

# Feature gluttony in the syntax of hierarchy effects

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This talk presents and develops a new approach to hierarchy effects, configurations in which the coexistence of two DPs within the same domain imposes restrictions on possible feature values of these DPs. The main line of approach in the recent literature is to attribute these restrictions to failures of  $\varphi$ -agreement or, more specifically, to failures of nominal licensing and case checking. Based on case studies of (i) the Person Case Constraint in Basque, (ii) copula constructions in Hindi-Urdu, and (iii) dative–nominative constructions in Icelandic, I instead propose (based on joint work with Jessica Coon) that the problem in these configurations is unrelated to nominal licensing, but is instead the result of a probe agreeing with more than one DP—a configuration that we refer to as “feature gluttony.” Feature gluttony does not in and of itself lead to ungrammaticality, but rather can create conflicting requirements for subsequent operations, which lead to ineffability. Building on work by Béjar (2003) and Béjar & Rezac (2009), according to which an articulated probe continues probing if at least some feature segments are left unchecked, feature gluttony can only arise if the lower DP is more richly articulated than the higher DP—precisely hierarchy-violating configurations. Important motivation for shifting the locus of the violation to an agreeing probe rather than failure of nominal licensing comes from the observation that such hierarchy effects display sensitivity to the presence/absence of overt agreement, and, moreover, are sensitive to morphological aspects of such agreement. First, hierarchy effects commonly disappear in clauses that lack  $\varphi$ -agreement or under grammatical-function changing operations that affect  $\varphi$ -agreement. Second, I present new data showing that they disappear under gapping of the verb and under specific syncretism patterns of the verbal inflection paradigm. I argue that an account that locates the restriction in feature gluttony and its aftermath provides a principled explanation of these patterns.