A Morphological Theory of Anti-Agreement

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Anti-agreement
- Anti-agreement (AA)
  φ-agreement with an argument is disrupted when that argument is Ā-extracted (Ouhalla 1993).

1. Berber anti-agreement
   man taghant, ay yezin/’t-,zra Mohand
   which woman C see.PART/3SG,F-see Mohand
   ‘Which woman saw Mohand?’ (Ouhalla 1993:479)

- Traditional view
  AA is a lack of agreement that results from syntactic constraints on extraction (Diercks 2010; Erlewine 2016; Richards 1997; Schneider-Zioga 2007).

Core idea
- AA is a form of wh-agreement – dedicated agreement morphology that indexes extracted arguments (Chung and Georgopoulos 1988).

Proposal
- AA is the result of a φ-probe copying both [φ] and [wh] from a goal.
  (2) [... H[wh] [... DP[φ, wh] ... ]]

- Impoverishment applies to the [φ-wh] bundle in the morphology.
  (3) [φ] → Ø / [__ wh]

- Insertion of a more highly specified agreement exponent is blocked.

- Ā-sensitive Agreement
  ‘Anti-agreement’ and ‘wh-agreement’ same underlying phenomenon.

  ▷ Anti-agreement → default agreement or zero form occurs.
  ▷ Wh-agreement → form realizing [wh] occurs.

Data: Wh-agreement in Abaza (NW Caucasian)
- Verbs exhibit multi-argument agreement, ergative-absolutive alignment.
  (4) prə́ prə́ jə-l-bat’
    3SG,F 2PL 2PL-3SG,F-see
    ‘She saw you(pr)’ (O’Herin 2002:66)

- Wh-words and relative operators (not pictured) control dedicated forms of agreement.

5. Absolutive wh-agreement: y(-φ)-
   [Izmir] prə́ dəzə-’vya, ya-,r-bak”az
   Izmir 3PL who ABS.WH-3PL-see.PL.POST
   ‘Who did they see in Izmir?’ (O’Herin 2002:252)

6. Ergative wh-agreement: z(-φ)-
   [Izmir] dəzə-də afə-č’ə yə-na-z-ax’x
   sugar who 3SG.I-PPV-ERG.WH-take
   ‘Who took the sugar?’ (O’Herin 2002:252)

- Prefixes y(-φ) and z(-φ) occupy same ‘slot’ as other agreement morphemes.

Analysis: Abaza
- O’Herin 2002: Both y(φ)- and z(φ)- spell out [wh]

  Proposal
  a. Full agreement: [φ, y(φ)-val] ↔ /-s/-, /b/-, ...
  ineligible
  b. φ-wh-agreement: [φ, wh] ↔ /2/-
  eligible
  c. Default: [φ] ↔ /-y/
  eligible

- Step 1, Syntax: φ-probe on Agr copies back [φ] and [wh]
  (9) [... Agr[φ] [... DP[φ, wh] ... ]]

  (10) [φ] → Ø / [Agr, __ wh]

- Step 3, Morphology: Vocabulary Insertion (VI)
  (11) a. X Full agreement: [Agr, φ-val] ↔ /-s/-, /b/-, ...
  ineligible
  b. φ-wh-agreement: [Agr, wh] ↔ /2/-
  eligible
  c. Default: [Agr] ↔ /-y/
  eligible

- Subject extraction requires that the verb be in the ‘participle form’ (anti-agreement).
  Full person/gender/number agreement is impossible.

  (12) Subject extraction: participle form (AA)
    man taghant, ay yezin/’t-,zra Mohand
    which woman C see.PART/3SG,F-see Mohand
    ‘Which woman saw Mohand?’ (Ouhalla 1993:479)

- Non-subject extraction does not trigger anti-agreement.

  (13) Object extraction: full agreement (no AA)
    ma, ag l,-swa 3PL
    what C 3SG,M-drink Ali
    ‘What did Ali drink?’ (Ouali 2011:99)

- The participle is composed of a prefix i- and suffix -n.
  ▷ i- → default agreement (3SG.MASC, cf. (13)).
  ▷ -n → only occurs in participles and only in certain aspects.

- Analysis: The same impoverishment rule applies in Berber and Abaza.

  (14) [φ] → Ø / [Agr, __ wh]

- Lack of φ-features gives rise to default agreement, i-, in Berber.

- The suffix -n is the spell out of [wh] in the context of certain Asp’s.

- Upshoot: In both Abaza and Berber, there is full agreement in the syntax, obscured by impoverishment in the morphology.

Technical Assumptions
- Α-syntax: -moved XPs bear [wh].
- Agreement: φ-probes ([uφ]) copy back both [φ] and [wh] from a goal.
- Distributed Morphology: late insertion; underspecification.

Extension to Anti-Agreement: Berber
- ‘Anti-agreement’ is a type of Ā-syntax
- ‘Anti-agreement’ comes from languages in which multiple arguments are cross-referenced.

- Given the configuration in (2), there is a crucial precondition on the possibility of a φ-probe exhibiting Ā-sensitive agreement.

- Precondition on Ā-sensitive agreement
  Extraction of an argument α can trigger Ā-sensitive agreement on a φ-probe β iff β has Agreeed with α.

- Berber object extraction doesn’t trigger AA because the object never Agrees with the relevant φ-probe.


- Variation in Ā-sensitive agreement triggers

- Subject-extraction: [Agr, φ-val] ↔ /-s/-, /b/-, ...
  ineligible
  [φ] ↔ /2/-
  eligible
  [φ] ↔ /-y/
  eligible

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Selected References