0. Prologue

THE BIG QUESTION:

• How does grammar select the subset of well-formed/grammatical/acceptable utterances from among the set of all possible utterances?
  • APPROACH #1:
    the grammar is able to generate all manner of structures, both well-formed and ill-formed; a set of late-applying filters serve to “separate the wheat from the chaff”
    – we could refer to these filters, for example, as interface conditions
    CALL THIS: **Filtration**.
  • APPROACH #2:
    what the grammar provides is a ‘recipe’ that is guaranteed (modulo the particular lexical items chosen) to produce a grammatical utterance
    – in other words, the sequence of operations applicable at every stage of the derivation always generates a well-formed structure in the end
    – ill-formedness arises only when:
      (i) an unavailable operation is applied anyway; or
      (ii) an obligatory operation is not applied
    CALL THIS: **Strict Generativity**.

• Historically, the debate between **Filtration** and **Strict Generativity** has been waged mostly on conceptual grounds (e.g. **Strict Generativity** is more computationally efficient, **Filtration** can be interface-driven) . . .
  • see also the “Global Rules” debate of Lakoff (1970, 1972) and Baker & Brame (1972); and more recently, Frampton & Gutmann (2002, 2006)
    (as well as the closely related debate between “representationalism” and “derivationalism”; Brody 1995, Hornstein 1998, a.o.)
  . . . with **Filtration** usually winning out (e.g. Chomsky & Lasnik 1977, Chomsky 2000 et seq.)

❖ TODAY: An empirical argument in favor of **Strict Generativity** in accounting for the obligatory nature of agreement

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THE EMPIRICAL DOMAIN FOR TODAY’S TALK: ϕ-agreement in Kichean

- **Kichean**: a branch of Mayan languages spoken in Guatemala
  - includes the languages Kaqchikel, K’iche’, Tz’utujil, and Achi’
  - approx. 2.8 million speakers in total

Some terminological housekeeping —
- I use the term ϕ-agreement to refer to morpho-phonologically overt co-variance in ϕ-features between a predicate, or tense/aspect/mood marker, and an argument
  - where ϕ-features refers to the categories \{person, number, gender/noun-class (…)\}

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A BIT OF BACKGROUND: “UNINTERPRETABLE” $\varphi$-FEATURES —

Chomsky’s (2000, 2001) Filtration account for the obligatoriness of $\varphi$-agreement

(i) finite verbs carry “uninterpretable” $\varphi$-features (originating on finite T$^0$)
(ii) these “uninterpretable” $\varphi$-features cannot be part of a well-formed, end-of-the-derivation structure
   • they must be checked, deleted, or turned into “interpretable” $\varphi$-features (varies by implementation) — or else the result is a “crash”, yielding ungrammaticality
(iii) agreement between the finite verb and a nominal argument deletes/checks/etc. the “uninterpretable” $\varphi$-features on the finite verb

$\Rightarrow$ agreement is obligatory because it eliminates representational elements that would otherwise give rise to ungrammaticality

LET’S CALL REPRESENTATIONAL ELEMENTS OF THIS SORT: ‘derivational time-bombs’

The important point for our current purposes:
Chomsky’s “uninterpretable” $\varphi$-features account is Filtration model par excellence.

1. Outline
   □ $\varphi$-agreement in Kichean
      □ $\varphi$-agreement in the Agent-Focus construction: The data
      □ The traditional account: “salience” hierarchies/scales
      □ A probe-goal account of $\varphi$-agreement in Kichean Agent-Focus
   □ What this all means for Filtration theories of $\varphi$-agreement
   □ The conjoint/disjoint distinction and the distribution of nominal augment in Zulu

2. $\varphi$-agreement in Kichean
   (1) SOME BASELINE EXAMPLES OF VERBAL $\varphi$-AGREEMENT IN KICHEAN
       [All examples are in Kaqchikel and come from my own fieldwork, unless otherwise noted.]

      a. yïn x-in-uk’lun
         me PRFV-1sg.ABS-arrive
         ‘I arrived.’
      b. rïx y-in-îw-axa-j yïn
         y’all IMPF-1sg.ABS-2pl.ERG-hear-ACT me
         ‘Y’all are hearing me.’

      ◦ $\varphi$-agreement on the Kichean verb:
        separate markers for ERG (transitive subj.) and ABS (transitive obj./intransitive subj.)
We now turn to focalization in Kichean:

(2) ja ri wuj x-φ-u-tz’et ri achin
    FOC the book PRFV-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-see the man
    ‘It was the book that the man saw.’

- Unlike (2) (which is an instance of focalizing an ABS argument), focalizing an ERG argument requires altering the verb form²
  - and the most common way of doing so is by using the Agent-Focus suffix, as shown in (3):

(3) AN EXAMPLE OF THE AGENT-FOCUS CONSTRUCTION
    ja ri achin x-φ-tz’et-ö ri wuj
    FOC the man PRFV-3sg.ABS-3sg.AF the book
    ‘It was the man who saw the book.’

cf.: (4) * ja ri achin x-φ-u-tz’et ri wuj
    FOC the man PRFV-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-see the book
    Intended: ‘It was the man who saw the book.’

- in Kaqchikel, where most of the data in this talk comes from, the Agent-Focus suffix has two allomorphs: -ö and -n

Properties of the Agent-Focus (henceforth, AF) construction:

(i) while sometimes called the “focus antipassive”, AF is not an antipassive at all (Aissen 2011, Craig 1979, Smith-Stark 1978)
  - both Agent and Patient surface in AF as full-fledged, non-oblique DPs
    - i.e., neither argument is “demoted” in AF
  
  cf. actual obliques, which are realized in Kichean as possessors of relational nouns introduced by P⁰:

(5) Juan x-φ-u-ya’ ri wuj cha-w-a
    Juan COM-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-give the book PREP-2sg.GEN-RN
    ‘Juan gave the book to you(sg.).’

Nevertheless —

(ii) the verb in the AF construction carries only one agreement marker, taken from the “ABS series” (the morphemes that in regular transitives, co-vary with the object)

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²The need for the Agent-Focus suffix in (3) (and the ungrammaticality of (4)) is a property known as “syntactic ergativity”—a ban against targeting ergative arguments for A-bar operations (why-interrogatives, focalization, relativization, etc.)—which the Kichean languages share with many (but not all) other Mayan languages, as well as many (but not all) other ergative languages. The cause and nature of syntactic ergativity, while of great interest, is not the focus of this talk; see Weisser et al. (2012), Coon, Mateo Pedro & Preminger (2011), and Polinsky (2011), for competing approaches.

³Note that while clefts are used in the English glosses of examples like (2–3), the original Kichean sentences are decidedly mono-clausal; see below.
Given two non-oblique DPs, but only one agreement marker, how does the grammar choose which DP’s \( \phi \)-features will be morphologically expressed on the AF verb?

It turns out that in Kichean AF, the answer is more complicated than just “the subj.” or “the obj.”

2.1. \( \phi \)-agreement in the Agent-Focus construction: The data

(6) \([1,2]_{sg} > 3_{sg} \Rightarrow [1,2]_{sg}\)
ja rat x-\text{at/*}\text{-axa-n} ri achin FOC you PRFV-2_{sg}/*3_{sg}-hear-AF the man
‘It was you(sg.) that heard the man.’

(7) \(3_{sg} > [1,2]_{sg} \Rightarrow [1,2]_{sg}\)
ja ri achin x-at/*\text{-axa-n} rat FOC the man PRFV-2_{sg}/*3_{sg}-hear-AF you
‘It was the man that heard you(sg.).’

(8) \(3_{pl} > 3_{sg} \Rightarrow 3_{pl}\)
ja rje’ x-e/*\text{-tz’et-ö} rja’ FOC them PRFV-3_{pl}/*3_{sg}-see-AF him
‘It was them who saw them.’

(9) \(3_{sg} > 3_{pl} \Rightarrow 3_{pl}\)
ja rje’ x-\text{-tz’et-ö} rje’ FOC him PRFV-3_{pl}/*3_{sg}-see-AF them
‘It was him who saw them.’

(10) \(3_{pl} > [1,2]_{sg} \Rightarrow [1,2]_{sg}\)
a. ja rje’ x-i-tz’et-ö yin FOC them PRFV-1_{sg}-see-AF me
‘It was them who saw me.’
b. * ja rje’ x-oj/*\text{-tz’et-ö} yin FOC them PRFV-1_{pl}/3_{sg}/3_{pl}-see-AF me

\(\text{– 5 –}\)
(17) **AF PERSON RESTRICTION**
In the Agent-Focus construction in Kichean, at most one of the two core arguments can be 1st/2nd-person.


- There is no counterpart to the AF person restriction in the domain of [number] (no “AF plural restriction”); two plurals can co-occur freely in AF:

(18) ja rje’ x-oj-tz’et-ö röj
FOC them PRFV-1pl.ABS-see-AF us
‘It was them who saw us.’

- In an example like (18), we find only one agreement marker, corresponding to 1st-person plural
  - this, even though there exists a putative overt agreement morpheme (of the correct series, ABS) that would correspond to the 3rd-person plural Agent rje’
    - namely, -e- (cf. (8–9), above)
  - but *x-oj-e(’)-tz’et-ö and *x-e(’)-oj-tz’et-ö are both impossible forms

2.2. The traditional account: “salience” hierarchies/scales

- Descriptively, the choice of agreement target in AF can be said to follow a disjunctive hierarchy:

(19) 1st/2nd \(\gg\) 3rd-plural (\(\gg\) 3rd-singular)


- The scale in (19) has been taken by some to be a theoretical primitive
  - some have gone a step further, taking (19) to be a reflection of cognitive salience
    - e.g. Stiebels (2006)

- Conceptual arguments aside, there are empirical reasons to be skeptical of such an approach to these Kichean facts
(i) If cognitive salience is what’s at issue, why would it surface nowhere else in the language but in the AF construction?
- the AF construction is characterized by a particularly rigid information structure (as its name, Agent-Focus, makes clear)
⇒ why would such rigid information structure give rise to this flexibility of “salience” for agreement purposes, when regular transitives do not?

(ii) K’ichee’ (a relative of Kaqchikel, which exhibits the same behavior under AF) provides further evidence militating against an account based on cognitive salience:

“[K’ichee’] has developed a 2nd person formal pronoun, which does not behave as a 2nd person with respect to the salience hierarchy, i.e. it does not outrank 3rd person.”
2emStiebels (2006:526, fn. 13)
⇒ we have a dissociation between the formal properties of a given pronoun (in this case, 3rd-person) and the cognitive properties of that pronoun (in this case, 2nd-person) — and the formal properties win
- the claim is not that there is no recourse for the cognitive approach, here (e.g. “speakers conceive of polite speech as if it were referring to an absent individual”);
  ◦ the point is this: the one differentiating prediction that an account based on cognitive salience could make in opposition to a formal account is not, in fact, borne out

NB: Unlike (i)–(ii), issues (iii)–(iv) persist even if we abandon the view that (19) refers to cognitive salience per se, and view it as a purely formal device.

(iii) Recall the AF person restriction, repeated here:

(20) In the Agent-Focus construction in Kichean, at most one of the two core arguments can be 1st/2nd-person.
[=(17)]
- there is nothing about a hierarchy like (19) that predicts that two arguments with high “salience” would not be able to co-occur
- indeed, some languages and constructions that exhibit behavior that is superficially very similar to (19), do not have a restriction along the lines of (20)
  ◦ cf. main verb agreement in Algonquian, for example

(iv) Most importantly, this approach fails to capture an emergent generalization regarding the actual morpho-phonological forms of the agreement markers
- By its very nature, a salience scale/hierarchy is made to factor out the choice of agreement target; it is an algorithm designed to:
  ◦ take as its INPUT: the inventory of arguments in a given clause
  ◦ return as its OUTPUT: which one will be targeted for φ-agreement
• Crucially, it is not the case that $\varphi$-agreement in Kichean AF is a uniform process but for the choice of agreement target:

$$
\text{strong pronoun} \quad | \quad 1sg \quad | \quad 1pl \quad | \quad 2sg \quad | \quad 2pl \quad | \quad 3sg \quad | \quad 3pl \\
\text{ABS agr.-marker} \quad | \quad -i(n)\text{-} \quad | \quad -o\text{j-} \quad | \quad -a(t)\text{-} \quad | \quad -i\text{x-} \quad | \quad -\varphi\text{-} \quad | \quad -e\text{-} \\
$$

(Kaqchikel)

**Note:** the segment [j] is a voiceless fricative, not a glide

- 1st/2nd-person agreement markers (both sg. and pl.) are essentially truncated versions of the corresponding strong pronouns:

  $\text{agreement marker} = \text{strong pronoun} – \text{initial approximant}$

- but this correspondence fails in the case of 3rd-singular/3rd-plural markers

⇒ an approach that factors out the choice of agreement target from the actual agreement process cannot account for this diverging behavior

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**Outline**

- $\varphi$-agreement in Kichean
  - $\varphi$-agreement in the Agent-Focus construction: The data
  - The traditional account: “salience” hierarchies/scales
  - A probe-goal account of $\varphi$-agreement in Kichean Agent-Focus
  - What this all means for *Filtration* theories of $\varphi$-agreement
  - The conjoint/disjoint distinction and the distribution of nominal augment in Zulu

2.3. A probe-goal account of $\varphi$-agreement in Kichean Agent-Focus

Ingredients: (all argued for independently of Kichean, or even Mayan in general)

(i) probing for PERSON and NUMBER occurs in separate derivation steps


- with PERSON probing first (*pace* Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008)

(ii) clitics are, quite literally, reduced pronouns

(following Cardinaletti & Starke 1999)

(iii) clitic-doubling is a parametrized reflex of a DP being probed by particular $\varphi$-probes

(Béjar & Rezac 2003, Kramer 2011, a.o.)

- in particular, whether probing of a DP by a head $H^0$ results in clitic-doubling of that DP—or merely, in valuation—depends on EPP-like features of the head itself
(iv) the space of \( \varphi \)-features is composed of privative features like [participant], [author], [plural] (Béjar & Rezac 2009, Harley & Ritter 2002, McGinnis 2005)

- singular noun-phrases are not specified for [plural] with a negative value (i.e., ‘−’); they simply lack that feature altogether
- similarly for [participant]: 1st/2nd-person pronouns carry this feature; all other noun-phrases simply lack it altogether

a somewhat simplified \( \varphi \)-feature geometry (Harley & Ritter 2002, McGinnis 2005):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\varphi \\
\downarrow \\
[\text{PERSON}] \\
\downarrow \\
[\text{participant}] \\
\downarrow \\
[\text{author}]
\end{array}
\quad
\begin{array}{c}
\downarrow \\
[\text{NUMBER}] \\
\downarrow \\
[\text{plural}]
\end{array}
\]
(23) **Basic Clause Structure in Kichean AF**

![Diagram of basic clause structure in Kichean AF]

- If \( \pi^0 \) seeks bearers of \([participant]\), then by *Relativized Minimality* (Rizzi 1990), it follows that \( \pi^0 \) will **skip** any DP not bearing that feature
  - **just like a probe seeking bearers of \([+wh]\) skips any DP not bearing \([+wh]\)**
  - **this is not new observation, by any means; it is merely Relativized Minimality** (Rizzi 1990, Frampton 1991) in action

**⇒ this probe (\( \pi^0 \)) will skip any 3rd-person nominals**

- Now suppose \( \pi^0 \) is parametrized to trigger clitic-doubling of whatever DP it probes
  (see Béjar & Rezac 2003, Kramer 2011, as well as (iii) above) —

(24) a. **1st/2nd-Person Subject, Any Object**

![Diagram for 1st/2nd-person subject, any object]

b. **3rd-Person Subject, 1st/2nd-Person Object**

![Diagram for 3rd-person subject, 1st/2nd-person object]
Thus, when one of the core arguments is 1st/2nd-person, a clitic will be generated that matches that argument’s $\varphi$-features

- This is exactly what is attested (§2.2):
  - recall that the 1st/2nd-person “agreement markers” are morpho-phonologically just truncated versions of the corresponding strong pronouns
  - and clitics are literally reduced pronouns (Cardinaletti & Starke 1999)

Moreover, this approach is equipped to derive the AF person restriction (repeated in (25) below) as a theorem, given certain independently motivated assumptions

(25) In the Agent-Focus construction in Kichean, at most one of the two core arguments can be 1st/2nd-person.

- The independently motivated assumption at issue is Béjar & Rezac’s (2003) Person Licensing Condition (or PLC):

(26) **PERSON LICENSING CONDITION (PLC)**

1st/2nd-person arguments must be licensed by entering into an agreement relation with an appropriate functional category.

[Bejar & Rezac 2003]

- The PLC is required, in one form or another, on any syntactic account of the Person Case Constraint (or PCC; a.k.a., the *me-lui* constraint)

- Under the analysis proposed here, the [PERSON] probe ($\pi^0$) only ever enters into an agreement relation with one core argument
  - the other argument is skipped, in much the same way a non-\textit{wh} DP is skipped by a \textit{wh}-probe (Rizzi 1990)

This derives (25).

(As an aside, note that the AF person restriction cannot be captured in terms of Multiple Agree (Anagnostopoulou 2005, Hiraiwa 2001, 2004, a.o.), because it is fully symmetrical with respect to the subject and object—cf. the PCC, which asymmetrically restricts the features of the DO relative to the IO; see Preminger 2011a:41–44 for a more detailed discussion.)

Now, consider derivations where there is no 1st/2nd-person argument to be found:

- Following the same Relativized Minimality logic, both DPs will be skipped by the $\pi^0$ probe
  - let’s defer, for a short time, the question of the “fate” of a probe that has found no suitable target (though this will be the central point of section 3, below)

- What is clear is that no 1st/2nd-person DP will have been successfully probed by $\pi^0$

\[ \implies \text{no clitic will be created} \]
• This derives the absence of any pronoun-like material in the agreement complex when all arguments are 3rd-person—again, exactly as attested:

(27) ja ri tz’i’ x-φ-etzela-n ri sian  
FOC the dog PRFV-3sg.ABS-hate-AF the cat  
‘It was the dog that hated the cat.’

(28) ja rja’ x-e/*φ-tz’et-ö rje’  
FOC him PRFV-3pl*/3sg-see-AF them  
‘It was him who saw them.’

At this juncture, we make the one assumption that is not directly supported from outside of Mayan (though see below, regarding Tzotzil):

(30) The realization of π₀<+CL> competes with—and preempts—the realization of #₀ (the [NUMBER] probe), for a single slot of morpho-phonological exponence.

○ This is along the same lines of Halle & Marantz’s (1993) account of English past tense verbal morphology
  • where ‘-ed’ competes with—and preempts—the subject agreement suffix, ‘-s’

○ See also Preminger 2011a:81–83, for support for this assumption regarding π₀ and #₀ in particular, from the (non-Kichean) Mayan language Tzotzil
  – possibly, an instance of a more general principle privileging the pronunciation of pronominal material (in this case, the clitic) over purely functional material

⇒ As a result, the exponence of the [NUMBER] probe, #₀, will surface only when clitic-doubling has not occurred (i.e., when both core arguments are 3rd-person)

• Assuming that #₀ is relativized to [plural] (just like π₀ is relativized to [participant]), only DPs bearing [plural] will give rise to valuation on #₀

(31) a. #₀ with valued [plural]: ⁴ /-e-/  
b. #₀ without valued [plural]: /-φ-/  

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⁴Additional support for the existence of a pluralizing morpheme -e- in Kaqchikel might be found in the forms of the 3sg/3pl strong pronouns, rja’ and rje’, respectively (see (21) above). It is not inconceivable that rje’ (3pl) arises from rja’ (3sg) via the affixation of -e-, followed by simplification of the resulting diphthong.
Despite these overwhelming similarities between probing for [participant] and for [plural] (compare (24a–b) and (32a–b)), there is one important difference between the two —

- having to do with licensing

Recall the AF person restriction:

(33) In the Agent-Focus construction in Kichean, at most one of the two core arguments can be 1st/2nd-person. [=(17)]

- This was shown to derive directly from Béjar & Rezac’s PLC (34), when combined with the fact that the probe, $\pi^0$, only ever enters into an agreement relation with one argument

(34) **Person Licensing Condition (PLC)**

1st/2nd-person arguments must be licensed by entering into an agreement relation with an appropriate functional category. [Béjar & Rezac 2003; ]

- Recall furthermore that there is no corresponding “AF plural restriction”; two plurals can freely co-occur in AF:

(35) ja *rje’* x-oj-tz’et-ô *röj*  
FOC them PRFV-1pl-see-AF us  
‘It was them who saw us.’ [=(13)]
This is predicted, if we assume—with Béjar & Rezac 2003 (34)—that the PLC is a *sui generis* licensing requirement on marked [PERSON] features

- rather than a licensing requirement on marked $\varphi$-features more generally (contra Baker 2011; see also Béjar & Rezac 2009)

⇒ a 1st/2nd-person DP that has not been agreed with will give rise to ungrammaticality; but a plural DP that has not been agreed with will not

We have arrived at a probe-goal based account of $\varphi$-agreement in Kichean AF, which:

(i) captures the effects of “salience” hierarchies/scales (like the one repeated in (36) below), without recourse to an extrinsic device of this sort
   - and instead, using well-established mechanisms, such as probe-goal and clitic doubling

(ii) derives the *AF person restriction* as a theorem
   - using Béjar & Rezac’s (2003) PLC, motivated independently of these Kichean facts

(iii) captures the distinctions in morpho-phonological form between 1st/2nd-person “agreement markers” and 3rd-person ones (repeated in (37) below)
   - namely, the systematic resemblance of the former, but not the latter, to the strong pronouns in the language

(iv) is compatible with the fact that these so-called “hierarchy” effects occur nowhere in the language except in AF
   - because this is the only configuration where both core arguments are in the same locality domain (say, the same phase) as the two $\varphi$-probes, $\pi^0$ and $\#^0$ (following Coon, Mateo Pedro & Preminger 2011)

(v) is compatible with the fact that it is the formal, not “cognitive”, properties of an expression that determine its behavior vis-à-vis $\varphi$-agreement
   - recall the 2nd-person “polite” pronoun in K’ichee’, which is morpho-syntactically 3rd-person, and behaves as a 3rd-person DP for the purposes of “hierarchy effects”

\[
\begin{array}{c|cccccc}
\text{strong pronoun} & 1sg & 1pl & 2sg & 2pl & 3sg & 3pl \\
\hline
\text{yin} & \text{rőj} & \text{rat} & \text{rix} & \text{rja’} & \text{rje’} \\
\text{ABS agr.-marker} & -i(n)- & -oj- & -a(t)- & -i-x- & -$\varphi$- & -e-
\end{array}
\]
3. What this all means for Filtration theories of ϕ-agreement

- Agreement in Kichean AF is obligatory:

(38) a. ja rat x-at/*ϕ-axa-n ri achin
   FOC you(sg.) PRFV-2sg/*3sg.ABS-hear-AF the man
   ‘It was you(sg.) that heard the man.’

b. ja ri achin x-at/*ϕ-axa-n rat
   FOC the man PRFV-2sg/*3sg.ABS-hear-AF you(sg.)
   ‘It was the man that heard you(sg.).’

(39) a. ja rje’ x-e/*ϕ-tz’et-ū rja’
   FOC them PRFV-3pl/*3sg.ABS-see-AF him
   ‘It was them who saw him.’

b. ja rja’ x-e/*ϕ-tz’et-ū rje’
   FOC him PRFV-3pl/*3sg.ABS-see-AF them
   ‘It was him who saw them.’

- Suppose that this is the result of the presence of “uninterpretable” ϕ-features on the probe (in this case, π₀/#₀)

  ⇒ the ungrammatical variants of (38–39) are ruled out because these “uninterpretable” ϕ-features reach the interfaces without being checked/deleted

- What would this entail for clauses where both arguments are 3rd-person singular?

(40) ja ri xoq x-ϕ-tz’et-ū ri achin
   FOC the woman PRFV-3sg.ABS-see-AF the man
   ‘It was the woman who saw the man.’

  o These should be ungrammatical unless some syntactic node has checked/deleted the “uninterpretable” ϕ-features on both π₀ and #₀

- Now, there is no 1st/2nd-person and/or plural DP in (40)

  o nor does any 1st/2nd-person and/or plural agreement morphology appear
The targets that putatively check the “uninterpretable” ϕ-features on π₀ and #₀ must be 3rd-person singular.

- But it was shown above that:
  - π₀ must systematically skip 3rd-person targets; and
  - #₀ must systematically skip singular targets

- Let’s remind ourselves of what goes wrong if were to relax these assumptions:
  We would falsely predict that the probe could agree with the 3rd-person subject in an example like (38b), and with the singular subject in (39b)
  - by hypothesis, this should eliminate the need for the probe to search any further, and thus, the need to agree with the 1st/2nd-person or plural object

⇒ There is no argument that could have checked the “uninterpretable” ϕ-features on π₀/#₀, as everything in the clause is 3rd-person singular.

- But the same applies to any potential agreement target, not just subjects/objects
  - including: covert expletives, functional projections along the clausal spine, etc.
    These will also be 3rd-person/singular—and again, the verb shows no 1st/2nd-person or plural morphology (40), in the first place—and thus cannot be targeted by π₀

⇒ An approach based on “uninterpretable” ϕ-features cannot handle these Kichean facts

But what about “Last Resort”?

- it is possible that there is a repair mechanism capable of eliminating “uninterpretable” ϕ-features from the representation before they have a chance to cause ungrammaticality
  - e.g. Béjar’s 2003 Default Valuation operation

- but it must be a last resort — in particular, we need to prevent it from applying to the non-agreeing variants of examples like (38–39) (cases of “gratuitous non-agreement”)

⇒ the system must keep track of whether agreement has been attempted, independently of whether it has culminated successfully
  - which is what uninterpretable/interpretable or unchecked/checked tracks

- but if agreement must be attempted independently of whether or not it succeeds, then “uninterpretable” ϕ-features are bearing absolutely none of the empirical burden
  - i.e., there is no ungrammatical utterance whose ungrammaticality results from an unchecked “uninterpretable” ϕ-feature

But what if the probe carries “uninterpretable” ϕ-features only when there is something for it to agree with?

- Then something must rule out the non-“uninterpretable”-bearing variant of the probe when there is a viable agreement target present —
○ otherwise the ungrammatical variant of (41), below, would be falsely ruled in:

\[(41)\] ja rja' x-e/*ϕ-tz'et-ö rje'
FOC him PRFV-3pl/*3sg.ABS-see-AF them
‘It was him who saw them.’ \[= (9, 39b)\]

⇒ It cannot be the case that [plural]-bearing DPs generally require licensing by agreement
○ otherwise at least one of the [plural]-bearing arguments in (42) would go unlicensed:

\[(42)\] ja röj x-oj-tz'et-ö rje'
FOC us PRFV-1pl.ABS-see-AF them
‘It was us who saw them.’

⇒ It seems that there is no way to enforce the “uninterpretable”-bearing variant to appear in (41), that does not also falsely rule out (42)

Note that the same considerations also militate against an account where the DPs themselves, rather than the probe, carry the “uninterpretable” \(ϕ\)-features (or any other ‘derivational time-bombs’) which enforce the obligatoriness of \(ϕ\)-agreement —

• since again, this predicts ungrammaticality for (42), which involves two [plural]-bearing DPs but only one \(ϕ\)-agreement relation

CONCLUSIONS SO FAR:

• It is empirically untenable to derive the obligatoriness of \(ϕ\)-agreement from “uninterpretable” \(ϕ\)-features (or any other ‘derivational time-bomb’)
  ⇒ So we should, you know, stop using them for that…

• Because \(ϕ\)-agreement adheres to Strict Generativity, it is no longer possible to entertain a syntactic theory that is entirely Filtration-based
  ○ this includes theories where syntax is entirely driven by late-applying “interface conditions” (as proposed, for example, by Chomsky 2004, 2008)

SOME OPEN QUESTIONS:

• Given their inadequacy as the mechanism underlying \(ϕ\)-agreement, can/should we try to do away with “uninterpretable features” altogether?

• What role, if any, remains for “uninterpretable features”, outside of \(ϕ\)-agreement?
  ○ EPP? \(|c,C|a\se? Ellipsis? Neg-Concord?

RESULTS SO FAR ⇒ The obligatoriness of \(ϕ\)-agreement cannot be reduced to Filtration, along the lines of the “uninterpretable” \(ϕ\)-features proposal.

How, then, should the obligatoriness of \(ϕ\)-agreement be captured in the grammar?
Here are a couple of possibilities:

(i) \( \varphi \)-agreement as a violable constraint:

(43) HAVEAGR: Assign one violation mark for every failure to represent the \( \varphi \)-features of the designated argument on a finite verb.

- when there is a viable agreement target, a candidate form with \( \varphi \)-agreement will outperform a candidate without \( \varphi \)-agreement with respect to HAVEAGR
- when there is no viable agreement target (e.g. when both core arguments in Kichean AF are 3rd-singular), no candidate will satisfy HAVEAGR
  - rendering it irrelevant to the competition between candidates

(ii) \( \varphi \)-agreement as an obligatory operation:

(44) \( \text{FIND}_\varphi(f) \): Given an unvalued feature \( f \) on a head \( H^0 \), find an XP bearing valued \( f \). Upon finding such an XP, assign the value of \( f \) on XP to \( H^0 \).

\[ \text{Preminger 2011a:128} \]

- what is obligatory, on this view, is the invocation of (44)
  \( \Rightarrow \) ungrammaticality arises when (44) is not invoked
- once (44) is invoked, however, the derivation will culminate successfully, whether \( \text{FIND}_\varphi(f) \) has found an appropriate target or not

• It seems to me that both of these approaches handle the data presented here equally well
  • though see Preminger 2011a:103–139, for discussion of an empirical domain that does distinguish (i) from (ii), and which tips the scales in favor of the latter, a Strict Generativity approach par excellence

Regardless of which implementation we ultimately adopt:

- the fact that the grammar tolerates attempted-but-failed agreement finds support in empirical domains beyond the one discussed so far

In the next section, I will briefly discuss one such case, from the morphosyntax of Zulu.
4. The conjoint/disjoint distinction and the distribution of nominal augment in Zulu

The original research reported in this section belongs to Claire Halpert (halpert@mit.edu). I am indebted to her for allowing me to use this material here. Any errors or misrepresentations are my own.

4.1. The conjoint/disjoint distinction

In some tenses, the Zulu verb alternates between two morphological forms: conjoint (marked by -φ- in the present), and disjoint (marked by -ya- in the present).

(45) a. POSTVERBAL SUBJECT: CONJOINT REQUIRED
    ku- φ/ya- pheka [ u- Sipho ]
    17S- cook 1AUG- 1Sipho
    ‘SIPHO’s cooking.’

b. PREVERBAL SUBJECT: DISJOINT REQUIRED
    [ u- Sipho ] u- ya/*φ- pheka
    1AUG- 1Sipho 1S- cook
    ‘Sipho is cooking.’

• Contra what (45a–b) might lead you to believe, it is not the case that conjoint/disjoint simply tracks whether or not something has been extracted from vP;

⇒ Instead, it is sensitive to whether or not vP contains any non-moved overt material (Buell 2005, 2006, van der Spuy 1993)

    conjoint: vP contains overt postverbal material
    disjoint: vP contains no overt postverbal material

⇒ The prediction is that extraction should be neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for the disjoint to appear; this is indeed borne out:
in (46a), where the subject has been extracted from vP, the conjoint is still required and the disjoint still impossible—since the vP still contains the object

- the object must be extracted, as well, for the disjoint to be grammatical, as in (46b) (in which case the conjoint is impossible, of course)

in (47), conversely, no extraction has taken place, yet the disjoint is the required form (and the conjoint is impossible), since the vP is born empty

(46)  

a. TRANSITIVE W/POSTVERBAL OBJECT: CONJONT REQUIRED

[ u- Sipho ] u- φl*ya- pheka [ i- qanda ]
1AUG- 1Sipho 1S- cook 5AUG- 5egg

ʼSipho is cooking an egg.ʼ

b. TRANSITIVE W/PREVERBAL OBJECT: DISJOINT REQUIRED

[ i- qanda ] [ u- Sipho ] u- yaf*φ- li- pheka
5AUG- 5egg 1AUG- 1Sipho 1S- 5O- cook

ʼAs for the egg, Sipho is cooking it.ʼ

(47) WEATHER PREDICATE: DISJOINT REQUIRED

ku- yaf*φ- banda
17S- be.cold

ʼItʼs cold.ʼ

- Finally, the alternation is sensitive not only to arguments, but also to locative modifiers⁵

- compare high (i.e., location) reading of phandle “outside”, vs. low (i.e., goal) reading:

(48)  

a. [ u- Sipho ] [ u- φ- gijima phandle ]vP
1AUG- 1Sipho 1S- run outside

ʼSipho is running outsideʼ (✓ goal reading, X location reading)

b. [ u- Sipho ] [ u- ya- gijima ]vP phandle
1AUG- 1Sipho 1S- run outside

ʼSipho is running outsideʼ (X goal reading, ✓ location reading)

4.2. The augment

- Nominals in Zulu are typically marked with an initial vowel (the augment), which reflects noun-class:

(49)  

a. i- n- cwadi “book” (class 9)

b. u- mu- ntu “person” (class 1)

c. i- zim- fingo “sharks” (class 10)

d. i- xoxo “frog” (class 5)

⁵ Claire Halpertʼs (p.c.) findings also indicate that the conditions on the appearance of -ya- cannot be formulated prosodically, either, as there are both instances of phrase-final verbs without -ya- (in the first conjunct of Right-Node Raising constructions), and instances of phrase-medial verbs with -ya- (before certain purpose/rationale clauses, which can be shown not to induce a right-hand prosodic boundary after the verb).
• In a set of restricted environments, nominals may appear without an augment vowel (Buell 2011, Mzolo 1968, Von Staden 1973); several factors affect the distribution of augment-less nominals—including definiteness, specificity, and focus, as well as the presence of c-commanding negation (Buell 2011, Halpert 2011)

**Here, we abstract away from these, focusing instead on the structural requirements on the appearance of augment-less nominals**

○ following Halpert (2011), who shows that the structural requirements are indeed independent of these other factors

• First, note that augment-less nominals must appear within vP:

(50) a. A- ngi- sho- ngo ukuthi ku- fik- e [ u- muntu ]
   NEG- 1st.sg.S- say- NEG.PAST that 17S- arrive- PRFV 1AUG- 1person
   ‘I didn’t say that someone came.’

   NEG- 1st.sg.S- say- NEG.PAST that 1AUG- 1person 1S- arrive- PRFV
   ‘I didn’t say that someone came.’

(51) a. A- ngi- sho- ngo ukuthi ku- fik- e [ muntu ]
   NEG- 1st.sg.S- say- NEG.PAST that 17S- arrive- PRFV 1person
   ‘I didn’t say that anyone came.’

   NEG- 1st.sg.S- say- NEG.PAST that 1person 1S- arrive- PRFV

• Next, note that an augment-less nominal must be the highest in its vP:

(52) a. ✓ SVO w/AUGMENT-LESS O
   [ u- muntu ] a- ka- phek- i [ qanda ]
   1AUG- 1person NEG- 1S- cook- NEG 5egg
   ‘A/the person isn’t cooking any egg.’

   b. ✓ VSO w/AUGMENT-LESS S, AUGMENTED O
   a- ku- phek- i [ muntu ] [ i- qanda ]
   NEG- 17S- cook- NEG 1person 5AUG- 5egg
   ‘NOBODY is cooking the/an/any egg.’

   c. ✗ VSO w/AUGMENT-LESS S, AUGMENT-LESS O
   * a- ku- phek- i [ muntu ] [ qanda ]
   NEG- 17S- cook- NEG 1person 5egg

   d. ✗ VSO w/AUGMENTED S, AUGMENT-LESS O
   * a- ku- phek- i [ u- muntu ] [ qanda ]
   NEG- 17S- cook- NEG 1AUG- 1person 5egg

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6See Halpert 2011, for a discussion of some complications that arise in applicative verb-phrases.
4.3. Halpert’s (to appear) analysis

- Suppose there is a head L^0, which probes into vP
  - and is crucially able to probe after some movement out of vP has already occurred (cf. Asarina 2011, Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir 2003, Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008)

- If no vP-internal XP is found, the result is not a “crash” — rather, simply a lack of valuation on L^0

(53)  a. -φ- (the conjoint): spellout of L^0 which has found an agreement target
  b. -ya- (the disjoint): spellout of L^0 which has not found an agreement target

  - while this pattern is slightly marked, in that the overt member of the paradigm is the one corresponding to a lack of valuation, this is not unattested
  - cf. the English simple present main-verb subject agreement paradigm
    (-s for 3rd-singular, -φ elsewhere)

(54)  a.  

  b.  

  c.  

  d.  

  – 22 –
Turning now to nominal **augment**:  
- suppose that **augment-less** nominals in Zulu are like [*participant*]-bearing nominals in Kichean —  
  - they must be agreed with (in this case, by \(L^0\)) in order to be licensed  
- **augmented** nominals in Zulu, on the other hand, are like [*plural*]-bearers in Kichean —  
  - they can be targeted for agreement, but they can also appear without being agreed with (i.e., they do not require “licensing”)  
  - cf. (13) above, a grammatical example of AF with two plural arguments  
- This derives the fact that multiple **augmented** nominals can co-occur, but at most one **augment-less** nominal can appear per \(vP\)  
  - exactly like Kichean [*plural*]-bearers and [*participant*]-bearers, respectively  
  - and for the same reasons  

⇒ Thus, in (54a) above, for example, it is impossible for both the subject and the object to be **augment-less** — as confirmed by (52c), repeated here:  

\[
(52) \quad \text{c.} \quad * \quad \text{a-} \quad \text{ku-} \quad \text{phek-} \quad \text{i} \quad [\text{muntu}] \quad [\text{qanda}] \\
\quad \text{NEG-} \quad \text{17S-} \quad \text{cook-} \quad \text{NEG} \quad \text{1person} \quad \text{5egg}
\]

- A significant difference relative to Kichean is that the kind of nominal requiring licensing in Zulu (i.e., the **augment-less** kind) must be the highest argument in \(vP\)  
  - as demonstrated by (52d), repeated here:  

\[
(52) \quad \text{d.} \quad * \quad \text{a-} \quad \text{ku-} \quad \text{phek-} \quad \text{i} \quad [\text{u-} \quad \text{muntu}] \quad [\text{qanda}] \\
\quad \text{NEG-} \quad \text{17S-} \quad \text{cook-} \quad \text{NEG} \quad \text{1AUG-} \quad \text{1person} \quad \text{5egg}
\]

- whereas the kind of nominal that requires licensing in Kichean (i.e., the [*participant*]-bearing kind) can appear as either subject or object  
  - provided that the other argument is 3rd-person (see, for example, (6–7) in §2.1)  
- In other words, 3rd-singular DPs in Kichean are “skippable”, whereas nothing in Zulu seems “skippable”  

