Resumption and the Highest Subject Restriction as Interaction of Move and Agree

1 Resumption

- Certain languages allow for the occurrence of an overt resumptive pronoun (RP) in the position which is traditionally regarded as a moved subject / object (e.g. Boxer 1984, McCloskey 2002, Prince 1990, Sells 1984, Shklovsky 1992, Sider 1999, Wills 2011)
- Thus, e.g. a relativized direct object may be spelled out at the foot of its movement chain as a pronoun, sometimes alternating with a corresponding gap:

(1) DIRECT OBJECT, RP AND GAP
mentena ma a slaingly hot ey / gebus people that a snake has THEM / GAP bitten
People that a snake has bitten them

- Not all resumptive languages can use RPs as a proper grammatical device in all positions. Some allow for full optionality (with gaps), some for either only one or the other:

(2) PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT, RP ONLY
haa gri baxali Talor-the
the-man that (i) thought about HIM

- An overt RP can often be readily removed in common island violations:

(3) NP-ISLAND, RP ONLY
y die y ezradda Djiyaddy i ya pralol Man v / φ
the man C believed David the rumor C saw 352 Mary HIM / GAP
the man that David believed the rumor that Mary saw him

(4) WH-ISLAND, RP ONLY
qalib libro me dijeste ti que no recordas donde LO pasaste which book to me told you that you do not remember where you put it
Spanish

- There is generalization to be made for resumptive languages not to allow for a RP in highest subject positions:

(5) HIGHEST SUBJECT, GAP ONLY
na forner se I / φ
the man C NEIL PAST remained / φ
at home
the man that didn’t stay at home

- This has been captured in the Highest Subject Restriction, stated in largely representative terms (involving e.g. the distance between a RP and its binder) (e.g. Shklovsky 1992, McCloskey 2002, 2006)

2 Approach

- Makes use of an ordering and interaction of the primitive operations Move and Agree and a PF computation
- Appears to imply the Highest Subject Restriction
- Could be enhanced to include islands remedied by RP

2.1 Background Assumptions

- The non-phasal DP to be relativized carries a [REL] feature which triggers its successive-cyclic movement up to the specifier position of a C with a corresponding feature (cf. Pesotsky and Torrego 2004)
- [REL] percolates only to φ
- A phase head φ takes the DP as its complement; it has valued φ features (cf. Adams 2005)
- φ allows for substraction of DP only after agreement with a c-commanding phase head; thus, agreement can be blind to a higher ordering of Move (cf. Rispens and Richards 2005, van Eck and Richards 2012)
- Phase heads v and C carry an unvalued φ eligible for agreement with φ; they can remain unvalued, though
- The operation Move is split into Final Movement (FM) and Intermediate Movement (IM); then ordered in relation to Agree (George 2013, among others)
- Ordering Agree higher with respect to FM / IM makes φ transparent for substraction of DP
- Ordering Move higher with respect to FM / IM blends agreement and necessitates the pied-piping of φ
- If Move is available to the DP, it thus to occur phase-by-phase until the specifier of the relativizing C is reached
- A computation at PF can translate the φ head in the extraction site into a DP
- If the entire DP has moved (possibly leaving a silent copy/trace), no RP is inserted

3 Derivations

Below, two derivations based on these assumptions will extract a direct object for the purpose of relativization. In the first, an overt RP will be left behind, while in the second a gap occurs. The difference lies in the ordering of the operations. Nothing so far appears to prevent this analysis from being applied to other relativization positions and cross-linguistically.

3.1 Direct Object RP: FM -> AGR

Within the object φ, DP moves to specifier position, triggered by [REL]:

(7) [REL]

Thus, when v is merged, the order enables Agree with φ (non-phasal VP omitted for clarity). Next, (intermediate) Move is available. DP moves to SpecvP (above or below the subject), leaving behind φ.

3.2 Direct Object GAP: FM -> IM -> AGR

After matrix C (with a [REL]) is merged (omitting TP for clarity), the final movement step for DP is due; it takes precedence over C’s agreement with the subject (φy), illustrating its agreement with the subject:
- DP is then in operation position, checking its [REL]. Agree becomes available for c:

Thus, we are left with a movement-derived relative construction that has valued φ in its extraction site; it will be computed into RP at PF. DP functions as the relative operator.

4 Highest Subject Restriction revisited

The present approach already derives by its ordering operation mechanism what is stated in the literature as the Highest Subject Restriction, but FM-AGR and FM+M-AGR reflect it. However, the former derives RP in other positions.

(12)

A matrix subject’s first movement step in relativization is also always via final one; thus, φP will never be made transparent via Agree, and DP will always pied-pipe it along

Regardless of whether a language in principle allows for overt RP in other positions, the order of operations derives a gap in the highest subject

Embedded subjects are excluded from this generalization as long as AGR is ordered higher than IM

Since there are languages with subject RPs (e.g. Spanish, Yiddish), they can be accounted for by a re-ranking (such as AGR -> FM -> IM)

It has been argued that ordering IM higher than FM is not (or only marginally) reflected in natural language (George (2013)): there appears to be no language with RPs only in matrix subject positions (but see English 1985)

5 Outlook (on Islands)

- So far the approach can derive RP vs. gap distributions without invoking representational tools such as base generation or distance
- Different forms of C (e.g. Irish) could in principle be implemented via refined C-agarrement properties
- Certain re-rankings of operations and refined feature-systems could derive languages with less straightforward RP patterns (e.g. Welsh)
- Leaving RP behind, DP comprises less structure than φP; this is possible route into why DP alone may pass as an island

6 References


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