

Agreement...or not...in ASL: Evidence from *pro*

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ISSUE: *pro* and its relation to agreement

BACKGROUND: part A

ASL has Different types of verb classes (Padden 1989)

- (1) a. **Agreeing** for person:
a-JOHN b-MARY a-HELP-b
'John helps Mary'
- b. **Agreeing** for location:
BOOK a-IX a-MOVE-b FINISH
'I moved the book (to that place)'
- c. **Plain**:
IX-1 LOVE FISH
'I love fish!'

BACKGROUND: part B

Subjects and objects can always be silent: all verbs allow null arguments (*pro*)
pro can be licensed by agreement in many languages (Taraldsen, 1978), e.g. Romance
Theory #1 (Lillo-Martin 1986, 1991): manual agreement only counts as a licenser
 • *pro* is licensed by agreement (*pro*_{Aggr}) or lack thereof / something else (*pro*_{non-Agr}) → *pro*_{Aggr} occurs with **agreeing** verbs only

- (2) a. **Agreeing** (*pro*_{Aggr})
A. Did John send Mary the paper?
B. YES, a-SEND-b
- b. **Plain** (some other type of null argument; not *pro*_{Aggr})
A. Did you eat my candy?
B. YES, EAT-UP

Theory #2 (Bahan et al. 2000): non-manual agreement counts as a licenser (e.g., head tilt and/or eye gaze)
 • *pro* is licensed by agreement only → *pro*_{Aggr} with all verbs

- (3) a. *pro*_i [+agr_i]_{AggrS} [+agr_j]_{AggrO} SHOOT_j FRANK_j
'(He/She) shoots Frank.'
- b. *pro*_i [+agr_i]_{AggrS} [+agr_j]_{AggrO} SHOOT_j FRANK_j
- (4) a. **pro*_i [+agr_i]_{AggrS} [+agr_j]_{AggrO} LOVE MOTHER_j
'(He/She) loves mother.'
- b. *pro*_i [+agr_i]_{AggrS} [+agr_j]_{AggrO} LOVE MOTHER_j

*pro*_{Aggr} exists in ASL, like in Romance
 ASL agreement (manual (Lillo-Martin) and/or non-manual (Bahan et al.)) parallels agreement in Romance languages

PREDICTION

If ASL *pro*_{Aggr} ≈ Romance *pro*_{Aggr}, then ASL and Romance should parallel on tests for *pro*.

NOVEL DIAGNOSTIC : Adnominal intensification (a la Eckard 2002)

- Adnominal intensifier
 - can adjoin to any element of type <e>, i.e. (pro)nominal
 - contributes to the meaning where the associate of the intensifier is compared to other people who might have been involved (a set of possible alternatives)
- (5) a. Surprisingly, the manager **herself** (and not her secretary) attended the party this year.
b. Surprisingly, she **herself** (and not her secretary) attended the party this year.
 - (6) a. [[[Otto]_{EN} selbst]] = ID ([[Otto]] = [[Otto]]) [German]
b. ID: D_e → D_i; ID(a) = a for all a ∈ D_e (Eckard 2002 [3.2]-[3.3])
 - can adjoin to null elements:
 - (7) Taroo-wa [kare(-zisin) / zibun(-zisin) / e- zisin-ga soko-no itta to] itta
Taroo-TOP he (-INT) / self (-INT) / e-INT-NOM there went that said
'Taroo said that (he) himself *(rather than his friends) went there.' [Japanese]

PREDICTION TESTED

- "Long-distance anaphoric" SELF in ASL = [*pro* + intensifier] (Mathur 1996, Lee et al. 1997, Koulidobrova 2009)
- (8) a. LOWEL_i PERSUADE WORKER_j SELF_{i,j} RIGHT (L-M 1995)
'Lowel thinks that the worker feels that he/self is right'
b. a-LOWEL_i FEEL a-SELF_i/a-PRONOUN_i INTELLIGENT
'Lowel thinks self/he is intelligent'
 - (9) a. SELF_{ASL} ≈ selbst_{German}
b. a-LOWEL_i FEEL a-[e_i + SELF] / a-PRONOUN_i INTELLIGENT
'Lowel thinks that he himself *(as compared to other people in the context) is intelligent'
- Possible where *pro* is possible: with both agreeing and plain verbs
 - pro* accompanied by manual agreement: can be signed in neutral space
 - pro* NOT accompanied by manual agreement: cannot be signed in neutral space
- (10) a. **Agreeing (for location):** COME
i. JEFF_i a-IX THINK e_i / a-SELF_i / neu-SELF_i a-COME-b
ii. JEFF_i THINK e_i / a-SELF_i / neu-SELF_i a-COME-b
'John thinks (he) himself will come here from there.'
 - b. **Agreeing (for person):** ASK
i. JEFF_i a-IX THINK e_i / a-SELF_i / neu-SELF_i a-ASK-b
ii. JEFF_i THINK e_i / a-SELF_i / neu-SELF_i a-ASK-b
'John thinks (he) himself will ask.'
 - c. **Plain:** PREFER
i. JEFF_i a-IX TELL-ME e_i / a-SELF_i / *neu-SELF_i PREFER FISH
ii. JEFF_i TELL-ME e_i / *a-SELF_i / *neu-SELF_i PREFER FISH
'Jeff told me that (he) himself prefers fish.'

