

Long-distance agreement  
Dieter Wunderlich (Berlin)

Recently, long distance agreement has become an intensive field of study because it violates (or seems to violate) certain locality conditions, which require that agreeing elements stand in a clause-mateship. A couple of accounts to overcome that problem within the framework of Minimalist Syntax has been proposed. It appears to me that these accounts are not so fruitful as wanted because the very nature of agreement hasn't met yet. Therefore I come back to a proposal 15 years ago (Wunderlich 1994), which says that agreement information ( $\phi$ -features) functions as an index on referential entities, and thus keeps record on the entities a discourse is about.

Agreement is a relational notion, and so is case; however, the latter is more restricted. Agreement is either complementary to case, parallel to case, or independent of case. Agreement is complementary to case in the predicate-argument relation, where the argument can bear a certain case wrt the predicate, and the predicate can show a certain agreement wrt the argument. Agreement is parallel to case in the DP-internal domain, where the elements (determiner, noun, attribute) can bear the same case (wrt some external predicate) and also can agree with each other. Agreement is independent of case in the antecedent-anaphor relationship, where a pronoun relates to the same entity as a (mostly preceding and more explicit) DP; note that in this case the relationship is not the most local one because a reflexive/reciprocal can encode a more intimate relationship than a pronoun.

Now, when in Hindi, agreement is used to express that Ram, a boy, wanted to read the book (!), which is feminine, all three verbs in (1) are attributed with the information of a feminine (singular) entity, so they collectively (as a verbal complex) describe the relevant state of affairs.

(1) Raam-ne kitaab parh-nii caah-ii th-ii.

Ram-erg book (fsg) read-inf.fsg want-perf.f be-fsg.

Since 'book' is an argument of 'read', but not (directly) of 'want', one feels a certain discrepancy, which, however, is solved when one detects that 'wanted to read' functions like a single verb.

I will discuss examples which mostly are not seen under the notion of long-distance agreement, and also those showing that the categorial-functional account (I am subscribing to) is confronted with some problems, too.

Wunderlich, Dieter (1994) Towards a lexicon-based theory of agreement. *Theoretical Linguistics* 20: 1-35.