

## All for One and One for All\*

Katsunori Fukuyasu

### 1. Introduction

In the study of English grammar the agreement phenomena often become a topic of research. Consider the following quotation from Shakespeare, for example (emphasis mine):

- (1) ‘**A thousand kisses buys my heart from me;**  
 And pay them at thy leisure, one by one.  
**What is ten hundred touches unto thee?**  
 Are they not quickly told and quickly gone?  
 Say, for non-payment that the debt should double,  
**Is twenty hundred kisses such a trouble?’**

(Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*)

This quotation is the words of Venus who fell in love with Adonis. We can see the way of Venus counting kisses and touches by considering the disagreement in number between subject nouns and inflections of verbs: A plural subject noun takes the singular form of the verb.

Another disagreement phenomenon in English is observed in a certain noun phrase. Consider the next example:

- (2) Cuts affecting **an additional 10,500 people** are scheduled for Oct. 1.

(*The New York Times*)

In (2), the article *an* is singular but *10,500 people* is plural. The disagreement in number here is between the determiner (or specifier) and the head noun.

Jespersen (1914) describes these phenomena as “unification of plurals” and Quirk et al. (1985) as “notional concord” but we cannot say that they have enough description and explanation of the construction exemplified by (2).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jackendoff (1977:129) deals briefly with the following examples:

- (i) a beautiful two weeks  
 a dusty four miles of road

In this paper the “number disagreement” observed within a noun phrase as in (3ii) will be mainly examined in detail:

- (3) Number Disagreement  
 (i) Subject (pl.)--Verb (sg.)  
 (ii) Indefinite Article (sg.) + Adjective + Numerical + Nominal Head (pl.)

Putting a focus on the meanings of Adjectives in the construction (3ii), we will classify the data collected for this study into four main groups: The meanings are related to (A) “understood elements,” (B) “attributive adding,” (C) “consecutiveness,” and (D) “calculation (approximation).”

## 2. A(n) + Adjective + Numerical + Plural Noun—Data and Classification

In this section I will present the data that show the number disagreement, classify them, and consider their properties.

### 2.1. A Group: Adjectives with Understood Elements

The adjectives in this group have understood elements in context.

#### 2.1.1. Argument (*additional, supplementary, alternative, different, incidental etc.*)

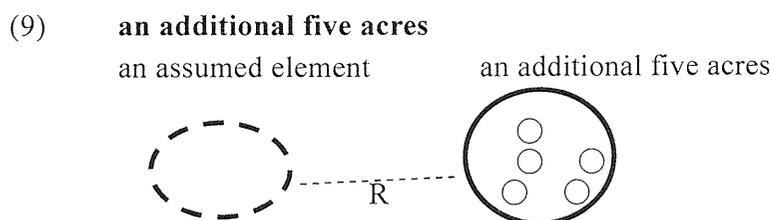
The adjectives that imply arguments are often found in the construction of (3ii). The examples are :

- (4) a. Mr. Reardon ... not only extorted from him the sum of five dollars by the simple but irregular process of striking him over the head, but subsequently “went through his pockets” and secured **a supplementary seven dollars**.  
*(The New York Times)*
- b. **A supplementary five points** was given to farmers who achieved first place in two hierarchies. The fifth indicator gave five points to each farmer who had been the first to introduce some innovation into practice in his community. (J. Marek, *The Significance of the ‘Good Farmer’*)
- (5) Thirty offprints of each paper, or **an alternative three copies** of each issue in which it appears, will be available free of charge to the author.  
*(JRS Editorial Office, Instructions to Authors)*
- (6) a. The process was then repeated for **a different five items** and the dispensers tested in reverse order. Timing was started when the dispenser was first viewed, and stopped when all five items were in the subjects hand.  
*(D. C. Gray, Labelling of Equipment Dispensers)*

- b. Five factors were found, but **a different five factors** were identified in the Turkish version of this instrument.
- (B. K. Redman, *Review of Measurement Instruments in Clinical and Research Ethics, 1999-2003*)
- c. Matches are 3-on-3. Only 5 players may sign-in per team for a single match. Team rosters are unlimited; thus you may have **a different five players** represent your team each match.
- (Florida State University Campus Recreation, *3-on-3 Soccer Rules*)
- (7) Professor Kellogg is able to devote **an incidental four pages** to development in spherical harmonics. The main line of march here, indeed, throughout the last third of the book, is towards the exploration of harmonic ...
- (Disseminate)
- (8) a. The farm leases an adjacent six acres and has **an additional five acres** in Whitneyville.
- (University of Maine, *Blueberry Hill Farm*)
- b. Fridays, 6:00 pm - 9:55 pm; Saturdays, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm plus **an additional 6 class hours** allotted to group study for a group presentation.
- (T. Dally, *Evangelism and Apologetics*)

