The Locus of Variation in types of Ā-Sensitive Agreement

Overview. In many languages, the form of φ-agreement is sensitive to the features typically associated with Ā-extraction. This phenomenon has been referred to as **anti-agreement** (Ouhalla 1993) or ***wh*-agreement** (Georgopoulos 1991; Chung 1994). Following Baier's (2018) unified analysis of these effects, I refer to them collectively as **Ā-sensitive (φ-)agreement**. In this paper, I examine the range of morphosyntactic variation exhibited by Ā-sensitive agreement along two parameters: (i) how many φ-contrasts are agreement expresses in an Ā-context; and (ii) whether or not a language possesses an exponent unique to Ā-contexts I argue that the range of variation encountered is best explained by a model where <u>the syntax of agreement is uniform</u>, and in which <u>all variation in parameters (i)–(ii) occurs in the morphological component</u>. This presentation thus contributes to the debate surrounding the locus of variation in the grammar. Furthermore, it shows that a seemingly wide range of surface variation can be accounted for with a small amount of constrained variation in morphological rules.

Ā-sensitive φ-agreement Two examples of Ā-sensitive φ-agreement are shown in (1).

(1) a. *Fiorentino (Romance)*
      Quante ragazze gli/*le   ha/*hanno   parlato con te
      how.many girls   3SG.M/3PL.F   have.3SG/have.3PL spoken with you
      'How many girls (it) has spoken to you?'   (Brandi and Cordin 1989:124–125)

   b. *Abaza (West Caucasian)*
      s-k tap   **dəzda$_i$** y-na-**z**$_i$-ax
      1SG-book who   3SG.INAN-PFV-ERG.WH-take
      'Who took my book?'   (O'Herin 2002:252)

In Fiorentino, (1a), an Ā-subject controls default (3SG.M) agreement; in Abaza, the ergative *wh*-phrase controls a unique agreement exponent *z-*. Importantly, in both languages, the forms in (1) are the only ones the agreement in question can take in the presence of Ā-features on its controller. That is, **Ā-sensitive agreement is highly syncretic**. I adopt Baier's (2018) analysis of Ā-sensitive agreement in terms of morphological **impoverishment**. This account has two core ingredients. **First**, Baier proposes that φ-probes copy back Ā-features from their goals, as shown in (2), where the φ-probe ([uφ]) on the head H copies both [φ] and [Ā] from its goal DP. **Second**, Baier proposes that φ-features may be deleted in the presence of Ā-features in the same feature bundle, (3). By deleting φ-features from a feature bundle, the morphological rule in (3) <u>will block insertion of a fully more fully specified agreement exponent</u>, thus leading to the realization of an underspecified morpheme. This accounts for the agreement syncretism that is observed in Ā-contexts.

(2) *Ā-sensitive φ-agreement*
      [… H$_{[uφ]}$ … DP$_{[φ, Ā]}$ …]
              └── φ+Ā ──┘

(3) *φ-impoverishment*
      $[φ] \rightarrow \emptyset \, / \, [\_\_, Ā]$

Uniformity in Agree. Some languages do not exhibit Ā-sensitive φ-agreement effects, like Mexican Spanish in (4). Under the current theory, there are two ways to account for this fact. **First**, φ-probes in such languages could *not* copy Ā-features from their goals at all, precluding the option of impoverishment. **Alternatively**, it could be the case that φ-probes in such languages behave exactly as (2) shows – the copy [φ] and [Ā] from their goals. The lack of a Ā-sensitivity effect in these cases would then be explained as the lack of φ-impoverishment in the context of Ā-features. I adopt Baier's (2018) **Ā-Sensitivity Uniformity Hypothesis** (ASUH) in (5).

(4) *Mexican Spanish*
      Soy   yo   que estoy aquí
      be.1SG 1SG C   be.1SG here
      'It's me who is here.'

(5) *The Ā-Sensitivity Uniformity Hypothesis (ASUH)*

All φ-probes are Ā-sensitive—they copy back Ā-features on their goal(s). There is no crosslinguistic variation in this property.

The ASUH requires that *all* φ-probes in *all* languages copy Ā-features, as well as φ-features, from their goals. Thus, variation in Ā-sensitive agreement effects must *not* arise from variation in the outcome of the syntactic operation Agree, but rather, must arise from variation in the morphological component. Below, I examine parameters of variation that can be accounted for in this manner.

Types of impoverishment. Languages vary as to how many φ-feature contrasts are neutralized in Ā-contexts. Languages like Fiorentino and Abaza exhibit **total φ-impoverishemt** – all φ-contrasts are neutralized. The Berber language Tashlhit exhibits **partial φ-impoverishment** – [NUMBER] agreement remains, as in (6).

(6) tim arin lli   ut-**nin**   afruh
    women C_REL hit-PTCP.PL child
    'the women who hit the child'
    (Aspinon 1953:168)

Languages like Mexican Spanish exhibit no φ-impoverishment in the context of Ā-features. Thus, these three types are straightforwardly handled by differences in the type of impoverishment rules present in a given language.

Ā-exponence. Languages also vary as to whether the Ā-feature that triggers φ-impoverishment is realized morphologically. Languages like Fiorentino do not realize this feature, while languages like Abaza do. Crucially, the whether or not a language has impoverishment in the context of Ā-features is independent of whether or not that language spells out those features. The Atlantic language Kobiana exhibits no φ-feature impoverishment in the context of [Ā], but has rather has a separate set of φ-agreement morphemes in the context of that feature.

	SG	PL
1	má-	ngée-
2	á-	káa-
3	à-	náà-

Table 1: Kobiana φ-agreement

	SG	PL
1	mé-	ngéena-
2	ée-	káana-
3	áma-	náàná-

Table 2: Kobiana subject focus agreement

Thus, we are able to fill in the 3x2 table (7) – all 6 possibilities are attested crosslinguistically

(7) *Typology of Ā-exponence and impoverishment*

		φ-impoverishment		
		TOTAL	PARTIAL	NONE
Ā-exponence	YES	Abaza	Tashlhit	Kobiana
	NO	Fiorentino	Lubukusu	Spanish