Agreement in thetic VS sentences in Bantu and Romance*

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Both Bantu and Romance languages use a V(erb) S(ubject) construction to express thetic ("out-of-the-blue") sentences. Two types of languages can be distinguished within these language families, with respect to the verbal agreement in a thetic VS sentence: in type 1 the verb has default agreement, whereas in type 2 the verb agrees with the postverbal subject. In the Bantu languages these two types also display a difference in the use of conjoint and disjoint verb forms. Collins (2004), Carstens (2005), and Baker (2008) have previously analyzed such agreement and word order phenomena. These accounts, attributing the differences between types 1 and 2 to parameter settings of the Agree system, do not offer a satisfactory explanation. This paper proposes that the difference is due to the status of the agreement of the verb, which is pronominal in type 1 languages and purely grammatical in type 2. Arguments for this analysis are found in Case, Binding Theory and information structure. The focus in this paper is on the Romance languages French and Italian, and on the Bantu languages Sesotho and Makhuwa.

1. Introduction

In the literature concerning Information Structure a distinction has often been made between categorical and thetic statements. The categorical is a twofold judgement, stating the existence of an entity and then predicating something on it. A thetic statement, on the other hand, is an unstructured judgement expressing only the recognition (or rejection) of an event or a state. Sasse (1987) uses (1) and (2) as typical examples of these two types of statements. The categorical judgement in (2) first names the entity John and then predicates on him that he is intelligent.

The thetic judgement in (1) does not involve the independent recognition of some entity, but simply recognizes the state or situation of "raining".

(1)   It is raining.
       statement

(2)   John   is intelligent.
       entity   *statement*

Lambrecht (1994, 2000) takes thetic sentences to be "topicless", because of their need to be paradigmatically distinguishable from categorical statements (Lambrecht 2000). He takes a topic-comment articulation as the unmarked state of affairs. Lambrecht calls this the Predicate Focus (PF) construction, which can be distinguished from Argument Focus (AF, in other studies sometimes referred to as "narrow focus") and Sentence Focus (SF, alternatively called "all-new utterance" or "thetic sentence"). In a PF sentence the subject is usually the topic. In a SF or thetic sentence, however, both the subject and the predicate are in focus. In order to avoid the default reading of the subject as the topic of the sentence (as in a categorical or PF sentence) the subject must be "detopicalized".

   One strategy for detopicalization is to use a Verb-Subject order. I show in this paper that languages in both the Bantu and the Romance language families make use of this strategy. There is a difference, however, in the agreement on the verb in thetic VS sentences, which is found in both language families. Bantu and Romance languages can be divided into two types according to their agreement. In type 1 languages the verb has default agreement, whereas in type 2 languages the verb agrees with the postverbal subject. The grammatical system of conjoint and disjoint verb forms and the phonological phrasing of the Bantu languages also behave differently in thetic VS sentences. These data are discussed in section 2.

   In section 3 the accounts of Collins (2004), Carstens (2005) and Baker (2008) are examined. They attribute the difference in agreement patterns to a different parameter setting for agreement. In type 1, agreement would require internal merge (move), and the verb (or T) agrees with the element which moves to its specifier. In type 2 the operations Move and Agree can be applied separately and agreement is dependent on Case checking. These analyses are shown to not fully account for all the agreement facts. An alternative explored in section 4 is to investigate the characteristics of the verbal agreement markers. Bresnan and Mchombo (1987) argue that these agreement markers can be either pronominal or purely grammatical. I propose that the differences between the two types in agreement as well as conjoint/disjoint verb forms are a result of the pronominal or grammatical status of the agreement marker, which is pronominal in type 1 non-agreeing languages and grammatical in type 2 agreeing languages. Section 5 evaluates the analyses and forms a conclusion.

2.   Expression of theticity

2.1   Detopicalization

As mentioned in the introduction, the subject of a thetic sentence must be detopicalized in order not to be interpreted as a topic. The principle of detopicalizing the subject is defined by Lambrecht (2000: 624) as follows: "SF marking involves cancellation of those prosodic and/or morphosyntactic subject properties which are associated with the role of subjects as topic expressions in PF sentences". Topical subjects are ideally preverbal, pronominal and unaccented. Thus, subjects in thetic sentences are typically expressed with (some of) the opposite features: they are full nouns, accented and in a postverbal position. Lambrecht captures this in the *Principle of subject–object neutralization*: "In a SF construction, the subject tends to be grammatically coded with some or all of the prosodic and/or morphosyntactic features associated with the focal object in the corresponding categorical construction" (p. 626).

