

Multiple Agrees?

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1. Valuation and Agree

Morphological Agreement: (very general statement) Properties (features) of one element determine the realization of another element.

Minimalist Perspective:

- ▶ Morphological agreement reflects existence of **uninterpretable features**.
- ▶ Syntax is driven by the need to associate these with valued and interpretable counterparts.
- ▶ All displacement results from a drive to eliminate uninterpretable features. → Feature valuation optionally triggers movement.

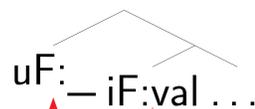
Syntax is an engine of valuation.

Mechanism of valuation is **Agree** (Chomsky, 1998)

2. The Debate

- ▶ **Agree** is an operation that licenses unvalued/uninterpretable features (**uF₋**) by relating them to valued/interpretable features (**iF_{val}**).
- ▶ Recent disagreement about the **configuration** in which licensing/valuation occurs:

Original answer: “Standard” Agree
(Chomsky, 1998)



feature values always passed **upwards**

Core motivation: finite agreement with post-verbal subjects.

- ▶ Icelandic agreement with *in situ* nominative objects:

- (1) Henni **leiddust** strákar.
3SG.F.DAT bored.3PL the.boys
“She found the boys boring.” (Sigurdsson, 1996, 3)

- ▶ Arabic (partial) agreement with post-verbal subjects:

- (2) **qadim-a** (/ *qadim-uu) al-ṭawlaadu.
came-3SG.M came-3PL.M the-boys-3PL.M
“The boys came.” (Harbert and Bahloul, 2002, 45)

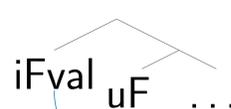
- ▶ Long distance agreement in Tsez and Basque with absolutive DPs “trapped” in embedded clauses (Preminger, 2012): movement above agreement target uniformly ungrammatical.

- (3) [₋ T⁰ [CP ... DP_{abs} ...]]
φ_{val}
-

Clear evidence on both sides: both upwards and downwards valuation are attested.

Preliminary conclusion: Agree must be **bifurcated** into two different operations of valuation.

Recent alternative: “Reverse” Agree
(Zeijlstra, 2010; Wurmbrand, 2011)



feature values always passed **downwards**

Core motivation: cases where a semantic operator licenses *multiple* lower morphological realizations.

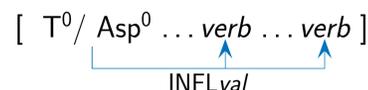
- ▶ Negative concord (Zeijlstra, 2012)

- (4) Dnes nikdo nevolá nikomu
Today n-body NEG.calls n-body?
“Today nobody is calling anybody?” (Czech: Zeijlstra, 2012, 14c)

- ▶ Inflectional “doubling” / “parasitic” inflection (Wiklund, 2007; Wurmbrand, 2012)

- (5) Han hade kunnat skrivit.
he had can.PTCP write.PTCP
“He had been able to write.” (Swedish: Wiklund, 2007, 1)

- (6) hy soe it **dien** (/ dwaan) wollen ha
he would it do.PTCP (/ do.INF) want.PTCP have.INF
“He would have liked to do it.”
(Frisian: Den Dikken and Hoekstra, 1997, 3)



3. Independent Operations?

- ▶ Is there a principled distinction in where **Standard Agree** and **Reverse Agree** apply?

- ▶ Core cases promising, each required in to account for very different empirical domains.

Standard Agree: relationships between arguments and clause structure

Reverse Agree: relationships between functional elements in a sequence

- ▶ Unfortunately, neat division breaks down elsewhere. . .

- ▶ Can’t be distinguished by **position** of features:

- ▶ **Standard Agree** might apply between heads and phrases; **Reverse Agree** between heads themselves.
- ▶ But as seen already, negative concord involves phrases *and* downwards valuation.

- ▶ Can’t be distinguished by **type** of features:

- ▶ **Standard Agree** might apply to features interpretable on DPs (ϕ , WH); **Reverse Agree** elsewhere.
- ▶ But cf. Baker (2008): downwards ϕ -valuation in Bantu subject agreement.

- (7) a. Omo-mulongo mw-a-hik-a mukali.
LOC.18-village.3 18S-PAST-arrive-FV woman.1
“At the village arrived a woman.”
b. Oko-mesa kw-a-hir-aw-a ehilanga.
LOC.17-table 17S-PAST-put-PASS-FV peanuts.19
“On the table were put peanuts.” (Kinande: Baker, 2008, p. 158)

- ▶ Direction of valuation could be **parameterized**, by language or by feature (Baker, 2008; Merchant, 2011) → but this would weaken the predictions of the theory.

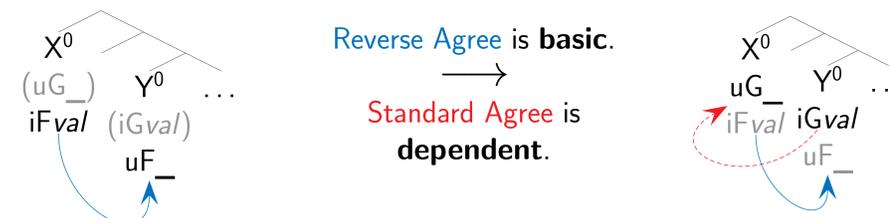
4. Towards (partial) unification

- ▶ A stronger theory is available: upwards and downwards valuation are not equivalent:

Asymmetry: upwards ϕ -valuation is often **defective**; downwards ϕ -valuation is not.

- ▶ English: optional agreement with expletive *there*
- ▶ Icelandic: quirky agreement only for number (Sigurdsson, 1996; Taraldsen, 1996)
- ▶ Arabic: post-verbal agreement only for person and gender (Fassi Fehri, 1993).

Zeijlstra (2013): upwards valuation (i.e. **Standard Agree**) is **parasitic** on pre-existing downwards valuation (i.e. **Reverse Agree**).



- ▶ **Remaining question:** why would parasitic valuation be defective?

- ▶ Possible answer: only features accessible to upwards valuation are those on the head that is receiving features – cross-linguistic variation in distribution of ϕ -features within DP.

Conclusions:

- ▶ Separate operations in one sense: upwards and downwards valuation do not apply in the same structural configurations, and do not necessarily yield the same effects.
- ▶ A single operations in another: upwards valuation is simply a **reflex** of downwards valuation (reverse of Chomsky (1998)’s approach to Case).
- ▶ Predictions to be pursued: link between upwards agreement and Case; direction of any asymmetries between upwards and downwards valuation.

For references and further detail, please see handout.

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