

A stab at nominal concord: A comparative perspective

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Part of the empirical context of this talk is Left Branch Extraction (LBE) as is familiar from many Slavic languages, but not e.g. Bulgarian and Macedonian (Bošković (2005)). LBE refers to movement of a determiner out of an NP. This is exemplified by Polish in (1) where α designates the relevant extractee unit:

- (1) [Którą]₁ kupiłeś [_{α} *t*₁ książkę]?
 which you.bought book
 ‘Which book did you buy?’

Rappaport (2000, 183)

Two factors have been claimed to condition the availability of LBE:

- (2) LBE is possible in a language if
- the language lacks articles (e.g. Uriagereka (1988), Corver (1990); Bošković (2005)) and
 - the language exhibits rich morphologically manifested nominal concord (e.g. Ross (1967), Bošković (2009, 2013), Reeve (2019)).

In Blümel (2024, 2025) I propose to capture LBE by the Nominal Strength Parameter according to which the categorizing nominal head *n* comes in the parametric flavors “strong” and “weak” for the purposes of labeling (building on Chomsky (2015)):

- (3) The Nominal Strength Parameter
- strong *n*/*n*_{str}: BSC, Czech, Polish, Russian, ...
 - weak *n*/*n*_{wk}: Dutch, English, German, Italian, ...

Accordingly, (1) is possible because *n*_{str} can be identified as a category label of α . In languages featuring *n*_{wk}, by contrast, the counterpart of (1) is ungrammatical (cf. Ross’s (1967) Left Branch Condition (LBC)) because the extractee unit remains fatally uncategorized. The analysis thus fares without the DP-hypothesis for both classes of languages. As for the availability of articles (i.e. (2-a)), *n*_{str} and *n*_{wk} unify LBE and LBC with optional and obligatory determiners (the nominal analogues of pro-drop and EPP-effects), providing a new perspective on the question. Finally, *n*_{str} and *n*_{wk} correlate with rich and poor noun inflection.

In this talk I return to Bošković’s (2005) claim that LBE of AP constitutes a class of languages (NP, in his terms). With an eye on finding the right analytical angle at (2-b) I establish the descriptive generalization that next to the conditions in (2), for a language to permit LBE, it must exhibit adjectival agreement when APs are used predicatively (for different but related context, cf. Alexeyenko and Zeijlstra (2025)). Analytical options will be discussed.

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