Languages with a more rigid syntax and a flexible focus structure will place a focus marker or move the sentence accent (so-called "prosodic inversion", Lambrecht 2000), rather than moving a constituent, whereas those with a rigid focus structure and a much more flexible syntax will rearrange the word order instead of shifting the accent (Van Valin 1999). Examples of the first language type are English and Ewe. In English (3a) the stress has been shifted to the subject and the word order remains as in a categorical sentence (3a'). Ewe detopicalizes the subject by placing a focus marker (3b); the word order is left unchanged. The second type is exemplified for Italian (3c) and Sesotho (3d),[1] which use the SV order in categorical sentences (3c') and the VS order in thetics.[2] The capitals in the examples indicate the main sentence accent.

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1.   The language Sesotho (Guthrie's S.30) is spoken in Lesotho, South Africa and Botswana by approximately 4.9 million people (Ethnologue).

2.   One other way to construct a thetic sentence is a so-called "split structure" (Sasse 1996) or "bi-clausal presentational construction" (Lambrecht 1994). The first clause has an existential marker (usually "be" or "have") followed by the entity to be presented and the second is a relative clause adding information on the introduced referent. The relative clause can also be left out to form an existential or presentational thetic sentence.

   (i)   Once there was a wizard who was very wise and rich. (Lambrecht 1994)

Makhuwa

   (ii)   *Y-aá-háa-vo*   *enámá*   *e-motsá   e-n-aátsím-íyá*   *ncóco.*
         9-PAST-be-LOC   9.animal   9-one   9-PRES-call-**PASS**   3.impala
         'There was an animal which is called impala'.

These are used in many languages, often in addition to a VS or subject-accented construction,

(3)   a.   My CAR broke down. ('What happened?')
       a'.   My car broke DOWN. ('What happened to your car?')

Ewe (Ameka, to appear)

       b.   *Deví-á-wó-é*   *gba*   *ze-a.*
            child-DEF-PL-FOC break pot-DEF
            'The children broke the pot.' ('What happened?')

Italian (Lambrecht 1994)

       c.   *Mi si è rotta*   *la*   *MACCHINA.* ('What happened?')
            me se is broken the car

       c'. *La mia macchina si è ROTTA.* ('What happened to your car?')
            the my car   se is broken

Sesotho (Demuth 1990)[3]

       d.   *Hó-lisá*   *ba-shányána.*
            17-herd   2-boys
            'There are boys herding.'

2.2   Romance and Bantu thetics

In both the Romance and the Bantu language families VS constructions can be used
to express a thetic sentence, as exemplified in (4)–(7). Most languages in these families
require the verb to be intransitive, with some languages having an even stronger re-
quirement that the verb be unaccusative (others allow both unaccusatives and unerga-
tives). The examples below are from both language families and show an unaccusative
verb in the (a) examples and, if possible, an unergative in the (b) examples (see
section 2.4 for more information on the markings "CJ" and "DJ").[4]

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to form an existential or presentational construction. They are primarily used for one type of
thetic sentence: the entity-central type. The other type is the event-central thetic sentence, on
which the current paper focuses. For more information on various functions and constructions
of thetic sentences, see Sasse (1996).

3.   Abbreviations and symbols used in this paper: 1/2/3 etc (noun classes), 1SG/PL (1st person
singular/plural), ACC (accusative), ASP (aspect), CAUS (causative), CJ (conjoint), CLS (subject
clitic), DEM (demonstrative), DJ (disjoint), DS (dummy subject), DUR (durative), FEM (feminine),
FUT (future tense), FV (final vowel), H (high tone), IMPF (imperfective tense), INT (intended
meaning), L (low tone), MASC (masculine), NEG (negative), NOM (nominative), OM (object
marker), PASS (passive), PAST (past tense), PERF (perfective tense), PERS (persistive), PP (past
participle), PRES (present tense), P2 (past tense), REDUPL (reduplication), REFL (reflexive), REL
(relative), REM (remote tense), T (tense), |tt| (retroflex voiceless stop), | (right boundary of pho-
nological phrase). Liaison is indicated by an apostrophe, high tones are indicated by an acute
accent (on or before the element), low tones are unmarked.

4.   The typical Northern Italian dialects pattern with French, and these also allow the VS

Sesotho (Demuth 1990, adapted)

(4)   a.   CJ   *Hó-fihl-ílé*   *li-pé:re.*
              17-arrive-PERF   10-horses
              'There arrived horses.'

       b.   CJ   *Hó-lóha*   *bo-nkhó:no.*
              17-weave   2b-grandmother
              'There are grandmothers weaving.'

French (Lambrecht 2000)

(5)   a.   *Il   est   (*sont)   venu*   *trois   femmes.*
              it   is   (*are)   come:PP:MASC.SG   three   women
              'There came three women.'

       b.   *Il   tombe   une   goute.*
              it   falls   a:FEM   drop:FEM
              'A DROP is falling.'

Makhuwa[5]

(6)   a.   DJ   *O-hoó-khwá*   *mwanámwáne.*
              1-PERF.DJ-die   1a.child
              'There has died a child.'

