Defectiveness: introduction

Greville Corbett

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Why are we here?

1. The topic

prixožu	'I'm coming'
prixodiš′	'you're (SG) coming'
prixodit	'she's coming'
prixodim	'we're coming'
prixodite	'you're (PL) coming'
prixodjat	'they're coming'

An example:

Russian verbs have different forms depending on their subject.

What is defectiveness?

'I'll convince'

ubediš'   'you'll (SG) convince'

ubedit   'she'll convince'

ubedim   'we'll convince'

ubedite   'you'll (PL) convince'

ubedjat   'they'll convince'

but some verbs simply lack a first person singular form.

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Instead, you have to use a different verb, or find some other way around it.

1.1 Key notions

- morphology (the structure of words)

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- morphology (the structure of words)

- inflectional morphology (forms of the same word)

- paradigm (the set of forms of a word)

- morphology-free syntax (syntax can't refer to forms of words)

1.2. Approaches

COMPUTE   COMPUTES

- Lexical versus inferential

- Incremental versus realizational

Stump's typology
of morphological theories (2001)

	lexical	inferential
incremental	Lieber (1992)	Steele (1995)
realizational	Distributed Morphology	W&P: PFM Network Morphology

Default inheritance


```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │        BIRD         │
                    │ has feathers = yes  │
                    │    can fly = yes    │
                    └─────────────────────┘
          ┌──────────────┼──────────────┐
    ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
    │  EAGLE   │   │  ROBIN   │   │   PENGUIN    │
    │          │   │          │   │ can fly = no │
    └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────────┘
          │              │               │
     ┌─────────┐   ┌─────────┐    ┌─────────┐
     │ Edwina  │   │ Rupert  │    │  Percy  │
     └─────────┘   └─────────┘    └─────────┘
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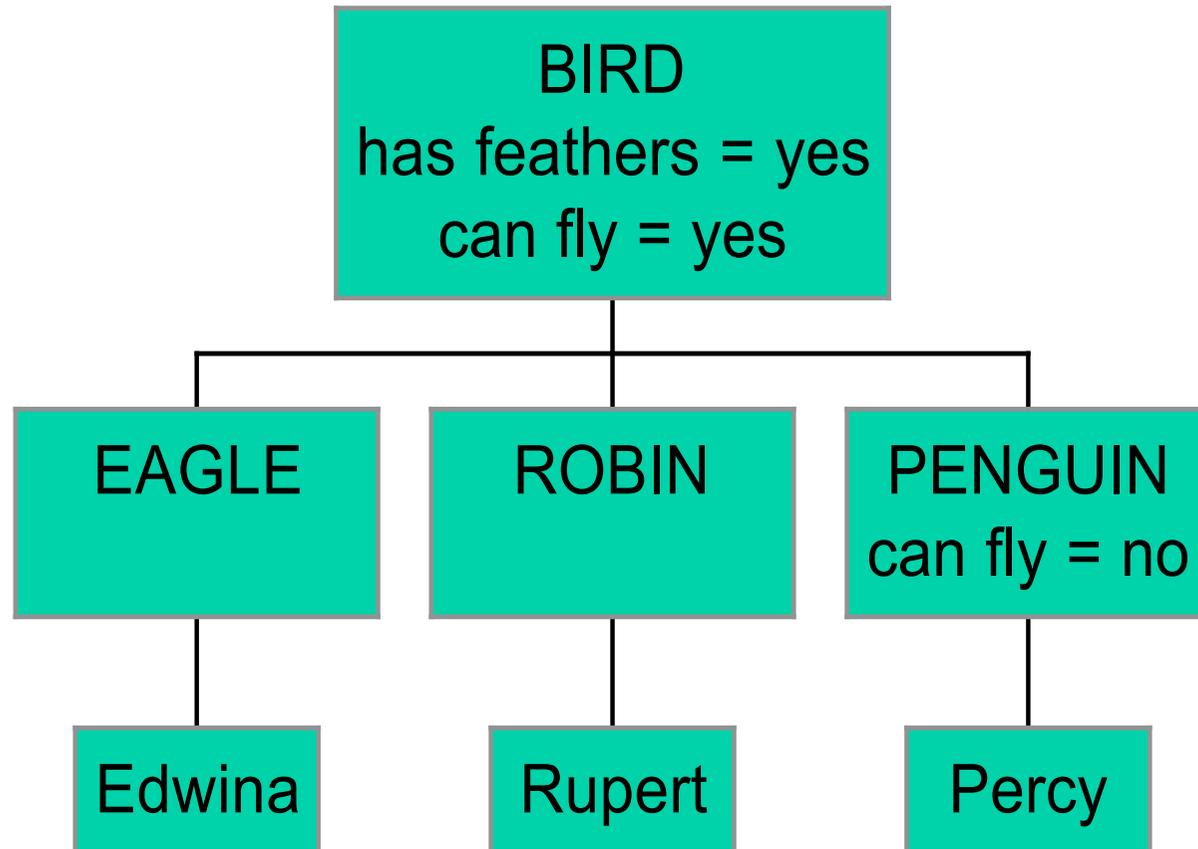
See especially Evans & Gazdar (1996)

1.3 Definitions of defectiveness

Matthews (1997: 89): '(Lexical item) whose paradigm is incomplete in comparison with others of the major class that it belongs to.'

Trask (1997: 64): 'A label applied to a lexical item which lacks some of the forms typically exhibited by members of its class.'

1.4 Phenomena falling outside the definition of defectiveness

Sanskrit has a dual, English doesn't.

1.4 Phenomena falling outside the definition of defectiveness

PRESENT	pay	bid
PAST	paid	bid

syncretism

1.4 Phenomena falling outside the definition of defectiveness

1 SG	am	go
1 PL	are	go

overdifferentiation

1.4 Phenomena falling outside the definition of defectiveness

PRESENT   walk   go

PAST   walked   went

suppletion

1.4 Phenomena falling outside the definition of defectiveness

SIMPLE

sang

CONTINUOUS was singing

periphrasis

1.4 Phenomena falling outside the definition of defectiveness

SINGULAR	disease	health
PLURAL	diseases	*healths

subcategories

1.5 Expectations

- productive patterns

- why we look at inflection

1.6 The problem

- production models

- morphology-free syntax

- inferential-realizational models

- defaults

- motivation

