

The Agreement Hierarchy revisited

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The Agreement Hierarchy constrains the distribution of semantic versus syntactic agreement (operating at corpus level).

The **Agreement Hierarchy** (Corbett 1979)

attributive > predicate > relative pronoun > personal pronoun

The constraint is that:

For any controller that permits alternative agreements, as we move rightwards along the Agreement Hierarchy, the likelihood of agreement with greater semantic justification will increase monotonically.

The Hierarchy constrains agreement with lexical hybrids, and with constructional mismatches (such as conjoined noun phrases and even Scandinavian ‘pancake’ constructions). It appears also to cover so-called split hybrids, that is, nouns which are hybrid in only a part of their paradigm. An example is Serbo-Croat nouns like *gazda* ‘landlord’, which are normal (masculine) nouns when singular, but hybrids (masculine/feminine) when plural. I analyse these split hybrids within a more general typology of external splits, and show how a canonical approach locates them elegantly within an overall scheme. More generally, I suggest that when we have a typology which successfully covers a range of data, we should go on to pull apart the methodological steps it rests on, and to articulate their significance (Round & Corbett forthcoming).