

NATURAL SYNTAX OF BELFAST ENGLISH
(I) SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT, (II) IMPERATIVE

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ABSTRACT

The framework of this paper is Natural Syntax initiated by the author in the tradition of (morpho-logical) naturalness as established by †Willi Mayerthaler and Wolfgang U. Dressler.

Natural Syntax is a developing deductive theory. The naturalness judgements are couched in naturalness scales, which follow from the basic parameters (or “axioms”) listed at the beginning of the paper. The predictions of the theory are calculated in what are known as deductions, the chief components of each being a pair of naturalness scales and the rules governing the alignment of corresponding naturalness values. Parallel and chiasitic alignment are distinguished and related to Henning Andersen’s early work on markedness.

Natural Syntax is exemplified here with two syntactic phenomena found in Belfast English and partly deviating from Standard English: (I) subject-verb agreement, (II) the imperative. The language data are taken from Henry (1995), and close attention has been paid to the (TG-)interpretations adduced in that monograph.

Some recent work related to Natural Syntax: Orešnik (2007a-e, 2008a-c) and Orešnik and Cvetko-Orešnik (2009, only work written in English is mentioned).

Natural Syntax is a (developing) deductive linguistic theory that determines the presuppositions on the background of which a (morpho)syntactic state of affairs can be made predictable, and thus synchronically explained. The two basic kinds of presuppositions are what are known as naturalness scales and rules of alignment among corresponding values of any two scales. Every (morpho)syntactic state of affairs is represented by two comparable variants. Natural Syntax contains no generative component.

The basic format of our naturalness scales is $>\text{nat} (A, B)$, where A is more natural than B. Two expanded scales are allowed, viz. $>\text{nat} (A + B, B)$ and $>\text{nat} (A, A + B)$; they are valid if the corresponding scale of the format $>\text{nat} (A, B)$ is valid. Exemplification below.

I proceed to list the criteria with which Natural Syntax substantiates naturalness scales:

- a) The speaker/hearer parameter. In the scale $>\text{nat}(A, B)$, value A is natural for the speaker (and unnatural for the hearer); value B is unnatural for the speaker (and natural for the hearer). The basic naturalness scale is $>\text{nat}$ (favourable for the speaker, favourable for the hearer). This view of naturalness is commonplace in linguistics (Havers 1931: 171), under the names of tendency to economize (utilized first of all by the speaker) and tendency to be accurate (mainly in the hearer's interest).

I follow Mayerthaler (1981: 13) in assuming that the speaker is the centre of communication; therefore most properties of the speaker are natural; for instance, being the first person and/or the subject and/or +human and/or +masculine (!) and/or +singular and/or +definite and/or +referential, etc.

What is favourable for the hearer may be less natural for the speaker. This is a pivotal point in Natural Syntax and will be maintained until some good counterexample nullifies it. By way of illustration, it can be pointed out that producing a longish noun phrase may be "tiresome" for the speaker (= less natural for him), but may ease the hearer's decoding process considerably (= be more natural for the hearer).

- b) The principle of least effort (Havers 1931: 171). What conforms better to this principle is more natural for the speaker. What is cognitively simple (for the speaker) is easy to produce, easy to retrieve from memory, etc.
- c) Degree of integration into the construction. What is better integrated into its construction is more natural for the speaker.

As a rule of thumb, what is located at the margin of a construction is less natural than what is placed inside a construction.

- d) Frequency. What is more frequent tokenwise is more natural for the speaker. What is cognitively simpler (for the speaker) is used more. (However, the reverse does not obtain: what is natural for the speaker is not necessarily more frequent).
- e) Small vs. large class. The use of (a unit pertaining to) a small class is more natural for the speaker than the use of (a unit pertaining to) a large

class. During speech small classes are easier for the speaker to choose from than are large classes (this is frequency typewise).

- f) The process criterion. Any process is natural. Only movement requires special comment. Given a construction, movement of a unit to the left is more natural for the speaker than movement of a unit to the right (movement to the left is more natural than non-movement; longer leftward movement is more natural than shorter leftward movement; movement to the right is less natural than non-movement).
- g) Acceptable vs. non-acceptable use. What is acceptable is more natural for the speaker than what is not acceptable. The very reason for the acceptability of a syntactic unit is its greater naturalness for the speaker with respect to any corresponding non-acceptable unit.
- h) What is more widespread in the languages of the world is more natural for the speaker (the typological criterion). What is cognitively simpler (for the speaker) is realized in more languages.

I have been applying the above criteria (henceforth also called axioms) (a-h) to language material covering several languages and miscellaneous (morpho-) syntactic states of affairs. Throughout my work, the criteria have compelled me, time and again, to reject certain solutions and to give precedence to other solutions. Given this encouraging experience, I will preserve the present list (a-h) until some convincing and irreparable counterexample casts doubt upon my axioms. The occurrence of such an event is in the overriding interest of Natural Syntax anyway. The only realistic aim of deductive theories is that they are eventually disproved. I am afraid that any improvement of the axioms would lead to a reduction of the chances for the desirable definitive outcome.

The above criteria of naturalness are utilized to support our naturalness scales. Normally it suffices to substantiate any scale with one criterion, which backs up either value A or value B of the scale; the non-supported value is allotted the only remaining position in the scale. Of course, a scale may be supported with more than one criterion. Any clash among the criteria applied to a scale is to be handled with constraints on the combinations of criteria. So far only a few constraints have been formulated; I have not yet encountered much useable crucial language data.

The naturalness scales are an essential part of what are known as deductions, in which Natural Syntax expresses its predictions about the state of affairs in language data. An example of a deduction:

English. The numerical indication of frequency normally consists of a cardinal number followed by the word *times* (e.g., *four times*) except that there are one-word expressions available for the lowest numbers: *once*, *twice*, and archaic *thrice* (Collins Cobuild 1990: 270-271).

