Unaccusativity in Guarani and the active/stative split

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Overview

- **Problem:** The semantic perspective on Guarani's active/stative covers little ground. Language-internal diagnostics suggest the split is *syntactic*.
- **Claim:** Statives are unaccusatives (actives = unergatives) and agreement morphology is sensitive to sole argument position (spec,vP/Comp V).
- **Proposal:** Agree w/ cycle-tracking (not new)—even in intransitives for failed Agree (new). *Probe relaxation*: probes Merge picky and relax their search condition upon failed Agree (cf. Bejar 2003, Georgi 2010). Upshots:
  1. better understanding of Guarani active/stative split
  2. no need for *dynamic interaction* (Deal 2022) in 1>2>3 agreement
  3. allows for a principled account of cycle tracking in Guarani and beyond

Background

- Guarani is "active/stative" (Velazquez-Castillo 1996,2002) based on (1): *guata* 'to walk' is active and *mandu'a* 'to remember' is stative.

  (1)   *Active/stative split in Guarani intransitives:*

      a.   (che) **a**-guata
          (I)   **1.ACT**-walk

          'I walk(ed).'   (active)

      b.   (che) **che**-mandu'a
          (I)   **1.STAT**-remember

          'I remember(ed).'   (stative)

- However, exceptions abound (2): statives with active morphology.

  (2)   a.   (ha'e) **o**-mano   b.   (ha'e) **o**-kirirĩ
          (s/he) **3.ACT**-die   (s/he) **3.ACT**-quiet

          'S/he is dead.'   'S/he is being quiet.'

- And exceptions go both ways (3): actives with stative morphology.

  (3)   a.   (ha'e) **i**-hasẽ   b.   (ha'e) **iñ**-ambu'e
          (ha'e) **3.STAT**-cry   (s/he) **3.STAT**-change

          'S/he cried.'   'S/he changed.'

- Some particularly compelling examples:

  (4)   a.   (ha'e) **o**-kirirĩ   b.   (ha'e) **i**-pyaguapy
          (s/he) **3.ACT**-quiet   (S/he) **3.STAT**-calm

          'S/he is being quiet.'   'S/he is calm.'

- The semantic distinction does not hold. In addition, it begs the question: **How could Agree even be sensitive to the semantics of the root?**
- I reclassify "active/stative" as simply Class I/Class II:

  (5)   i) **Class I** verbs in Guarani are intransitive verbs which take direct morphology (unergative).
      ii) **Class II** verbs in Guarani are intransitive verbs which take inverse morphology (unaccusative).

- This perspective has been adopted previously for other languages with active/stative splits (Kroeger 1999, Golluscio 2007, Ko 2020) (cf. Mithun 1991).

Selected references: Bejar 2003, Phi-syntax: A theory of agreement. Bejar and Rezac 2009, Cyclic Agree, *LI*. Clem 2023, Cyclic expansion in Agree: Maximal projections as probes, *LI*. Deal 2022, Interaction, satisfaction, and the PCC, *LI*. Georgi 2010, Third-cycle effects in Mordvin. Velazquez-Castillo 1991, The semantics of Guaraní agreement markers, *BLS 17*.

Diagnostic 1: passivization

- Passives are formed with prefix *je-* (nasal allomorph *ñe-*: *ha'e che-nupã* 's/he beats me' → *a-**ñe**-nupã* 'I was beaten by him/her'.
- Class I verbs may be passivized to receive an impersonal interpretation (Zubizarreta and Pancheva 2017, Estigarribia 2020).

  (6)   a.   o-**ñe**-mano
          3-**PASS**-die

          'There was lots of dying/death.'   (war/battle)

      b.   o-**ñe**-kirirĩ
          3-**PASS**-quiet

          'There was lots of silence/people shutting up.'   (football match)

- This is impossible for Class II verbs (7).

  (7)   a.   *i-**ñe**-h-asẽ
          3.STAT-**PASS**-DIR-cry

          Int: 'There was crying.'   (funeral)

      b.   *i-**ñe**-mandu'a
          3.STAT-**PASS**-remember

          Int: 'There was remembering.'   (funeral/wake)

  Analysis: passives involve demoting an subject and because Class II verbs are unaccusatives and lack a subject, they cannot be passivized.

Diagnostic 2: controlling agreement

- Only DOs of (di)transitives can control (inverse) agreement (8a). IOs cannot (8b), and neither can other arguments (8c).

  (8)   a.   Laure **che**-me'ẽ   (chéve) ichupe
          Laure **1SG.OBJ**-give   (me)   to.him

          'Laure gave me to him.'   (S=3, DO=1, IO=3)

      b.   *Laure **che**-me'ẽ   ichupe (chéve)
          Laure **1SG.OBJ**-give   him   (to.me)

          Int: 'Laure gave him to me.'   (S=3, DO=3, IO=1)

      c.   *che-ho   che-roga-pe
          1OBJ-go   my-house-LOC

          Int: 'He went to my house.'

