

The Heterogeneity of Anti-Agreement

Nico Baier - UC Berkeley

This paper examines anti-agreement (Ouhalla 1993), an effect whereby the normal pattern of ϕ -agreement with an argument in a specific position is disrupted when that position is \bar{A} -bound. While previous literature implicitly assumes that anti-agreement is a unified phenomenon, I show that it is more properly decomposed into two parts. First, languages may exhibit a (morphologically) alternative pattern of agreement with an argument that has been \bar{A} -extracted. Second, languages may express an impoverished number of ϕ -feature contrasts in an agreement paradigm when the argument controlling that agreement paradigm is \bar{A} -extracted. These effects are distinct: languages may exhibit alternative agreement without reducing ϕ -feature contrasts and may reduce ϕ -feature contrasts without employing an alternative paradigm.

These observations emerge from a cross-linguistic survey of 30 languages exhibiting anti-agreement. The sample includes all languages already discussed in the anti-agreement literature and languages that have not been previously noted as exhibiting the effect. To my knowledge, this survey represents the first of its kind in the anti-agreement literature.

\bar{A} -extraction of an agreement controller may require a morphologically distinction pattern of ϕ -agreement in some languages. I call this an *alternative agreement effect*. In Somali, the verb agrees for person/gender/number with the subject, (1a). Under subject extraction, the segmental form of agreement changes, (1b; Saeed 1999):

- (1) a. buugág-ga nimán-ku keen-àan
men-the books-the bring-3SG.M.PRES
'the men who bring the books.'
- b. nimán-ka buugág-ga keen-á
men-the books-the bring-3SG.M.PRES.RED
'the men who bring the books.'

Another example comes from the Bantu language Abo, where extraction of a class 1 subject requires the subject marker *nú*, (2b), instead of the normal *à* (2a; Burns 2013):

- (2) a. mǎn à jé kó
1child 1.SBJ 1SM eat.PST 9chicken
'The child ate chicken.'
- b. mǎn (nú lá) nú jé kó
1child (1.REL C) 1SM.AAE eat.PST 9chicken
'The child who ate chicken.'

In both of Somali and Abo, the number of ϕ -feature contrasts expressed by the agreement paradigm in subject extraction contexts is *not* reduced. Nonetheless, this effect is asymmetric: in both languages, the alternative paradigm only appears when the argument that controls it is extracted. This asymmetry has previously been taken as a hallmark of anti-agreement.

Other languages in the survey display an impoverished number of ϕ -feature contrasts in an agreement paradigm when the argument that controls that agreement is \bar{A} -extracted. Person agreement is always deleted; number and gender agreement may be retained in some languages (see

Henderson 2013, a.o.). For example, anti-agreement in Tarifit Berber deletes person/gender/number agreement, (3a), whereas in Tashlhit Berber, number is retained, (3b; Ouhalla 2005) :

- (3) a. man tamghart_i ay yzrin/*t-zra Mohand
 which woman C_{FOC} see.PART/*3SG.F-see Mohand
 ‘Which woman saw Mohand?’
- b. irgazn_i nna ffegh-n-*(in)
 men C_{REL} left-PART-PL
 ‘the men who left.’

Feature impoverishment under anti-agreement is constrained in two ways. First, agreement features in anti-agreement contexts are always a *proper subset* of normal agreement features. Second, gender agreement cannot be retained to the exclusion of number agreement. The interaction of these principles yields the three patterns (4).

- (4) a. **Pattern 1** = Person, (Gender), Number → ∅
 b. **Pattern 2** = Person, (Gender), Number → Number
 c. **Pattern 2** = Person, Gender, Number → Gender, Number

These patterns of feature deletion are the only ones in the cross-linguistic survey, and they have not previously been noted in the literature.

Agreement impoverishment effects are distinct from alternative agreement effects. A language may exhibit one or both simultaneously. This yields three types of anti-agreement cross-linguistically:

- (5) a. **Type 1**: Alternative agreement only
 b. **Type 2**: Agreement impoverishment only
 c. **Type 3**: Alternative agreement + agreement impoverishment

Somali, (1), and Abo, (2), are examples of type 1 anti-agreement. The northern Italian dialect Fiorentino, which requires default 3SG.MASC agreement under subject extraction is an example of type 2 anti-agreement (Brandi and Cordin 1989). Tashlhit Berber, (3b), is an example of type 3 anti-agreement. While these effects are distinct, they are connected in that they both have an asymmetric distribution: they occur only when the argument which controls the affected agreement morphology undergoes \bar{A} -extraction. That is, they are not a general characteristic of clauses in which \bar{A} -movement has occurred.

References: Burns, R. 2014. Abo optional anti-agreement. In *Selected Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Conference on African Linguistics*. Brandi, L. and P. Cordin. 1989. Two Italian dialects the null subject hypothesis. In: *The Null Subject Parameter*, ed. Jaeggli, O. and Safir, K. Henderson, B. 2013. Anti-agreement and person in Bantu. NLLT 31:453-481. Ouhalla, J. 1993. Subject-extraction, negation and the anti-agreement effect. NLLT 11:447-518. Ouhalla, J. 2005. Agreement features, agreement, and anti-agreement. NLLT 23:655-686. Saeed, J. 1999. Somali. John Benjamins.