

HPSG AND ARCHI AGREEMENT

Within Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG) there are a number of approaches to agreement. One possibility is that it reflects constraints on ARG-ST (ARGUMENT-STRUCTURE) lists, which encode the basic combinatorial properties of a word. In much HPSG work it is assumed that null subjects and unbounded dependency gaps are only represented in ARG-ST lists. Since these elements participate in agreement relations, work that adopts this view must assume that agreement involves ARG-ST lists. This approach is quite plausible where agreement involves a head and one or more of its arguments. In Archi, verbs agree with an absolutive argument, as illustrated in (1), but so do some other elements such as the dative argument in (2).

(1) buwa d-aq^ʰa
 mother(II)[SG.ABS] II.SG-come.PFV
 ‘Mother came’

(2) to-r-mi b-ez χ^ʰošon au
 that.one-II.SG-ERG III.SG-1SG.DAT dress(III)[SG.ABS] <III.SG>make.PFV
 ‘She made me a dress.’

It seems that any agreeing element agrees with an absolutive argument in the relevant domain. Neither a constraint on ARG-ST lists nor a constraint on the features SUBJ (SUBJECT) and COMPS (COMPLEMENTS), which encode the more superficial combinatorial properties of words and phrases, can provide a satisfactory account of this agreement. This suggests that a constraint on syntactic structures is required. There are two possibilities: a constraint on constituent structures, encoded by the DTRS (DAUGHTERS) feature, or a constraint on order domains, encoded by the DOM (DOMAIN) feature. Archi biabsolutives such as (3), with two absolutive NPs, one triggering agreement on a copula and the other triggering agreement on a converb, permit a choice between these two approaches.

(3) But:a buq’ b-e<r>k’u-r-ši w-i
 Butta(I)[SG.ABS] grain(III)[SG.ABS] III.SG-<IPFV>sort-IPFV-CVB I.SG-be.PRS
 ‘Butta is sorting grain.’

The observable order of constituents is a reflection of order domains, but not necessarily of constituent structures since constituents may be discontinuous. An approach involving order domains allows agreement relations to be nested but does not allow them to cross. In biabsolutives, they may cross, as the following shows:

(4) tu-w q’onq’ o<r>kħin-ši w-i ez
 that-I.SG.ABS book(IV)[SG.ABS] IV.SG.read<IPFV>-CVB I.SG-be.PRS [IV.SG]1SG.DAT
 ‘He is reading a book for me.’

Here *w-i* agrees with the first absolutive *tu-w*, and *ez* agrees with the second absolutive *q’onq’*. Such examples suggest that Archi clausal agreement must be the product of a constraint on constituent structures. This approach requires fairly flat constituent structures, but there is no objection to such structures in HPSG.