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Intervention Effects in Agreement: Comparing Hindi-Urdu with Tsez

PRITHA CHANDRA
University of Maryland, College Park

0. Introduction

Recent studies (Bhatt 2005) seek uniform Agree-based accounts for long-distance-agreement/LDA patterns in Hindi-Urdu/HU and Tsez. Bhatt's main contention is that both languages allow a matrix T head to agree in phi-features with an embedded nominal without dislocating the latter to the specifier of TP. The absence of LDA is blamed on defective intervention caused by embedded PRO-subjects (in HU) and embedded T heads (in Tsez). The problems with this analysis are that it (i) conforms to a long-distance agreement relation like Agree, dependent on a representational notion of c-command, (ii) resorts to a rather fuzzy set of defective interveners, and (iii) makes incorrect predictions about intervention effects in HU. This paper is concerned with the last two points (see Chandra 2005 for critique on (i)). I intend to show that HU and Tsez do not show the same intervention effects with A-bar elements. This suggests that a uniform analysis for them is not justified. On the other hand, different 'local' alternatives for the two languages provide better explanations for the difference in intervention effects without resorting to (i) Agree and (ii) the notion of defective intervention.

I organize the paper in the following way. First, I present the LDA data from Hindi-Urdu and Tsez. Following that, I discuss Bhatt's Agree-based account and some false predictions it makes for HU. I highlight the differences between these two languages in the third section. The alternative analyses are given in the fourth section. The fifth section concludes the paper.

1. Introducing LDA

I initiate the discussion with a very brief introduction to LDA in general. These patterns are instances of phi-feature agreement between two elements that are (at least apparently) not in a local, sisterhood relation with each other. Take the Kashmiri example (from Bhatt 2005) for example:

(1) Raam-an che hameeSI yatshiImatsI panInis necivis khAAtrI koori vuchini.
Ram-erg. be.fem.pres.always wanted.pl.fem. self-dat. son.dat. for girls see-inf.pl.fem.
'Ram has always wanted to see girls for his son'

In (1), the matrix predicate agrees in number and gender with a nominal embedded within its clausal complement. Agreement in such instances goes beyond the immediate clause boundary of the agreement triggering nominal. We are mainly concerned with cross-clausal agreement configurations in HU and Tsez. Consider the following HU and Tsez constructions in (2) and (3) respectively.[1] HU verbs agree in gender while Tsez verbs agree in class.

(2) Johnne [roTii khaanii] chaah-ii.
John-erg. bread-acc.fem. eat-inf.fem. want.fem.perf.
'John wanted to eat bread'

(3) eni-r [uz-a magalu b-ac-ru-li] b-iy-xo.
mother-dat. [boy-erg bread.III.abs. III-eat-pstprt.nmlz] III-know.pres.
'The mother knows that the boy ate the bread'

There are some specific properties associated with these patterns in both languages. First, embedded verbs in LDA constructions have 'parasitic' agreement. They bear the same agreement morphology as that reflected on the main verbs. These facts are attested in the sentences above. In (2), the embedded verb bears the same gender morphology as the matrix predicate, while in (3), the same class morphology shows up on both matrix and embedded verbs. Second, LDA is optional in both languages; the matrix verb may bear default agreement as shown in (4)-(5).[2]

(4) Johnne [roTii khaanaa] chaahaa.
John-erg. bread-acc.fem. eat-inf.def. want.def.perf.
'John wanted to eat bread'

(5) eni-r [uz-a magalu b-ac-ru-li] r-iy-xo.
Mother-dat. boy-erg. bread.III.abs. III-eat-pstprt-nmlz.]-IV IV.know-pres
'The mother knows the boy ate the bread'

Finally, the agreement trigger receives a different interpretation in both languages. In HU, it is interpreted as definite or with wide scope. In Tsez on the other hand, it is

[1] All Tsez examples are taken from Polinsky and Potsdam (2001).
[2] Default agreement is 3rd person, singular, masculine morphology in HU and class-IV clausal agreement in Tsez.

interpreted as a topic. The following pairs (6)-(7) and (8)-(9) bring out the relevant difference between the agreeing nominal and its non-agreeing counterpart.

