

Principles and Parameters in Natural Language
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Lecture - 14
Sentence: An Introduction

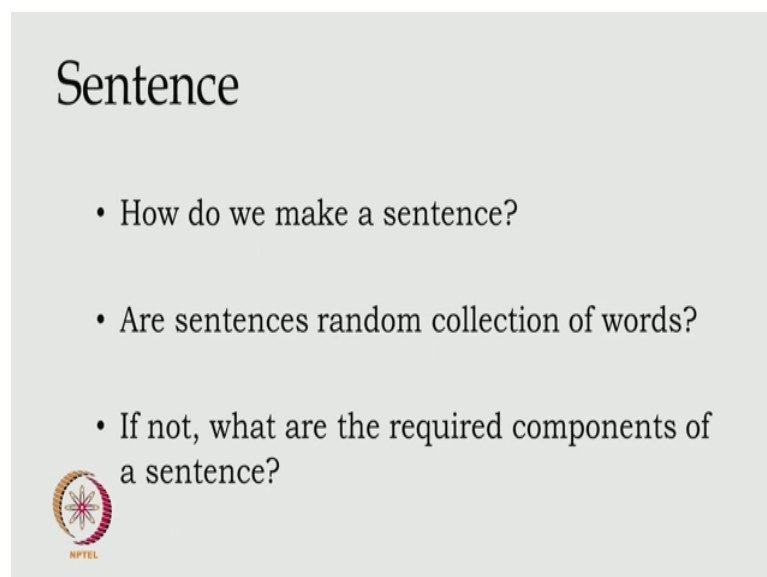
Now we want to move to Sentences. And we are trying to look at the underlying patterns as well as now we are moving little bit ahead of only patterns. We want to see what are those factors responsible for these underlying patterns and again you may be familiar with these terms, but when we see how they collectively work together to give us a sentence this is what we are going to see.

So, in our initial discussions we have talked about a sentence little bit. Remember, what is the most important thing for a sentence?

Student: You should have verb.


A verb right the most important part of a sentence is a verb. So, that is going to play several kinds of roles in a sentence and we will see that as well. So, these are the things.

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Sentence

- How do we make a sentence?
- Are sentences random collection of words?
- If not, what are the required components of a sentence?



These are the questions we are going to look at how do we make a sentence right of course, sentences are not merely random collection of words, we put several words


together they are not going to become a sentence right and then if that is not the case then what are the things that are responsible for sentences, these are the things that we will look at. When we say things responsible for making sentences clearly such things are not categorically visible right away you can see them, but they are not categorically visible right away some of them are hidden ok.

Once we are familiar with such elements then we will move to patterns and more patterns of a sentence and then to principles that govern sentence formation and then eventually language of the word. So, let us look at these two sentences from Hindi in simple terms, they are pretty simple sentences do they look simple.

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Agreement

1. raajuu ne caay pii
Raju-**M** erg tea-**F** drank-**F**
'Raju drank tea.'
2. siimaa ne seb khaaye
Sima-**F** ERG apple-**M-Pl** ate-**M-Pl**
'Sima ate apples.'

 Features (ϕ)= **Person, Number, and Gender**

You can read them right the one of the points that I want to draw your attention to which goes without saying as you can see listed here; however, I do want to mention it specifically for you. Anytime we are writing or we are going to talk about a sentence which comes from languages other than English, we are going to have to give sentence in this particular way ok.

So, first we write the whole sentence and then in there in the writing of a sentence what we do is we do not write in a way we want to we try to put things in a way. So, that people can get maximum idea about. In earlier days and the convention is still relevant people will use symbols of international phonetic association and those symbols will help you read the sentences the way they are supposed to be read or a spoken. Some of

those symbols are difficult and some of those symbols have been simplified, but nonetheless for the simplicity of this class what the convention that I am using is at least try to distinguish sounds few sounds ok.

So, you see how I have written Raju what does this tell you, the way it is written how does it tell you what does it tell you that after the sound [FL] the vowel is.

Student: Long vowel.

