

‘External’ agreement with unexpected targets

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Across the world’s languages, agreement is generally limited to relations between a verb and its arguments (clausal agreement) or a noun and its dependents (nominal agreement), and it usually occurs between elements belonging to particular parts of speech within the boundaries of established syntactic constituents.

We focus on a radically different type of agreement, where the relation between the controller and the target is typologically and theoretically unexpected. This is typically seen when the controller and target of agreement are in a ‘non-local’ syntactic relation.

Examples have been registered in abundance in one linguistic family, Nakh-Daghestanian, and have been sporadically reported for other languages of the world (Antrim 1991, Fábregas and Pérez-Jiménez 2008, Ledgeway 2011 among others). Consider example (1), from the Nakh-Daghestanian language Avar, where the postposition *žaniw* ‘inside’ has the neuter noun *tusnaq* ‘prison’ as its complement, yet the agreement on the postposition is controlled by one of the verb’s arguments, the object Rasul:

- (1) tusnaq-al-da žani-w t’amuna niže-c:a Rasul
prison(N)-SG.OBL-SUP in-M.SG put.PST 1PLEXCL-ERG Rasul(M)[SG.ABS]
‘We put Rasul in prison.’

The agreement represented in (1) is striking: first of all, it is an unusual part of speech that shows agreement. Secondly, the agreement happens with an unexpected controller: not the complement of the postposition, but the object of the predicate. The target and controller in (1) do not form a local domain either in terms of strict locality (sisterhood) or high locality (such as verb-argument relations), as defined in Alexiadou et al. (2013: 3-4).

Languages of the Andic group present an even more striking example: clause-level agreement between nouns, as illustrated by Andi. In (2) and (3), the noun in the affective case (‘mother’), which encodes the experiencer argument of the verb *hago* ‘see’, has a morphological slot for agreement and agrees in gender and number with the absolutive argument of the clause:

- (2) ilu-**b**-o q’inkom hago
mother(II)-III.SG-AFF bull(III)[SG.ABS] see.AOR
‘Mother saw a bull.’
- (3) ilu-**r**-o c’ul hago
mother(II)-V.SG-AFF stick(V)[SG.ABS] see.AOR
‘Mother saw a stick.’

These examples demonstrate that, first, agreement affects a much wider range of grammatical elements than previously thought and, second, agreement can ‘sidestep’ syntactic relations, contrary to what has been generally assumed. To capture the latter property of this phenomenon, we call it ‘external agreement’. This is, however, just a shorthand for a more accurate description: ‘agreement of non-verbal targets outside their minimal syntactic phrase, yet within the clause’.

The aim of this workshop is to expand our understanding of how agreement works by investigating agreement phenomena such as arguments agreeing with other clause-level arguments, adpositions agreeing outside the adpositional phrase, and agreeing adverbs and discourse particles, as represented

in the world's languages. Our overarching research question is: **What does external agreement tell us about the structure of human language?** Answering this question involves considering the following:

- What types of controllers and targets are involved in external agreement?
- What are the structural constraints on non-local agreement?
- What are the morphosyntactic properties of external agreement?
- How does external agreement develop?

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