the puzzle

(for ALG, IRGEND, see [1, 2]; for SOME, see [3, 4])

(1) Jo vive con **algún** estudiante,
Jo lives with ALG-SG student-SG

a. # en concreto, con A.
namely with A

b. ✓ pero no con A.
but not with A

(1') Jo vive con **algunos** estudiantes,
Jo lives with ALG-PL student-PL

a. ✓ en concreto, con A y B.
namely with A and B

b. ✓ pero no con A y B.
but not with A and B

(2) Jo wohnt mit **irgendeiner** Studentin,
Jo lives with IRGEND-SG student-SG

a. # und zwar mit A.
namely with A

b. ✓ aber nicht A.
but not A

(2') Jo wohnt mit **irgendwelchen** Studenten,
Jo lives with IRGEND-PL student-PL

a. # und zwar mit A und B.
namely with A and B

b. ✓ aber nicht A und B.
but not A and B

(3) Jo lives with **some** student,

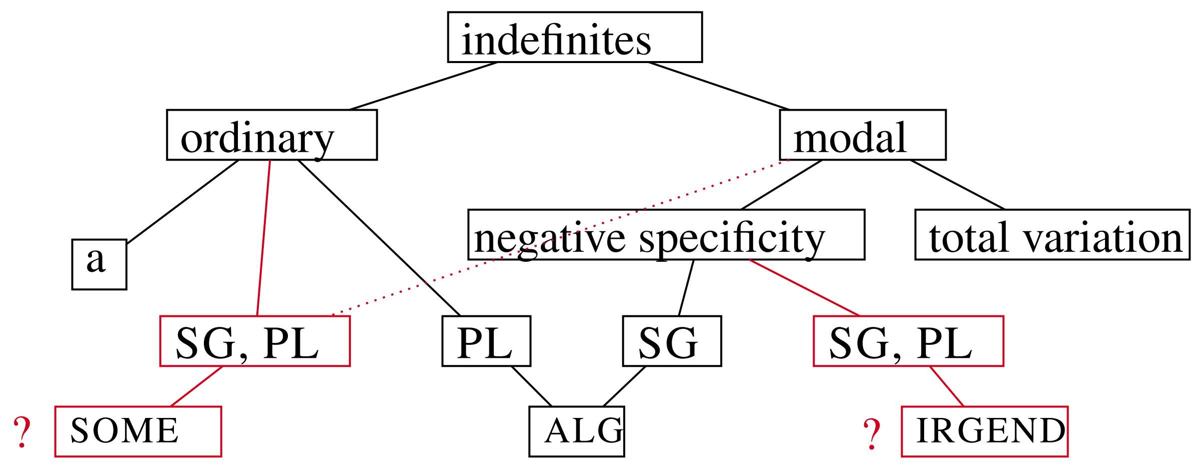
a. ? namely A.

b. ✓ but not A.

(3') Jo lives with **some** students,

a. ✓ namely A and B.

b. ✓ but not A and B.



existing literature, focused on ALG [1, 2] (Fig. bottom left)

Modal indefinites: total or partial variation. Partial = neg. specificity. Partial SG → ordinary PL.
How do we derive partial variation in the SG?
How do we prevent partial variation in the PL?

this work, in light of IRGEND and SOME (Fig. top right)

Modal indefinites: total or partial variation. Partial = neg. or *pos.* spec. [6]. Partial SG → partial PL.
How do we derive partial variation in the SG and the PL?
Why is one type of partial variation dispreferred / banned in the SG?

Singular. Plural. Modal.

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scenarios of interest

total variation	partial variation		no variation	
'no winner'	neg. specificity 'one loser'	pos. specificity 'one winner'-1	pos. specificity 'one winner'-2	'all winners'
e.g.,	e.g.,	e.g.,	e.g.,	e.g.,
w_1: x ~~y~~ ~~z~~	w_1: ~~x~~ y ~~z~~	w_1: x y ~~z~~	w_1: x ~~y~~ ~~z~~	w_1: x y z
w_2: ~~x~~ y ~~z~~	w_2: ~~x~~ ~~y~~ z	w_2: x ~~y~~ z	w_2: x ~~y~~ ~~z~~	w_2: x y z
w_3: ~~x~~ ~~y~~ z	w_3: ~~x~~ y z	w_3: x y z	w_3: x ~~y~~ ~~z~~	w_3: x y z

How do we derive negative and positive specificity in the SG and the PL?

[1, 2, 7]: Modal variation ← competition with subdomain alternatives (DA). I agree.

[1, 2]: Negative specificity 'one loser' ← SgDA. I qualify: *Exh*SgDA [5]. I add:
Positive specificity 'one winner-1&2' ← Exh*Non*SgDA [6].