Long vowel see that and then after the sound [FL] the vowel [FL] is a long vowel right. So, it is Raju; similarly when we say [FL] right we are not putting the aspiration mark here that is h, that is because the moment we put that in a phonetic symbol that becomes what does that become with less aspiration it a [FL] or no aspiration it is [FL] with the aspiration it becomes .

Student: [FL].

[FL] right. So, we do not want to say a sound with more aspiration therefore, that is not there, but again there is a long vowel you see that therefore, these things are written this way. So, the sentence from a particular language is written with usually with international phonetic association symbol, but in general trying to simplify it as close as actual pronunciation all right that is number 1. Number 2 in the second line you try to give it is glosses that is what we call gloss; gloss simply means word by word description of what that is.

So, it is not gloss does not only include meaning of the word, it also includes several other things as you can see here and relevant information that we want to put forward that we want people's attention to. So, such information we put there and then finally, in the third line we give the meaning of the word. If you put sentences from languages other than English this way then we do not really need to know the language that we are talking about. If we are drawing examples from a particular language that is not really relevant what is relevant is the point that we are making through such examples all right and you can you can apply these points to many languages some of them are applicable to all languages and I keep telling you time to time, whether something is languages specific or generic or a principle which is applicable to all the languages right.

So, I have picked up examples from Hindi, when we talk about this particular aspect of language which is agreement, and then you will see lot of it applies to other languages. In a exam or in other places you are free to write examples from any language, you do not have to write examples from Hindi or any particular language you can write examples from any language provided you give you present it in this way. So, that anybody who is reading the example for making the point does not have a problem seeing the point see that is all is relevant note for this kind of a for these examples get my point alright.

Now; So, let us look at this thing when we when we say agreement what does this mean to you without discussing it much the word agreement means.

Student: Mutual consent.

Mutual.

Student: Consent.

Consent that is right; so the word means mutual consent the moment it is mutual it has to be between at least.

Student: Two parties.

Two parties or two entities right it works exactly this way in sentences as well right and therefore, most of the time agreement in a sentence is referred to as subject verb agreement have you heard this thing? Subject verb agreement which simply means there is going to be an agreement between subject and the verb get this point then agreement of what or in what terms agreement in what terms.

Student: Gender.

It now things start becoming different; in some languages agreement depends on just one particular thing or in others it may be 2 3 or more all right. So, here from here on things start becoming different. Agreement is a fundamental principle of language we cannot have a sentence without agreement between certain elements in a sentence and those elements normally are subjects and the verbs ok.

Now, we are defining what is subject is right now; however, that is a complete discussion by itself right and when we start discussing that one of these days we will look at that as a side thing the more you try to constrain to the definition of a subject, the more counter examples you are going to find of that ok.

So, right now though all we want to say about a subject is the element of a sentence that agrees with the verb is a subject. You may have heard different things and I take you to those things little later that is some other time, but right now we are only going to say the subject of a sentence is the element in a sentence, which agrees with the verb all right that is a working definition that is a grammatical definition of a subject. There could be different types of definition of a subject depending upon what we want to highlight all right most of the time they are all going to come to the same element; however, sometimes they could be different all right.

Now, let me let me take you through these examples, I am sure many of you understand these two sentences must have looked at it by now and this do you agree that these are these are simple sentences of Hindi. So, what are the elements that are in agreement with each other; as a matter of fact when I am asking you are they the simple sentences of Hindi many of you are nodding your heads right as a matter of fact they are not simple sentences of Hindi. How many I have asked this question several times how many of you speak Hindi 1 2 3 4 each one of you individually or collectively can you tell me the meaning of the second word in this in the first sentence what is the second word in the first sentence.

Student: (Refer Time: 13:39) [FL].

[FL]. So, the sentence is [FL] we understand meaning even those who do not speak Hindi as their first language or second language, they can figure out the meaning and definitely from this screen right, but if I ask you what is the meaning of [FL] what does this word mean can someone tell me, what I mean is what the meaning of the word [FL]

Student: Tea.

