

In some languages, bound person forms on the verb present difficulties when one attempts to classify a language as either showing agreement or not for the purposes of typological investigations.

The first type of problems arises from the fact that in some languages bound pronominals can be analyzed as pronouns (and thus arguments) and not as agreement markers. According to an influential line of research, pronouns are distinguished from agreement markers on the basis of the co-occurrence restriction: (i) if the co-occurrence of two argument expressions is possible, then one of them is an argument and the other one is an agreement marker (grammatical agreement); (ii) if the co-occurrence is impossible, the pronominal markers are considered to be arguments themselves and thus pronouns (pronominal agreement) (see Bresnan & Mchombo 1987, Siewierska 1999, Bickel & Nichols 2007). Notably, this co-occurrence restriction is not general but often concerns a specific phrase-structural position reserved for true arguments. This diagnostics is orthogonal to the question whether an NP occurs at all in the clause, as in most languages, NPs are optional in all positions, regardless of whether the language has grammatical or pronominal agreement.

The second type of problems concerns the instances of restricted (or “optional”) agreement, illustrated with Mixtec subject agreement in (1). Whereas in certain contexts the bound pronominal markers are obligatory (1a, 1c), they are banned in other contexts (1b, 1d). The distribution of the agreement markers in this and similar cases has been accounted for in terms of language-specific constraints mostly formulated with reference to phrase-structural position, intonation or information structure.

Though this phenomenon is quite well-spread in the languages of the world, we are not aware of any attempt to typologize such constraints on agreement. In this study we will consider an areally-balanced sample of 50 languages with restricted agreement. For every language we investigate the restrictions on agreement and develop a typology of structural positions necessary to represent the observed variation.

### Examples

(1) Mixtec (Chalcatongo) (Macaulay 1996:139ff.)

- a. *ni-žee=rí*  
COMP-eat=1sS/A  
'I ate (it).'
- b. *rù?ù ni-žee*  
I COMP-eat  
'I'm the one who ate (it).'
- c. *rù?ù ni-žee=rí*  
I COMP-eat=1sS/A  
'As for me, I ate (it).'
- d. *\*ni-žee(=rí) rù?ù*  
COMP-eat=1sS/A I  
'I ate (it).'

### References

- Bickel, Balthasar & Johanna Nichols. 2007. Inflectional morphology. In Timothy Shopen (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, vol. 3, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2nd edn.
- Bresnan, Joan & Sam A. Mchombo. 1987. Topic, pronoun, and agreement in Chichewa. *Language* 63.
- Macaulay, Monica. 1996. *A Grammar of Chalcatongo Mixtec*, vol. 127 University of California Publications in Linguistics. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Siewierska, Anna. 1999. From anaphoric pronoun to grammatical agreement marker: why objects don't make it. *Folia Linguistica* 33(2). 226–251.