CASE AND AGREEMENT

What is agreement sensitive to?

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6 CASE AND AGREEMENT

- Agree-based theory of case assignment: agreement and case and necessarily interconnected because they are the result of the same operation.
 - ▶ Insight empirically supported by cases where case and agreement and indeed correlated.
 - Subject and object agreement in Khanty, which are correlated with nominative and accusative case, respectively.
 - Agreement with anything that is NOM in Icelandic, irrespective of grammatical function.
- Dependent Case Theory: no necessary correlation, since case, according to this theory, is the result
 of the workings of the Disjunctive Case Hierarchy. This algorithm does not rely on the presence of
 some Probe that Agrees with a DP Goal.
- Icelandic NOM agreement: cannot be accounted for an Agree-based system; Dependent Case Theory empirically superior for this particular data.
 - ▶ *But*: because a Dependent Case analysis does not have anything to say (thus far) about the relationship between case and agreement, how can it account for the fact that the verb in Icelandic does agree with any DP that is NOM?
 - DCT is empirically superior because it can account for the persistence of NOM in the absence of a T_{FIN} probe in an ECM environment, but the simplest version of DCT *cannot* account for the phenomenon fully because it has nothing to say about agreement.
 - What is the empirical relationship between case and agreement, beyond how an Agree-based theory models their necessary correlation?
 - What is agreement sensitive to? Grammatical function (e.g. agree with a subject or object) vs. case (e.g. agree with anything that is NOM).

6.1 What is agreement sensitive to?

• An empirical generalization about agreement and grammatical function:

- (1) Moravcsik Hierarchy
 Subject > Object > Indirect Object
- ▶ This is an **implicational** hierarchy: if a language exhibits agreement with any given category *C* in the scale, it will necessarily exhibit agreement with the element that precedes *C* immediately.
 - For instance, if a language has agreement with the indirect object, it necessarily also has agreement with the direct object.
 - Likewise, if a language has agreement with the direct object, it also necessarily also has agreement with the subject.
- ▶ No category in the hierarchy can be skipped over: there is no language that has e.g. only subject and indirect object agreement, without also having direct object agreement.
- ▶ This implication has a particular *directionality*: a language can have agreement with some category *C* in the scale without also having agreement with another category that *follows C*.
 - For instance, a language can have subject agreement only, without also having object agreement.
- The implicational hierarchy in (1) is stated in terms of grammatical functions.
- Bobaljik (2008): this hierarchy should be restated in terms of the categories in the Disjunctive Case Hierarchy:
 - (2) Revised Moravcsik Hierarchy
 Unmarked case > Dependent case > Lexical case
 - Despite the reformulation, this is still an implicational hierarchical, which follows the rules stated above regarding (1).



Exercise 1

- A. The hierarchy in (2) implies a particular order of the syntactic operations responsible for case and agreement. What is this order?
- B. Are both case assignment theories surveyed here compatible with this order? Why or why not?

6.2 Comparing the two hierarchies

- The two hierarchies are often empirically equivalent, e.g.:
 - ▶ English: agreement with subject \equiv agreement with a NOM DP.
 - (3) Faatu own-s an apartment in St. John's.
 - \triangleright Khanty: agreement with subject and with object \equiv agreement with NOM DP and with ACC DP.

(Khanty, Uralic)

(4) ma naŋ-e:n wa:n-s-e:-m.
1SG.NOM 2SG-ACC see-PST-3SGO-1SGS
'I saw you.'

 \triangleright Adyghe: agreement with subject and with object \equiv agreement with ERG DP and with ABS DP.

- (5) č'ale-m pisme-r Ø-j-e-txə (Adyghe, Northwest Caucasian) boy-erg letter-abs 3sg.abs-3sg.erg-dyn-write 'The boy is writing a letter.'
 - 1 Pay attention to the features that agreement morphemes are crossreferencing and not the particular choice of terms in the glosses.
- How, then, can we distinguish between the two hierarchies?
- Above and beyond the cases where there happens to be equivalence between the two theories, they actually make different predictions:
 - ▶ Hierarchy based on grammatical function, (1): agreement always with the same grammatical function (e.g. subject), irrespective of the case it is assigned.
 - ▶ Hierarchy based on Dependent Case case categories, (2): agreement always with the same case, irrespective of the grammatical function of the DP that is assigned that case.