Very simple no problem no objection what is the meaning of the word [FL].

Student: Meaning (Refer Time: 14:16) by Raju.

By Raju what is by Raju it is a we are saying Raju [FL].

Student: (Refer Time: 14:24).

That is Raju had tea drank tea what is by Raju in that.

Student: Means Raju is a person who drank the tea (Refer Time: 14:34) it does not have a true translations.

It does not have a true translation. So, what the question is you are your right it does not have a true translation what you are trying to do is trying to put it equivalent to something which it is not.

Student: By Raju.

It is not by Raju, it is not it is not anything which you saying then it does not have a literal meaning. So, right away this is what I meant when I told you these are not simple sentences of Hindi, you are going to find elements in a sentence which have got no meanings for example, we can also say Raju [FL] right what is the meaning of this sentence Raju [FL].

Student: Drinks Raju (Refer Time: 15:23).

Raju drinks tea.

Student: Drinks tea.

Right where is the [FL] in the sentence, do you see that it is not there and still the meaning is Raju drinks; Raju drinks tea it has a different meaning slightly different meaning, but where is the word [FL] and this is this question is definitely not for primarily not for people who do not speak Hindi, and it is not really a question question for Hindi speakers also this is just for everybody to see that there are going to be elements in a sentence which do not have their literal meanings and this is why I am giving you this example.

It however, it does something in a sentence, the second example that I just give you Raju [FL] do we need that element in that sentence what I mean do we need that element in that sentence what I mean is we do not if that element is not there in a sentence the

sentence is a still grammatical perfectly good sentence. Therefore, we do not need it. However, if I drop it from sentence number 1 is this going to be a good sentence for the speakers no we say Raju [FL] can we cannot say that or if someone says so.

Student: Meaning change.

It is even if meaning does not change we can say Raju [FL] right it is going to be a marked sentence you understand the meaning of marked no. The meaning of marked is it is not going to be the way this way many Hindi speakers would say. In other words if you say sentence like Raju [FL] instead of saying Raju [FL] Hindi speakers know that you are not a you can speak, but you are not a Hindi speaker there are elements of that type in every language right and on the basis of such things, the moment a person starts saying something.

You immediately figure out that this person is not a real or a good speaker of this language, I from now onwards I can spend 15 years running Telugu or Tamil or Malayalam, even at the end of 15 years you can tell that you started pretty late. I am right you must be meeting with people of that sort every day. However, those who are those who grew up with language Tamil, Telugu or for that matter Hindi, they do not need to tell you the meaning of this word [FL], but they know pretty well where to put it and where not to put it without worrying about it that is what makes us makes us speaker of that language in other words native speaker of that language and the language becomes our first language we have already discussed these things at length right coming back to this thing [FL] does not have a meaning, do you see I have marked it something there is something written under it.

Student: (Refer Time: 18:45).

That is simply a marker for it simply means ergative; it is name of a case which is not very important for with the name is not really very important for you; however, it is important to know all right it simply means ergative case marker. Now I want to draw your attention to agreement what is going on with the agreement, most of the time the elements that are going to take part in agreement are called phi features. I did not find a better symbol of phi, but this looks pretty much close to that I am a right.

So, we call them either with a symbol or we just write them we call them phi features it is just a fancy name, it simply means number person and gender by the way have you heard these words number person gender? So, quickly reviewing that number is we were talking about it yesterday.

Student: (Refer Time: 19:53).

With reference to words numbers are singular and plural singular means.

Student: One.

Singular means one plural.

Student: (Refer Time: 20:06) two word.

More than one more than one in some languages we have three numbers singular dual and then plural. So, 1 2 and then more than 2 all right, but in a in a language like Hindi and most of our languages follow just two way system singular and plural one and more than one all right gender only two either masculine or feminine; however, again some languages namely Sanskrit would follow singular sorry.

Student: (Refer Time: 20:45).

Masculine, feminine and neuter; in a language like Hindi and many other languages there is no role of neuter gender every single noun must be either masculine or feminine see that alright and then person what does this refer to.

