



# 615:515 Seminar in Syntax, Spring 2023

## Topic: Agreement with Coordinate Structures

Instructor: Luke James Adamson

### **Instructor and Contact Information**

Hi, I'm Luke and I use the pronouns he/him/his; you can address me by my first name.

I can be reached by email at [luke.adamson@rutgers.edu](mailto:luke.adamson@rutgers.edu). You can expect to hear back from me usually within 24 hours. Meetings are by appointment, and will be held in Kristen Syrett's office on the third floor of the department building.

My communications meant for the whole group will be sent via the Canvas site through Announcements.

### **Seminar Meeting Days, Times, Location, and Modality**

This seminar meets in person on **Tuesdays from 12:10 to 3:10 P.M.** in SEM-108 in the department building at 18 Seminary Place.

### **Seminar Description**

This seminar is going to explore how coordinate structures induce patterns of  $\phi$ -agreement marking (broadly construed). Understanding coordination is an objective of linguistic theory in its own right, but coordination phenomena also have the potential to shed light on other important topics, including feature representation, the mechanics of agreement, binding, and the modularity of the grammar. Depending in part on enrollee/participant interests, topics may include: coordination resolution, single conjunct agreement, agreement with Right-Node-Raising, agreement inside nominals, directionality of agreement, and syntax vs. morphology modularity.

The seminar is (unsurprisingly) going to operate under a seminar format. In each meeting, we'll discuss (roughly) two original research articles and/or book chapters, and work through a couple derivations to evaluate how well each account fares against some data set. A list of potential readings can be found below. We'll pick at least some of our readings from this list, but we may deviate from it, should other relevant literature be suggested or come up. Each set of readings will be announced on Canvas one week before we discuss it, and will be made available in the Modules section of the Canvas page.

# Materials

All research articles/chapters will be made available via Canvas in the Modules section. If you are not registered but would like Canvas access, please let me know by email.

## Course Requirements (for Registered Students)

### Grading

1. Post one weekly discussion question per reading to Canvas: 15%
2. Four critical summaries: 20%
3. Leading the discussion for one reading: 15%
4. Final paper: 50%
  - 2a. Proposal (10%)
  - 2b. Brief Presentation (10%)
  - 2c. Paper (30%)

#### 1. Weekly discussion questions

Every week we meet, I'd like for registered students – *and for auditors, if they would be so kind!* – to post a discussion question on Canvas on the 'Discussions' page for each article/chapter we read. This should be submitted by **10:10 A.M.** on seminar days. A discussion question can range from something open-ended (but contentful) to something specific and technical. It can be a question that you have a possible answer to but want to know what other people think; it can be about something that you don't understand at all; it can be about a problem you think the paper suffers from. (See the 'critical summaries' section if you're seeking inspiration for types of questions to ask.)

#### 2. Critical summaries

Participation is vital to the seminar format. To prepare for discussion, before each meeting, you'll read the assigned research article/chapter(s) carefully. **For four articles/chapters of your choice**, you'll write up a **brief (!) critical summary** of about 300-500 words (=a page or less), which you'll submit to Canvas by **10:10 A.M.** the day of the seminar. In the summary, you'll want to address a few key points, using this set of questions as a guide (not necessarily as a template):

- *What are the main hypotheses of interest in this work?* Try to state them succinctly without directly paraphrasing the abstract. Also, go general – no need to describe the detailed mechanics of the analysis.
- *What types of data and/or arguments are presented that bear on these hypotheses?* This should be, for example, about empirical generalizations and how they're applied by the author(s).

- *According to your own assessment, in what ways do the arguments seem to succeed or not succeed? Is the logic sound? Are there plausible alternatives? Are alternatives discounted by the author(s)?*
- *Relatedly, is there any unclarity regarding how an account is supposed to work? Points of unclarity can be ‘forest’-level or ‘tree’-level, and they may be points of personal clarification, or they can be genuine problems with an account. (It’s okay if you’re not sure which, but try to see if the research piece somehow addresses the issue.)*
- *Can you think of other relevant phenomena or considerations that might support or problematize the views presented in this work? Fine if not – but worth pondering.*

Of course, a review article might tackle all these questions at length and in depth, but this isn’t your objective. Rather, you should aim to write something concise and coherent that i) organizes your thinking on the material, ii) prepares you to raise points and issues for seminar discussion, and that iii) you could (in principle) return to later to remind yourself of what your main reactions were to the research. You may find this material useful in the preparation for your final paper.

### **3. Leading a discussion for one reading**

Towards the beginning of the semester, you will choose a reading and a date to lead the discussion on. (You may also volunteer to do this if you aren’t registered for the course.) I don’t expect you to orate for an hour and a half. Rather, I would like for you to **compose a handout** (possibly framed in a similar manner to the critical summary described above) and **guide the seminar conversation** for about half of the seminar that day, coming equipped with a few open-ended questions that may lead to fruitful exchanges among the seminar participants. 1.5 hours can be a long time, so don’t worry about being able to fill that whole slot; I’ll step in with additional questions or observations to discuss.

### **4. Research proposal/presentation/paper**

At the end of the semester, you’ll submit a final ‘squib’, due on the last day of the exam period (5/10). The squib should be related, or at least adjacent to, the seminar topics. You’ll want to collect some original data – informal grammaticality judgments from you or your friends are acceptable – and engage with theoretical literature that we’ve read and/or from elsewhere. Alternative proposals may also be entertained, but please ask me about them before the proposal deadline.

