Deriving anaphoric co-argumenthood and predicate binding

Andrew Kato
University of California, Santa Cruz

The classical method for deriving antecedent-anaphor relations in narrow syntax is via the Binding Theory (à la Chomsky, 1981), or at least a variety of it:

1. Reflexive distribution: Condition A: An anaphor must be bound locally.

Among other structurally syntactic approaches, e.g., predicate marking (Reinhart & Reuland, 1992), stipulated value constraints are generally still set aside for anaphors. However, developments of strong minimalist approaches (Chomsky, 1995 et seq.) have since supplied the search for structural primitives as a primary basis for contemporary linguistic pursits. While much research continues to take Binding Theory related data prima facie, minimalist motivations have seen heavy reduction of Conditions A–C, as a consequence.

Approaches to Decomposing Binding

Notable takes on delimiting anaphor distribution without specific binding conditions include:

- Movement: Antecedents initially merge with anaphors, and raise (e.g., Zwart, 2002).
- Agreement: γ-features transmitted via Agree (Reuland, 2011; Hicks, 2009; Ke, 2019).
- Movement + Agreement: Binding as a composite operation in syntax (Diéres et al., 2020).

Binding-as-Agreement (BAA)

We share features, and the external argument in [Spec, VoiceP] values them via cyclic Agree. And, no motivation for adjoining to vP is provided by R&VW besides to feed downward Agree.

Constructing a Derivation

We take up here, the derivation of anaphors is still an agreement relation, but it develops through multiple operations early on involving Voice.

1. **Verbal Complex**: Taking on a fine-grained approach to the verbal domain (e.g., Harley 2013, 2017), raising to vP would not c-command external arguments that lie in [Spec,vP].
2. **Voice** mediates anaphoric agreement: Ahn’s (2015) reflexive Voice, provides an effective starting point for distributing the burden of anaphoric feature-matching to a functional head (Enshova, 2002; Paparonas & Aikug, To Appear).
3. **Cyclic Agreement**: Movement of the reflexive to the phase edge feeds cyclic Agree, not strict downward agree with Voice.

Reframing Argument Distinctions

As demonstrated most recently in Enshova (2002) with West Circassian, R&VW’s analysis is largely too simple in the grand scheme of agreement structure. Anaphoric Agree also remains out of place in approaches that stipulate agreement as a relation involving a functional head. And, no motivation for adjoining to vP is provided by R&VW besides to feed downward Agree.

Sketching a Reflexive Voice in BAA

This analysis is derived from observations of voice systems seen in various ergative-absolutive constructions (Mandar: Brodin, 2022; Chuj: Brodin & Royer, 2021). Like object shift, the internal argument moves to the edge of vP, which is also predicted by R&VW.

Over the course of vP, reflexive Y must enter Agree with an antecedent X, where \( \phi \rightarrow Y \rightarrow X \).

Behavioring as a floating quantifier/intensifier, complex reflexives move to the edge of the vP to c-command their antecedents to Agree (1–4). The corresponding form is inserted post-syntactically. Diéres et al. (2020) refer to this as a composite operation of (Int) Merge + Agree.

References