

A declarative perspective on agreement and government

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Declarative approaches to syntax such as HPSG and LFG are information-based frameworks where each lexical item places partial constraints on an overall information structure, aggregated by unification. There is no inherent “direction” in agreement constructions, which appears to be a virtue in the analysis of agreement but potentially problematic for government or subcategorisation. Certain kinds of directionality can be introduced by replacing unification with subsumption (Sells 2006) – and in fact unification is defined as mutual subsumption in the foundations of these approaches (Shieber 1992, Blevins 2006). I will present a few illustrative cases of mutual constraints and of selection, with a view to highlighting any aspects of analysis which specifically follow from a declarative approach.