Student: First (Refer Time: 21:10) person.

Very nice first person second person, and.

Student: Third.

Third person this is going to be three of them. Now Sanskrit if you look at Sanskrit it has everything; three first person, second person, third person singular dual plural masculine feminine neuter everything three in languages that we are talking about number and gender to each person three first second and third what do they refer to first person refers to?

Student: (Refer Time: 21:40).

Anybody the one.

Student: Speaker.

Who is speaking? So if and second.

Student: The person one who is listening (Refer Time: 21:49).

Person, who is being a spoken to very nice and third.

Student: Anyone accept these two.

Anywhere accept these two yes and specifically the one who is being talked about right it could be it could also be the person who is not being talked about yes anyone other than these two. These things play very important role in agreement, and what the agreement means the in simple words we are going to say whatever is the verb what whatever things that you see on the verb, you are going to see similar things on subject or the other way around. Whatever things you are going to see on singular on subject they are going to reflect on verb.

So, languages can decide that we want to retain agreement between only two of these elements or it can decide we want to keep all three of them, which two that also could be languages specific right, but they are going to show up agreement in these terms only.

Student: (Refer Time: 23:06) does not agreement also depend on the tense and also whether it is an actual voice or passive voice.

No tense and such other things do play a role in a sentence, but that then they do not take part in agreement. The reason for that is see agreement means if you have a singular noun then we are going to have a singular marker on the verb also. See my point; if you are going to see masculine gender on the subject you are going to see masculine gender on the verb also alright; however, tense is not part of that because tense is only the feature of a verb, tense only shows up on the verb it has nothing to do with the subject therefore, it is not part of agreement. Remember we started talking about this agreement means some kind of settlement between two entities right some type some type of

adjustment between two entities tense is only related to verb has got nothing to do with subject therefore, that is not part of.

Student: (Refer Time: 24:26) verb also give change it way.

If gender is playing the role in the language then they must be same.

Student: (Refer Time: 24:39) because sentence.

I am coming to those things in a moment take the sentence Raju [FL].

Student: (Refer Time: 24:45).

Can we say Raju [FL] what is wrong with that sentence.

Student: He speak (Refer Time: 24:49).

The it for a for anybody or for speakers of Hindi in particular, it takes less than fraction of a second to give judgment about it that the sentence is not good right. This comes from knowledge of language, the ability to make such a judgment is part of our ability what we call knowledge of language that every speaker has developed through generative mechanism remember this thing. This is reference to knowledge of language which also means a native is speaker or a speaker of that language may not be able to tell you about masculine and feminine mismatch.

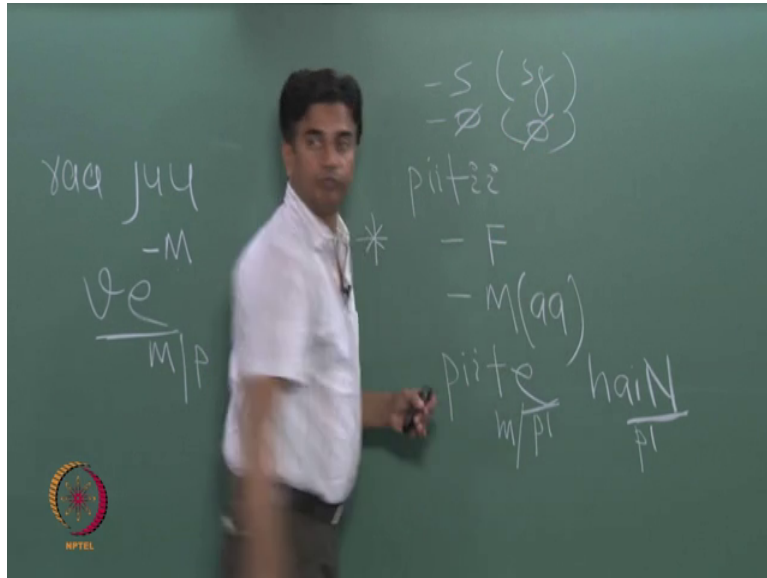
They do not even need to tell you that much you can say or I can tell you, because we are talking about this thing you use a sentence to a speaker judgment is given in a moment not necessarily the explanation. See my point, therefore it is more the reason that it is part of what we call knowledge of language because this is the characteristics of knowledge of language that such kind of things we know, but we do not necessarily need to put them in explicit words.

