Filters vs. Triggers: Deriving the obligatoriness of agreement

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> "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)

Prologue

- Ever since the late '70s, syntactic theory has captured obligatoriness via <u>filtration</u> —
  - as stated explicitly in the above quote; though the origins of this approach can be traced at least as far back as Perlmutter's (1968/1971) dissertation, as well as the *Global Rules* debate (Baker & Brame 1972, Lakoff 1970, 1972)
- If we have a linguistic process X (e.g. φ-agreement) that is "obligatory", structures in which X has not applied are not ruled out due to the inapplication of X directly;
- Instead, they are ruled out because they fail to exhibit some representational property that the application of X would have brought about.
- e.g. **if X is φ-agreement**:
  - the representational property that X brings about is the absence of (unchecked) "uninterpretable" features (Chomsky 2000, 2001)
  - instances where X has not applied are ruled out because they do not exhibit this property (i.e., they do contain unchecked "uninterpretable" features)

....

<u>TODAY:</u>

- an illustration that **a filtration approach to φ-agreement is empirically untenable**
  - based on evidence from Kichean (Mayan) and from Zulu (Bantu)
- if true, this means that "uninterpretable" features—assuming there is such a thing—cannot be the cause for the obligatoriness of φ-agreement

1. Outline

☐ Agreement in the Kichean *Agent-Focus* construction
☐ Consequences for *filtration* theories of φ-agreement
☐ The *conjoint/disjoint* distinction and the distribution of *augment* in Zulu
☐ Some implications of the existence of tolerated failed φ-agreement

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2. Agreement in the Kichean *Agent-Focus* construction

- <u>Kichean:</u> a branch of the Mayan language family, spoken in Guatemala[1]
  - languages: Kaqchikel, K'ichee', Tz'utujil, and Achi'
  - approx. 2.8 million speakers in total

- Like many (but not all) of the other Mayan languages, the Kichean languages exhibit so-called "syntactic ergativity" —
  - a ban against targeting ergative arguments for A-bar operations (*wh*-interrogatives, focalization, relativization)

- The cause and nature of "syntactic ergativity" will <u>not</u> be the focus of this talk
  - see Weisser et al. (2012), Coon, Mateo Pedro & Preminger (2011), Markman (2009), and Polinsky (2011), for some competing approaches

- ↬ Rather, we will be focusing on what is perhaps the most common means used in Kichean to circumvent this ban, and successfully target Agent arguments for A-bar operations

···

(1) *SOME "BASELINE" EXAMPLES OF KICHEAN*

     a. rïx   y-**in**-**iw**-axa-j   yïn   (Kaqchikel)
         y'all IMPF-**1sg.ABS**-**2pl.ERG**-hear-ACT me
         'Y'all are hearing me.'

     b. 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.).'

     <u>POINTS TO NOTICE:</u>
  - separate markers for ERG ("subject") and ABS ("object") agreement
  - no real *datives* or *applicative arguments*; arguments other than the ABS and ERG ones are introduced as possessors of relational nouns
    - which are themselves introduced by prepositions

- Focalizing a non-ERG argument in Kichean is done without altering the form of the verb:

(2)   ri   achin **x-ϕ-u-tz'et**   ri   wuj
       the man   **PRFV-3sg.ABS-3sg.ERG-see** the book
       'The man saw the book.'

(3)   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.'

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[1]The superordinate branch, known as *Greater Kichean*, also includes the languages Q'eqchi', Uspantek, Poqomchi', Poqomam, Sakapultek, and Sipakapense (see Campbell & Kaufman 1985).

- On the other hand, focalizing the ERG argument requires altering the verb form
  - e.g. by using the *Agent-Focus* form of the verb, as in (4b):

(4)   a.   * 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.'

   b.   ja   ri   achin **x-ϕ-tz'et-ö**   ri   wuj
            FOC the man   **PRFV-3sg.ABS-see-AF** the book
            'It was the man who saw the book.'

Properties of the *Agent-Focus* (AF) construction:

   (i)   while sometimes called the "focus antipassive", AF is not an antipassive at all:

- both Agent and Patient surface in this construction as full-fledged, non-oblique DPs

     but:

   (ii)   the verb in the AF construction carries only one agreement marker, taken from the "ABS series" (i.e., the morphemes that in regular transitives, co-index the Patient)

> Given two non-oblique DPs, but only one agreement marker, how does the grammar choose which DP's φ-features will be morphologically expressed on the AF verb?

- Descriptively, agreement in AF can be said to follow a disjunctive hierarchy, as in (5):

(5)   *1st/2nd $\gg$ 3rd-plural ($\gg$ 3rd-singular)*
                      [*Dayley 1978*, *Mondloch 1981*, *Norman & Campbell 1978*, *Smith-Stark 1978*]

- The scale in (5) has been taken by some to be a theoretical primitive
  - and by some to be a reflection of <u>*cognitive salience*</u> (see, for example, Stiebels 2006)

↪ Conceptual argument aside, we will see that **there are empirical reasons to be skeptical of such approaches**

2.1. Dataset #1: Clauses without plurals

1st/2nd-singular "wins" over 3rd-singular:

(6) 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.'

(7) 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.).'

(8) ja   yïn x-**in/***ϕ-axa-n   ri achin
FOC me PRFV-**1sg/*3sg.ABS**-hear-AF the man
'It was me that heard the man.'

(9) ja   ri achin x-**in/***ϕ-axa-n   yïn
FOC the man   PRFV-**1sg/*3sg.ABS**-hear-AF me
'It was the man that heard me.'

When both arguments are 3rd-person…:

(10) 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.'

(11) ja   **ri xoq**   x-ϕ-tz'et-ö   **ri achin**
FOC **the woman** PRFV-3sg.ABS-see-AF **the man**
'It was the woman who saw the man.'

The remaining binding-theoretically viable combinations are out:

(12) * ja   rat   x-**in/at/**ϕ-axa-n   yin
FOC you(sg.) PRFV-**1sg/2sg/3sg.ABS**-hear-AF me
Intended: 'It was you(sg.) that heard me.'

