

Object agreement in ditransitive constructions

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Multiple Agreement across Domains

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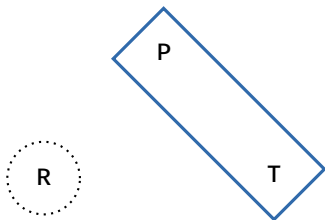
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Introduction: Alignment in ditransitives

Indirective alignment

- (1) a. I give [_P the book].
 b. I give [_T the book] [_R to the woman].
- (2) **Indirective alignment** — P and T identical (*direct object*)

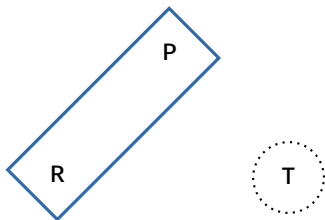


See e.g. Dryer (1986), Haspelmath (2005), Malchukov, Haspelmath & Comrie (2010)

Secundative alignment

- (3) a. I equip [_P the woman].
 b. I equip [_R the woman] [_T *with a book*].

- (4) **Secundative alignment** — P and R identical (*primary* object)



Alignment in case and agreement I

Object agreement with one object (or “indexing”) also shows both types:

- (5) Indirective case and **indirective agreement, i.e. with τ** [Hungarian]

[_R *Neked*] *ad-ja* [_T *a kutyá-t*].
 you.SG.DAT give-3SG.SBJ>OBJ the dog-ACC
 ‘S/he gives you the dog.’

- (6) Indirective case and **secundative agreement, i.e. with \mathbf{R}** [Amharic]

Lamma [_R *l-Almaz*] [_T *tarik-u-n*] *nəggər-at*.
 Lemma.M DAT-Almaz.F story.M-DEF-ACC tell.3.M.SBJ-3.F.OBJ
 ‘Lemma told Almaz the story.’ (Baker 2012: 261)

Alignment in case and agreement II

- **Four logical ways** of combining secundative and indirective case and agreement alignment in languages with **one instance of object agreement**
- Three types are found all over the world
- One type is missing

	Secundative case	Indirective case
Secundative agreement	✓ (Nez Perce)	✓ (Amharic)
Indirective agreement	✗	✓ (Hungarian)

Today's talk

Case and agreement alignment in ditransitives

The attested types differ in whether the theme or the recipient is the primary object and whether the verb can agree with DAT objects or not.

A typological gap: No secundative case and indirective agreement

The gap in ditransitive constructions is not accidental: it follows from hierarchical syntactic structure and the case hierarchy.

Counterexamples?

Languages with **symmetric objects** (in some respects) pose a challenge: information structure and φ -features seem to allow violations of locality.

→ These can be explained by a version **multiple agreement**.

Alignment patterns

Indirective case and indirective agreement: Hungarian

- P and T marked ACC (direct object)
- R marked DAT (indirect object)
- Object agreement with (roughly) definite direct objects

(7) a. Monotransitive with object agreement

Lát-ja [P *a kutyá-t*].

see-3SG.SBJ>OBJ the dog-ACC

'S/he sees the dog.'

b. Indirective case and **indirective agreement**

[R *Neked*] *ad-ja* [T *a kutyá-t*].

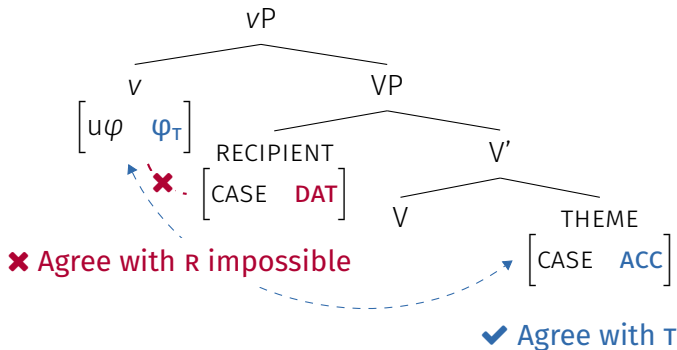
you.SG.DAT give-3SG.SBJ>OBJ the dog-ACC

'S/he gives you the dog.'

