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"Agreement" as a Perspectivizing Device in Discourse: the View from French

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ABSTRACT

The description of agreement brings into play a number of different components and levels of analysis. This chapter's goal is to show how stating certain agreement facts requires reference to each of the levels and components available within the Functional Discourse Grammar model. Agreement's *raison d'être* in discourse concerns the (re)identification and establishment of referents. Its manifestation depends on the assumed properties of the intended referent as conceptualised by users, as well as on what is being predicated of it. Thus agreement is not purely redundant, semantically empty and grammatically predictable (as is often claimed), but may perform several key functions at the level of discourse, the chief one of which is the superimposition of a referential perspective on the intended referent.

Keywords: Agreement, anaphora, deixis, discourse, gender, number

1. *Introduction*

Agreement is a central phenomenon for grammatical theory, since its description brings into play a number of different components and levels of analysis: not only morpho-syntax, but also semantics, pragmatics (with inevitable reference to context), and knowledge of the world as well as familiarity with the socio-cultural environment in which language is used. The overall goal of this chapter is to show how the statement of certain agreement facts, taking French as the example language, requires reference to each of the levels and components (in particular, the Contextual component) available within the Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG)

model.[1] This is in order to refine the description of agreement and in doing so, to sharpen the descriptive apparatus of the model as a whole.

Agreement is first and foremost bound up with the (re)identification and establishment of referents (Lehmann 1987:55; Dowty & Jacobson 1988). Others claim its function lies in "highlighting the grammatically privileged participant" (Kibrik, 2011, p. 229). So clearly, the *Interpersonal level* as well as the *Contextual component* are centrally involved in its operation. In French NP-internal agreement, the various dependents of a head noun as well as determiners, and the expressions involved in a predicative relation with the NP as a whole —namely, finite verbs, past participles, predicative or appositive adjectives or nouns— may be said to contract a function-argument relation with their controller term (cf. Keenan 1979; Blinkenberg 1950; Cornish 2000). This is clearly the province of the *Representational level* within FDG. The grammatical relation which the agreeing terms create via the manifestation of agreement between them is crucial to the very existence of the phenomenon; and the inflectional markers which manifest it on the targets involved are the tangible trace of this relation. These two dimensions belong to the *Morphosyntactic level.*

All this suggests that agreement is not merely the "icing on the grammatical cake"; rather, its operation involves a substantial part of the very cake itself. I argue that agreement phenomena (in French, but in many other languages too) are not purely redundant, semantically empty and grammatically predictable,[2] but that they may perform several key functions at the level of discourse —in particular, that of tracking given discourse referents, and of superimposing a referential perspective upon them. I am using the standard term "agreement" in this chapter simply for convenience and "faute de mieux" —since it occurs so ubiquitously in the literature on this topic—, even though I do not subscribe to the description most commonly associated with it.

1.1 "Cross-reference" vs. "agreement"

Dik (1997), Hengeveld & Mackenzie (2008) and Hengeveld (2012) draw a principled distinction between "cross-reference" marked on verbs in many languages, and "agreement", which is said to derive via feature copying from the relevant controller argument. Cross-reference is a relation of coreference involving the obligatory marking on finite verbs or auxiliaries of the essential arguments of the verbal predicates involved, in the form of

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[1] See Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008) for a detailed exposition of the model. Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2010) is a shorter, more recent introduction.

[2] As has often been claimed – e.g. by Hengeveld & Mackenzie (2008, p. 350) and by Hengeveld (2012, p. 468) within the FDG framework, and also by Dik (1997, p. 357) within classical FG.

pronominal affixes. Two examples from Navajo presented by Jelinek (2006:262) follow:[2]

(1) a. Yiyiiltsà
3sObj:3sSubj:saw
'He saw him'

b. (Diné) ('ashkii) yiyiiltsà
man boy 3sObj:3sSubj:saw
(The man,) (the boy,) he saw him
'The man saw the boy' (Jelinek's (4a) and (4b), respectively)

It is essentially polysynthetic languages such as Navajo which exhibit this property (cf. Jelinek 2006; Baker 2006). These languages do not require the co-presence of lexically-explicit phrases in the clause; but when these occur, they may appear as adjuncts (as in (1b) above). According to Jelinek (2006:266), pronominal argument (PA) languages "completely lack the agreement relation … that licenses pro-drop." Given that these pronominal affixes are fully referential (that is, they may determine their referent independently), they differ from agreement inflections on the verb in those languages which have them. These are said to require the co-presence of their lexically-explicit controllers, which occur in argument and not adjunct positions in the clause.[3] So agreement inflections in such languages are said to have no independent referential or semantic import, being solely licensed via a feature-copying mechanism from their controllers.

It is this latter claim that I intend to call into question in this chapter as far as French is concerned, in particular. Interestingly, Siewierska & Bakker (2005) (see also Siewierska 2004:126 on person agreement) in invoking the notion of a continuum, also call into question the sharp distinction between cross-reference via clitic pronouns or pronominal affixes, and agreement markers (inflections) —the latter making use of the same morpho-syntactic categories used by the former. See the extended Scale of grammaticalisation ranging from independent pronouns to

[3] However, Marianne Mithun (p.c.) informs me that this is not always the case in all polysynthetic languages: if there are pronominal affixes on the verb in a language (i.e. "cross-reference"), these can co-occur with something akin to adjunct status for lexical noun phrases – but this is not necessarily the case. In Eskimo-Aleut languages, for example, there are robust referential pronominal suffixes on every verb referring to the core arguments. However, when lexical noun phases are present in the clause, these are clearly not adjuncts. they carry case (ergative/absolutive), and there is a basic, syntactically-definable word order, though this can of course be altered for pragmatic purposes. This claim is supported by Kibrik (2011, p. 98) in relation to certain European languages (Basque and Svan).

agreement inflections originally argued for by Givón (1976),[4] presented as Figure 1 below. I have inserted an extra position ("Pronominal affix") in between "Clitic pronoun" and "Agreement inflection", showing the close relationship between these types of marker.

