

Interactions of phi-agreement and anaphora: the Anaphor Agreement Effect

Sandhya Sundaresan

Universität Leipzig

The Anaphor Agreement Effect (AAE) is a descriptive observation going back to Rizzi 1990, that anaphors do not seem capable of triggering "normal" (i.e. phi-covarying) phi-agreement. As such, the Anaphor Agreement Effect (AAE) serves as a window into the featural ingredients of phi-agreement and anaphora and the way in which these dependencies are formalized in syntax. In structures where an anaphor is in a position to trigger phi-agreement, anomaly ensues in one of several ways: the structure crashes (English), agreement fails yielding a default form (Italian, Icelandic, Albanian), a special anaphoric agreement form surfaces (Swahili, Chichewa), or agreement is exceptionally triggered by another element in the local domain (Tamil, Kutchi Gujarati). In this talk, I will present an overview of these various strategies used across languages to avoid a violation of the AAE, focussing on an AAE strategy in Tamil and a particularly interesting case in Icelandic, while asking why the AAE should hold in the first place, and whether it does, in fact, represent a grammatical universal or is merely representative of a conspiracy of independent forces. If the former, we expect it to be exceptionless; if the latter, we expect exceptions to be possible if the forces contributing to its existence are removed.