The two variants: the type *once* and the type *four times*.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (type *once*, type *four times*)

I.e., the type *once* is more natural than the type *four times*. – According to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (low, non-low) / number

I.e., any low number is more natural than any non-low number (Mayerthaler 1981: 15). – Low numbers are more easily accessible to the speaker. According to the speaker/hearer criterion, item (a) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of parallel alignment of corresponding values:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D. See Note 4.1 below.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between low and non-low numbers in numerical indications of frequency such that one kind of number uses the pattern *four times* and the other kind of number uses the pattern *once*, it is the low numbers that tend to use the pattern *once* and it is non-low numbers that tend to use the pattern *four times*. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Notes

4.1. Value A of scale 1.1 (= the type *once*) tends to combine with value C of scale 1.2 (= low number). Value B of scale 1.1 (= the type *four times*) tends to combine with value D of scale 1.2 (= non-low number). Similarly in the remaining deductions, with the proviso that the alignment (unlike here) is chiasitic in most cases. Chiasitic alignment is explained below.

4.2. Natural Syntax cannot predict the cut-off point between low and non-low numerals.

4.3. Henning Andersen (p.c.) has pointed out to me that there is a parallel system covering numerical indications of frequency, *one additional time*, *two/three/four additional times*, etc., which does not make use of the dichotomy treated in the deduction above.

This deduction maintains that the state of affairs cannot be the reverse; i.e., that numerals above *two* (or *three*) would be one-word formations and that the numerals under *three* (or *four*) would be two-word formations. All predictions of our Natural Syntax are restricted to such modest claims about the unlikelihood of the reverse situation.

In every deduction, the rules of alignment play a prominent role; compare item 2 in the above deduction. The alignment rules regulate the combinations of corresponding values of the two naturalness scales mentioned in the deduction.

The alignment can be parallel or chiasitic. Suppose that the two scales are $>\text{nat}(A, B)$ and $>\text{nat}(C, D)$. Parallel alignment pairs value A with value C, and value B with value D. Chiasitic alignment pairs A with D, and B with C.

A paramount question is when the alignment is parallel and when chiasitic. Parallel alignment is the default case. Chiasitic alignment is necessary whenever a given deduction is limited to the language data obtaining within an “unnatural environment”. This is defined as value B of the scale $>\text{nat}(A, B)$.

An example. In the scale $>\text{nat}(\text{main, dependent}) / \text{clause}$, the value “dependent clause” is an unnatural environment. This means: all deductions whose language data lie within the environment “dependent clause” require the implementation of chiasitic alignment.

Chiasitic alignment is prohibited when a naturalness scale is substantiated with an axiom. If, however, an axiom is engaged as one of the scales in a deduction, it obeys the usual distribution of the alignment rules.

The insistence of Natural Syntax on the distinction between parallel and chiasitic alignments stems indirectly from the work of Henning Andersen within markedness theory. Andersen observes situations such as the following in all human semiotic systems: on an everyday occasion casual wear is unmarked, formal wear marked; on a festive occasion it is the formal wear that is unmarked, whereas casual wear is marked, see Andersen 1972: 45 n. 23). This example expressed with our scales: (i) $>\text{nat}(\text{casual, formal}) / \text{wear}$, (ii) $>\text{nat}(-, +) / \text{marked}$. A third scale as the source of the environment of the deduction: $>\text{nat}(\text{everyday, festive}) / \text{occasion}$. If the environment is “everyday occasion”, the alignment within (i-ii) is parallel; if the environment is “festive occasion”, the alignment within (i-ii) is chiasitic.

This paper exemplifies Natural Syntax of Belfast English based on the language material of Alison Henry (1995) and the sources cited therein. Due to space limitations, only two of Henry's topics are treated: (I) subject-verb agreement and (II) the imperative.

(I) Subject-verb agreement

1) Belfast English. In *the children is late* there is no agreement between the subject and the verb. In the question *are the children late* agreement does obtain (Henry 1995: 42-43).

The two variants: present vs. absent subject-verb agreement.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (+, -) / agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, -) / inversion

I.e., inversion of the subject and the finite verb is more natural than the absence of inversion. – Inversion results from movement of the finite verb to the left across the subject (Huddleston – Pullum 2002: 97). All movement to the left is natural, item (f) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between the presence and absence of subject-verb agreement such that one option is accompanied by inversion of the subject and verb and the other option is not accompanied by inversion, then it is the presence of subject-verb agreement that tends to be accompanied by inversion and it is the absence of subject-verb agreement that tends not to be accompanied by inversion. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. For the exceptional situation in the type *where's my glasses*, see deduction (2).

2) Belfast English. In sentences introduced with a *wh*-adjunct subject-verb agreement does not obtain; for instance, *where's my glasses* (Henry 1995: 41–42).

The two variants: (non-)realized subject-verb agreement. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environment “*wh*-adjunct” culled from the scale >nat (–adjunct, +adjunct) / *wh*-word (adjuncts are the least natural *wh*-words, just as adjuncts in general are the least natural parts of speech).

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (+, –) / subject-verb agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / acceptable

I.e., what is acceptable is more natural than what is not acceptable. – This is the very criterion of acceptability, item (g) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of chiasitic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (with *wh*-adjuncts) between realized and non-realized subject-verb agreement such that one option is acceptable and the other option is not acceptable, then it is realized agreement that tends to be acceptable and it is non-realized agreement that tends to be unacceptable. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. The deduction applies in the singular as well, but vacuously.

3) Belfast English. In *these cars goes fast* subject-verb agreement is absent (Henry 1995: 16–17).

The two variants: (about *these cars*) (non-)realized subject-verb agreement.
 – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environment “plural” culled from the scale >nat (singular, plural).