- But this derives from an independently observable difference between Kichean and Zulu:  
  - In terms of *Relativized Minimality*, Zulu \(L^0\) is relativized to target pretty much *any* \(XP\), even locative modifiers  
    - recall (48a–b), repeated here:
(48)  a. [ u- Sipho ] [ u- gijima phandle ]\_vP
    1AUG- 1Sipho  1S- run  outside
    ‘Sipho is running outside.’ (✓ goal reading, ✗ location reading)

b. [ u- Sipho ] [ u- ya- gijima ]\_vP phandle
    1AUG- 1Sipho  1S- run  outside
    ‘Sipho is running outside.’ (✗ goal reading, ✓ location reading)

○ Kichean π^0, in contrast, is relativized to target only [participant]-bearers
  ⇒ it can target the object, in the event that the subject is [participant]-less

○ whereas the same never happens with Zulu L^0 (which given its behavior w.r.t. locative modifiers, appears to place little or no featural restrictions on what it can target)

(55) [cf. (54a–b)]

4.4. The case from Zulu against Filtration

• Halpert’s analysis centers around the conjoint/disjoint probe, L^0
• as with Kichean π^0 and #_0, probing by L^0 can fail to find a target altogether
  ○ like in examples such as (56a–c), where the \_vP has been completely vacated:

(56)  a. [ u- Sipho ] u- ya/*φ- pheka
    1AUG- 1Sipho  1S- cook
    ‘Sipho is cooking.’

b. [ i- qanda ] [ u- Sipho ] u- ya/*φ- li- pheka
    5AUG- 5egg  1AUG- 1Sipho  1S-  5O- cook
    ‘As for the egg, Sipho is cooking it.’

c. ku- ya/*φ- banda
    17S- be.cold
• crucially, $L^0$ cannot engage in *Multiple Agree* relations
  o since that would falsely predict that more than one *augment-less* nominal could appear (and be licensed) within the same $vP$
• consequently, $vP$ cannot be a viable target for $L^0$
  o since given the unavailability of *Multiple Agree*, that would predict that an *augment-less* nominal within $vP$—unambiguously farther away from the probe than the $vP$ node itself—could not be targeted by $L^0$, contra to fact
• for the same reason, traces of dislocated XPs cannot be viable targets for $L^0$
  ⇒ *when $vP$ is completely vacated, there is no target which could have checked any features on $L^0*
  o and note that a theory where $L^0$ can be born with and without the relevant feature(s) is ruled out on the same grounds as with Kichean $\#^0$
    – namely, it renders the obligatoriness of $L^0$-probing impossible to derive without falsely ruling out the appearance of multiple *augmented* nominals in the same $vP$
    • see the discussion of multiple [*plural*]-bearing DPs in Kichean, in §3

Thus, the disjoint (*-ya-*), where $vP$ is completely vacated, constitutes an instance of tolerated attempted-and-failed agreement

4.5. One more note on hierarchies/scales

• Recall now the approach to $\varphi$-agreement in Kichean AF based on a “salience” scale/hierarchy:

(57) \[1st/2nd \gg 3rd-plural (\gg 3rd-singular)\] $[=(19)]$

• We can now add one more significant shortcoming to this approach:
  o to capture the unity between the Kichean facts and the Zulu facts—as uncovered by Halpert and discussed in §4.3–§4.4—the hierarchies/scales approach would have to posit a corresponding scale for Zulu
  o but the substantive categories involved in the Zulu pattern are nothing like ‘1st/2nd/3rd-person’ or ‘singular/plural’
    – they are ‘augment-less’ and ‘augmented’
• what is required, then—on analogy with (57)—is for *augment-less* nominals to be somehow more “salient” than *augmented* ones
As a result, the prospects for a “salience”-based account of these Zulu facts that is not completely ad hoc seem rather bleak

- since Zulu of course has 1st/2nd/3rd-person distinctions —
  - and yet somehow the latter play no role in the relevant scale/hierarchy in Zulu

- If the ingredients of the system are purely formal (e.g. features and probes), then it is not terribly surprising to find that the substantive content of the relevant categories can vary in this way (see, for example, Ritter & Wiltschko 2009)

- But if the relevant properties pertain to “salience”, then this is quite unexpected.

5. Further areas of application

- agreement in Basque unergatives and LDA constructions (Preminger 2009, 2012)
- “agreement attraction” in Italian, Hebrew, … (Franck et al. 2006, Preminger 2010, among many others)
- Tzotzil (see Preminger 2011a:81–83, as well as Aissen 1987, Woolford 2011)
- systematic cross-linguistic asymmetries between agreement in [PERSON] and in [NUMBER] (Baker 2008, 2011; Preminger 2011b; see the APPENDIX)

6. Conclusions

“Our hypothesis, then, is that the consequences of ordering, obligatoriness, and contextual dependency can be captured in terms of surface filters, something that surely need not be the case in principle”

[Chomsky & Lasnik 1977:433, emphasis added]
As part of this, we saw that “uninterpretable” \( \varphi \)-features (Chomsky 2000, 2001) are empirically inadequate as an account for the obligatoriness of \( \varphi \)-agreement.

2. Some phenomena that don’t necessarily look like \( \varphi \)-agreement at first glance might derive from the same underlying mechanism
   • Maybe this is something that we already knew — but:
     ○ Halpert’s (to appear) work on Zulu provides a vivid illustration of this point
     ○ and in so doing, it provides support for the proposed analysis of \( \varphi \)-agreement in the Kichean AF construction, as well

3. A healthy skepticism of scales and “salience” hierarchies can be useful
   • In some cases, their convenience as a tool of description can mask the existence of a more explanatory and cross-linguistically viable alternative
   (which is not to say that I have shown, nor attempted to show, that this is always the case)

Appendix: Asymmetries between person and number agreement

  When an agreement host reflects only a proper subset of the \( \varphi \)-features of a given DP, it is typically [PERSON]-agreement that goes missing
  • Importantly, this is not always the case —
    • in Spanish, for instance, main verbs reflect the [PERSON]- and [NUMBER]-features of the agreement target, but not its [GENDER]-features;
    • the latter, however, are syntactically active in Spanish, since they determine overt participial agreement for example
  — see Baker 2008:8–9 for some discussion.

(58) (Nosotras) somos gord-as / *gord-amos
we.F.PL are.1pl.SUBJ fat-E.PL *fat-1pl
‘We are fat.’ [Baker 2011:876]

(59) a. Honum mundi/mundu virðast þeir vera hæfir.
   him.DAT would.3sg/would.3pl seem they.NOM be competent
   ‘They would seem competent to him.’

b. Honum mundi/*munduð virðast þið vera hæfir.
   him.DAT would.3sg/*would.2pl seem you(pl).NOM be competent
   ‘Y’all would seem competent to him.’

c. Honum mundi/*mundum virðast við vera hæfir.
   him.DAT would.3sg/*would.1pl seem we.NOM be competent
   ‘We would seem competent to him.’

[Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008:255]

⇒ The question is: Why is [PERSON] special?
**Baker (2008):**

- [PERSON] is special because 1st/2nd-person features on an agreement host (e.g., $T^0$) are, in essence, indexical anaphors that must be bound in an extremely local manner
  - a requirement that boils down roughly to immediate m-command

- Thus, when their binder (i.e., the argument itself) is too far away to satisfy these locality conditions, the 1st/2nd-person feature cannot felicitously reside on the agreement host
  - a scenario we would descriptively characterize as “[PERSON]-agreement breaking down” (cf. PCC effects)

⇒ **Prediction:** agreement in [PERSON] should not be possible at a (structural) distance

**Preminger (2011b):**

(i) [PERSON]-agreement at a distance, while rare, does exist

- for example, in the Kichean data presented above, as well as in certain varieties of Basque (Preminger 2009)

(60) \[
[Ni]_{ABS} \text{altxa-zte-n} \text{probatu} \text{na-ϕ-u-te.}
\]

me(ABS) lift-NMZ-LOC attempted I.ABS-sg.ABS-∇3pl.ERG

‘They have attempted to lift me.’

(subject is pro<3pl.ERG)

(ii) [NUMBER]-agreement at a distance, while more robust than [PERSON]-agreement at a distance, is also “fragile”

- see considerable work on so-called defective intervention, in Romance, Greek, Icelandic, Basque, and others; for example:

(61) a. það (finnst/*finnast) [einhverjum stúdent]_{DAT} [sc tölvurnar] ljótar ].

EXPL find.SG/*find.PL some student.SG.DAT the.computers.PL.NOM ugly

‘Some student finds the computers ugly.’

b. [Einhverjum stúdent]_{1} [finnast] t_{1} [sc tölvurnar] ljótar ].

some student.SG.DAT find.PL the.computers.PL.NOM ugly

‘Some student finds the computers ugly.’

[Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir 2003:1000]

⇒ **Baker’s approach doesn’t work,** because it is counter-exemplified by (i) (the existence of long-distance [PERSON]-agreement), and fails to capture the generalization that emerges from (i)–(ii) —

- namely, that both [PERSON]- and [NUMBER]-agreement are “fragile” at a distance (i.e., subject to intervention)

- But how do we salvage the empirical coverage that Baker’s approach does achieve (recall the Spanish (58) and Icelandic (59a–c), above)?

⇒ **What if instances of alleged “partial agreement” are simply instances of tolerated attempted-but-failed [PERSON] agreement?**
Focusing again on [PERSON] and [NUMBER], and their structural arrangement which should be familiar from earlier:

(62) [ ... [\#_{P} {#^0} \_P \_P \_P [ ... \_P \_T ... ] ] ] ... ]  

(\textit{where DP}_{T} is a putative agreement target)

\begin{itemize}
\item suppose there is some syntactic obstruction separating \#^0 and \textit{DP}_T
  \begin{itemize}
  \item such as an intervening nominal (e.g. a dative), or a phase boundary
  \end{itemize}
\item this will prevent \#^0 from agreeing with \textit{DP}_T; now one of two things can happen:
  \begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{NOTHING}
    \begin{itemize}
    \item The obstruction remains, and similarly prevents agreement between \#^0 and \textit{DP}_T
      \begin{itemize}
      \item as is the case in full-fledged \textquotedblleft defective intervention\textquotedblright
      \end{itemize}
    \end{itemize}
  \item \textbf{SOMETHING}
    \begin{itemize}
    \item Probing by \#^0, even though it was unsuccessful in reaching \textit{DP}_T, had syntactic consequences that effectively removed the obstruction — for example:
      \begin{itemize}
      \item clitic-doubling the intervener (Anagnostopoulou 2003, Béjar & Rezac 2003)
      \item agreeing with the phase-head, thereby allowing subsequent probing to look inside the phase in question (Rackowski & Richards 2005)
      \end{itemize}
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item Crucially, this requires a grammar where probing by \#^0 can fail to find the kind of target it is looking for—yet the derivation does not \textquotedblleft crash\textquotedblright:
  \begin{itemize}
  \item either (i) or (ii) takes place, and the derivation proceeds unimpeded.
  \end{itemize}
\item Importantly, the converse pattern, where \#^0 can successfully target \textit{DP}_T but \#^0 cannot, is predicted not to exist:itatex\textsuperscript{7}
  \begin{itemize}
  \item without going into specific details, this would require an obstruction being introduced between \#^0 and \#^0 —
    \begin{itemize}
    \item but \#^0 and \#^0 are consecutive heads in the clausal spine, so this will generally be impossible
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}
\item And, of course, it could be the case that there was no obstruction to begin with—and so probing by both \#^0 and \#^0 would go through unimpeded (a.k.a. \textquotedblleft successful \textit{\varphi}-agreement\textquotedblright).
\end{itemize}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{7}The expression \textquoteleft X successfully targets \textit{DP}_T\textquoteright is to be understood, in this context, as \textit{X} successfully reflecting marked \textit{\varphi}-features found on \textit{DP}_T ([\textit{participant}], [\textit{author}], [\textit{plural}], etc.; \S2.3 on the privativity of \textit{\varphi}-features). It is, in my mind, an open question whether such a thing as \textquoteleft agreement with a 3rd-person/singular nominal\textquoteright even exists, or these are simply descriptive terms we use to identify the morphology that surfaces when probes fail to find a target bearing marked features (see Nevins 2007, Preminger 2011a for somewhat dissenting views).}
• On the other hand, merging $DP_T$ in (the specifier of) the immediate complement of $\pi^0$ would render an obstruction impossible —
  o since there is no structural space between $\pi^0$ and $DP_T$ for the obstruction to reside\(^8\)

This derives:
• the fact that long-distance [PERSON]-agreement is more susceptible to disruption than long-distance [NUMBER]-agreement
• the fact that both are more susceptible to disruption than agreement at close range, whether in [NUMBER] or in [PERSON]

References


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\(^8\)This is so even if the category $\alpha$ in $[\text{Compl}, \pi]$ is phasal—since the XP in $[\text{Spec}, \alpha]$ would be situated in the escape-hatch of the $\alpha$ phase, and thus accessible to probing by $\pi^0$. 


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