

Agreement and person in anti-agreement

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Abstract Many languages display correlations between subject-verb agreement and subject extraction that have come to be known as anti-agreement effects. This paper explores an anti-agreement effect found in many Bantu languages whereby a third person singular human subject triggers a unique verbal agreement marker when the subject is extracted. It is argued that co-variation of certain morphological properties of constructions with subject extraction points to an agreement relation between C and T underlying the anti-agreement effect, a conclusion that converges with proposals from Richards (2001) and Boeckx (2003) about the nature of extraction. I also argue that although this agreement relationship involves full sets of phi-features, the differing values acquired by the feature [person] in the nominal and verbal domains often makes it appear as if [person] is uniquely affected in anti-agreement contexts. Finally, I argue that variation in how anti-agreement is spelled out in a language is determined by morphological quirks of the language, especially the organization of its agreement paradigm. I illustrate this latter point using the framework of distributed morphology.

Keywords Anti-agreement · Bantu · Phi features · Distributed morphology

1 Introduction

In many languages the agreement relation between an argument and a verb is suppressed or altered when the argument is extracted. These so-called anti-agreement effects (AAEs) have been discussed for a variety of languages, including Berber (Ouhalla 1993, 2005; Ouali 2008), Chamorro (Chung 1982; Schneider-Zioga 2002),

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