(13) * ja   yin x-**in/at/**ϕ-axa-n   rat
FOC me PRFV-**1sg/2sg/3sg.ABS**-hear-AF you(sg.)
Intended: 'It was me that heard you(sg.).'

(14) <u>*AF PERSON RESTRICTION*</u>
In the Agent-Focus construction in Kichean, at most one of the two core arguments can be 1st/2nd-person.
[*Davies & Sam-Colop 1990*, *Dayley 1978*, *Norman & Campbell 1978*, *Smith-Stark 1978*]

⎛To express the intended meanings of examples like (12–13), speakers can resort to constructions⎞
⎝such as the *absolutive antipassive*—an intransitivizing construction proper.⎠

2.2. Dataset #2: Clauses with plurals

***3rd-plural "wins" over 3rd-singular*:**

(15) Ja   rje'   x-**e/*ϕ**-tz'et-ö   rja'
      FOC them PRFV-**3pl/*3sg.ABS**-see-AF him
      'It was them who saw him.'

(16) Ja   rja'   x-**e/*ϕ**-tz'et-ö   rje'
      FOC him PRFV-**3pl/*3sg.ABS**-see-AF them
      'It was him who saw them.'

***1st/2nd-<u>singular</u> "wins" over 3rd-<u>plural</u>*:** (or any other combination of {1st/2nd, 3rd} × {sg., pl.})

(17) a. Ja   rje'   x-**i**-tz'et-ö   yïn
          FOC them PRFV-**1sg.ABS**-see-AF me
          'It was them who saw me.'

      b. * Ja   rje'   x-**oj**/**ϕ**/**e**-tz'et-ö   yïn
            FOC them PRFV-**1pl/3sg/3pl.ABS**-see-AF me

(18) a. Ja   yïn x-**i**-tz'et-ö   rje'
          FOC me PRFV-**1sg.ABS**-see-AF them
          'It was me who saw them.'

      b. * Ja   yïn x-**oj**/**ϕ**/**e**-tz'et-ö   rje'
            FOC me PRFV-**1pl/3sg/3pl.ABS**-see-AF them

***Just like 1st/2nd-<u>singular</u>, 1st/2nd-<u>plural</u> also "wins"*:**

(19) a. Ja   rja'   x-**oj**-tz'et-ö   röj
          FOC him PRFV-**1pl.ABS**-see-AF us
          'It was him who saw us.'

      b. * Ja   rja'   x-**i**/**ϕ**/**e**-tz'et-ö   röj
            FOC him PRFV-**1sg/3sg/3pl.ABS**-see-AF us

***Finally, note that there is no "AF plural restriction"; two <u>plurals</u> can co-occur*:**

(20) Ja   rje'   x-**oj**-tz'et-ö   röj
      FOC them PRFV-**1pl.ABS**-see-AF us
      'It was them who saw us.'

- Crucially, in an example like (20), we find only <u>1st-person plural</u> agreement morphology
  - even though there exists a putative overt agreement morpheme corresponding to the <u>3rd-person plural</u> Agent *rje'* ("them") — namely, *-e-* (cf. (15–16), above)

2.3. Properties of AF left unexplained by salience scales/hierarchies

(21)   *1st/2nd ≫ 3rd-plural (≫ 3rd-singular)*   *[=(5)]*

I take no issue with the usefulness of devices like (21) for descriptive and typological purposes, but… *(items listed in rising order of "severity")*

  (i) If <u>cognitive salience</u> is what's at issue, why would it surface nowhere else in the language but 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 <u>formal</u> and <u>cognitive</u> properties of a given pronoun — *and the <u>formal</u> properties win*

  - the claim is not that there is no recourse for the cognitive approach, here (e.g. "speakers conceive of polite speech as 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 borne out**

NB: Issues (iii)–(iv), unlike (i)–(ii), persist even if we abandon the view that (21) refers to *cognitive salience* per se, and view it as a purely formal device.

  (iii) Recall the *AF PERSON RESTRICTION*, repeated here:

  (22) In the Agent-Focus construction in Kichean, at most one of the two core arguments can be 1st/2nd-person.   *[=(14)]*

  - **there is nothing about a hierarchy like (21) 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 (21), do not have a restriction along the lines of (22)

    ○ 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 designed to factor out the choice of agreement target
  - the point of such a device is to serve as an algorithm evaluating the inventory of arguments in a given clause, and returning an answer as to which one will be targeted for φ-agreement
- crucially, agreement in Kichean is <u>not</u> a uniform process, when we compare across different agreement targets:

(23)

	1sg	1pl	2sg	2pl	3sg	3pl	(Kaqchikel)
strong pronoun	*yïn*	*röj*	*rat*	*rïx*	*rja'*	*rje'*	
absolutive agreement marker	*-i(n)-*	*-oj-*	*-a(t)-*	*-ix-*	*-ϕ-*	*-e-*	

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

    agreement marker = strong pronoun − 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**

Now, the forms in (23) are those of ABS agreement markers in general —

- used in AF, but also in regular transitives

⇒ so one could make the argument that an account of agreement in AF need not concern itself with these morpho-phonological properties
  - beyond stating that *"AF agreement makes use of ABS morphology"*

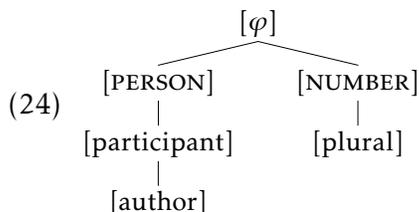⇥ but this turns a blind eye to **the possibility of a unified account**
  - one that derives at once both the morpho-phonological distinctions in (23), and the choice of agreement target —
    – the very property that (21) was put forth to account for, in the first place
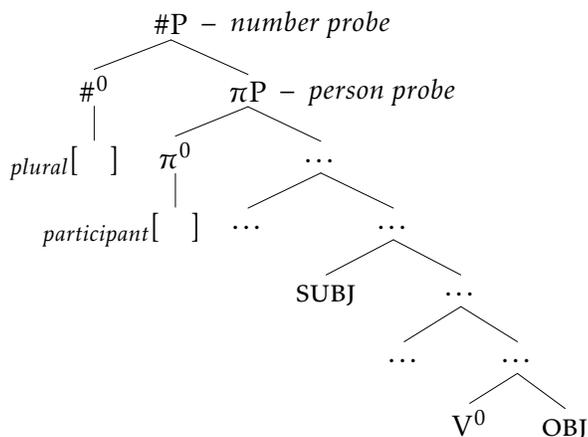
2.4. A unified account of agreement in Kichean AF

<u>Ingredients:</u>   *(all argued for independently of Kichean, or even Mayan in general)*

(i) probing for [PERSON] and [NUMBER] occurs in separate derivation steps (Anagnostopoulou 2003, Béjar 2003, Chomsky 2000, Laka 1993, Shlonsky 1989, Sigurðsson 1996, Taraldsen 1995, a.o.)

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

(ii) clitic-doubling is a parametrized reflex of a DP being probed by particular φ-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

(iii) the space of φ-features is internally structured (Béjar & Rezac 2009, Harley & Ritter 2002, McGinnis 2005)

- a (somewhat simplified) φ-feature geometry:

(24)

$$
\begin{array}{ccc}
 & [\varphi] & \\
[\text{PERSON}] & & [\text{NUMBER}] \\
| & & | \\
[\text{participant}] & & [\text{plural}] \\
| & & \\
[\text{author}] & &
\end{array}
$$

(25)   *BASIC CLAUSE STRUCTURE IN KICHEAN AF*

- If π^0 seeks bearers of [*participant*], then by *Relativized Minimality* (Rizzi 1990), it follows that π^0 will <u>skip</u> any DP not bearing that feature

  - just like a probe seeking bearers of [*wh*] skips any non-[*wh*]-bearing DP

- Now suppose π^0 is parametrized to trigger clitic-doubling of whatever DP it probes (cf. Béjar & Rezac 2003, Kramer 2011) —

(26) *CLITIC-DOUBLING IN KICHEAN AF*

    a. *1ST/2ND-PERSON SUBJECT,*   b. *3RD-PERSON SUBJECT,*
       ANY OBJECT   *1ST/2ND-PERSON OBJECT*
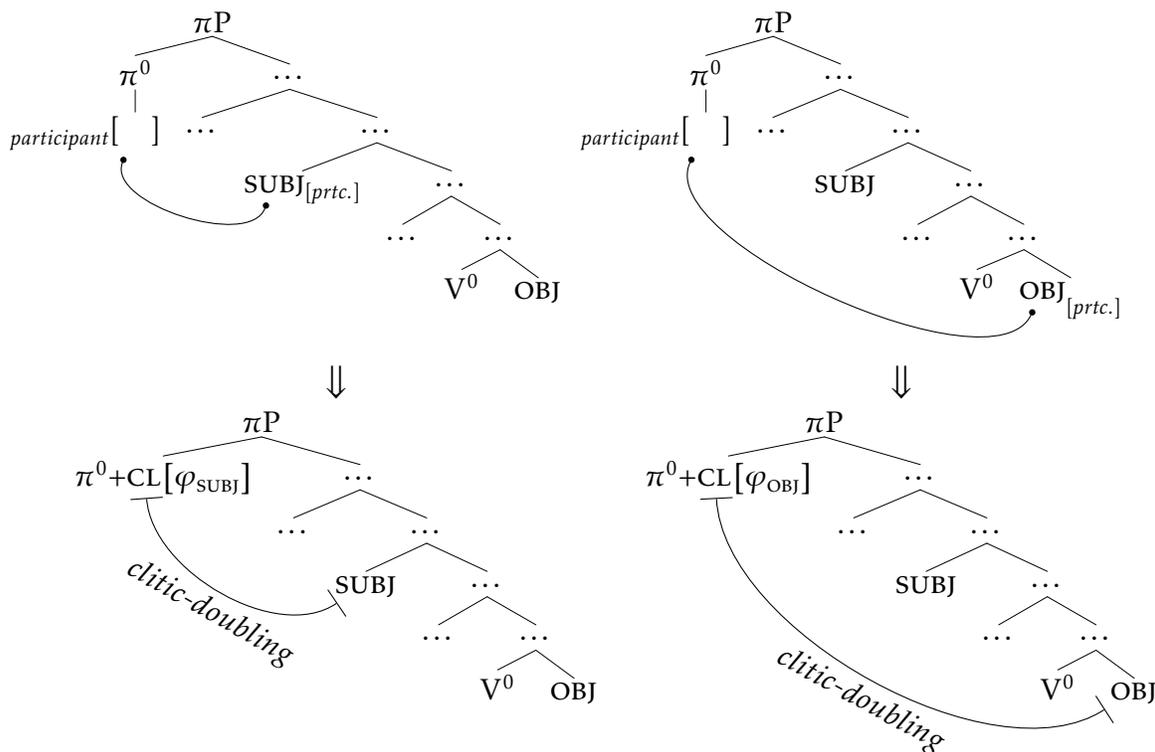
⇒ Thus, when one of the core arguments is 1st/2nd-person, a clitic will be generated that matches that argument's φ-features

↪ This is exactly what is attested (§2.3):

    ○ recall that the 1st/2nd-person "agreement markers" are morpho-phonologically just truncated versions of the corresponding strong pronouns

    ○ and clitics are, quite literally, reduced pronouns (see, e.g., Cardinaletti & Starke 1999)

                    ....

- Moreover, this approach is equipped to derive the *AF PERSON RESTRICTION* (repeated in (27), below) as a *theorem*, given certain independently motivated assumptions

(27) In the Agent-Focus construction in Kichean, at most one of the two core arguments can be 1st/2nd-person.   *[=(14)]*

- The independently required assumption is Béjar & Rezac's (2003) *Person Licensing Condition* (or *PLC*)

(28)   *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*]

   ↠ required in one form or another on any syntactic account of the *Person Case Constraint* (or *PCC*; a.k.a., the **me-lui* constraint)
       – see also Baker 2011, Preminger 2011b

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

⇒ This derives (27).

