

Reflexive predicates and the Voice- v division of labor

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1. Overview. Especially with the advent of minimalist approaches to syntactic derivation, a growing pursuit since Chomsky (2000; 2001) concerns laying out the mechanisms of the Agree operation, the primary tool for feature-based dependencies (see Deal, 2023). Debates over the years have included search-space directionality, locale (syntax versus PF), and halting conditions. The particular line of research explored here involves the reducibility of binding to Agree (*binding-as-agreement* — henceforth: BAA), one of multiple ways in which researchers have attempted to decompose Conditions A–C (see Chomsky, 1981):

- (1) a. **Binding as movement:** Antecedents externally merge (EM) with anaphors, then proceed to raise at a later step. (e.g., Zwart, 2002).
- b. **Binding as φ -feature agreement:** Features on anaphors are valued via agreement by their antecedents (Hicks, 2009; Ke, 2019; Reuland, 2011).
- c. **Binding as movement + agreement:** φ -feature agreement is preceded by movement. (Diercks et al., 2020; Rooryck & Vanden Wyngaerd, 2011).

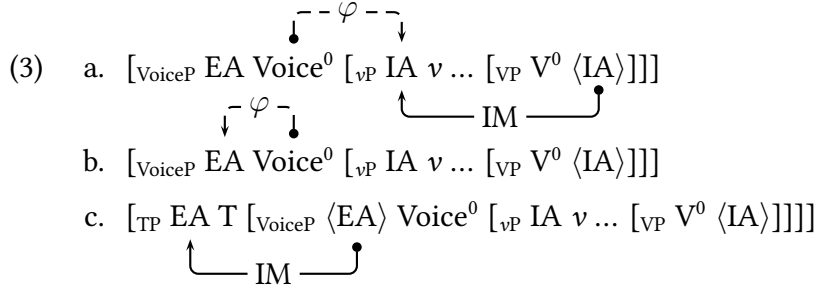
In this work, I propose a novel approach to deriving reflexives in transitive constructions that relies on the emergent cooperation between v^0 and Voice⁰ involving movement + agreement. Taking on the perspective that θ -roles are generally introduced via distinct heads (*thematic separation* in Husband, 2023), I characterize anaphoricity with a reflexive-Voice⁰ that acts as a φ -probe (Paparounas & Akkuş, 2023). Departing from previous work, however, I argue that the unvalued internal-argument (IA) anaphor undergoes object shift as a result of obligatory EPP on the phase-head v^0 — motivated by observations of argument extraction in ERG/ABS languages (e.g., Mandar: Brodtkin, 2022; Chuj: Brodtkin & Royer, 2021). This allows for the natural preservation of the *strong* Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC^S; see Chomsky, 2000; Gallego, 2020), and ensures that the IA is the first DP Voice⁰ encounters.

2. Patterns in Reflexivity. The intuitive principles guiding and favoring a BAA approach can be summarized as in (2). The fundamental restriction of precedence in anaphor distribution is described by Haspelmath as antecedent-reflexive asymmetry — a postulate which entails Condition A. Moreover, the cross-linguistic empirical pattern emerges that pronominal forms and antecedents tend to match in φ -features (see Collins & Postal, 2012; Angelopoulos et al., 2023).

- (2) a. **Antecedent-reflexive asymmetry:** An antecedent must occur higher on the rank scale of syntactic positions than its anaphor. (Haspelmath, 2023: 37).
- b. **The Pronominal Agreement Condition:** An anaphor agrees in φ -features with its antecedent. (Angelopoulos et al., 2023: 3).

