Establishing some working terminology (descriptive)

See in particular Corbett 2003.

(1) Agreement broad covariation

Two distinct elements (e.g., words, syntactic terminals, etc) stand in a relation of agreement if there is systematic covariance between the (semantic or) formal properties of one and the formal properties of the other.

(2) Controller: the element that determines the agreement.

Target: the element whose form is determined.

Examples:

(3) “Subject-Verb Agreement” Subject = controller, verb = target

a. I read-Ø ja čítaj-u [Russian]
b. ty čítaj-ø

c. She read-s ona čítaj-et

(4) “Noun-Adjective Agreement” Noun = controller, adjective = target

bell-a ragazz-a ‘nice-looking girl’ [Italian]

bell-o ragazz-o ‘nice-looking boy’

This terminology treats agreement as an asymmetric relation. [controversial]

Properties of the controller are determined independently of the agreement relation (e.g., by reference, or by lexical stipulation in the case of grammatical gender), whereas the properties of the target are dependendent.

This (intuitive) characterization is denied by theories that rely on Unification or Feature-Matching, such as HPSG and (sometimes) Minimalism.

More terms:

(5) a. Domain: the syntactic environment in which agreement occurs.

b. Features: those formal properties that co-vary.

c. Conditions: anything else that restricts the relation
1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Familiarization with empirical generalizations (special emphasis on universals) that set bounds on theories of agreement.

Starting point: Agreement \textit{narrow}, predicate-argument agreement

➢ Are there universal constraints on syntactic configurations in which a predicate \textit{may} agree with an NP? (domains, features, conditions?)
  
  o Government \textit{[=Chomsky's AGREE] (c-command + locality)}?
  o Spec-Head? (is this distinct from government?)
  o How is locality properly formulated? Downwards-bounded (phase, clause?)

➢ Extra assumptions:
  
  o Actual morphological agreement in any language is a subset of UG-possible agreement relations (cf. abstract case vs. morphological case)
  o Sample size is large enough that any posited abstract configuration should be morphologically instantiated in some language.
    • If X is universally unattested, its absence must be explained
    • Syntax, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, system-external ...

➢ Assume there is a small, describable set of possible agreement configurations, call it \( R_{\text{AGREE}} \) (=Spec,Head + closest government?)

➢ Does \( R_{\text{AGREE}} \) play any other role in syntax?
  
  o Case = Agreement?
    • Prima facie evidence = NO: some overlap, but important differences.
  o Other syntactic licensing configurations (cf. Chomsky's Agree)?

➢ Does \( R_{\text{AGREE}} \) extend to other kinds of agreement (see below)?
  
  o Pronouns, Tense Agreement etc.

2. PLAN (PRELIMINARY)

\textbf{Today:} survey of types of agreement.

\textbf{Topic 1:} Features, Controllers and Conditions / The Corbett Hierarchy

Towards an explicit theory of agreement, interaction of semantics/pragmatics and grammatical features, Feature Mismatches and the Agreement Hierarchy

Corpus Data / Statistical Trends in a non-stochastic theory

Readings:
- Pollard & Sag 1994, Chapter 2 "Agreement"
- Wechsler & Zlatić 2003, Chapter 1
- Wechsler & Zlatić 2003, Chapter 5
- Corbett 1983, Chapter 2 "The Agreement Hierarchy" & Chapter 4 "The status of the hierarchies" (Wechsler & Zlatić 2003, Chapter 7) [maybe]

\textbf{Topic 2?:} Agreement Domains / Is there Long-Distance Agreement?

- Structurally limited? 
  • Clausemate?
  • Clausemate + a little bit? 
  • Polinsky 
  • Phraseate (= clause?) 
  • Wurmbrand / Bobaljik; Bruening

- Closest? (Is this the domain or a condition)? Hindi (Bhatt); Icelandic (Schütze)

\textbf{Topic ?: Agreement and Case}

- Sub-topics:
  • "Defective Intervention"
  • Person-Case Constraint
  • Case-Agreement Mismatches (Displacement)

\textbf{Topic ?: Universals: The Moravcsik Hierarchy?}

- Language or Sentence?
- By position or by feature?
- Does this reduce to anything else? Case? Marantz 1991
- How much is non-subject agreement like subject agreement? (Bresnan)
- Trigger-Happy Agreement (Comrie 2003; Bobaljik & Wurmbrand 2002)
- Object > Subject Priority (Béjar; Béjar & Rezac's "Cyclic Agree")

