An Elsewhere Exponent in Discontinuous Agreement

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1 Main Claim

The insertion of an elsewhere exponent in discontinuous agreement requires separate exponent slots to be present before it comes to Vocabulary Insertion (=VI).

☞ Discontinuity ≺ Vocabulary Insertion

This is an argument

- in favor of discontinuous agreement accounts where discontinuity precedes VI (e.g. Shlonsky 1989, 2023, Martinović 2019, Noyer 1992, Halle 1997, Hewett 2022).
- against discontinuous agreement accounts that implement discontinuity through (a modified version of) Vocabulary Insertion, i.e. where discontinuity arises at the same time as VI (e.g. Trommer 1999, Harbour 2008, 2023, Campbell 2012).

2 Data – Didinga (Surmic/South Sudan)

Subject agreement on intransitive verbs in Didinga is **discontinuous**. The data come from fieldwork with two Didinga consultants conducted in Kenya.

(1) a. h-à-ìrìt-í
1-ASP-cough-1SG
'I am coughing'

b. h-à-ìrìt-tá
1-ASP-cough-1PL.EXCL
'We (excl.) are coughing'

c. h-à-írìt-ì
1-ASP-cough-1PL.INCL
'We (incl.) are coughing'

(2) à-írìt-ì
ASP-cough-3
'He/She/It/They is/are coughing'

(3) Subject agreement, incompletive

	Singular		Plural	
1st	h- -i	(excl.)	h-	-Ca
		(incl.)	h-	-ɪ
2nd	-i			-Cu
3rd	-ɪ		-ɪ	

Didinga represents a rare combinatorial type of discontinuous agreement where **both exponents realize different sub-features of person** (for the classification of combinatorial exponence see Campbell 2012).

(4) Vocabulary entries
a. -ɪ ↔ [ ]
b. h- ↔ [+auth]
c. -i ↔ [+part, −pl]
d. -Ca ↔ [−addr, +pl] / [+auth]
e. -Cu ↔ [−auth, +addr, +pl]

(5) Overview Feature Specifications

	Singular		Plural
1st	[+part, +auth, −addr, −pl]	(excl.)	[+part, +auth, −addr, +pl]
		(incl.)	[+part, +auth, +addr, +pl]
2nd	[+part, −auth, +addr, −pl]		[+part, −auth, +addr, +pl]
3rd	[−part, −auth, −addr, −pl]		[−part, −auth, −addr, +pl]

(see e.g. with some variations Noyer 1992, Harbour 2016, Pertsova 2022)

Arguments for binary clusivity features (see also Pertsova 2022):

- specific exclusive morpheme (*-Ca*)
- underlying (A)BA pattern (in the triple of 1sg–1pl.excl–1pl.incl)

☞ Both points contradict the clusivity containment hypothesis (where the inclusive properly contains the exclusive) that lies at the core of privative clusivity features (Moskal 2018).

1pl.incl - 3rd Syncretism

- Neither binary (e.g. Noyer 1992, Harbour 2016, Pertsova 2022) nor privative (e.g. Harley & Ritter 2002, Béjar 2003, Moskal 2018) person feature inventories predict any shared feature between 1pl.incl and 3sg/pl → *no common person feature*
- The syncretism appears in the singular and plural → *no common number feature*

☞ The 1pl.incl - 3rd syncretism has to be described with a **radically underspecified elsewhere exponent** (see (4-a)) and it is involved in discontinuous agreement.

3 Vocabulary Insertion

The Subset Pinciple (Halle 1997, 428) predicts that only one exponent ("*the item matching the greatest number of features*") will be inserted into one terminal node.

One can distinguish discontinuous agreement accounts depending on whether they maintain the original Vocabulary Insertion process of the Subset Principle.