Full pronoun > Clitic pronoun > Pronominal affix > Grammatical agreement inflection

Figure 1: Source of agreement inflections via the progressive grammaticalisation of independent pronouns (Figure based on Givón 1976)

The chapter is organised as follows: section 2 briefly presents various discourse-pragmatic accounts of so-called "agreement". Section 3 provides evidence and examples showing the sensitivity of various agreement phenomena to factors relating to each of the various Levels and Components of the FDG model. Finally, section 4 attempts to determine the kinds of interactions between levels of derivation within the FDG model (in particular, the Contextual component, the Fund[5] and the Morphosyntactic level) that a description of the agreement (and non-agreement) phenomena discussed earlier requires. The following types of agreement in French will be examined: subject-finite verb/auxiliary, direct object-participle, subject-predicate adjective and participle, and "antecedent"-3rd person pronoun "agreement" (or rather "conformity" in person, gender and number: cf. Wiese 1983).

2. *Discourse- and semantic-oriented accounts of "agreement"*

Two major approaches are particularly relevant to this discourse-pragmatic account of various agreement phenomena in French: first, Barlow (1999), a general account in terms of the merging of discourse properties and referents (primary and secondary); and second, Reid (2011), a language-specific account of noun and verb number in English (i.e. what would standardly be called "subject-verb agreement", though Reid's account is very different), worked out within the functionalist Columbia School

4 Cf. also Ariel (2000), Mithun (2003), and Corbett (2006, p. 23).

5 The construct termed "Fund" originated within the ancestor of FDG, Simon Dik's Functional Grammar model (cf. Dik, 1997, pp. 58–62). It is not in fact mentioned as such in Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008), but is mentioned in several works developed within this framework (e.g. Dikker, 2004 and Dikker & van Lier, 2005). It is considered to be a kind of storehouse providing frames and templates into which lexemes, grammatical morphemes and so on are inserted during the derivation of an utterance token.

framework. See also the semantically-oriented account by Dowty & Jacobson (1988).

Barlow (1999) provides a variety of examples from different languages showing mismatches between "controllers" and "agreement targets" (to use Corbett's 2006 terms —for which Barlow 1999:189 suggests the replacement terms 'primary' and 'secondary' sources, respectively). These show not only that agreement targets may carry morphosyntactic feature values for which their controllers are unmarked, or at least less highly specified, but also that targets may manifest inflections for person, number or gender which are different from the values carried by their controllers. These inflections may, for example, be motivated by extra-linguistic, referential factors.[6] Thirdly, there are instances where the controller *is* specified for a particular number, gender or person value, but where the expected "agreement" in a relevant target expression does not occur (cf. so-called "**neutral agreement**": see Corbett 1991, Cornish 1986 and §3.1 below). In addition, in certain informal contexts of language use, an agreement-marked form may be used and readily understood without the textual co-presence of a relevant controller (cf. also Bock & Middleton 2011:1039, Cornish 1996 and §3.3 below).

Like myself, Barlow (1999:202-204) aligns the various agreement phenomena he studies with (pronominal) anaphora, an alignment which purely formal, morphosyntactic agreement rules do not countenance (cf. Bock & Middleton, 2011:1039). We will be seeing the correctness of this view throughout the remainder of this chapter. Barlow's essential claim (at least in relation to NP-external "agreement") is that while NPs may evoke "primary" discourse referents (which when topical are highly salient, psychologically), agreement inflections determine "secondary", more vaguely delineated discourse referents, bearing a lower degree of salience, which are then linked to the primary discourse referents already installed in the discourse model (cf. also Croft, 1988, pp. 173–174).

This is achieved via the merging of their several discourse properties (see below), which the relevant person, number and gender features map into. The prototypical function of (referential) NPs is to introduce a new referent into some discourse; while that of the agreement inflections which may be connected with them is to help track that referent, as well as to assign further (or identical) properties to it via (re-)classification. Once the "controllers" and "targets" are brought into relation with one another, the discourse-relevant properties each conveys are merged, giving rise to coherent or less than coherent discourse representations, as the case may be.

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[6] E.g. natural gender determined by the sex of a human referent, where the controller's gender value is the opposite of its target's: see nouns like *recrue* 'recruit,' *sentinelle* 'sentry' or *victime* 'victim' in French, whose grammatical gender is feminine, but where the human referent targeted by NPs of which they are heads may well be male, not female, so motivating the choice of masculine gender marking on agreement targets.

Properties associated with given agreement inflections include <ANIMATE>, <INDIVIDUAL>, <IN-MASC-CLASS>, <IN-FEM-CLASS>, <COMPOSED-OF-INDIVIDUALS>, <NATURAL-GENDER-FEMALE>, <NATURAL-GENDER-MALE>, <HUMAN>, and <NON-HUMAN>.

As for Reid (2011), his article argues for an account of "noun" and "verb" number in English present tense clauses, in terms of the separate assignment of the contrasting conceptual properties "ONE" marked by singular inflections (-∅ for nouns, and -*S* for verbs), and "MORE THAN ONE" marked by plural ones (-*S* for nouns, and -∅ for verbs). However, the semantic substances to which these two meanings apply are different. Noun number indicates the number of entities described by the associated noun stem, while verb number indicates how many entities are at the centre of attention with respect to the event described by the verb stem (and associated material) — what Reid calls "the entity in focus" (see below). This means that the two number systems are counting slightly different things and can thus respond to different discourse considerations *even* when the noun is describing the entity in focus.

The two meaning values represent, for Reid, the core, invariant meanings of each pair of inflections. The full in-context interpretation of the subject noun phrase containing the noun at issue and that of the finite verb is a function of the fleshing out by the user of these systemic, quasi-Saussurean signs in terms of the context of use of the forms at issue (Reid's article adduces only attested, contextualised utterances as data).

The semantic substance to which each inflection pair is sensitive is that of "Entity in focus", i.e. the entity which is assumed to be the centre of attention at the point of use. The verb's inflectional value is a direct function of the "event" (in other, more mainstream accounts, this would be termed the "eventuality") which the verb as predicator[7] —in conjunction, I would add, with its dependents— evokes; and the inflection marked on the head noun of the "subject" NP indirectly evokes an entity which is made available via the "event" denoted by the finite verb (i.e. it is a participant in the event in question). The potential divergence in inflections and their concomitant semantic values (e.g. -∅ for the head noun of the subject nominal, signalling "ONE" and -∅ for the finite verb, indicating "MORE THAN ONE") gives rise to an in-context inference, dependent upon the relevant features of the co-text as well as the context of utterance at issue.

