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Licensing empty nouns in French By Petra Sleeman (review)

Anne Lobeck

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tion). Finally, there are the inevitable one or two papers whose circuitous paths or mismatched introductions and conclusions make them appear to have been written up in the hotel the night before. [STEPHANIE GOTTWALD and MARGARET THOMAS, *Boston College*.]

Licensing empty nouns in French. By PETRA SLEEMAN. The Hague: Holland Institute of Linguistics, 1996. Pp. 205.

Petra Sleeman presents an interesting and thorough study of noun ellipsis in French, constructions in which N, dominated by DP, is empty, as in *Trois PRO arriveront demain* 'Three will arrive tomorrow'. S follows other work on ellipsis in claiming that 'noun ellipsis' actually involves an empty NP PRO which must be licensed and identified. Her analysis departs from other approaches to PRO, however, in proposing that the empty nominal in French DP is not licensed and identified by morphological agreement, it is licensed by the semantic feature [+partitive] and identified by discourse linking with an antecedent which must be specific in interpretation. S extends her account to certain related constructions in English, Dutch, Spanish, and Italian.

Ch. 1 is a short introduction, with Ch. 2 providing the core of the analysis elucidated in subsequent chapters. S first develops a theory whereby different kinds of French pronominal adjectives and determiners are specified for the semantic feature [+partitive]. On her account, cardinals, superlatives, ordinals, *seul/autre*, etc., color adjectives, and certain adjectives of quality such as *grand/petit* are all partitive. Other adjectives of quality are nonpartitive and fail to license ellipsis. Thus, a nonpartitive adjective such as *intéressantes* is not a potential licenser of PRO in **Je n'ai pas entendu les deux intéressantes PRO*. 'I have not heard the two interesting (ones).' Ellipsis is grammatical in cases in which *pro* is licensed by a numeral, a color adjective, or a partitive adjective of quality. Examples are, respectively: *Trois PRO arriveront demain* 'Three will arrive tomorrow.' *Je prends la petite verte PRO* 'I will take the small green (one).', and *Je préfère les deux grands PRO* 'I prefer the two tall (ones).' The requirement that PRO be identified by specificity is illustrated by the contrast between *Trois PRO arriveront demain* and **J'ai lu trois PRO* 'I have read three'. In the latter, the DP object containing PRO is nonspecific, and identification fails. In the former, as in the other grammatical examples discussed above, DP is specific, and NP PRO is both licensed and identified. S extends her analysis to English, Spanish, and Italian and argues that English differs from French in relaxing the requirement that PRO in DP be specific, from which it follows that 'I have read three' in English

is grammatical. In her brief discussion of Dutch, German, and the Scandinavian languages, S proposes that empty NP in these languages is licensed and identified through adjectival inflection, concluding that at least two different licensing and identification strategies for NP PRO exist, one involving semantic features, and the other, morphological agreement features.

A central tenet of S's analysis of the phrase structure of DP is that pronominal elements, including certain adjectives, numerals, etc., are specifiers of functional projections dominating NP. She does not elaborate on the nature of the functional heads of these projections and assumes that many such heads are phonologically empty with feature specifications, though exactly what these specifications are remains unclear. Proper government (licensing) of empty NP is through Spec-head agreement of a lexical element in Spec with an empty head, and empty X⁰ in such cases licenses PRO. Numerals, for example, are not generated in Num but rather in the Spec of a higher functional QP. Num itself heads a lower NumP and is presumably the locus of features, though this is not made clear. Why numerals are not associated with the projection NumP is not addressed.

In order to account for the distribution of personal and other pronouns in French, S proposes in Ch. 3 that these pronouns are actually DP dominating NP PRO in which either D or its specifier are filled. Demonstratives such as *celui*, possessive pronouns such as *sien*, and quantifiers such as *certains*, *plusieurs*, *chacun*, and *quelques-uns*, among others, are pronouns generated in Spec of functional projections of NP. They are [+partitive], and when the containing DP is specific, ellipsis is grammatical as PRO is both licensed and identified. Examples include *celui PRO que tu aimes* 'that that you like', *Certains PRO sont venus me voir* 'Some have come to see me', and *Je préfère le sien PRO, de chat* 'I prefer his/her cat'. S argues that personal pronouns (strong forms such as *lui* and weak forms, the clitics *le/me* etc.) are generated in D with NP PRO complements. These heads are [+partitive], and license NP PRO. NP PRO is identified in these cases, however, not by association with a [+specific] DP but rather by association with a [+human] antecedent in *Je lui parle* 'I am speaking to him/her', and an antecedent which is either [+human] or [-human] in *Je le vois* 'I see him/it'. S extends this analysis to English and argues that demonstrative, personal, and possessive pronouns all involve an empty PRO licensed and identified as in French.