This can be easily verified in the SG:

(4) $O_{\text{ExhSgDA}}\ \Box_S\ (a \vee b \vee c)$
$= \Box_S\ (a \vee b \vee c) \wedge$
$(\Box_S\ a \rightarrow \Box_S\ b \vee \Box_S\ c) \wedge$
$(\Box_S\ b \rightarrow \Box_S\ a \vee \Box_S\ c) \wedge$
$(\Box_S\ c \rightarrow \Box_S\ a \vee \Box_S\ b)$
compatible with 'one loser'

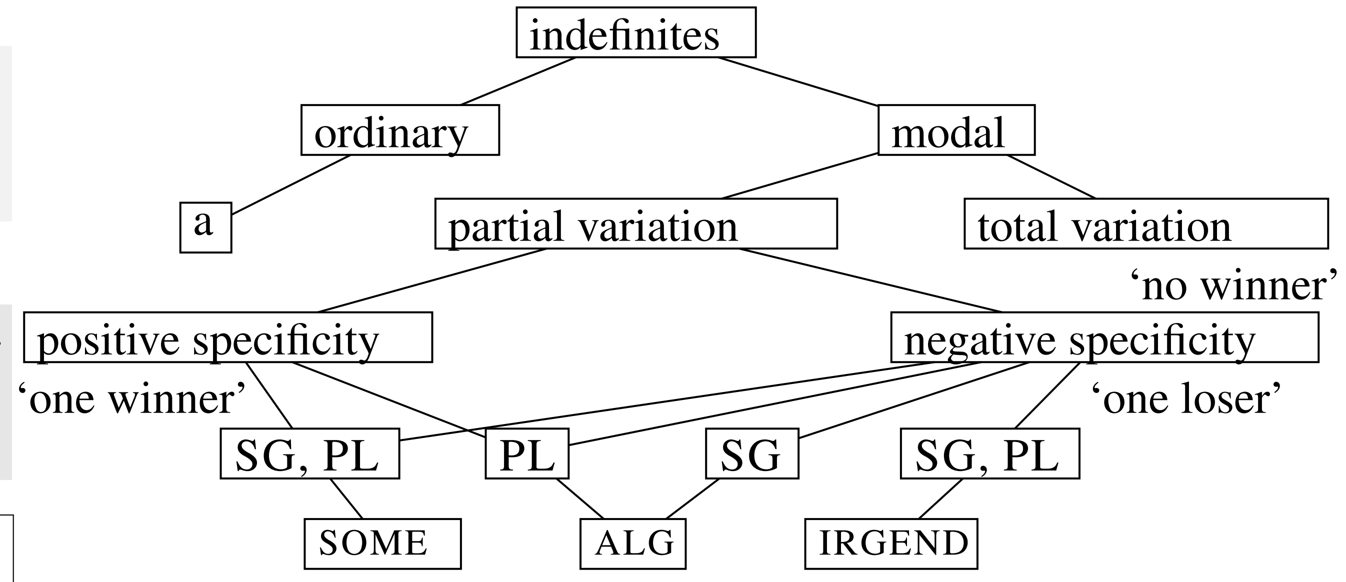
(5) $O_{\text{ExhNonSgDA}}\ \Box_S\ (a \vee b \vee c)$
$= \Box_S\ (a \vee b \vee c) \wedge$
$(\Box_S\ (a \vee b) \rightarrow \Box_S\ (a \vee c) \vee \Box_S\ (b \vee c)) \wedge$
$(\Box_S\ (a \vee c) \rightarrow \Box_S\ (a \vee b) \vee \Box_S\ (b \vee c)) \wedge$
$(\Box_S\ (b \vee c) \rightarrow \Box_S\ (a \vee b) \vee \Box_S\ (a \vee c))$
compatible with 'one winner-1&2'

Computations with PL quickly explode, but preliminary checks suggest this might be true of PL also.

Crucially, one must use the DA in pre-exhaustified form, ExhDA[5], and pre-exhaustify with Innocent Exclusion [5, 8] and relative to DA of the same size (or smaller) [6], as done above, where for the PL this might mean matching DA not just by domain size but also by plurality size.

Why is positive specificity dispreferred / banned in the SG?

[2]: Partial SG: 'ordinary' PL ← [indef]-PL → existential witness be plural. I disagree.
I propose: [indef]-SG → existential witness be unique. INDEF-SG NP-SG: $\exists! x \in D_{AT}\ [\ldots]$
→ In a SG modal indefinite, pos. specificity can be just 'one winner'-2, a no variation meaning.
Explains why positive specificity is dispreferred / banned in the SG.
Predicts that [indef] that allow positive specificity in the SG might have another way of preserving variation → speaker *indifference*, present in SOME[3] but not in ALG [9].



conclusion

- [1, 2] showed that modal indefinites are not just total variation but also partial variation, and the latter can also differ within item, by number, with the PL becoming seemingly 'ordinary'.
- Further data revealed that difference by number is also difference *within* number, by item, and 'ordinary' patterns might actually be modal.
- I have extended [1]'s solution to capture the difference within-number in the SG; suggested the same extends to the PL; and showed that, given this, the within-item differentiation between the SG and the PL can be explained functionally as a way to preserve variation.

open issues

- Solution for the variation in PL is incomplete.
- Solution for the variation by number is *ad hoc*.
- Still, for both, good reasons to look deeper.

References

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