The adjectives in examples (4-8) have an “argument” outside the noun phrase indicated by bold letters. For example, the adjective *supplementary* has *five dollars* as one of the arguments outside the noun phrase *a supplementary seven dollars* in (4a). In (5), *thirty offprints of each paper* is understood to be one of the arguments of the adjective *alternative*: what *three copies of each issue* is alternative to. In the same way, in (6b), *five factors* is understood to be one of the arguments of the adjective *different*. In (8b), *Fridays, 6:00 pm - 9:55 pm; Saturdays, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm* is understood to be one of the arguments of the adjective *additional*: what *6 class hours* is added to.

Let me describe the function of the adjectives in this group and consider why the adjectives appear in this construction using example (8a), with the following figure:



R: semantic relation (“addition” in this case)

The semantic relation of addition needs two elements: the thing that is added and that which it is added to. It may be reasonable to suppose that this mental action makes it easier to grasp plural entities as one unit. In the case of addition we can add a unit to a unit, whether a unit has plural members or not. Adjectives like *additional* seem to facilitate the mental function of unification of plurals. That is why the adjective occurs in this disagreement phenomenon.

### 2.1.2. *Sequentiality (subsequent, final etc.)*

Adjectives in this subgroup also imply other elements because of sequentiality. That is the reason why adjectives in this subgroup are used in the construction (3ii) as in the previous subgroup:

- (10) a. Trunk radius, tree height, and tree fresh weight were measured and growth index ((radius)<sup>2</sup> \* height) was calculated after **a subsequent eight months** in a field nursery.

(C. DeBuse et al., *Heritabilities of Seedling Traits in a Prunus Domestica (L.) Breeding Population*)

- b. An specific regimen of acupuncture sites will be needled twice weekly for eight weeks and once weekly for **a subsequent eight weeks**. After the first four weeks of acupuncture treatments, subjects will initiate a three times per week ...

(VA Maryland Health Care System, *Assessment of Acupuncture to Improve Function, Exercise Capacity, and Pain*)

- (11) The last stage begins with the three survivors ranged side by side facing the host. At this point William G. Stewart (left) is armed with **a final 40 questions**. (Wise Old Owls, *15 to 1*)

### 2.1.3. *Others (further, adjacent etc.)*

The explanation in 2.1.1 holds of the adjectives in this subgroup:

- (12) Wind gusts can be **a further 40 percent** stronger than the averages given here ... (Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology, *Warnings*)

### 2.2. *B Group: Attributive Adjectives (happy, miserable, weary etc.)*

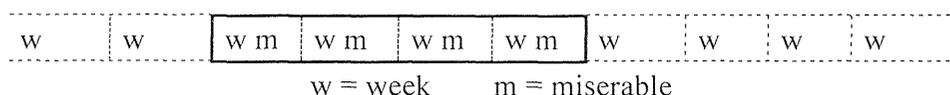
Adjectives that assign attributes to the referent denoted by the plural noun are also found in the construction (3ii):

- (13) a. He had **a happy five years** establishing the teaching of humanities and

- social sciences as what was still a new institution ... (*The Independent*)
- b. The Magistrate, after listening for **a weary eight hours** to the contentions of both sides, gave judgment for the trustees.  
(*The Nelson Evening Mail*)
- c. She'd spent **a miserable four weeks** in mild conditions and realized she was one of the unfortunate few that never gets over it. (*BBC-Lancashire*)

For example, in (13c) the adjective *miserable*'s function of assigning the attribute to the referent denoted by the plural noun *weeks* is to give the same attribute ("miserable") to each entity "week" of the referent. The following figure is intended to show this point:

(14) **a miserable four weeks** in (13c)



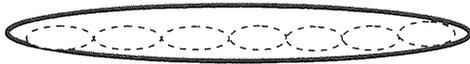
Sharing the same property/attribute may be the reason to facilitate the unification of plurals.