- Additional arguments of Class I verbs can control agreement (9)

  (9)   a.   jagua **che**-guata   (chéve) b.   Romi **che**-kuaa   (chéve)
          dog   **1SG.OBJ**-walk (me)   Romi **1SG.OBJ**-know (me)

          'The dog walked me.'   'Romi knows/met me.'

- Additional arguments of Class II verbs cannot (10).   **Analysis:** because they're applicatives of unaccusatives (Deal 2019, Den Dikken 2023).

  (10)   a.   *(ha'e) **che**-mandu'a   (**cherehe**)
           (s/he) **1SG.OBJ**-remember   (**me.OBL**)

           Int: 'S/he remembers me.'

       b.   *(ha'e) **che**-japu   (**chéve**)
           (s/he) **1SG.OBJ**-lie   (**me**)

           Int: 'S/he lies to me.'

Model of Agree

Interaction and satisfaction (Deal 2015, Deal 2022)

- **Feature geometries (Harley and Ritter 2002, Bejar 2003)**

  (11)   a.   3rd: $[\phi]$, 2nd: $[\phi,\text{PART}]$, 1st: $[\phi,\text{PART},\text{SPKR}]$

- **Cyclic Agree (Rezac 2003, Bejar and Rezac 2009)**

  (12)   a.   **Step 1:** $[_{vP}\ v_\phi\ [_{VP}\ \text{V DO}]]$ (search domain)

      b.   **Step 3:** $[_{vP}\ \boxed{\text{Subj}}\ v_\phi\ [_{VP}\ \text{V DO}]]$

- **Interaction and satisfaction (INT:[],SAT:[]) conditions:**
  - *interaction* condition: determines what features are Agreed with
  - *satisaction* condition: determines what stops the probe

!! Probe relaxation: probes Merge picky, relax upon failed first-cycle Agree (cf. probe impoverishment (Bejar 2003), chameleon probes (Georgi 2010)).
  - $[\text{INT:PART}] \leadsto [\text{INT:}\phi]$ iff no Agree on first-cycle
  - *opposite* of dynamic interaction (Deal 2022)

Probe relaxation

- Derivations of 3rd person Class I, Class II, and 2nd person Class II:

  (13)   *3rd person Class I:*

      a. $[_{vP}\ v_{[\text{INT:PART,SAT:SPKR}]}\ [_{VP}\ \text{V}\ ]]$ (1st cycle failed Agree)

      b.   relaxation: $[\text{INT:PART}] \leadsto [\text{INT:}\phi]$

      c. $[_{vP}\ \text{3SG}\ v_{[\text{INT:}\phi,\text{SAT:SPKR}]}\ [_{VP}\ \text{V}\ ]]$ (Agree with EA)
          ⋮②⋮

      d. $o \Leftrightarrow [\phi]_\phi\ /\ [\ \underline{\quad}\ ]_v$

  (14)   *3rd person Class II:*

      a. $[_{vP}\ v_{[\text{INT:PART,SAT:SPKR}]}\ [_{VP}\ \text{V 3SG}]]$ (failed Agree)

      b.   relaxation: $[\text{INT:PART}] \leadsto [\text{INT:}\phi]$

      c. $i \Leftrightarrow [\ ]_\phi\ /\ [\ \underline{\quad}\ ]_v$

  (15)   *2nd person Class II:*

      a. $[_{vP}\ v_{[\text{INT:PART,SAT:SPKR}]}\ [_{VP}\ \text{V 2SG}]]$ (successful Agree)
          ⋮·············①·············⋮

      b. $nde \Leftrightarrow [\phi,\text{PART},\text{ADDR}]_{\text{PART}}\ /\ [\ \underline{\quad}\ ]_v$

Discussion and outlook

- Previous analyses of cycle-tracking are designed for transitive clauses (Bejar and Rezac 2009, Hammerly 2020, Clem 2023), often involving double Agree, and do not extend straightforwardly to intransitives or failed Agree.
- Probe relaxation accomplishes: i) cycle-tracking via interaction condition and ii) obviates need for dynamic interaction in 1>2>3 agreement patterns.
- Does probe relaxation derive all direct/inverse or active/stative systems? Does unaccusativity underlie stativity (Golluscio 2007, Ko 2020, etc.)?
- Probe relaxation may be applied in a segmental probing system of Agree too, but what are the constraints on probe relaxation? What other hierarchy effects might be best explained by probe relaxation? How does it compare to Bejar 2003 and Georgi 2010's analysis of flexible search conditions?