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construction with unergative verbs, as in (i). Since the information structure has not yet been much discussed in the syntactic accounts of the Italian dialects (as is visible, for example, in the lack of an idiomatic translation of (i)), I use French as an example of the Romance type 1 in this paper.

Ciàno d' Enza (Manzini & Savoia 2002)

(i)   *De d'la   a   'dorm   i   pu'te.*
       in there   CLS   sleeps   the   children

Note also that it has been claimed for Italian and its dialects (e.g., Brandi & Cordin 1989) that 'free inversion' is possible, i.e., with all types of verbs and no restriction in definiteness. However, the information structure differs with the type of verb and definiteness of the inverted subject. This paper only considers the thetic VS constructions, not those with a contrastive or other narrow focus on the subject as in (ii).

Standard Italian (Brandi & Cordin 1989)

(ii)   *Parlerá   Mario,   non Lucio.*
        speak.FUT   Mario,   NEG Lucio
        'Mario will speak, not Lucio.'

5.   The language Makhuwa (Guthrie's P. 30) is spoken in the north of Mozambique by approximately 5 million people (Sebastian Floor, p.c.). All Makhuwa examples in this paper are from my own fieldwork conducted in 2005 and 2006 on the variant Enahara, which is spoken on and around Ilha de Moçambique.

   b.   DJ   *A-náá-ttónyá   maátsi.*
               6-pres.dj-drip   6.water
               'There is water leaking out.'

Italian (Lambrecht 1994)

(7)   a.   *E   arrivato   GIOVANNI.*
          is   arrived   Giovanni
          'GIOVANNI arrived.'

       b.   *Ha   telefonato   GIOVANNI.*
          has   called   Giovanni
          'GIOVANNI called.'

2.3 Two types of agreement

As can be seen in (4)–(7) the subject agreement on the verb varies in the languages examined. This is true even within the Romance and the Bantu language families. The languages can be divided into two types, according to their agreement in thetic sentences:[6]

(8)   Type 1: the agreement on the verb is a default or dummy agreement;
       Type 2: the verb agrees with the postverbal subject.

The Romance language French and the Bantu language Sesotho are both of type 1. The verb in French cannot have the gender/number features of the subject, see (9a). The auxiliary agrees in number with the preverbal dummy element *il*, which is singular, and not with the postverbal logical subject *trois femmes*, which is plural. The past participle cannot be marked for either feminine or plural, but has to take its default masculine singular form; compare with the SV order in (9b) where the auxiliary and the past participle do agree in number and gender.

French (Lambrecht 2000)

(9)   a.   *Il   est venu   trois   femmes.*
          3sg.masc   is   come.masc.sg   three   women
          'There came three women.'

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6.   One of the reviewers raised the question of whether there exist languages which allow both types of agreement. So far I have not come across any language which has a choice in agreement. What must be kept in mind is that this paper considers VS constructions of the event-central type, excluding existential structures with the copulas 'be' or 'have', as partly described in endnote 2. According to Schoorlemmer (2007), in an existential construction with 'have' as the copula, the presented entity gets accusative case and can therefore not agree with the copula (unlike constructions with 'be' as the copula). These existential 'have' constructions and the thetic VS sentences discussed in this paper can behave differently with respect to agreement; and languages frequently have more than one way to express different thetic sentences. See for more information on functions and constructions of thetic sentences Sasse (1996).

b. *Les femmes sont venues.*
the.PL women are come.FEM.PL
'The women have come.'

c. **Il sont venues trois femmes.*
3SG.MASC are come.FEM.PL three women
int: 'There came three women'.

In general, Bantu languages have a rich noun class system and rich morphology on the verb. One of the morphemes on the verb is the subject marker or prefix, which agrees in noun class with the subject in categorical sentences. This is exemplified for Sesotho (type 1) in (10a), where the subject *bashanyana* 'boys' is in class 2 and the subject marker on the verb agrees in class 2. In the thetic example in (10b) the verb takes a subject prefix in noun class 17, which is a locative class. There cannot be agreement with the postverbal logical subject, which is in noun class 10 (10c).

Sesotho (Demuth 1990)

(10) a. CJ *Ba-shányáná bá-pálám-é li-pére.*
2-boys 2-ride-PERF 10-horse
'The boys are riding horses.'

b. CJ *Hó-fihl-ílé li-pé:re.*
17-arrive-PERF 10-horses
'There arrived horses.'

c. CJ **Li-fihl-ílé li-pé:re.*
10-arrive-PERF 10-horses

Type 2 languages are also found in both the Romance and the Bantu language families. In contrast to the French examples, in Italian the auxiliary as well as the past participle agrees in number with the subject, in both categorical (11a) and thetic sentences (11b).

Italian (Graziano Savá, p.c.)