In Ch. 4 S addresses the distribution of partitive *en* and provides extensive arguments that *en* is the lexical counterpart of NP PRO discussed in previous chapters. She proposes that *en* is used in derivations in which NP PRO is nonspecific, to keep such derivations from crashing. In Ch. 5, she turns to 'substantivized' adjectives such as *le malade* and *l'important*,

arguing that these constructions also involve an empty noun but that this empty noun is present at the morphological/lexical level, where it is licensed again by partitivity.

S's book is lucidly written and provides a good overview of previous work on ellipsis in French noun phrases (beginning with Mitsou Ronat's work from the 1970s). The account of ellipsis in DP which S proposes raises a number of interesting issues for those interested in ellipsis in general and in the phrase structure of DP more particularly. It would be interesting to investigate whether S's semantic licensing and identification strategy for PRO extends to other ellipsis constructions (such as VP ellipsis and sluicing) and to null subjects and objects in French and other languages (for example, the empty prepositional objects in French discussed by Anne Zribi-Hertz). [ANNE LOBECK, *Western Washington University*.]

Wörterbuch der Valenz etymologisch verwandter Wörter. By KARL-ERNST SOMMERFELDT and HERBERT SCHREIBER. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996. Pp. vi, 298.

This book is designed as a valence dictionary meant to give learners of German the opportunity to understand the combinatory possibilities of words they want to use. For this purpose the words are organized in word-fields. These word-fields are not limited to single word classes, i.e. verb or noun or adjective fields, but contain various word classes and juxtapose words of different word classes that are derived from each other, i.e. *gebären-Geburt*. However, to talk of 'etymological kinship' of these words that are directly derived from each other, as Sommerfeldt & Schreiber do in their title, does seem odd, especially if the book is in fact directed at learners of German. But, as the introduction makes clear, the book is directed both at learners of German and at valence scholars interested in the possibility of using valence information to broaden a learner's understanding of word use. This twofold goal in producing the book entails various problems for the design of the single word entries.

The authors state in the introduction that they intend to consider pragmatic valence (i.e. contexts in which the word may be used, which also means giving register information) as well as systemic valence (grammatical possibilities of combining the word with other words and word classes). They also explain, in the last sentence of their introduction (14), that they are aware of the fact that, although the chosen examples may not always reflect normal usage in German, they exemplify the possible valence of an expression. Thus the examples at the beginning of an entry exemplify the valence scope, giving all three agents, even if the expression may sound odd in German.

This seems to me a problematical decision if the dictionary is meant to improve word combination usage of learners of German. The biggest problem is the decision to include infinitives as nouns wherever grammatically possible, even if they are not used in German, because a noun not directly derived from the infinitive is used instead. Mere usage examples without realization of all agents at the end of each entry do not contain this error, but even they use infinitive-nouns unusual for everyday German usage.

Although the authors do explain the abbreviations they use in their syntactic and semantic valence descriptions for each entry in a table preceding the actual dictionary, they do not explain the meaning of the words they use to give register information. They use words like *pejorativ* 'pejorative', *salopp* 'colloquial', or *vulgär* 'vulgar' without explaining their hierarchical structure. Some entries do not contain register information, meaning that the word is standard usage, but this 'default' meaning may not be immediately clear to every reader. Thus true learners of German would have to check these register description terms in another dictionary before they could decide on the context in which they may use the word, unless they have been able to infer register information from the words in the context.

Other problems are that the total number of entries is too small, the word groups too limited and, unlike traditional dictionaries showing semantic affinity between words (such as the *Stilwörterbuch*, Vol 2 in the Duden Series or the Wehrle-Eggers *Deutscher Wortschatz*, Klett, 1993), the word entries are not completed by references to other possible meanings of words. Thus the word *verwerfen* in the Word Field, 'Feld des Existierens' (288) (Field of Existence or Non-Existence), is mentioned in its very occasional meaning—'to have a miscarriage (for animals)'. No reference to the more common meaning 'to discard' is made anywhere in the text.

This book is certainly a laudable effort towards a valence dictionary that can be of help to learners of German. It is, however, not yet a finished product fit to be used by this group. For this, the valence dictionary would need to incorporate elements of more traditional dictionaries of semantically related words, i.e. more words, more cross references, and a more generally understandable terminology. [VERENA JUNG, *University of Düsseldorf*.]

Die Orthographischen Regelbücher des Deutschen. By BRITTA STANZE. (Deutsche Hochschulschriften 1044.) Egelsbach, Frankfurt, & Washington, DC: Hänsel-Hohenhausen, 1994. Pp. xi, 377.

In her doctoral thesis Stanze traces the development of orthographic standardization in German