

Metasyncretism I: Bobaljik (2002)

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1 Underspecification

(1) Polish *wh*-forms

	'who'	'what'
NOM	<i>kto</i>	<i>co</i>
ACC	<i>kogo</i>	<i>co</i>
GEN	<i>kogo</i>	<i>czego</i>

- Solution here: decomposition & underspecification
- Not all syncretism can be reduced to natural classes. Take this Hindi data:

(2) 'boy' (MASC)	singular	plural	(3) 'big' (MASC)	singular	plural
NOM	laDk-aa	laDk-e	NOM	baD-aa	baD-e
OBL	laDk-e	laDk-õ	OBL	baD-e	baD-e

- What is the distribution of *-e* in Hindi?

2 Impoverishment

- There are examples of syncretic patterns that appear to be systematic:

(4) *Person/number marking in pronouns in Burarra* (Baerman et al. 2005):

	singular	dual	plural
1st	ngu-	nyiburr-	nyirri-
2nd	nyi-	nyiburr-	nyirri-
3rd	(a-)	aburr-	(a)birri-

- This is a *meta-syncretism*.
- What would an underspecification analysis of this syncretism look like?
- What important fact does it miss?
- Instead, we can assume a more general *impoverishment* rule that removes the distinction between 1st and 2nd persons in both the dual and the plural.

3 Rules of referral

- An alternative approach to syncretism involves *rules of referral* (Zwicky 1985).
- This can capture the metasyncretism in Burarra:

(5) In non-singular contexts, the 1st person has the same form as the 2nd person.

- Another argument from Stump (1993: 452f.) based on Macedonian:

(6) *Present/past inflection for Macedonian padn- ('to fall')*:

	present			imperfect			aorist		
	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III
1SG	<i>padn</i>		<i>-am</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-v</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-v</i>
2SG	<i>padn</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-š</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-še</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-a</i>	
3SG	<i>padn</i>	<i>-e</i>		<i>padn</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-še</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-a</i>	
1PL	<i>padn</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-me</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-v</i> <i>-me</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-v</i> <i>-me</i>
2PL	<i>padn</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-te</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-v</i> <i>-te</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-v</i> <i>-te</i>
3PL	<i>padn</i>		<i>-at</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-e</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>padn</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-a</i>

- Stump's point: 2SG and 3SG syncretism is captured by referral, not underspecification.
- Consider the following partial analysis (focussing on the middle paradigm):

(7) Slot II:

- [+past, 'non-third person'] ↔ *-v*
- elsewhere ↔ \emptyset

(8) Slot III:

- [3rd person, -plural, +impf] ↔ *še*
- [1st person, -plural] ↔ *me*
- [2nd person, +plural] ↔ *te*
- [3rd person, +plural] ↔ *a*

(9) *Rule of referral:*
 In past tenses, the second person singular has the same form as the third person singular.

• What about this alternative? Assuming (10) instead of a rule of referral:

- (10) a. Slot II: [2nd, -pl, +past] ↔ ∅
 b. Slot III:
 (i) [1st, -pl, +impf] ↔ ∅
 (ii) [-pl, +impf] ↔ -še

• A better argument for rules of referral?

(11) *Gender markers in Khinalug* (Corbett 1991):

	Series 1		Series 2		Series 3	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
I	∅	b-	j	v-	h-	f-
II	z-	b-	z-	v-	s-	f-
III	b-	∅	v-	j-	f-	h-
IV	∅	∅	j-	j-	h-	h-

• Also consider this data from Nehan articles (Baerman 2007):

(12)

'the'	class I	class II
SG	a	o
PL	o	a

(13)

'a'	class I	class II
SG	me	mo
PL	mo	me

4 Williams' (1994) argument for paradigms

Williams' first argument:

• Williams argues that (14) forms part of speakers' knowledge about English morphology:

(14) *English Meta-Paradigm:*

	Present		Past	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1st	B		C	
2nd				
3rd	A			

• Even though there are different endings for past tense (and participles), they never express distinctions in the non-present tense:

- (15) a. -n (stolen)
 b. -ed (helped)
 c. -t (felt)
 d. -∅ (hit)

• Bobaljki provides a similar example from Russian:

(16) *3rd person nominative pronouns in Russian:*

Masc (sg.)	on	Masc (pl.)	on-i
Fem (sg.)	on-a	Fem (pl.)	on-i
Neut (sg.)	on-o	Neut (pl.)	on-i

(17) *3rd person dative pronouns in Russian:*

Masc (sg.)	emu	Masc (pl.)	im
Fem (sg.)	ej	Fem (pl.)	im
Neut (sg.)	emu	Neut (pl.)	im

(18) *Nominative adjectival endings in Russian:*

Masc (sg.)	-yj	Masc (pl.)	-ye
Fem (sg.)	-aja	Fem (pl.)	-ye
Neut (sg.)	-oe	Neut (pl.)	-ye

• What is the meta-paradigm?

