

NPE Licensing

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Plan

- +Lobeck's formulation of NPE licensing
- +Head government and strong agreement
- +Predictions concerning possessors, plurals, and partitivity.

Recap

- + During the last 3 weeks, we have looked at aspects of the gap. Now for this week, we will be covering the syntactic environment around the gap.
- + We will examine Lobeck's (1995) account of NPE licensing

Lobeck's theory of Licensing and Identification of pro

- + An empty, non-arbitrary pronominal must be properly head-governed and governed by an X0 specified for strong agreement. (Lobeck, 1995)
- + We need to unpack this:
 - + What is proper head government in particular and head government in general?
 - + What does Lobeck mean by “strong agreement”? How can this be formalised?

Head Government

+ Lobeck adopts Rizzi's (1990) formulation of head government as follows:

+ Head Government

+ X head-governs Y iff

(1) a. X is a head

b. X m-commands Y

(2) $X = \{[\pm V, \pm N], \text{AGR}, \text{Tense}\}$

(3) a. no barrier intervenes

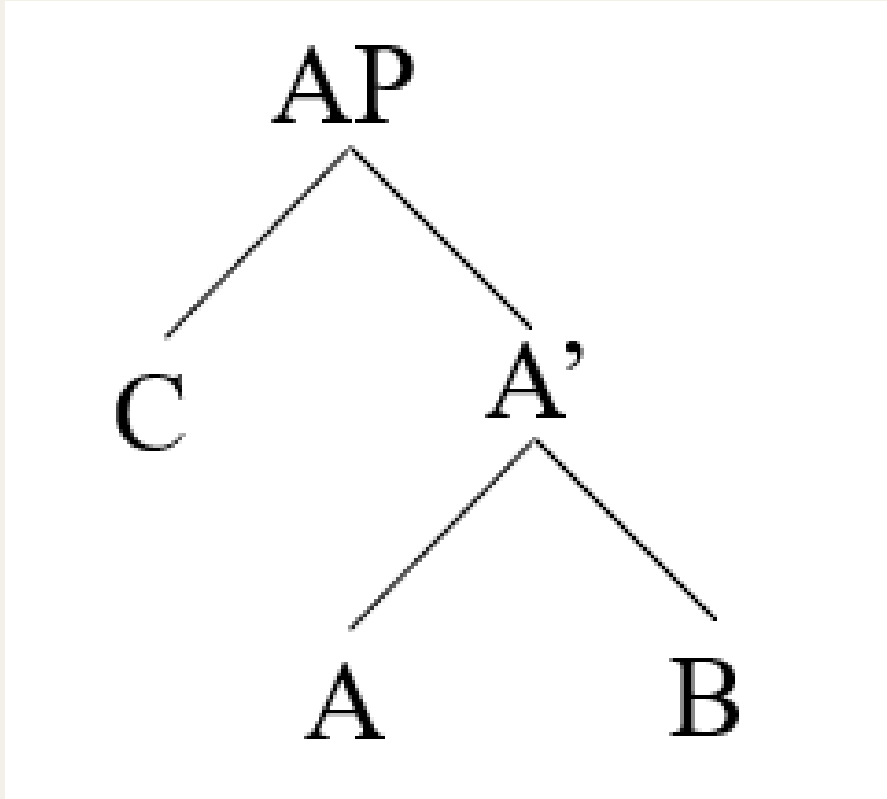
(3) b. Relativized Minimality is respected

+ Proper head government is established between X and its complement.

+ M-command:

+ A m-commands B iff A does not dominate B and any maximal projection that dominates A also dominates B.

Head Government



+ Quick check:

- + What does A govern?
- + What does A properly govern?

Strong Agreement

+Agreement:

- + X is specified for agreement iff its features must be 'shared' with those of another X or XP under government.

+Strong Agreement:

- + X is specified for strong agreement iff it, or the phrase or head with which it agrees, morphologically realises agreement in a productive number of cases.

Strong Agreement

- + Strong agreement in D (according to Lobeck):
 - + [+Poss] => 's realized on the DP in Spec,DP
 - + [+Plural] => **-s/unique plural form** realised on the complement NP or the head D.
 - + [+Prt] => ??? (Lobeck says this strong agreement feature is “lexically realised by quantifier” but how to distinguish between the lexical realisation of “every” and that of virtually all other quantifiers when there is no overt morphological distinction?)

Possessors

- + The first prediction that Lobeck's account makes is that all possessors can license an NPE gap.
 - (1) Andrew's boba had no pearls but Boyan's ___ had some ___.
 - (2) My supervisor is incredibly strict but *her ___/hers ___ (?) is pretty chill.
- + Lobeck argues that both *her* and *hers* sit in **D**, but the former is not specified for [+Poss] while the latter is.
- + But if *her/my/it/etc.* are not specified for [+Poss] then phrases like *my supervisor* should not have a possessive interpretation, contrary to fact.
- + Surprisingly, if we add numerals, the pattern reverses.
 - (3) My two kids are always running around but her three ___ /*hers three ___
behave like adults.

Possessors

+What about *of*-PPs?

+Like **D**, *of* productively assigns accusative case to its complement (the possessor), so we can say that it is specified for strong agreement. Plus, it properly head-governs its complement.

(4) The president of the Syntax Republic has resigned in light of the scandals, so *the vice-president of ___ will take over.

Plurals

+Plural elements are allowed to license NPE gaps.

(5) Six students came to the lecture yesterday but only two/one ___ came to today's tutorial.

(6) Only a few residents of CH have known true happiness but many ___ have experienced bottomless despair.

(7) Because some ___ *uses/use AI in the final assignment, all students in the future will have to sit an in-person exam.

(8) Do you have some money that I can borrow? I do, but not much ___.

Plurals

- + (7) is a tiny piece of novel data showing support for Lobeck's analysis (I believe). *Some* in English can combine with either a singular or a plural noun. But the gap in (7) **cannot** have a singular reading. Why?
- + (8), on the other hand, presents some problematic data for Lobeck. Much is certainly not specified for [+Plural], so why can it license NPE gaps?

Partitivity

- + Sweeping aside the fact that it's hard to see any strong agreement realisation on quantifiers, let's assume that Lobeck is correct. (Maybe this feature realises as an *of-PP*)
- + This feature seems to have quite a strong predictive power, since it draws the correct line between *every* and all other quantifiers.
- + It explains why *one*, a [-Plural] element, can still license NPE gaps.

Partitivity

- +The beauty of this feature is that numerals, which have the [+Plural] feature, also have the [+Prt] feature.
- +In addition, we have a way to explain the behaviour of *much*, since *much* does license a partitive structure.
- +Therefore, one attractive solution is to remove at least [+Plural] from the list of features for NPE licensors.
- +However, plural demonstratives exist.
(9) those students/*those of the students

References

- +Lobeck, Anne (1995). *Ellipsis: Functional Heads, Licensing, and Identification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.