

1 Intro

★ In this talk we present:

1. A reanalysis of facts about Lubukusu complementizer agreement (henceforth CA), that proposes:
 - (a) CA in Lubukusu is controlled by matrix T, which values features directly on the embedded C (requires a modification of a feature sharing view of feature valuation)
 - (b) This probe is omnivorous (Béjar 2003, Nevins 2011) and can continue to interact with heads on the clausal spine until it reaches a phase boundary.
 - (c) vP does not behave like a phase in Lubukusu for some reason
2. A novel use of ellipsis to adjudicate between the aforementioned proposal and an indirect agree story such as Diercks (2013)

★ We argue that this reanalysis and Diercks (2013) are equally successful at explaining the facts, but this reanalysis offers a more generalizable account that can extend to agreement phenomena cross-linguistically.

2 A Reanalysis of Lubukusu CA

★ Lubukusu embedded complementizers may agree with the superordinate subject:

- (1) a. baba-ndu ba-bol-el-a Alfredi **ba**-li a-kha-khil-e
 2-people 2S-said-AP-FV 1Alfred 2-that 1S-FUT-conquer
 “The people told Alfred that he will win.”
- b. Alfredi ka-bol-el-a baba-ndu **a**-li ba-kha-khil-e
 1Alfred 1S-said-AP-FV 2-person 1-that 2S-FUT-conquer
 “Alfred told the people that they will win.” (Diercks 2013)

★ Diercks (2013) proposes an indirect agree story in which a null pronoun in Spec CP can be bound by matrix T (by moving to the matrix clause above matrix objects). This null pronoun controls agreement on embedded C.

- (2) Indirect Agree Analysis of CA in Lubukusu (Diercks 2013)

$$[\text{TP Subject}_1 \dots [\text{CP OP}_1 [\dots \text{C} \dots] \dots] \dots]$$

★ We can reanalyze this as direct feature valuation on embedded C by matrix T:

1. if we relax our notions about the phasal status of vP,
2. assume T’s phi probe is omnivorous (Béjar 2003, Nevins 2011), and keeps interacting with elements on the clausal spine until it reaches a phase boundary.

(3) Direct Feature Valuation Analysis of CA in Lubukusu (Newman 2018)

$$[{}_{TP} \text{ Subject } [{}_{T'} T [{}_{vP} \dots V \dots [{}_{CP} \dots C \dots]]]]$$

Agree

★ This sort of an analysis is attractive because it can generalize to agreement and parasitic morphology phenomena cross-linguistically (van Urk to appear), and does not stipulate the existence of a null operator.

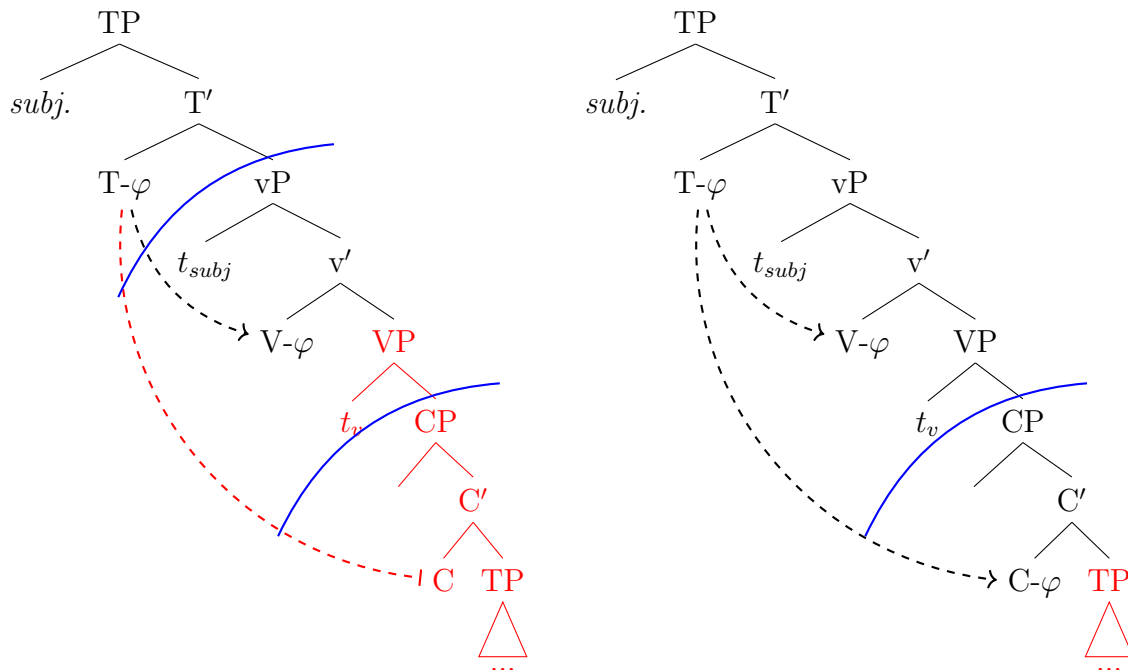


Figure 1: φ -agreement in languages where vP is a phase, vs. where vP is not a phase