The key point in this account, a factor which aligns Reid's account with Barlow's (1999), is that the in-context interpretations of **both** subject and verb number marking are a function of other features than simply the individual reference of the former, and the number marking on its head

7 Where this is the case: for not all verbs correspond semantically to predicates.

noun for the latter: indeed, these are a function of a range of message-level factors, the most important of which would seem to be the nature of what is predicated of the subject's referent (as is the case here). A minimal pair of attested examples given by Reid is presented in note 15 in §3.4 below.

3. *The sensitivity of agreement phenomena to factors relating to different levels in the FDG model*

3.1 The Interpersonal level

Notice first that agreement, in many languages, may well not occur between potential controllers and their targets, for "interpersonal"-type reasons. First, if the potential controller is not a topic, as is the case in thetic utterances, then subject—finite verb agreement, for example, may not occur. Compare (2a) and (2b) in this respect (see also Cappeau's, 2011, p. 44 attested examples (13)–(15) from spoken French):

(2) a. *demain* *se tiendr**a*** *à Moscou et à Kiev*
tomorrow will be held 3SG in Moscow and in Kiev
des séances *solennelles*.
sessions 3PL solemn 3PL (Cappeau, 1996, ex. (9), p. 177)

b. demain des séances solennelles se tiendr**ont** à Moscou et à Kiev
tomorrow solemn sessions (3PL) will be held (3PL) in Moscow and in Kiev (FC)

Since there is no predicational relation obtaining between the inverted finite verb *se tiendra* and postposed subject NP *des séances solennelles* in (2a), the utterance token being a **thetic** one (an existential presentative construction), no agreement marking with the latter in number and gender appears on the former: the NP *des séances solennelles* is not a topic, the whole clause being situation-reporting (moreover, the constituent order within the sentence is non-canonical, the subject NP following, not preceding, the finite verb). However, in (2b), the expected agreement does appear, since here there is (or at least, may be) a predicational relation at issue. Moreover, the preverbal subject NP is by that token a potential topic (though it is still indefinite). Many other languages exhibiting agreement show a similar contrast.[8]

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[8] E.g. classical Arabic, as demonstrated by Bakker (2005, pp. 12–13) and Breton and Dutch as illustrated by Bakker and Siewierska (2004, pp. 327–328); cf. also Siewierska's (2004, p. 159) comment in relation to the wide range of unrelated languages she examines: "...[person] agreement is much more likely to occur with topical controllers than with non-topical ones." See also the

Second, the speaker is at liberty to 'withhold' or suspend the expected agreement between given potential controllers and their targets, as a function of the nature of the reference intended. This corresponds to so-called "neutral agreement",[9] whereby either a special neuter/neutral agreeing inflection is carried by the target, or the latter assumes the default feature values for the relevant morphosyntactic categories (3rd for person, singular for number, and masculine for gender). This is the case whenever the controller does not possess a value for the relevant agreeing category, or where the speaker wishes to effect an 'eventive' (2nd-order) rather than '1st-order' reference via the controller: cf. NP-internal examples as illustrated in (3a,b):

(3) a. ***l*e** *bouche-à-oreille*
the (M.SG.) mouth (F.SG) to ear ("information conveyed via the grapevine")

b. ***l*e** *politique*
the (M.SG.) political (F.SG.)

Here the nominal forms *bouche*(*-à-oreille*) and *politique* are being used adjectivally, and then re-nominalized within these predicational structures, rather than strictly nominally.

In the subject-verb (NP-external) domain, an example would be that given in (4):

(4) *Deux livres* *lui* *suffir**a***
Two books (3.PL.) for him/her will suffice (3.SG.) (Blinkenberg, 1950: 69)

Here, the expected agreement in number on the finite verb (*suffiront*, 3PL) does not occur, since either the speaker is conceiving the subject referent as a unitary set (a collective rather than distributive interpretation), or alternatively, in a characteristically eventive manner: "Having/Reading two books will be sufficient for him/her". The speaker is thus in control of agreement phenomena, rather than their being necessarily specified by the grammar of a language automatically (cf. also Reid, 2011 and examples (9a-d) in Barlow, 1999:192).

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discussion in Lazard (1996), for whom it is the disjunction between thematic and rhematic segments within the clause that provides the conditions for agreement. In examples like (2a), this is not the case.

9 See Corbett (1991, pp. 203–218), (2006, pp. 97–98); Cornish (1986, pp. 196–203).

3.2. The Morphosyntactic Level

Regarding subject- or object-predicate (or more generally topic-predicate) agreement, the **Morphosyntactic** level is clearly involved, since it is one or other of the nuclear syntactic functions (subject or direct object), in contrast to a non-nuclear function such as indirect or oblique object, that triggers the agreement of the past participle with this controller (Le Bellec 2009). In the case of past participle-direct object agreement (see (5c and d)), this is only applied when the direct-object argument precedes the past participle.[10] This is in contrast with (5a), where the past participle remains invariant since the direct object is in its canonical position (i.e. in the focus segment):

(5) a. Nous av**ons** mangé les restes.
We (1.PL.) have (1.PL) eaten the remains

b. Les restes ont été mangé**s**.
The remains (M.PL.) have been eaten (M.PL.)

c. Les restes que nous avons mangé**s**.
The remains (M. PL.) that (M. PL.) we have eaten (M. PL.)

d. Les restes, nous les avons mangé**s**.
The remains (M.PL.), we them (M.PL.) have eaten (M.PL.)

By contrast, agreement with an indirect or oblique object in the same non-canonical position is impossible:

(6) A sa mère$_i$, elle lui$_i$ a menti**/**
To his/her mother (F. 3SG.), she to her (F.3SG.) has lied(ø)/
*menti**e**
lied (F.SG.)

As already indicated, agreement also concerns the **pragmatic** (Interpersonal) level —the common factor in the two nuclear grammatical functions in (5a-d) being the fact that the controller in each case corresponds to the pragmatic function 'topic'. See Lazard (1996) on this issue, in relation to a variety of languages.

[10] I.e. when it is in a non-canonical position for the expression of this function.