\textbf{Topic ?: Beyond Agreement}

- Does "rich" agreement matter? The Pro-Drop Parameter; Verb Movement Rohrbacher; Bobaljik

- Are any other things "like" agreement?
3. AGREEMENT: A WHIRLWIND TOUR

3.1 Argument-Predicate Agreement

Controller = Argument, Target = (Main) Predicate

Examples:

(6) “Subject-Verb Agreement” Subject = controller, verb = target
   a. I read-Ø ja čitaj-u [Russian]
   b. ty čitaj-es
   c. She read-s ona čitaj-et

(7) “Object Agreement”
   a. kma kza t’irčqu-in I • you • see-2sg [Itelmen]
   b. kma na t’irčqu-čen I • him • see-3sg
   c. kma ity t’irčqu-če?n I • them • see-3pl

(8) “Indirect Object Agreement” (Goal/Recipient, Benefactive … “Dative”, others)

(9) Possessor-Predicate Agreement (controller is possessor of an argument)

(10) Adjunct Agreement

(11) Moravcsik Hierarchy (9 universal implicatures, Moravcsik 1978, pp. 364-365)

Subject > Object > Indirect Object > Adjunct
Ergative > Absolutive > …

(12) Gilligan’s Survey (100 languages, Gilligan 1987)

No Agreement: 23 Japanese, Chinese
Subject only: 20 English, Indo-European
Subject – Object: 31 Classical Arabic, Greenlandic
S – IO – DO: 25 Cherokee, Basque
(S – IO, “DO”): 1 Waskia (suppletive forms of give)
unattested: any combination of object agreement(s) w/o subject agr.

3.2 Noun-Modifier Agreement

Examples above: Adj = N for gender Italian (4), Det = N for gender German (20)

Properties like grammatical gender (= noun class) are lexical properties of N, hence controller = N, and target = Adjective, Determiner, etc.

Other cases of NP-internal agreement: CASE

(13) a. odn-a xoroš-aja knig-a one good book (fem, nom) [Russian]
    b. odn-u xoroš-uju knig-u one good book (fem, acc)
    c. odn-oj xoroš-oj knig-i one good book (fem, gen)

Less obvious that case agreement is asymmetric.

Case is typically a property of the entire NP (=DP) determined externally (syntactic context). Controller = DP, Target = all daughters?

Extreme example: Kayardild / Tangkic (Australia) (Tiberius & Evans 2002)

All words in an NP agree in case.

(14) Case-stacking: [uP1 X Y [uP2 Z W]]

If NP2 requires case A due to its relation to NP1, Z and W are marked A
If NP1 requires case B, then X,Y,Z and W are marked for that:

jath-a dangka-a [natha-wan-da bartha-wan-da] kamburi-j
other-NOM man-NOM camp-ORIG-NOM base-ORIG-NOM speak-ACT

‘Another man from the base camp spoke’.

Kayardild is famous (or should be) for a variety of extremely challenging properties in the domain of agreement / feature-sharing (see below).

Finite embedded clauses are case-marked, and all elements in the clause bear that case marking (verb & nouns) in addition to their own local case-marking.

(15) kiyarrng-ka walbu-wa nga-ku-l-da kurrka-th,
    two-NOM raft-NOM 1-INC-PL-NOM get-IMP
    [dathin-kuru-ya bijarrba-wuru-ya raa-juru-y]
    that-MPROP-CLOC dugong-MPROP-CLOC spear-POT-CLOC
    ‘Let us get our rafts, from which to spear that dugong’ (Evans 1995, 500)

The purpose clause headed by the finite verb meaning ‘spear’ takes CLOC (a complementizing case) which spreads to the rest of its clause (including subject
pronoun if there were one), occurring outside the case marking of non-subjects in the embedded clause.

3.3 Discontinuous Modifier Agreement

Secondary predicates, floating quantifiers, emphatic elements Agreement in Number, Gender, (Case) Though (for some, at least) no single underlying constituent.