So, Raju [FL] is not a good sentence because there is a mismatch between gender between subject and.

Student: Verb

The verb therefore, that is ungrammatical get this thing. So, for them for that sentence to be grammatical, there has to be a proper agreement in terms of what do you have that sentence written with you.

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Can you can you write this terms, I see some people are not even carrying note books. So, here we know that this is masculine right and this comes also from native intuition and here we know that this is feminine right therefore, this is roll out what will be important the what will make it grammatical is because this is masculine, if we have this thing also as masculine which is sometimes marked with this right then we know this that the sentence is going to be grammatical.

So, we see clearly that the gender is playing a role in language like Hindi all right is number playing a role.

Student: Yes.

Yes right, suppose we are saying two people right let us say let us use something which either refers to two people or more than two people right we can put two names here or we can use a pronoun right what will be the marker on the word can we say [FL].

Student: (Refer Time: 28:41).

We have to say [FL] right and [FL] all right now this is going to be a marker of plurality right and this is this also carries plurality, because we cannot even say [FL] it must be [FL].

Student: [FL].

[FL] do I have everybody with me? I hope I have not lost people so far right now in the second one we see that both number and gender are at work right. So, far we know that this is masculine right. So, plural masculine and then plural therefore, you see masculine and plural get this thing? Now if you take it to English just these two sentences what are the things out of these that are at work do gender play a role in that no.

Student: (Refer Time: 30:21).

Does number play a role in that?

Student: No.

No we can say Raju drinks tea, if we want to use the plural one they.

Student: Drank (Refer Time: 30:37).

What do we say?

Student: Drink (Refer Time: 30:41).

Drink tea can we say they drinks tea why can we not say they drinks tea.

Student: They are not a (Refer Time: 30:48).

Because this is violating agreement of number, they plural and there is no plural marker on the verb therefore, there is a violation of agreement thus the sentence ungrammatical. Now how a language reflects singular and plural are going to be language specific thing get my point, how a language reflects plural is going to be language specific. in a language like Hindi you see this is the marker of plurality, remember you have seen the same marker on nouns yesterday [FL] is singular what is the plural of [FL] and what is the plural marker.

Student: (Refer Time: 31:37).

Is this similar to that so that is the plural, then it does not stop here there is this also must be plural and I am not taking you through every single thing and how it works because we are not working on Hindi, we want to see the role of number at work. So, how number is at work this is Hindi is specific thing same thing number will be reflected in different terms in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and other languages. English has a completely different system which is if you put this marker on the verb then it refers to singular number right when we put when and for plural.

So, this this is going to be singular and for plural it 0 no marker. Raju drinks tea they drink tea no marker on the verb this much making sense get the point. How a language is representing it is markers is language specific thing; however, these things are going to be surfacing in one way or the other is part of principle. Again agreement is a principle phenomena in language we cannot have a sentence without proper agreement.

Now, what makes it proper that is which one of these elements are going to take part in agreement is again parametric which is language specific making sense. Now this is why the role of input in learning language is relevant. Now do you see the patches of these rules we have here the rules of English too we have here rules of Hindi too we have here rules of all the languages that we speak right.

Now, if input is not there then which rule is this going to activate see that therefore, the role of input in speaking what we speak am I making the point you are still with me very nice. So, that is all I have said so, for all I am I have said I have told you what we mean by phi features that is number person and gender and how they work. Agreement as a word as a phenomena is very simple, it is between two elements and both must match there must not be a mismatch. If gender is part of the agreement then both of them must match mismatch results into ungrammaticality.