3.3 The Conceptual component: Speaker's conceptualisation of the topic (the notion of "referential perspective" superimposed by certain agreement targets)

(7) [Context: Notice on gates leading to public parks in Paris: picture of a dachshund in profile, crossed through by two thick red diagonal lines, with the caption:]

Même ten**us** en laisse
Even (when) held (M. PL.) on (a) lead (Cornish 1986:190 example (12))

Notice here that it is via the stereotypical character of the picture on the notice (as well as the addressee's familiarity with the genre of public notices of this type), that a gender value (M.) is invoked, in terms of the "basic-level" noun *chien* 'dog', rather than the "subordinate-level" noun *teckel* 'dachshund' (also M.).[11] The number value, however, is not derived via the image, but in terms of the characteristic denotation 'class of entities' corresponding to plural NPs. As Corbett (1991:154) argues (see also Cornish 1986:191, 1999:128-132), number and gender must be distinguished: gender is an inherent *lexical* property (in languages like French which recognise grammatical gender): NPs whose head is a lexical noun endowed with a gender value receive that value indirectly, via "percolation" (cf. Bakker 2005:9); number however (apart from a small number of exceptional inherently plural nouns: e.g. *fiançailles* F.PL 'engagement', or *obsèques* F.PL 'funeral') is a *phrasal* property, determined by the speaker's intention to refer to a single, mass, collective, generic or multiple entity in context.[12]

This distinction is illustrated graphically by example (7), which may be characterised in terms of anaphora *and* deixis: the gender value (masculine) marked by *tenus* would be anaphoric in function, whereas the number one (plural) is more properly deictic.

For the number and gender marking on the target *tenus* in (7), Barlow's (1999:194) comment is highly relevant: "What is important is the fact that agreement in providing information about the nature of referents rather than information about the morphosyntax of the controller." Using

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11 This interpretation is supported by the explicit reference made in similar notices displayed on the entrances to public parks seen in Toulouse in February, 2010: "Les chiens doivent être tenus en laisse" ('Dogs must be held on a lead').

12 This difference in status has also been verified experimentally, in terms of processing (see the results reported by De Vincenzi, 1999 for Italian).

Barlow's formalism, we might represent the "secondary" discourse referent evoked via the occurrence in its context of the past participial form *tenus* as follows:

(7) a. [[GEN: <IN-MASC-CLASS> ; NUM: <COMPOSED-OF-INDIVIDUALS>]]

The vaguely-delineated "secondary" discourse referent corresponding to these properties would then be expanded into a fully-fledged "primary" discourse referent in terms of the discourse context of the utterance in (7) in the way indicated above. This two-stage operation is very similar to the account of the message-level interpretation of present-tense number inflections in English given by Reid (2011) (see §2 above).

3.4 The Representational Level

Moreover, agreement also involves the **semantic** (**Representational**) level, in the case of agreement *ad sensum*, as in (8):[13]

(8) **Une** parti**e** d**es** hectare**s**
'(A) F. 3SG. part F. 3SG. of the 3PL. hectaresM.PL.
qui le[14] composai**ent** avaie**nt**
REL.NOM PRON.NOM.ACC.3 comprised 3 PL. had 3PL.
été vend**us** l'année précédente par M.Henri Tournet…
been sold M.PL. the year previous by M. Henri Tournet…
(*Le Monde*, 31.10.79, p. 1)

In (8), either the reference of the subject NP *une partie des hectares qui le composaient* may be taken to be to 'a particular part of the plot of land in question, measured in hectares', in which case the finite lexical and auxiliary main verbs would have been inflected for 3rd person singular agreement, and the past participle as feminine singular; or its reference is (as here) to the area represented by this 'part' of the plot of land conceived distributively (i.e. as being made up of a number of hectares). But this agreement configuration reflects a somewhat incoherent semantic-pragmatic interpretation, since presumably the owner, Henri Tournet, had sold the plot of land as a whole, rather than as a set of individualised strips, each

13 See Berrendonner and Reichler-Béguelin (1995) for enlightening discussion of this type of French example.

14 The land on which a M. Boulin's allotment was situated.

measured in hectares. For a fully coherent interpretation, we might have expected that, where *composaient* is 3.PL, as part of the restrictive relative clause, the auxiliary verb *avaient* of the main verbal complex would be 3.SG, and the passive past participle marked as F. SG. – thereby denoting the 'part' of the whole set of hectares *qua* part (see also (9) below for a similar example). So agreement depends on the highlighted properties of the intended referent as well as on what is being predicated of it, as we have already seen in previous examples: it is the type of interpretation intended by the writer that has determined the agreement patterning in both subordinate and main clauses.

Corbett's Agreement and Predicate Hierarchies (2006:233, item (59)) are an attempt to capture alternative agreement type of the kinds we have seen, in terms of a universal implicational Scale:

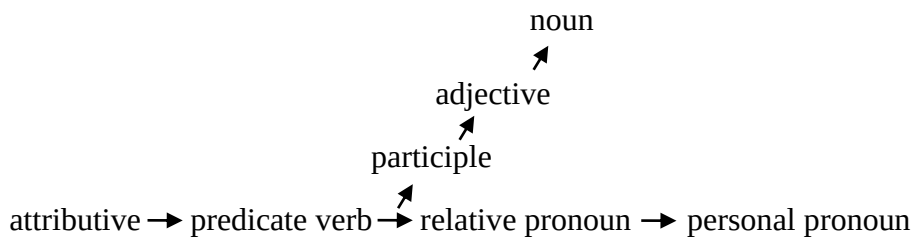


Figure 2: Corbett's (2006: 233, item (59)) combined Agreement and Predicate Hierarchy

According to this combined Hierarchy, as we move rightward along the scale, the more likely it is that the type of agreement target concerned will show semantically-justified agreement. What is ruled out within a single sentence by this Hierarchy is the possibility of semantic agreement with a target to the left, and of syntactic agreement with one to the right, with the same controller. Note that the "attributive" position (determiners and epithet adjectives) on the extreme left is NP-internal, while the "predicate-verb" one is NP-external (as are the other two positions to its right). See Dikker (2004) and Dikker & van Lier (2005) for discussion of Corbett's Agreement hierarchy in the context of FDG.

