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.).

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)

(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)

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

(1) IX JOHNa NO aGIVEb BOOK

(2) *IX JOHNa NO DESIRE CAR

(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

(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.'
- Stressed pronouns must be clitic-doubled
  (*lo* vi a el)
  'I saw him.'
- In Nilo-Quichottean Spanish (Arg.), such doubling is possible
  *le 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)
'\(X\) 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
'\(X\) didn’t meet anyone.' (LSB)
Default/uninflected/neuter forms

- Donkey sentences

IF PEASANT HORSE THERE-BE, SURE TAKE-CARE

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

Non-deictic/indicating agreement

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 NEG 3-ADVISE-ldist '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 \rightarrow 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" \rightarrow 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.

Selected references

- Delfina Aliaga (LSC)
- Ronie de Quadros (LSC)
- Nelson Pimenta (LSB)
- Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (FPI2009-10492)