Indirective case and indirective agreement

In languages like Hungarian, the verb can only agree with ACC objects

→ Agreement can skip the recipient R and agree with the theme T



Indirective case and secundative agreement: Amharic

- P and T marked ACC (direct object)
- R is DAT (indirect object)
- The verb can agree with the DAT R

(8) a. Monotransitive with object agreement

Lamma [_P *ganzab-u-n*] *sərrək'-ə-w*.

Lemma.M money.M-DEF-ACC rob-3.M.SBJ-3.M.OBJ

'Lemma stole the money.'

b. Indirective case and **secundative agreement**

Lamma [_R *l-Almaz*] [_T *tarik-u-n*] *nəggər-at*.

Lemma.M DAT-Almaz.F story.M-DEF-ACC tell.3.M.SBJ-3.F.OBJ

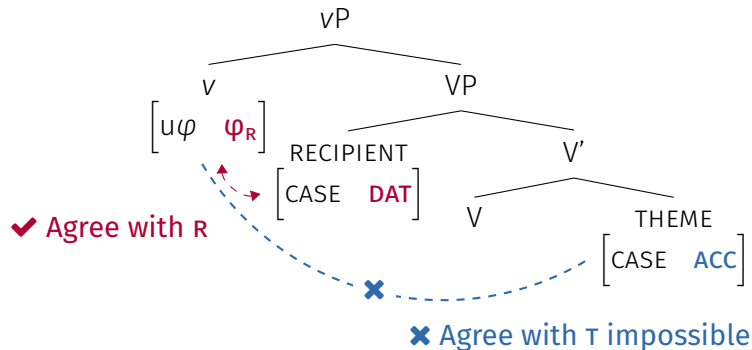
'Lemma told Almaz the story.'

(Baker 2012: 261)

Indirective case and secundative agreement

If DAT arguments can control agreement, the verb will agree with R rather than T

→ Agreement with T is ruled out by locality



Secundative case and secundative agreement: Nez Perce

- P marked ACC in monotransitives
- R marked ACC (primary O), T marked NOM

(9) a. Monotransitive with object agreement

Ciq'aamqal-nim pee-tw'ehke'yk-se-∅ [_P *picpic-ne*].

dog-ERG 3/3-chase-IPFV-PRS cat-ACC

'The dog is chasing the cat.'

(Deal 2013: 396)

b. Secundative case and **secundative agreement**

P.-nim_i pee-kiwyek-∅-e [_R *Elwit'et-ne_j*] [_T *'ip-nim_{i/j} hipt*].

P.-ERG 3/3-feed-PFV-REM.PST Elwit'et-ACC 3SG-GEN food.NOM

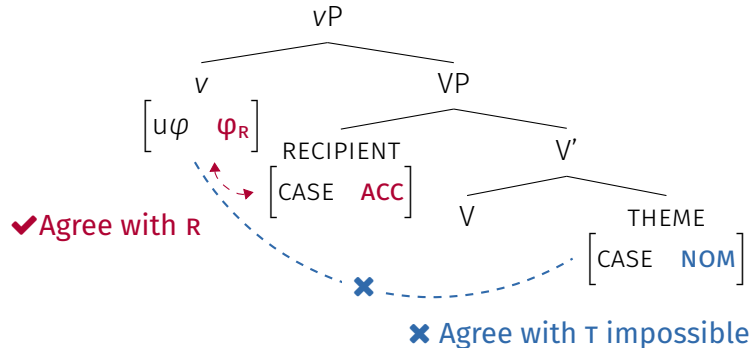
'Pinooc_i fed Elwit'et_j her_i/his_j food.'