(11) a. *Tre ragazze sono arrivate.*
three girl.3PL be.3PL arrive.PP.3PL
'Three girls have arrived.'

b. *Sono (*è) arrivate tre ragazze.*
are (*is) arrive.PP.3PL three girl.3PL
'There arrived three girls.'

In the Bantu language Makhuwa (type 2) the subject prefix on the verb agrees in noun class with the subject in categorical as well as thetic sentences. The preverbal (12a) or postverbal (12b) subject is in class 3, and so is the agreement marker on the verb (*o-*).

Makhuwa

(12)   a.   DJ   *Ntháná   o-náá-ki-weréya.*
              3.back   3-PRES.DJ-1SG-hurt
              'My back HURTS.'

       b.   DJ   *O-náá-ki-weréyá   nthána.*
              3-PRES.DJ-1SG-hurt   3.back
              'My BACK hurts.'

2.4   Conjoint-Disjoint distinction

The two Bantu languages in types 1 and 2 (Sesotho and Makhuwa) exhibit
another distinguishing property apart from the agreement facts. In order to de-
scribe this property, some basics on the grammatical system of some southern
Bantu languages must first be introduced. The inflection of verbs in several lan-
guages, including Makhuwa and Sesotho, has pairs of conjugational categories
("tenses") which refer to the same TAM semantics (Buell 2005), but differ in
their "linkage" with what follows the verb. These verb forms are referred to as
conjoint (CJ) and disjoint (DJ). They are segmentally marked by different TAM
markers and indicate a difference in information structure. Their difference
in phrase-final distribution is the most easily detectable characteristic. If the
element directly following the verb is in a (focus) domain, the verb has its CJ
form; if this is not the case, or if the verb is phrase-final, the verb appears in its
DJ form (cf. Creissels 1996, Buell 2006). Both Makhuwa and Sesotho use a prefix
with *-a-* to mark the DJ form of the present tense (13a), (14a), which is absent in
the CJ form (13b), (14b).

Makhuwa

(13)   a.   DJ   *O-náá-thípa.*
              1-PRES.DJ-dig
              'She is digging.'

       b.   CJ   *O-n-thípá   nlittí.*
              1-PRES.CJ-dig   5.hole
              'She digs a hole.'

Sesotho (Demuth 1990)

(14)   a.   DJ   *Ba-shányáná   bá-á-li-fé:pa.*
              2-boys   2-PRES.DJ-10-feed
              'The boys are feeding them.'

       b.   CJ   *Ba-shányáná   bá-fepá   li-pé:re.*
              2-boys   2-PRES.CJ.feed   10-horses
              'The boys are feeding horses.'

The two forms are also marked tonally in Makhuwa: a different tonal pattern is applied to the element directly following the CJ verb form (15a) (cf. Stucky 1979), a process referred to as Predicative Lowering (PL; Schadeberg & Mucanheia 2000; van der Wal 2006b). This process consists of the loss of the first underlying H tone of the noun stem, and the possible addition of a boundary tone to indicate the right boundary of some prosodic phrase. More information on its use will follow in section 4.2. Thus the tonal pattern of *ekuwo* "cloth" is LHL in citation form (15), but LLH (immediately) after a CJ verb form (15a). The element following a DJ verb form has not undergone Predicative Lowering and its tonal pattern is as in citation form: LHL (15b).[7]

Makhuwa

(15)   citation: *ekúwo*   'cloth'   (LHL)

    a.   CJ   *Ki-n-kátthá   ekuwó.*   (LLH)
               1SG-PRES-wash 10.clothes
               'I wash clothes.'

    b.   DJ   *Ki-náá-káttha   ekúwo.*   (LHL)
               1SG-PRES.DJ-wash 10.clothes
               'I wash clothes.'

In Sesotho the CJ/DJ distinction is not marked by a different tonal pattern on the object, but it is visible in the phonological phrasing. The right boundary of a phonological phrase in Sesotho is designated by the lengthening of the penultimate syllable.[8] A verb in its CJ form is phrased together with the following element, as can be seen in the penultimate lengthening which is only present on the object (16a) (Demuth 1990). The DJ verb form is in a phonological phrase by itself, as is the postverbal element: both verb and object have penultimate lengthening (16b). The interpretation also differs, as indicated by the translation.

Sesotho (Demuth 1990, adapted)

(16)   a.   CJ   *Ba-shányáná bá-fepá   li-pé:re|.*
               2-boys   2.PRES-feed 10-horses
               'The boys are feeding horses.'

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7.   The difference in interpretation between the CJ and DJ verb form with an object is very hard to define. When asked to give a context, informants immediately came up with a context for the cj form, namely as an answer to 'what did you pound?'. A context for the DJ form was very hard or impossible to find, even though it was easy enough to produce the DJ form. If any explanation was given, it was that the DJ sentence is uttered as a way of giving plain information or assertion of the proposition. More elaborate data are needed for further research.

