

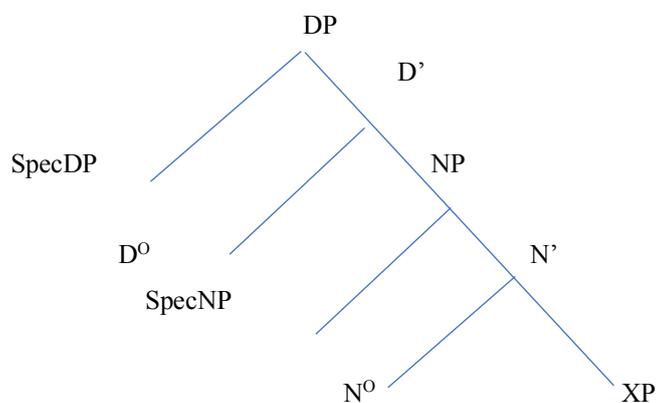
## Abstract

Revisiting the Gender-Animacy-Sub-gender and Case assignment Notions: When do Slavic languages agree and when disagree?

This contribution is part of a not yet finalized DFG project entitled “Animacy, Gender and Agreement in Typologically and Genetically Cognate and Non-Cognate Languages.

Explorations into the Syntax-Semantic Interfaces of Human Language Faculty.”

It doesn't just want to pour new wine into old tubes, but old wine into new tubes. Rather, in demonstrating that as opposed to grammatical Gender (which is restricted in terms of languages and categories), Animacy is a cognitively encoded property of human mind and can be expressed in very different and most intriguing ways in natural languages. The project goes back to our research on grammatical categories with special reference to syntax and semantics of Slavic languages compared to a small set of typologically and genetically non-cognate languages. This kind of comparison aims at discovering overt and hidden properties of human mind encoded as grammatical categories in grammars of different types of languages ranging from Slavic Languages such as Russian and Czech or Polish which one can typologically compare roughly to the so-called inflected type of synthetic Indo-European languages and including Carrier and Apache (from the Athabascan language family) and Ket (a Yeniseian language) which are typologically polysynthetic, but others belong to the agglutinative (Japanese) and also to the isolating type (Mandarin). Since both, Gender and Animacy are relevant but still not well understood regarding their ranking and hierarchy, we believe that a new fresh review is necessary. We give the representation of the DP under (1):  $D^0$  contains  $\varphi$ -Features for Agreement (Person, Number, Gender), while  $N^0$  includes semantic (lexical) features for Animacy ( $\pm$  animate), Countability ( $\pm$  count) and structural Case (Nom, Acc, G).



In Slavic, the functional head  $D^0$  serves as the bearer of the grammatical Agreement features for Gender, Number and Case (cf. Späth 2006:1-3, Kosta and Zimmerling 2020). It is also the locus to which structural Case will be assigned by structural condition of C-command. Gender is usually an arbitrary category, which does not correspond to the semantic-referential “properties of the referent”, even if Gender can sometimes be motivated by natural sex. The same relation between language and world holds for many categories such as individuality, countability under the nominal head  $N^0$ . We assume that Animacy is encoded in the Mental Lexicon on the lexical noun and only then checked against the functional head in the Specifier-Head Agreement relation, thus  $DP-D^0$ . The nominal head  $N^0$  in some Slavic languages such as Polish (and partly Slovak) is further specified for the following Semantic features [ $\pm$  animate,  $\pm$  virilism,  $\pm$  individual,  $\pm$  countable...] and of course it is specified as an individual member of a subset of an intensional class (in the sense of Heim and Kratzer 1998, and Kosta 2020). The functional head  $D^0$  of the functional layer DP is specified for Functional features [Gender, lexical Case and Number]. Lexical Cases (such as Dative, Instrumental, Locative, Prepositional, Allative, Illative, etc.) are assigned in Narrow Syntax via external Merge by a C-commanding lexical Category (N, A, V, P). Structural Cases (e.g. Nominative/Accusative and in some cases Genitive and Instrumental) are assigned via internal Merge or Adjunction to the structural position of the probe-goal domain (cf. Kosta and Zimmerling 2020). In the paper we want show different strategies of grammatical encoding of Gender and Animacy in different types of languages. We will present evidence from the Australian indigenous languages Kurna and Barnjarla (South-Australia), two Athabascan languages Carrier (British Columbia) and Ket (North Russia’s Krasnoyarsk province along the river Yenisei), but also Japanese, Mandarin and Cantonese which clearly give evidence that marking of Animacy in grammar is independent of Gender. We consider the classification of Animacy as a sub-gender of grammatical Gender in Slavic as a secondary (ancillary) property because many languages differentiate between animate-inanimate while not having Gender (e.g. English who – what, Mandarin, Japanese, Kazakh).

#### References

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