The sequence of examples (9a) in which "syntactic agreement" has occurred between the finite verb and the subject (relayed via the restrictive relative subject pronoun *qui* 'who': interestingly, this is a factor which Cappeau, 2011, p. 43 adduces as favouring singular verb agreement with plural subject head nouns in spoken French data), and (9b), where the coreferential subject pronoun "agrees" (or is in conformity) syntactically with that NP, is pragmatically unnatural —hence the crosshatch prefixing the first alternative of the latter sentence added by me:

(9) a. "...'C'est fou, le nombre de personnes
It is incredible, the numberM.SG of person F.PL

qui vien**t** voir où et comment
REL.NOM come PRES 3.SG see where and how `
vit Gabriel…
live PRES 3SG. Gabriel…
(Extract from article "Le retour de l'homme des bois", *La Dépêche du Midi* 28.04.10, p. 8)

b. …***Il** arriv**e** de partout
PRON.NOM.M.3SG arrivePRES.3.SG from everywhere/
Il**s** arriv**ent** de partout.
PRON.NOM M.3PL arrive PRES.3PL from everywhere
(My continuation: FC)

I have attempted to formalise this sequence of examples in the Appendix, and will develop in particular the context which they presuppose in the next section. (9a) is taken from a local newspaper article about an eccentric man living in an old caravan in a forest. To this direct-speech quotation, I have added an in-context plausible continuation in (9b). Unlike example (8), where the plural number marked on the finite auxiliary verb in the main clause signalled a distributive interpretation (already signalled via the plural-marked verb within the restrictive relative clause extending the subject NP), in (9a) the finite verb *vient* 'comes' has singular number. This clearly signals a collective, not distributive interpretation of the subject NP's referent, whereby the reader construes the latter as an entire group of (say) 200 people as a unit —that is, as a very large group (and the nature of what is predicated of this set of entities via the predicate adjective *fou* 'crazy' (i.e. 'incredible') in the initial clause underlines this interpretation). We may characterise this in Corbett's (2006) terms as effecting "syntactic agreement" with the formal property of the subject NP (determined by what may be analysed as its head, the noun *nombre* (M.SG.): this feature value has then percolated up to the whole NP of which it is the head).

However, maintaining this interpretation via "syntactic agreement" (or rather, conformity) on the anaphorically-interpreted subject pronoun (*il*) in (9b) —intended as a continuation of (9a), uttered by the same speaker— leads to incoherence, since what is predicated of that pronoun's referent (namely, "arriving from everywhere (i.e. from all parts of the region at issue)") is not a property that may be applied to a group categorized as a collective whole: after all, it's not the **group** *qua* group which has "arrived from everywhere" (the several arrivals would not yet constitute a "group" at all, in fact) but rather its individual members. Hence, only the plural pronoun *ils*, "agreeing" semantically in terms of the referent's salient property (involving a set of individuals: cf. also the plural marking on *tenu**s*** in example (7)) is capable of ensuring the maintenance of the topic referent within the separate sentence illustrated in (9b). Interestingly, the feminine

plural *elles* ("agreeing" syntactically with *personnes* (F.PL)) would not be possible here as an alternative to masculine plural *ils*: if used, it would imply that the set of "pilgrims" to the site of GV's home were all **female**. The contrast between singular *il* and plural *ils* in (9b) is in line with the predictions of Corbett's (2006) Agreement Hierarchy presented in Fig. 2 — except for the fact that here, unlike in examples (8) and (9a), there is in fact no choice between syntactic and semantic "agreement" in (9b). See Reid (2011:1109-10, examples (32a, b), reproduced in note 15) for an analogous English pair of examples involving the singular-marked noun *number* as head of a complex subject NP with a plural noun as part of its complement, where the present-tense verb conforms in number to the head noun ((32a)) or to the complement noun ((32b)), thereby inducing a distinct type of interpretation of the subject NP as a whole in each case.[15]

3.5 The Contextual and Conceptual components

For its part, the Contextual component in the FDG model plays a significant role in the operation of agreement, since it is designed to contain a description of the discourse just constructed as well as a representation of the perceptible situational frame. It should also contain a representation of the speech participants' shared knowledge and their social relations.[16] The Conceptual component, on the other hand, is relevant in that it should house an ontology and a characterisation of relevant world knowledge. This kind of knowledge is required for the form of the pronoun in example (10) (see below). According to Dikker (2004) and Dikker & van Lier (2005), a lexeme's inherent grammatical gender value should be available via the Fund, and the semantic or conceptual gender reflecting the biological sex of the referent ought to be available within the Contextual component. The Contextual component should therefore feed into the operation of morphosyntactic encoding in order to be able to make this kind of information accessible to that level.[17] The physical context of an interaction

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15 The examples in question are as follows:

> (i) But the *number* of people making real changes **seems** slight, even in places where information about AIDS is readily available. (Reid's (32a), p. 1109)
> (ii) A growing number of sexually active *heterosexuals*, especially in cities with a substantial caseload of AIDS patients, **are** considering taking the test.
> (Katie Leishman, *The Atlantic*, January 1987, p. 44; Reid's (32b), p. 1110)

16 See Connolly (2007; forthcoming 2014), Cornish (2009) and Hengeveld and Mackenzie (forthcoming 2014) for some suggestions as to the kinds of information that might be made available via the Contextual component of a FDG, and how these should be structured. See also the recent insightful account of context and discourse in van Dijk (2008, Chapter 3), an approach compatible with the top-down orientation of FDG.

17 This is indeed the case in the more elaborated, and most recent, version of FDG: see Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, p. 13, Figure 2).

would thus be able to motivate the gender and number selections in third person pronouns, in "exophoric" examples of type (10).

(10) [Poster on roadside bus shelter near Grasse, S-E France, showing a large colour photo of the Mediterranean, without mention of the name]

Nous	veillons	sur	**elle**
PRON. 1PL	watch PRES.1PL	over	PRON.NOM.F.SG.

(Advertisement, Conseil Régional de la Région Provence-Côte d'Azur) (Example (4.19) in Cornish, 1999: 138)

Here, the physical context of the poster, a bus shelter on a major road near Grasse in the Provence-Côte d'Azur region of south-east France, together with the pictorial representation —a large colour photo of a blue-green sea bordered by a vegetation typical of the Côte d'Azur —evoke, in conjunction with the feminine gender of the disjunctive (and hence "anadeictically"-functioning: see Cornish 2010) pronoun *elle*, a description 'la mer (F.) Méditerranée'. Notice that the gender value manifested by the pronoun assumes that French speakers know that the Mediterranean is a 'sea' (*mer*, F.), and not an 'ocean' (*océan*, M.). Moreover, the presupposition of fragility and vulnerability assigned via the semantics of the predicator *veiller sur* 'watch over' to its single internal argument serves to activate and reinforce the stereotype or 'frame' associated with the Mediterranean assumed to be held in the intended addressee's long-term memory: it is 'sick', polluted, it is almost an enclosed sea, hence the pollutants which affect it cannot easily be absorbed and purified, etc. Thus it needs "caring for" or "watching over" by the relevant authorities.

