

## Signed Agreement: Putting the arguments together



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## Goals

- Revised view on SL agreement (Janis, Quadros, Quadros & Quer)
- Additional empirical and conceptual evidence for linguistic analysis of SL agreement
  - Syntactic conditioning
  - Optionality
  - Default agreement
  - Non-deictic agreement

## Basic assumptions revised

(Quadros & Quer 2006, 2009; Janis 1995; Quadros 1999)

- Non-plain verbs (“spatial”+“agreement”) can agree either with
  - locative arguments (spatial agreement),
  - personal arguments (person agreement).
- Non-plain verbs can in principle participate in both types of agreement.
- Ultimately, agreement possibilities depend on lexical class (plain vs. non-plain), lexical semantics and features associated with loci (location, person, etc.).

## Basic assumptions revised

(Quadros & Quer 2006, 2009; Janis 1995; Quadros 1999)

- Path and facing can realize agreement with either spatial loci (location features) or person loci (person and number features), i.e. they can be interpreted as locative agreement and as subject-object agreement.
- Backwards vs
  - (1) BOOK-x x-UNDERSTAND-1 (LSC)
  - (2) 2-UNDERSTAND-1
  
  - (3) BOOK-x x-TAKE-2 (LSC/LSB)
  - (4) CHILD-3 3-TAKE-2

## Basic assumptions revised

(Quadros & Quer 2006, 2009; Janis 1995; Quadros 1999)

- (1) TOM(a) a-TEACH-b [STUDENTS H-S](b)  
'Tom teaches high school students.'
- (2) TOM TEACH MATH  
'Tom teaches math.'  
(Janis 1995: 203)
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_t  
IX-1 MY DAUGHTER IX-3 TEACH-3  
PORTUGUESE (LSB)  
'I teach Portuguese to my daughter.'

## Revising basic assumptions

(Quadros & Quer 2006, 2009; Janis 1995; Quadros 1999)

- Loci can carry more than one syntactically relevant feature
- Agreement auxiliaries in principle can only agree with personal/animate arguments (person agreement)
- In some languages, we can see them realized independently in the same structure.

## Revising basic assumptions

(Quadros & Quer 2006, 2009; Janis 1995; Quadros 1999)

- With backwards verbs, agreement of AUX with subject-object, **not** with SOURCE-GOAL

TOMORROW 1-INVITE-3 3-AUX-1  
(LSC)

## Revising basic assumptions

(Quadros & Quer 2006, 2009; Janis 1995; Quadros 1999)



TOMORROW 1-INVITE-3 3-AUX-1

## Revising basic assumptions

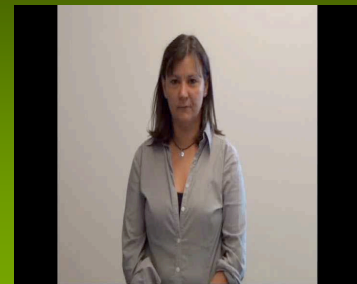
(Quadros & Quer 2006, 2009; Janis 1995; Quadros 1999)

(1)  
DOG IX-3 3-AUX-1 BITE-x:hand  
'The dog bit me in the hand.'

(2)  
IX-3 3-AUX-2 FACE CARESS-face  
'She caressed you on your face.'  
(cf. Bos for NGT)

## Revising basic assumptions

(Quadros & Quer 2006, 2009; Janis 1995; Quadros 1999)



IX-3 3-AUX-2 FACE CARESS-face

## Syntactic effects of agreement

- Morphosyntactic agreement has syntactic effects in LSB: e.g. negation cannot appear preverbally with plain verbs in LSB (Quadros 1999)

\_\_\_\_\_neg  
(1) IX JOHNa NO aGIVEb BOOK

\_\_\_\_\_neg  
(2) \*IX JOHNa NO DESIRE CAR

\_\_\_\_\_neg  
(3) IX JOHNa DESIRE CAR NO

## Syntactic effects of agreement

- LSB agreement auxiliary can only occur with plain verbs in principle.

(1) IX JOHNa IX MARYb aAUXb LIKE

- Still, possible cooccurrence with agreeing vs in LSB: with backwards verbs and in ellipsis contexts

(2) GIRL 2-AUX-3 TAKE-3

(3) GRANDMA-3x GRANDPA-3y 3x-AUX-3y  
TAKE-CARE-3y, 3y-AUX-3x NOT

## optionality

- Take object clitic as an instance of agreement in Spanish
- No doubling of direct object DP  
(=Lo) vi al director.  
'I saw the director.'
- Still, stressed pronouns must be clitic-doubled  
(Lo)\* vi a él  
'I saw him.'
- In Rioplatense Spanish (Arg.), such doubling is possible  
Lo vi al director
- With indirect objects, clitic doubling is optional  
(Le) di el informe al director.  
'I gave the report to the director.'
- Doubling correlates with specific DP-readings

## optionality

- It is not enough looking at forms in isolation in order to determine how an alleged agreement system works.
- ( ) IX-1 MATH TEACH (LSB)  
'I teach math.'
- Cf. syntactic and interpretive restrictions of the use of AUX in LSB and LSC