(Deal 2013: 397)

Secundative case and secundative agreement

Nez Perce assigns the R the same case as the monotransitive object P

- Since the monotransitive object P can control agreement, so must the R
- Agreement with τ is ruled out by locality



Explaining the gap

Agreement patterns with indirective case

In indirective case-marking, i.e. when R is marked DAT:

- If verb cannot agree with DAT object: **indirective agreement**
 - If verb can agree with DAT object: **secundative agreement**
- Case hierarchy: NOM/ABS > ACC/ERG > **DAT** > OBL > ... (cf. Blake 2001, Caha 2009)
- Languages differ in which (morphological) cases are accessible for agreement

	Secundative case	Indirective case
Secundative agreement		✓ (Amharic)
Indirective agreement		✓ (Hungarian)

Agreement patterns with secundative case

In secundative case-marking, i.e. when R is marked ABS/ACC:

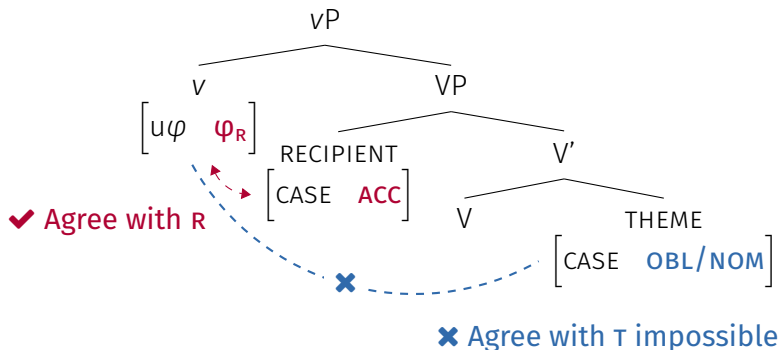
- In languages with object agreement, ...
 - ... ABS/ACC can always control agreement: **secundative agreement**
- Case hierarchy: NOM/**ABS** > **ACC**/ERG > DAT > OBL > ...
- Agreement with T, i.e. indirective agreement, should be impossible

	Secundative case	Indirective case
Secundative agreement	✓ (Nez Perce)	✓ (Amharic)
Indirective agreement	✗	✓ (Hungarian)

Ruling out secundative case and indirective agreement

Assumptions:

- The verb can agree with R — **true by definition**,
- the agreeing verb c-commands both R and T,
- and R c-commands T (cf. Nez Perce, (9b)).



Is this on the right track?

- Structural explanation makes the right predictions
 - Ditransitives in around 40 languages with object agreement (from Dryer 1986, Haspelmath 2005, Malchukov, Haspelmath & Comrie 2010):
- **Secundative or neutral case do not occur only with indirective agreement**
- Functional explanations only capture part of what is going on...

“

Since IO's vary for person, while DO's in ditransitive clauses generally do not, it makes more sense functionally for the verb in a ditransitive clause to code the person of the IO rather than the person of the DO ... (Dryer 1986: 841f.)

Apparent exceptions

Skipping accessible goals

So far, I suggested that an accessible R will always control agreement



In some languages, R is skipped **under certain conditions** and the verb agrees with T – even though R's case is accessible for agreement.

- This happens both in languages with both case alignment types
 - **Competition** between objects in person and/or information structure
- **Multiple agreement** can derive these patterns

Person determining agreement alignment

Chukchi and Alutor (Chukotko-Kamchatkan) have indirective case alignment

- P and T marked ABS (direct object) — R marked DAT (indirect object)
- The verb agrees with a first or second person R/T or with **a third person T**

(10) a. **Secundative agreement** with 1PL R [Chukchi]

ne-jəl-mək *atr'ec* [_T *kante-t*]
 INV-give-**1PL.OBJ** only lollies-3PL.ABS
 'They only gave **us** lollies.'

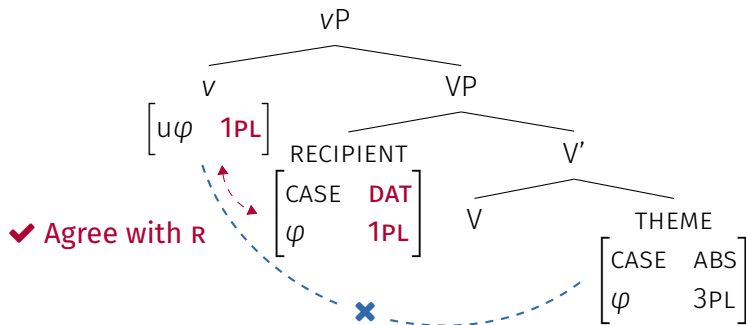
b. **Indirective agreement** with 3SG T

... [_T *yamyɑ-taƣo*] [_R *yamyɑ-ramkəl'etə*] *n-ə-jəl-qin*
 EMPH-food.3SG.ABS EMPH-guest-DAT HAB-EP-give-3PL.SBJ>>**3SG.OBJ**
 'They only gave [this] special food to special guests.' (Dunn 1999: 207)

