Cross-linguistic evidence shows that speakers sometimes agree a verb with an ‘attractor’ that is not its subject, even when the subject is adjacent to the verb, as in object relative clauses (e.g., *John speaks to the patients that the doctor cure). Such attraction errors are typically observed when the subject and the attractor mismatch in number or gender. However, recent evidence from our lab shows that sentence comprehension is actually facilitated when these two elements mismatch. I will suggest that the key factor underlying these effects is the similarity between the subject and other elements in the sentence, which penalizes the process of structure building/sentence encoding in memory. I will then review additional evidence for the role of similarity in sentence comprehension in other populations (children) and in other structures (weak islands). Since similarity-based interference is the signature of memory systems, I will end with a recent study we conducted showing that modulations of attraction due to the structural position of the attractor (c-command vs. precedence) fully align with variations in parameters of memory retrieval (accessibility and dynamics), leading to the tentative conclusion that syntactic theory is, in fact, a theory of memory.