

## 6 Concluding Remarks

We began with two questions:

- How are natural languages the same?
- In what ways can they be different?

To answer these questions, I focused on one corner of human language—the grammatical-feature system—that plays the central role in the narrow-syntax operations of agreement and movement. Extending the proposal in Miyagawa (2010), I argued that every language has the same set of grammatical features, and this set includes both  $\phi$ -features and the  $\delta$ -features of topic and focus. Where languages may vary is in the location of the grammatical features in the structure and how these features interact with the elements in the structure. Looking at human language in this “Strong Uniformity” fashion allowed us to have greater empirical coverage and, I believe, deeper understanding of certain linguistic phenomena than if we were to limit ourselves to the typical  $\phi$ -feature agreement found in Indo-European and other languages. Most importantly, it allowed us to unify agreement and agreementless languages under a single, coherent system. This system not only identifies what is the same across languages, but it also has built into it a way to account for the variations that give each language its unique set of properties.

I assumed that grammatical features begin at C, and sometimes are inherited by T (e.g., Chomsky 2005, 2007; Richards 2007; Miyagawa 2010). This gives two possible sites where a grammatical feature resides and triggers some sort of operation. Just these two options lead to a variety of possibilities. Most of these operations target an element within the local TP, such as agreement with the subject or topicalizing an argument to Spec,CP. There were some surprising findings. In a Category I language such as Japanese, it is predicted that  $\phi$ -feature agreement occurs at C, despite the fact that Japanese is a stereotypical agreementless language. We indeed found such a  $\phi$ -feature in the form of person agreement in the politeness marking system. This  $\phi$ -feature agreement

does not target an element in the TP, but rather an element that corresponds to the addressee. This is a form of allocutive agreement, something that is found in some dialects of Basque and Tibeto-Burman languages. I suspect that we will find more instances of allocutive agreement now that we know what to look for.

The Chinese subject *pro* differs sharply from the subject *pro* in Romance and Japanese. Its antecedent within the same sentence must be a subject, which is different from other languages that allow a subject, an object, or other items to function as the antecedent. Also, as noted by J. Huang (1984), *pro* in Chinese observes strict locality in that only the closest subject can function as its antecedent within the sentence; such a strict locality does not hold for *pro* in other languages. The Chinese subject *pro* is able to refer to an entity in the discourse, but in a highly restricted way, and this inter-sentential reference is only possible if the topic position is not taken up by some other entity. In other languages *pro* can refer to something in the discourse without much effort so long as the reference is clear, and there is no restriction on what can occur in the topic position. If our analysis is correct, the Chinese *pro* takes advantage of the Strong Uniformity consequence that the  $\phi$ -feature and the  $\delta$ -feature are computationally equivalent: it either receives the  $\phi$ -feature of person or the  $\delta$ -feature of topic, and the choice between the two accounts for its unusual behavior. What is important to note is that although the Chinese *pro* behaves in a fundamentally different fashion from *pro* in Romance and Japanese, its behavior is fully compatible with the system that underlies the general grammatical-feature system across all languages.

I presented a number of other phenomena that reflect some aspect of Strong Uniformity. It is my hope that there will be others that will be discovered, and as we find them, we will have a deeper understanding of how languages, agreement and agreementless, operate with uniformity and diversity.

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# Agreement Beyond Phi

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