4. *Towards a derivation of certain French agreement configurations within the FDG model*

Let us briefly attempt now a rather ambitious discourse-level representation of one of the previous examples, the sequence (9a)-(9b), showing how the context (in FDG terms, the purview of the Contextual component) may be exploited in order to motivate the shift in number specification as between the singular finite verb *vient* in (9a), and the (coherent) plural-marked subject pronoun *ils* and plural finite auxiliary *sont* in (9b) – the objectively verifiable referent being identical in each case. For this purpose, we will attempt to flesh out the Contextual component to some extent, drawing inspiration from Connolly's (2007, forthcoming 2014) FDG-oriented approach to the representation of discourse context.

Here again is example (9a), which I will place within its discourse context (as part of a news-in-brief article in a local newspaper about an eccentric man living on his own in a wood):

(9) a. . "...'C'est fou, le nombre de personnes
It is incredible, the number M.SG of person F.PL
qui vien**t** voir où et comment
REL.NOM come PRES 3.SG see where and how `
vit Gabriel…
live PRES 3SG. Gabriel…
(Extract from article "Le retour de l'homme des bois", *La Dépêche du Midi* 28.04.10, p. 8)

In terms of the context preceding this quotation (by the deputy mayor of the town near where Gabriel Viala, the man in question, was living —St Agnan), there are a number of items of world knowledge which the article presupposes as familiar to the intended reader of the article. These would need to be made available in the ontology provided by the Conceptual component:

Table 1: Activated contents of Conceptual component required for understanding article "Le retour de l'homme des bois" (*La Dépêche du Midi*, 28.04.10, p. 8)

-Hospital treatment
-Surgical Operations
-Scar(s) left by incision after an operation
-Escaping" from hospital where recovering from an operation
-Living in the woods as opposed to in an urban environment
-Media publicity often given to out-of-the-ordinary events
-Deputy mayor of a small French town
-Local newspaper reporters
-Going on a pilgrimage

Table 2: Information to be provided by the Contextual component to ensure both the formal properties of (9a) and its interpretation by the reader of the article in question.

Topic of source article as developed up to this point	A 62-year-old man, named Gabriel Viala, has had a prostate operation in Saint-Agnan, Tarn. But instead of quietly convalescing in hospital after the operation, he "escaped" and went back to live in an old caravan in the woods (since he preferred to live alone close to nature, in the wild).
Immediately preceding co-text + corresponding DU*	"…Pendant son absence et suite à la médiatisation de sa situation, le bois de Gabriel est devenu presqu'un lieu de pèlerinage." 'During GV's absence [from the wood where he lived, while in hospital], and following the media publicity given to his circumstances, Gabriel's wood has almost become a place of pilgrimage.' **<u>Corresponding DU</u>: [During s (time s (absent_from_home_in_wood, gv, s)) & CAUSE r (publicity_by_media, r) (know t (many_people, t) (u (situation_of, gv, u))) almost BECOME (v, wood_of_gv,v) (w, holy_place (visit, t, w))]**Message unit m47: Claim/Statement
Genre of text	Article in a local newspaper sold in S-W France, of the "news-in-brief" type. Topic is of the "local, human interest" type.
Style of text	Informal

* "DU" symbolises "discourse unit" (the discourse-structural correlate of a (minimal) "discourse act").

Table 2 is an attempt to flesh out the context needed to ensure the formal properties of utterance (9a) and its interpretation by the reader. The first row gives a summary of the content of the article up to this point. Then the second row specifies the immediately preceding co-text of (9a) (a co-text which is assumed to be held in working memory at the point where (9a) is processed). I have attempted to give a rough and ready representation of the discourse unit (symbolised as DU) corresponding to this co-text, once it will have been understood. The mode of representation adopted (as also in Tables 4 and 5 below) is an adaptation of a symbolic logic formula specifying the representational content of utterance (9a) in terms of the predicates and their arguments, with the basic scope relations indicated via the bracketing.

Let us call this "message unit 47", with the discourse-rhetorical function of 'Claim' or 'Statement'. The genre of the text is specified as being a "news-in-brief" article of the "human interest" type, published in a local French newspaper covering the South-West region. Finally, the style of the article is "informal".

Now let us see how the selection by the journalist of the quotation by the deputy mayor of St Agnan serves to update this framing context for (9a). Table 3 below provides its contextually-relevant utterance properties.

Table 3: Contextually relevant utterance-level properties of (9a)

Locutionary source of direct-speech quotation in (9a)	The deputy mayor of St. Agnan, Patrice Dayde.
Addressee of (9a):	*La Dépêche du Midi* reporter (author of the article), Richard Bornia — and indirectly, via RB's production of the article and its publication in this edition of the newspaper, the readers of the edition.
Time of utterance	About 21st April 2010 (the edition of the newspaper in question appeared on 28th April 2010)
Place of utterance	(Presumably) Town Hall of St Agnan, Tarn, France
Illocution of (9a), in its discourse context	Exclamation.
Information structure status	Topic-Focus + Tail (a right-detached construction typical of colloquial French speech). The right-detached Tail NP in P^{post} position, *le nombre de personnes qui vient voir où et comment vit Gabriel*, has a highly-presupposed topic referent, licensed via the preceding co-text: "…le bois de Gabriel est presque devenu *un lieu de pèlerinage*." ('GV's wood has virtually become a place of pilgrimage').