(6) HU LDA with (optional) wide-scope for the agreement trigger:
Naimne har kitaab parhnii chaah-ii.
Naim-erg. every book-acc.sg.fem. read-inf.sg.fem. want.sg.fem.perf.
'Naim wanted to read every book'
Every book > want
Want > every book

(7) HU non-LDA with narrow scope for the embedded object:
Naimne har kitaab parhnaa chaah-aa.
Naim-erg. every book-acc.sg.fem. read-inf.def. want.def.perf.
'Naim wanted to read every book'
Want »every book
*every book > want (Bhatt 2005)

(8) eni-r [uz-a magalu b-ac-ru-li] b-iy-xo.
mother-dat. [boy-erg bread.III.abs. III-eat-pstprt.nmlz] III-know.pres.
'The mother knows that the bread, the boy ate'

(9) enir [uz-a magalu-n/magalu-gon b-ac-ru-li] *r/b-iy-xo.
Mother boy-erg. bread.III-abs-top III-eat-pstprt-nmzl]. *IV/III-know-pres.
'The mother knows that the boy ate the bread'

Agreeing nominals in HU optionally scope over the matrix volitional predicates. This option is unavailable for the non-agreeing objects. In Tsez, the agreeing nominals are interpreted as topics, whereas the non-agreeing ones must not be interpreted as topics.

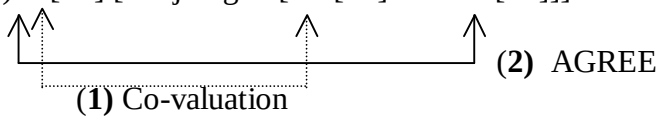
To summarize our main observations in this section, HU and Tsez LDA share some characteristics. They are listed below in (i)-(iii).
(i) LDA is accompanied by 'parasitic' agreement on the embedded verb;
(ii) agreement is optional and;
(iii) the agreement trigger is interpreted with wide scope (HU) or as topics (Tsez).

2. Agree-based Analysis[3]

Bhatt (2005) provides a modified (long-distance) Agree-based analysis (Chomsky 2000, 2001a,b) a.k.a. AGREE for both HU and Tsez LDA. Crucial to Bhatt's AGREE-based account are:
(i) case-marked elements are still available for phi-feature checking;
(ii) T is the 'pivot' of agreement relations.
For HU LDA constructions corresponding to 'John wanted to eat bread' (see (2)), he suggests the derivation in (10).

[3] Also see Polinsky and Potsdam (2001).

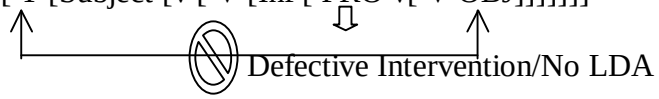
(10) T [uF] [Subj-Erg V [Inf [uF] .... OBJ[uF]]]



In (10), the matrix T establishes a dependency with embedded Inf. It then AGREEs in phi-features with the object, following which it also co-values the features on Inf. As a consequence, LDA patterns always have 'parasitic' agreement on the embedded verb. Inf. cannot act as an independent probe. Nonetheless, it does not serve as a defective intervener in the probe-goal relation between T and the object, since it is already in a certain relation with the probe. Also note that there is no embedded PRO subject (on the lines suggested for restructuring predicates by Wurmbrand 2001). This removes every possibility of defective intervention in the configuration.[4]

LDA is prohibited in the presence of defective interveners. Take for instance, Bhatt's conception of a non-LDA construction in (11).