## Default/uninflected/ neuter forms

- Syntactic configuration: in LSC, when AUX cooccurs



GRANDMA-a a-IX-b GRANDPA-b CHEAT

## Default/uninflected/ neuter forms

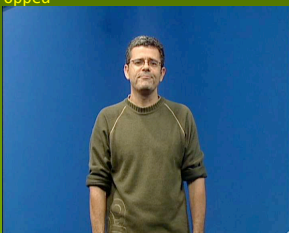
- Syntactic configuration: in LSC, when AUX cooccurs



3-IX-1 INVITE

## Default/uninflected/ neuter forms

- Syntactic configuration: in LSB, in ellipsis path marking dropped



GRANDMA-3x GRANDPA-3y 3x-AUX-3y TAKE-CARE-3y, 3y-AUX-3x NOT

## Default/uninflected/ neuter forms

- Semantic properties of potential controller: Negative quantifiers
- IX-1 NOT MEET NOTHING
  - 'I didn't meet anyone.' (LSB)

## Default/uninflected/ neuter forms

- Donkey sentences



IF PEASANT HORSE THERE-BE, SURE TAKE-CARE

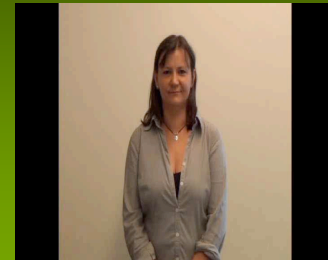
## Default/uninflected/ neuter forms



FRIEND ALL COME NO-RES2  
'No friend at all came along.'

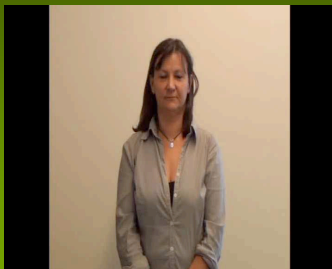
## Non-deictic/indicating agreement

- Different forms of multiple morpheme depending on implicit restriction for the quantifier: arc on lower horizontal plane vs. Arc rising from lower to higher horizontal plane



IX-1 SO-FAR IX-PL.GEN EXPLAIN-mult NEG  
'I haven't told anyone.'

## Non-deictic/indicating agreement



IX-1 IX-2 FRIEND IX-PL.REST EXPLAIN-3a NEG  
'I haven't told any of your friends.'

## Non-deictic/indicating agreement



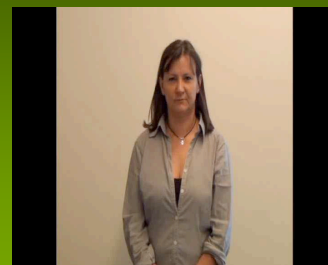
3-ADVISE-1 NEG. IX-1 SELF DECIDE  
'Noone advised me. I decided myself.'

## Non-deictic/indicating agreement



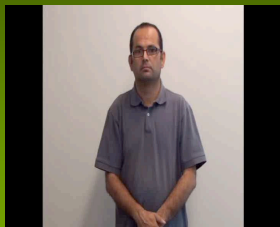
IX-1 IX-2 PUPIL CL:PL NEG3-ADVISE-1dist  
'I wouldn't advise it to any of your students.'

## Non-deictic/indicating agreement



IX-1 1-ADVISE-3mult NEG  
'I wouldn't advise it to anyone.'

## Non-deictic/indicating agreement



IX-1.PL GO-PL.mult NEG  
'I didn't go anywhere.'

## Indicating vs. Agreeing

- Gradiency vs. Categoricity
- All SLs make use of R-loci, but not all have agreeing patterns for verbs → grammaticalization, not simply conventionalization.
- Some SLs have agreement auxiliaries, others don't
- Fine-grained differences in behaviour of agreement-marked forms
- Structure dependency

## Non-ambiguity of R-loci?

- Overstated in most of the literature: at sentence level agreement morphemes and pronouns *are* often ambiguous.
- 3rd person pronouns for non-present referents *\*always\** ambiguous.
- 1st/2nd person pronouns unambiguous in languages like English
- In SLs, all pronouns, even 1st/2nd person, ambiguous in role-shift contexts
- In connected discourse, alleged deictic character is sometimes lost in the form of pronouns (Barberà 2010)

## Cautionary notes

- Inaccurate to talk about “SL agreement” → detailed analysis of individual languages
- SLs probably have grammaticalized agreement to different degrees (cf. AUSLAN corpus study De Beuzeville et al. 2009)
- Individual and generational variation (cf. Recreolization)

## Further thoughts...

- Taking modality issue seriously implies rethinking agreement as a whole → accept that the controller can be not an NP but an R-Locus (*contra* Corbett 2006).
- Under certain analyses of pro-drop, the agreement morphemes themselves carry the features and are referential.
- Referential expressions in SLs resort to R-loci, but not exclusively.

## Conclusions

- Rethinking SL agreement does not force us to take it out of the domain of grammar and to interpret it as a gesture-dependent mechanism.
- Strong indications that SL agreement systems are constrained by morphosyntactic properties of the specific language.
- Interpretive properties of agreement beyond deixis.
- Fine-grained analysis is required in order to attest and understand linguistic properties of individual SLs.

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