

Agreement and Focus

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A central puzzle of recent syntactic theory has been: why does agreement exist? It appears unnecessary to take information from one position in a sentence and reproduce in another position as is the case when, for instance, subject/verb agreement occurs. Specifically, agreement expresses redundant information. Miyagawa (2010) proposes that the purpose of agreement is to establish functional relations between lexical items and discourse related functions mediated by functional heads. In this way, he argues, language achieves a rich expressiveness in that constructs such as topic, focus, subject, questions, etc. become possible. That is, agreement relates lexical items introduced into the syntax via lexical heads to the structurally higher functional layer of the clause. Miyagawa also proposes an answer for why movement exists: it is necessary to retain a record of the functional relations that have been established by Agree but subsequently eradicated at the C-I interface when the semantically irrelevant ϕ -probe is removed. Movement is motivated then by the existence of agreement.

Miyagawa's approach yields a rich typology of languages based on whether Agree is in terms of phi-features or in terms of discourse-configurational notions such as topic and focus. However, there are several areas of the typology that appear murky or problematic. For example, there are focus expressions related to the functional layer of the clause that appear to manifest neither phi-feature nor discourse-configurational agreement. Moreover, it is unclear what this typology predicts about languages where discourse related expressions remain in situ, or at least do not appear on the left edge. How are such expressions then related to discourse notions such as topic and focus? Finally, it is clearly empirically wrong, at least for Bantu languages, to propose, as Miyagawa does, that there is only one set of phi features on the left edge.

This research initiative proposes to expand the empirical base upon which any Agree/Move typology could draw by exploring the realization of agreement and focus in a variety of languages. Focus is chosen as it is a discourse-configurational notion and thus is necessarily related to the functional layer of a sentence and hence by hypothesis is implicated in Agree and Move. The resources of Afranaph are particularly well suited to exploring this issue as it includes a significant number of languages that are rich in agreement morphology and in focus constructions such as the Niger Congo languages. Moreover, it also includes Afro-Asiatic languages such as Berber and Amharic which display agreement in gender as well as person. Carstens (2010) proposes that these features behave differently with respect to movement; therefore being able to compare the behavior of gender features and movement across the language families represented in Afranaph will help clarify the parameters of an Agree/Move typology in multiple ways. My research hypothesis is that focus is always associated with the left

edge via Agree and Move. That is, with respect to focus, I will push Miyagawa's thesis to the limit to see to what extent it can be maintained or must be revised to accommodate the empirical facts.

Correlative disjunctions involve contrastive focus, as convincingly established by Den Dikken (2006), Hendriks (2004), Johannessen (2005), and Lipták (2001). Since this is related to a discourse function, the Agree/Move typology predicts Agree and Move here. Since the core of agreement is reproducing apparently redundant information, we can extend the notion of agreement to reduplication of lexical items. However, this is not agreement in phi-features. The following example illustrates correlative disjunction in Kinande. ((1)a) illustrates simple disjunction with a single lexical item *kútse*. In ((1)b) we observe a reduplication of the disjunction *kútse* such that the reduplicated lexical item precedes the initial disjunct.

(1) a. Kámbale alyá ebíkené *kútsy'* omutsérê
Kambale ate yams or rice
"Kambale ate either yams or rice."

b. Kámbale alyá *kútsy'* ebíkené *kútsy'* omutsérê
Kambale ate or yams or rice
"Kambale ate either yams or rice."

The reduplicated disjunction¹ introduces the discourse-configurational notion of *focus* as a set of alternatives are introduced and one alternative is excluded. In contrast, the simple disjunction can be interpreted collectively. That it is reduplication that forces the focus interpretation is illustrated by the fact that when *kútse* does not introduce a disjunction, it is interpreted with the adverbial meaning of "maybe:"

(2) Kambale *kutse* asondire ini.alya amapome
Kambale *kutse* wants that he.eat apples
"Maybe Kambale wants to eat apples."

Moreover, the distance between the initial and second reduplicated disjunction is subject to the type of locality restrictions familiar from movement. For example, if negation intervenes between the initial and second disjunction the construction is ungrammatical on the correlative reading.²

(3) a. Jakí, *kútse* mwagulá ebíkené *kútsy'* omutsérê
Jacky, or bought yams or rice
"Jacky *either* bought yams or rice."

b. Yohani *kutse* mwatetalya mutsere *kutse* buhoti

¹ I use the term "disjunction" here in a pre-theoretical way.