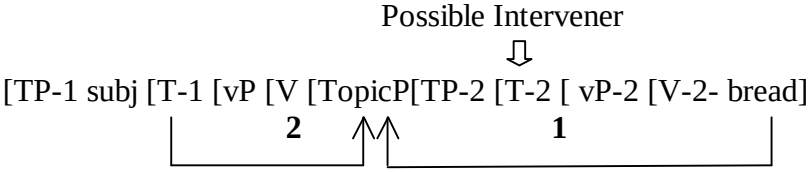
(11) [T [Subject [v [V [Inf [PRO v[V OBJ]]]]]]]



In (11), there is an intervening embedded PRO-subject. T cannot extend its search beyond the lower IP, as PRO is the closest (defective) goal. Hence no LDA between T and the embedded object ensues in such cases.

For LDA in Tsez on the other hand, corresponding to 'The mother knows that the boy ate the bread' (see 3), Bhatt proposes the derivation in (12).

(12)

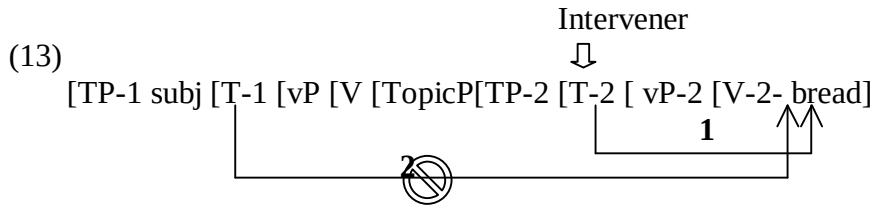


In (12), the agreement trigger must move to the specifier of TopicP to avoid embedded T's intervention. Matrix T encounters the object at this position and subsequently triggers agreement with it. This explains why agreeing nominals are interpreted as topics. Note that it is crucial for Bhatt's analysis that embedded T is a defective intervener, otherwise there is no explanation for the movement of the nominal to the clause edge. Of course,

[4] The notion of defective intervention is first discussed in Chomsky (2000). Sometimes elements themselves cannot trigger agreement but they may intercede a potential agreement relation if they are positioned in the c-command path between the probe and the goal (see below for more).

the embedded object may choose to stay in its embedded clause position. However, in such instances, its agreement with matrix T is disrupted by the presence of the lower T.

(13)



Let us now consider a few conceptual and technical flaws in Bhatt's analysis. The notion of defective intervention was introduced as part of the definition of Match, a sub-component of Agree. Elements must match in features (alias feature-identity, but not feature-value) before they may agree with each other. At the level of Match, even those elements that cannot trigger agreement on the probe, are nonetheless counted as relevant goals. Therefore there is a "possibility" that a higher DP defectively intervenes in the agreement relation between the probe and a lower DP. Once the probe encounters the higher element with the same feature-set, it stops its search. Defective intervention is built on a representational notion of c-command. Probes pursue their search on the c-command path. They enter into agreement with potential goals in their c-command path. The problem with such an account is that it does not explain why c-command plays such a pivotal role in agreement. C-command is not a primitive of the grammar; its existence in various domains of grammar must fall out from the interplay of other fundamental grammatical operations and principles. If c-command itself is derived from the operations Merge and Remerge/Move, there is no reason why relations like Agree and related notions like defective intervention should exist in the grammar. Agreement relations must ensue in local configurations created by Merge and Move, and similarly intervention effects must be deduced from locality constraints on these operations or from general economy considerations.

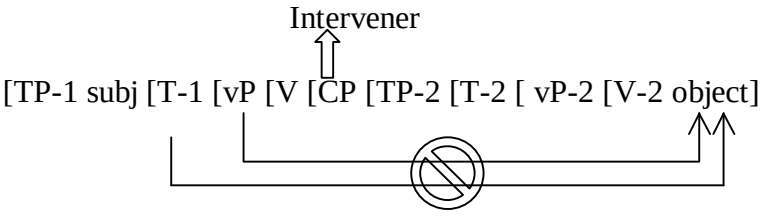
Another problem with the notion of defective intervention in particular is that it is ill defined and fuzzy. Since its inception, defective intervention has been suggested to be caused by heads, topics, wh-phrases, focused elements and of course other arguments (also see Boeckx 2004 among others). The set of defective interveners is presently very arbitrary and unmotivated, and for this very reason, its existence in the grammar must be suspect. Finally, it has also been shown to be too strong in certain contexts (see Boeckx and Jeong 2002). We will encounter a similar problem in the present context. Let us turn to that problem directly. [5]

Suppose that the grammar actually displays defective intervention effects. We predict that for HU and Tsez, other intermediate projections or heads in the structure should

[5] Chandra (in prep.) attempts to derive the alleged defective intervention effects in languages like Icelandic, Japanese among others from an interplay of distance/path-differences (as defined in Hornstein 2005), agnostic movement (Boskovic 2002, Franks and Lavine 2006) and Improper Movement Constraint.

block LDA. More specifically, an intermediate CP layer (especially with filled specifiers) should block LDA in both the languages. In (14), there is an intervening element (a wh-phrase, a topic or a focused element) in the c-command path between the matrix probe and the lower nominal. In such cases, defective intervention is - in principle - a "possibility". Note that the effect in (14) holds irrespective of whether the probe is v or T.

(14)



If both HU and Tsez LDA are outputs of the operation Agree and their generation is interceded by the presence of defective interveners, then we expect to find both languages behaving similarly with regard to CP-layer interveners. LDA must be incompatible with wh-phrases, topics and focused elements in both languages. Let us see if this prediction is actually borne out.

3. HU LDA versus Tsez LDA: Intervention Effects

As we show below, the prediction is not borne out. HU and Tsez pattern differently with regard to intervention with A-bar elements. We start with the relevant HU examples. (15) is a case of LDA in the presence of an intervening wh-dative (indirect) object.

(15) Johnne kisko roTii denii chaahii?
John who-dat. bread give want?
'Who did John want to give bread to?'

Second, LDA is compatible with focused elements (16).

(16) Johnne Miraako roTii denii chaahii, Peterko nahii.
John Mira-dat bread give want, Peter-dat. not.
'It was Mira that John wanted to give bread to, not Peter'

Finally, it also co-occurs with topics (17).

(17) ?Johnne Miraakoto hamesha chiThii likhnii chaahii, magar usne manaa kar diyaa.
John Mira-dat-top. always letter write want, but she refused do-give.
'John always wanted to write (a letter) to Mira, but she declined'

Tsez shows stark differences in this regard. First, LDA is incompatible with wh-elements (18).

(18) enir [lu micxir b-ok'ak'-ru-li] r/*b-iyxo.
Mother who-erg money.III.abs. III.steal-pstprt-nmlz.] IV/*III-knows.
'The mother knows who stole the money'

Second, it is incompatible with focused elements (19).

(19) eni-r [uz-a magalu hul-kin b-ac-ru-li] r/*b-iy-xo.
Mother boy bread.III.abs. yesterday-foc. III-eat-pstprt-nmlz].IV IV/*III-knows
'The mother knows the boy ate bread yesterday'

Third, it is incompatible with topics (20).

(20) eni-r [ah-a canaqan-go-gon ziya bisr-er-xosi-li] r/*b-iy-xo.
Mother shepherd hunter-poss.ess-top cow.III.abs. feed-caus-prtpst-nmlz]
IV/*III-know-pres.
'The mother knows that the hunter, the shepherd made (him) feed the cow'

Moreover, it is also incompatible with overt complementizers (21).

(21) *eni-r [uz-a magalu b-ac-ru-□] b-iy-xo.
Mother-dat. boy-erg. bread.III.abs. III-eat-pst.evid-COMP] III-knows
'The mother knows the boy ate the bread'

Below I summarize the results:
(i) HU LDA is compatible with co-occurring wh-phrases, focused elements and topics.
(ii) Tsez LDA is incompatible with co-occurring wh-phrases, focused elements, topics and overt complementizers.

