Kuniya Nasukawa,
Henk van Riemsdijk (Eds.)

IDENTITY RELATIONS IN GRAMMAR

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Edited by

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Identity Relations in Grammar

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Moira Yip did her BA at Cambridge University, then earned her PhD at MIT in 1980. She taught at Brandeis University, and the University of California, Irvine. She returned to the UK in 1998, and taught at University College London (UCL) until her retirement in 2008. She is now Emeritus Professor of Linguistics at UCL. She has published two books on tone, and many articles on a wide range of topics in phonological theory, including many on identity and non-identity phenomena. She has a particular interest in Chinese, and more recently has published on comparisons between birdsong and human language.

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Introduction

Kuniya Nasukawa and Henk van Riemsdijk

1. Introduction

Few concepts are as ubiquitous in the physical world of humans as that of identity. Laws of nature crucially involve relations of identity and non-identity, the act of identifying is central to most cognitive processes, and the structure of human language is determined in many different ways by considerations of identity and its opposite. The purpose of this book is to bring together research from a broad scale of domains of grammar that have a bearing on the role that identity plays in the structure of grammatical representations and principles.

Needless to say, the notion of identity as used here is an intuitive notion, a pre-theoretical one. We do not really know that we are talking about the same thing when we talk about referential identity and haplology, even though both are discussed in terms of some notion of identity. Bringing together a variety of studies involving some notion of identity will undoubtedly bring us closer to an understanding of the similarities and differences among the various uses of the notion of identity in grammar. Ultimately, many of the phenomena and analyses discussed in this book should probably be evaluated against the background of Type Identity Theory to see if a more precise notion of identity can emerge.

Some ways in which identity-sensitivity manifests itself are fairly straightforward. For example, reduplication (cf. Raimy 2000 and many others) in morpho-phonology creates sequences of identical syllables or morphemes. Similarly, copying constructions in syntax create an identical copy of a word or phrase in some distant position. This is typically true, for example, of verb topicalizations such as those frequently found in African languages such as Vata (cf. Koopman 1984). In such constructions (often referred to as 'predicate clefts') the verb is fronted, but is again pronounced in its source position, (cf. Kandybowicz 2006 and references cited there). Such constructions as well as the observation that wh-copy constructions are frequently found in child language (see for example McDaniel, Chiu and Maxfield 1995), have also contributed to the so-called copy theory of movement according to which a chain of identical copies is created whose

(non-)pronunciation is determined by principles of spell-out. Alternate theories of movement such as remerge resulting in multiple dominance largely avoid the identity problem, see Gärtner (2002), who observes that the copies under the copy theory are not formally identical at all.

In many cases, however, what is at stake is not the coexistence of identical elements in grammatical structure but rather its opposite, the avoidance of identity, a term due to Yip (1998). Haplology, the deletion of one of two identical syllables or morphemes, is a case in point. In addition to deletion, there are other ways to avoid sequences of two identical elements ("XX"): insertion of an epenthetic element (XX→XeX), dissimilation (XX→XY), creating distance (XX→X...X) or fusion (AA→Ā). In phonology and morphology, there is an abundance of identity avoidance phenomena, and some major principles such as the Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP, cf. McCarthy 1986) are instrumental in accounting for them. But OCP-like principles have also been argued to be operative in syntax (cf. Van Riemsdijk 2008 and references cited there).

In semantics, an identity avoidance effect that immediately comes to mind is Principle C of the Binding Theory (Chomsky 1981): a referential expression can never be bound, that is, c-commanded, by an element bearing an identical index. Principle C may thus be interpreted as a principle that avoids identity in some way. Still, while referential identity is clearly a necessary condition in order for Principle C to kick in, why does it apply in some cases but not in others? For example, why does contrastive focus override Principle C? And why does Principle C treat epithets more like pronouns than like full copies of the other noun phrase? Given elements must be either deaccented or deleted/silent (cf. Williams 1997), which suggests an identity avoidance effect. But then, how does the notion of 'givenness', to the extent that we understand it, relate to the notion of identity? Does the fact that we may be talking about pragmatics here rather than semantics play a role in our assessment of apparent identity relations of this kind?