Modelling Chukchi agreement with 1st/2nd person

Agreement cannot just be sensitive to locality, it must be sensitive to **person**

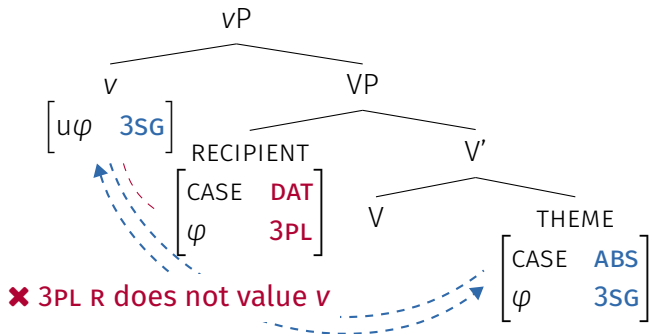
- Assumption: 1st/2nd person value a probe right away, 3rd person does not
- If *v* encounters a 3rd person argument, it will continue to probe (cf. Deal 2015)



Modelling Chukchi agreement with 3rd person

Agreement cannot just be sensitive to locality, it must be sensitive to **person**

- Assumption: 1st/2nd person value a probe right away, 3rd person does not
- If *v* encounters a 3rd person argument, it will continue to probe (cf. Deal 2015)

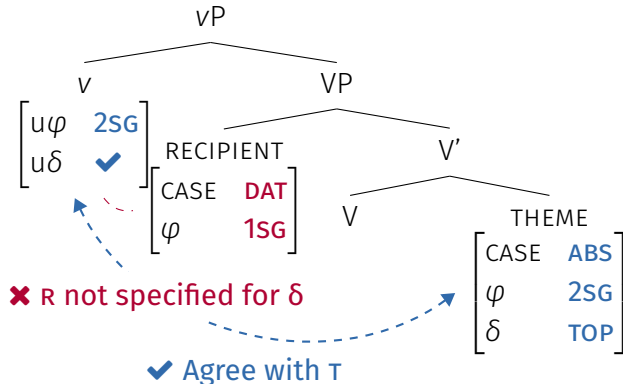


- ✗ 3SG T does not value v at first
- ✓ 3SG T values as v final accessible goal

Modelling Itelmen agreement with salient object

Agreement in Itelmen is sensitive **information structure**

- Assumption: the probe on v is discourse-sensitive
- A δ -probe is looking for a salient DP (cf. Miyagawa 2010, 2017, Hamilton 2017)



Symmetrical alternations

Some languages have symmetrical ditransitive constructions in which

- both internal arguments can agree with the verb, or passivise, ...
- These usually involve identical, often null case morphology (**neutral alignment**)

(12) a. **Secundative agreement** with class 2 R [Bembe]

twa-ba-h-ile [_T *bokyo*]
 1PL-2.OM-give-PST 14.money
 'We gave **them** money.' (*batu* 'the people')

(Iorio 2015: 106)

b. **Indirective agreement** with class 14 T

twa-bo-h-ile [_R *batu*]
 1PL-14.OM-give-PST 2.person
 'We gave **it** to people.' (*bokyo* 'the money')

(Iorio 2015: 105)

Whence (a)symmetry?

But are such patterns really symmetrical?

- van der Wal (to appear) argues that information structure influences which object controls agreement in several Bantu languages
 - Languages can be symmetrical in some respects but not others (Holmberg, Sheehan & van der Wal 2018, Haddican & Holmberg 2018)
 - Jerro (2018) shows that the lexical semantics of verb classes also influence their symmetry in Lubukusu (also Bantu)
 - Alternations are associated with particular entailments (Oehrle 1976, Beck & Johnson 2004)
- Not only structure and case-marking introduce asymmetries

“Apparent” exceptions

- ? Why are these only **apparent** exceptions?
- In Chukotko-Kamchatkan, Bembe, and others non-local agreement is an **option**
- When R is accessible (through its case), it is a kind of default
- Agreement with T across R requires something additional
- No language **only** allows agreement with T across an accessible R
- ? Does **Case** play a primary role?