Given these results, it follows that a uniform Agree and defective intervention based account cannot suffice to generate both HU and Tsez LDA constructions. LDA in these two languages must have different derivations. In the next section, we discard Agree and instead opt for local, merge or move-based approaches to LDA. We then go on to show the advantages of the local alternative in correctly deriving the intervention effects in Tsez.

4. Possible Alternatives

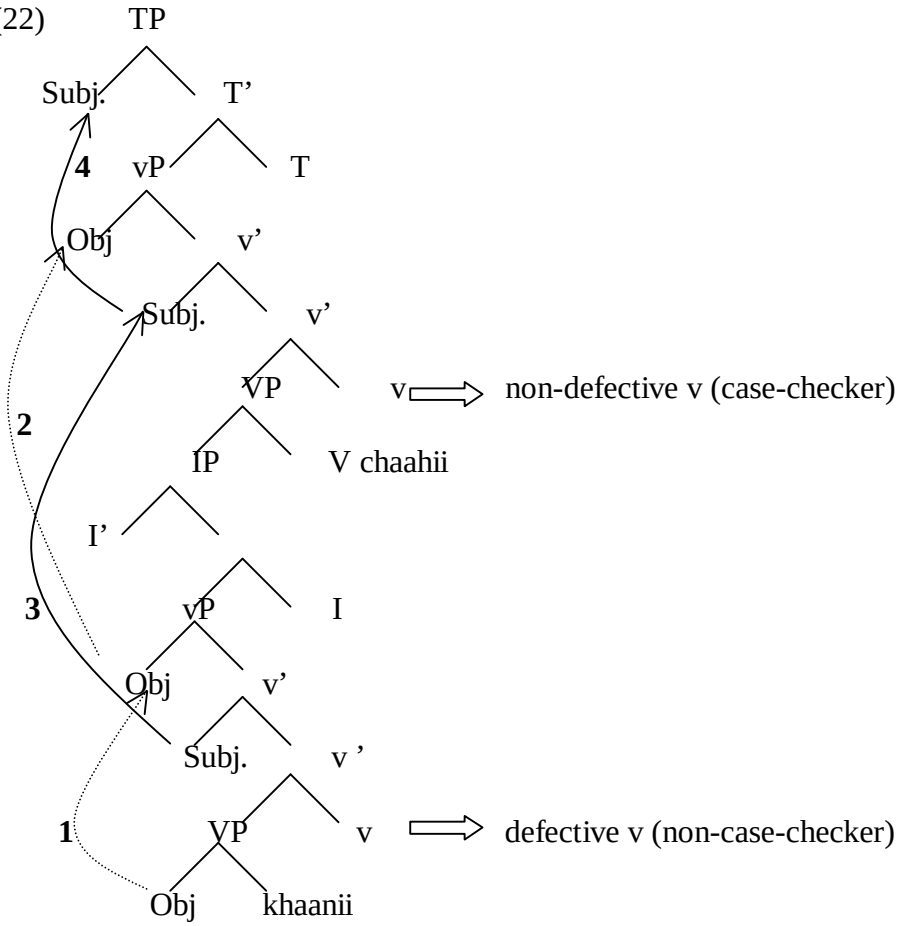
Before we proceed to their detailed descriptions, here is the gist of the alternative proposals. I argue that HU LDA involves object-raising (A-movement), while Tsez LDA involves clausal pied-piping. HU LDA alias A-movement does not block covert A-bar

movement. Tsez LDA, on the other hand, is blocked by intermediate CP layers, which prevent the agreement trigger from appearing as a sister to the verbal probe. Both analyses are based on the following pair of assumptions: (i) accusative (for HU objects) and absolutive (for Tsez nominals) are structural cases, and (ii) both cases are checked against verbal heads.

4.1. Raising Analysis for HU (Mahajan 1990, Chandra 2005)

For a HU LDA construction corresponding to 'John wanted to eat bread', I propose (as in Chandra (2005)) the underlying representation in (22).