★ **Prediction:** if there is an intervening probe or phase boundary between matrix T and embedded C, CA should be blocked. Indeed we see such an intervention effect:

- Associative phrases with an agreeing associative head block CA
- Adjunct phrases do not block CA

- (4) a. M-bona bu-ng'ali **bw-a** **Alfredi mbo** (*a-li/*n-di) ...
 1SG-PRS.see 14-certainty 14-ASSOC 1Alfred that (*1-that/*1SG-that) ...
 "I see Alfred's certainty that..."
- b. M-bona bu-ng'ali **mu-Alfredi n-di** ...
 1SG-PRS.see 14-certainty 18-Alfred 1SG-that ...
 "I see Alfred's certainty..." (Diercks 2013)

★ We might conclude from (4) that the associative head is the sort of thing that either denotes a phase or is a more local phi probe that interrupts T's phi probe.

★ We see these sorts of intervention effects with by-phrases in the passive as well, presumably for a similar reason.

- (5) a. omw-ana ka-a-sitaki-bwa a-li k-eba chi-ngokho
 1-child 1S-PST-accuse-PASS 1-that 1S-stole 10-chicken
 “The child was accused that he stole chickens.”
- b. omw-ana ka-a-sitaki-bwa **ne ba-bebusi mbo** (*a-li) k-eba
 1-child 1S-PST-accuse-PASS by 2-parents that (*1-that) 1S-stole
 chi-ngokho
 10-chicken
 “The child was accused by the parents that he stole chickens.” (Diercks 2013)

★ **Puzzle:** Subjects that hyper-raise out of embedded clauses do not control agreement on the embedded C:

- (6) a. Li-lolekhana **li-li** Sammy a-likho a-lwala
 5S-seems 5-that 1Sammy 1S-PROG 1S-be.sick
 “It seems like Sammy is sick.”
- b. Sammy a-lolekhana **mbo** (*a-li) a-likho a-lwala
 1Sammy 1S-appears that 1S-PROG 1S-be.sick
 “Sammy appears to be sick.” (Diercks 2013)

★ **Pattern:** When the subject is merged above the embedded C, we see phi agreement on C. When the subject is merged below the embedded C, we see no agreement.

★ **Suggestion:** maybe timing is important, i.e. T needs to have already agreed with the subject *before* it interacts with C, in order to value features on the embedded C ... need to modify a feature sharing account of head agreement (Pesetsky and Torrego 2004)

Proposal: T can only share its features if it has something to share. I propose that feature valuation is mediated by another probe on T, which I will call an *Affix Host* probe.

The Affix Host probe mediates phi feature valuation on V and C by allowing T to flag which heads it will share its features with. T can only begin to flag heads for feature valuation after it has itself been valued for phi features (i.e. it has become a non-null affix).

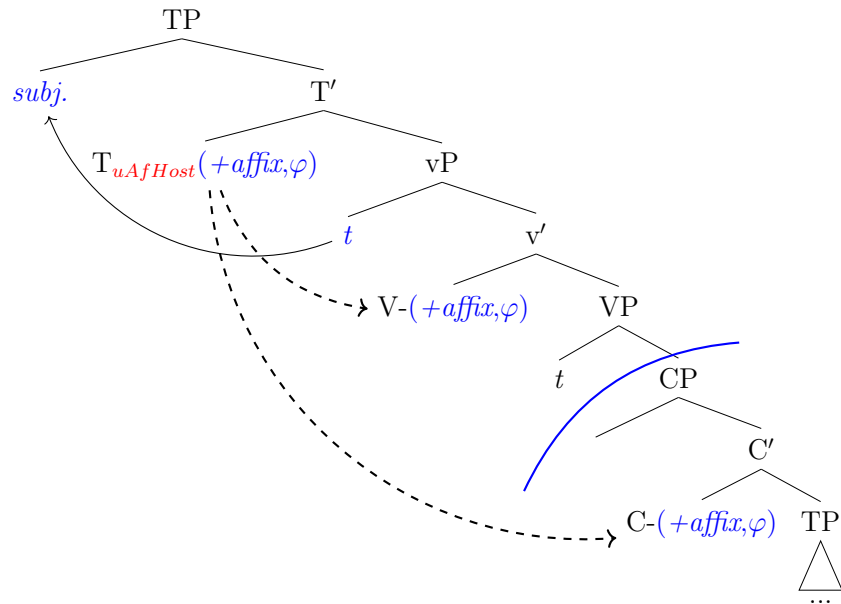


Figure 2: Complementizer agreement when the matrix subject is base generated in the matrix clause.

