How wrong is your existential? What ungrammaticality judgments can tell us about Upward Agree versus Downward Agree.

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The aim of this paper is to investigate certain agreement properties related to postverbal subjects in Romanian, and argue, on the basis of (un)grammaticality judgments on agreement in existential and copulative sentences, that postverbal subjects engage in a different type of agreement relation with the verb than preverbal subjects.

In my analysis, I looked at copular and existential sentences, which I analyzed as involving a SC- for copular sentences, I embraced a Moro SC analysis (1997), and for existential sentences, I embraced Kallulli's analysis (2008), where the SC has the DP as the subject and the location as the predicate. I adopted the view that in copular sentences, there is Upward Agree, while in existentials, the subject stays in situ, and there is downward Agree, a type of Agree which may be defective (Bjorkman & Zeijlstra 2014). In order to test this difference, a query was conducted on 20 native Romanian speakers, to see which sentence (*Cărțile e frumoase* "Books is beautiful" and *E niște cărți pe masă* "Is some books on table") was less ungrammatical in their view. Although considered ungrammatical, the second sentence was deemed more acceptable by native speakers.

The reasons for this are the existential (rather than predicative) meaning of the verb *to be* in existential sentences, the postverbal positioning of the pivot noun, as well as the use the quantifier *niște* ("some").

In Romanian, the verbs *a exista* "to exist" and *a se afla* ("to be located"), both used in paraphrases of existential sentences with the verb *to be*, have the same form both in the 3rd person singular and plural (*există, se află*). Moreover, singular agreement is favoured by the postverbal positioning of the pivot noun, also found with coordinated DPs if agreement is by proximity (*E o carte și un caiet pe masă* "Is a book and a notebook on table"). Unlike upward agree, downward agreement may thus be argued to defective to a certain extent, suggesting that c-command is less strict than Spec-head. Also, the use of the quantitative adjective *niște*, combining both with singular and plural pivot nouns, favours this interpretation. The effect of the quantifier has been studied at length for Hebrew (Danon 2012, 2013), where the existential verb exhibits agreement either with the noun or the quantifier modifying it (although not all quantifiers allow this variability), something problematic for a structural account of agreement. Similar facts can be noted for Romanian.

Variation in agreement in existential sentences is a widely known and well-documented phenomenon (Bentley 2013, Claes 2014 a.o.), being present both cross-linguistically (the personal *ci sono* in Italian versus the impersonal *il y a* in French) and within the same language (in Spanish, for instance, *había árboles* versus *habían fiestas*, or in English, *There are nice things to discover* versus *There's things I cannot resist*). Thus, the data on ungrammaticality from Romanian seems to fit in the array of already existing data from languages worldwide.

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