Analogues in monotransitives

A gap in monotransitives

Moravcsik (1978), Bobaljik (2008) point out an analogous gap in monotransitives

- In ERG-ABS languages, not all ERG subjects can agree
- In NOM-ACC languages, **the subject always agrees**

	Accusative case	Ergative case
Accusative agreement	✓ (English, Finnish)	✓ (Shipibo, Nepali)
Ergative agreement	✗	✓ (Tsez, Hindi)

- Bobaljik (2008) provides a structural explanation involving a case hierarchy
- ? Do we find apparent exceptions to the monotransitive generalisation?

Exceptions to the monotransitive generalisation?

- In Algonquin, T agrees with SBJ or OBJ, based on their person (Oxford 2018)
- In Dzamba **theme inversion**, the verb agrees with a topical OBJ, see (13)

(13) a. **Agreement with A**, SVO order [Dzamba]

[_A *Omwana*] **a**-tom-aki [_P *imukanda*].
 1.child 1.SM-send-PFV 5.letter
 'The child sent a letter.'

b. **Agreement with P**, OVS order

[_P *Imukanda*] **mu**-tom-aki [_A *omwana*].
 5.letter 5.SM-send-PFV 5.child
 'The letter, *the child* sent it.'

(Henderson 2011: 743)

Conclusions

Conclusions

- Case and agreement in ditransitives do not vary freely
- Only certain types are attested
- With secundative (or neutral) case, **secundative agreement is always possible**
- Case, person, and information structure determine controllers
- Analogous gap: *ACC case/ERG agreement (Moravcsik 1978, Bobaljik 2008)
- Striking parallelisms between higher (T) and lower (v) agreement domains
- We find similar “exceptions” to the generalisations

Thank you!

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Abbreviations 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, A = agent-like argument of a canonical transitive verb, ABS = absolutive, ACC = accusative, DAT = dative, DEF = definite, EMPH = emphatic, EP = epenthetic vowel, ERG = ergative, F = feminine, FUT = future, GEN = genitive, HAB = habitual aspect, IMPRS = impersonal, INV = inverse, IPFV = imperfective, LOC = locative, M = masculine, NOM = nominative, OBJ = object, OBL = oblique, OM = object marker, P = patient-like argument of a canonical transitive verb, PFV = perfective, PL = plural, PRS = present, PST = past, R = recipient-like internal argument of a ditransitive verb, REM = remote, SBJ = subject, SG = singular, SM = subject marker, T = theme- or patient-like internal argument of a ditransitive verb, TOP = topic.

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Language breakdown I

	Non-indirective case	Indirective case
Non-indirective agreement	23	4
Indirective agreement	0	10

Table 1 Case/agreement alignment in languages with one instance of object agreement from Dryer (1986), Haspelmath (2005), Malchukov, Haspelmath & Comrie (2010)

```
Fisher's Exact Test for Count Data
data:  unchecked
p-value = 2.874e-06
alternative hypothesis: true odds ratio is not equal to 1
95 percent confidence interval:
 7.956302      Inf
sample estimates:
odds ratio
      Inf
```

Listing 1 Fisher's exact test on data from Table 1

Language breakdown II

ICIA	ICSA	SCSA	SCIA	NCSA	NCIA
Alutor	(Alutor)	Chintang		Cree (Plains)	(Chintang)
Apurinã	Amharic	Greenlandic (West)		Huichol	
Chukchi	(Chukchi)	Kham		Itonama	
Hungarian		Khanty (Eastern)		Jaminjung	
Ika		Khanty (Northern)		Mapudungun	
Itelmen	(Itelmen)	Mansi (Northern)		Motuna	
Lango		Nez Perce		Nahuatl (Huasteca)	
Tundra Nenets		Nlaka'pamux		Ojibwe	
Ket		Selkup		Palauan	
		Wari'		Teop	
		Yup'ik		Tzotzil	
				Wambaya	
				Wampis	
				Zulu	(Zulu)

Table 2 Languages I checked for case and agreement alignment