, the derivation requires some form of a parallel derivation, or some form of a re-admittance to the workspace procedure, as e.g. in De Belder & Van Craenenbroeck (2015). We leave the technical aspects aside as they are not critical for the question of person valuation we focus on in this paper.

(25)



Thus narrow syntax agree per se cannot, and does not, yield a valued person feature. However, we argue that this state of affairs plays out differently when the relevant agree chain becomes realized by the syntax-morphology interface. We argue that morphology is presented with an ambiguous input: there is an agree chain with the unvalued person feature, and there is a semantically enriched semantic index as part of the DP label within the agree chain. We argue that morphology can either target the narrow-syntax input, or it can use the person information associated with the DP label. When morphology strictly uses the narrow-syntax input, then the predicate agreement is realized as the morphological default, i.e., 3rd person. When morphology takes the CI-informed DP label into account as well, the predicate agreement is realized as 2nd person (to reflect the [+participant, -author] presuppositional information associated with the semantic index).

We thus have derived the variable predicate agreement we observe in argument uses of *pan.M/ pani.F*. Crucially, such duality requires D to be a phase head, because for person to be licensed by the syntax-semantics interface, that DP must be a phase.

2.4 PREDICTIONS

The current proposal crucially associates the semantic enrichment of the unvalued person feature with phase properties of the D head itself. In this respect our proposal differs from recent proposals that argue for a special [\pm speaker] functional head at the left periphery of the clause (e.g., Sigurðsson 2004). The two lines of reasoning make different predictions for arguments other than the structural subject. If there is a designated functional head in the left periphery, then only the person features of the structural subject can be enriched by this head. If, however, the D head itself is the locus of this presuppositional enrichment, then any argument can in principle be interpreted as [+participant]. As the example in (26) demonstrates, only the prediction made by the present proposal is borne out. The direct object *pan* clearly refers to the speaker.

- (26) Szanowny Panie, chciałbym pana przedstawić mojemu
 respected Mr.VOCAT.M.SG like.1.M.SG gentleman introduce.ACC.2.M.SG my
 znajomemu.
 friend.DAT
 ‘Sir, I would like to introduce you to a friend of mine.’

Our proposal further predicts that any lexical DP should have the same freedom in person valuation as *pan.M/ pani.F*. That is, any 3rd person DP should be able to be interpreted as [+participant]. We argue that this prediction is correct but its manifestation is crosslinguistically restricted. For example, any lexical DP, even in a language like English, can function as a vocative, i.e., be valued

as [+participant, –speaker] (for example, the proper name *Sam* in *Hey, Sam, how are you?*). Yet, this valuation possibility arises only in a syntactic environment that licenses vocatives and it does not extend to argument positions. We hypothesize that this type of semantic enrichment is rather restricted because the incongruent valuation of the corresponding narrow-syntax feature and its CI-labeled counterpart is highly marked and, in most cases, is excluded by economy of derivation that prefers pronominal structures over full lexical noun phrases.

3 WHEN A NOUN PHRASE IS NOT A PHASE

Not every root-*n* formation forms a DP. We argue that the *pan.M/ pani.F* modifiers used in politeness constructions in (2), repeated below as (27), are *nP* constituents.

- (27) ta (*pani) nasza (*pani) wspomniała pani dyrektorka kichnęła.
 this.F.SG Ms.F.SG our.F.SG Ms.F.SG wonderful.F.SG Ms.F.SG headmaster.F.SG sneezed
 ‘this wonderful headmaster of ours/ Ms. Maria sneezed.’

Such *nPs* lack a phase head that can be the locus of CI person features (only D hosts person), and behave as a modifier rather than an argument. Such modifier behavior manifests itself semantically by the lack of inherent referential features: *pani* in (27) must refer to the headmistress. *nP* modifier behavior also has a morphological reflex where ϕ -features on *n* that heads the *nP* modifier undergo concord with the ϕ -features of the head noun. Whereas structurally the modifier *nP* is in Spec,*nP* of the head noun (‘headmistress’ in (27)), positioning it uniquely adjacent to the head noun and, in essence, forming a syntactic compound. This claim is supported by the strict adjacency restriction imposed on the *nP* modifier: it cannot be separated by any of the other nominal modifiers, as can be seen in (27) as well.¹⁶

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¹⁶An anonymous reviewer inquired about structures in which the gender of the modifier and the head noun do not match. Mismatches are indeed possible in a limited domain, namely, when a morphologically masculine head noun combines with a feminine-agreeing modifier. We argue that in this case we see the morphologically masculine form as a realization of a syntactically unvalued gender feature, and the feminine marking arises via means parallel to those explored in this paper. For a more detailed discussion, including why the reversed, i.e., a feminine head noun and a masculine modifier, is not possible see Kučerová (2018) for Italian and Kučerová & Szczegielniak (2019) for gender mismatch limitations in the nominal domain for Polish.

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