(22)



I assume with Hornstein (1999, 2001) a movement account of control. PRO is an unnecessary grammatical formative; it is in reality a copy left over from A-movement of a nominal. In (22), the matrix subject is generated at the specifier of the lower vP. The agreement trigger or the embedded object moves overtly to the 'domain' (Chomsky 1993) of the matrix verb. This, it does, by first moving into the same minimal domain as

the embedded subject, i.e. to the outer specifier of the embedded vP. The object also agrees with the embedded defective verb. It then moves to the outer specifier of the matrix verb, entering into a local agreement relation with it. The embedded subject moves further to matrix vP, receiving a second theta-role from it. It finally targets the specifier of TP. This analysis is reminiscent of Mahajan's (1990) account of the same phenomenon. But unlike him, I do not appeal to the notion of PRO-invisibility to account for the possibility of LDA between the matrix predicate and the lower nominal.

There are two important points to note here. First, HU LDA is an instance of A-movement (driven for case/phi-feature agreement). Second, object movement is an instance of overt movement. Overt object movement explains the scope contrast evident between agreeing and non-agreeing nominals in LDA. I repeat the relevant examples from (6)-(7) below in (23)-(24).

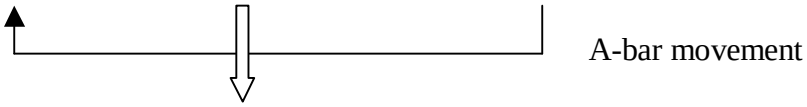
(23) HU LDA with (optional) wide-scope for the agreement trigger:
Naimne har kitaab parhnii chaah-ii.
Naim-erg. every book-acc.sg.fem. read-inf.sg.fem. want.sg.fem.perf.
'Naim wanted to read every book'
Every book > want
Want > every book

(24) HU non-LDA with narrow scope for the embedded object:
Naimne har kitaab parhnaa chaah-aa.
Naim-erg. every book-acc.sg.fem. read-inf.def. want.def.perf.
'Naim wanted to read every book'
Want »every book
*every book > want

Only agreeing nominals may take wide scope over matrix volitional predicates. Wide scope cannot be attained by covertly quantifier-raising the agreeing nominal. If QR was possible, it is unclear why non-agreeing nominals cannot QR and get wide scope too. We therefore contend that only agreeing objects scope over matrix predicates as they overtly move to the specifier of matrix vP. On the other hand, non-agreeing nominals fail to move to a matrix clause position, and consequently end up with narrow scope vis-à-vis matrix predicates.

Second, the movement-based account proposed here gives an easy explanation for the lack of intervention effects with A-bar elements. If HU LDA is generated via A-movement, then the lack of intervention effects with A-bar elements trivially follows from the lack of Relativized Minimality effects. Wh-phrases, focused elements and topics (covertly) A-bar move at LF; they cannot be barred from moving by the object placed in an A-position. Hence, there ensues no Minimality violations in such cases. This is schematized in (25):

(25) [CP [TP Subj [vP Obj v'[V [Inf [vP [wh-IO Obj v[V Obj]]]]]]]]



4.2. Clausal Pied-Piping Analysis for Tsez LDA

The core assumptions for the alternative analysis for Tsez LDA are (i) complement clauses obligatorily pied-pipe in Tsez, and (ii) clausal complements can be either CPs or TPs, but in LDA, these are always TPs. The first assumption is motivated by the fact that Tsez disallows long-distance A-bar movement. Consider the unacceptable (26).

(26) *sebi enir riyxo [c'ohora rok'ak-ru-li]
what.abs. mother knows thief-erg. steal.pstprt.nmlz.
'What does the mother know that the thief stole?'

