**On Agreement**

I discuss here a simple approach to agreement. I will show that agreement is a case of adjacency or linking. In addition, I will attempt to keep the level of processing to a limit.

In the standard theory, percolation accounts for agreement. However, I will propose an alternative hypothesis to agreement influenced by both Emergence Grammar and Construction Grammar.

Let us suppose that there is a numeral phrase construction, which is a small part of our mental representation of grammar. The head numeral phrase is a numeral operator whose argument is a count noun. It is assumed that it is not derived in any sense in the grammar but it is probably acquired in the process of language acquisition:

1. [NumP [Num ---] [N ---]]

Connected to this is the lexicon. For example, suppose that the numeral is the lexical stem FOUR and its complement is LETTER:

1. [NumP [Num four] [N letter]].

FOUR contains the feature [+Pl(ural)]. LETTER must agree with with the feature [+Pl] inherent in FOUR.

Assume two rules of grammar:

1. An unspecified feature must be marked either positive or negative.
2. If two lexical items are linked, they must agree.

Borrowing the term *link* from Chomsky (1981), assume that a head is linked to its arguments. In (2) above, FOUR is linked to LETTER. Agreement information is passed directly through the link. This makes percolation of features redundant and undesirable. Thus, linking simplifies the grammar.

I now propose two hypotheses to account for agreement. In the first hypothesis, LETTER and other count nouns contain a feature unspecified for [±plural]:

1. LETTER, [+Ct], [\_Pl].

As it stands (5) is ungrammatical. Either plus or minus must be assigned to [\_Pl]. If minus is inserted, the result fails by Rule (4). If plus is inserted, the result is good.

In the second hypothesis, the lexicon is fully specified. The lexical item *four* is selected for the numeral. There are two lexical items: *letter* and *letters*. The former is [-Pl] and the latter [+Pl].If the former is selected, the result is ungrammatical (\*four letter); if the latter is selected, the result is acceptable (four letters).

Either hypothesis is a process. Arguably, such processes should not be in the grammar. With the exception of certain memorized expressions, the speaker chooses the verb and the noun to indicate the intended message. The process of agreement is a matter of speech production. Rules (3) and (4) part of the grammar. Much more research is needed here.

Which of the two hypothetical processes is likely to be more acceptable? I believe the second one is the better one. It conforms to the fully specified lexicon hypothesis, and it easily accounts for speech errors involving agreement. Additionally, rule (3) is not necessary since all features of a lexical item are specified.

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