

Syntactic Agreement

Roberta D'Alessandro

Class 4

EGG in Lagodekhi

Defective intervention

- If agreement takes place under closest c-command, as Agree does, then locality problems may arise.
- This means that if there are two potential goals for a probe, the closest will be the first one to Agree, and in case **silent** it will in any case “intervene”. This concept is formalized in Chomsky (2000, MI), and named DEFECTIVE INTERVENTION.

Defective intervention obtains in the following configuration:

- $\alpha > \beta > \gamma$ (where $>$ = c-command)
(Chomsky 2000:123)
- Intervention takes place under feature identity, not under value identity.

Defective intervention effect

- Only a fully specified ϕ -set is able to delete the unvalued features on the goal. One example of this is participial agreement (with unaccusative verbs). Take for instance the Italian sentence in (29), with the part participle agreeing with the subject which is the internal argument of the unaccusative verb *arrivare* ('to arrive'):

(29) La ragazza è arrivata
 the-F.SG girl-F.SG is-3.SG arrived-F.SG
 'The girl has arrived'

Ragazza, being an N, has interpretable ϕ -features, which percolate to the NP *la ragazza*. The participial *v* is not ϕ -complete, in that it lacks [person]. This means that it will probe the NP *la ragazza*, it will have its features checked, but it will not be able to assign Case to this NP. *La ragazza* will still be visible from the T head, which instead has a full set of uninterpretable ϕ -features. These features will probe the interpretable ϕ -set of *la ragazza* and will check it. This will result in full agreement of T with the internal argument, and with this internal argument to be assigned Nominative case.

Japanese honorifics

- Honorifics in Japanese
- The verb in Japanese displays an object honorific agreement in transitive clauses, and an indirect object honorific agreement in ditransitive clauses, as in (30) and (31).

(30) Taro-ga Tanaka sensei-o o-tasuke-**si**-ta
Taro-Nom Prof. Tanaka-Acc help-OH-past
'Taro helped Prof. Tanaka'

(31) Hanako-ga Tanaka sensei-ni Mary-o
Hanako-Nom Prof. Tanaka-Dat Mary-Acc

go-syookai-**si**-ta

introduce-OH-past

'Hanako introduced Mary to Prof. Tanaka'

(Boeckx & Niinuma 2004:456)

Japanese honorifics

- If the honorific suffix refers instead to a direct object in ditransitive constructions, while the indirect object is not marked for honorifics, the sentence is ungrammatical, as illustrated in (32)

(32)*Hanako-ga Mary-ni Tanaka sensei-o
 Hanako-Nom Mary-Dat Prof. Tanaka-Acc

go-syookai-si-ta

introduce-OH-past

‘Hanako introduced Prof. Tanaka to Mary’

Defective intervention

Honorific agreement between the verb and the object is **blocked** in the presence of an intervening dative.

The dative NP, despite it cannot take case, acts as a **defective intervener** in the Agree relationship between the verb and the object. The indirect object is in fact in a closer c-command relationship to the verb (the probe, in this case) than the object.

Mary-ni = β ,

Tanaka sensei-o = γ .

β is a defective intervener between α and γ : *it cannot trigger honorific agreement, but nevertheless it prevents it from happening between the verb and the object.*

Agreement before movement

- Japanese has scrambling – constituents can move around
- BUT
- The dative intervention effect holds also after scrambling
- → Agreement takes place before movement

Icelandic LDA

(33) Mér virðast t_{NP} [hestarnir
 me-DAT seem-PL the.horses-NOM

vera seinir]

be slow

‘It seems to me that the horses are slow.’

(34) Það **virðist**/*virðast **einhverjum manni** [hestarnir
 EXPL seems/seem some man-DAT the.horses-NOM

vera seinir]

be slow

‘It seems to some man that the horses are slow.’

Icelandic LDA

- Dative DPs cannot value T

(35) Strákunum leiddist/*leiddust

the.boys.pl.dat bored.3sg/*3pl

‘The boys were bored.’