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (+, –) / subject-verb agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / acceptable

I.e., what is acceptable is more natural than what is not acceptable. – This is the very criterion of acceptability, item (g) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of chiastic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (with *these cars*) between realized and non-realized subject-verb agreement such that one option is acceptable and the other option is not acceptable, then it is realized agreement that tends not to be acceptable and it is non-realized agreement that tends to be acceptable. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. In addition to *these cars goes*, Belfast English also has *these cars go*, corresponding to the situation in Standard English. Here and elsewhere the correspondences with Standard English are omitted whenever they could be accommodated by aid of a mere technicality.

4) Belfast English. Personal-pronoun subjects. The nominatives show agreement: *I am, you are, he is, we are, youse are, they are*. The accusatives lack agreement: *me is, you is, him is, us is, youse is, them is* (Henry 1995: 32-42).

The two variants: the nominative and the accusative of the personal-pronoun subject.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (nominative, accusative) / of personal pronoun

I.e., the nominative is more natural than the accusative. – In many languages with the distinction between the nominative and the accusative, the nominative is much more often zero coded than the accusative. Therefore the nominative is natural according to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / subject-verb agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between the nominative and the accusative of the personal-pronoun subject such that one case shows subject-verb agreement and the other case does not show agreement, then it is the nominative that tends to show agreement and it is the accusative that tends not to show agreement. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

5) Belfast English. With raising verbs, subject-verb agreement does obtain if an adverb stands between the subject and the verb. For instance, *the children really are late* is acceptable whereas *the children really is late* is not acceptable (Henry 1995: 19, 25-26).

The two variants: (in the presence of an adverb before a raising verb) realized and non-realized subject-verb agreement.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (+, –) / subject-verb agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / acceptable

I.e., what is acceptable is more natural than what is not acceptable. – This is the very criterion of acceptability, item (g) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (in the presence of an adverb before a raising verb) between realized and non-realized subject-verb agreement such that one option is acceptable and the other option is not acceptable, then it is realized agreement that tends to be acceptable and it is non-realized agreement that tends to be unacceptable. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. See deduction (6).

6) Belfast English. With raising verbs, subject-verb agreement does obtain if an adverb stands between the subject and the verb. For instance, *the children really are late* is acceptable whereas *the children really is late* is not acceptable (Henry 1995: 19, 25-26).

The two variants: the subject and the finite verb (not) in contact.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (+, –) / subject-verb agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (–, +) / contact between the subject and the finite verb

I.e., the absence of contact is more natural than the presence of contact. – Contact eases the decoding process for the hearer; therefore contact must be mentioned in slot B of the scale. According to the speaker/hearer criterion, item (a) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between contact and non-contact between the subject and the finite verb such that in one option subject-verb agreement is realized and in the other option agreement is not realized, then it is contact between the subject and the finite verb that tends not to be accompanied by agreement, and it is lack of contact between the subject and the finite verb that tends to be accompanied by agreement. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. Henry (1995: 19, 25-26) implies that it is the presence of the adverb that causes the lack of subject-verb agreement. See deduction (5). I assume that it is at least equally probable that the (non)contact between the subject and the verb is decisive, irrespective of what brings about the (non)contact.

7) Belfast English. The subject and the finite verb not in contact. With raising verbs, subject-verb agreement does obtain; for instance, *the girls probably have left*. With other verbs agreement does not obtain; for instance, *the girls probably likes coffee* (Henry 1995: 26).

The two variants: (non)realized subject-verb agreement.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (raising, other) / finite verb

I.e., raising finite verbs are more natural than other finite verbs. – Raising verbs are a small class whereas other verbs are a large class. Therefore raising verbs are natural according to the criterion of small vs. large class, item (e) in the list of axioms. Raising finite verbs undergo leftward movement and are natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / subject-verb agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (given that the subject and the finite verb are not in contact) between raising verbs and other finite verbs such that one class shows realized subject-verb agreement and the other class does not show it, then it is raising finite verbs that tend to show agreement and it is other finite verbs that tend not to show agreement. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. When the subject and the finite verb are in contact, there is no difference between raising and other finite verbs with respect to subject-verb agreement. Cf. *the girls has left, the girls likes coffee*.

8) Belfast English. Absent subject-verb agreement obtains in the present tense, somewhat less in the past tense, and even less in the historic present. (Past tense and the historic present both refer to past time). The relationship between the past tense and the historic present is dealt with in deduction (9).

The two variants: present and past time. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environment “absence of subject-verb agreement”. The unnaturalness of “absence of subject-verb agreement” follows from scale 1.1 in deduction (2).

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (present, past) / time

I.e., present time is more natural than past time. – Present time is the time of the speaker (who is the centre of communication); according to the speaker/hearer criterion, item (a) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (smaller, larger) / class of speakers

I.e., a smaller class of speakers is more natural than a larger class of speakers. – Communication usually proceeds among a small number of participants; given this, a small class of speakers is natural.

2. The rules of chiasitic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (with respect to the lack of subject-verb agreement) between a smaller and a larger class of speakers such that one option obtains in present time and the other option obtains in past time, then it is the smaller class of speakers that tends to obtain in past time and it is the larger class of speakers that tends to obtain in present time. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. Scale 1.2 is introduced here tentatively; it remains to be checked in other suitable deductions.

9) Belfast English. Absent subject-verb agreement obtains in the present tense, somewhat less in the past tense, and even less in the historic present. (Past tense and the historic present both refer to past time). This deduction treats only the relationship between the past tense and the historic present.

The two variants: (with respect to the absence of subject-verb agreement) the past tense and the historic present. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environment “absence of subject-verb agreement”. The unnaturalness of “absence of subject-verb agreement” follows from scale 1.1 in deduction (2).