$\Big($ 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 of its symmetrical nature—cf. the PCC, which asymmetrically restricts the direct object w.r.t. the indirect object; see Preminger 2011a for a more detailed discussion. $\Big)$

. . . .

Now, suppose that no 1st/2nd-person argument is present in the derivation:

- Following the same *Relativized Minimality* logic, both DPs will be skipped by the π^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 §3. . . !)*

↠ What is clear is that no 1st/2nd-person DP will have been successfully probed by π^0
   ⇒ 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; see §2.3)

At this juncture, we make the one assumption that is not independently supported by work outside of Mayan:[2]

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

$\Big($ Along the lines of, say, English past tense '*-ed*' competing with—and preempting—the subject agreement suffix '*-s*'; see Halle & Marantz 1993. $\Big)$

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[2]There is some support for this assumption from the behavior of other Mayan languages, outside of the Kichean family, such as Tzotzil; see Preminger 2011a:81–83.

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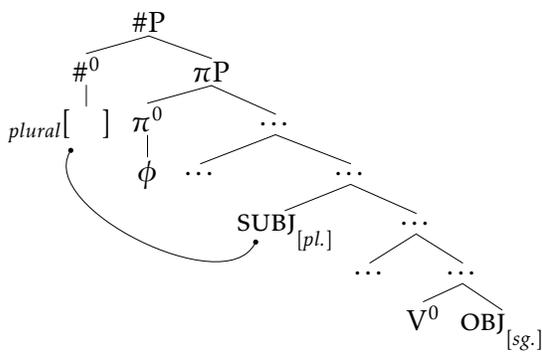
    ○ i.e., when both core arguments are 3rd-person

- Assuming that $\#^0$ is relativized to [*plural*] (just like π^0 is relativized to [*participant*]) —

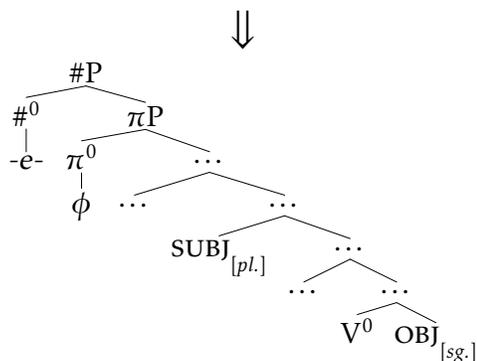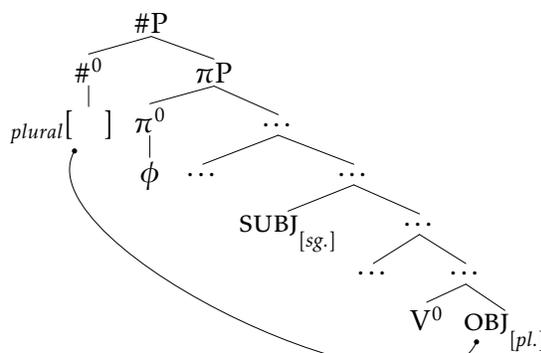   ○ only DPs bearing [*plural*] will give rise to valuation on $\#^0$

(30)   a. $\#^0$ with valued [*plural*]:[3]   /-e-/
        b. $\#^0$ without valued [*plural*]:   /-ϕ-/

(31)   *RELATIVIZED PROBING FOR [PLURAL]*

     a. *PL SUBJECT, SG OBJECT*   b. *SG SUBJECT, PL OBJECT*

- Despite these overwhelming similarities in [*participant*] and [*plural*] (compare (26a–b) and (31a–b)), there is one important difference, having to do with <u>argument licensing</u>

    ○ recall the *AF person restriction*, which was argued to derive directly from Béjar & Rezac's (2003) *PLC* — in (27) and (28), respectively

    ○ and recall that there is no corresponding *"AF plural restriction"*; two plurals can co-occur in AF (see (20), above)

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[3]Additional 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 (23), above). It is not inconceivable that *rje'* (3pl) arises from *rja'* (3sg) via the affixation of *-e-*, followed by simplification of the resulting diphthong.

↦ This is predicted, if we assume—with Béjar & Rezac 2003—that the PLC is a *sui generis* licensing requirement on marked [PERSON] features

     ○ rather than on marked φ-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

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We have arrived at a comprehensive account of φ-agreement in Kichean AF, which:

(i) captures the effects of salience scales/hierarchies (like the one repeated in (32), below), without recourse to an extrinsic device of this sort

(ii) derives the *AF person restriction* as a theorem

(iii) captures the distinctions in morpho-phonological form between 1st/2nd-person "agreement markers" and 3rd-person ones (repeated in (33), 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 φ-probes, π^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 φ-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"

           . . . .

(32)   *1st/2nd ≫ 3rd-plural (≫ 3rd-singular)*   *[=(5)]*

(33)

	1sg	*1pl*	*2sg*	*2pl*	*3sg*	*3pl*
strong pronoun	*ÿin*	*röj*	*rat*	*rïx*	*rja'*	*rje'*
absolutive agreement marker	*-i(n)-*	*-oj-*	*-a(t)-*	*-ix-*	*-ɸ-*	*-e-*

(Kaqchikel)
[=(23)]

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3. Consequences for *filtration* theories of φ-agreement

- Agreement in Kichean AF is obligatory (*yes, this is a rather trivial observation…*)

(34) 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.).'   *[=(6–7)]*

(35) a. Ja   rje'   x-**e/***ϕ-tz'et-ö   rja'
               FOC them PRFV-**3pl/*3sg.ABS**-see-AF him
               'It was them who saw him.'

      b. Ja   rja' x-**e/***ϕ-tz'et-ö   rje'
               FOC him PRFV-**3pl/*3sg.ABS**-see-AF them
               'It was him who saw them.'   *[=(15–16)]*

- Suppose that this is the result of the presence of "uninterpretable" features on the probe (in this case, $\pi^0/\#^0$)

  ⇒ the ungrammatical variants of (34–35) are ruled out because these "uninterpretable" features reach the interfaces without being checked/deleted

  NOTE: While so-called "agreement" with 1st/2nd-person arguments in AF was analyzed in §2.4 as clitic-doubling, this does not affect the logic of obligatoriness; indeed, if a 1st/2nd-person argument could be probed by π^0 without concomitant clitic-doubling, the "non-agreeing" variants of (34a–b) would be grammatical, which they are not.