8.   Another indication for the boundaries of phonological phrases in Sesotho is a tonal change, which is described in Demuth (1990).

b. DJ *Ba-shányáná bá-á-li-fé:pa| li-pé:re|.*
        2-boys   2-PRES.DJ-10-feed   10-horses
        'The boys are feeding them, the horses.'

The behaviour of CJ/DJ verb forms is rather similar for the two languages in SVO sentences, but differs in thetic constructions: Sesotho uses a CJ form and phrases the postverbal logical subject with the verb (17), whereas Makhuwa uses a DJ form, and the tonal pattern of the postverbal subject has not undergone Predicative Lowering (18).

Sesotho (Demuth 1990, adapted)

(17) CJ *Hó-fihl-ílé   li-pé:re|.*
          17-arrive-PERF   10-horses
          'There arrived horses.'

Makhuwa

(18) DJ *O-hoó-khwá   mwanámwáne* (PL: *mwanamwáne).
          1-PERF.DJ-die 1.child
          'There died a child.' (as an announcement on the news)

The difference in the use of the CJ or DJ verb form and the phonological marking related to it correlates with the two types of agreement on the verb. The question is how these phenomena are related, and how to account for blocking the agreement with the logical subject in type 1 and/or allowing the agreement in type 2 languages.

3.   Possible analyses

So far it has been shown that the Romance language family as well as the Bantu language family distinguishes two types of agreement in thetic VS sentences. In some Bantu languages this difference is also visible in the relation between the verb and the postverbal logical subject, as observed in the use of a conjoint or disjoint verb form and the corresponding phonological phrasing. In languages of type 1 the verb does not agree with the postverbal logical subject, but instead has default agreement. The Sesotho verb appears in its conjoint form and the logical subject is phrased with the verb. In type 2 languages the verb agrees with the postverbal subject and in Makhuwa the verb has a disjoint form and prosody.

In order to consider possible analyses of these phenomena, I first examine the position of the logical subject. The subject in a categorical sentence is assumed to be in specTP, or even specTopP. This preverbal position is associated with identifiable referents (Lambrecht 2000), which have a topic status. Since the

subject in a thetic sentence lacks this property, the specTP (let alone specTopP) position is pragmatically not appropriate for the inverted subject. There is no motivation in information structure for the subject to move from its original position.

One word order argument for Bantu can be found in the position of the verb. I assume, following (among others) Myers (1990), Julien (2002), Kinyalolo (2003, cited in Carstens 2005), and Buell (2005), that the verb in Bantu starts out as a root and only moves in the lower part of the VP to incorporate the derivational extensions. It then terminates in a functional projection lower than T. It does not head-move further to T, and the inflectional prefixes on the verb represent functional heads spelled out in their base positions.

(19) $[_{TP} [T [inflection \ldots [_{FP} V_i [_{VP} S [t_i O]]]]]]$

If the subject were moved to specTP, the verb would need to move to a position even higher than that to derive a Verb-Subject order. It is unclear to which position this movement would be (indicated by XP in (20)) and what would trigger the movement. Furthermore, because the verb is not a complex head in T, but contains several in-situ functional heads and a stem, it cannot head-move to the position above specTP. The movement of the verb would thus have to be remnant movement. However, the part moved will be the part under the T' node (20), which is not a maximal projection.[9] There are thus several arguments against an analysis with the subject in specTP in a VS construction.

(20) $[_{XP} [_{T'} [V]]_i [X [_{TP} S t_i]]]$

Indeed, on the basis of word order, agreement and binding properties it has been argued for various languages that the inverted subject is in a VP-internal position (Bobaljik & Jonas 1996; Déprez 1990; Belletti 1999; Samek-Lodovici 1996; Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 1999, 2001; Demuth & Harford 1999, among many others). Having established the position of the subject of a thetic VS sentence as lower than T, there are two general ways to analyze the different agreement patterns in thetic VS sentences.[10] The first contains the analyses of Carstens (2005) and Collins (2004) on the one hand and Baker (2008) on the other hand. These analyses attribute the agreement patterns to a different parameter setting in terms of features (phi, EPP) or direction of agreement (upward/downward). The second approach proposes that the difference is connected to the status of

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9. Thanks to Lisa Cheng for pointing this out to me.

10. This could be specVP or specvP, depending on whether the verb is unaccusative or unergative. Belletti 1999 introduces a low FocP for the inverted subject.

the agreement marker, which can be pronominal or grammatical (cf. Bresnan & Mchombo 1987).