(16) a. Jakobson, Fant and Halle have themselves studied this very proposal.
   b. *Mne budet samomu interesno, kak reshitja etot vopros Me-DAT will be self-M.SG.DAT interesting, how resolves this question. ‘It will be interesting to me myself, how this question turns out.’ (Russian)

(17) Strákarnir vonast til … [Icelandic] hope for…
   a. [ að komast allir i skóla] subject of komast = NOM to get all.MASC.PL.NOM to school
   b. [ að vanta ekki alla i skóla] subject of vanta = ACC to lack not all.MASC.PL.ACC in school
   c. [ að leiðast ekki öllum i skóla] subject of leiðast = DAT to bored not all.MASC.PL.DAT to school
   d. [ að verða allira getið í ráðunni subject of verða = GEN to be all.MASC.PL.GEN mentioned in the speech

‘The boys hoped…
to all get to school / to not all be absent from school / to not all be bored in school / to all be mentioned in the speech.’ (Sigurðsson 1991, 331-332)

(parallel facts with secondary predicates)

3.4 Possessor-Possessee Agreement

(18) a. az én kalap-om ‘my hat’ [Hungarian] the I hat-1SG
   b. a te konyv-ed ‘your book’ the you book-2SG

3.5 Antecedent-Anaphor/Pronoun Agreement

(19) Pronoun Agreement

Noah walked to the store. Then he/she went in.
Miri am walked to the store. The *he/she went in.

(20) Grammatical gender = (non-semantic) [German]

Masc. Ich habe einen Rock gesehen. Er war schön. Rock = skirt
Fem. Ich habe eine Bluse gesehen. Sie war schön. Bluse = blouse
Neut. Ich habe ein Kleid gesehen. Es war schön. Kleid = dress

I have a-(M/F/N) ____ seen. PRONOUN-(M/F/N) was pretty.

3.6 Complementizer Agreement

(21) … ob-st noch Minga kumm-st [Bavarian]

whether-2sg to M. come-2sg ‘whether you’re coming to M.’ [pronoun = du/Ø] Bayer 1984

(Distinction only applies descriptively to languages with independent subordinating words. In many languages, complementizer-like functions are indicated morphologically on the main verb of a clause. There, even when agreement is peripheral, they are described as predicate agreement, but worth reconsidering).

(22) a. taqqialu-up tuktu tuku-lau-nqit-ta-(ŋ)a [Inuktitut]

T.-ERG caribou.ABS see-PAST-NEG-INDIC.TRANS-3SG>3SG ‘There is a (certain) caribou and Taqqialuk didn’t see it.’ Wharram 2003 p.39

b. miali kappiasun-nqiau-tq M.ABS be.frightened-NEG-FUT-INDIC-INTR-3SG arvi-up qajaq katja-kpaju whale-ERG kayak.ABS hit-COND.3SG>3SG Wharram 2003 p.113

‘There is a kayak and Miali will be frightened if a particular bowhead hits it.’

3.7 Wh-agreement

(23) a. -um- Wh = NOM Verb inflects for Wh-role [Chamorro]
   b. -in- Wh = OBL
   c. Ø Wh = OBL (simplified)

(24) a. Ha-fa’gasi si Juan i kareta. [simple clause]

AGR-wash NOM Juan the car ‘J. washed the car’
3.8 Tense-Aspect Mood Agreement

Sequence of Tense. Controller = matrix verb, target = subordinate verb.

(25) a. Smith thinks Mary is sick.
   Smith thinks: “Mary is sick now.”

b. Smith thinks Mary was sick.
   Smith thinks, “Mary was sick.”

  c. Smith thought Mary was sick.
   Smith thought: “Mary is sick.”

Semantics: [ anterior [ simultaneous ]] 
Morphology: [ PAST [ PAST ]] 

(27) a. ngada warra-jarra dathin-kiwa-tharra ngilir-iwa-tharr
   1sg.NOM go-PST that-VALL-PST cave-VALL-PST
   ‘I went to that cave’

b. ngada warra-ju dathin-kiwa-thu ngilir-iwa-thu
   1sg.NOM go-POT that-VALL-POT cave-VALL-POT
   ‘I will go to that cave’

c. ngada warra-nangku dathin-kiwa-nangku ngilir-iwa-nangku
   1sg.NOM go-NEG POT that-VALL-NEG POT cave-VALL-NEG POT
   ‘I will not go to that cave’

d. ngada warra-ju dathin-kiwa-tharr
   1sg.NOM go-PST that-VALL-PST cave-VALL-PST
   ‘I will go to that cave’

This is not like Salish languages where tense on nouns is interpreted, e.g., in Salish it is reported that dog-PAST means ‘former (or dead) dog’, etc. (Burton 1997).

References: