Transitive Agreement?

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The picture of syntactic displacement in the MP goes as follows:

- A head $\alpha$ bearing an edge feature ($\varepsilon$) and a feature [$\phi$] capable of undergoing agreement probes its c-command domain for a [$\phi$]-bearing $\beta$ (1a).
- On finding $\beta$, $\alpha$ agrees with it on [$\phi$], activates its edge feature and raises $\beta$ to its Spec (1b).
- The probe-goal relation respects Minimality; $\alpha$ cannot probe $\gamma$ “past” an intervening $\beta$ that is an actual/potential [$\phi$]-bearer (1c):

\begin{align*}
(1) & \quad \text{a. } [a_P \alpha \ldots [\ldots \beta \ldots]] \\
& \quad [\varepsilon, \phi] \rightarrow \text{probes } \rightarrow [\phi] \\
& \quad \text{b. } [a_P \beta \alpha \ldots [\ldots \beta \ldots]] \\
& \quad \quad \text{c. } [a_P \alpha \ldots [\ldots \beta \ldots [\ldots \gamma \ldots]]] \\
& \quad \quad \quad [\phi] \rightarrow \text{probes } \rightarrow [\phi]
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
(2) & \quad \text{a. } [c_P C \ldots [\ldots \beta \ldots [\ldots \gamma \ldots]]] \\
& \quad [\phi] \rightarrow \text{probes } \rightarrow [\phi] \\
& \quad \quad \text{b. } \text{Who } \text{____ saw what?} \\
& \quad \quad \text{c. } *\text{What} \text{ did who see } \text{___ ?}
\end{align*}

Although this picture neatly explains Superiority, it plainly will raise questions for any displacement purporting to cross one phrase over another of the same type:

\begin{align*}
(3) & \quad [a_P \gamma \alpha \ldots [\ldots \beta \ldots [\ldots \gamma \ldots]]] \\
& \quad \quad \text{??}
\end{align*}

In this talk I:

- Review potential cases of the problematic type, both in the clause nucleus (vp/VP) and in the left periphery (CP).
- Explore a possibility for establishing agreement relations between $\alpha$ and $\beta$ in (1c) that doesn’t involve a direct probe-goal relation, viz., by transitivity via a moving head.
- Explore a potential consequence of this picture for the left periphery.