3.1   Agree/uφ requires Move/EPP

Collins (2004) and Carstens (2005) start out with the agreement properties in Chomsky's (2001) Minimalist framework. In this framework a head (prototypically T) with unvalued, uninterpretable features (henceforth uF) probes down in the structure. It searches and finds the closest c-commanded element that matches these features: the goal. When the search is successful, probe and goal agree, which means that the uF of the probe are valued. The goal is claimed to also have uF (case, wh) which can also be valued in the Agree relation. If, in addition, the probe has an EPP feature, the agreed-with goal will be re-merged (moved) in the specifier of the probing head. According to Chomsky (2001) all movement is dependent on an Agree relation. Not all Agree relations, however, are dependent on movement, as is apparent in English expletive constructions (21). The verb/T here agrees with the goal (the subject) without moving it to its specifier, that position being filled by the expletive "there".

(21)   There is a problem in the White House.
       There are problems in the White House.

Collins (2004) argues that for Bantu languages it is impossible to treat EPP and Agree separately from each other (unlike in English). He thus proposes the Agreement parameter for Bantu languages, where Agree requires internal Merge (Move).

(22)   Agreement Parameter (minimally adapted)[11]:
       Let Agree (X, YP), where X contains the probe (uninterpretable phi-features) and YP contains the goal, then X has an EPP feature that is satisfied by YP

Carstens (2005: 266) formulates the dependency of Agree and Move as the Feature-linking parameter: uninterpretable phi-features (henceforth uφ) have EPP as a subfeature in Bantu. Both authors thus claim that agreement in Bantu languages is so closely tied to movement that it is impossible for a head with uF to agree with an element that stays lower in the structure. Carstens supports her claim with data on three constructions in Bantu languages where agreement takes place. Firstly,

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11.   Instead of EPP, Collins uses the abbreviation OCC here, which stands for 'occurrence'. He argues that the term is more or less the minimalist equivalent to EPP, but better since it is more general than EPP (which for him only applies to specIP). Since so far no linguist has been able to explain the content of the feature, I find its naming uninteresting, and since EPP is more commonly used in minimalist work I will use the abbreviation EPP in this paper.

there is dummy agreement in the VS structures, as exemplified above. Secondly, there is agreement with the complementizer. Carstens (2005) argues that when C has *u*φ features, it also has EPP. So when C probes down to search for a wh-element, for example, it will agree with the wh-element and consequently move it to specCP, as can be seen in (23b). The verb in (23b) does not agree with the logical subject in class 2, as it does in (23a), but rather with the question word *biki*, which is in class 8.[12]

Kilega (Carstens 2005)

(23) a. *Bábo   bíkulu   b-á-kás-ílé   mwámí bikí   mu-mwílo?*
2.DEM   2.women 2-T-give-PERF   1.chief   8.what 18-3.village
'What did those women give the chief in the village?'

   b. *Bikí   bi-á-kás-ílé   bábo   bíkulu   mwám   mu-mwílo?*
8.what 8-T-give-PERF   2.DEM 2.women   1.chief   18-3.village
'What did those women give the chief in the village?'

Thirdly, there is agreement with preposed locatives. In (24a) the verb agrees with the subject, which accordingly moves to the specifier position in Carstens'/Collins' theory. However, in the case where it is not the logical subject but another element which occupies the preverbal position (presumably for reasons of information structure), it is this other element with which the verb agrees.[13] In (24b) the locative is preposed and the verbal agreement is with the locative (class 17) and not with the logical subject (class 2).

Chichewa (Bresnan & Kanerva 1989)

(24) a. *A-lendô-wo   a-na-bwérá   ku-mu-dzi.*
2-visitors-2.DEM   2-REC.PAST-come   17-3-village
'Those visitors came to the village'.

   b. *Ku-mu-dzi   ku-na-bwérá   a-lendô-wo.*
17–3-village   17-REC.PAST-come   2-visitors-2.DEM
'To the village came those visitors'.

These tests show different results when applied to the Bantu language Makhuwa. As is clear from examples in the previous section, Makhuwa allows agreement with the verb in thetic VS constructions, where the subject does not move to specTP. Carstens's second example concerning complementizer agreement cannot be properly compared to Makhuwa, since the language uses a cleft with relative

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12.   See Sabel & Zeller (2005) for an account of in-situ versus ex-situ wh-questions in Nguni.

13.   I have been unable to find a motivation for the type 1 VS construction in Carstens (2005) or Collins (2004).

verb form when preposing wh words. The third argument, however, does have a counterpart in Makhuwa. When preposing a locative (25b, class 16), the agreement on the verb is still with the subject (class 2), which is now in a postverbal position. Agreement in Makhuwa can thus be applied without moving the goal to the probe's specifier.

Makhuwa

(25) a. *Aléttó   a-náá-phíyá   wakisírwa.*
       2.guests   2-PRES.DJ-arrive   16.island
       'The guests arrive on the island'.

   b. *Wakisírwá a-náá-phíyá   alétto   / *wa-náá-phíyá.*
       16.island   2-PRES.DJ-arrive   2.guests   / 16-PRES.DJ-arrive
       'On the island arrive guests'.