In the examples alluded to above, questions immediately arise as to what exactly we mean by identity. And when we think about these issues a bit more, things are indeed far from obvious. It suffices to look at distinctive features in phonology. /i/ and /u/ are identical in that both are vowels, but they are different in that one is a front vowel and the other a back vowel. What counts for the calculus of identity, full feature matrices or subsets of features, and if the latter, which subsets? Take a difficult problem from syntax. The so called "Doubly Filled Comp Filter" (DFC, cf. Chomsky and Lasnik 1977 and much subsequent research) ostensibly excludes two posi-

tions that are close to one another (the complementizer head and its specifier position) if both are phonetically realized. Typically, the complementizer is an element such as that, while the specifier contains some wh-phrase, i.e. a DP, a PP, an AP or a CP, excluding such cases as *I wonder who that you saw?* Note however that many languages have a process whereby a finite verb is moved into the complementizer position, such as Subject Auxiliary Inversion in English. But whenever this happens, the DFC does not apply: who did you see? Could the relative identity between a wh-phrase and a "nominal" complementizer such as that as opposed to the relative non-identity between the wh-phrase and a finite verb be responsible? Clearly, identity is a very abstract and perhaps not even a coherent concept, and invoking it is never a trivial matter.

Similar issues arise in the domain of intervention constraints. Minimality, and in particular, Relativized Minimality (Rizzi 1990), involves the relative identity of the intervening element with the element that crosses it. But again, what are the relevant properties? In Rizzi's book, it is proposed that the crucial property is A vs. Ā. But there are many indications that what counts as an intervener is tied to "lower" level features. In Dutch, for example, the [+R] feature creates an intervention effect (cf. Van Riemsdijk 1978) but the [+wh] feature does not.

Beyond a great many analytical puzzles, the creation and avoidance of identity in grammar raise lots of fundamental and taxing questions. These include:

- Why is identity sometimes tolerated or even necessary, while in other contexts it must be avoided?
- What are the properties of complex elements that contribute to configurations of identity (XX)?
- What structural notions of closeness or distance determine whether an offending XX-relation exists or, inversely, whether two more or less distant elements satisfy some requirement of identity?
- Is it possible to generalize over the specific principles that govern (non-)identity in the various components of grammar, or are such comparisons merely metaphorical?
- Indeed, can we define the notion of 'identity' in a formal way that will allow us to decide which of the manifold phenomena that we can think of are genuine instances of some identity (avoidance) effect?
- If identity avoidance is a manifestation in grammar of some much more encompassing principle, some law of nature, then how is it possible that what does and what does not count as identical in the

grammars of different languages seems to be subject to considerable variation?

The present collection of articles addresses only some aspects of such questions, but we hope it will pave the way for more extensive attention to the role of (non-)identity in linguistics and neighboring as well as superordinate disciplines. The idea for this book finds its origin in the workshop entitled "Identity in Grammar" held in conjunction with the 2011 GLOW Conference in Vienna on May 1 2011.[1] The workshop was co-organized by Martin Prinzhorn, Henk van Riemsdijk and Viola Schmitt. The contribution of Martin Prinzhorn and Viola Schmitt, which extends to some of the passages of the topic description that are incorporated in some form or other in the present introduction, is gratefully acknowledged. The articles in this collection are arranged under four categories: phonology (Part I), morphosyntax (Part II), syntax (Part III) and general (Part IV). Four of the articles, those by Artemis Alexiadou, Maria Rita Manzini, Kuniya Nasukawa and Phillip Backley, and Moira Yip, were presented at the Vienna workshop. And because these papers succeed in illustrating the overall theme of the volume, they appear first in their respective category. The remaining articles were submitted in response to an invitation by the editors. Abstracts of all the articles are given below.

Phonology

Kuniya Nasukawa and **Phillip Backley** observe that identity avoidance constraints such as OCP do not usually refer to phonological domains smaller than the segment. This is based on their claim that allowing two identical features to be adjacent leads to redundancy. They also argue that in other domains of phonology and morphology identity avoidance is driven by a general principle of contrastiveness which subsumes constraints such as OCP and *REPEAT. The existence of identity avoidance at various prosodic levels is attributed to the way some properties are bound by prosodic domains: those tied to the edges of domains (e.g. aspiration, glottalisation, prenasality, true voicing) adhere to identity avoidance whereas place properties tend to display harmonic behavior instead. These two patterns reflect the division between non-resonance features (prosodic markers) and resonance features (segmental markers). This approach is altogeth-

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er simpler than Feature Geometry proposals involving three or more feature divisions.

