The title: The anaphor-agreement effect and argument marking

This talk presents a new explanation for the Anaphor-Agreement effect (anaphors do not occur in syntactic position construed with agreement; cf. Rizzi 1990). I propose that the effect is not an issue of binding theory *per se* but that it is an issue of argument-marking. My proposal has two components: an explicit theory of argument marking and a proposal for how case and agreement relations are established in syntax. The theory of argument marking that I adopt is that of Neeleman & Weerman (1999). It is argued that case and agreement relations must be syntactically encoded in the manner proposed by Neeleman and van de Koot (2002 and in prep). The combination of these proposals suffices to capture Rizzi’s Anaphor-Agreement effect, together with given certain assumptions about the content and internal structure of anaphors. I also consider data from a variety of languages.

A number of proposals for the problem have been proposed. For example, Chomsky (1986) attributes the ungrammaticality of sentences like (1) to a violation of the ECP. He proposes, following Lebeaux (1983), that anaphors move to INFL at LF. In the sentence in (1), *himself* moves to the matrix INFL, and the trace of the reflexive is not properly governed. Chomsky (1981), on the other hand, proposes that agreement plays a role in ruling out the sentence in (1). In his formulation of binding domain, agreement counts as SUBJECT, one of the elements which define a binding domain. Rizzi (1990) proposes that the absence of nominative anaphors is to be understood in terms of the ‘Anaphor-Agreement effect’: anaphors cannot occur in agreeing positions. He relates this generalization to the properties of chains and a referential autonomy hierarchy.

While there are problems with all of these proposals, the empirical evidence for the Anaphor-Agreement effect is overwhelming. This raises the question what alternative explanation might be offered for its existence. In this talk I develop an answer based on a particular view of what agreement is for. I adopt the traditional view that arguments must be ‘marked’ in order to be made visible for θ-assignment (cf. Chomsky’s 1986 Visibility Condition). None of the above proposals adopts the view that anaphors cannot agree. It is just that, when they do, they end up violating some grammatical constraint (Principle A, the ECP, or the chain condition). But suppose instead that anaphors literally cannot enter into a syntactic agreement relation, such as subject-verb agreement. As a result, they cannot be argument-marked by agreement, and they will be invisible for theta-marking.

I adopt the theory of dependency, the Configurational Matrix, developed by Neeleman and van de Koot (2002 and in prep) to demonstrate how arguments are marked. According to their theory, dependent lexical items must express their dependency as a lexical property, formalized by the authors as a ‘function’. A function is copied upward and then satisfied by an appropriate syntactic object at the earliest opportunity. The relationship between arguments and agreement/case can be captured as syntactic dependencies, so I assume that a predicate introduces an agreement-function, f_{Agr}, and an argument that does not agree introduces case-function, f_{Nom/Acc}. For example, in Germanic languages, nominative arguments are marked by agreement, and other arguments are marked by case (Nichols 1989), so a nominative argument satisfies agreement-function introduced by the predicate, and other arguments introduce case-functions that are satisfied by appropriate nodes.

In (2), whose structure is in (4), *himself* cannot enter into an agreement relation with the verb *blames*. The reflexive is headed by *self* (cf. Williams 1981), and (3) shows that the head *self*/*selves* does not reflect the differences of person while verbs reflect the difference of both number and person. An argument-function is introduced by the verb *balmes* and copied up to the α node, but because the reflexive is headed by *self* that has only a number feature, agreement-function at the α node, which has at least person and number feature, cannot be satisfied by *self*. The verb cannot agree with the pronoun part of the reflexive, i.e., *him*, because it violates the Accessibility, which states that relations between nodes require immediate domination (Neeleman and van de Koot 2002). The object Bill introduces an accusative case-function, and the function is satisfied by the V node that is dominating both the object and the verb (function satisfaction is indicated by #), and the object argument is argument-marked.

This approach correctly predict the distribution of nominative anaphors in languages, such as Japanese and Chinese. In these languages, nominative is a true case (see Neeleman and Weerman 1999) and not associated with agreement. Therefore, in these languages a nominative argument introduces case function and it is satisfied by T node, and the argument can be marked. Hence, nominative anaphors are available (see (5)).
(1) *John₁ said that himself₁ is clever.

(2) *John₁ says that himself₁ blames Bill everyday.

(3) I eat myself
    you eat yourself
    we eat ourselves
    he/she eats him/herself
    they eat themselves

(4)

(5) John₁-ga [zibun-zisin₁-ga Bill-o semeta to] itta
    John-NOM self-self-NOM Bill-ACC blamed COMP said
    “John₁ said that he₁ blamed Bill.”

Reference
Neeleman, Ad and Hans van de Koot (in Prep) *Theta Theory*.