

An Areal Typology of Agreement Systems

Surveying over 300 languages, this typological study presents new theoretical insights into the nature of agreement, as well as empirical findings about the distribution of agreement patterns in the world's languages. Focusing primarily on agreement in gender, number and person, but with reference to agreement in other smaller categories, Ranko Matasović aims to discover which patterns of agreement are widespread and common in languages, and which are rather limited in their distribution. He sheds new light on a range of important theoretical questions such as what agreement actually is, what areal, typological and genetic patterns exist across agreement systems, and what problems in the analysis of agreement remain unresolved.

RANKO MATASOVIĆ is Professor of Comparative Linguistics in the University of Zagreb and a Fellow of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He has published thirteen books in Croatia and abroad, including *Gender in Indo-European* (2004) and *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic* (2009).

An Areal Typology of Agreement Systems

Ranko Matasović
University of Zagreb



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42097-6 — An Areal Typology of Agreement Systems
Ranko Matasović
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108420976
DOI: 10.1017/9781108355766

© Ranko Matasović 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Matasović, Ranko, author.

Title: An areal typology of agreement systems /

Ranko Matasović, University of Zagreb.

Description: Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018000225 | ISBN 9781108420976 (hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: Grammar, Comparative and general – Agreement.

Classification: LCC P299.A35.M38 2018 | DDC 415–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018000225>

ISBN 978-1-108-42097-6 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of Maps</i>	viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiii

Part I Theoretical Prerequisites

1	Introduction	3
	1.1 The Topic of This Book	3
	1.2 Outline of the Book	9
2	What Is Agreement?	12
3	Domains of Agreement and Categories Involved	20
	3.1 Domains	20
	3.2 Categories	25
	3.3 Summary	41
4	Problems with Agreement	42
	4.1 Optionality of Agreement	42
	4.2 Omission of Controllers	45
	4.3 Referentiality of Targets: Pronominal Argument Hypothesis	48
	4.4 Markedness of Targets	53
	4.5 Case Agreement	58
	4.6 Person/Number Agreement in the NP	60
5	Grammatical, Ambiguous and Anaphoric Agreement	63
6	Marginal Agreement	71

Part II Empirical Results

7	The Sample of Languages	77
	7.1 The Construction of the Sample	77
	7.2 The Design of the Database	83

vi	Contents	
8	Areal and Genetic Patterns in Agreement Systems	86
8.1	Eurasia	88
8.2	Africa and the Middle East	91
8.3	North America	96
8.4	South America	100
8.5	Australia and Oceania	107
8.6	Differences among the Macro-Areas	112
8.7	Areal and Genetic Stability of Agreement Patterns	115
9	Typological Correlations in Agreement Systems	123
9.1	Adnominal and Verbal Agreement	123
9.2	Grammatical Verbal Agreement and Adnominal Agreement	127
9.3	Person Agreement in the NP and in the Verb	128
9.4	Agreement and Word Order	129
10	Diachronic Patterns in the Development of Agreement	136
10.1	Origins of Agreement	137
10.2	Loss of Agreement	148
11	Conclusions	153
	<i>Appendix: Languages in the Database</i>	155
	<i>References</i>	171
	<i>Language Index</i>	193
	<i>Subject Index</i>	199

Figures

1	Combinations of categories involved in adnominal agreement	<i>page 27</i>
2	Combinations of categories involved in verbal agreement	30
3	The development of agreement systems	147

Maps

1	Languages in the sample	<i>page</i> 83
2	Languages with gender (in any domain) in Eurasia	92
3	Languages with case agreement in Eurasia	93
4	Languages with gender in Africa	98
5	Languages with gender in North America	102
6	Languages with gender in South America	108
7	Languages with gender in Australia and Oceania	113
8	Languages with case agreement	114
9	Languages without verbal agreement	114
10	Languages with grammatical verbal agreement	115
11	Languages with adnominal agreement	116
12	Languages with adnominal agreement without verbal agreement in Australia	126
13	Languages with adnominal agreement without verbal agreement in Africa	127
14	Languages with bound pronouns in Australia	151

Tables

1	Asymmetries in agreement domains	<i>page</i> 21
2	Categories and domains of agreement	41
3	A typology of verbal agreement systems (for number)	66
4	A typology of adnominal agreement systems (for number)	69
5	The proportions of languages in the sample by macro-areas	83
6	Agreement in the languages of Eurasia	92
7	Agreement in the languages of Africa and the Middle East	97
8	Agreement in the languages of North America	101
9	Agreement in the languages of South America	107
10	Agreement in the languages of Australia	112
11	Frequency of agreement patterns in different macro-areas	113
12	Selection of languages from ten large families	117
13	Selection of languages from ten micro-areas	117
14	Means and modes for selected agreement patterns in families	118
15	Means and modes for selected agreement patterns in micro-areas	118
16	Deviations from the means obtained for randomly selected languages (for families)	120
17	Deviations from the means obtained for randomly selected languages (for micro-areas)	120
18	Statistical significance of divergences between areas and families with respect to patterns of agreement	121
19	Rareness of the [+NA & -VA] type	126
20	Distribution of languages with adnominal agreement and the order of adjective and noun	135
21	Agreement and word order	135

