

COMPLEMENTARY FEATURES IN SLAVIC CARDINAL SYNTAX.

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0. The morphosyntax and syntax of lexical and phrasal cardinals and of cardinal phrases (CardPs) in the modern Slavic languages are somewhat complex and remarkably diverse, especially considering that just a thousand years ago the dialects from which these languages are descended differed little from one another or from the earliest attested Old Church Slavonic. Key to explicating these systems—in synchrony as well as in diachrony—is the concept of complementary distribution. In the proposed presentation, this will be illustrated with the following four examples taken from Russian, old (OR) and contemporary standard (CSR).

1. *Word-class membership.* Across languages lexical cardinals are complementarily distributed among adjectives, nouns and verbs, which shows that with respect to word-class cardinals are *sui generis* (pace Hurford 1987). Old Russian cardinals are distributed between adjectives ('2'–'4') and substantive nouns ('5'–'10', '40', '90', '100', '1000'), the latter having inherent gender. By contrast, in CSR, cardinals are neither adjectives nor substantives: some have adjective-like inflection ('2'–'4'), the rest have substantive-like inflection, but despite these appearances, all cardinals govern their denominator in nominative CardPs, all cardinals agree with their denominator in oblique CardPs, none have inherent gender.

2. *Number agreement.* In some languages denominator NPs are obligatorily singular (Hungarian), in others they are plural (English), a clear sign that number in denominators is redundant: numerosity is specified by the cardinal. In CSR denominators are singular and plural in complementary distribution: in nominative CardPs with '2'–'4' the major classes of substantives are (genitive) singular, in nominative CardPs with other cardinals substantives are (genitive) plural; in oblique CardPs all denominators are plural.

3. *Headedness.* In OR, headedness in CardPs is lexically conditioned: in CardPs with '2'–'4', the denominator is head, in CardPs with higher cardinals, the cardinal is head. This shows that headedness is essentially irrelevant to the relation between numerator and denominator: CardPs are twin-headed, as one would expect on semantic grounds. In the history of Russian, this complementary distribution has shifted from lexical to grammatical conditioning: cardinals are heads in nominative CardPs, they bear the CardP case and govern the denominator in genitive (sg. or pl.); denominators are heads in oblique CardPs, they express case, and control agreement in the dependent cardinal.

4. *Predicate agreement.* In the received standard, CSR allows for two patterns of agreement with subject (nominative) CardPs, plural and (neuter) singular. Plural agreement predominates when the CardP precedes the finite verb, singular agreement, when the CardP follows the finite verb. The two agreement alternatives have been described in terms of precedence, but in this language constituent order signals information structure. Thus plural agreement is with the nominative cardinal when the denominator referent is thematic, (neuter) singular agreement is with the (genitive) denominator when this is rhematic. The existence of these two alternatives is another manifestation of the semantic equipollence of numerator and denominator in CardPs.

5. *Conclusion.* The features in section 1 indicate that cardinals are not provided for in "universal grammar" and agrees with the well known fact that cardinals represent a culture-specific attainment. The feature in section 2 helps to explain the cross-linguistic diversity in denominator number marking. The features in sections 3 and 4 are indications of the truly complementary character of the descriptive content of denominators (by which referents can be identified) and the numerosity expressed by cardinals (by which the number of a referent is specified).