**Proposal** In preparation for writing the squib, you’ll write a brief proposal (less than a page) to be submitted by Apr. 4, which should sketch out i) what the broad focus is, ii) how the work relates to some of the seminar topics, iii) how you plan to approach collecting data, and iv) how you think the data might bear on pertinent hypotheses. If you’re having difficulty developing a project idea, you can come talk to me before the deadline. It’s fine if you ultimately go a different direction from what is in your proposal.

**Presentation** You'll do a short presentation of your project on one of the last days we meet. Your presentation should involve i) a talk (of length to be determined depending on the number of presenters), where you address relevant theoretical/empirical background, some of your data, some of your (possibly preliminary) findings, and how your data fit or do not fit into plausible theories; and ii) roughly 5-10 minutes of questions from other students or from me. *Please generate a handout or slides for the audience, which should include (bullet) points and key data.*

**Final Paper** The final paper should be (roughly) between 2500-3500 words (~10-14 pages double-spaced). You'll want to have:

- An exposition on what the relevant theoretical background is (e.g. *The phenomenon of single-conjunct agreement raises questions about the role of linearization in agreement...*)
- Allusion to some empirical findings that are related to what you've looked at (e.g. *Some work indicates that single-conjunct effects are more likely to arise in particular configurations...*)
- Your core proposal/idea of how what you're doing fits into linguistic theory (e.g. *The evidence discussed in the current work supports the view that single-conjunct agreement is mediated at PF.*)
- Your original data and discussion of its relevance (e.g. *As (13) shows, Greek speakers do not allow single-conjunct agreement for semantic features.*) Please clarify towards the beginning (or in a footnote) what the source of your data is (e.g. *Grammaticality judgments from two native speakers of Greek were collected informally.*)
- Some theoretical discussion of analysis/implications of your data, with some possible suggestions for extensions. (e.g. *While the evidence seems to support the PF-view of single-conjunct agreement, outstanding questions remain concerning cross-linguistic variability and alternative hypotheses that cannot be fully discounted here.*)

I am not expecting a journal-ready final paper. I am most interested in how what you end up with reflects your understanding of theory and how data you collected bear on it. **You may incorporate some of your written material from your critical summaries.**

If you want to send me a draft of your work at any time before the last day of the term, I will provide feedback on it before the final paper is due (for one draft only).

## Tentative List of Topics and Readings

Topics	Potential Readings	Additional Keywords
Coordinate Structure	Munn 1993 (excerpts)	asymmetries, binding
Resolved Agreement	Corbett 1991 (Chapter 9)	gender, variation
	Wechsler 2008	gender, variation, markedness
	Dalrymple and Kaplan 2000	set union, LFG
	Dalrymple and Nikolaeva 2006	natural/accidental coordination
	Sadler 2011	indeterminacy, syncretism
	Harbour 2020	number, interpretation
	Adamson and Anagnostopoulou submitted	gender, interpretability
	Willer-Gold et al. 2016	Closest Conjunct, experimental
	Thorvaldsdóttir 2019	experimental, individuation
	Lyskawa 2021 (excerpts)	grammar-external, omnivorous
Single Conjunct	Nevins and Weisser 2019	overview
	Munn 1999	clausal reduction, specifier-head
	Bhatt and Walkow 2013	modularity, directionality
	Čitko 2018	directionality
	Murphy and Puškar 2018	First Conjunct, gender
	Smith 2021 (excerpts)	agreement directionality
RNR and Agreement	Grosz 2015	summative, anticollectivity
	Shen 2018	Nominal RNR
	Shen 2019	Nominal RNR, implicational relations
DP-Internal	King and Dalrymple 2004	LFG, dual-feature
	Harizanov and Gribanova 2015	attributives, split coordination
	Adamson under revision	attributives, directionality
Disjunction	Foppolo and Staub 2020	experimental
Other topics	Paparounas and Salzmänn to appear	clitic doubling
		suspended affixation?

We will go through background in the first session, and the handout we use that day will be posted on Canvas for reference. Additional articles will also be posted to Canvas for reference.

# 1 Tentative Seminar Schedule

Date	Topics
Jan. 17	Preliminaries (handout to be posted)
Jan. 24	Structure
Jan. 31	Resolution
Feb. 7	
Feb. 14	
Feb. 21	
Feb. 28	Single Conjunct
Mar. 7	
Mar. 21	
Mar. 28	
Apr. 4	RNR, DP-internal
Apr. 11	
Apr. 18	
Apr. 25	Final Paper Presentations

## Student Support and Mental Wellness

- Student Success Essentials: <https://success.rutgers.edu>
- Student Support Services: <https://www.rutgers.edu/academics/student-support>
- The Learning Centers: <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/>
- The Writing Centers (including Tutoring and Writing Coaching):  
<https://writingctr.rutgers.edu>
- Rutgers Libraries: <https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/>
- Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services: <https://veterans.rutgers.edu>
- Student Health Services: <http://health.rutgers.edu/>
- Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program & Psychiatric Services (CAPS):  
<http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>
- Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: [www.vpva.rutgers.edu/](http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/)

## References

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