Limitations on concept formation in personal pronouns

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Introduction
Person in Indo-European languages: 3 atoms: 1st, 2nd, 3rd person.

1. speaker: SP
2. hearer: HR
3. non-participant: NON

Other languages may add an inclusive pronoun, e.g. Marquesan (Cablitz 2006):

- Tiúmpisa (Panamint) Shoshone
- Quechua

Ques00ns & Hypotheses

Why is only the combination of speaker and hearer lexicalised?

Why?

1. 80% of the languages: morphologically independent inclusive, i.e. not related to first or second person (1) (Daniel 2005).
2. Otherwise: mostly related to 1st (and sometimes also to 2nd) person (4).

The inclusive

Morphology:

- Predicted by the Concept Formation Constraint in the kite framework (Jaspers 2012, Seuren & Jaspers 2014)

Consider a Hasse diagram (Smessaert 2009, Jaspers 2012):

- With atoms represented by bitstrings (5)
- For 1st, 2nd and 3rd person (6).

The same applies to person, corresponding exactly to the observations in the Hasse diagram (10).

This has been demonstrated for a.o. the natural logic quantifiers, predicate calculus operators and colour terms (Seuren & Jaspers 2014, Jaspers 2012).

Conclusion

A kite analysis of person sheds light on person distinctions in personal pronouns:

- Captures the complexity of the inclusive person.
- Predicts other combinations to be unlexicalisable.

The system can be extended to add number in order to account for the basic personal pronoun distinctions.

Questions & Hypotheses

What is the inclusive?

- Predicted by the Concept Formation Constraint: The kite

Analysis

The inclusive

Morphology:

- 80% of the languages: morphologically independent inclusive, i.e. not related to first or second person (1) (Daniel 2005).
- Otherwise: mostly related to 1st (and sometimes also to 2nd) person (4).

The inclusive (Level 2) is semantically made up of the atoms SP + NON-PART.

Unlexicalized combinations:

- SP + NON-PART
- HR + NON-PART

The inclusive

Morphology:

- Predicted by the Concept Formation Constraint in the kite framework (Jaspers 2012, Seuren & Jaspers 2014)

The Kite Framework & Concept Formation Constraint

The kite framework deals with (metalogical) relations between concepts, represented in the geometrical figures (shown below):

- Entailment and proper parthood (arrows)
- Contradiction (full lines)
- Subsumption (dotted and dashed lines)

The concept formation constraint posits that:

- O and U in the logical hexagon (3) are never lexicalised
- This results in a kite structure (9).

For number, I propose the following extension (Sonnaert 2016):

- This distinction is confirmed by:
  - Semantics: person is deictic vs. plural is never defined as such (a.o. Bijari 2003, Corbett 2004).
  - Morphology: no languages have the same morpheme for PL and 3rd

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Literature Cited


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