So, matching is part of agreement if a language does not allow a agreement in terms of let us say gender, then there is no role of gender in no role of gender in the grammar of that language. Remember this thing in the grammar of that language for example, in a language like English, we cannot say there is no role of gender right we can say john drinks tea right girls drink tea, there is a role of gender. However, the role of gender is not on the agreement the role of that is to say the role of the gender is not in the grammar of that language in the agreement of that language clear.

Now, we come to these sentences, what do you see here in these sentences. First of all at least the speakers of Hindi agree that both the sentences are good are they good what do you see about agreement which noun agrees with the verb in sentence one.

Student: [FL].

[FL] agrees with the verb right and what is not agreeing with the verb is what we think is subject clear in the second one.

Student: We see.

We see the same phenomena right what can we say about this.

Student: So, the subject must be [FL] instead of that.

In that case the one of the conclusions that, we can draw is if this is true and if what we know about agreement is true then Raju or Seema are not subjects of these sentences right. So, what we what and what we wanted to say through those sentences is that is true that is to say Raju and Seema in sentence 1 and 2 respectively are not subjects. you may see or you may think is that really true right should I really completely believe it well we must on the basis of what we see so far.

Student: Sir what happens if Raju and Seema (Refer Time: 37:56) from the two sentences.

Try try doing that.

Student: (Refer Time: 37:59).

And I have purposely picked these two names in these two sentences, to make my point for the purpose of sentence nothing changes do you do you understand his question; what he is saying a very smart move that if we put Seema in the first one that is going to be feminine noun and we have the feminine gender on the verb also. Therefore, we can very conveniently show that there is an agreement between the two, that will be kind of cheating right and by cheating I do not mean real cheating, but that will be kind of cheating, because we know that that is not the case even if you do that though it will be harder to see, but the fact is that that does not agree with the verb what agrees with the verb is the other noun, and this is why this kind of mismatch and that is the only way to

show that the two nouns that we think are going to be subjects are not really subjects in these sentences right.

So, according to the grammatical definition of subject these are not the subjects. According to semantic description of subject the semantic description of subject is that is meaning wise some you must have been told or you must have read the noun that does something is the subject am I right have you heard this thing or have you been told. So, in that case who is drinking tea? Therefore, that is going to be the subject.

So, semantically is speaking these things are the subjects, but when we say subject in languages, we mean grammatical subjects and that is not the case. What we mean by subjects is the element that agrees with the verb, and what agrees with the verb you can see here and you can you can categorically see these are two pretty simple Hindi sentences and I could not possibly be making things up am I.

Student: Are all liquids considered as feminine (Refer Time: 40:20).

Sorry.

Student: (Refer Time: 40:21) in Hindi considered as feminine.

No.

Student: (Refer Time: 40:23).

I do not know we will need to check are all liquids considered feminine I do not know. I will need to think at least on the basis of the ten examples and still that is not going to be exhaustive list. For the simple reason that gender to a noun is not assigned in that particular way the assignment of gender to a noun is completely arbitrary, which is even if that is the case is arbitrary there is no reason why [FL] should be feminine.

Student: Water (Refer Time: 41:10) is masculine.

Water is masculine.

Student: (Refer Time: 41:11).

Yes thanks water is masculine.

Student: Suppose there could [FL] there [FL] is wrong.

That will be that will not be good am I right that will not be a good sentence Raju [FL].

Student: (Refer Time: 41:27).

What will be the sentence?

Student: [FL].

[FL] that way you categorically know that what agrees with the verb is that is the noun in that slot right. Now why and how these are questions of further discussions very briefly I can tell you every time you get something like [FL] or any other post position if I say the word post position does it make sense to you yes.

Student: (Refer Time: 42:00).

No I will describe that in all our languages right do you know what is a preposition is, can you give me one some examples of prepositions.

Student: On at.

On at.

Student: (Refer Time: 42:15).

In.

Student: In upon.

Upon these are prepositions why are the prepositions.

Student: (Refer Time: 42:25) depend a relative position of.

To what relative to what.

Student: (Refer Time: 42:28) object, but after (Refer Time: 42:29).

