PHASE UNLOCKING IN GEORGIAN

Sigwan Thivierge, University of Maryland

THESIS. Recent work has investigated whether Agree can neutralize phasal boundaries, thus widening the syntactic domain accessible for subsequent Agree operations (Rackowski & Richards 2005, Preminger 2011, Van Urk & Richards 2015, *a.o.*). This paper provides novel evidence for such a theory, based on *inverse agreement* in Georgian (Kartvelian).

DATA. Georgian *inverse* agreement is characterized as a 'flip' in agreement patterns compared to the *basic* (the default agreement paradigm). A set of prefixes mark the object in the basic, but the subject in the inverse; a set of suffixes mark the subject in the basic, but the object in the inverse. A separate *-t* suffix marks plurality in both—however, 1SG (and 2SG) inverse objects block 3PL agreement, as in (1). 3PL agreement is allowed if the object is also 3rd person, as in (2).

(1) mat   me   v-u-χvar-<u>var</u>(*-**t**)
     3PL.DAT   1SG.NOM   1-VER-love-1.PRES(-PL)
     'They love me.' (Okay as: 'They love **us**.')

(2) mat   is   u-χvar-**t**
     3PL.DAT   3SG.NOM   VER-love-PL
     '**They** love him/her.'

Behaviour from binding and agreement patterns suggests that inverse subjects are introduced by $Appl^0$, below vP (see McGinnis 1995, *i.a.*). Therefore, the structure is as follows with the φ-probe on v^0, capturing its tendency to expone the object in the basic and the subject in the inverse.

(3) $[_{\#P} \#^0 [_{\pi P} \pi^0 [_{vP} \textbf{DP}_{\textbf{subj}} v^0 [_{\sqrt{P}} \sqrt{^0} DP_{obj}]]]]$ BASIC

(4) $[_{\#P} \#^0 [_{\pi P} \pi^0 [_{vP} v^0 [_{ApplP} \textbf{DP}_{\textbf{subj}} Appl^0 [_{\sqrt{P}} \sqrt{^0} DP_{obj}]]]]]$ INVERSE

This paper focuses on the following question related to the inverse agreement paradigm: Why do 1SG and 2SG objects block 3PL subject agreement?

ANALYSIS. I propose that, in the inverse agreement paradigm, 1st/2nd person objects move to the vP phase edge in order to be licensed by a higher probe on π^0 (Rezac 2008). Independent evidence for this licensing requirement comes from PCC effects in ditransitives, suggesting that 1st/2nd person arguments are subject to the PLC (Béjar & Rezac 2003). This movement blocks Agree relations with 3PL subjects, crucially with respect to the higher number probe, as in (5).

(5) $[_{\#P} \#^0 [_{\pi P} \pi^0 [_{vP} \textbf{DP}_{\textbf{1PL/2PL}} v^0 [_{ApplP} DP_{3SG/PL} Appl^0 [_{\sqrt{P}} \sqrt{^0} \textbf{D̶P̶}_{\textbf{1̶P̶L̶/̶2̶P̶L̶}}]]]]]$

However, 3rd person objects do not require licensing and thus remain low. Since there is no argument in Spec,vP, and vP is a phase, π^0 first encounters v in its entirety. The vP, however, does not carry the features π^0 is seeking, and so this agreement relation has the effect of unlocking the interior of the phase for further searches (Van Urk & Richards 2015, *a.o.*). With no phasal boundary, 3PL inverse subjects in Spec,ApplP are now accessible to the number probe, which will spell-out as *-t* if it finds a plural feature, as in (6).

(6) $[_{\#P} \#^0 [_{\pi P} \pi^0 [_{vP} v^0 [_{ApplP} \textbf{DP}_{\textbf{3PL}} Appl^0 [_{\sqrt{P}} \sqrt{^0} DP_{3SG/PL}]]]]]$

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS. I argue that licensing requirements on 1st/2nd person arguments (which are independently seen in Georgian PCC effects) force them to move to a high position when they appear as inverse objects, where they block number agreement for 3PL inverse subjects. This addresses the long-standing puzzle concerning the distribution of the Georgian plural marker *-t*, particularly in the oft-ignored inverse agreement paradigm. That is, the proposed analysis captures how 3PL inverse subjects can indeed be marked by *-t* just in case the object is also 3rd person. Crucially, part of the analysis argues that phasal boundaries may be unlocked when no phase-peripheral target was found, thus providing novel empirical support for this theory.

References

Béjar, Susana, and Milan Rezac. 2003. Person licensing and the derivation of PCC effects. *Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science Series 4* 49–62.

McGinnis, Martha. 1995. Projection and position: Evidence from Georgian. In *Proceedings of ConSole IV*, ed. & Reuben van der Vijver João Costa, Rob Goedemans, 203–220. Leiden.

Preminger, Omer. 2011. Asymmetries between person and number in syntax: A commentary on Baker's SCOPA. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 29:917–937.

Rackowski, Andrea, and Norvin Richards. 2005. Phase edge and extraction: A Tagalog case study. *Linguistic Inquiry* 36:565–599.

Rezac, Milan. 2008. The syntax of eccentric agreement: The person case constraint and absolutive displacement in Basque. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 26:61–106.

Van Urk, Coppe, and Norvin Richards. 2015. Two components of long-distance extraction: Successive cyclicity in Dinka. *Linguistic Inquiry* 46:113–155.