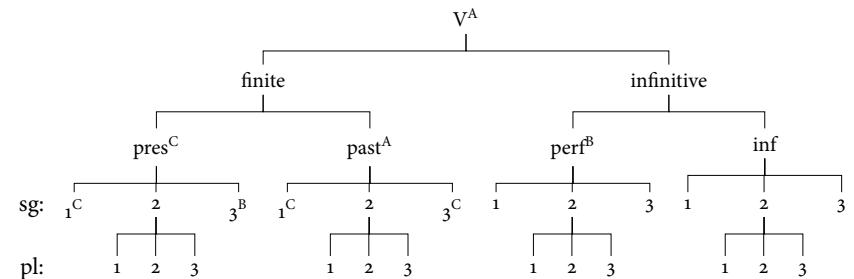
• This can be done in terms of disjunctively-ordered realization rules:

- (19) a. -/d/ ↔ past
 b. -/z/ ↔ 3sg
 c. -∅ ↔ elsewhere

• How can we derive this by Impoverishment?

• Williams' original proposal for English:

(20)



- Morphological forms are specified for 'entry points' into this hierarchy.
- Consider the paradigms for *write*, *play*, *be*, and modals.
- What are the entry points for each form?

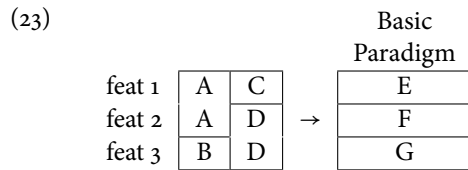
- (21) a. *be* = C, B, A
 b. *write* = B, A
 c. *can* = A

- Bobaljik's criticism*: This doesn't capture 1st/3rd sg. past syncretism with *be* as a natural class.
- Impoverishment can do this. How?

Williams' second argument:

- (22) *Instantiated Basic Paradigm Requirement*:

When there are multiple related paradigms, there will be one instantiated paradigm, and all others will have its syncretic structure, and perhaps some more. But no other related paradigm will have a contrary syncretic structure, making distinctions where that one does not. We will call that one paradigm the basic paradigm.



- How does English conform to this? What would a hypothetical paradigm look like that violated it?
- Bobaljik provides a Russian example to illustrate this further:

- (24) *Russian nominal declension*:

	Masc Animate Singular	Masc Inanimate Singular	Animate Plural	Inanimate Plural
NOM	-∅	-∅	-y	-y
ACC	-a	-∅	-∅/-ov/...	-y
GEN	-a	-a	-∅/-ov/...	-∅

- (25) *Russian adjectival inflection*:

	Masc Animate Singular	Masc Inanimate Singular	Animate Plural	Inanimate Plural
NOM	-yj	-∅	-yj	-yje
ACC	-ogo	-yj	-yx	-yje
GEN	-ogo	-ogo	-yx	-yx

- What kind of paradigm do we expect to find, given the Instantiated Basic Paradigm Requirement?

- (26) *Russian nominal/adjectival declension (fem sg.)*:

	Feminine noun	Feminine poss. pron	Feminine adjective
NOM	-a	moj-a	-aja
ACC	-u	moj-u	-uju
GEN	-y	moj-ej	-oj

- Bobaljik note that expanding these paradigms to include the three other cases is problematic:

- (27) *Russian nominal/adjective declension (fem. sg) – expanded*:

	feminine noun	feminine poss. pron	feminine adj
NOM	-a	moj-a	-aja
ACC	-u	moj-u	-uju
GEN	-y	moj-ej	-oj
INSTR	-oj	moj-ej	-oj
DAT	-e	moj-ej	-oj
PREP	-e	moj-ej	-oj

- (28) *Russian nominal/adjective declension (fem. sg) – expanded*:

	Masc sg. noun	Plural noun	Plural adjective
NOM	-∅	-y	-yje
ACC	-∅ -a	-y -∅	-yje -yx
GEN	-a	-∅	-yx
INSTR	-om	-ami	-ymi
DAT	-u	-am	-ym
PREP	-e	-ax	-yx

- Why is this a problem for Williams?

5 Subanalysis

- The complexity of our morphological analysis often depends on more basic analytic choices about how many morphemes we have.
- This is not always trivial. Consider the following German data:

(29) *Past/present paradigm for regular German glauben ('to believe')*:

	present	past
1SG	glaube	glaubte
2SG	glaubst	glaubtest
3SG	glaubt	glaubte
1PL	glauben	glaubten
2PL	glaubt	glaubtet
3PL	glauben	glaubten

- What are the possible analyses for verbal inflection that we could give here?
- Sometimes even complex cases can be decomposed:

(30) *German irregular sein ('to be') in present tense*:

	singular	plural
1st person	bin	sind
2nd person	bist	seid
3rd person	ist	sind

(31) *Radical subanalysis of German irregular sein (Pike 1965)*:

	A	B	C	D	E	
1SG	b		i	n		<i>bin</i>
2SG	b		i	s	t	<i>bist</i>
3SG			i	s	t	<i>ist</i>
1PL	z		i	n	t	<i>sind</i>
2PL	z	a	i		t	<i>seid</i>
3PL	z		i	n	t	<i>sind</i>
INF	z	a	i	n		<i>sein</i>

- Consider this Hupa agreement paradigm from Embick (2015: 116):

(32) *Agreement prefixes in Hupa*:

	subject	object
1sg	W-	Wi
2sg	n-	ni
1pl	di	noh-
2pl	oh-	noh-

(33) An analysis based on (33):

- [+1, -pl, +subj] ↔ W-
- [+1, -pl, +obj] ↔ Wi
- [+2, -pl, +subj] ↔ n-
- [+2, -pl, +obj] ↔ ni-
- [+1, +pl, +subj] ↔ di-
- [+2, +pl, +subj] ↔ oh-
- [+pl, +obj] ↔ noh-

- Does this miss any potential generalizations about (33)?

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