
Variation of agreement forms: Investigations on *lexical hybrids* in German dialects

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The term lexical hybrid (Corbett 2006: 213–215ff.) designates nouns with inconsistent agreement patterns concerning number or gender. The current presentation focuses on lexical hybrids with an internal conflict between grammatical gender and biological sex. One famous example is the German lexeme *Mädchen* ('girl'), which is biologically female but grammatically neuter. Agreement targets of *Mädchen* may either show agreement with the biological sex (semantic agreement) or the grammatical gender (formal agreement). Corbett (1979) established a hierarchy based on agreement patterns from multiple languages allowing a prediction about the possibility of semantic agreement. This agreement hierarchy is shown below:

(1) *attributive > predicate > relative pronoun > personal pronoun*

The possibility for semantic agreement increases consistently from the left to the right. If semantic agreement is possible in a given position, it should also be possible for all elements to the right of that position. There are also a couple of other factors influencing the choice of formal or semantic agreement, like e.g. the linear distance between controller and target. All previous studies have in common that they analyze written standard language. In contrast, the current presentation follows a novel approach by using oral data of dialect speakers. The project *Syntax of Hessian Dialects* (SyHD) collected written and oral data from so called NORMs and NORFs (non-mobile, older rural males/females). In addition, a corpus investigation is used to test as to whether German dialects behave differently from the standard language concerning agreement patterns.

References: • Corbett, G. G. (1979): The Agreement Hierarchy. *Journal of Linguistics* 2(15), 203–224.
• Corbett, G. G. (2006): *Agreement*. CUP.

AG12