From these Makhuwa examples it can be concluded that the relation between $u\varphi$ and EPP, formulated as the Feature-linking parameter (Carstens 2005), or the Agreement Parameter (Collins 2004) does not hold for all Bantu languages. Since "the Bantu languages" are a heterogeneous group of some 550 languages (cf. Nurse & Philippson 2003), it is probably more appropriate to propose parameters for individual languages, or patterns in languages. The Agreement Parameter (Collins 2004) or the dependency of Agree and EPP (Carstens 2005) could then apply to the Bantu languages of type 1 only.

A separate account should be given for the agreement pattern in the languages of type 2. If in these languages the verb can indeed agree with the subject without moving it to the specifier position of TP, is there anything else correlating with this agreement? Carstens (2005) proposes that whereas in Bantu languages (type 1) $u\varphi$ have an EPP feature, in Indo-European languages $u\varphi$ have Case as a subfeature. The EPP is believed to be separate from the agreement relation in Indo-European (IE) and case-checking is believed to be separate in Bantu. If the relation Agree-EPP holds not for "Bantu", but for languages of type 1 (as I have just suggested), the relation Agree-Case might in a parallel manner hold for languages of type 2 (and not just IE). An argument for the *absence* of an Agree-Case relation in type 1 is found in the multiple subject agreement on complex tenses or auxiliary structures in Bantu, as in (26). The subject *mikoko* "sheep" (class 4) triggers noun class agreement on 'to be' and two aspectual phrases, which is impossible in a language like English, which has agreement only on the auxiliary (27).

Kilega (Kinyalolo 1991)

(26) *Mikoko z-á-bézágá zí-se   z-á-sínz-ua.*
      4.sheep 4-T-be   4-about.to 4-T-slaughter-PASS
      'Sheep were about to be slaughtered'.

(27)   He is crying.
      *He is crie-s/crying-s.

If Case were connected to Agree in Kilega as in English, the Case features would be deleted in the first instance of agreement. The subject would no longer be active and would thus be invisible for a probing head. The fact that it can agree more than once is taken as an argument to claim that the subject's case features are syntactically active until the next strong phase (Carstens 2003). Since agreement is more strongly connected to Case-deletion in IE than in Bantu/type 1, Case in IE is immediately deleted at Agree and hence no multiple agreement can take place. If Carstens' Agree-Case relation held for type 2 languages, Makhuwa (as a type 2 language) should behave identically to IE and have Case deletion at Agree. Thus it should not allow multiple agreement in complex tenses. As can be seen in (28), Makhuwa does in fact have multiple agreement in complex tenses. This demonstrates that Agreement in Makhuwa (type 2) is not related to Case either. See Pires-Prata (1960) for more information on Makhuwa complex tenses.

Makhuwa
(28)   *Ki-háana ki-khum-áka.*
      1sg-have 1sg-go.out-DUR
      'I have to go out.'

(29)   *Álé   aa-khálá   aa-vélávela.*
      2.DEM 2.PERF-stay 2.PERF-be.stuck
      'They were trapped.'

In summary, the Agreement Parameter (Collins 2004) or the relation Agree-EPP (Carstens 2005) works for languages of type 1, but the relation Agree-Case cannot be generalized to all type 2 languages. This approach thus does not provide motivation for the agreement pattern observed in type 2 languages, and although it does present a technical way to analyze the agreement in type 1, it does not offer us insight into the deeper motivation behind the surface agreement patterns. In the next section Baker's (2008) approach is considered, which also takes into account agreement in languages like Makhuwa which do not connect agreement to either Case or EPP.

3.2   Direction of agreement vs. case dependency

Baker (2003) has related agreement to EPP and Case as well. He claims that in IE languages $u\varphi$ is a property of Case features, while in Bantu it is a subfeature of EPP. Baker (2008) captures these facts in two parameters on agreement on a functional head F.

(30)   The Direction of Agreement Parameter
        F agrees with DP/NP only if DP/NP asymmetrically c-commands F.

(31)   The Case-Dependency of Agreement Parameter
        F agrees with DP/NP only if F values the Case feature of DP/NP or vice versa.

According to Baker, each language (family) is set to "yes" or "no" for each parameter. For Bantu languages (though not all of them) the parameters are set "yes-no": agreement is only sensitive to the position of the element it agrees with; it is independent of Case. In Indo-European languages agreement is case-sensitive, regardless of the direction of agreement ("no-yes"). In other words: Bantu agrees with whichever element is in the specifier of the probe, whereas IE agrees with whichever element it checks the case of. The different agreement patterns in thetic VS sentences may be explained by these different parameter settings.

