Morphologie: Morphologie der Argumentkodierung
Das Obermengenprinzip

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The Superset Principle

(1) Superset Principle (Starke (2002)):
The phonological exponent of a vocabulary item is inserted into a node if the item matches all or a superset of the grammatical features specified in the node. Insertion does not take place if the vocabulary item does not contain all features present in the node. Where several items meet the conditions for insertion, the item containing fewer features unspecified in the node must be chosen.

(2) Decomposing the Superset Principle:
a. Condition on insertion:
The translator can insert everything that is a superset of the features of a given node.
b. Elsewhere condition:
If there are more candidates, it inserts the best match.

The English Verb ‘be’

(3) Example: Inflection of “be” in English:

	Singular	Plural
1	am	are
2	are	are
3	is	are

(4) Feature decomposition:
participant, addressee, group, present

(5) Vocabulary items:

a. /am/ $\leftrightarrow$ [pres,part]

b. /is/ $\leftrightarrow$ [pres]

c. /are/ $\leftrightarrow$ [pres,part,addr,group]

The English Verb 'be' cont'd

(6) Competition:

Features	Ø	Group
part	am ~~are~~	are
part,addr	are	are
Ø	is ~~am~~ ~~are~~	are

Note:

- The default exponent is overspecified.
- The exponents that block its insertion in certain environments have fewer features.
- The feature specification of a vi does not have to be coherent, or capture a natural class of instantiations of a grammatical category.
- Syntactic contexts are inhomogeneous (e.g., 3. person contexts in syntax have fewer features than 1. person contexts, which have fewer features than 2. person contexts).

A Difference: The Shape of Paradigms

Lit.: Caha (2007, 2010)

- The Subset Principle predicts that default exponents disappear first in the most complex (marked) environments across paradigms.
- The Superset Principle predicts that default exponents disappear first in the least complex (unmarked) environments across paradigms.

(7) The Subset Shape:

Features	Paradigm 1	Paradigm 2	Paradigm 3
[x]	**D**	**D**	**D**
[x,y]	**D**	**D**	C
[x,y,z]	**D**	A	B

(8) The Superset Shape:

Features	Paradigm 1	Paradigm 2	Paradigm 3
[x]	**D**	A	B
[x,y]	**D**	**D**	C
[x,y,z]	**D**	**D**	**D**

Czech Declension

(9) a. nom = [x]
b. acc = [x,y]
c. ins = [x,y,z]

Assumption:
x, y, z encode trees: The instrumental tree contains the accusative tree, which contains the nominative tree (all on top of the DP).

(10) A subset of declension paradigms of standard Czech:

	hrad 'castle',pl	pán 'lord', pl	kuře 'chicken', pl	Adj fem.sg	žena 'woman',sg
nom: [x]	**hrad-y**	pán-i	kuřat-a	dobr-á	žen-a
acc: [x,y]	**hrad-y**	**pán-y**	kuřat-a	**dobr-óu**	žen-u
ins: [x,y,z]	**hrad-y**	**pán-y**	**kuřat-y**	**dobr-óu**	**žen-ou**

- There is a transparadigmatic syncretism pattern.
- The pattern is expected under the Superset Principle, but not under the Subset Principle.

Questions

- What are the predictions if all syntactic contexts are characterized by the same number of features?
- Impoverishment under Subset Principle = Enrichment under Superset Principle (cf. retreat to the general case)?
- What do the entries of the vi's in Czech look like? (/y/ $\leftrightarrow$ [x,y,z], but /a/ $\leftrightarrow$ [x,y],[α])