Dative Experiencer binders and the Anaphor Agreement Effect

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This study focuses on the Polish psychological verb podobać się ‘to please’, which licenses a Dative Experiencer (Exp\_DAT) and a Nominative Theme (Th\_NOM). Some argue that podobać się-verbs are double object unaccusatives (Miechowicz-Mathiasen and Scheffler 2008; Jiménez-Fernández and Rozwadowska 2016; a.o.). This draws a parallel between Exp\_DAT and Dative-marked indirect objects (IO\_DAT) of double object constructions (DOCs). However, in the light of accounts that take Exp\_DAT to be projected higher than IO\_DAT (e.g. Pylkkänen 2002, Cuervo 2003), such analysis is unexpected. Therefore, in order to test the unaccusative account, we experimentally explore binding relations in DOCs (Exp[periment]1) and Exp\_DAT constructions (Exp2). If Exp\_DAT and IO\_DAT are projected in the same position, they should show the same binding potential (Hypothesis 1).

Exp1 and Exp2 elicited grammaticality judgments using a 7-point Likert scale, testing experimental items based on four binary variables. Here, we focus on two variables, bindee.type (possessive pronoun vs. possessive reflexive) and bindee.embedding (one-degree vs. two-degree embedding, to test if NP’s embedding has an effect on binding, as observed for Russian (Nikolaeva 2014)). This is illustrated in (1) for IO\_DAT, and (2) for Exp\_DAT. Exp1’s results show that IO\_DAT can bind only DO\_ACC possessive pronouns, but never possessive reflexives. Thus, coreference between the objects of DOC, can be expressed only with a pronoun (main effect of bindee.type F(1,56)=103.74, p<.001). Bindee embedding yielded no effect. Similarly to IO\_DAT, Exp\_DAT can bind only possessive pronouns; in Exp 2 reflexives were rated unacceptable (bindee.type F(1,71) = 86,812, p=.000). Two-degree embedded bindees were rated higher (F(1,71)= 28,975, p=.000), though this effect did not influence their acceptability status – they were still judged unacceptable. Therefore, the results of Exp1 and Exp2 suggest that both Exp\_DAT and IO\_DAT are projected in [spec;VP], as suggested in the double object unaccusative analysis of podobać się ‘to please’.

However, a broader range of Polish Exp\_DAT contexts taken into account, there are cases where Exp\_DAT may bind anaphors (Bondaruk and Szymanek 2007), as e.g. (3). Therefore, it could be that Exp\_DATs are in fact projected higher than IOs, allowing thus for anaphor binding. If so, the unacceptability of anaphors in (2a) must be attributed to a different factor than the low [spec;VP] position of Exp\_DAT. If Exp\_DAT can bind anaphors as soon as they are embedded and, consequently, marked for a non-Nominative case, the unacceptability of example (2a) could be due to an Anaphor Agreement Effect (AAE) (Rizzi 1990, Woolford 1999). Rizzi (1990: 26) submits that “anaphors do not occur in syntactic positions construed with agreement”. Thus, because Th\_NOM is the argument that agrees with T, a reflexive possessive in this position is illicit irrespective of its binder’s type. Therefore, if: a) AAE holds for Polish, and b) Exp\_DAT is merged higher than IO\_DAT, we expect Exp\_DATs to bind anaphors embedded in non-agreeing NPs (Hypothesis 2). In order to check the hypothesis, we aim to test contexts such as in (4). We provide a description of the result and an analysis within the Index Theory of Binding (Hestvik1992, Nikolaeva 2014).
(1) a. Babcia pokazała wnukowi, swoją/jego kuzynkę
   granny showed grandson self/his cousin
   ‘Grandmother showed her grandson his cousin’
   b. Babcia pokazała wnukowi zdjęcie swojej/jego kuzynki
   granny showed grandson picture self/his cousin
   ‘Grandmother showed her grandson a picture of his cousin’

(2) a. Markowi podobają się swoje/jego koleżanki.
   Marek please 3PL REFL self/his friends
   ‘Marek likes his (female) friends’
   b. Markowi podobają się koleżanki swojej/jego siostry.
   Marek please 3PL REFL friends self/his sister
   ‘Marek likes the (female) friends of his sister’

(3) Jest jej żal swojej młodości.
   is her pity self’s youth
   ‘She feels pity for her youth’ (Bondaruk and Szymanek 2007)

   Maria missed/lacked self’s her fiance
   ‘Maria was missing her fiance’
   b. Marii brakowało towarzystwa swojego/jej narzeczonego.
   Maria missed/lacked company self’s her fiance
   ‘Maria was missing the company of her fiance’

Selected references: