On the unavailability of argument ellipsis in Kaqchikel

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Argument ellipsis (AE)

Some null arguments allow non-pronominal (sloppy) readings:

(1) Turkish null objects allow sloppy readings (=argument ellipsis)
   a. Can [pro anne-sj]-ni e-leštri-di-Ø.
      John his mother-3SG-ACC criticize-3SG
      ‘John, criticized his mother.’
   b. Mete-ye-e de-ø-½-Ø.
      Mete-however praise-3PSG
      ‘But Mete praised John’s mother.’ = strict
      ‘But Mete, praised his mother.’ = sloppy

(2) … but Turkish disallows subject AE [Sener & Takahashi 2010].
   a. Can [pro øl]-u ıngirize őgreno-iyor-Ø diey-iyor-Ø.
      John his son-3SG English learn-PRF-3SG c know-PRF-3SG
      ‘John, knows [that his, son learns English].’
   b. Mete-ye-e [e Francesa őgreno-iyor-Ø diey-iyor-Ø] Mete-however Frenchlearn-PRF-3SG c know-PRF-3SG
      ‘But Mete knows [that John’s son learns French].’ = strict
      ‘* But Mete, knows [that his, son learns French].’ = ‘sloppy

The Anti-Agreement Hypothesis

Question: How can you learn if a language has AE or not?
   • Not unambiguous in child-directed speech (Sugisaki 2009).
   • AE must correlate with some other factor that is observable.

(3) Anti-Agreement Hypothesis for Argument Ellipsis (Saito 2007)
   Argument ellipsis is possible iff the argument is not ø-Agree with.

For example, Japanese lacks subject and object agreement and indeed allows argument ellipsis for both subjects and objects (cf Turkish (2)).
Φ-agreement is observable and position-specific.
(3) predicts availability of AE if a DP is exceptionally not Agree with.

Turkish ECM subjects are not Agree with and permit AE!

(4) Exceptional AE in Turkish ECM (cf (2))
   a. Pelin [pro yeğen]-ni bise-ye başla-yacak-san-yor-Ø.
      Pelin her niece-3SG-ACC high-school-DAT start-fut think-PRF-3SG
      ‘Pelin, thinks her, niece will start high school.’
   b. Suzan-ıa [e ikokol]-a başla-yacak-san-yor-Ø.
      Suzan-but grade-school-DAT start-fut think-PRF-3SG
      ‘But Suzan thinks [Pelin’s niece will start grade school].’ = strict
      ‘* But Suzan, thinks [her, niece will start grade school].’ = ‘sloppy

(Krishna examples from Sener & Takahashi 2010)

NB: Japanese also disallows AE with subject-honorific agreement.

Kaqchikel lacks exceptional AE

In Agent Focus, just one argument is agreed with (e.g. Preminger 2014).

(8) Kichean Agent Focus ‘salience’ hierarchy (Dayley 1978)
   1st / 2nd person > 3rd person plural > 3rd person singular

(9) 3rd plural controls agreement over 3rd singular
   a. Ja rje- e / 'Ø' -t'l-et-o rja'. Set B = subject (3pl)
      ‘It was them who saw him.
      FOC them PRF-B3PL/'B3SG-see-AF
      ‘It’s them that we saw him.’
   b. Ja rja- x e / 'Ø' -t'l-et-o rje'. Set B = object (3pl)
      ‘It was him who saw them.’
      FOC him PRF-B3PL/'B3SG-see-AF

Unlike Turkish (4), arg’s that aren’t agreed with still disallow AE!

The 3rd singular object null in (10b) is not agreed with due to Agent Focus, but still disallows the sloppy (AE) reading!