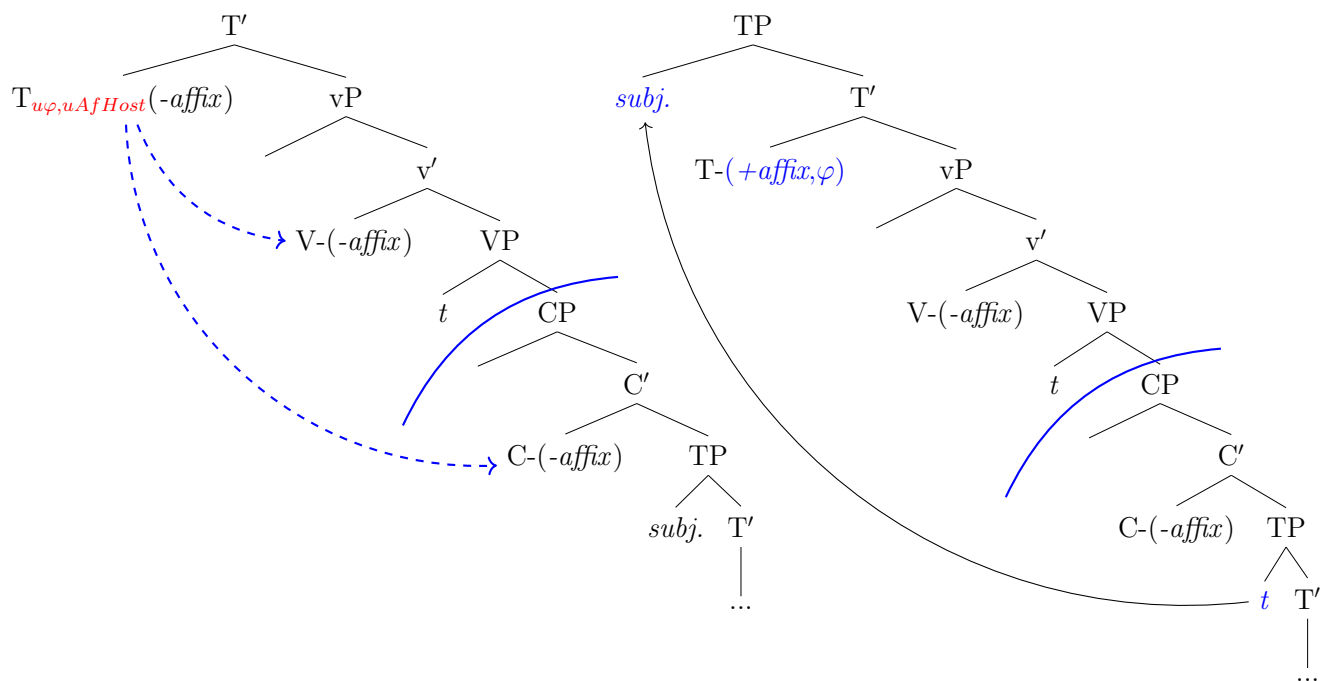


Figure 3: Lack of complementizer agreement when the matrix subject is base generated in the embedded clause.

V ultimately moves to T, so V *always* shows phi agreement, but embedded C only agrees when the subject is base generated in the matrix clause.

In summary, this reanalysis of Lubukusu CA explains the basic facts, and presents a modified view of feature valuation that has the capacity to generalize cross-linguistically. More discussion of the predictions of this account can be found in Appendix A.

3 Using Ellipsis to Test Predictions

★ Two competing hypotheses:

1. A null anaphor in Spec, CP of the embedded clause is bound by the matrix subject (Diercks 2013)
2. Matrix T values the φ -features of embedded C via Agreement (Newman 2018)

★ A diagnostic from ellipsis can tease them apart. First let's look at English; sloppy reading is only compatible with matrix VP ellipsis:

- (7) John_i has said that Mary will hit him_i, and Bill_j also has said ~~Mary will hit him_j~~.
- (8) *John_i has said that Mary will hit him_i, and Bill_j has also said she will ~~hit him_j~~.

★ Ellipsis is a two-step process (Takahashi and Fox 2005):

- Step 1: choose a Parallelism Domain (PD). PD must be semantically identical to an antecedent constituent (AC).
- Step 2: MAXELIDE. Elide the biggest deletable constituent reflexively dominated by the PD.

