The syntax of valuation in auxiliary–parasitic constructions

keywords: Syntax-morphology, Agree, participles, Germanic

This paper addresses the question of where/how morphological dependency relations (e.g., between an AUX[iliary] and a PART[icle]) are established. The conclusions are: A) morphological properties are, to a significant part, determined by the syntactic configuration; B) the syntactic licensing configuration is invariable within/across languages: the higher element licenses (=values) the lower element under Agree; C) languages differ, based on their morphological inventory, regarding which element (AUX/PART) values the other: generally, AUX values PART, but in languages with prexical/circumfixal PARTs, valuation is reversed.

Several Germanic languages allow parasitic participles (ParPars) as in (1): PARTs selected by modals, which normally combine with infinitives. The common properties of ParPars are: ParPars alternate with infinitives; ParPars are only possible if there is an AUX (not necessarily another PART); ParPar morphology is semantically vacuous—ParPars are not interpreted as perfective but the same as infinitives.

(1a) Jeg hadde villet lest / lese boka Norwegian
I had want.PART read.PART / read.INF book.DEF
‘I would have liked to read the book.’

(1b) hy soe it dien / dwaan wollen ha Frisian
he would it do.PART / do.INF want.PART have.INF
‘He would have liked to do it.’

The account proposed is based on Reverse Agree in (2) (see also Haegeman&Lohndal, Merchant, Zeijlstra). Specifically, I suggest that in the standard case, IP-heads (T, MOD, AUX…) involve a valued interpretable feature encoding the semantic value (past, perf…). All verbal heads also involve an unvalued (normally uninterpretable) V-feature, which must get valued under Agree. The value assigned under Agree is realized morphologically. Thus, in AUX-MOD-V constructions, (3a), AUX values MOD as [perf], yielding PART morphology on MOD; MOD values V as [mod/irrealis], resulting in infinitival morphology on V. Valuation of V by AUX across MOD is blocked by (2)ii. ParPars are ‘special’ in that the syntactic configuration enables multiple valuation by AUX, since MOD can be a main verb which does not involve an iF:mod. MOD in (3b) then does not block Agree between AUX and V, and both MOD and V are valued as PARTs. Since PARTs require valuation by AUX, the dependency of ParPars on a higher AUX follows; since only AUX involves an iF:perf (iFs only occur on functional heads), neither V in (3a,b) is interpreted as a PART. A)-B) then derive ParPars in Norwegian and Frisian, which only differ in that Frisian linearizes verbs in head-final (3-2-1) order.

(2) A feature F:unval on α is valued by a feature F:val on β, iff
i. β c-commands α AND
ii. There is no γ with an iF:val such that β c-commands γ and γ commands α.

(3a) 

(3b)
Frisian also allows “upward” ParPars. In (4a), \( \text{want}_{\text{MOD}} \), which selects/takes scope over \( \text{have}_{\text{AUX}} \), is selected by another modal (\( \text{would} \)), yet \( \text{want} \) can be realized as PART. This construction is restricted to head-final languages (also Stellingwerf; Bloemhoff, Zwart), and in Frisian only possible when the modal selecting \( \text{want} \) occurs in V2 position, (4b). These properties follow again from (A)-B). To value a higher verb as PART, AUX must move to a position above the licensee. Hence, in (4a), AUX(\( p \)) must have moved above \( \text{want}_{\text{MOD}} \). This movement is justified in head-final (3-2-1) orders, but not in head-initial orders. The lack of this construction in Scandinavian is therefore expected. Furthermore, the restriction in (4b) follows from (2)ii: for AUX(\( p \)) to value \( \text{want}_{\text{MOD}} \) as PART, AUX must be the closest element to \( \text{want}_{\text{MOD}} \). This is only possible, I argue, when higher verbs (\( \text{would} \) in (4)) move out of the way. Crucially, the fact that in cases such as (4), the morphological form is dependent on a derived syntactic configuration (subject to locality) and not simply determined by selectional properties provides new support for the claim that syntax feeds into morphology.

(4a)  
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{hy} \quad \text{soe} \quad \text{it} \quad [\text{dien}_4 \quad \text{ha}_1 \quad ]_{\text{AuxP}} \quad \text{wollen}_2 \\
\text{he} \quad \text{would} \quad \text{it} \quad [\text{do.PART} \quad \text{have}.\text{INF}] \quad \text{want.PART}
\end{array}
\]

‘he would like to have it done’

(4b)  
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{*omdat} \quad \text{hy} \quad \text{it} \quad \text{dien} \quad \text{ha} \quad \text{wollen} \quad \text{soe} \\
\text{because he it do.PART have}.\text{INF} \quad \text{want.PART} \quad \text{would}
\end{array}
\]

Evidence for (C) comes from word order in ge-languages and cross-linguistic differences in the distribution of downward ParPars. In all ge-languages, PART can precede AUX, even in languages where verbs otherwise (e.g., modals-infinities) must appear in strictly head-initial order (see Wurmbrand). Assuming GE-participles value AUX as in (5b), this distribution follows from Agree: since valuation is uniformly top-down, movement of ge-PARTS is necessary to establish an appropriate licensing configuration. Lastly, in contrast to Scandinavian and Frisian, German ParPars are only possible if PART moves above AUX (evidenced by word order, (6), and locality restrictions). A system that involves (A)-(C) then allows for a uniform treatment of ParPar constructions across Germanic, which, so far, have been assumed to be unrelated.

(5a)  
Frison/Norwegian: no ge.  
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{Aux} \quad \text{[F: perf]} \quad \text{V(P) F: [ ]} \quad \text{Agree} \\
\text{Move}
\end{array}
\]

(5b)  
German/Dutch varieties: ge-stem -en/-t  
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{Aux} \quad \text{[F: [ ]]} \quad \text{V(P) F: perf} \quad \text{Move}
\end{array}
\]

(6)  
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{ohne es} \quad \{\text{verhindert}\} \quad \text{haben} \quad \{\text{*verhindert/\text{\textbackslash}/\text{verhindern}\} \quad \text{zu können}
\text{without it} \quad \{\text{prevent.PART}\} \quad \text{have}.\text{INF} \quad \{\text{prevent.PART/\text{\textbackslash}/\text{INF}\} \quad \text{to can.IPP}
\end{array}
\]

‘without having been able to prevent it’

Selected References