The utterance of (9a) corresponds to two Discourse acts: an exclamative act (*c'est fou* 'it's incredible') conveying the speaker's surprise at the large number of people coming to see Gabriel's place of residence in the wood, followed by an orienting act, expressed via the right-detached "Tail" NP *le nombre de personnes qui vient voir où et comment vit Gabriel*. These two discourse acts are fused into a single Move, which will be tagged as message unit 48. The discourse-rhetorical function of the unit corresponding to the direct-speech quotation by the deputy mayor of St Agnan in (9a) is that of *giving evidence* for the statement made in the immediately preceding co-text (see the second row of Table 2), and hence of reinforcing what it claims: that is, that the wood GV was living in had become a virtual pilgrimage site. The utterance in (9a) indirectly informs the reader *why* this was so: namely, because people from the region were curious to see exactly *where* and *how* this eccentric individual was living, having heard so much about him previously through the media. As is often the case in journalism, the use of direct-speech quotations is a means of giving evidence for, or generally backing up, prior statements. In FDG terms, each of these utterances (the first, written, the second spoken) would constitute a Discourse Act; and their integration into a higher-level discourse unit would constitute a Move.

Now, this new updated context strongly motivates the conceptualisation of the people wanting to see GV and his current habitat, no longer as a unitary *group* (as indicated by the 3rd person singular marking on the finite verb within the relative clause embedded within the Tail NP in (9a)), but as a *set of individuals*. Hence the contextually more appropriate 3rd person plural and not 3rd person singular verb agreement marking in the (ostensibly plausible) continuation of (9a), (9b), which I now characterize: see Tables 4 and 5 below.

(9) b. …***Il** arriv**e** de partout
PRON.NOM.M.3SG arrivePRES.3.SG from everywhere/
Il**s** arriv**ent** de partout.
PRON.NOM M.3PL arrive PRES.3PL from everywhere
(My continuation: FC)

Table 4: Information to be provided by the Contextual component to ensure both the formal properties of (9b) and its interpretation by the reader of the article in question

Topic of source article	As per Table 2, 1st row.
Immediately preceding co-text + corresponding (DU)	"'C'est fou, le nombre de personnes qui vien**t** voir où et comment vit Gabriel...'" Gabriel." **Corresponding DU**: "The number of people coming to see where and how GV lives is particularly large" **[(Particularly_large, x (number_of_people, x (come_to_see, x, y, z (place, y (live gv, y) & (manner, z (live gv, z))))))]**Message unit m48: Evidence1 for Claim47**
Genre of text	As per Table 2, 3rd row.
Style of text	As per Table 2, 4th row.

Table 5: Contextually relevant utterance-level properties of (9b)

Intended locutionary source of (9b)	As per Table 3, 1st row.
Intended addressee of (9b):	As per Table 3, 2nd row.
Time of utterance	As per Table 3, 3rd row.
Place of utterance	As per Table 3, 4th row.
Illocution of (9b), in its discourse context	Assertion (declarative mood).
Information structure status	*Topic-Focus.* The pronominal subject *Ils* codes a highly topical referent, here the set of individuals already indirectly evoked via the description "un lieu de pèlerinage", and via the reference to the incredibly large number of people who come to visit GV's habitat, available via the preceding co-text (now part of the framing discourse context for (9b)).
Discourse unit (9b)	*"…Ils arrivent de partout."* **DU: [BECOME be_at (many_people t (wood_gv)) & start_from t (∀x (place_in_SW_France, x))]** **Message unit m49: Evidence2 for Claim 47**

(9b), unlike (9a), would correspond to a single Discourse act (an assertion: message unit 49), and its integration with the discourse unit just constructed would be in terms of a further contribution of a piece of Evidence for the "Claim" introduced via the utterance of the immediate co-text of (9a) (see row 2 of Table 2). As noted earlier, the predication *arriver de partout* 'arriving from all parts of the area concerned' can only be applied coherently to a set of individuals assumed to be gathering at GV's place of residence from a variety of *different* starting points. This information derives from the meaning definition of the verb *arriver* (see the Appendix for an attempt at this), as well as from that of *de partout* in its predicational context. So in conjunction with the discourse status corresponding to the interpretation of the immediately preceding co-text (i.e. (9a)), whereby the processing of that direct-speech quotation will have given added emphasis to the immediately preceding assertion to the effect that GV's home had become "a virtual place of pilgrimage", the nature of what is predicated of the referent of *ils* ('they') in (9b) will strongly induce the interpretation "set of individuals" of the intended referent.

As such, the only number agreement marking possible on the subject pronoun, as also on the finite auxiliary *sont*, is plural. In addition, the independent utterance of (9b) corresponds syntactically to a separate sentence. So there is a break in coherence (as well as in cohesion) between the second Discourse act of the first Move and the independent Discourse act corresponding to the utterance of (9b). This of itself makes it less likely that the subject pronoun would continue the syntactically-determined "agreement" (and hence the "collective" interpretation of the intended referent to which it gives rise) marked on the finite verb (*vient*) in the right-detached Tail NP in (9a).

This discussion shows how agreement marking on 3rd person pronouns (as well as on NP-external agreement targets generally) is dependent on discourse-referential, co- and contextual, local rhetorical-structural as well as local predicational factors.

5. *Taking stock: Conclusions*

The description of agreement in the languages which exhibit it needs to take into account the following set of factors:

– those having to do with topic or focus status as well as speaker reference (thus involving the *Interpersonal level* within an FDG, indicating what the speaker is presupposing to be currently active in the addressee's mind at the time of utterance: cf. the "entity in focus" in Reid's (2011) account of English noun and verb number);
– those involving knowledge of the world (the *Conceptual component*) and of the conventions regulating communication as well as the immediate co-text and discourse constructed upstream of the incoming utterance (the purview of the *Contextual component*, specifying the intended reference, and how the referent is being conceptualised – a conceptualisation which may well evolve, as we have seen);
– those bearing on the particular function-argument relation in terms of which the agreement occurs (thus involving the *Representational level*, which should establish what is being predicated of the intended referent – crucial for determining which of a possible number of potential referents is in fact having something predicated of it);
– and finally, those concerning the nature of the grammatical relation which it expresses (the *Morphosyntactic*, encoding level).

The latter level, in conjunction with the Fund and the Contextual and Conceptual components, will also determine the particular bundles of feature values which will ultimately be spelled out as morpho-syntactic

inflections (or whole pronominal units, as the case may be): namely (in the case of French), values for the agreeing categories of *person* (cf. Siewierska 2004; Ariel 2000), *number* (Corbett 2000) and *gender* (Corbett 1991). Grammatical gender is a lexically-relevant category for which head nouns are inherently specified, and is semantically closely bound up with the predicate corresponding to common noun lemmas; so its immediate domain of relevance is NP-internal (potentially correlating with the form of epithet modifiers, both pre- and post-nominal, determiners and compound restrictive relative pronouns). It is only indirectly, through the "projection" of the gender value of the head noun to the containing NP, that it may correlate with the form of NP-external targets: past participles, predicative and appositive adjectives as well as variable nouns.