If *pro*_{ASL} ≈ *pro*_{Romance}, then we expect [*pro* + intensifier] in Romance

- Romance languages allow an adnominal intensifier to adjoin to nouns and pronouns (König & Siemund 2008)
- (11) a. La maestra misma vió el accidente [Spanish]
The teacher.FEM.SG INT.SG.FEM saw the accident
'The herself saw the accident'
 - b. Podemos preguntar a María, porque ella misma vió el accidente
We can ask OBJ Maria because she INT.SG.FEM saw the accident
'We can ask Maria because she saw the accident herself.'
- Many Romance languages allow null subjects ("consistent null subject languages," Biberauer et al. 2010)
- (12) Podemos preguntar a María, porque e_i me lo dijo
'We can ask Maria because (she) told me that'
- BUT**
- Romance null subject languages disallow [*pro* + intensifier] (also holds for Serbo-Croatian and Hebrew)
- (13) *Podemos preguntar a María, porque e_i misma me lo dijo
'We can ask Maria because (she) herself told me that'

Null subject in ASL ≠ null subject in Romance languages

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ACCOUNT: Evidence for (the lack of) *pro*_{Aggr} in Romance

- Minimalist Program → new tool-kit → what's *pro*_{Aggr}? (Holmberg 2005)
- (14) a. **Hypothesis A:**
The null subject is specified for interpretable φ-features, values the uninterpretable features of Agr, and moves to Spec,IP, just like any other subject. This implies that the nullness is a phonological matter: the null subject is a pronoun that is not pronounced.
 - b. **Hypothesis B:**
There is no *pro* at all in null subject constructions. Instead, Agr (the set of φ-features of I) is itself interpretable; Agr is a referential, definite pronoun, albeit a pronoun phonologically affix. As such, Agr is also assigned a subject 0-role, possibly by virtue of heading a chain whose foot is in vP, receiving the relevant 0-role, expressed as an
- The intensification test above adds a novel tool for disambiguating the two hypotheses for a null subject language:
- (15) a. If there is a pronominal but silent at PF, then there is no reason not to be able to have [e + intensifier], as in Japanese (consistent with the *Hypothesis A*).
 - b. If there is nothing nominal (i.e. of type <e>), for instance) for the intensifier to adjoin to, the construction will be impossible (consistent with the *Hypothesis B*).

(Possible) Conclusion #1: no *pro* in Spanish but there is *pro* in ASL

- Languages in which the [e + adnominal intensifier] is found: Japanese, Chinese.
- pro* in East Asian = unspecified for φ-features nominal (Tomioka 2003, Holmberg 2005, Neelman & Szendrői 2007)
- If this is the case in (13) for ASL, then this explains why **neu** locus is allowed on [*pro* + SELF]

Conclusion #2: *pro*_{ASL} ≈ *pro*_{East Asian}

BUT

*pro*_{East Asian} (radical *pro*) implies lack of agreement (Saito 2007, Biberauer et al. 2010)

Conclusion #3: ASL "agreement" ≠ Romance agreement

- Option 1: completely epiphenomenal (probably not, considering previous research)
- Option 2: requires another account, not Agr (e.g. clitic doubling, etc)

SUMMARY

- ASL null subject ≠ Romance null subject (*pro* exists in ASL but not in Romance languages)
- ASL patterns with East Asian in having *pro*, whose tie to agreement requires independent support
- ASL null argument requires an account outside Lillo-Martin (1991) and Bahan et al. (2000)

SOME CONSEQUENCES (directions for future research)

- Agreement in SL is typologically "odd" (Lillo-Martin & Meier, 2009, in prep.):
- (16) a. S agreement is optional but O agreement is obligatory (cross-linguistically: Nom > Acc)
b. Some plain verbs can optionally take location agreement
c. Plural cannot be marked on both S and O
d. Locative agreement may "outrank" S/O person agreement

- NOT agreement but **cliticization** (e.g. Kegl 1987, i.a.)
- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>AGREE (Chomsky 2001, McGinnis 1998, i.a.): subject to defective intervention: a host cannot Agree with a given noun-phrase if there is another noun-phrase structurally closer to the host</p> | <p>CLITICIZATION (Sportiche 1996, 1997, Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1997, Anagnostopoulou 1994, Chomsky 1995, Iatridou 1990, i.a.): voids the status of its target as an intervener: the "chain" formed by clitic-doubling (i.e. the syntactic object consisting of the generated clitic and the full noun-phrase that it doubles) behaves as an A-chain, whose head is the clitic; only the heads of A-chains can intervene; subject to a locality condition that prevents it from operating across the boundaries of a tensed clause conforms to a locality condition which for the current purposes can be approximated as the clause-mate relation</p> |
|---|--|

- (17) Given a scenario where the [clause-mate] relation *R* between an agreement-morpheme *μ* and target noun-phrase *X* is broken—but the result is still a grammatical utterance—the proposed diagnostic supplies a conclusion about *R* as follows:
 - a. *μ* shows up with default f-features (rather than the features of *X*) → *R* is Agree
 - b. *μ* disappears entirely → *R* is clitic-doubling. (Preminger 2009)

- (18) JEFF_i a-ASK-b PETER_j
- (19) PETER_j FEEL JEFF_i a-ASK-(*)b (if loci have not been previously established)
- (19) JEFF_i PETER_j FEEL WILL ??ASK / ASK-QUESTION
'As for Jeff_i, Peter_j, thinks he, will ask ??him/a question'