Relativized Anaphor Agreement Effect

Overview The Anaphor Agreement Effect (AAE) is a generalization that anaphors do not trigger φ-agreement covarying with their binders (Rizzi 1990; Woolford 1999; Haegeman 2004; Deal 2010; Grosz and Patel-Grosz 2014; Sundaresan 2016; Yuan 2018 a.o.). Based on evidence from Koryak (Chukotko-Kamchatkan) anaphors, we argue that the AAE should be weakened and be stated as a generalization about person agreement only. We propose a theory of the weakened AAE.

Data Koryak verbs display obligatory agreement in person and number with their subjects and objects (1a). The object (and subject) agreement obligatorily shows up also if the object is the reflexive/reciprocal anaphor uviki (1b-1c). But while the verb obligatorily shows agreement with the anaphor in number (1d), agreement reflecting the person features of the anaphor’s binder is ungrammatical (1e). (1e) also shows that ‘agreement switch’, where subject agreement occurs instead of object agreement (cf. Kutchi Gujarati, Grosz and Patel-Grosz 2014), is not possible.

(1) a. *moćyanan {*(mat)-laʔu-* (net)} kəmja-t / *(mat)-laʔu-* (tak) tuji
   1NSG.ERG 1NSG.S-see-3DU.O child-ABS.DU / 1NSG.S-see-2NSG.S/O 2DU.ABS
   ‘We two saw two children / you two.’
   b. moćyanan mat-laʔu-* (net) uviki-t
c. yamnan t-a-leʔu-(n) uvik
   1NSG.ERG 1NSG.S-see-3DU.O self-ABS.DU 1SG.ERG 1SG.S-EP-see-3SG.O self-ABS.SG
   ‘We two saw ourselves/each other.’
   ‘I saw myself.’
   d. *moćyanan mat-laʔu-n uviki-t
e. *moćyanan mat-laʔu-{mak} / -yaʔi) uviki-t
   1NSG.ERG 1NSG.S-see-3SG.O self-ABS.DU 1NSG.ERG 1NSG.S-see-1NSG.S/O / -3DU.S self-ABS.DU
   intended: ‘We two saw ourselves/each other.’
   intended: ‘We two saw ourselves/each other.’

These facts show that anaphors can trigger some covarying agreement, contrary to previous versions of the AAE, but that agreement cannot be in person. We therefore propose (2), which fits well with the typological evidence: Murugesan (2019)’s survey of AAE counterexamples finds no language in which anaphors trigger person agreement covarying with their binders.

(2) Revised AAE: Anaphors do not trigger covarying person agreement.

Analysis Following Harbour (2016) and van Urk (2018), we take Person to be generated below the other φ-features in pronouns cross-linguistically (3). We follow Preminger (2019) in assuming that anaphors are just pronouns with an additional ANAPH head in them. Preminger’s idea to derive the original AAE, which we adopt, is that ANAPH is barrier to agreement: any head below it will be shielded from agreement. In order to explain (2) with this system, we propose that languages can vary as to how high ANAPH merges along the pronominal spine: in Koryak, ANAPH selects πP, making only Person agreement inaccessible to agreement (4). In contrast, in Albanian, which always shows (default) 3SG agreement with anaphors (Woolford 1999), ANAPH selects #P, making both Number and Person agreement inaccessible (5). In languages like Tamil and Ingush, where anaphors trigger covarying gender agreement (Murugesan 2018), the structure would be like that in (4) but with gender above Anaph instead of number. ANAPH cannot be placed below person because we assume that person is the lowest possible node in any pronominal DP, making (6) an illicit structure.

(3) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{PronP} \\
\ldots \\
\ldots \\
\ldots \\
\end{array}
\]

(4) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{AnaphP} \\
\piP \\
\end{array}
\]

(5) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{ANAPH} \\
\text{AnaphP} \\
\piP \\
\end{array}
\]

(6) \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{ANAPH} \\
\text{AnaphP} \\
\piP \\
\end{array}
\]

As for the semantics of ANAPH, we take the ANAPH head to contribute a reflexivizing function on predicates (an ‘Arity Reducer’). It moves at LF from its pronoun-internal position and adjoins to the predicate that it reflexivizes, along the lines of Lechner (2012)’s analysis of reflexives (we will provide the details in the talk).

Nonstandard abbreviations: EP - epenthetic vowel, NSG - non-singular, π - person, # - number