(Sigurðsson 1996)

- Dative acts as an intervener

Icelandic TEC

(36)a. Manninum virðist hestarnir vera seinir
the-man-DAT seems-SG the-horses-NOM be slow-NOM

b. Manninum virðast hestarnir vera seinir
the-man-DAT seem-PL the-horses-NOM be slow-NOM

‘The man finds the horses slow’

(37) a. það **virðist** **einhverjum manni** hestarnir vera seinir
EXPL seem-SG some man-SGDAT the horses-NOM be slow-NOM

b. *það virðast einhverjum manni hestarnir vera seinir
EXPL seem-PL some man-DAT the horses-NOM be slow-NOM

‘A man finds the horses slow’ (Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir 2003:1000)

Icelandic

(37) a. *það **finnast** einhverjum stúdent **tölvurnar** ljótar
EXPL find-PL some student-DAT the-computers-NOM ugly-NOM

b. *Hvaða stúdent veist þu að **finnast t tölvurnar** ljótar?
which student-DAT know you that find-PL the-computers-NOM ugly-NOM

c. *Þetta er stúdentinn sem **finnast t tölvurnar** ljótar
this is the-student-NOM that find-PL the-computers-NOM ugly-NOM

d. *Þessum stúdent veit ég að **finnast t tölvurnar**
this student-DAT I know that find-PL the-computers-NOM

ljótar
ugly-NOM

(Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir 2003:1002-1003)

WHAT DOES THIS SAY ABOUT AGREEMENT?

Agreement before movement!

Icelandic - again

(38) Það líkuðu mörgum þessir tómatar
EXPL liked-3.PL many-DAT these-NOM tomatoes-NOM
'Many liked these tomatoes'

(39) Það leiddust sumum þessar rædur
EXPL found.boring-3.PL some-DAT these-NOM speeches-NOM
'Some people found these speeches boring'
(Koopmans 2006:178)

What do these sentences show?

Icelandic passives

(40) Það voru konungi gefnar ambáttirí
EXPL were-3.PL king-DAT given-NOM.PL slaves-NOM

vetur

in winter

‘There was a king given maidservants in winter’

(Koopmans 2004:178 from Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson 1984)

(41) Það hafa sumum leist þessar rædur
EXPL have-3.PL some-DAT bore these speeches-NOM

‘Some people have found these speeches boring’

(Koopmans 2004:178)

The direction of agreement

- Agreement under c-command:

(42) There *seems/seem to be three cats in the garden

(1) Arrivano le ragazze
come-3.pl the-f.pl girls-f.pl
“The girls arrive”

Icelandic LDA - again

(43) a. Mér virðast [þeir vera skemmtilegir]
Me-DAT seem-3.PL they-NOM be interesting
'It seems to me that they are interesting.'

b. Mér virðast [hafa verið seldir margir hestar]
Me-DAT seem-3.PL have been sold many horses-NOM
'It seems to me that many horses have been sold.'

(Boeckx 2009: 5-6)

Icelandic LDA

Long distance agreement in Icelandic is subject to locality restrictions.

The finite verb cannot agree with the low Nominative argument when a CP boundary intervenes:

(44) Mér fannst/*fundust henni leiðast þeir
me-DAT seemed-3.SG /3.PL her-DAT bore they-NOM
'I thought she was bored with them'.

(Boeckx 2004:28)

Hindi agreement: recall!

(47) a. Nominative subject, Accusative object, both non-overtly case-marked

Rahul kitaab paṛh-taa thaa
Rahul-M book-F read-HAB-M.SG be.PST.M.SG

‘Rahul used to read (a/the) book.’

b. Ergative subject, Accusative object, **only object is non-overtly case-marked**

Rahul-ne kitaab paṛh-ii thii
Rahul-ERG book-F read-PFV-F be.PST-F.SG

‘Rahul had read the book.’