Marc van Oostendorp presents an analysis of rhyme in terms of multidominance, arguing that rhyming words share some part of their phonological representation. It is shown how this analysis differs from two other formal phonological approaches to rhyme, one developed within Correspondence Theory and the other within Loop Theory. Van Oostendorp also demonstrates how his analysis can account for imperfect rhymes and for the fact that the onsets of rhyming syllables (or feet) have to be different — in other words, that the world's languages display a strong tendency to avoid complete identity when it comes to rhyming systems. He concludes with a short case study of a rhyming style that ignores voiceless coronal obstruents.

Patrik Bye examines a database of 1556 English CV(V)C monosyllables and shows that identical transvocalic consonants at non-apical places of articulation are overrepresented relative to their homorganic class and strongly overrepresented once gradient similarity avoidance is factored in. His proposed explanation connects this pattern to repetitive babbling in infancy, which lays down connections in memory between non-apical places of articulation and motor repetition. Apical consonants are not mastered until long after the babbling phase, and are therefore subject to similarity avoidance.

Toyomi Takahashi focuses on identity avoidance within the syllable onset. In general, complex onsets (two or more timing slots or root nodes) disallow partial or full geminates, unlike other phonotactic domains such as complex nuclei or coda-onset sequences. Revisiting Kahn's ideas (1976) concerning the constrained nature of non-linear representation, Takahashi claims that well-formedness in representations should be ensured in such a way that the expressive capacity of representations naturally excludes unattested (and thus, redundant) structures without recourse to extrinsic well-formedness constraints. From this 'redundancy-free' perspective, he argues that the onset is unary at all levels of representation. Apparent 'clusters' or 'contours' within the onset are claimed to result from the phonetic interpretation of phonologically unordered melodic properties, in much the same way that plosives show three distinct phases that are not phonologically encoded.

Morpho-syntax

Maria Rita Manzini investigates three constructions which feature in a variety of Romance languages and which involve identity avoidance in one form or another. Specifically, she offers a detailed discussion of (i) double -*l*, as found in clitic clusters, (ii) negative imperatives, and (iii) negative concord (or double -*n*). Manzini demonstrates that, while these constructions apparently belong to three different domains of grammar (morphology, syntax and semantics, respectively), they all produce a mutual exclusion effect that manifests itself in very local domains. In other words, all three appear to involve a kind of identity avoidance.

Peter Ackema investigates a number of agreement phenomena in Dutch, some of which are partly morpho-phonological and partly morpho-syntactic in nature. He shows that there are instances of agreement weakening which apply to syntactic agreement but not to semantic agreement, and argues that syntactic agreement weakening should be viewed as an instance of identity avoidance. Furthermore, Ackema traces the difference in behavior between syntactic and semantic agreement to a difference in the internal structure of strong and weak pronouns: strong pronouns have a richer internal structure than weak pronouns, which explains why the latter are more likely to be identical with their antecedents and thus susceptible to agreement weakening.

Syntax

Artemis Alexiadou distinguishes two types of proposals that aim to account for "bans on multiple objects," viz. the Subject *in situ* Generalization and Distinctness. She argues that, while both may be viewed as specific instantiations of identity avoidance, each is independently motivated. Furthermore, Alexiadou suggests that both principles are also different from other identity avoidance effects that have been observed in the literature. Alexiadou therefore offers a caution to the linguistic community against any hasty attempts to unify what may appear to be similar instances of identity avoidance but which, under closer scrutiny, reveal crucial differences.

Ken Hiraiwa addresses three cases of morpho-syntactic identity avoidance in Japanese: a double genitive constraint (**-no -no*), a double conjunctive coordinator constraint (**-to -to*), and a double disjunctive coordinator constraint (**-ka -ka*). He goes on to argue that the structural conditions under which these three constraints may apply, or are blocked from apply-