★ Semantic identity requires PD to include variable binders

- A free variable cannot be semantically identical to a corresponding element in the AC
- Therefore, all variables must be bound within the PD
- Pronouns are variables, so the PD must include their binders

- (9) ... and [_{TP} Bill [λx has also [_{VP} said she will [_{VP} hit x]]]]]

1. Possible PD's:	λxP	*Embedded VP
2. MAXELIDE chooses:	Matrix VP ellipsis	*Embedded VP ellipsis
4. Result:	(7) ... and Bill also has.	(8) *... and Bill has also said she will.

★ If Lubukusu agreeing complementizer is a pronoun-like variable (Diercks 2013), and if it were to be included in the PD, its binder must be included in the PD as well

★ In contrast, if the complementizer gets its φ -features valued by Agreement with T (Newman 2018), there is no null pronoun to impose restrictions on the PD

(10) Hypothetical Lubukusu sentence:

baba ba-bol-el-a Alfredi ba-li a-kha-khil-e,
2-men 2S-said-AP-FV 1Alfred 2-that 1S-FUT-conquer

“The men told Alfred that he will win,”

a. ... and 2-women also 2S-said-AP-FV ~~1Alfred 2-that 1S-FUT-conquer~~

“... and the women also did tell ~~Alfred that he will win~~”

b. ... and 2-women also 2S-said-AP-FV 1Alfred ~~2-that 1S-FUT-conquer~~

“... and the women also told Alfred ~~that he will win~~”¹

(11) ... 2-women [λx also 2S-said-AP-FV [$_{VP}$ 1Alfred [$_{CPx}$ 2-that [$_{TP}$ 1S-FUT-conquer]]]]

1. Possible PD's:	λxP	*Embedded CP
2. MAXELIDE chooses:	Matrix VP ellipsis	*Embedded TP ellipsis
4. Result:	(10a) ... 2-women also 2S-said-AP-FV	(10b) *... 2-women also 2S-said-AP-FV 1Alfred

★ (10a) and (10b) differ minimally by the occurrence of the object *Alfred*; the object cannot be pro-dropped in (10a):

- Object pro-drop triggers obligatory object agreement on the verb
- Matrix VP ellipsis does not require object agreement on the verb

★ TP ellipsis is attested in Basaa (Bassong 2014)

★ V stranding VP ellipsis exists in Kikuyu and Chingoni (Ngonyani & Githinji 2006)

Appendices

A

★ Problematic prediction: auxiliaries and modals should steal phi agreement away from V in hyper-raising examples (to the extent that these examples are even possible). (need to visit other work on these so-called “compound tense constructions”)

(12) omwaana anyala alolekhana bali alia busuma
1child 1Scan 1Sseem that ate ugali

“The child can seem like they ate ugali.” (judgment from Justine Sikuku via Michael Diercks, p.c.)

¹There is a universal requirement that C cannot be stranded behind with TP ellipsis:

(i) Speaker A: John left. Speaker B: *Did ~~he~~ leave?

So I deleted the complementizer in the elided sentence, which should not affect the main point here.

★ Another interesting phenomenon: speaker doubt about the validity of a report can block complementizer agreement. Maybe there is an intervening subjunctive probe or something?

- (13) Mosesi a-lom-ile _____ Sammy k-eb-ile chi-rupia
 1Moses 1S-say-PRF COMP 1Sammy 1S-steal-PST 10-money
 “Moses has said that Sammy stole the money.” (Diercks 2013)
- Moses saw the event, and the speaker believes him: *bali/✓ali
 - Moses did not see the event, but reported what people have said: ✓bali/*ali
 - Moses says he saw the event, but the speaker doesn’t believe him: ✓bali/*ali

★ **Regarding cross-linguistic predictions:** this account of feature valuation adapts easily to languages like English where phi agreement only appears on one head in the clausal spine (namely the highest verbal element).

- (14) a. Gromit likes carrots.
 b. Gromit is eating carrots.
 c. Gromit has eaten carrots.

★ Here T cannot probe past the main verb because vP is a phase, and T cannot probe past the auxiliary verbs because they control the affix on the verb via their own probes (i.e. they require *-ing* or a participle affix on the main verb).

B

★ Can TP ellipsis in (10b) be ungrammatical for an independent reason, such as a universal ban on embedded TP ellipsis? The equivalent English sentence is acceptable and much better than embedded VP ellipsis:

- (15) ??John_i has said that Mary will hit him_i, and Bill_j has also said ~~Mary will hit him_j~~.

References

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