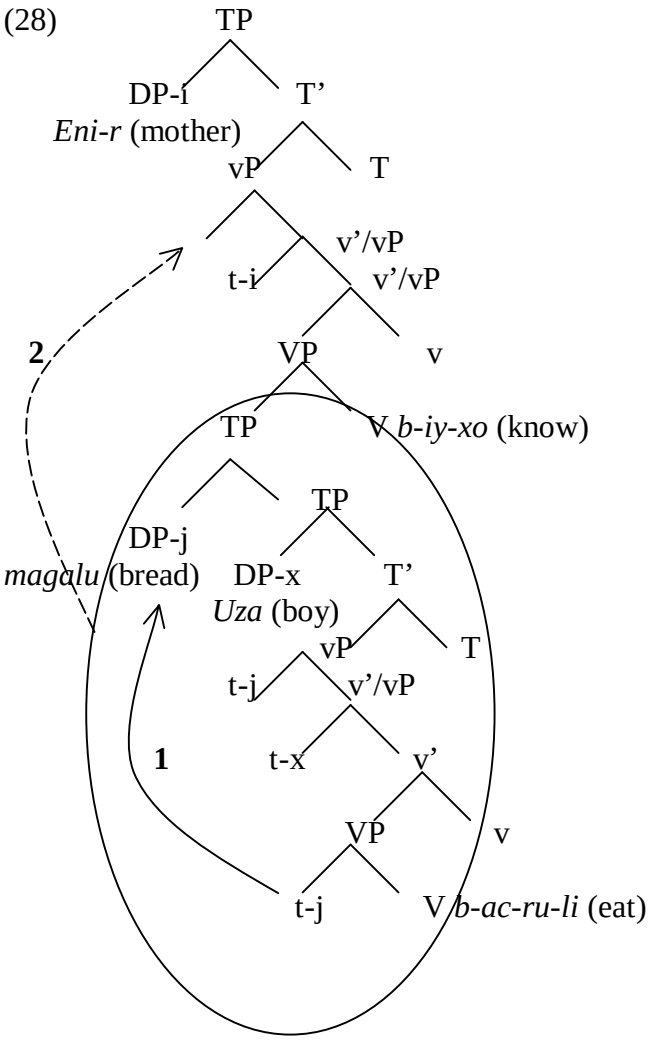
Extending Uriagereka's (1999) conception of islands as derived by the operation Spell-out, I contend that clausal complements in Tsez are islands for A-bar movement as they overtly pied-pipe to the specifier of matrix vP. Once they are outside the main skeleton of the tree, they are converted into giant compounds. Elements stranded inside them are invisible for future computations.

The motivation for (ii) lies in the fact that LDA is infelicitous with overt complementizers, as illustrated below in (27). The incompatibility of Tsez LDA with overt complementizers suggests that clausal complements in such cases must be TPs and not CPs. When an overt C is present, the matrix verb shows class-IV or clausal agreement.

(27) *eni-r [uz-a magalu b-ac-ru-□] b-iy-xo.
Mother-dat. boy-erg. bread.III.abs. III-eat-pst.evid-COMP] III-knows
'The mother knows the boy ate the bread'

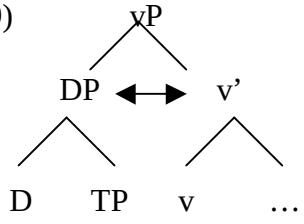
Given these observations, I propose (28) as the underlying representation for an LDA construction corresponding to 'The mother knows that the boy ate the bread'. In (28), the object adjoins to the embedded TP. This step is motivated by the need to place the nominal as close to the target (the higher vP) as another potential goal (the embedded TP itself). Such kind of movement – which is not triggered for immediate feature-checking requirements – has been termed 'agnostic movement' in the literature (see Boskovic 2002; Franks and Lavine 2006).

(28)



However, TP is closer to the target than the raised absolutive DP. Consequently, it pied-pipes to the specifier of vP. Once the TP moves, the DP – adjoined to it – projects itself and substitutes the erstwhile TP with a DP-label, as in (29).

