

ECCENTRIC AGREEMENT, FEATURE HIERARCHIES
AND LANGUAGE CONTINUA

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0. INTRODUCTION

GENDER AGREEMENT MISMATCH in Ripatransone [Parrino (1967), Mancini (1993), Harder (1998), Jones (2001), Ledgeway (2005), Rossi (2008), Ferrari Bridgers (2010)]

OBSERVATION: Some Upper Southern Italian dialects (USIDs) have person-driven auxiliary selection like split-ergative languages [Rohlf's (1969), Giammarco (1973), Tuttle (1986), Kayne (1993); Nash (1997), Mahajan (1994), Cocchi (1995), Manzini & Savoia (2005)]

Is gender agreement mismatch the result of an ergative status of USIDs?
Are USIDs ergative at all?

0.1. AGREEMENT RESTRICTIONS

PERSON

Restrictions on PERSON combinations [PCC, quirky datives, impersonal *se*] [Perlmutter 1971, Bonet 1991, Anagnostopoulou 2005, Bejar & Rezac 2009, D'Alessandro 2007, D'Alessandro *et al.* 2008]

- Person restrictions are often attributed to “animacy hierarchies” [Silverstein 1976] and/or rely on the idea that 3rd person is no person [Benveniste 1966 and many MANY others]

NUMBER

No restrictions on NUMBER combination, but agreement with the plural argument [D'Alessandro & Roberts 2010, OMNIVOROUS NUMBER: Nevins 2010]

- (2) a. Giuwanne a pittatø nu mure
John-sg has-3rd sg/pl painted-pp sg a wall
'John has painted a wall' [sg SUBJ-sg OBJ]
- b. Giuwanne a pittite ddu mure
John-sg has-3rd sg painted-pp pl two walls
'John has painted two walls' [sg SUBJ-pl OBJ]

c. Giuwanne e Mmarije a pittite
 John and Mary-pl have-3rd sg/pl painted-pp pl
 nu mure
 a wall
 'John and Mary have painted a wall' [pl SUBJ – sg OBJ]

d. Giuwanne e Mmarije a pittite ddu
 John and Mary-pl have-3rd sg/pl painted-pp pl two
 mure
 walls
 'John and Mary have painted two walls' [pl SUBJ -pl OBJ]
 [Abruzzese, D'Alessandro & Roberts (2010:45)]

OBSERVATION: Nevins (2010): Number agreement (if constrained) obeys different constraints. There is no such thing as a Number-Case constraint

QUESTION: What about gender?

1. GENDER AGREEMENT MISMATCH IN RIPATRANSONE

(3)	a. I' ridu (I laugh'-masc)	b. ia ride (I laugh'-fem)
	tu ridu ('you laugh'-masc)	tu ride ('you laugh'-fem)
	issu ridu ('he laughs'-masc)	esse ride ...
	noja ridemi	noja ridema
	voja rideti	voja rideta
	issi ridi	essa ride
		[from Rossi 2008: 31]

c. se ride ('it is laughed'-neuter)

Moreover: AGREEMENT MISMATCH

(4)	a. Babbu dice	le	verita
	dad-m sg says-3 rd sg neu	the-f sg	truth-f sg
	'Dad told the truth'		
	b. Mamme e	kkotte	li
	mum- f sg is-3 rd sg	cooked- pp neu	the- m pl
	'Mum cooked pasta'		pasta- m pl
			[Mancini 1993: 107]

*1.1. AGREEMENT PATTERNS WITH TRANSITIVE VERBS*NO MISMATCH

SUBJECT (m sg) – OBJECT (m sg):[all examples are taken from Mancini 1993:106-107; see also Ferrari Bridgers 2010]

- (5) ___ so ngundratu n amigu
 pro-m sg am met-m sg a friend – m sg
 'I met a friend'

SUBJECT (f sg) – OBJECT (f sg)

