

Syntax Square 4/24/12 - Junya Nomura and Daeyoung Sohn

First conjunct agreement in Kaqchikel

In Kaqchikel, the verb can agree with the first conjunct of a postverbal object with coordination, as in (1), where the object is *yin i ri xta Maria* “I and Maria”, and the verb can agree with the whole object or with only the first conjunct *yin* “I”. This phenomena is called First Conjunct Agreement (FCA) in the literature.

- (1) ri a Juan x-*oj/i-r-tz'et* yin i ri xta Maria.
the Juan com-1pl/sg.B-3sg.A-see I and the Maria
'Juan saw me and Maria.'

There are two types of analyses for FCA in general: DP-coordination and clausal coordination analyses. According to the clausal analysis (Aoun et al (1994, 1999) among others), contrary to the appearance, the coordination occurs at some clausal level above DP, and the apparent First Conjunct Agreement results from the deletion of the verb in the second conjunct at PF for some reason. According to the DP-coordination analysis (Benmamoun et al. 2009 and Bošćović 2009 among others), the coordination does involve genuine DP-coordination, and the FCA is the result of the agreement of the verb with the first conjunct, which is higher than the other conjunct(s).

- (2) a. clausal coordination: [verb DP1] & [<verb> DP2]
b. DP-coordination: verb [&P DP1 [&' & DP2]]

In this presentation, we provide supporting evidence for the DP-coordination analysis using the tests proposed in the literature to tell the two hypotheses apart. Specifically, we show that at least one of the tests supports the DP-coordination analysis. At the same time, we also show that other tests seem to constitute the evidence for the DP-coordination analysis at the first glance, but they turn out to only apparent. We take this to reveal very interesting properties of Kaqchikel. The test that successfully supports the DP-coordination analysis is the one using a predicate which requires a semantically plural object: *xol* “mix” is one of such predicates, which cannot take a singular object as in (3a). (3b) shows that it is also ungrammatical to coordinate two VPs with *xol* ‘mix’ with a singular object in each conjunct. In (3c), the verb takes two singular objects being coordinated, and the sentence is grammatical while the verb agrees for third person singular - with the first conjunct. The grammaticality of (3c) would be mysterious if it involved coordination of two clausal constituents, considering (3b), whereas the DP-coordination analysis explains it easily: The verb takes a plural object, but it agrees with the first conjunct only.

- (3) a. # yin x-*ø-in-xol* jun ala'.
I com-3sg.B-1sg.A-mix a boy
'I mixed a boy.'
- b. # yin x-*ø-in-xol* jun ala' i x-*0-in-xol* jun xtan.
I com-3sg.B-1sg.A-mix a boy and com-3sg.B-1sg.A-mix a girl
- c. yin x-*ø-in-xol* jun ala' i jun xtan.
I com-3sg.A-1sg.A-mix a boy and a girl
'I mixed a boy and a girl.'

The data in (4) provide further support for the DP-coordination analysis from the difference in meaning of the two examples. When there is no verb in the second conjunct as in (4a), the interpretation indicates that the whole conjuncts are the object of the verb: the two conjuncts are mixed into one, and the interpretation remains the same whether the verb agrees with only the first conjunct or with the whole object DP. In contrast, as in (4b), when the second conjunct contains a verb, the meaning of the sentence is different from (4a): The objects of each conjunct are not mixed together. This fact is problematic for the clausal analysis.

- (4) a. ri a juan x-e/oj-r-xol rje' i roj.
 the Juan com-3/1pl.B-3sg.A-mix they and we
 'Juan mixed them and us to form a bigger group.'
- b. ri a juan x-e-r-xol rje' i x-oj-r-xol roj.
 the Juan com-3pl.B-1sg.A-mix they and com-1pl.B-1sgA-mix we
 'Juan mixed them and mixed us.'

Lastly, we discuss the tests that seem to support the DP-coordination analysis at the first glance, but turn out not to. First, the compatibility with the adverb together is often used as evidence for the DP-coordination analysis. As (5a) shows, in Kaqchikel, the adverbs like *jnan* "together" and *jnan ramaj* "at the same time" are compatible with FCA. However, we argue that this fact alone cannot be used as supporting evidence for the DP-coordination analysis because the second conjunct can also have an overt verb in it. The relative clause with the plural agreement on the verb, as in (5b), is often claimed to support the DP-coordination analysis, but this test does not work for Kaqchikel for the same reason as (5a).

- (5) a. jnan/jnan ramaj x-ø-in-tz'et ri a Juan i ri xta Maria.
 together/at.the.same.time com-3sg.B-1sg.A-see the Juan and the Maria
 'I saw Juan and Maria together/at the same time.'
- b. yin x-ø-in-chey ri xten i ri ta ala' [ri x-ø-ki-tz'et ri xta maria].
 I com-3sg.A-1sg.B-hit the girl and the boy ? pst-3sg.A-3pl.B-see Maria
 'I hit the girl and the boy who saw Maria.'

References

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