6.2.1 ICELANDIC, AGAIN



EXERCISE 2

What would each theory say about agreement in Icelandic? Are both theories empirically correct?

- (6) a. Þið lásuð / *las bókina. (*Icelandic*) you.nom.pl read.2pl read.3sg book-the.acc.sg 'You read the book.'
 - b. Við klæðumst dýrum fötum. we.nom.pl wear.1pl expensive clothes.dat.pl 'We wear expensive clothes.'
- (7) a. **Henni** líkuðu hestarnir. (*Icelandic*) her.dat liked.3pl the.horses.nom
 'She liked the horses.'
 - b. **Mér** finnast skot af brennivíni bragðgóð. me.dat find.3pl shots.nom.pl of Brennivín tasty 'I find shots of Brennivín tasty.

6.2.2 HINDI AND NEPALI

• A similar argument can be based on the agreement systems of Hindi and Nepali.



Exercise 3

What does the verb agree with in Hindi?1

- (8) a. niina bacce-ko uthaayegii. (Hindi, Indo-Aryan)
 Nina.FEM child-ACC lift.FUT.FEM
 'Nina will pick the child up.'
 - b. Raam-ne RoTii khaayii thii. Ram-erg.masc bread.fem eat.perf.fem be.past.fem Ram had eaten bread.'
 - c. siitaa kelaa khaatii thii. Sita.FEM banana.MASC eat.IMPERF.FEM be.PAST.FEM 'Sita (habitually) ate bananas.'
 - d. siitaa-ne laRkii-ko dekhaa. Sita-erg.fem girl-ACC.fem see.perf.masc 'Sita saw the girl.'



Exercise 4

Which agreement hierarchy best captures the agreement system in Hindi?

- (1) Moravcsik Hierarchy
 Subject > Object > Indirect Object
- (2) Revised Moravcsik Hierarchy
 Unmarked case > Dependent case > Lexical case
- Consider now Nepali.²
 - (9) a. ma [PP yas pasal-mā] patrikā kin-ch-u. (Nepali, Indo-Aryan)
 1SG.NOM DEM.OBL store-LOC newspaper.NOM buy-NON.PST.1SG
 'I buy the newspaper in this store.'
 - b. maile [PP yas pasal-mā] patrikā kin-ē / *kin-yo
 1SG.ERG DEM.OBL store-LOC newspaper.NOM buy-PST.1SG buy-PST.3SG
 'I bought the newspaper in this store.'
 - c. malāī timī man par-ch-au /*parch-u. 1sg.dat 2hon.nom liking occur-non.pst-2hon occur-non.pst.1sg 'I like you.'
- Hindi vs. Nepali:
 - (10) <u>Unmarked case ></u> Dependent case > Lexical case Hindi

¹Recall that has split ergativity based on aspect.

²You can ignore "in this store" in (9).

(11) <u>Unmarked case > Dependent case</u> > Lexical case Nepali

6.3 Interim conclusion

- We investigated two types of relationship:
 - ▶ The relationship between the operations responsible for case assignment and agreement.
 - o Case assignment as a reflex of Agree vs.
 - Dependent case (which doesn't rely on the operation Agree at all).
 - ▶ The relationship between agreement and case phenomena.
 - Agreement targets particular DPs and the choice can be neatly stated in terms of the typology of a dependent case framework.

6.4 The order of derivations: Agree and Dependent Case



Exercise 5

Assume a "hybrid" framework that has the following components:

- Case is assigned according to the Disjunctive Case Hierarchy,
- Agreement is the result of the operation Agree, though the probe—goal dependency does not result in the latter being assigned case,
- Agreement is sensitive to case and not grammatical function.

Propose a derivation that accounts for the case and agreement properties of the following sentences:

(12) a. Þið lásuð bókina. (Icelandic)
you.nom.pl read.2pl book-the.acc.sg
'You read the book.'

b. Við (klæðumst) dýrum fötum.
we.nom.pl wear.1pl expensive clothes.dat.pl
'We wear expensive clothes.'

c. **Henni** (líkuðu) hestarnir. her.dat liked.3pl the.horses.nom

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