

## Reconciling replicative & anti-replicative processes in syntax

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Many syntactic dependencies are fundamentally *replicative* in nature: e.g. in cases of subject-verb agreement, the  $\phi$ -features on the verb replicate the  $\phi$ -features on its subject. Under classic Agree (e.g. Chomsky, 2001, et seq.), a feature-deficient element (probe) searches its local syntactic domain to get its features checked (or alternatively valued) by an element (goal) which bears these features. The output is a configuration where the features of the probe match those of the goal. Far from being accidental, feature replication (e.g. for  $\phi$ ) is the *only* possible output of Agree. But other grammatical phenomena like case assignment or switch-reference seem to involve an apparent drive toward *anti-replicative*ness or distinctness: e.g. two locally c-commanding nominals are *differentiated* with respect to their case value. Let us assume a strongly Minimalist world-view where (i) all syntactic dependencies are captured under Agree, and (ii) Agree always and only yields grammatical replication. This leaves us with only two logical strategies for dealing with anti-replicative phenomena: a) propose that they do not, in fact, obtain under Agree to begin with; or (b) propose that they are the epiphenomenal side-effect of a *different* Agree operation.

Treatments of case exploit both strategies. Post-syntactic approaches to dependent-case (Marantz, 1991; McFadden, 2004) argue that case-assignment doesn't happen in syntax under Agree, but in post-syntactic morphology, under a special dependent case algorithm. Head-based approaches to case (Chomsky, 2001 et seq.), argue that case assignment happens in narrow-syntax but that it is the side-effect or reflex of a different Agree operation between nominals and dedicated functional heads (e.g. T,  $v$ ) for  $\phi$ -features. But neither approach is compatible with the facts on its own. Arguments that case-assignment can feed syntactic processes like  $\phi$ -agreement or movement (e.g. Preminger, 2014; Levin, 2015) show that it cannot be entirely post-syntactic; arguments that case-assignment must involve case-competition (Richards, 2010; Baker, 2015, Yuan, To Appear) shows that case distinctness cannot be derived epiphenomenally. Taken together, this shows that (structural) case assignment must actually be derived in syntax, via a dependent case algorithm. Ideally, whatever syntactic mechanism derives an anti-replicative output like case-marking should also be able to derive replicative syntactic processes, like  $\phi$ -agreement.

Proposal: I propose a revised model of AGREE which is articulated across distinct sub-operations (cf. also Nevins, 2014; Kalin, 2020), as follows:

Step 1. LINK: Link two locally c-commanding objects X & Y for some featural attribute  $\alpha$ ;

Step 2. COMPARE: Check whether X & Y differ for some *relevant* feature  $\beta$ , where  $\beta = \alpha$  and what counts as relevant is parametrized (Richards, 2010);

- (i) If Yes → AGREE: allow values for  $\alpha$  to be replicated across X&Y;
- (ii) If No → DISAGREE: force values for  $\alpha$  to be distinct across X&Y.

AGREE is thus driven by a generalized OCP condition (see also Richards, 2010) that two syntactically local objects cannot be featurally indistinguishable at the interfaces. I will show how this new formulation of AGREE can successfully derive both phi-agreement and dependent case effects in syntax (the latter involving a path-based approach to dependent case proposed in Branan (2022)).

We will see independent support for this model from local anaphora crosslinguistically, which shows that DP1 may locally bind DP2 just in case it is distinguishable from DP2 at both LF (Reuland 2011) and PF (Faltz 1977). Such a condition crucially does not hold for cases of non-local anaphora. The approach also fulfills independent empirical predictions concerning the behavior of other nominal dependencies, as in predicate-nominal constructions (Longobardi 1994, den Dikken 2007).

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