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

(36) ja **ri xoq**   x-ϕ-tz'et-ö   **ri achin**
      FOC **the woman** PRFV-3sg.ABS-see-AF **the man**
      'It was the woman who saw the man.'   *[=(11)]*

  ○ These should be ungrammatical unless some syntactic node has checked/deleted the "uninterpretable" features on both π^0 and $\#^0$

  ○ Now, there is no 1st/2nd-person and/or plural DP in (36)

    – nor does any 1st/2nd-person and/or plural agreement morphology appear

⇒ The targets that putatively check the "uninterpretable" features on π^0 and $\#^0$ must be <u>3rd-person singular</u>

↪ But it was shown in §2.4 that:

  – $\boldsymbol{\pi^0}$ **must systematically skip <u>3rd-person</u> targets**; and

  – $\boldsymbol{\#^0}$ **must systematically skip <u>singular</u> targets**

○ otherwise, we would falsely predict that the probe could agree with the 3rd-person subject in an example like (34b), and with the singular subject in (35b)

  – 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

  (on the hypothesis that the checking of "uninterpretable" features is what enforces the obligatoriness of agreement, in the first place)

⇒ There is no node that could have checked the "uninterpretable" features on $\pi^0/\#^0$, as everything in the clause is <u>3rd-person singular</u>

○ The same applies to any potential agreement target, not just subjects/objects:

  – covert expletives, functional projections along the clausal spine, etc.

  These will also be <u>3rd-person/singular</u>—and again, the verb shows no 1st/2nd-person or plural morphology (36), in the first place—and thus cannot be targeted by π^0

⇒ **An approach based on "uninterpretable" features cannot handle the Kichean facts**

....

But what about "Last Resort"?

• it is possible that there is a repair mechanism capable of eliminating "uninterpretable" 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 (34–35) (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 <u>uninterpretable/interpretable</u> or <u>unchecked/checked</u> tracks

↪ but if agreement must be attempted independently of whether or not it succeeds, then **"uninterpretable" features are bearing absolutely *none* of the empirical burden**

  ○ i.e., there is no ungrammatical utterance whose ungrammaticality results from an unchecked "uninterpretable" feature

....

But what if the probe carries "uninterpretable" 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 <u>is</u> a viable agreement target present —
    - ○ otherwise the ungrammatical variant of (37), below, would be falsely ruled in:

(37)   Ja   rja'   x-**e/*** ϕ-tz'et-ö   rje'
       FOC him PRFV-**3pl/*3sg.ABS**-see-AF them
       'It was him who saw them.'   *[=(16, 35b)]*

- ↠ It cannot be the case that [plural]-bearing DPs generally require licensing by agreement
    - ○ otherwise at least one of the [plural]-bearing arguments in (38) would go unlicensed

(38)   Ja   röj x-**oj**-tz'et-ö   rje'
       FOC us   PRFV-**1pl.ABS**-see-AF them
       'It was us who saw them.'

    (recall that *Multiple Agree* is not suited to handle agreement in Kichean; see Preminger 2011a, as well as §2.4 above)

- ⇒ It seems that **there is no way to enforce the "uninterpretable"-bearing variant to appear in (37), that does not also falsely rule out (38)**

Note that the same considerations also militate against an account where the DPs themselves, rather than the probe, carry the "uninterpretable" features which enforce the obligatoriness of φ-agreement —

- since again, this predicts ungrammaticality for (38), which involves two [*plural*]-bearing DPs but only one φ-agreement relation

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CONCLUSIONS SO FAR:

- It is <u>empirically untenable</u> to derive the obligatoriness of φ-agreement from "uninterpretable" features (or any other 'derivational time-bomb')
    - ⇒ *So we should, you know, **stop using them** for that...*

SOME OPEN QUESTIONS:

- What role, if any, remains for "uninterpretable" features? (*EPP? {c,C}ase?*)
- Given their inadequacy as the mechanism underlying φ-agreement, can/should we try to do away with them altogether?

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4. The *conjoint/disjoint* distinction and the distribution of *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 in the current presentation. 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).

(39)   a. ku- ϕ/***ya**- pheka [u-   Sipho   ]   (Zulu)
           17s-   cook   1AUG- 1Sipho
           '*SIPHO*'s cooking.'

       b. [u-   Sipho] u- **ya/***ϕ- pheka
           1AUG- 1Sipho   1s-   cook
           'Sipho is cooking.'

- Contra what (39a–b) might lead you to believe, it is not the case that *conjoint/disjoint* simply tracks whether or not something has been extracted from *v*P;

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

> *conjoint*: *v*P contains overt postverbal material

> *disjoint*: *v*P 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 (40a), where the subject has been extracted from *v*P, the *conjoint* is still required and the *disjoint* still impossible—since the *v*P still contains the object

      – the object must be extracted, as well, for the *disjoint* to be grammatical, as in (40b) (in which case the *conjoint* is impossible, of course)

   ○ in (41), conversely, no extraction has taken place, yet the *disjoint* is the required form (and the *conjoint* is impossible), since the *v*P is born empty

(40)　a.　*TRANSITIVE W/POSTVERBAL OBJECT:* **CONJOINT** *REQUIRED*
　　　　[u-　　Sipho　] u-　ϕ/***ya**- pheka [i-　　　qanda]
　　　　　1AUG- 1Sipho　1S-　　　cook　　5AUG- 5egg
　　　　'Sipho is cooking an egg.'

　　　b.　*TRANSITIVE W/PREVERBAL OBJECT:* **DISJOINT** *REQUIRED*
　　　　[i-　　　qanda] [u-　　Sipho　] u- **ya**/*ϕ- li-　pheka
　　　　　5AUG- 5egg　　　1AUG- 1Sipho　1S-　　　　5O- cook
　　　　'As for the egg, Sipho is cooking it.'

