

Problem Set 5

Due November 8 before class. Submit on IVLE > Files > Student Submission > PS5.

For both problems here, the definition of Agree will be important. Here it is repeated from handout 6. (You may want to review handout 6 in general.)

- (1) **Agree**($\alpha, \beta; F$) (read: ' α and β agree in F' '; see Adger p. 168)

For any syntactic objects α and β with matching feature F , where α c-commands β :

- a. let the value of F on α and the value of F on β be equal;
- b. if F is uninterpretable on α or β , check the feature (let $uF = \mathfrak{u}F$).

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1. **Northern Italian agreement:** Italian generally shows ϕ -agreement with the subject on T. However, in the Northern Italian dialect of Fiorentino,¹ only preverbal subjects agree (2); sentences with postverbal subjects (3) show "default" (third singular masculine) agreement, indicating that T did not Agree with the subject. (We ignore case here.)

- (2) Le ragazze l'hanno telefonato.
the girls has[3.PL.FEM] telephoned
'The girls have telephoned.'

- (3) Gl'ha telefonato delle ragazze.
has[3.SG.MASC] telephoned some girls
'Some girls have telephoned.'

- i. Use the lexical items below to build example (2) and (3). For each, give the tree and the sequence of Merge, Adjoin, Move_{phrase}, and Agree operations.

Lexicon:

- [N, ϕ :3.pl.fem] ragazze 'girls'
- [Det] le 'the'
- [Det] delle 'some'
- [V] telefonato 'telephone'
- [v , uN] (unpronounced)
- [T] gl'ha
- [T, uN*, u ϕ :__] pronounced l'hanno if ϕ is valued 3.pl.fem

(Assume V is pronounced with T via V-to- v and v -to-T movement, but you don't need to show this. This is important in order to get the correct word order for (3).)

¹Data here comes from (6861) Cordina & Brandi but don't look it up!

ii. Consider the following subject *wh*-question in Fiorentino. Which T is used here?

- (4) Quante ragazze {gl'ha / *l'hanno} parlato con te?
How many girls {has[3.SG.MASC] / *has[3.PL.FEM]} spoken with you
'How many girls talked to you?'

Bonus: Why? (Hint: Handout 11 is relevant.)

2. **Assamese case**: This problem is about the distribution of the case marker *-e* in Assamese.² I call the case of NPs with *-e* "ergative" and the case of NPs without *-e* "absolutive" (even though this pattern in Assamese is different than the common ergative/absolutive pattern). Consider the following data:

- (5) Ram-*(e) kaam-(*e) kor-e.
Ram-ERG WORK-ABS DO-PRES
'Ram does work.'

Other verbs like this: *maar-* 'beat/kill,' *saa-* 'see,' *kaT-* 'cut,' *khaa-* 'eat'...

- (6) Ram-(*e) por-e.
Ram-ABS fall-PRES
'Ram falls.'

Other verbs like this: *xuu-* 'sleep,' *mor-* 'die,' *aah-* 'come,' *jie-* 'live'...

- (7) Ram-*(e) dour-e.
Ram-ERG RUN-PRES
'Ram runs.'

Other verbs like this: *naas-* 'dance,' *xator-* 'swim,' *hāāh-* 'laugh,' *juuj-* 'fight'...

Recall: *(*e)* means the case marker *-e* cannot be used; **e* means the linker *must* be used.

- i. What is the generalization for which NPs take *-e* (ergative) and which do not?
- ii. Use the lexical items below to build example (5). Give a tree and the sequence of Merge and Agree steps.

Assume Assamese is head-final: Merge(H,XP) of head H with XP will return $\overbrace{XP \ H}^{HP}$.

²Data here comes from (2002) Sarma & Amritavalli but don't look it up!

Lexicon:

- [N, uCase: __] *Ram*
- [N, uCase: __] *kaam* work
- [V, uN] *kor-* 'do'
- [*v*, uN, Case:ABS] (unpronounced)
- [T, Infl:PRES, Case:ERG] *-e*

(There is also V-to-*v* and *v*-to-T movement to get the verb to be pronounced together with the present tense marker *-e*. You do not need to show this.)

- iii. The lexicon above can grammatically derive (5), but it can also derive (with additional verbs) many ungrammatical sentences, such as the following:

- (8) a. **Ram kaam-e kor-e.*
 Ram-ABS WORK-ERG DO-PRES
- b. **Ram-e por-e.*
 Ram-ERG fall-PRES
- c. **Ram dour-e.*
 Ram-ABS RUN-PRES

Now consider the hypothesis in (9).

- (9) Case-assignment in Assamese is always *downwards*: from a c-commanding head with a [Case:...] feature to a c-commanded N with [uCase: __].

Does this hypothesis in (9) help us predict the ungrammaticality of the examples in (8)? Which ones? Explain.