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (past tense, historic present)

I.e., the past tense is more natural than the historic present. – The historic present is often stylistically marked and in this sense unnatural (in the spirit of Mayerthaler 1981: 15).

1.2. >nat (smaller, larger) / class of speakers

I.e., a smaller class of speakers is more natural than a larger class of speakers. – Communication usually proceeds among a small number of participants; given this, a small class of speakers is natural.

2. The rules of chiastic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (with respect to the absence of subject-verb agreement) between the past tense and the historic present such that one option obtains with a smaller class of speakers and the other option obtains with a larger class of speakers, then it is the past tense that tends to obtain with a larger class of speakers and it is the historic present that tends to obtain with a smaller class of speakers. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. There are two unnatural environments involved here: in addition to the “absence of subject-verb agreement” mentioned above, also “past time”. (For the latter, see scale 1.1 in deduction (8). In Natural Syntax, any number of unnatural environments covering a single deduction invariably triggers chiastic alignment.

10) Belfast English. Negative polarity items are used in subject position if subject-verb agreement is lacking; for instance, *any animals isn't coming* (Henry 1995: 27-30).

The two variants: *any-* and *no-* as subject. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environment “negation”.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (*any-*, *no-*) / indefinite determiner or pronoun

I.e. the indefinite element *any-* is more natural than the indefinite element *no-*. – *No-* is easy for the hearer to decode because of its invariably negative meaning; therefore it occupies position B in the scale. According to the speaker/hearer criterion, item (a) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / subject-verb agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of chiasitic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between *any*- negative-polarity items and *no*-negative words in subject position such that one type of item allows subject-verb agreement and the other type of item does not allow subject-verb agreement, then it is *any*- that tends not to allow agreement and it is *no*- that tends to allow agreement. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

11) Belfast English. For some speakers, the personal pronoun *youse* ‘you (pl.)’ behaves as a normal noun phrase (Henry 1995: 38).

The two variants: *you* (sg.) and *youse* (pl.).

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (*you*, *youse*)

I.e., *you* is more natural than *youse*. – According to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / nominative-marked noun phrase

I.e., a nominative-marked noun phrase is more natural than other noun phrases. – Nominative-marked personal pronouns are a small class, therefore natural according to the criterion of small vs. large class, item (e) in the list of axioms. In many languages nominatives are zero coded, therefore natural according to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

A special case of 1.2:

1.2.1. >nat (+, +/-) / nominative-marked noun phrase

Scale 1.2.1 assumes the permitted expanded format $>\text{nat}$ (A, A + B) and is automatically valid because the corresponding basic scale 1.2 has been substantiated.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between *you* (sg.) and *youse* (pl.) such that one unit is obligatorily nominative marked and the other unit is only optionally nominative marked, then it is *you* that tends to be obligatorily nominative marked and it is *youse* that tends to be only optionally nominative marked. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. Two important consequences concerning *youse* when it is not nominative marked: (i) it lacks subject-verb agreement; for instance, *youse is really stupid*, and (ii) it can follow the particle in the verb-particle construction; for instance, *I'll phone up youse* (Henry 1995: 38).

Henry (1995) also discusses some closely related phenomena from other kinds of English and an important Arabic case. These are treated below.

12) Colloquial Standard English. In the type *where's my glasses* (adjunct *wh*-word, subject after the finite verb) the verb can be in the singular if the subject is a full noun phrase; if the subject is a personal pronoun, the verb must be in the plural; for instance, *where are they* (Henry 1995: 41, referring to Radzinski 1985).

The two variants: the type *where's my glasses* and the type *where are they*.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. $>\text{nat}$ (personal pronoun, full NP) / subject

I.e., a personal pronoun is more natural than a full NP. – Personal pronouns are a small class and are natural according to the criterion of small vs. large class, item (e) in the list of axioms. Personal pronouns are also more natural than full NPs according to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, -) / subject-verb agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (within the type *where's my glasses*) between the personal-pronoun subject and the full-NP subject such that one unit combines with subject-verb agreement and the other unit does not combine with agreement, then it is the personal-pronoun subject that tends to combine with agreement and it is the full-NP subject that tends not to combine with agreement. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Notes

4.1. The deduction includes the singular subject (e.g., *where's my glass*, *where's he*), but operates vacuously in that domain.

4.2. The idea, entertained by some, that the verb agrees with the *wh*-adjunct in the type *where's my glasses* does not deserve any attention.

13) Arabic. Subject-verb agreement obtains in SVO sentences; for instance, *l-ḥawlaad-u jaa ḥuu* 'the boys came (pl.)'. Subject-verb agreement does not occur in VSO sentences; for instance, *jaa ḥa l-ḥawlaad-u* 'came (sg.) the boys' (Henry 1995: 22, referring to Mohammad 1989).

The two variants: (non-)realized subject-verb agreement.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (+, -) / leftward movement of subject

I.e., leftward movement is more natural than non-movement. – According to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms. Because Arabic is a VSO language, leftward movement of the subject obtains in Arabic SVO sentences.

1.2. >nat (+, -) / subject-verb agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between realized and non-realized subject-verb agreement such that one option obtains in VSO sentences and the other option obtains in SVO sentences, then it is realized agreement that tends to obtain in SVO sentences and it is non-realized agreement that tends to obtain in VSO sentences. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. The ʔ in the Arabic examples represents the glottal stop, or “hamza” (Arabist Miljana Stanković, p.c.).

14) Universal. “The availability of SPEC/Tense as a subject position (...) permits the occurrence of negative polarity items in subject position” and “nominative case cannot be checked by Tense, and therefore nominative Case-marked items (...) must rather move to SPEC/AGR_S” (Henry 1995: 44).