(41)　*WEATHER PREDICATE:* **DISJOINT** *REQUIRED*
　　　ku-　**ya**/*ϕ- banda
　　　17S-　　　be.cold
　　　'It's cold.'

- Finally, the alternation is sensitive not only to arguments, but also to locative modifiers[4]
  - compare high (i.e., location) reading of *phandle* "outside", vs. low (i.e., goal) reading:

(42)　a.　[u-　　Sipho　] [u-　ϕ- 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*)

4.2. The *augment*

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

(43)　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)

- In a set of restricted environments, nominals may appear without an *augment* vowel (Buell 2011, Mzolo 1968, Von Staden 1973)

- There are several factors that affect the distribution of <u>augment-less</u> nominals—including definiteness, specificity, and focus, as well as the presence of c-commanding negation (Buell 2011, Halpert 2011)

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[4]Claire Halpert's (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).

⇢ 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 <u>augment-less</u> nominals must appear within vP:

(44) 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.'

      b.   A-   ngi-   sho- ngo   ukuthi [**u-   muntu**] u- fik-   ile
           NEG- 1st.sg.S- say- NEG.PAST that   **1AUG- 1person** 1S- arrive- PRFV
           'I didn't say that someone came.'

(45) 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.'

      b. * A-   ngi-   sho- ngo   ukuthi [**muntu**] u- fik-   ile
           NEG- 1st.sg.S- say- NEG.PAST that   **1person** 1S- arrive- PRFV

• Next, note that an <u>augment-less</u> nominal must be the highest in its vP:[5]

(46) 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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[5]See 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" — but rather, simply a lack of valuation on L^0**

(47)   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)

(48)   a.
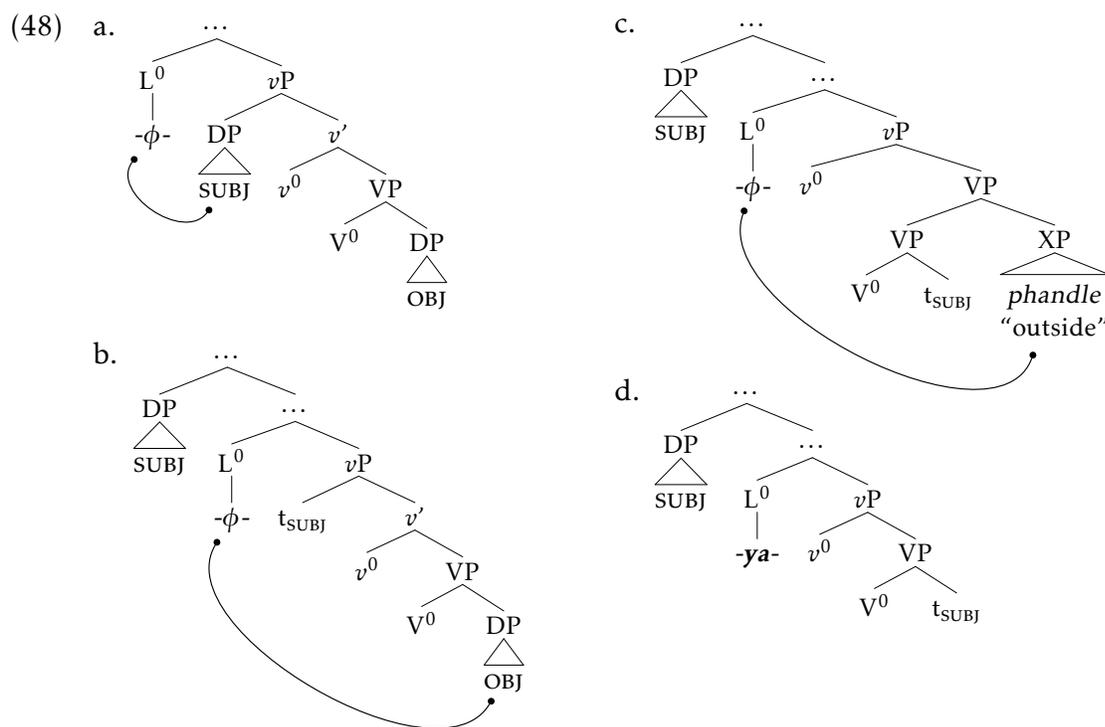
Turning now to nominal *augment*:

- suppose that <u>augment-less</u> 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
- <u>augmented</u> 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. (20), above, a grammatical example of AF with two plural arguments

↝ **This derives the fact that multiple <u>augmented</u> nominals can co-occur, but at most one <u>augment-less</u> nominal can appear per *v*P**

- exactly like Kichean [*plural*]-bearers and [*participant*]-bearers, respectively (and for the same reasons)

⇒ Thus, in (48a) above, for example, it is impossible for both the subject and the object to be <u>augment-less</u> — as confirmed by (46c), repeated here:

(46)   c.   * a-   ku- phek- i   [**muntu**   ] [**qanda**]
             NEG- 17S- cook- NEG   **1person**   **5egg**

··

- A significant difference relative to Kichean is that the kind of nominal requiring licensing in Zulu (i.e., the <u>augment-less</u> kind) must be the highest argument in *v*P

  - as demonstrated by (46d), repeated here:

(46)   d.   * a-   ku- phek- i   [**u-**   **muntu**   ] [**qanda**]
             NEG- 17S- cook- NEG   **1AUG- 1person**   **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, (6–9) in §2.1)

 - In other words, 3rd-singular DPs in Kichean are "skippable", whereas Zulu has no "skippable" DPs

↝ **But this derives from an independently observable difference between the Kichean and Zulu patterns:**

  - in terms of *Relativized Minimality*, Zulu L^0 is relativized to target pretty much *any* XP, even locative modifiers

    – recall (42a–b), repeated here:

(42)   a.   [u-   Sipho   ] [u-   gijima phandle]$_{v\text{P}}$
            1AUG- 1Sipho   1S- run   outside
            'Sipho is running outside.' (✓ *goal reading*, ✗ *location reading*)
    b.   [u-   Sipho   ] [u- **ya-** gijima]$_{v\text{P}}$ 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)

(49)　　　　　···　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*[cf. (48a–b)]*

···
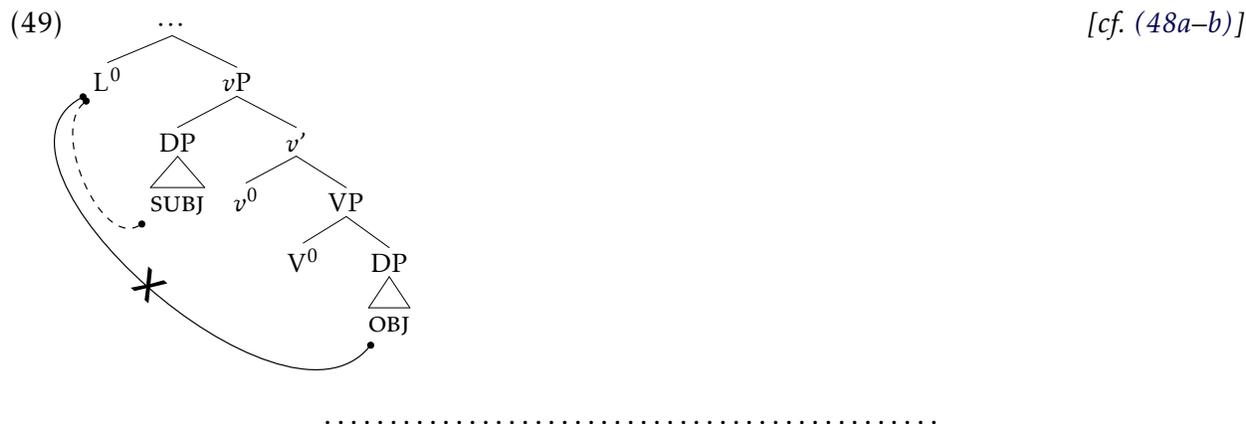
4.4. The case from Zulu against *filtration*

- 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 (50a–c), repeated from earlier, where the vP has been completely vacated:

(50)　a. [u-　　Sipho] u-　**ya/*ϕ**- pheka
　　　　　　1AUG- 1Sipho　1S-　　　cook
　　　　　'Sipho is cooking.'　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*[=(39b)]*

　　　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.'　　　　　　　　　　　　*[=(40b)]*

　　　c. ku-　**ya/*ϕ**- banda
　　　　　17S-　　　be.cold　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*[=(41)]*

- crucially, L^0 cannot engage in *Multiple Agree* relations
  - since that would falsely predict that more than one <u>augment-less</u> nominal could appear (and be licensed) within the same vP
- consequently, vP cannot be a viable target for L^0
  - since given the unavailability of *Multiple Agree*, that would predict that an <u>augment-less</u> 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**

  ○ 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 in Kichean

    – namely, it renders the obligatoriness of L^0-probing impossible to derive without falsely ruling out the appearance of multiple <u>augmented</u> 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 scales/hierarchies

• Recall now the approach to φ-agreement in Kichean AF based on a salience scale/hierarchy, as in (51):

(51)   *1st/2nd ≫ 3rd-plural (≫ 3rd-singular)*   *[=(5)]*

• We can now add one more significant shortcoming to this approach:

  ○ to capture the unity between the Kichean facts and the Zulu facts—as uncovered by Halpert and discussed in §4.3–§4.4—the scales/hierarchies approach would have to posit a corresponding scale for Zulu

  ○ **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 (51)—is for <u>augment-less</u> nominals to be somehow more "salient" than <u>augmented</u> 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 <u>has</u> 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.

....

A small (but important) methodological note:

- Unlike the Kichean data examined in §2–§3, the Zulu data discussed here is not self-evidently about **agreement**
   - ○ after all, not every restriction on the distribution of morphemes is necessarily a matter of agreement (at least not pre-theoretically)
- ↪ But crucially, we have seen that the *conjoint/disjoint* alternation and the distribution of the *augment* can be captured using the same analysis proposed in §2.4
   - ○ an analysis which was put forth to handle facts that <u>are</u> pre-theoretically identifiable as agreement par excellence
- The only modification required was the feature-relativization of the relevant probe (i.e., which targets were relevant and which were skipped, as per *Relativized Minimality*)
   - ○ which is something that can be gleaned directly from the surface syntax of Zulu
      - – namely, the behavior of the *conjoint/disjoint* w.r.t. locative modifiers; see §4.1
- ⇒ **We can conclude with a reasonable degree of certainty that these phenomena in Zulu <u>are</u> a matter of agreement, proper**

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OUTLINE

- ☑ Agreement in the Kichean *Agent-Focus* construction
- ☑ Consequences for *filtration* theories of φ-agreement
- ☑ The *conjoint/disjoint* distinction and the distribution of *augment* in Zulu
- ☐ Some implications of the existence of tolerated failed φ-agreement

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5. Some implications of the existence of tolerated failed φ-agreement

§2–§4 ⟹ The obligatoriness of φ-agreement cannot be reduced to *filtration*, along the lines of "uninterpretable" features.

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

(i) φ-agreement as a *violable constraint*:

(52) HaveAgr: Assign one violation mark for every failure to represent the φ-features of the designated argument on a finite verb.

- ○ when there is a viable agreement target, a candidate form with φ-agreement will outperform a candidate without φ-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) φ-agreement as an *obligatory operation*:

(53) 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.   [*Preminger 2011a:128*]

- what is obligatory, on this view, is the invocation of (53)

  ⇒ ungrammaticality arises when (53) is not invoked

- once (53) *is* invoked, however, the derivation will culminate successfully,
  whether 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

....

