

Feature Gluttony in Bengali Copular Infinitivals

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FEATURE GLUTTONY is an Agree phenomenon thus dubbed by Coon and Keine (2021) (“C&K”, henceforth) in which a single probe enters into Agree relationships with two different DP goals and any concomitant ineffability, in the absence of syncretistic exponents, leads to ungrammaticality (1). This is what, according to C&K, explains the PERSON CASE CONSTRAINT (“PCC”, henceforth) effects in various languages like Catalan, Basque, Slovenian, French, Greek, German *et cetera* (see the paper for a complete survey of the languages). And they do it without resorting to the PERSON LICENSING CONSTRAINT (“PLC”, henceforth) (Béjar and Řezáč (2009)) (2).

(1) FEATURE GLUTTONY

FEATURE GLUTTONY — that is, Agree between a single probe and multiple DPs — does not in and of itself cause ungrammaticality, but it can create irresolvably conflicting requirements for subsequent operations, which gives rise to ineffability.

(C&K, p. 3, wording borrowed)

(2) PERSON LICENSING CONDITION (PLC)

A π -feature [F] must be licensed by Agree of some segment in a feature structure of which [F] is a subset.

(Béjar and Řezáč (2009), (13): 46)

From such an account of PCC effects follows that if a clause lacks a gluttonous ϕ -probe, then $3 > 1/2$ configurations should ameliorate. C&K provide such evidence from German using identity swap contexts (3): only in the sentences with an infinitival clause do we see a lack of PCC effects in a $3 > 1/2$ configuration (3c), and this is consistent with C&K because infinitival clauses wouldn’t have any ϕ -probes, no FEATURE GLUTTONY will happen and no ineffability will be incurred.

(3) a. *Du* bist **Martin**.

you.NOM are Martin.NOM

“You are Martin.”

b. *?*Martin* ist **du**.

Martin.NOM is you.NOM

“Martin is you.”

c. *Martin* scheint [**du** zu sein].

Martin.NOM seems you.NOM to be

“Martin seems to be you.”

(C&K, (51), (54))

However, Bhatia and Bhatt (forthcoming) (“B&B”, henceforth) have argued that this doesn’t have to be the general picture because in Hindi infinitivals with a copula, the PCC effects are not alleviated. I show the crucial data in (4a). *adhya:pak* “teacher” in (4b) is pseudo-incorporable according to B&B, who follow Dayal (2011) in this regard. This leads them to propose that the PLC is a requirement that must be met, which will render (4a) ungrammatical because the first-person DP *mē* needs licensing, but isn’t.

(4) a. **mi:ra:=ne* [*ravi=ka mē banna:ʃ*] b. *mi:ra:=ne* [*ravi=ka adhya:pak*

Mira=ERG Ravi=GEN I become.INF

ca:ha: tha:
want.PFV.DEF be.PST.DEF

“Mira had wanted Ravi to become me.”

Mira=ERG Ravi=GEN teacher

banna:ʃ ca:ha: tha:
become.INF want.PFV.DEF be.PST.DEF

“Mira had wanted Ravi to become a teacher.”

(B&B, (59), (60))

That is, the PLC as a requirement must be parametrically available across languages, which is demonstrated by the difference just described between German and Hindi. The aim of this talk is to reinforce this observation by providing Bengali data which is similar to German but different from Hindi in that Bengali infinitivals with copulas do not show the PCC effects that Hindi does (5).¹

1. All and only Bengali glosses are given in the IPA.

References

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