The two variants: movement of subject to AGR(S) and to Tense. - The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environment “negation”.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (to AGR(S), to Tense) / movement of item

I.e., movement of an item to AGR(S) is more natural than movement of an item to Tense. – Both movements are leftward. Any leftward movement is natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms. Movement to AGR(S) is longer, and therefore more natural, than movement to Tense. Both movements result in the item becoming the subject.

1.2. >nat (+, -) / movement of NPI over negation

I.e., movement of NPI over negation is more natural than non-movement. – The movement in question is leftward. Any leftward movement is natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms. Leftward movement of NPIs over negation results in the occurrence of NPIs in subject position; cf. *any animals isn't coming* (Henry 1995: 29).

2. The rules of chiastic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between movement of an item to AGR(S) and to Tense such that one option co-occurs with movement of NPIs over negation and the other option does not co-occur with such movement, then it is movement of the item to Tense that tends to co-occur with movement of NPIs over negation and it is movement of the item to AGR(S) that tends not to co-occur with movement of NPIs over negation. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

15) English. In the verb-particle construction, “simple personal pronouns must occur between verb and particle, whereas other NPs can occur either in this position or after the particle”; for instance, *I phoned him up*, *I phoned the owner up*, *I phoned up the owner* (Henry 1995: 35).

The two variants: simple personal pronouns and other NPs.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (simple personal pronoun, other NP)

I.e., a simple personal pronoun is more natural than other NPs. – Simple personal pronouns are a small class and are natural according to the criterion of small vs. large class, item (e) in the list of axioms. Personal pronouns are also more natural than other NPs according to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / leftward movement of object

I.e., leftward movement is more natural than non-movement. – According to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

A special case of 1.2:

1.2.1. >nat (+, +/-) / leftward movement of object

Scale 1.2.1 assumes the permitted expanded format >nat (A, A + B) and is automatically valid because the corresponding basic scale 1.2 has been substantiated.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between simple personal pronouns and other NPs such that one option undergoes obligatory leftward movement and the other option undergoes optional leftward movement, then it is simple personal pronouns that tend to undergo obligatory leftward movement and it is other NPs that tend to undergo optional leftward movement. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. The deduction proceeds in the environment “object”. When the object refers to the situation within the basic configuration not encompassing the subject, the object is the most natural of syntactic items (barring the finite verb). It is such a situation that is discussed in this deduction.

16) English dialect (apparently in the Boston area). The third-person singular -s is lacking in examples such as *Mark knows the people who Clark think are in the garden* (Kimball – Aissen 1971: 241). My interpretation: when the finite verb is immediately preceded by more than one noun phrase, subject-verb agreement fails to apply (optionally, but this qualification will be ignored below). A commonsensical explanation is that the speaker is confused by the string of more than one NP immediately before the finite verb; in the above example the crucial string is underscored.

The two variants: (non-)realized subject-verb agreement. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environment “more than one NP in a string” culled from the scale >nat (one NP, more than one NP) / in the same string.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (+, -) / subject-verb agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process, therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, -) / acceptable

I.e., what is acceptable is more natural than what is not acceptable. – This is the very criterion of acceptability, item (g) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of chiastic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (with more than one NP immediately preceding the finite verb) between realized and non-realized subject-verb agreement such that one option is acceptable and the other option is not acceptable, then it is realized agreement that tends not to be acceptable and it is non-realized agreement that tends to be acceptable. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. Unlike in the Belfast examples, here the lack of subject-verb agreement manifests itself in the absence of the third-person singular desinence *-s*. The third-person plural form can be interpreted in two ways (both equally plausible) in the dialect under consideration: either as conforming with Standard English or as due to lacking subject-verb agreement; in the latter case, this deduction applies. An example: *Mark saw the man who the girls like*. Under my interpretation it is not possible for the theoretical alternative *Mark saw the man who the girls likes* to arise.

In *it is girls that John like to kiss* the relative *that* has enough properties of NPs that the string *that John* is able to prevent the subject verb agreement from taking place. If *that* is a conjunction, strings such as *that John* cannot prevent subject-verb agreement from occurring; for instance, *Lucine knows the people who think that John knows (*know) the answer* (my interpretation). I agree with Henry (1995: 41) that this matter shows some interesting similarity with her own material. All examples in this note are from Kimball and Aissen (1971), who offer an explanation unrelated to the Belfast data.

(II) Imperative

In terms of Natural Syntax, the imperative is natural. The basic naturalness scale covering the imperative is >nat (imperative, prohibitive); i.e., the affirmative imperative is more natural than the prohibitive. The latter always contains at least one extra element (usually the negation), and is less natural than the imperative according to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms. In many languages the sound body of the imperative (at least of the imperative singular) is shorter than the sound body of the remaining finite forms. Even in non-pro-drop languages, the imperative is usually not accompanied by a subject although the remaining finite verbs are. (The imperative can have an overt [mostly suffixed] subject in Icelandic; see Orešnik 1980). The imperative is typically used in main clauses, which are a natural type of clauses. In German the negative word follows the imperative (*Geh nicht!* 'don't go'), just as in most main clauses and unlike in dependent clauses. (I am not concerned with the semantic side of the imperative, although the truism is perhaps worth mentioning that it is the interjections – these rudimentary units – that tend to develop an imperative function: *(p)st!*)

To be sure, the imperative is usually (main-)clause initial (= at the margin of the clause), thus seemingly unnatural according to the criterion of integration into the construction, item (c) in the list of axioms. However, this is a secondary phenomenon due to the regular ellipsis of the preceding unemphatic subject.

The use of *be* in the English imperative is also to be understood in the light of the imperative's naturalness; *be* is "the morphologically most elementary /verbal/ form" (Huddleston – Pullum 2002: 83). Mysterious at first, the use of the more analytic *don't be*, as against the less analytic *you aren't*, can be made predictable in the framework of the unnatural environment "negation": (i) >nat (imperative, present tense) / of *BE*, (ii) >nat (*not*, *do not*); chiasmic alignment. Scale (i) is supported by the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms: the internal structure of the imperative forms is quite often simpler than the internal structure of the present-tense forms. Scale (ii) is likewise supported by the criterion of least effort.

Scale (i) suggests a correlation between imperative and non-imperative finite verbs, but this issue has not yet been resolved in its entirety in Natural Syntax.

Even directives other than the imperative display the tendency to ellipsis. For instance, the German infinitive in *bitte beeilen* 'please hurry up'; the verb is reflexive, *sich beeilen*, yet the reflexive pronoun is always ellipsed in the directive (*Duden Richtiges und gutes Deutsch* 1985: 361). Warning sign in trains: *Nicht hinauslehnen* 'do not lean out of the window'; the verb is reflexive in the intended meaning, *sich hinauslehnen* 'lean out'.

A further basic scale covering the imperative is >nat (–, +) / overt subject of imperative, supported by the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axi-

oms. Consequently the imperative accompanied by its overt subject constitutes an unnatural environment. This will play an important role below.

17) Standard English and Belfast English. The imperative. The overt subject is stylistically marked; namely, slightly emphatic or contrastive – for instance, *you stay here*. The null subject does not share this property; for instance, *stay here* (Henry 1995: 48).

The two variants: presence vs. absence of overt subject.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (–, +) / overt subject of imperative

I.e., the absence of the overt subject is more natural than the presence of the overt subject. – According to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (–, +) / stylistically marked

I.e., lack of stylistic marking is more natural than its presence (in the spirit of Mayerthaler 1981: 15).

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between the presence and absence of the imperative's overt subject such that one option is stylistically marked and the other option is not, then it is the presence of the overt subject that tends to be stylistically marked and it is the absence of the overt subject that tends not to be stylistically marked. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

18) Standard English and Belfast English. In the example *everybody, take out their books* the pronoun *their* cannot be co-referential with (the vocative) *everybody*. In the example *everybody take out their books* the pronoun *their* can be co-referential with the subject *everybody* (Henry 1995: 48).

The two variants: *everybody* as a subject and as a vocative

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (su ABSTRACT object, vocative) / *everybody*

I.e., *everybody* as a subject is more natural than *everybody* as a vocative. – Any subject is better integrated into its construction than any vocative. Therefore the subject is natural according to the criterion of integration into the construction, item (c) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / subject-pronoun agreement

I.e., realized agreement is more natural than non-realized agreement. – Agreement is a process and therefore natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

A special case of 1.2:

1.2.1. >nat (+/–, –) / subject-pronoun agreement

Scale 1.2.1 assumes the permitted expanded format >nat (A + B, B) and is automatically valid because the corresponding basic scale 1.2 has been substantiated.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between *everybody* as a subject and as a vocative such that one can be co-referential with *their* and the other cannot be co-referential with *their*, then it is *everybody* as a subject that tends to allow co-referentiality with *their* and it is *everybody* as a vocative that tends not to be co-referential with *their*. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. Concerning the pair of variants, the unacceptable *everybody*, *wash themselves* and the acceptable *everybody wash themselves* (Henry 1995: 49) it suffices to apply the scales 1.1 and 1.2 (parallel alignment).

19) Standard English and Belfast English. Negative imperatives always require *do*-support; for instance, *don't be silly*, *don't go away* (Henry 1995: 49).

The two variants: (in negative imperatives) presence and absence of *do*-support. – The deduction proceeds within the unnatural environment “negation”.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (–, +) / *do*-support

I.e., the absence of *do*-support is more natural than the presence of *do*-support. – According to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / acceptable

I.e., what is acceptable is more natural than what is not acceptable. – This is the very criterion of acceptability, item (g) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of chiastic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (within negative imperatives) between the presence and absence of *do*-support such that one option is acceptable and the other option is not acceptable, then it is the presence of *do*-support that tends to be acceptable and it is the absence of *do*-support that tends not to be acceptable. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

20) Standard English and Belfast English. “Where the imperative has an overt subject, the negative must be the contracted form *don't*, and not the uncontracted *do not*”. For instance, *don't you speak to me like that* vs. **do not you speak to me like that* (Henry 1995: 50).

The two variants: (within the negative imperative) presence and absence of overt subject. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environment “negation”.

1.1. >nat (–, +) / overt subject of imperative

I.e., the absence of the overt subject is more natural than the presence of the overt subject. – According to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (don't, do not)

I.e., *don't* is more natural than *do not*. – According to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

A special case of 1.2:

1.2.1. >nat (*don't*, *don't* & *do not*)

Scale 1.2.1 assumes the permitted expanded format >nat (A, A + B) and is automatically valid because the corresponding basic scale 1.2 has been substantiated.

2. The rules of chiasmic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (within negative imperatives) between the presence and absence of the overt subject such that one option requires *don't* and the other option requires *don't* or *do not*, then it is the presence of the overt subject that tends to require *don't* and it is the absence of the overt subject that tends to require *don't* or *do not*. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

21) Standard English and Belfast English. In the imperative *don't you speak to me like that* the negative *don't* is located in situ. In the remaining finite verbs *don't* has moved leftward; for instance, *don't you like coffee* (Henry 1995: 50).

The two variants: the imperative and “other” finite verbs. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environment “negation”.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (imperative, "other" finite verbs)

I.e., the imperative is more natural than "other" finite verbs. – See the introduction to section (II) above.