Both of you are right relative positions to their objects their objects and the object of a preposition is definitely a noun or you can say the same thing in other words bear with me I am talking about pretty simple things, but probably I do not intend to make this

claim, but probably you are looking at this description for the first time. There is nothing new about the definition of this preposition such elements are called prepositions because their relative position is prior to their objects. In the languages where such elements are going to come after the object they are called post positions see that how do you say on the table in a language like Hindi or Telugu for that matter.

Student: (Refer Time: 43:25).

See that.

Student: (Refer Time: 43:26).

So, the same thing is going to follow the noun which happens to be the object of the same element. Now in Hindi it is called [FL] in English it is in see this thing. Now availability of post positions is a universal feature of language is part of principle whether it is going to be a preposition in some languages like English and French right or whether it is going to be a preposition in English French and others or post positions in language like Hindi, Italian, Japanese and rest of our languages is language a specific rule is parametric.

So, every time you see a post position in a language like Hindi after a noun that noun is not going to agree with the verb. Every time there is a noun and you see a post position after that that noun is not going to agree with the verb. Many a times such nouns may not need to agree, but if they are supposed to agree with the verb then then also it is not going to agree. It is a very robust and a strict rule strict language specific rule that the moment you have a post position out of agreement what agrees with the verb, but the other rule.

So, this is language specific rule the moment you have a post position that noun is out of the race of agreement, but then there is another robust rule which is more robust in the nature that is part of a principle that there must be agreement you see the tension you see the contradiction; that in a sentence number one and two what we think is subject is out of the agreement because they have post positions. The rule is another, rule is there must be an agreement because without agreement you do not have a sentence am I at least able to show you the contradiction between these two rules.

Student: (Refer Time: 45:55) reason why Raju [FL] (Refer Time: 45:56).

Exactly Raju [FL] make sense because the moment some a speakers drop [FL] then there is no nothing that blocks Raju from agreeing with the verb; however, not good they may sound for Hindi speaker they may tell you no this this is not really a very good sentence.

Student: (Refer Time: 46:22) is it wrong.

No it is hard to say wrong or right for that I need to start Hindi to tell you all the rules of this I know it is very fascinating.

Student: But grammatically (Refer Time: 46:32).

Grammatically there is nothing wrong with it is simply that the speakers of that language will not accept it and we respect the speakers of the language, if they do not accept it then we do not say we do not accept that also fine, but there is nothing wrong grammatically and now you also know why. They are just dropping [FL] right and see when you look at the interface of psychology and learning and gram grammar then you can explain why people drop that, because this does not mean anything I have I started by telling you this does not have a literal meaning right if at all it does anything it complicates the whole situation.

So, for a from the perspective of a learner, it becomes lot easier to.

Student: Drop.

Drop it and then work in a nice way Raju and [FL] and everything is fine right that is just a explanation with the interface of learning, grammar and psychology all right. So, and grammaticality can also be explained in a nice way; however, speakers of Hindi will tell you no that is not the right way, you have to say Raju [FL] even though it does not mean anything by when I say does not mean anything even though [FL] does not have a meaning, what it does is and there are more reasons why [FL] can a come and why [FL] in some cases cannot come what are the conditions on that, that is a matter of another discussion. Here all I am trying to show you through these examples is there is a contradiction, languages specific rules says these subjects by the virtue of post position following them cannot agree with a subject they obey that rule as you can see. They are obeying that rule; however, they also must obey the rule that there must be an agreement.

So, the compromise formula there they arrived at is the next available noun, which does not have a post position will agree with the verb see this thing there, thus they follow both the rules because without following these things you do not have a sentence, all these things make no additional burden on human mind.

So, we have discussed these two things today we need to go to other things and we will try to go little faster we have discussed only two things agreement and phi features and the role of phi features in agreement. I am sure while discussing, while we are talking about these things you are also looking at the languages that you speak and see how these things are working in these languages right. We continue with this with more examples and more discussion on such other stuff.

Student: (Refer Time: 49:54).

Tomorrow all right we meet tomorrow at our time.

Thank you.