The structure of animate collective nouns

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Goal. In this paper we analyze animate collective nouns in Spanish (*población* 'population', *equipo* 'team', etc.) as derived from the 'phrasal spell-out' (Caha 2021) of partitive structures, assuming the analysis of partitives developed in Pérez-Jiménez & Demonte (2017). Our proposal accounts for the agreement alternations triggered by these nouns (1,2) and for their referential properties too.

(1) El   equipo   viajó   a   Melbourne.   (esTenTen18)
     The   team$_{MASC.SG}$ travelled$_{3.SG}$ to   Melbourne.
     'The team travelled to Melbourne'.

(2) El   equipo   ya me   han   advertido…   (esTenTen18)
     The   team$_{MASC.SG}$ already me have$_{3.PL}$ warned…
     'The team have already warned me'.

Hypothesis. The structure spelled-out as equipo contains a null group noun [group] merged to a root that determines the specific lexical item to be spelled-out. The null noun [group] selects a partitive complement with a null personal pronoun (pro). Partitive semantics requires pro to be plural. We are trying to formalize the intuition that equipo means 'group of animate beings'. The null noun [group] has in this example concord features valued as number: sg, gender: masc. What characterizes this noun is the behaviour of the index bundle. On the one hand, the index bundle can be valued by default: the index number and gender features have identical values to those for number and gender in the concord value: number: sg, gender: masc. Person will be systematically valued as 3. On the other hand, the index bundle can be unvalued. The values of the index number, gender and person features will be taken from that element that they can agree with in a maximal way under locality constraints: the index features of pro. Pro, as a pronominal category, has a bundle of valued index features, depending on its referential properties: thus, gender can be masc. or fem. and person can be 1, 2, 3. The existence of a pro in the structure and the behaviour of the index bundle of the null group noun allows to explain the hybrid agreement illustrated in 1 and 2.

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