1.2. >nat (ex situ, in situ) / *don't*

I.e., *don't* located ex situ is more natural than *don't* located in situ. – *Don't* located ex situ has moved leftward. Any leftward movement is natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of chiasitic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between the imperative and "other" finite verbs such that one option contains the negative *don't* in situ and the other option contains the negative *don't* ex situ, then it is the imperative that tends to contain *don't* in situ and it is "other" finite verbs that tend to contain *don't* ex situ. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

22) Standard English and Belfast English. "Emphatic imperatives can be formed with *do*, if there is a null subject; however, overt subjects cannot occur with emphatic *do*" (Henry 1995: 50).

The two variants: presence vs. absence of emphatic *do*. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environment "stylistic marking" in the following very special sense: stylistic marking obtains when emphatic *do* is present and stylistic marking obtains when the overt subject of imperative is present. Thus stylistic marking covers the whole deduction.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (–, +) / emphatic *do*

I.e., the absence of emphatic *do* is more natural than the presence of emphatic *do*. – According to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (–, +) / overt subject of imperative

I.e., the absence of the overt subject is more natural than the presence of the overt subject. – According to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

A special case of 1.2:

1.2.1. >nat (–, +/-) / overt subject of imperative

Scale 1.2.1 assumes the permitted expanded format >nat (A, A + B) and is automatically valid because the corresponding basic scale 1.2 has been substantiated.

2. The rules of chiasmic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between the presence and absence of emphatic *do* such that one option combines with the optional presence of the imperative's overt subject and the other option combines with the absence of an overt subject, then it is the presence of emphatic *do* that tends to combine with the absence of an overt subject and it is the absence of emphatic *do* that tends to combine with the optional presence of an overt subject. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

23) Belfast English. Any overt subject of the imperative has a slightly emphatic or contrastive effect; the form of *you* is full, stressed ([ju:]), never reduced, unstressed ([jə]) (Henry 1995: 51).

The two variants: [ju:] and [jə] as subject of the imperative. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environments “+subject of imperative” and “stylistic marking”.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat ([jə], [ju:]) / subject of imperative

I.e., [jə] is more natural than [ju:]. – According to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / acceptable

I.e., what is acceptable is more natural than what is not acceptable. – This is the very criterion of acceptability, item (g) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of chiastic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between [jə] and [ju:] as the subject of the imperative such that one option is acceptable and the other option is not acceptable, then it is [jə] that tends to be unacceptable and it is [ju:] that tends to be acceptable. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

24) Belfast English, dialect A. The subject follows the imperative in unaccusative verbs; for instance, *go you there*. In “other” verbs the subject precedes the imperative; for instance, *you read that book* (Henry 1995: 52-54). Following Henry (1995: 61) I assume that the subject remains in situ in unaccusative verbs, and moves leftward in “other” verbs.

The two variants: the subject before and after the imperative. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environments “+subject of imperative” and “stylistic marking”.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (ex situ, in situ) / subject of imperative

I.e., the subject located ex situ is more natural than the subject located in situ. – The subject located ex situ has moved leftward. Any leftward movement is natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (unaccusative, “other”) / verb

I.e., unaccusative verbs are more natural than “other” verbs. – Unaccusative verbs are a small class and are natural according to the criterion of small vs. large class, item (e) in the list of axioms. Unaccusative verbs are intransitive; intransitive verbs are more natural than transitive verbs because intransitive verbs code fewer core participants than transitive verbs and are natural according to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of chiastic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between the subject of the imperative in situ and ex situ such that one option obtains with unaccusative verbs and the other option obtains with “other” verbs, then it is the subject in situ that tends to obtain with unaccusative verbs and it is the subject ex situ that tends to obtain with “other” verbs. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

25) Belfast English, dialect A. The subject immediately follows the verb; no adverb can intervene. For instance, *go always you to school* is not acceptable (Henry 1995: 54).

The two variants: adverb (not) located between the imperative and the verb.
– The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environments “+subject of imperative” and “stylistic marking”.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (+, –) / adverb located between imperative and subject

I.e., an adverb located between the imperative and its subject is more natural than an adverb located elsewhere. – An adverb located between the imperative and its subject is better integrated into its construction than an adverb located elsewhere. The former option is natural according to the criterion of integration into the construction, item (c) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / acceptable

I.e., what is acceptable is more natural than what is not acceptable. – This is the very criterion of acceptability, item (g) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of chiastic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes an adverb located between the imperative and its subject from an adverb located elsewhere such that one option is acceptable and the other option is not acceptable, then it is an adverb located between the imperative and its subject that tends to be unacceptable and it is an adverb located elsewhere that tends to be acceptable. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

26) Belfast English, dialect B. Negative imperatives. With unaccusative verbs the subject can either precede or follow the verb; for instance, *don't run you away*, *don't you run away*. With “other” verbs the subject must precede the verb; for instance, *don't you hit your sister* (Henry 1995: 55-56).

The two variants: unaccusative and “other” verbs. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environments “negation”, “+subject of imperative” and “stylistic marking”.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (unaccusative, “other”) / verb

I.e., unaccusative verbs are more natural than “other” verbs. – Unaccusative verbs are a small class and are natural according to the criterion of small vs. large class, item (e) in the list of axioms. Unaccusative verbs are intransitive; intransitive verbs are more natural than transitive verbs because intransitive verbs code fewer core participants than transitive verbs, and are natural according to the criterion of least effort, item (b) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / leftward movement of verb

I.e., leftward movement is more natural than non-movement. – According to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

A special case of 1.2:

1.2.1. $>\text{nat } (+, +/ -)$ / leftward movement of verb

Scale 1.2.1 assumes the permitted expanded format $>\text{nat } (A, A + B)$ and is automatically valid because the corresponding basic scale 1.2 has been substantiated.