(10) A: [ri ma Kabla-ıi ri ya b'toj]- x-e-kano-n ri ak'wal.
      yet the cl. K. and the cl. L.
      PRF-B3PL-Look-for-AF the A3SG-child
      ‘It’s [Kabla and B'toj], that looked for their child.’
   B: Manc, ja [ri ma Q'anil ri ya Nikte]- x-e-kano-n e.
      No roc the cl. Q. and the cl. N.
      PRF-B3PL-Look-for-AF
      ‘No, it’s [Q, and N], that looked for K. and L’s child.’ = strict
      ‘* No, it’s [Q, and N], that looked for their child.’ = ‘sloppy

Against the logic of Anti-Agreement

Kaqchikel provides a conceptual argument against (5) as well.

(11) The logic of the Anti-Agreement Hypothesis (Saito 2007):
   a. In AE, the e position is unaccessible to ø-probing.
   b. Its semantic content has yet to be copied or it’s already elided.
   c. If ø-agreement probes do not successfully Agree, they crash.

But in AF at most one argument is agreed with. AF with two participant DPs is ungrammatical (12), as one of the two arguments is not agreed with, in violation of Person Licensing (Béjar & Rezac 2003).

(12) AF ungrammatical with two participants; only Agrees with one
   * Ja rat- x in / at / Ø -ax-an yin.
      FOC you.sg PRF-B1SG/B2SG/B3SG-hear-AF
      ‘It was you that heard me.’
      (Preminger 2014)

To capture (8), Preminger concludes that 3rd singular DPs are not Agree with; they lack ø-features entirely (Harley & Ritter 2002).

(13) Lack of agreement is grammatical:
   Ja ri a Xan x-o-kano-n ri ak'wal.
      the cl. X. PRF-B(òxault)-look-for-AF the A3SG-child
      ‘It’s Juan that looked for his child.’

→ If failure to Agree does not induce a crash, (13), the logic of the Anti-Agreement Hypothesis (11c) fails apart.

Background: Kaqchikel and argument ellipsis in Kaqchikel (Otaki et al. 2013)

Kaqchikel (Mayan; Guatemala) has null arguments, and transitive verbs agree with both objects (Set B marker) and subjects (Set A marker):

(5) Kaqchikel agreement and null arguments (Otaki et al. 2013)
   a. X-e-ru-t'ij nimaimiku' a Xwan, iwir.
      FPR-B3PL A3SG-eat apple cl Juan yesterday but NEG PRF-B3SG A3SG-eat NEG now
      ‘Juan ate apples yesterday.’
      ‘But (he) didn’t eat it today.’

Otaki et al. (2013): (agreeing) null subjects and objects cannot be argument ellipsis, as predicted by the Anti-Agreement Hypothesis (3).

(6) Null subjects do not allow AE
   a. Ri a Xwan n-Ø-u-na-o'jjì [chi ri ru-mes tikriel y-e-ru-chap ch'oy] c the cl. X. knows c the A3SG-cat can
      FPR-B3PL/B3SG-see-AF cat mice
      ‘Juan, thinks his, cat can catch mice.’
   b. Chuqa' ri a Karlux n-Ø-u-na-o'jjì [chi [e tikriel y-e-ru-chap ch'oy].
      also the cl. K. knows c can
      FPR-B3PL/B3SG-see-AF cat mice
      ‘Carlos also thinks Juan’s cat can catch mice.’ = strict
      * ‘Carlos, also thinks his, cat can catch mice.’ = ‘sloppy

(7) Null objects do not allow AE
   a. Ri a Xwan x-Ø-u-kanoj ri a k'wäl.
      the cl. X. PRF-B3SG/B3PL-look-for the A3SG-child
      ‘Juan, looked for his child.’
   b. Chuqa' ri a Karlux x-Ø-u-kanoj e.
      also the cl. K.
      PRF-B3SG/B3PL-look-for
      ‘Carlos also looked for Juan’s child.’ = strict
      * ‘Carlos, also looked for his, child.’ = ‘sloppy

Argument ellipsis (null argument) readings are unavailable in Kaqchikel even when those arguments are not Agree with.
This contradicts predictions of the prominent Anti-Agreement Hypothesis for ellipsis (3) (Saito 2007).