(29)



By relabeling itself, the DP is now a sister to v. It agrees with the head in this local configuration. In addition, the agreement trigger - by virtue of its adjoined position to embedded TP- also gets the required topic interpretation (cf. Boskovic 1997). [6,7]

The next task is to account for the intervention effects with A-bar elements within the new paradigm. We claim that the incompatibility with wh-phrases and focused elements results from the ban on reprojection or relabing in the presence of a CP-layer. Wh-phrases and focused elements target the specifier of embedded CP. Given that this movement is overt, the potential agreement trigger – adjoined to embedded TP – fails to reproject. As a consequence, it fails to enter into a local agreement relation with the matrix verb. This explains the absence of LDA in such constructions. The lack of LDA in constructions with overt complementizers is also blamed on the presence of a CP. The incompatibility with topics on the other hand, results from the absence of multiple TP-adjunction in Tsez. Since Tsez allows only one argument-topic in a structure, it follows that TP-adjunction will be ruled out for agreement triggers in instances with another argument topic.[8]

To summarize our main results in this section, we showed that local alternatives are available for HU and Tsez LDA. The former results from A-movement of the object to the specifier of matrix vP. Object movement does not intercede A-bar movement; hence there are no intervention effects with wh-elements, focused elements and topics. On the other end, Tsez LDA results from object movement to a TP-adjoined position followed by TP pied-piping to the specifier of matrix vP and subsequent DP-reprojection. Intervention effects are caused by intermediate CP projections that bar the trigger from reprojecting and appearing as a sister to the matrix verbal head.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, in this paper, we have argued against long-distance Agree configurations for phi-feature checking. Instead, we have proposed that agreement is confined to local relations created by the structure-building operation Merge and Move. The local alternatives are also better suited to explaining the differences in intervention effects without appealing to the notion of defective intervention.

There is one remaining question. If HU LDA is accomplished via A-movement of the object to the specifier of the higher verb, then we expect structures like the following (30) to be unacceptable, contrary to facts. If our analysis holds, then the embedded object

[6] This operation is similar to reprojection as defined in Hornstein and Uriagereka (2002). Details of reprojection and its motivations are not discussed here due to space constraints, but see Chandra (2006). Issues related to linearization are also discussed there.

[7] Koopman (2003) proposes a clausal pied-piping analysis for Tsez, where the embedded object is adjoined to the clause edge. Being adjoined to TP, it is incorporated into the checking domain (à la Chomsky 1993) of the matrix v after TP's movement to the specifier of v. See its critique in Chandra (2006).

[8] Tsez does allow multiple topic constructions, involving one argument-topic and a non-argument/adjunct topic.

A-moves over an intervening A-element, the embedded indirect object. However surprisingly, we do not witness any minimality violations here.

(30) Johnne mirako roTii denii chaahii.
John-erg Mira-IO bread-DO give want.
'John wanted to give bread to Mira'

To answer this question, we must look at an interesting property of HU indirect objects, originally due to Kidwai (2000). She observes that indirect objects display adjunct-like properties. Contrast the following structures.

(31) [marksvad-par]-i ramne use [t-i ek kitab] di.
Marxism-on Ram-SU her (IO) a book (DO) gave.
'Ram gave her a book on Marxism'

(32) *[marksvad-par]-i alocak-ne [t-i ek kitab-ko] bahot buri tippani di.
Marxism-on critic(SU) one book(IO) very bad review gave.
'The critic gave a very bad review to the book on Marxism'

As shown in (31), it is possible to extract out of the direct object. However extraction out of an indirect object elicits an unacceptable structure, such as (32). Kidwai takes this contrast to suggest that indirect objects are adjoined to TPs; i.e they are in broadly L-related positions. They do not occupy A-positions in HU. If she is right, then we have a possible explanation for the lack of intervention effects in (30): the indirect object is in an A-bar position and should not intervene A-movement for the object. However, these tentative solutions must be corroborated by further evidence. We leave these questions open for future research.

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1401 Marie Mount Hall, University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742 USA