Given that the most common discourse function of 3rd person pronouns is to signal anaphora, it is to be expected that the grammatical inflections to which they give rise should also perform this function (see in this regard Fig. 1 above and Croft, 1988, p. 175). This is indeed the case, as we have seen (see example (7) and (10) in particular): more accurately, it is the gender feature value carried by agreement targets (epithet adjectives and determiners, compound restrictive relative pronouns, predicate and appositional adjectives and past participles as well as independent 3rd person pronouns) which fulfils this role. The person and number feature values marked on other targets (NP-internal —for number only—as well as -external) perform a more referential, deictically-oriented function (again, see (7) and (10) in this respect).

If this analysis is correct, then agreement-marking on targets does indeed have both semantic and referential import, contrary to what is claimed by Dik (1997), Hengeveld & Mackenzie (2008) and Hengeveld (2012) as well as certain other linguists —for whom agreement derives solely via feature copying from the relevant controller argument. The data and analyses given above seem to show that, often, agreement-marked forms serve to indicate, not only *which* controller amongst several possible candidates the target is to be understood as contracting a grammatical —and hence semantic, predicational— relation with; but also *how* its reference or denotation is to be construed in context.

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APPENDIX

Representations of examples (9a) and (9b) at the Interpersonal Level, the Representational Level, and the Morphosyntactic level within the FDG model

Examples (9a) + (9b)

Interpersonal Level (IL)

(M_0:

(M_1: (A_1: [(F_1: EXCL (F_1)) (P_1)$_S$ (P_2)$_A$ (C_1: [(T_1)$_{FOC}$ (R_1: +id [-S,-A] (R_1))] (C_1))] (A_1))

(A_2: [(F_2: DECL (F_2)) (P_1)$_S$ (P_2)$_A$ (C_2: [(R_1: +id [-S,-A] (R_1))$_{TOP}$] (C_2))] (A_2))$_{Orient}$ (M_1)) (= (10a))

(A_3: [(F_3: DECL (F_3)) (P_1)$_S$ (P_2)$_A$ (C_3: [(T_2) (+id R_1: [-S, -A] (R_1)$_{TOP}$)] (C_3)) (A_3)) (=(10b))

M_0)

Meaning definitions for the verbs *venir* 'come' in (9a) and *arriver* 'arrive' in (9b):

(a) *venir* [V]

[f_1: move_along_path (x_1) & [f_2: [INGR be_at (x_1), (x_2)$_{LOC[+S]}$]] (i.e. "coming to be where the speaker of the containing utterance is located")

(b) *arriver* [V]

[f_1: move_along_path (x_1) & [f_2: INGR be_at (x_1), (x_2)$_{LOC}$]]

Representational Level (RL)

(i) (PRES e_i: [(f_j: *fou* (f_j)) (x_i)] (e_i))

(ii) (coll x_j: [(1f_k: *nombre* (f_k)): [(mx_l: *personne*) (x_l))$_{Ref}$: [PRES sim e_j: [(IMP f_l: [(f_m: *venir*: (f_n: *voir* (f_n)) (f_m)) (e_k): [(PRES ep_i: [(sim e_l: [IMP f_o: [(f_p: *vivre* (f_p))] (x_m: *Gabriel* (x_m)$_{FOC}$] (f_q [(f_r: *où* (f_r))$_{FOC}$ - (*et*) - (f_s: *comment* (f_s))]$_{FOC}$ (f_q)) (f_o))] (e_l)] (ep_i)) (e_k)] (f_l))] (e_j))] (x_l)) (x_j) $_{TOP}$) ((i) + (ii) = (10a))

(iii) (PRES ep_k: [(e_i: [IMP f_s: [(f_t: *arriver* (f_t)) (distr id (x_m))$_{ATOP}$ (e_l)] (prox: (f_u)$_{LOC}$ (f_v: *partout* (f_v))$_{SO\ FOC}$] (f_s)] (ep_k)) ((iii) = (10b))

Morphosyntactic Level (ML) (Simplified)

(i) (Cl_i: [(Gw_i: *ce*)$_{Subj}$ (Vp_i: (Vw_{icop}: *es*-+-*t*) (Vp_i)) ($Adjp_i$: ($Adjw_i$: *fou*) ($Adjp_i$:] (Cl_i))

(ii) (Np_i: [(Gw_j: *le*) (Nw_i: *nombre*) [(Adp_i: (Gw_k: *de*) [Np_j: (Nw_k: *personne-s*) [(Cl_j: (Gw_l: *qui*) (Vp_j: [(Vw_j: *vien*-+-*t*) (Vp_k: [(Vw_{kinf}: *voir*)] (Vp_k))] (Vp_j)) [(Cl_k: ($Advp_i$: [[$Advw_i$: *où*)]$_{Loc}$ (Gw_m: *et*) [$Advw_j$: *comment*)]$_{Man}$] ($Advp_i$)) (Vp_l: (Vw_l: *vi*-+-*t*) (Vp_l)) (Np_j: (Nw_l: *Gabriel*) (Np_l))$_{Subj}$] (Cl_k))] (Cl_j))] (Np_j)] (Adp_i)] (Np_i))

(iii) (Cl_l: (Np_l: [(Gw_o: *il*-+-*s*)] (Np_l))$_{Subj}$ (Vp_m: [(Vw_m: *arriv*-+-*ent*)] (Vp_m)) (Adp_j: [(Gw_p: *de*) ($Advp_j$: ($Advw_k$: *partout*) ($Advp_j$))] (Adp_j)) (Cl_l))

Note: In ML (ii), the constituent ordering template will place the compound adverb *où et comment* 'where and how' in P1 position within clause Cl_k, and the Np *Gabriel* in P^F position (since it is Focus).

The specification within the RL (ii) representation of the conception of referent (x_i) as 'collective' (coll) or 'distributive' (distr) will trigger the agreement feature value 'singular' (as in (9a)) or plural (as in (9b)).