Preface

Quid velit et possit rerum concordia discors?
(Horace, Epistles 1.12.19)

This book is the result of over a decade of investigation. It all began in 2004, when I wrote a monograph on gender in Proto-Indo-European (Matasović 2004), a synthetic treatment of the development of that category in one of the largest and best-studied language families in the world. One of the conclusions of that book was that gender, as a grammatical category, has an unexpected distribution in Eurasia, in that the languages and language families in the south and west of Eurasia are gendered, while those in the north and east are not. Moreover, gender agreement is mostly adnominal in Indo-European, while it is shown on verbs in all other gendered families of Eurasia. This led me to extend my investigations to other forms of adnominal agreement and to other linguistic areas. In a paper published in 2014 (Matasović 2014a) I argued that there was a fundamental areal–typological opposition between languages with adnominal agreement and those without it, and that languages with adnominal agreement generally also have verbal agreement, while the converse does not hold. However, the sample of languages on which the 2014 paper was based was too small and it was somewhat biased, as too many languages from Eurasia were included; moreover, the definition of verbal agreement used in that article was objectionable, as it was taken for granted that only languages with argument indices coded by affixes should be taken to instantiate verbal agreement. Clitics were disregarded, and the relationship between clitic and affixal agreement was not properly discussed. Therefore, a larger and more carefully constructed sample was needed, and several methodological problems had to be addressed. This book grew out of that effort.

I have reported on the progress of my work at several conferences, including “Syntax of the World’s Languages V” organized by myself and my colleagues in Dubrovnik in 2012, as well as at “Syntax of the World’s Languages VI” in Pavia in 2014. I would like to thank the participants of these conferences for their discussion of my papers, and especially to Tena Gnjatović, who helped me with the Pavia presentation. Part of the research carried out in preparation of

this book was supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Bonn), to which I am very grateful for helping me not only now, but at several points in my career.

I would like to thank Martin Haspelmath for being my host at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in 2015, where I used the magnificent resources of the Institute's library – probably the largest collection of grammars of “exotic” languages in the world. I am also grateful to Greville Corbett, whose work on gender and agreement provided a lot of theoretical framework for this book, and who offered me advice and help on several occasions. Robert D. Van Valin, Jr. and his colleagues from the Institute of Linguistics in Düsseldorf University invited me to present the first results of my investigations in December 2015 and I would like to sincerely thank them for the stimulating questions and discussion that followed my presentation. Some of the most difficult chapters of this book were written in the winter semester of 2015, while I was a visiting professor in Heidelberg University, and I doubt that I could have finished them were it not for the intellectually stimulating atmosphere and good academic resources of that university. I would also like to thank my research assistant, Jurica Polančec, who has kindly read the first draft of this book and suggested some corrections and improvements, as well as to Goran Pavelić for a number of corrections.

Finally, the greatest thanks of all go to my wife, Maja, and to my three sons, Mavro, Lujo and Fran. Writing good books matters, but living with good people while doing it matters more.

Abbreviations

Almost all the abbreviations for grammatical morphemes were taken from the sources in which the original examples quoted in the text appear. However, some regularization was made where there was absolutely no doubt of confusion, e.g. *f.* for feminine gender was consistently changed to *fem.* Leipzig glossing rules (www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php) were used throughout the book, whenever our sources allowed it.

<i>abl.</i>	=	ablative
<i>abs.</i>	=	absolutive
<i>acc.</i>	=	accusative
<i>adj.</i>	=	adjectivizer
<i>aff.</i>	=	affirmative
<i>all.</i>	=	allative
<i>a.obl.</i>	=	associating oblique
<i>art.</i>	=	article
<i>aux.</i>	=	auxiliary
<i>caus.</i>	=	causative
<i>cl.</i>	=	noun class (gender)
<i>comit.</i>	=	comitative
<i>cvb.</i>	=	converb
<i>dat.</i>	=	dative
<i>deic.</i>	=	deictic
<i>dem.</i>	=	demonstrative
<i>det.</i>	=	determined
<i>dir.</i>	=	directional
<i>du.</i>	=	dual
<i>erg.</i>	=	ergative
<i>evid.</i>	=	evidential marker
<i>excl.</i>	=	exclusive
<i>fem.</i>	=	feminine
<i>fut.</i>	=	future

xiv List of Abbreviations

gen.	=	genitive
hon.	=	honorific
hum.	=	human
imp.	=	imperative
iness.	=	inessive
inf.	=	infinitive
ins.	=	instrumental
interr.	=	interrogative
intrans.	=	intransitive
ipf.	=	imperfective
irr.	=	irrealis
loc.	=	locative
local	=	local case
m.	=	masculine
m.abl.	=	modal ablative
nar.	=	narrative
nmsr.	=	nominalizer
nom.	=	nominative
obj.	=	object
obl.	=	oblique
part.	=	participle
pauc.	=	paucal
perf.	=	perfect
pf.	=	perfective
pl.	=	plural
poss.	=	possessive
pres.	=	present
pret.	=	preterite
pst.	=	past
ptc.	=	particle
real.	=	realis
refl.	=	reflexive
sg.	=	singular
subj.	=	subject
top.	=	topic
trans.	=	transitive
v.dat.	=	verbal dative