### 2.3. C Group: Adjectives of Consecutiveness (*successive, consecutive etc.*)

The adjectives in this group express the relation between the consecutive elements. The examples are the following:

- (15) Luong Hue Tieu was sentenced Monday to 80 months of imprisonment for attempting to obstruct commerce and to **a consecutive 7 months** of imprisonment for failure to appear for sentencing ...  
(*The FBI Press Releases*)
- (16) a. ... the provisions of Sections ... are applicable to every real state broker who intends or reasonably expects in **a successive 12 months** to do any of the following ...  
(*SB 795 Senate Bill*)
- b. I bowed as mourner on many occasions, bidding farewell, although I will no doubt be the first of **a successive four generations** not to be buried among the kindred dust of Forest Hill ...  
(*Ancestry Magazine*)

The reason why the consecutiveness facilitates the unification of plurals is demonstrated by the next figure:

(17) **a consecutive 7 months of imprisonment**

Consecutiveness

Note that while the adjectives in the A group relate one unit with another, the adjectives in the C group interrelate the elements within a unit. The elements (7 months in (17)) are consecutive and we easily make them one unit.

2.4. *D Group: Adjectives of Calculation (Approximation) (estimated, approximate, almost, exact etc.)*

Adjectives that imply the mental activities such as calculation and approximation also occur in the “disagreement phenomenon” considered in this section:

- (18) a. **An approximate 36 million viewers** viewed Bush’s State of the Union address on all four major networks combined, with Fox gaining the largest audience share because of the Idol lead-in.

*(Entertainment Newsbits)*

- b. Light Rail Stats show that an efficient light rail system reduces traffic and handles up to **an approximate 20,000 passengers** per hour vs. **an approximate 2,400 passengers** per hour with regular vehicles on major highways.

*(CNN, iReport)*

- c. **An approximate ten thousand people** in the U.S. are identified with this condition annually & their avg. 1-yr. survival rate is around fifty per cent.

*(Just Cancer)*

- (19) It sits in the center of **an almost 900 million consumers** in the middle east. *(Geographic Information Systems, Dubai Is the Place to Be ...)*

- (20) Below is a simplified example of how registration fees are apportioned. The total preceding year mileage for the tractor/trailer combination was 100,000 miles, with **an exact 20,000 miles** in each jurisdiction. Under apportioned registration, the license fee will be computed as follows:

*(State of Vermont, International Registration Plan & International Fuel Tax Agreement)*

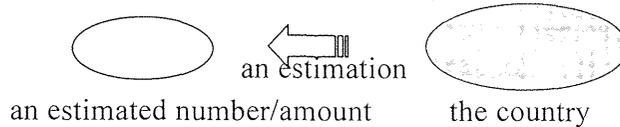
- (21) a. There are **an estimated 90,000 gangsters** in the country. *(COBUILD)*

- b. **An estimated five hundred people** have since applied for the job.

*(Genius)*

Adjectives like *estimated*, *approximate*, *almost*, and *exact* express cognitive states that involve calculation or approximation of number/amount. Let me consider why those adjectives facilitate the unification of plurals. Consider the next:

- (22) There are **an estimated 90,000 gangsters** in the country.



In order to estimate the number/amount of something, the limitations of that something must be defined. Otherwise, the calculation/estimation is meaningless. The definite article of *the country* sets the limitations of the estimation. Then the estimation related to the defined boundary is singular, which is reflected in the use of the singular indefinite article *a(n)*.

There are some examples that suggest this “boundedness condition” for the calculation/estimation:

- (23) Secretary of Defense Gates ... **estimated** the number of Iraqis working for the U.S. military to be twenty-two thousand. (*The New Yorker*)
- (24) The study **estimated** the amount of cash that homeowners have extracted from rising housing prices (those prices are up 53 percent over five years, according to government figures). (*The Washington Post*)  
[the underlines added by the author]

The underlined parts involve modification by a present participle in (23), and a relative clause in (24). The examples in (23) and (24) are interesting in that the verb *estimate* explicitly takes the noun *number* and *amount*, respectively.

The word *number/amount* occurs not only after the verb *estimate*, but *number/amount* also occurs after the adjective *estimated* as the head noun:

- (25) This is often difficult to determine ahead of time, but **an estimated number** is useful, as the number of participants determines ...  
(G. Wadsworth et al., *Pamoja*)
- (26) ... **an estimated amount** is shown in your award letter. You applied for the Pell grant when you filled out the FAFSA.  
(Princeton University, *Terms of Your 2011-12 Financial Award*)

These examples suggest that in *an estimated 90,000 gangsters*, for example, the understanding of “number” be in the perception of the expression.

