

Exceptional Agreement in Italian Pseudo-Relatives

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We propose that constituent pseudo-relatives (PRs) in Italian are headed by a null determiner, which is responsible for mediating an AGREE relation between the subject within the PR and external probes, in a fashion similar to suggestions for Long Distance Agreement (LDA) in Basque (Preminger 2009) and Tsez (Bjorkman and Zeijlstra 2015).

Background: PRs are finite constructions in which the subject appears before a *che*-clause with a subject gap (Radford 1977, Kayne 1975, Guasti 1988, Cinque 1992). Cinque argued that constituent PRs like (1) are structurally and semantically ambiguous. In one parse, he claims, the *che*-clause merely modifies the individuals described by the matrix subject (*Carlo e Paolo*) hence PL agreement. In the other parse, the whole PR is an event-denoting subject (hence SG agreement) which properly *contains* an embedded subject.

- (1) [_{PR} Carlo e Paolo che ballano il tango] è/sono un evento da non perdere.
 Carlo and Paolo that dance-PRES the tango **is/are** an event to not miss
 ‘Carlo and Paolo dancing the tango is/are an event not to miss.’

Proposal: We argue that, regardless of surface agreement, (1) has the same analysis: an event-denoting DP, headed by a null D_C containing a DP subject (DP_S) followed by a C' predicate (2). (We provide distributional evidence that all constituent PRs are DPs.) PL in (1), we show, is simply optional agreement reflecting AGREE between DP_S and external probes mediated by D_C .

- (2) [_{DP} D_C [_{CP} [_{DP_S} Carlo e Paolo] [_{C'} che ballano]]] \rightsquigarrow event-type

Evidence: Matrix PL agreement in (1) cannot be attributed to the fact that the construction is an individual-denoting expression because individual denoting expressions cannot be predicated by *sono un evento* (3), unlike the event-denoting noun *destruzione*. (1) must be an event-denoting PR.

- (3) [#Carlo e Paolo] / [La distruzione di Roma] sono/era un evento da non perdere.
 C. and P. / the destruction of Rome are/was an event to not miss.
 ‘#Carlo and Paolo are an event not to miss.’

Similarly, (4) demonstrates that agreement is possible with the subject embedded inside the event-denoting PR. It is clear here that the verb *seguono* ‘follow’ relates the time of two events.

- (4) [Carlo e Paolo che ballano il tango] seguono sempre l’arrivo di Maria.
 C. and P that dance the tango follow.3PL always the arrival of Maria.
 ‘Carlo and Paolo dancing the tango always follows the arrival of Maria.’

Here then is a classic ‘syntax-semantics’ mismatch—the PR as a whole is the matrix subject, and yet its own subject can trigger matrix agreement in an exceptional way.

Analysis: DP_S bears the same case as the PR as whole does (pronominal subject data, not shown). We propose optional ϕ -agreement piggy-backs on Case transmission. In the PL version of (1), D_C gets ϕ -valued by DP_S (an option, since D_C ’s own complement, a CP, lacks ϕ features, Iatridou and Embick 1997). D_C then in turn values matrix T, giving LDA. The singular option arises when D_C takes on default 3SG. In both cases, however, Case is passed from T to D_C to DP_S (Reuland 1983).

- (5) a. T ... [_{DP} D_C [_{CP} DP_S [_{C'} che ...]]] Plural version of (1)

 NOM/3PL NOM/3PL
 b. T ... [_{DP} D_C [_{CP} DP_S [_{C'} che ...]]] Singular version of (1)

 NOM/DEFAULT.3SG NOM