- accounts modifying the Subset Principle:
  ☞ **discontinuity = VI, i.e. only one exponent slot present before VI** (see 4)
- accounts maintaining the original Subset Principle:
  ☞ **discontinuity ≺ VI, i.e. separate exponent slots present before VI** (see 5)

4 Accounts where Discontinuity = VI

Common property: (e.g. Trommer 1999, Harbour 2008, 2023, Campbell 2012)

- There is only one exponent slot present before it comes to Vocabulary Insertion.
- These accounts modify the insertion process in order to get more than one exponent.
- They allow for iterated insertion in order to realize features which have been unrealized after a previous cycle of Vocabulary Insertion.

- This works as long as all exponents are able to realize features.
- ϟ However, if a radically underspecified elsewhere exponent is involved in discontinuous agreement, like in the 1pl.incl in Didinga, the mechanism breaks down.
- ϟ The elsewhere exponent is not able to realize any unrealized features because it is not specified for any features.
- ϟ After a first cylce of vocabulary insertion where *h-* (4-b) is inserted, there is no motivation to insert the elsewhere exponent -ɪ (4-a).

Conceivable Workarounds fail:

Option 1: Not only exponents realizing unrealized features but all exponents which *fit* the unrealized features can be inserted.

- ϟ The elsewehere exponent would never stop fitting. → undefined endpoint (see also Halle 1997)
- ϟ Since most vocabulary entries are assumed to be underspecified and leave features unrealized, the elsewhere exponent would show up in wrong places. → overgeneration

Option 2: The elsewhere exponent is not radically underspecified but associated with a generic feature.

- ϟ This would make the overgeneration problem even more problematic.

☞ These accounts fail to insert an elsewhere exponent in discontinuous agreement.

5 Accounts where Discontinuity ≺ VI

Common property:

- There are separate slots available for each exponent involved in discontinuous agreement before it comes to the insertion of the respective exponent.
- Therefore, a standard vocabulary insertion process lead by the Subset Principle can be maintained for each slot.

Syntactic accounts
(e.g. Shlonsky 1989, 2023, Martinović 2019)

- start: two functional nodes in the syntax
- VI of *h-* (4-b)
- VI of -ɪ (4-a)

Morphological accounts
(e.g. Noyer 1992, Halle 1997, Hewett 2022)

- start: one functional node
- (VI of *h-* (4-b))
- Fission creates an additional functional node
- VI of *h-* (if it has not been inserted before)
- VI of -ɪ (4-a)

☞ These accounts are able to insert an elsewhere exponent in discontinuous agreement because there are separate exponent slots preceding the insertion of the exponents.

6 Contextualizing the Argument of this Poster

This poster

Discontinuity ≺ VI

- This poster adds to recent literature that provides arguments for discontinuity ≺ VI.
- However, in contrast to previous arguments, it allows a direct connection between discontinuity and VI without an intermediate step.

Kramer (2023)

Discontinuity ≺ Haplology ≺ VI

- Kramer's (2023) argument is based on the absence of a discontinuous agreement exponent in the imperative in Amharic. She analyses the pattern through a haplology rule that deletes the 'person slot' of the two discontinuous agreement slots.
- Accordingly, her argument is based on transitivity.

Hewett (2022)

Discontinuity ≺ 'Place of Insertion' ≺ VI

- Hewett (2022) provides an allomorphy-based argument where the linear position (prefix vs. suffix) where insertion takes place is important.
- The precondition that the exponent slot does not start in the position where allomophy can apply is crucial for discontinuity to play a role in this setting.

Selected References • Harbour, D. 2008. Discontinuous Agreement and the Syntax-Morphology Interface. In *Phi Theory: Phi-Features Across Modules and Interfaces* • Hewett, M. 2022. *Allomorphy in Semitic Discontinuous Agreement: Evidence for a Modular Approach to Postsyntax.* NLLT • Kramer, R. 2023. *The Morphosyntax of Imperative Agreement in Amharic: A Haplology Analysis.* Brill's Journal of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics 15(1). • Trommer, J. 1999. *Morphology consuming Syntax' Resources: Generation and Parsing in a Minimalist Version of Distributed Morphology.* In Procceedings of essli workshop on resource logics and minimalist grammars.

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