

The Morphosemantics of the Slovenian Dual

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Abstract: Slovenian makes a three-way number distinction: singular, dual and plural. The dual normally receives a double-sided meaning ('exactly two'). Dvorak & Sauerland (2006) and Sauerland (2008) claim that part of this meaning is due to competition with the singular. Specifically, they propose that [dual] has a upper-bounded semantics ('at most two') denoting an identity function over entities that is only defined for atomic entities or plural entities with exactly two atoms, but in the former case, the pragmatics prefers [singular] over [dual]. Contrary to this analysis, we raise data suggesting that the conventional meaning of [dual] is lower-bounded ('at least two'). This observation has important consequences on how the double-sided inference is generated. We follow Farkas & De Swart (2010) and pursue a morphosemantic account that takes into consideration morphological markedness, in addition to semantic markedness.