Regardless of which implementation we ultimately adopt:

↬ the fact that the grammar tolerates attempted-but-failed agreement has implications for
empirical domains beyond the ones discussed so far

I will briefly discuss one example here, involving the typology of *partial agreement*:

• Baker (2008, 2011):
When an agreement host reflects only a proper subset of the φ-features of a given DP, it is
typically [PERSON]-agreement that goes missing.[6]

⇒ 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—
something along the lines of *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 which we descriptively characterize as "[PERSON]-agreement breaking
  down" (cf. *PCC effects*)

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[6]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. See Baker 2008:8–9 for some discussion.

<u>Preminger (2011b):</u>

1. [PERSON]-agreement at a distance, while rare, does exist
   - for example, in certain varieties of Basque (Preminger 2009), as well as in the Kichean data you have just seen

2. [NUMBER]-agreement at a distance, while more common than [PERSON]-agreement at a distance, is also "fragile"
   - see considerable work on so-called *defective intervention* in Romance, Greek, Icelandic, Basque, and others

⇒ **What if instances of alleged "partial agreement" are simply instances of tolerated attempted-but-failed agreement**?

Focusing again on [PERSON] and [NUMBER], and what should by now be their familiar clausal arrangement:

(54) $[\dots [_{\#P} \#^0 [_{\pi P} \pi^0 [\dots DP_T \dots]]] \dots]$ *(where DP_T is a putative agreement target)*

- suppose there is some syntactic obstruction separating π^0 and DP_T
  - such as an intervening nominal (e.g. a dative), or a phase boundary
- this will prevent π^0 from agreeing with DP_T; now one of two things can happen:

   (i) NOTHING

   The obstruction remains, and similarly prevents agreement between $\#^0$ and DP_T

   - as is the case in full-fledged "defective intervention"

   (ii) SOMETHING

   Probing by π^0, even though it was unsuccessful in reaching DP_T, had syntactic consequences that effectively removed the obstruction — for example:

   - clitic-doubling the intervener (Anagnostopoulou 2003, Béjar & Rezac 2003)
   - agreeing with the phase-head, thereby allowing subsequent probing to look inside the phase in question (Rackowski & Richards 2005)

   In these cases, probing by $\#^0$ will be *successful* in targeting DP_T.

   ↣ **Crucially, this requires a grammar where probing by π^0 that has failed to find the kind of target being sought is tolerated, and the derivation proceeds, impervious to this failure (cf. the notion of "crash").**

Importantly, the converse pattern, where π^0 can successfully target DP_T but $\#^0$ cannot, is predicted not to exist:[7]

- π^0 and $\#^0$ are consecutive heads in the clausal spine;
- $\Rightarrow$ the only position for an obstruction that would block $\#^0$ but not π^0 is in [Spec,π];
- but π^0 is not a thematic head, it does not introduce arguments of its own;
- $\Rightarrow$ the obstructing XP got to [Spec,π] via movement
  - $\circ$ movement which could only have been triggered by π^0, given that there are no intermediate heads
- XP was closer to π^0 than DP_T was (otherwise DP_T would have moved instead);
- $\Rightarrow$ XP would have intervened in probing of DP_T by π^0, as well
  - ↠ *contradiction*.

And, of course, it could be the case that there was no obstruction to begin with—and so probing by both π^0 and $\#^0$ would go through unimpeded (a.k.a. "successful φ-agreement").

On the other hand, merging DP_T in (the specifier of) the immediate complement of π^0 would render an obstruction impossible.[8]

<u>This derives:</u>

(i) the fact that long-distance [PERSON]-agreement is more susceptible to disruption than long-distance [NUMBER]-agreement

(ii) the fact that both are more susceptible to disruption than agreement at close range, whether in [NUMBER] or in [PERSON]

An aside:

- The overall "fragility" of agreement at a distance has led some researchers to claim that agreement is invariantly *upwards* (e.g., that it adheres to a "spec-head" requirement; see Koopman 2006 for a recent example)
  - $\circ$ This, of course, is not really borne out by the data
    - – the Basque pattern referenced earlier, for example, cannot be handled in a "spec-head" system without assuming massive amounts of movement which— if allowed—empty the "spec-head" proposal of any empirical content
  - $\circ$ But that doesn't mean the guiding insight, which I take to be that *agreement at close range is (nearly) foolproof*, is wrong

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[7]The expression *X successfully targets DP_T* is to be understood, in this context, as *X* successfully reflecting marked φ-features found on DP_T ([*participant*], [*author*], [*plural*], etc.); it is, in my mind, an open question whether such a thing as "agreement with a 3rd-person/singular nominal" 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).

[8]This is so even if the category α in [Compl,π] is phasal, since the XP in [Spec,α] would be situated in the escape-hatch of that phase.

⤳ On the current proposal: if DP_T has made it to [Spec,X] (where X is π^0 or $\#^0$) in the overt syntax, then there was clearly no impediment to X probing DP_T in its lower, base position

⇒ Some of the more familiar arguments for "spec-head" (e.g., agreement with low targets is optional/impoverished/unavailable, compared to agreement with pre-verbal targets) are really arguments for the exact opposite:

  ○ they show that agreement is sensitive to intervening material, and that the effects of this sensitivity disappear when there is no room for intervening material

    – exactly what we'd expect if agreement was *downwards*

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OUTLINE

☑ Agreement in the Kichean *Agent-Focus* construction
☑ Consequences for *filtration* theories of φ-agreement
☑ The *conjoint/disjoint* distinction and the distribution of *augment* in Zulu
☑ Some implications of the existence of tolerated failed φ-agreement

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6. Conclusions

1. Chomsky & Lasnik were right to hedge their bets:
    not all instances of obligatoriness can be reduced to surface filters

    • In particular, "uninterpretable" features (Chomsky 2000, 2001) are empirically inadequate as an account for the obligatoriness of φ-agreement

      ○ as demonstrated, initially, on the basis of φ-agreement in the Kichean *Agent-Focus* construction

    ⇒ **We need to reexamine any account that appeals to unchecked "uninterpretable" φ-features in deriving the ungrammaticality of an utterance**

2. Some phenomena that don't necessary look like φ-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 φ-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)

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