(Bhatt 2005:760)

→ Hindi LDA

- (48) Vivek-ne [kitaab paṛh-nii] chaah-ii
Vivek-ERG book-F read-INF.F want-PFV-F.SG
'Vivek wanted to read the book.'
(Bhatt 2005:760)
-

PARASITIC AGREE

- (49) Shahrukh-ne [ṭehnii kaat -nii] chaah-ii thii
Shahrukh-ERG branch-F cut-INF-F want-PFV-F be-PST.F.SG
'Shahrukh had wanted to cut the branch.'
(Bhatt 2005: 761)

Hindi parasitic Agree

(50)*Shahrukh-ne [ṭehnii kaaṭ -nii] chaah-aa
Shahrukh-ERG branch.F cut-INF-F want-PFV-M.SG
thaa
be-PST.M.SG

(Bhatt 2005:761)

What is parasitic on what?

If no LDA takes place, the embedded V does not agree with the non case-marked object.

Hindi parasitic Agree

If the matrix clause has no-Case marked argument to agree with, it will agree with them, and no long distance agreement will arise:

(51) **Shahrukh** [ṭehnii kaaṭ-naa] chaah-taa thaa

Shahrukh branch-F cut-INF.M want-PFV-M.SG be.PST.M.SG

‘Shahrukh wants to cut the branch.’

Case and Agree

AGREE is the process by which a head X_0 with unvalued uninterpretable features (the Probe) identifies the closest Y_0/YP in its c-command domain with the relevant set of visible matching (i.e. nondistinct) interpretable features (the Goal), and uses the interpretable features of Y_0/YP to value its uninterpretable features. (If the Probe is $/-$ -complete and the Goal has unvalued uninterpretable features, the Probe values and deletes these features.)

Case is not the active flag for a goal, and consequently Case-assignment is not parasitic on ϕ -valuation

Case and Agree

(52) Rahul-ne kitaab paṛh-ii thii
 Rahul-ERG book-F read-PFV-F be.PST.F.SG
 ‘Rahul had read the book.

Both T and part need to have their features valued.

T c-commands v (part), and Matches with it, but part is still unvalued.

Dependency and THEN valuation
(see also López)

Chamorro wh- agreement

(56) a. Hayi fuma'gasi t i kareta?
 who? wh-NOM.wash the car
 'Who washed the car?'

b. Hafa fina'gase-nña si Antoniot?
 what? wh-OBJ .wash-3.SG Antonio
 'What did Antonio wash?'

c. Hafa a'gase-nña si Antonio ni kareta t?
 what? wh-OBL-wash-3.SG Antonio OBL car
 'What did Antonio wash the car with?'

(Chung 2013:258)

Chamorro wh agreement

(57) Hafa ha-sangan si Juan päragodde-**tta** ni chibat?
what? 3.SG.TR.RL-say Juan FUT wh-OBL.tie-1.PL OBL goat
'What did Juan say we would tie the goat with?'

* Hafa sangan-**ña** si Juan pära godde-**ttani**
what? wh-OBL -say-3.SG Juan FUT wh-OBL.tie-1.PLOBL
chiba *t*?
goat

References

- Bhatt, Rajesh. 2005. Long-distance agreement in Hindi-Urdu. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 23: 757–807.
- Boeckx, Cedric. 2004. Long-distance agreement in Hindi. Some theoretical implications. *Studia Linguistica* 58(1) 2004, 23–36.
- Boeckx, Cedric, Fumikazu, Niinuma. (2004) ‘Conditions on Agreement in Japanese’. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 22: 453-480.
- Chung, Sandra. The Syntactic Relations Behind Agreement. In: Lisa Lai-Shen Cheng and Norbert Corver (eds), *Diagnosing Syntax*, ed, 251-270. Oxford University Press.
- Holmberg, Anders & Thorbjörg Hróarsdóttir. 2003. Agreement and movement in Icelandic raising constructions. *Lingua* 113: 997–1019.
- Koopman, Hilda. 2006. In defense of Spec-Head. In: Boeckx, Cedric (ed.), *Agreement Systems*, 159–199.