

Stage and individual-level agreement in Mohawk

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The Mohawk agreement paradigm shows a split within intransitives, casually referred to as 'subjective' and 'objective' agreement (Deering and Harries-Delisle, 2007; Baker, 1996). Agreement prefixes are shown in bold face type.

- (1) a. 'subject' agreement:
 katá:wens I swim
 katsherón:nis I dress up
 enk'śhete' I'll count
- b. 'object' agreement:
 wakhterón:ni I'm afraid
 waktsi'yó:ha I'm weak
 wakatshenón:ni I'm happy

Such agreement splits are common among languages of North America. Traditionally, they have been labeled 'agentive agreement' or 'active case' (Mithun 1991), but usually this comes in the form of a labeling assumption rather than an analysis. Clearly, the intuition is that the two agreement paradigms somehow correspond to thematic roles, but it is never made explicit how exactly the thematic roles should transform the agreement. Furthermore, there appears to be strong evidence against the claim that the agreement paradigms simply correlate to thematic roles. First, there are extremely 'non-agentive' roots which are marked by the putative 'agentive' agreement. Compare the agreement in (2) to that in (1a).

- (2) **khnén:yes** I'm tall
 ke'shátste' I'm strong
 kkowá:nen I'm big
 ken'niká:'a I'm small
 khétken I'm ugly
 keksá:'a I'm a child
 konkwehón:we I'm Indian
 kónhe' I'm alive
Mithun (1991)

Also, 'subjective' agreement consistently changes to 'objective' agreement in the perfect and progressive aspectual modes. This fact is unexplained by a strictly thematic account.

- (3) a. **katá:wens**
 1s.swim.HAB
 'I swim.'
- b. **wakatá:wen**
 1s.swim.PERF
 'I have swum.'

The aspect alternation would follow from a stative/eventive analysis, but examples like those in (4) make it unsatisfactory. Both types of agreement occur on events and states (Mithun, 1991).¹

¹ Stative and eventive roots are morphologically distinct in Mohawk.

- (4) a. EVENTS:
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| wa'katíta' | I got in |
| wa'keráthen' | I climbed |
| katerí:yos | I fight |
| wa'tewako'tsísko' | I slipped |
| enwakí:ta'we' | I'll sleep |
| wakáhta's | I get full, satiated |
- b. STATES:
- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| kenákere' | I reside (somewhere) |
| ke'nikôn:rara' | I'm careful |
| kentórha | I'm lazy |
| wakáhton | I'm full, satiated |
| wakhterón:ni | I'm afraid |
| waktsi'yó:ha | I'm weak |

I have been exploring the idea that the two types of agreement correspond to i-level and s-level predicates as discussed in Diesing (1992) and Milsark (1974). The crucial claim in that work was that subjects of i-level predicates originate in a higher position than s-level predicates. Diesing (1992) generates i-level predicates in the spec of IP, but identifies the VP as the key boundary above which i-level subjects must originate. Current theory assumes an additional vP shell, which is often thought to introduce agents. I am considering the possibility that this is the origin of i-level subjects, and perhaps the locus of 'subjective' agreement in Mohawk. This would explain the shared agreement between i-level properties in Mohawk and agentive of events.² This might also offer insight into the relationship between subjects and predicates with respect to perfected events.

There is preliminary evidence in support of this idea which primarily consists of parallels between known i and s-level predicates in English and roots that trigger 'subject' and 'object' agreement in Mohawk.

References

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² Eventive predicates are generally thought to be s-level.