Leftover Agreement across Kartvelian languages

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1 INTRODUCTION

Standard DM (Bobaljik 2000): Vocabulary Insertion (VI) is fully replacive: all features of the head are replaced by the exponent.

This poster: VI is only partially replacive: the exponent replaces only those features of the head that its specification matches.

Evidence: unexponed features of v-probes get agreed with by higher #-probes in Kartvelian languages.

2 THE KARTVELIAN DISCONTINUOUS-BLEEDING GENERALIZATION

- Kartvelian verbs have three agreement slots; we assume the first slot (g- in (1)) corresponds to a probe on v, the second (-da) to a T-probe, and the third (-t) to a higher, phasal #-probe.

(1) (tkven) gada-g-’c-em-’dar-t-
Georgian
(3SG.NOM) (2PL.ACC) PVB-2-describe-COND.3SG-PL
’S(he) would describe you (pl).’

- Suffixed PL-agreement with an NP in Kartvelian shows up only if there is no v-prefix that can expose PL-agreement with that NP — an instance of discontinuous bleeding (Noyer 1992).

(2) Georgian (Arsonov 1990: 172)
Laz (Lacroix 2009: 294)

(3) Svan (Testelets 1989: 9)

In Georgian and Svan there is a 1PL prefix, in those forms that have it, the #-suffix is bled by its presence — unlike in Megrelian and Laz, which lack a 1PL prefix.

- No language has a 2PL prefix, so all of them have suffixed PL-agreement with 2PL NPs.

- The question: why does the suffix’s presence depend on the features exposed by the prefix?

3 PROPOSAL: LEFTOVER AGREEMENT (LA)

Leftover Agreement is agreement of a higher probe X with unexposed features on a lower probe Y.

(6) a. 
Let Y be a probe that has copied a feature bundle φ through agreement with noun phrases in its c-command domain, and let X be a higher probe, the head of the phase XP.

- X, being a phase head, triggers the Spell-Out of its complement, and the head Y thus gets matched with the best exponent available, /α/. It turns out that this exponent is specified for only a subset of the feature bundle φ. (E.g., in (6), /α/ is specified for F1, but not F2.)

- The features of Y that /α/ is not specified for — the leftovers, like F2 in (6) — remain accessible for further computation, and can get agreed with by X. This is Leftover Agreement (LA).

(7) v-agreement (a simplified version): v agrees with participant NPs in φ-features (gv-/gw-/hr- ⇒ [1PL], m- ⇒ [1], z-/g-/hr- ⇒ [2]); it first searches in its complement, then in its specifier.

T-agreement: T agrees with the highest non-oblique NP: the subject in (2)-(5).

(8) a. Laz & Megrelian
b. Georgian & Svan

4 ACCOUNTING FOR KARTVELIAN NUMBER AGREEMENT WITH LA

- Laz/Megrelian: the v-exponent m- only exposes a subset of v’s bundle: only [1]. The unexposed PL is left over and remains visible to the #-probe. The #-probe copies PL and then exposes it ⇒ LA.

- Georgian/Svan have v-exponents that are specified for the whole bundle [1st, PL]. Thus, after Spell-Out, there are no leftover features on v that the # probe could agree with. ⇒ no LA.

Why can’t the #-probe get PL from the object NP itself? We crucially assume Chomsky’s (2001) Weak PIC: the phase head # can access the lower phase head v and its specifier, but not anything in v’s complement.

- None of the four languages have an exponent specified for the whole bundle [2st, PL], so the unexposed PL feature copied from the 2PL object is left over and gets agreed with by the #-probe.

5 KEY EVIDENCE

- Previous accounts captured the pattern in (2)-(5) by morphological means (Halle & Marantz 1993; McGinnis 2008; Lomashvili & Harley 2011; Blix 2016; Thivierge 2019).

- Instead, we view the number suffix as a syntactically distinct probe (cf. Foley 2017), and therefore predict LA to be subject to intervention effects and locality conditions. This is borne out.

- Svan exhibits intervention effects: LA with object features on v is blocked by participant subjects.

- Svan’s highest probe is relativized to PL or PART, so that participant subjects — even if singular — can halt its search.

- Evidence for sensitivity to locality comes from #-agreement with 3PL objects in Georgian. Such agreement is normally impossible: v does not agree with 3rd-person NPs, so no LA is possible with them, and 3PL objects that are inside vP are not directly accessible to # due to the Weak PIC. However, 3PL objects can be agreed with directly by # if moved out of vP.

- ‘A common function unites the forms of the 3rd series.’ (via Blix 2018)