² Irrelevantly, it is still grammatical if the initial disjunction is interpreted like the adverbial *maybe*.

John **kutse** neg.ate rice or beans
 “John **maybe** didn’t eat rice or beans.”

In addition, if the first disjunction is separated from the second disjunction by an island, the construction is ungrammatical on the correlative reading. If it is not separated from the second disjunction by an island, it is grammatical wholly within the island (although not particularly as natural sounding as a simple disjunction in the same syntactic context):

(4) a. Kambale **kutse** abuga [ng’ alya omutsere **kutse** obuhoti]
 Kambale maybe/rather said if he could eat rice or beans
 **“Kambale either said if he could eat rice or beans.”*
 ok: *“Maybe Kambale said if he could eat rice or beans.”*

b. Motowir’ omwatsi w’ eribuga ambu Amani akandisyabanira **kutse** baba wiwe **kutse**
 we.heard news of saying that Amani will.meet either father her or
 omwira wiwe y’ eRutgers
 friend her Linker at.Rutgers
 “We heard the rumor that Amani will meet either her father or her friend at Rutgers.”

What is unexpected however, is that the subject in Kinande acts as an island as well:

(5) **kútse** Jakí mwagulá ebíkené **kútsy’** omutsérê
kutse Jacky bought yams or rice
 “**either?* ok: *maybe* Jacky bought yams or rice.”

Note this is perfectly fine in English.³ The Kinande can be accounted for as an intervention effect due to special configuration of subjects –where they canonically occupy the left edge. That means that in ((5)) *kutse* (ungrammatically) occupies the Left Edge. The presumed location of *kutse* is in focus, given the interpretation of *kutse*...*kutse* as necessarily involving contrastive focus. Elsewhere I have established that dislocated XP’s intercept moved ones. That appears to be true here and also lends support to Den Dikken’s analysis of the correlative as a phrasal category. I have also argued (2007) that an XP that moves to the Left Edge can force a base generated XP out of the Left Edge. My analysis involved an interaction of phi-features. Note that *kutse* has no phi-features. Therefore, it would not be able to force an expression out of the Left Edge and overcome intervention effects.

³ The following is ungrammatical in both languages. It appears the problem is semantic here:

- i. **kutse** Amani yo w.agula ordinateur **kutse** bitabu
kutse Amani wh-agr antiagr.bought computer or books
Maybe Amani is the one that bought the computer or the books (this one might not be bad for reasons of intervention but semantics—it’s horrible in English, too.)

Kinande does allow *kutse* to be interpreted as a contrastive focus marker just in case two complete clauses are disjoined:

(6) *kutse* Eric akandisoma echapitre ya kasatu *kutse* Nadine y' ukandisoma yo
kutse Eric will.read chapter of four or Nadine Wh-agr'antiagr.read it
"Either(/maybe) Eric will read chapter four or Nadine will read it."

(7) *kutse* Valinande akandiha esyofranga siwe sy' abasama *kutse* iniaha ebitabu biwe
by'euniversity.
kutse Valinande will.give money his Lk poor or he(foc).give books his
Lk university
"Either Valinande will give his money to the poor or he will give his books to the
university."

These facts suggest there are two possibilities for the origin of *kutse*: *kutse+kutse*, as a single reduplicated unit, and also: [*kutse*] & [*kutse*]. How the second is accomplished from the point of view of expressing co-occurrence sensitivities is unclear to me and awaits further investigation.

To summarize, we saw that the limitations on *kutse* for the contrastive focus interpretation distinguishes Kinande from other languages that have been studied in this regard. I traced this difference to the special status of subjects on the left Edge in Kinande. I also presented evidence that the distribution of *kutse* supports the idea that there are two sources for correlative disjunctions.

The data in (6) and (7) also seem to suggest that coordination can involve unlike constituents to a certain extent. The following example indicates an apparently even starker unparallel coordination from the structural point of view, although semantically they are parallel:

(8) Mobafungire kutse iyo Kambale kutse Valinande yo bafunga
fact.3pl.locked.up either focus Kambale or Valinande wh-agr(foc) 3pl.locked.up
"They either locked.up Kambale or they locked.up Valinande."

I am just beginning to gain an overview of what the facts are here. As a preliminary observation I can say that discourse functional parallelism suffices to fulfill the well known parallelism requirements on coordination. These data also suggest a possible heuristic for discovering discourse functionally similar or identical structures via a coordination test.

Finally, there is a subject/object asymmetry that emerges when the focusing of correlatively disjoined NP's is considered. Namely, correlatively disjoined NP's do not only occur on the left edge in a focus construction, it is, under unmarked circumstances, the required configuration for them. The following examples establish that a correlatively disjoined NP

subject may not occur in the canonical subject position, but instead must be focused and anti-agreement must occur:⁴

(9) a. *Kutse Amani kutse Josh a.gula e ordinateur
or Amani or Josh 3s.bought computer

b. ok: Kutse Amani kutse Josh yo w.agula e ordinateur
or Amani or Josh wh-agr antiagr.bought computer
“Either Amani or Josh bought a computer.”

Objects, by contrast, do not have such a requirement. First, unlike subjects, they do not have to occupy the far left edge:

(10) Kambale agula [kutsy’ ebikene kutsy’ omutsere]
Kambale bought or sweet potatoes or rice
“Kambale bought either yams or rice.”

This does not mean they are in situ, however. Recall that we saw in (8) the possibility of a focus particle, involving a focus prefix: *i+* wh-agreement. Shortly we will turn to the question of the functional layer at the level of vP and I will propose a focus location there. What is relevant to note now is that correlatively disjoined object NPs cannot occur on the far Left Edge:

(11) *[kutsy’ ebikene kutsy’ omutsere], byo Kambale agula
or yams or rice WH-agr K. bought
“Either yams or rice, Kambale bought ____.”

Instead, the following construction must be used:

(12) [mulí byabyá bíkené, mulí abyá mutséré], wo/byo Kám bale ágú la
there.be CL8.be yams be CL3.be rice, wh-agr K bought
“Either yams or rice, Kambale bought ____.”
LIT:“Exist be yams, exist be rice, Kambale bought.”

⁴ Again we can find evidence that being associated with canonical agreement does not prevent a focus interpretation just in case something else occupies the left edge as it does in the following example where the direct object is focused and the subject is a correlatively disjoined NP:⁴

(1) a. Ekitabu kyo kutse Kambale kutse Mary a.gula
book wh-agr or Kambale or Mary 3s-bought
“It is a book that either Kambale or Mary bought.”

b.*Ekitabu kyo kutse Kambale kutse Mary yo w.agula
book wh-agr or Kambale or Mary wh-agr antiagree.bought

A structural account for this asymmetry can be provided if we conclude that objects must target a different focus position than subjects: one that is structurally too high to license contrastive focus in the usual way. Alternately, suppose that correlatively disjoined objects would occupy the left edge of vP, as by hypothesis they must. If agreement features are no longer active after participating in an agreement relation on the Left Edge of vP, the correlative disjunction construction can move no higher. Therefore, an inherently existential construction is used as an alternative that doesn't need agreement of the same type (cf. French *soit...soit...*)

An exploration of this construction enriches our understanding of functional clause structure. A different aspect of this research will be of interest to morphologists, typologists, and anyone who is concerned about issues of feature resolution. The high number of noun classes found in Kinande and other Bantu languages poses interesting questions for feature resolution in coordinations and data bearing on this is easily collected as part of the exploration of correlative constructions.

Preliminary results for feature resolution show that similar strategies are followed in both disjunctions⁵ and conjunctions with resolution in conjunctions frequently being toward class 8 when non-humans were involved and toward class 2 when a human was involved in at least one conjunct. Feature conflicts were resolved identically across all agreement constructions examined in Kinande. Examples here involve conjunction. Although the data are not included here, the resolutions worked the same regardless of the order of the conjuncts:

(13) subject/verb agreement

a. abalwana babiri n' omusika muguma bahika
 CL2.boys CL2.two and CL1.girl CL1.one CL2.arrived
 "Two boys and a girl arrived."

b. Obuki n' ebiribwa bibiri byahirawa oko mesa
 CL14.honey and CL8.sweetpotato CL8.two CL8agr.put.pass on table.
 "Honey and 2 sweet potatoes were put on the table"

(14) focus (wh-) agreement

a. omwana n' embene bo natsumanga
 CL1 and CL9 CL2.wh-agr 1s.scolded
 *omwana n' embene syo natsumanga
 CL1 and CL9 CL10.wh-agr 1s.scolded
 "It is the child and the goat that I scolded."

b. obuki n' ebiribwa byo nanzire
 CL14.honey and CL8.sweet potatoes CL8.wh-agr 1s.like

⁵ Not surprisingly, disjunctions elicited singular agreement in most cases. Nonetheless, the overall strategies were the same.

“It is honey and sweet potatoes that I enjoy.”

(15) linker agreement

Monaha obuki n’ebiribwa byo Kambale

1s.gave CL14.honey and CL8.sweet potatoes CL8.Linker Kambale

I gave a book and honey to Kambale.

It is quite straightforward to elicit the coordination agreement data. However, it was initially rather difficult to elicit correlative constructions. The consultants did not initially spontaneously produce a correlative construction even when they were translating from an English correlative into Kinande. This problem appears to be robust, as an attempt to elicit a correlative structure in Chinese from a linguistically sophisticated consultant met with the consultant’s insistence that such constructions do not exist in Chinese. It turns out that in Chinese, post verbal objects cannot be in correlative co-ordinations unless they are in a focus rather than normal post verbal position. Therefore, it appears to be crucial to construct contexts which set up exclusive disjunction. In addition, providing context proved crucial anytime the construction was inside an island. Moreover, the two readings of *kutse* were not initially discovered, so it proves important to ask the interpretation of the initial disjunction in all contexts as well.

An additional type of construction involving focus bears on a typology of Agree and Move. Namely, sentences involving exclusive and additive focus elements. I will just briefly describe the first type without offering any kind of analysis and offer a preliminary analysis of the distribution of the additive focus particle. In Kinande, both particles involve agreement with the noun phrase that they focus. The exclusive particle is *-sa* and it agrees in gender with the focused noun. For example, *mu-sa* focuses a class 1 noun. The additive particle has two forms: *na+N* and *na-* followed by a reduced pronoun that agrees with the focused N. Here it appears that agreement is active, but it is not obvious that these expressions occur at the left edge (of CP or VP). This is in distinction to a language like Japanese where the exclusive particle might occur on the verb and the focalized noun in a structurally higher than usual position.

Here are some illustrative examples of the *-sa* only construction:

(16)a. Jackí mwágúla ebíkene bi.sá (by’ omosóko)
Jacky bought CL8.sweet potatoes CL8.only (L’ LOC.market)
“Jacky bought only sweet potatoes at the market.”

b. Jacky mu.sá yo wagula ebíkene
Jacky CL1.only wh-agr antiagr.bought sweet potatoes
“Only Jacky bought sweet potatoes.”

The agreement between the focalized noun and the exclusive focus particle is in terms of gender only. The relation is extremely local and *agr-sa* cannot “migrate” from a noun to a verb. The particle agrees with the entire noun phrase and not just a single noun:

- (17) omwana muke musa
o-CL1.child CL1.short CL1.only
“only the short child”

I will not offer an analysis of the exclusive particle here.

The additive particle consist of either na+N:

- (18) a. na Kambale
b. Kambale naye
c. Kambale.....[naye]

Let us call strategy a. the simple additive construction, b. the locally anaphoric construction, and c. the distant anaphoric construction. I call the constructions anaphoric because the relation between the additively focus NP and the additive particle abides by the usual restrictions on anaphora:

- (19) a. c-command is required between antecedent and additive particle
b. split antecedents are not possible
c. the relation cannot be established across clause boundaries.
d. the additive construction involves an element that agrees with the antecedent.

There is a curious restriction in that the direct object is rather restrictive in its use of the anaphoric strategy; it is completely impossible in simple sentences. When the additive meaning is desired the simple additive construction must be used:

- (20) *Kambale mwalire [eBikene_j na.Byo_j]
Kambale ate CL8.yams and.AGRCL8

- (21) Kambale mwalire n'eBikene
Kambale ate and-yams
"Kambale ate yams also." (with "also" modifying "yams")

However, it is not impossible to use the anaphoric strategy with logical direct objects/themes. For instance, the anaphoric strategy can be used when the logical object has been passivized:

- (22) [Ebikene_j naByo_j] moByalirwe
yams and-AGr eat.pass
“The yams were also eaten.”

- (23) [eBikene_j] moByalirwe [nabyo_j]
yams eat.pass and.AGR
“The yams were eaten also.”

The anaphoric strategy can also be used in double object constructions (DOCs), provided it is locally anaphoric:

(24) a. Kambale aha [eBikene_j naBo_y] By'esyombwa
 Kambale gave yams and-AGR Lk'

b. *Kambale aha [eBikene]_j By'esyombwa [naBo]_y

We can make the following empirical generalization about the data: a theme can be in an anaphoric relation with a focus particle only if it agrees with something. This is true in (22) and (23) where the theme agrees with the verb due to the passive. This is also true for ((24)a) where it agrees with the linker. Note it does not participate in the anaphoric additive construction if it is a theme and does not agree with the linker as in ((24)b) since it is then embedded lower than the linker.

Goals have a different behavior. They can participate in both the local and distant anaphoric constructions ((25)(26)) and they do not need to be in an agreement relation to do this (cf. (27)):

(25) Kambale aha [aBana_y naBo_y] B'eBikene
 Kambale gave children and-AGR L' yams
 (cl.2) (cl.2) (cl.2) (cl.8)

"Kambale gave also the children yams."

(26) Kambale aha [aBana]_y B'eBikene [naBo]_y
 Kambale gave children L' yams and-AGR
 (cl.2) (cl.2)(cl.8) (cl.2)

"Kambale gave the children the yams also." (with "also" modifying "the children")

(27) Kambale aha eBikene By'[aBana_y naBo_y]
 Kambale gave yams L' children and-AGR
 (cl.8) (cl.8) (cl.2) (cl.2)

"Kambale gave the yams to the children also." (with "also" modifying "the children")

This can be accounted for straightforwardly if we assume the structure for VPs proposed by Baker and Collins (2006) where a projection is assumed for the linker in between vP and VP and the goal is projected in the specifier of VP. I propose that the local anaphoric additive construction involves adjunction of the NP to the additive *na* or to a projection immediately dominating it under the right circumstances. Na as a conjunction/comitative element doesn't tolerate movement away from it and so the movement must be repaired with a resumptive pronoun. Adjunction is only possible if the immediately dominating projection to the adjunction

site is not theta marked. Therefore, under the view of phrase structure we have adopted here, self-adjunction or local adjunction is never possible for a theme that is not in an agreement relation, as that is the only time it is not immediately dominated by a theta marking projection, but rather only a functional category. The goal, in contrast, as a specifier can adjoin to VP where it is in a non-theta position and so participate in a local anaphoric construction. The goal, like the theme, can move into the functional periphery in the vP and has done so whenever we see it in an agreement relation in vP. In this situation, it can participate in both distant anaphoric constructions and local ones.

This preliminary examination of the additive focus construction has confirmed part of the intuition of the Agree/Move typology; namely when a relation to clausal functional structure (including vP) is established, it is marked by the grammar somehow. However, we do not necessarily find Agree/Move signified in the form of spec/head agreement involving phi-features of some type. (Although perhaps in the additive construction we might consider the long distance anaphoric relations a type of agreement as common phi-features are shared.) Examining the additive focus construction has also provided some interesting confirmation concerning current views of constituent structure in vP/VP. The data can be expanded by including applicative constructions as well as small clauses to see how well they stand up to the generalizations just made. It will be particularly interesting to see if languages that lack the linker yet are otherwise similar share the same account of functional structure on the vP periphery. Moreover, the behavior of the additive particle can be compared to reflexive pronouns and reflexive adverbs for which a fair amount of documentation currently exists.

Finally, this proposal will automatically yield data on the agreement involved (if any) when focused constructions occur at the left edge because the interaction between the left edge and focus would be probed in each of the types of focus constructions discussed above. This is of interest because it is already well established (see, for instance, Henderson (2006) and Carstens (2005)) that a number of Bantu languages involve phi-feature agreement related both to the subject of the sentence and to an expression focused on the left edge. Miyagawa explicitly proposes there is only one set of phi-features on the left edge so it would prove important to have an accurate overview of the facts.

My preliminary conclusion is that there is plentiful evidence supporting the function of Agree as relating lexical items to the establishment of functional structure. The imperfect existence of Move does not however, appear illuminated by the Agree/Move link.