2. The rules of chiasitic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between unaccusative and “other” verbs such that one option requires obligatory leftward movement of the verb and the other option allows optional leftward movement of the verb, then it is unaccusative verbs that tend to combine with the optional leftward movement of the verb and it is “other” verbs that tend to require obligatory leftward movement of the verb. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

27) Belfast English, dialect B. The imperative triggers leftward movement of weak object pronouns across adverbs in the imperative clause; for instance, *give you them always your full attention* (Henry 1995: 71-73).

The two variants: (in imperative clauses) (non-)realized movement of the weak object pronoun.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. $>\text{nat } (+, -)$ / leftward movement of weak object pronoun

I.e., leftward movement is more natural than non-movement. – According to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms.

1.2. $>\text{nat } (+, -)$ / acceptable

I.e., what is acceptable is more natural than what is not acceptable. – This is the very criterion of acceptability, item (g) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (in imperative clauses) between realized and non-realized leftward movement of weak object pronouns such that one option is acceptable and the other option is not acceptable, then it is realized leftward movement of weak object pronouns that tends to be acceptable and it is non-realized leftward movement of weak object pronouns that tends not to be acceptable. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. The distinction between *read it you to me* and *read you it to me* does not depend on the movement of weak object pronouns, but on the location of the subject (Henry 1995: 72-73).

28) Belfast English, dialect B. In imperative clauses, the subject (if it moves at all) makes a longer leftward movement than the weak object pronouns; for instance, *read you it always to me* (Henry 1995: 72-73, 75).

The two variants: subject and object of a clause. – The deduction is NOT limited to any unnatural environment; chiasitic alignment is not indicated.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (subject, object)

I.e., a subject is more natural than an object. – The speaker (as the centre of communication) is usually the subject. Therefore the subject is natural according to the speaker/hearer criterion, item (a) in the list of axioms.

1.2. >nat (longer, shorter) / leftward movement

I.e., longer leftward movement is more natural than shorter leftward movement. – Leftward movement is natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms. More movement is more natural than less movement.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between the subject and the object such that one unit undergoes a longer leftward movement and the other unit undergoes a shorter leftward movement, then it is the subject that tends to make a longer leftward movement and it is the object that tends to make a shorter leftward movement. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. This movement of the object obtains only with weak object pronouns.

29) Belfast English. In imperative clauses, subject raising is optional (Henry 1995: 75).

The two variants: obligatory vs. optional subject raising. – The deduction proceeds in the unnatural environments “+subject of imperative” and “stylistic marking”.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (obligatory, optional) / movement

I.e., obligatory movement is more natural than optional movement. – According to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms. More movement is more natural than less movement.

1.2. >nat (+, –) / acceptable

I.e., what is acceptable is more natural than what is not acceptable. – This is the very criterion of acceptability, item (g) in the list of axioms.

2. The rules of chiastic alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value D,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value C.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes (with the subject of an imperative clause) between obligatory and optional movement such that one option is acceptable and the

other option is not acceptable, then it is obligatory movement that tends not to be acceptable and it is optional movement that tends to be acceptable. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

4. Note. Here the issue is the unacceptability of obligatory vs. optional raising, and it is obligatory raising that is unacceptable. If the issue were the unacceptability of optional raising vs. non-raising, it is optional raising that would be unacceptable. Notice that this is valid only in unnatural environments; for instance, in overt-subject imperatives. In natural environments: If the issue were the unacceptability of obligatory vs. optional raising, it is optional raising that would be unacceptable; if the issue were the unacceptability of optional raising vs. non-raising, it is non-raising that would be unacceptable. There is no third possibility.

30) English. In imperative clauses the finite verb undergoes a longer leftward movement than in tensed clauses (Henry 1995: 77).

The two variants: the imperative and “other” finite verbs.

1. The assumptions of Natural Syntax:

1.1. >nat (imperative, “other” finite verb)

I.e., the imperative is more natural than “other” finite verbs. – See the introduction to section (II) above.

1.2. >nat (longer, shorter) / leftward movement

I.e., longer leftward movement is more natural than shorter leftward movement. – Leftward movement is natural according to the process criterion, item (f) in the list of axioms. More movement is more natural than less movement.

2. The rules of parallel alignment:

2.1. value A tends to associate with value C,

2.2. value B tends to associate with value D.

3. The consequences

If the language distinguishes between the imperative and “other” finite verbs such that one option undergoes longer leftward movement and the other option

undergoes shorter leftward movement, then it is the imperative verb that tends to undergo longer leftward movement and it is “other” finite verbs that tend to undergo shorter leftward movement. *Q.E.D.* (The reverse situation is not expected).

Conclusion

Exploiting the monograph by Henry (1995), which discusses certain topics of Belfast English generative (morpho)syntax, an attempt has been made here to illustrate the treatment of the same language phenomena within another school, Natural Syntax. (Due to space limitations only two of Henry’s topics are dealt with: (I) subject-verb agreement and (II) the imperative).

The above illustration demonstrates that Natural Syntax is capable of predicting a significant amount of language situations, given a small number of presuppositions (i.e., the particular description of language data adopted, the choice of variants, the naturalness scales, the alignment rules) and a modest apparatus (namely, the deduction format). As mostly in morphology and unlike in generative syntax, the predictions are shallow in the sense that no prediction follows from any other prediction.

The special trait of Natural Syntax is its insistence on comparing two variants (mostly variant constructions) in each deduction. Thus Natural Syntax has something to say only about those areas of a language that happen to display variants. For instance, the fact that Slovenian uses one construction with the cardinal numerals 1-4, and another from 5 on, is of interest for Natural Syntax; the fact that English makes no such difference cannot be accounted for in Natural Syntax.

Ignoring this limitation, it is still impossible to compare the predictive power of Natural Syntax and, say, of generative grammar, because the presuppositions of the predictions in one school and the other are so different.

The development of Natural Syntax is to be continued, exploiting as variegated language material as possible.

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