Long-distance agreement in Sheshatshiu Innu-aimun

In Sheshatshiu Innu-aimun (henceforth SIA), as in other Algonquian languages, a matrix verb may agree with a constituent of an embedded clause. This phenomenon is known as 'long-distance agreement' (LDA), as seen in (2) and (3) (cf. among others, Frantz 1978; Dahlstrom 1991; Polinsky and Potsdam 2001; Bruening 2001; Branigan and MacKenzie 2000, 2002; Bliss 2008; Khalilova 2008, 2009; Lochbihler 2012; Forker 2012; Hamilton 2015; Lochbihler and Mathieu 2016).

In (1), there is no LDA. The matrix verb stem appears in the transitive inanimate (TI) form, indexing the argument relationship between the animate 1st person subject 'I' and the inanimate clausal complement object. In (2), the matrix verb stem is in the transitive animate (TA) form. The embedded subject *Pûn* 'Paul' agrees with the matrix verb, which is indicated by a direct theme suffix *-âu*. In (3), the matrix verb agrees with the embedded object *musha 'moose,'* and this is marked by the direct theme suffix *-imâu*.

In (2) and (3), the targeted embedded nominal constituent, which agrees with the matrix verb, is separated by a clausal boundary (cf. Branigan and MacKenzie 2000, 2002). At first glance, this syntactic configuration yields a non-local agreement relationship, which gives rise to a question of whether LDA violates the locality requirement imposed by the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC) in Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2008, and subsequent works). Besides, another question concerns what licenses LDA in SIA. In this presentation, I will discuss and answer these questions.

(1) *Non-LDA*

Nit-itenit-**en**	[Pûn	kâ-uâpam-ât
1-think.TI-**1SG >0.PRS**	Paul.3SG	PV.PST-see.TA-3SG>3'(DIR).CONJ
mush-a	utâkushît].	
moose.NA-3'	yesterday	

'I think that Paul saw a moose yesterday.'

(2) *LDA with the embedded subject*

Q: **Who** do you think saw a moose yesterday?

A:

Nit-itenim-**âu**	[**PÛN**		
1-think.TA-**1SG>3SG(DIR).PRS**	**Paul.3SG**		
kâ-uâpam-ât	mush-a	utâkushît].	
PV.PST-see.TA-3SG>3'(DIR).CONJ	moose.NA-3'	yesterday	

'I think that **PAUL** saw a moose yesterday.'

(3) *LDA with the embedded object*

Q: **What** do you think Paul saw yesterday?

A:

Nit-itenim-**imâu**	[Pûn	
1-think.TA-**1SG>3'(DIR).PRS**	Paul.3SG	
kâ-uâpam-ât	**MUSH-A**	utâkushît].
PV.PST-see.TA-3SG>3'(DIR).CONJ	**moose.NA-3'**	yesterday

'I think that Paul saw a **MOOSE** yesterday.'

Branigan and MacKenzie (2002) argue that Innu-aimun LDA is licensed by the topicalization of the LDA goal in the finite embedded clause that is CP-sized. The topicalized LDA goal appears at the left periphery of the embedded CP, where it is visible to a probe on the matrix verb. Consequently, the agreement relationship

between the probe on the matrix verb and the embedded LDA goal is syntactically legitimate, which, in turn, suggests that LDA complies with the PIC.

Based on the empirical findings from my research fieldwork and my data analysis, I argue that focalization is another factor motivating LDA in Innu-aimun. More specifically, the LDA goal serves as the focus of the embedded clause, as seen in (2) and (3) where the embedded nominal constituents highlighted in boldface and in capital letters answer the wh-questions (cf. among others, Jackendoff 1972; É. Kiss 1995, 1998; Lambrecht 1994, 2001; Erteschik-Shir 1997, 2007).

Since focalization has been analyzed as a successive cyclic phenomenon (cf. Chomsky 2000, 2001), we expect that LDA should occur in a successive-cyclic manner. Indeed, this prediction is borne out by my empirical findings. If there is more than one level of embedding in the sentence, LDA on the matrix verb is licensed only when all embedded verbs agree with the targeted LDA goal, as seen in (4).

(4) Q: **Who** do you think Mary knows they saw yesterday?

A1: Nit-itenim-**imâu** [Mânî
1-think.TA-**1SG>3'(DIR).PRS** Mary.3SG
tshissenim-**imât** [kâ-uâpam-**imâht**
know.TA-**3SG>3'(DIR).CONJ.PRS** PV.PST-see.TA-**3PL>3'(DIR).CONJ**
PÛN-A Û-TÂUÎ-NUA utâkushît]].
Paul-3' 3.POSS-father.NA-3'' yesterday
'I think that Mary knows that they saw **PAUL'S FATHER** yesterday.'

A2: Nit-itenim-**imâu** [Mânî
1-think.TA-**1SG>3'(DIR).PRS** Mary.3SG
(* tshissenit-**âk**) [kâ-uâpam-**imâht**
know.TI-**3SG>0.CONJ.PRS** PV.PST-see.TA-**3PL>3'(DIR).CONJ**
PÛN-A Û-TÂUÎ-NUA utâkushît]].
Paul-3' 3.POSS-father.NA-3'' yesterday
Intended: 'I think that Mary knows that they saw **PAUL'S FATHER** yesterday.'

Second, the extraction of the LDA goal out of its embedded clausal domain is blocked when it appears in an island domain such as an embedded interrogative clause. This suggests that the LDA goal undergoes movement in order to locally agree with the matrix verb in LDA configurations.

In my analysis, I demonstrate that the movement of the LDA goal to the clausal left periphery is optional when it is interpreted as a new information focus, as seen in (2), (3), and (4) (cf. É. Kiss 1995, 1998; Lambrecht 1994, 2001). The diagnostics tests, which I use to demonstrate the optional movement of the new information focused LDA goal, include the 'Island effects' test (Ross 1967; Huang 1982) and the 'Quantifier Raising' test (May 1985). Most interestingly, when the LDA goal is interpreted as a contrastive focus (cf. among others, Neeleman et al. 2009; Repp 2009; Kroeger 2017), the movement of the LDA goal to the matrix clausal left periphery is obligatory. I propose that in SIA, contrastive foci are marked by means of word order.

The results of my analysis are in line with Branigan and MacKenzie's (2002) finding that LDA does not violate the PIC in Innu-aimun. Additionally, the discussion of LDA phenomena in some Nakh-Dagestanian languages and in other Algonquian languages, and that of theoretical implications are also presented.

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