This suggestion seems to be strengthened further by the following data:

- (27) a. MCR to Support NATO’s Air Command and Control Management Agency Firm to provide key mission support services under contract up to eight-years duration worth **an estimated \$14 million** [headline]
- b. [running text] McLean, VA, March 12, 2010 — MCR, LLC, a premier provider of integrated program management services to the US government and Allied nations, has been awarded a contract for **an estimated amount of 10 million euros (\$14 million)** by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to provide key mission support services to its Air Command and Control Management Agency (NACMA) for a period of up to eight years.

(MCR, *Press Release*)

The headline (27a) and the running text (27b) have the expression *an estimated \$14 million*. If it is true that the same person wrote the headline and the running text, it is very natural to conclude that there is a reading of “amount” in the expression of *an estimated \$14 million* in (27a).

## 2.5. Summary

The functions of the adjectives in four groups we have considered in this section may be summarized as (28):

- (28) Functions of Adjectives in Four Groups for Unification of Plurals
- A group: making clear the relation between the units through “understood elements”
  - B group: assigning the same attribute to the members of the unit
  - C group: giving consequitiveness to the members of the unit
  - D group: calculation/approximation of the bounded entity

The functions as in (28) may be the reason why the adjective in the construction (3ii) works as a kind of “facilitator” of unification of plurals.

### 3. From the Data of the Combination of *Additional, Long, Successive and Estimated*

In this section I will report the search results by Google as to each example of the four groups considered in section 2: *additional, long, successive, and estimated*. The results (October 10, 2010) are the following:

(29)	an additional	67,900,000
	an additional successive	41,100
	an additional long	784,000
	an additional estimated	87,500
(30)	a long	184,000,000
	a long estimated	28,600
	a long additional	30,100
	a long successive	26,300
(31)	a successive	407,000
	a successive additional	5,100
	a successive long	349
	a successive estimated	4
(32)	an estimated	39,100,000
	an estimated additional	555,000
	an estimated successive	6
	an estimated long	162,000

Note that there is a striking restriction on co-occurrence between *successive* and *estimated*. This fact seems to support the classification in the previous section.

Jespersen points out that there is a difference in interpretation between (33a) and (33b):

- (33) a. a long two hours  
b. two long hours

(Jespersen (1914:492-493))

As for the order of adjective and numerical, the search was done and the result is the following:

- (34) a. “an additional successive three” 1,830  
b. “an additional three successive” 8

The small number of occurrences is explained if we assume that *successive three Xs* can be one unit which *an additional* is compatible with but *three successive Xs* cannot be compatible with a unit interpretation *an additional* demands. This assumption is natural if we put the functions of the adjectives given in (28) into consideration.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

We have attempted to clarify the functions of the adjectives in the disagreement phenomenon that occur in the construction (3ii) and are summarized as in (28).

Here let us look back a little on the disagreement in the (3i) construction exemplified in (1), from which the parts in block letters are taken as (35) for consideration:

- (35) a. A thousand kisses buys my heart from me  
 b. What is ten hundred touches unto thee?  
 c. Is twenty hundred kisses such a trouble?

Remember that the words in (35) are Venus's. She was deeply in love with Adonis, who is young and beautiful.

Venus in another scene seduces him:

- (36) 'Give me one kiss, I'll give it thee again,  
 And one for int'rest, if thou wilt have twain.'  
 (*Venus and Adonis*, 209-210)

The words in (36) suggest Venus' mentality of the following sort:

- (37)  $X + X$  (interest included) =  $Y$  (=  $2X$ )

This shows that a kind of relation is on the mind of Venus, which is similar to the one found in the A group in section 2.

There is another place where Venus shows her mentality:

- (38) 'And yet not cloy thy lips with loath'd satiety,  
 But rather famish them amid their plenty,  
 Making them red and pale with fresh variety;  
 Ten kisses short as one, one long as twenty:

A summer's day will seem an hour but short,  
Being wasted in such time-beguiling sport.'

(*Venus and Adonis*, 19-22)

Especially consider the following words:

- (39) a. ten kisses short as one
- b. one long as twenty

It seems that the mentality displayed in (39a) is similar to that of the C group and that displayed in (39b) is similar to that of the D group.

I wonder if Shakespeare would agree with me.

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Department of Foreign Language Education  
Education Center  
The Organization for Supporting University Education  
Tottori University  
e-mail: kafukuya@uec.tottori-u.ac.jp