- very rare *versus* impossible

1.6 The problem

It is generally assumed that the rules of language encode how things are to be done, and that speakers extrapolate these rules to all the words they encounter. This is how language is structured, and this how language is learned, or so we think. Defectiveness contradicts these assumptions, because it seems to require that speakers know that for certain words, not only should one not employ the expected rule, one should not employ any rule at all. This is a serious problem, **since it is probably safe to say that all reigning models of grammar were designed as if defectiveness did not exist, and would lose a considerable amount of their elegance if it were properly factored in.**

2. "We"

- inclusive

- exclusive

    - defectiveness known to classical grammarians

    - but …

2. "We"

it hadn't penetrated into mainstream linguistic
consciousness. In 1999, defectiveness was:

Asher Encyclopedia	Bright Encyclopedia	Spencer/Zwicky Handbook
not in index	*not* in index	*not* in index

2. "We"

Defectiveness, syncretism, suppletion, 'deponency': four dimensions for a typology of inflectional systems. Guest lecture at The Second Mediterranean Meeting on Morphology, 10-12 September 1999, Lija, Malta

- SMG projects on other three topics

- bid > mess

- paper > mess

- Stephen Anderson's intervention (Fréjus 2005)

- Matthew's persistence

3. "Here"

Funding from British Academy and from AHRC

"AT a Meeting of the Representatives of the chief European and American Academies, held at Wiesbaden in October, 1899, a scheme was drawn up for the organization of an International Association of the principal Scientific and Literary Academies of the World.

The scheme provided for the division of the Association into two Sections, viz. a Section of 'Natural Science' and a Section of 'Literary Science,' the term 'Literary' being used to indicate the sciences of language, history, philosophy, and antiquities, and other subjects the study of which is based on scientific principles, but which are not included under the term 'Natural Science.'

While the Royal Society represented at the Association the United Kingdom in the Section of 'Natural Science,' no existing institution was at that date deemed competent to represent the United Kingdom in the section dealing with historical, philosophical, and philological studies.

In consequence of this **defect** in existing English institutions, these branches of study in the United Kingdom were not represented at the first meeting of the International Association of Academies held in Paris in 1900.

It was urgently demanded by the International Representatives present at the Meetings of the Association that immediate efforts should be made to secure the due corporate representation of these branches of study in the United Kingdom."   [Material from the British Academy website]

The British Academy was established by Royal Charter in 1902; since March 1998, the Academy has been located at 10 Carlton House Terrace (also occupying much of No. 11).

4. "?"

- big questions: Matthew will propose some, and we'll revisit them in the final session

- practical questions: ask any of us

- this evening
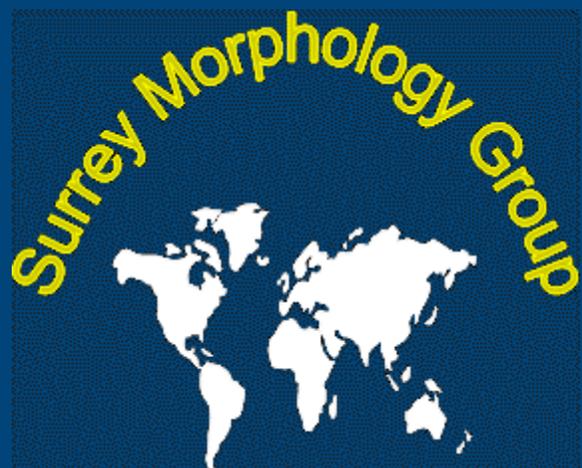
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