- (6) le frəkine e vvolute ne mele
 the- f sg girl-f sg is wanted-f sg an-f sg
 apple-f sg
 'The girl wanted an apple'

✓ MISMATCHGENDER

SUBJECT (m sg) – OBJECT (f sg)

- (7) I' maŋŋə le pələnde
 I-m sg eat-n the- f sg polenta- f sg
 'I eat the polenta'

SUBJECT (f sg) – OBJECT (m sg)

- (8) mamme e rrəlavatə lu mendi'
 mum- f sg is washed- n the-m sg tablecloth-m sg
 'Mum has washed the tablecloth'

NUMBER

SUBJECT (m sg) – OBJECT (m pl)

- (9) ___ mazzə li keppu'
 pro-m sg kills-n the-m pl capons-m pl
 'He kills the capons'

SUBJECT (f sg) – OBJECT (f pl)

- (10) Semə maŋŋata/ə lə pera
 we-are eaten-f pl/n the-f pl pears- f pl
 'We ate the pears'

SUBJECT (f pl) – OBJECT (f sg)

- (11) — maŋnemə le pələnde
 we-f pl eat-n the- f sg polenta- f sg
 ‘We eat the polenta’

GENDER + NUMBER

SUBJECT (f pl) – OBJECT (n sg)

- (12) oggia lə femməna pijjə lə sola
 today the-f pl women-f pl take-n the-f sg sun- n sg
 ‘Today the women catch the sun’

SUBJECT (f pl) – OBJECT (m sg)

- (13) — semə maŋnatə lu prəsciutta
 pro- f pl are eaten-n the- m sg ham-m sg
 ‘We-fem have eaten the ham’

⇒ AGREEMENT MISMATCH BETWEEN THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT IS MARKED ON THE VERB

EXCEPTION

SUBJECT IS 3RD PL MASC ⇒ ALWAYS subject agreement

- (14) li frəki maŋni lə nucia e ll
 the-m pl boys-m pl eat-m pl the-f pl nuts-f pl and the

uve

grapes- f pl

‘The boys eat nuts and grapes’

- “Omnivorous gender” mismatch or Gender-Case constraint?

GENDER mismatch does not exactly resemble PERSON [no restriction on one feature]

GENDER mismatch does not exactly resemble NUMBER [no “exclusive agreement”]

- Nevins (2010): negative values for person are visible in the syntax [-person], while negative values for number are not [D’Alessandro & Roberts 2010 for number].

Negative values for gender [-masc] are still visible in the syntax.

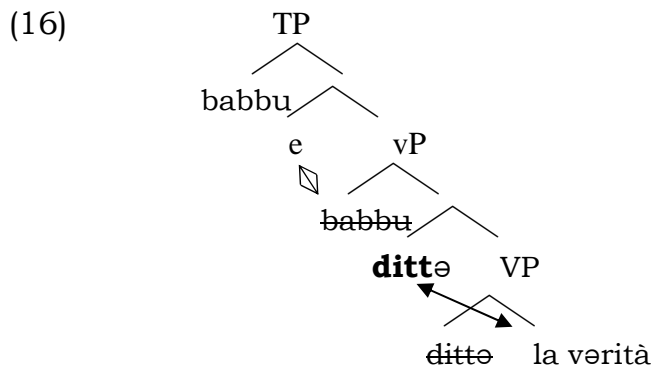
But also: Negative values for number [-pl] are still visible in the syntax.

2. AGREE

2.1. CHOMSKY (2001) DBP PROBE-GOAL AGREE

- (i) Agree an asymmetric relation between a Probe and a Goal. The Probe has uF features while the Goal has ‘matching’ iF features.
- (ii) Agree eliminates the uF features on the Probe by ‘valuing’ them and ‘removing them’/‘spelling them out phonologically’.
- (iii) Conditions on the Probe-Goal relation:
 1. Probe and Goal must be sufficiently **local** to each other (*Locality*) [CLOSEST C-COMMAND]

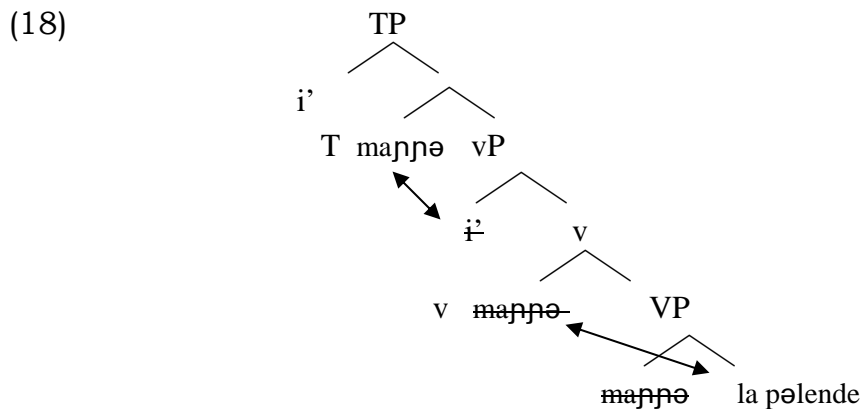
- (15) a. Babbu e dditte la verita
 dad-m sg is-3rd sg said-past part neu the-f sg truth-f sg
 ‘Dad told the truth’



How do we express the feature mismatch between T and v?

In a simpler sentence, like (17), this is even more straightforward:

- (17) I' manne le polende
 I-m sg eat-n the- f sg polenta- f sg
 ‘I eat the polenta’



v Agrees with the object, T Agrees with the subject

WORKING HYPOTHESES:

① We need to express a condition on feature uniformity on two different heads

or

② one head/Probe has to “see” two Goals [Multiple Agree]

2.2. MULTIPLE AGREE

- The Probe must see the two Goals simultaneously [Hiraiwa 2001, Anagnostopoulou 2005, Nevins 2007, 2010]
- The two Goals must be in the same search domain
- Nevins (2010): DO/IO agreement restrictions are more frequent than SU/OB ones because the two elements need to be in the same domain.
- The PCC and all other agreement restrictions on person involve the presence of a clitic (so that IA and EA can be in the same “search domain”). NOT NECESSARILY!

(19) CONDITION ON MULTIPLE AGREE

Multiple Agree can only take place under non-conflicting feature specifications of the agreeing elements [Anagnostopoulou 2005:219]

3. RT AGREEMENT EXPLAINED

3.1. BACKGROUND. FEATURE HIERARCHY

a) Müller (2010)

- All syntactic operations are feature driven
- Also External Merge is triggered by features [subcategorization features]
- two types of features:
 - [\bullet F \bullet] = structure-building features [edge features and subcategorization features]
 - [\ast F \ast] = probe features [\varnothing -features, triggering Agree]
- Features on lexical items are ordered
-

(20) *Last resort* [Müller 2010:40]

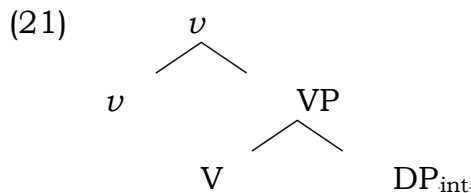
Every syntactic operation must discharge either [\bullet F \bullet] or [\ast F \ast]
Only features at the top of a feature list are accessible

EXAMPLE: Transitive *v* has two subcategorization features: [\bullet V \bullet] and [\bullet D \bullet]

These features are hierarchically organized: [\bullet V \bullet] \succ [\bullet D \bullet]

ν discharges first the [$\bullet V \bullet$] feature by Merge (ν , VP), then the [$\bullet D \bullet$] feature by Merge (ν }, DP)

b) Müller (2004): the “ergative parameter” (Marantz 1984, Mahajan 1994) arises from the indeterminacy of operations at the ν -cycle.
At the stage of (21):



- the EA is available for merger
- the IA is an active Goal for Agree with ν .

Languages RANK the two requirements

- Agree(ν , IA) > Merge(EA, ν) \Leftrightarrow [Nominative-Accusative]
- Merge(EA, ν) > Agree(ν , IA) \Leftrightarrow [Ergative-Absolutive]

PROPOSAL

Features in RT (i.e. syntactic operations) are ordered differently in USIDs than in the rest of Romance [i.e. they have an ergative-like ordering]

More specifically:

- subcategorization features are higher in the hierarchy in RT than probe features [first Merge all, then Agree]
- RT has a complex ν [i.e. ν has an additional [$\bullet V \bullet$] feature]?

RT and USIDs: [$\bullet F \bullet$] > [$\bullet F^*$]

First build the spine, then Agree

(22) ν_I in RT: [$\bullet V \bullet$] > [$\bullet D \bullet$] > [$\bullet V \bullet$] > [$\bullet u \varphi^*$]

ν_I	[$\bullet V \bullet$] = Merge with VP ①	{ \bullet BUILD THE SPINE! \bullet }
	[$\bullet D \bullet$] = Merge with EA ②	{ \bullet BUILD THE SPINE! \bullet }
	[$\bullet V \bullet$] = Merge with an extra ν_{II} [or split into two ν s] ③	{ \bullet BUILD THE SPINE! \bullet }
	[$\bullet u \varphi^*$] ④	{ \bullet AGREE! \bullet }

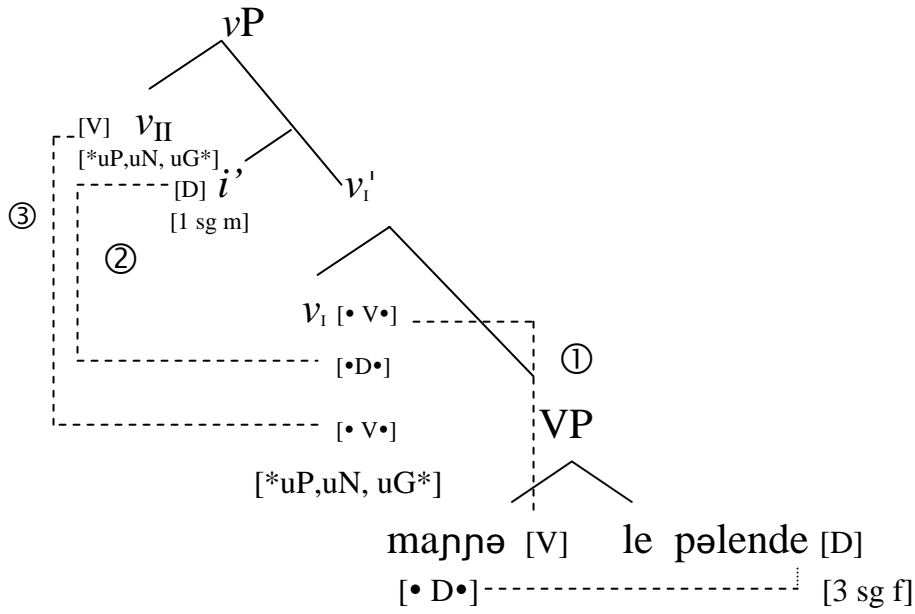
(23) ν_{II} in RT: [$\bullet V \bullet$] > [$\bullet u \varphi^*$]

ν_{II}	[$\bullet V \bullet$] = Merge with T	{ \bullet BUILD THE SPINE! \bullet }
	[$\bullet u \varphi^*$] = Agree	{ \bullet AGREE! \bullet }

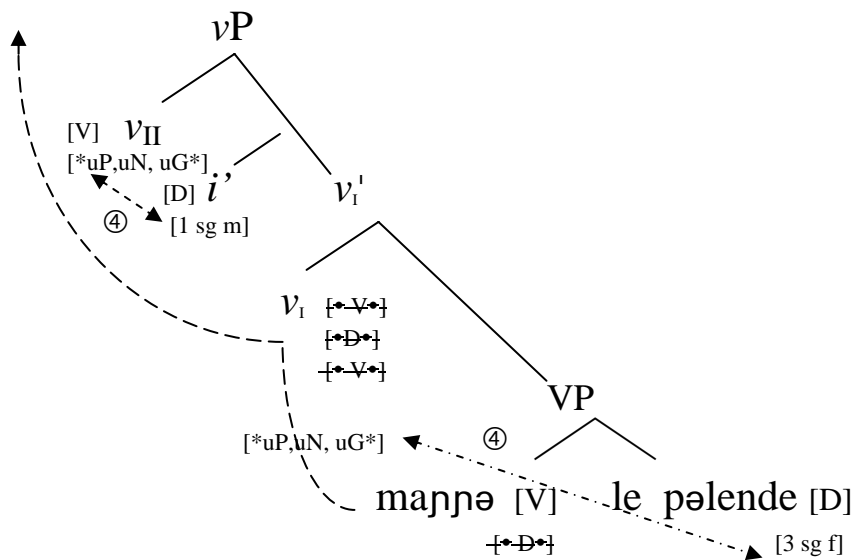
3.2. HOW IT WORKS

(24) I' mɔŋŋə le pələnde
 I-m sg eat-n the- f sg polenta- f sg
 'I eat the polenta'

(25) {•BUILD THE SPINE! •}



(26) {*AGREE!*}



$\left. \begin{array}{l} v_I [3 \text{ sg } f] \\ v_{II} [1 \text{ sg } m] \end{array} \right\} \Rightarrow ! \text{ feature mismatch}$

v_I and v_{II} form a complex

The content is SHARED between the two heads

Cf. Ouali's (2008) SHARE, Schoorlemmer's (2009) SHARE, etc.

- split the heads;
- feature inheritance, Chomsky 2005 AND
- retain a copy on the phase head-SHARE (Ouali 2008):

(27) SHARE

Transfer Φ -features from C to T and keep a copy.

[Ouali 2008: 169]

v_I - v_{II} are in a SHARE relation: [uP, uN, uG] are SHARED between the two heads;

- SHARE can only apply if the two heads constitute a UNIT. In this case there has to be UNIFORMITY OF VALUES between the two v's (recall Anagnostopoulou 2005):

(28) CONDITION ON MULTIPLE AGREE

Multiple Agree can only take place under non-conflicting feature specifications of the agreeing elements

- Feature value mismatch on $v \Rightarrow$ Postsyntactic insertion of the neuter ending $-\emptyset$ to mark the mismatch

3.3. THE NATURE OF THE HIGHER V

The higher v (v_{II}) only carries agreement features. What is its nature?

SOME HINTS

1. Complex auxiliaries [D'Alessandro & Ledgeway 2010a]

(29) **So'** **'vé** *parlatə* [Arielli, CH]
BE-1sg. HAVE-past.impf. spoken
'I had spoken'

(30) **S'** **avaveme** *parlatə*
BE-1st/2nd HAVE-past imp 1st pl spoken
'We had spoken'

2. Split auxiliary selection

- The auxiliary is chosen depending on EA's person feature \Rightarrow the EA has to Agree with ν BEFORE the aux can be selected (31)

Abruzzese unergative			
1st sg	ji I	so' am-1st sg	fatijate worked-pp sg
2nd sg	tu you	si are-2nd sg	fatijate worked-pp sg
3rd sg	esse she	a has-3rd sg	fatijate worked-pp sg
1st pl	nu we	seme are-1st pl	fatijite worked-pp pl
2nd pl	vu you-pl	sete are-2nd pl	fatijite worked-pp pl
3rd pl	jisse they	a have-3rd pl	fatijite worked-pp pl

[D'Alessandro & Roberts 2010]

3. Defective T

- [no Spec, TP] [D'Alessandro & Ledgeway 2010b]:

(32) Je so ditte Marije **ocche** (*Marije) le porte Marije
 him am said Mary that Mary it takes Mary
 'I told him to let Mary bring it'

- T does not assign Nominative
 If ν_{II} is fully valued by the EA, does the EA still Agree with T for Nom?
 NO

Nominative is assigned to the EA by ν in (U)SIDs [D'Alessandro & Roberts 2010]; the EA is licensed by ν

4. "Omnivorous" number agreement in many USIDs

Recall:

- (33) a. Giuwanne a pittatə nu mure
 John-sg has-3rd sg/pl painted-pp sg a wall
 'John has painted a wall' [sg SUBJ-sg OBJ]
- b. Giuwanne a pittite ddu mure
 John-sg has-3rd sg painted-pp pl two walls
 'John has painted two walls' [sg SUBJ-pl OBJ]

- c. Giuwanne e Mmarije a pittite
John and Mary-pl have-3rd sg/pl painted-pp pl
nu mure
a wall
'John and Mary have painted a wall' [pl SUBJ – sg OBJ]
- d. Giuwanne e Mmarije a pittite ddu
John and Mary-pl have-3rd sg/pl painted-pp pl two
mure
walls
'John and Mary have painted two walls' [pl SUBJ -pl OBJ]

⇒ IA and EA are in the same domain: ν .

- cf. Nash (1997): agents are lower in ergative lgs than in Nominative lgs

⇒ ν_{II} might actually be Giorgi & Pianesi's T_2 , encoding anteriority

QUESTION: What kind of languages are these Central-Southern Italian dialects?

3.3. TYPOLOGICAL SPECULATIONS

Central and Upper-Southern Italian dialects exhibit some features that are uncommon within Romance.

- split auxiliary selection [also found in ergative languages]
- agreement mismatch/displacement phenomena [also found in ergative languages]
- tense, mood & subordination splits [also found in ergative languages]

Mahajan (1994), Cocchi (1995), Manzini & Savoia (2005): USIDs share split auxiliary selection with ergative languages

QUESTION: are these varieties ergative?

SPECULATION/PROPOSAL 1

If features are hierarchically ordered, there are several logical possibilities for their order.

USIDs and CIDs are “hybrid” languages. They display features that group them with ergative languages and features that group them with nominative languages.

Ergative and nominative are distributed along a continuum.
Different ranking of features will originate different clusters of properties, i.e. different language types.

What are the ranking possibilities?

Consider a transitive ν :

[• F•] > [*F*] > Merge over Agree [Ergative-Absolutive]
[*F*] > [• F•] Agree over Merge [Nominative-Accusative]
[Müller 2004]

But there are many more possibilities

Merge-Agree-Merge (Merge the EA, Agree, then Merge the Aux? –USIDs)

The ‘ergative-like’ status of USIDs is due to different order of syntactic operations.

The different order of syntactic operations, together with a rich ν , generates the ‘ergative effect’, even though these languages are not ergative.

SPECULATION 2

If ν licenses the subject then the language will have a defective T, hence it will be *pro*-drop [Contreras 1991, D’Alessandro & Roberts 2010]

Agreement mismatch arises when ν “sees” both the EA and the IA, i.e. when we have a complex ν . In this case we also have a defective T

Languages that present agreement mismatch/displacement of the Georgian/Basque/Abruzzese kind are null-subject.

BASQUE ✓
MORDVINIAN ✓
KAROK ✓
GEORGIAN ✓

...

4. CONCLUSIONS

- Gender agreement displacement does exist

- Upper Southern and Central Italian Dialects have a different set of parameterized features yielding a complex ν field
- The complex ν allows agreement mismatch phenomena to arise
- The apparent ergative status of these varieties stems from the different parameterization of features on the ν head
- Ergative and Nominative languages are the extremes of a continuum of intermediate varieties resulting from different rankings of features
- Languages with a complex ν are also likely to be null-subject

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