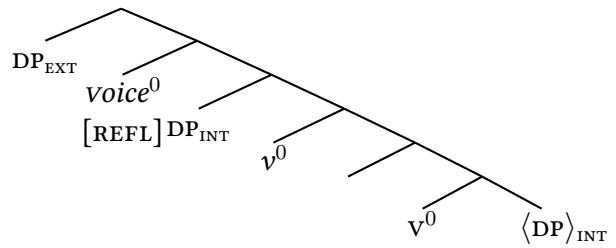
3. Condition A via BAA. Constructing an analysis based on the patterns in §2, downward agreement serves as a natural explanation at play for local anaphors. Rooryck & Vanden Wyngaerd (2011; R&VW) is a notable example of a BAA approach that seeks this. However, their account argues for a *direct* Agree relation between co-referent items — an account that falls out of place from perspectives that delineate functional heads as probes, not lexical elements such

as anaphors. Taking on a more fine-grained structure of the verbal system (i.e., where Voice⁰ introduces external arguments, e.g., Harley, 2013), anaphors adjoining to the edge of vP would not c-command antecedents. As a result, I depart from R&VW’s view that anaphors probe. Instead, I build on the analysis of Turkish by Paparounas & Akkuş (2023) in having Voice⁰ mediate this relation. As seen in (3a-c), the reflexive (IA) still moves to the phase edge, but serves as a goal rather than a probe. Agreement with Voice⁰ initially fails, since the anaphor carries unvalued features. Once the pre-valued EA is merged, Voice⁰ and the IA – as a composite probe – successfully Agree with the new specifier (as in cyclic Agree). T⁰ probes as expected (3c), and the predicate verb can subsequently undergo head-movement to converge on linear order.



4. Implications. Reflected in (4) as a tree, the IA undergoes movement to [Spec,vP] for a different reason than R&VW originally proposed. While this movement, referred to as the “Principle for the Anaphoric Properties of Agreement (PAPA)” by Diercks et al. (2020: 361) still occurs, it is instead motivated by the EPP-feature on phase heads that triggers movement, such as with object shift in ERG/ABS voice alternations (e.g., Brodtkin, 2022; see Legate, 2014). As a consequence of adopting the novel pairing of object shift and BAA on a cross-linguistic scale, the information in the transferred vP phase need not be accessible to Agree. The parsimonious PIC^S can be freely maintained at this step via the conceptual unification between multiple argument systems. From a broader perspective, this analysis proves especially relevant for future research on the possible underlying mechanisms at play in the distributional patterns Conditions A–C sought to capture.

(4) *PAPA feeds a shorter search-space:*



Sel ref. Angelopoulous, N., Collins, C., Michelioudakis, D., & Terzi, A. (2023). On the syntactic status of implicit arguments: Greek as a case study. To appear in *WCCFL 41*. • Brodtkin, D. (2022). Two steps to high absolutive syntax: Austronesian voice and agent focus in Mandar. *JEAL*. • Brodtkin, D., & Royer, J. (2021). Ergative anaphors and high absolutive syntax. To appear in *WCCFL 39*. • Chomsky, N. (1981). *Lectures on government and binding*. De Gruyter Mouton. • Chomsky, N. (2000). Minimalist inquiries: The framework. In *Step by step*. • Chomsky, N. (2001). Derivation by phase. In *Ken Hale*. • Collins, C. & Postal, P. M. (2012). *Imposters: A study of pronominal agreement*. MIT Press. • Deal, A. R. (2023). Current models of Agree. Ms, UC Berkeley. • Diercks, M., van Koppen, M., & Putnam, M. (2020). Agree probes down: Anaphoric feature valuation and phase reference. In *Agree to Agree*. Language Science Press. • Harley, H. (2013). External arguments and the Mirror Principle. *Lingua*. • Haspelmath, M. (2023). Comparing reflexive constructions in the world’s languages. In *Reflexive constructions in the world’s languages*. Language Science Press. • Husband, E. M. (2023). Thematic separation in light of sentence comprehension. *Language & Linguistics Compass*. • Legate, J. A. (2014). *Voice and v: Lessons from Achnese*. MIT Press. • Rooryck, J. & Vanden Wyngaerd, G. (2011). *Dissolving Binding Theory*. OUP. • Paparounas, L. & Akkuş, F. (2023) Anaphora and agreement in the Turkish DP: Delimiting binding-through-agree. To appear in *NLLT*.