

Obviating the Disjoint Reference Effect in French

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Background. Obviation, or the subjunctive disjoint reference effect, in Romance occurs when one argument of a control predicate cannot be coreferential with the subject of the immediately subordinated subjunctive clause, while coreference is allowed in subordinate infinitive clauses. Most of the literature focuses on subject-subject obviation (SSO) — when the subject of the control verb must not be coreferential with that of the subordinate clause. As for object-subject obviation (OSO) — when the object of the superordinate clause is involved in obviation — its existence is controversial, refuted by some (Manzini 2000, Costantini 2009) and only alluded to by others (Farkas 1992, Bianchi 2001).

Novel French data. Although (1-a) seems to suggest that OSO doesn't exist in French, I observe the opposite in (1-b). (1) points to an asymmetry: a pronominal clitic object is obviative, but a full object may not be.

- (1) a. *Tom a demandé à Arthur₁ PRO₁ de partir / qu' il₁ parte.*
T. has asked to A. to leave.INF / that he leave.SUBJ
b. *Tom lui₁ a demandé PRO₁ de partir / ??qu' il₁ parte.*
T. him.DAT.CL has asked to leave.INF / that he leave.SUBJ

Proposal. This paper shows that the distinction usually posited by competition theories between the use of the infinitive and that of the subjunctive in French doesn't apply to directive contexts. It is still proposed, however, that the absence of obviation in (1-a) is due to different interpretations that the infinitive and the subjunctive may contribute to. Thus, an account of obviation in terms of a competition between both moods is called for. An explanation for the contrast in (1), in lines with a recent account of antilogophoricity effects in clitic clusters, is also presented.

Competition Theories. The acceptability of (1-a) is problematic for competition theories, which account for obviation in positing an economy principle which will select the infinitive to express coreference in examples like (1), and the subjunctive to express disjoint reference as in (3). This blocking should not take effect if a subjunctive clause is used to express a different meaning than what is expressed by the infinitive clause. Schlenker (2005) proposes that this distinction relies on the notion *de se*; the infinitive is *de se*, the subjunctive *non-de se*. Yet, such a difference is not found when these moods are subordinated under a directive predicate, as shown in (2).

- (2) Context: Elisabeth is hosting a party, and she hears that Arthur is being rude to the guests. She tells the person standing next to her, "Arthur should leave". That person was Arthur.
a. *#Elisabeth a demandé à Arthur de partir.*
E. has asked to A. to leave.INF
b. *#Elisabeth a demandé à Arthur qu' il parte.*
E. has asked to A. that he leave.SUBJ

Farkas' (1992) argues that responsibility (RESP) — a type of relation between a proposition and an individual responsible for bringing about the action described by the proposition — is characteristic of infinitive clauses, but not of subjunctive clauses in SSO contexts.

- (3) *Tom a demandé à Arthur₁ que son₁ frère parte.*
T. has asked to A. that his brother leave.SUBJ

Contrary to expectations, in (3), the notion of RESP also seems to characterize the subjunctive in

French OSO contexts; it is only acceptable if we assume that Arthur has some authority over his brother and, thus, that he can cause his departure. It is possible to have a third party as the subject of the subjunctive, but it needs to enter a RESP relation with the superordinate object. Nevertheless, the infinitive and the subjunctive are not equivalent in (1-a); the latter expresses the ‘emotional involvement’ of the speaker with respect to the action described by the subordinate clause. In (4), if the subordinate is the infinitive clause, Arthur is simply asking Tom to move out.

- (4) *Arthur a demandé à Tom₁ de déménager / qu’ il₁ déménage.*
 A. has asked to T. to move out.INF / that he move out.SUBJ

If the subordinate is the subjunctive clause, the speaker may be surprised that Arthur asked Tom to move out. In (5), the directive predicate is in the imperative mood. Here coreference within the subjunctive clause is marginal even though the superordinate object is not a clitic, because the interpretation where the speaker is emotionally involved is infelicitous. There is no emotional involvement or commitment with respect to the request, because it has not yet been made.

- (5) *Demande à Arthur₁ PRO₁ de partir / *qu’ il₁ parte.*
 Ask to A. to leave.INF / that he leave.SUBJ

A contrast similar to that between (1-a) and (5) is characteristic of expressives, which are sensitive to different types of speech act (Beltrama 2015) and also express the emotional commitment of the speaker. The difference in interpretation between the infinitive and the subjunctive discussed above explains the acceptability of both moods in (1-a). In addition, this difference provides some clue as to why (1-b) is degraded as shown below.

The asymmetry. Charnavel & Mateu (2014) propose that dative clitics are empathy loci in French, a certain type of logophoric centers — and more specifically the event participant with which one empathizes or identifies. They observe that when this pronoun occurs within the same domain as another logophoric center, a conflict in perspective arises which triggers unacceptability. In the case at hand, since the subjunctive expresses the emotional involvement of the speaker (i.e. a discourse participant and logophoric center), an operator contributing to this interpretation (Op in (6)) enters in conflict with the referent of the dative clitic object, i.e. the subordinate subject, resulting in unacceptability: e.g. ??[IP subject *lui*₁ V... [IP subject₁ Op SUBJUNCTIVE ...]].

Conclusion. Novel French data shows that OSO exists in directive contexts, and that the use of the subjunctive and the infinitive cannot be distinguished by the notion (event) *de se* or RESP-relation. The subjunctive expresses an emotional involvement of the superordinate subject in the accomplishment of the action denoted by the subordinate clause. An asymmetry between superordinate clitic objects and full objects is also found in the presence of a directive predicate. This paper proposes an account of this asymmetry based on an antilogophoricity effect, caused by a conflict in perspective between two logophoric centers found within the same clause.

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