Blocking Effects of Long-distance Reflexives (LDRs) Revisited

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Summary
- This poster proposes a unified derivational account on cross-linguistic blocking effects of LDRs within the Minimalist Program (MP) framework.
- The account lends support to the current assumptions that underly the MP, i.e., languages do not differ in narrow syntax and variations lie in the lexicon of individual languages.

1. Background & Data
- LDRs: reflexive pronouns that can take an antecedent in a higher clause, e.g., ｚｉｊ in Mandarin, proprie in Italian, sig in Icelandic.
- Two Types of Blocking: nominal blocking effects in Mandarin vs. verbal blocking effects in Italian and Icelandic (Giorgi 2006).

- Mandarin: 1st/2nd person pronouns block LDRs
  (1) ｚｉｊｚｉｊ
  (2) ｚｉｊｉ

- Italian: indicative verbal morphemes block LDRs
  (3) Quel dittatore spera che i notiziari televisivi parlino
  a lungo delle proprie gesta.
  (4) Quel dittatore ha detto che i notiziari televisivi hanno parlato
  a lungo delle proprie gesta.

- Icelandic: indicative verbal morphemes block LDRs
  (5) ｊｏｎｓ sigt.
  (6) ｊｏｎｓ

2. Pesetsky and Torrego 2007 on Feature Valuations
- In English, T-node (T) has an interpretable (ɪv) but unvalued (-val) tense feature that acts as Probe;
- This feature Agree with a valued (ɪv) tense feature on verbs;
- As a result, the feature [ɪv, -val] on T gets a value and the uninterpretable tense feature ｕＴ on ｖ and DP become interpretable.

3. Extension of Pesetsky and Torrego 2007
- T-node in Mandarin and Italian/Icelandic also has an interpretable (ɪv) but unvalued (-val) mood feature that acts as Probe;
- It searches down the derivation for a valued (ɪv) mood feature;
- A mood feature is valued when it has the value [+ real world]; otherwise, it is unvalued.

4. Accounting for Cross-linguistic Blocking Effects
- Mandarin
  - verbs do not have tense/mood inflections.
  - T can Agree with nominals in Spec vp position to get its mood feature values
  - 1st/2nd person pronouns are indexicals which always reference to the speaker/addressee of an utterance in the real world (Kaplan 1977)
  - 1st/2nd person pronouns have valued mood feature, i.e., [+ real world]
  - T in the embedded clause in (2) Agrees with I/you to get its [+real world] mood value.

- Italian/Icelandic
  - verbs inflect for mood features
  - T Agrees with verbs for its mood feature values
  - indicative morphemes on verbs have [+ real world] mood feature
  - embedded T in (4) or (6) Agrees with verbs with indicative morphemes

- Explaining blocking effects by phases
  - a phase: a ‘feature-complete’ unit in a syntactic derivation, the complement of whose head cannot be altered in further derivation;
  - ‘feature-complete’: all the features are valued/interpretable via Probe-Agree
  - the whole embedded TP in (2)/(4)/(6) is the complement of a phase, i.e., the embedded CP, because
  - the embedded T node gets its mood features valued by [+ real world]
  - the whole embedded TP no longer has unvalued/interpretable features
  - as a result, the reflexive pronoun in (2)/(4)/(6) can only take the subject in the embedded clause as its antecedent
  - This gives rise to the observed blocking effects.

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Selected References