The reason that Baker introduces these parameters is that they are needed to restrict the possibilities of agreement after he has extended Chomsky's principles of syntactic agreement. The first principle is that the probe must c-command the goal (Chomsky 2000, 2001). This is a constraint on the direction in which a probing head searches: it can only probe down. Baker (2008) claims that a head F can agree with its goal XP not only if F c-commands XP, but also if XP c-commands F. This claim leads to considerable freedom with respect to probing: a head can probe upward as well as downward. Since languages generally do not allow optional agreement with the one or the other probe (upward or downward), there must be restrictions. These are the parameters Baker (2008) proposes.

When two parameters (Direction and Case) can be set for two values (yes and no), the result are four different types of languages. Baker (2008) indeed finds example languages of these four types in his 100 language sample from the World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS). With the data from the previous section the conclusion can be drawn that the settings for Makhuwa are "no-no": agreement in Makhuwa is not dependent on movement or a spec-head relation, as can be seen in structures where the verb/T agrees with the postverbal subject, such as thetic sentences (6), and sentences with preposed locatives (25). Neither is agreement dependent on Case, because Makhuwa can have multiple subject agreement in complex tenses (28). The "no-no" languages pose a problem to Baker's theory, because in this theory agreement in these languages is not restricted by any principle or parameter. Agreement could thus randomly be upward or downward. For example, in the case of a preposed locative the verb could agree with the subject or with the preposed locative (locative inversion). This is not what we find, because agreement in Makhuwa is regular and predictable. Baker admits in a footnote that his description leaves open how the grammar determines which element T agrees with.

In conclusion, the approaches which attribute the different agreement patterns of types 1 and 2 to the relations in the agreement mechanism do not offer a satisfactory explanation for the agreement in type 2, which is sensitive neither to EPP/direction nor to Case. If the Agree mechanism is unable to shed light on the difference, there must be a more fundamental distinction which drives the difference in agreement.

4.   Pronominal vs. grammatical agreement marker

This section presents an alternative analysis of the different agreement patterns in thetic VS sentences. It proposes a difference in the status of the agreement marker of type 1 and type 2: type 1 languages have pronominal agreement, whereas in languages of type 2 the agreement is purely grammatical.

4.1   Sesotho (type 1) pronominal agreement

The first hint at the pronominal nature of the agreement in type 1 is the agreement in French thetic VS sentences, where the auxiliary agrees in number with the pronoun *il*.

French (Lambrecht 2000)

(32)   *Il*   *est* *venu*   *trois* *femmes.*
       3SG.MASC is   come.MASC.SG three   women
       'There came three women'.

Such a free pronoun is not used in most Bantu languages, since these are pro-drop languages. Instead, the subject agreement marker can function as a pronoun or as agreement only. Bresnan and Mchombo (1987) claim that the subject prefix can ambiguously be used for grammatical and anaphoric agreement (at least in Chichewa). In Bresnan and Mchombo (1987) grammatical agreement is defined as "a verbal affix redundantly expressing the person/number/class of an NP bearing an argument relation to the verb". In anaphoric/pronominal agreement the agreement prefix is an incorporated pronominal argument of the verb, and possible coreferential NPs are non-arguments. Pronominal agreement, as used in this paper, is equivalent to an analysis in which the agreement prefix agrees with an empty category *pro*.

Proposing that the agreement marker *ho-* in Sesotho thetics is a pronoun has certain implications, each of which will be discussed below. Firstly, a pronoun can have Case. Bantu languages do not mark case overtly, but if, in Sesotho thetics, the default agreement marker is a pronoun, it has nominative case (as in French *il*),

which enables the verb to mark the logical subject as its complement. At this point Lambrecht's (2000) principle of subject-object neutralization (section 2.1) is of importance: in Sesotho the postverbal subject in a thetic sentence indeed has certain properties associated with the focal object in a categorical sentence. As shown in (17), repeated here as (33), the postverbal logical subject is in one phonological phrase with the verb, indicated by the penultimate lengthening on the logical subject only. The verb does not have penultimate lengthening and is thus not phrased separately.

Sesotho (Demuth 1990, adapted)

(33) CJ *Hó-fihl-ílé   li-pé:re|.*
            17-arrive-PERF   10-horses
            'There arrived horses.'

A second implication of analyzing the agreement marker as a pronoun is that it cannot be coreferential with the postverbal logical subject. It cannot agree with this subject, since the two are in the same clause and agreement would lead to a violation of principle B. According to this principle in standard Binding Theory pronouns must be free in their local clause, which is not the case in (34) where the pronoun and the full noun are both in the same phrase. As a result the example is ungrammatical.

Sesotho

(34) CJ **Li-fihl-ílé   li-pé:re|.*
            10-arrive-PERF   10-horses
            int: 'There arrived horses.'

In order to avoid such a violation the language could either dislocate the logical subject NP, so that the pronoun and the full NP are no longer in the same phrase, or avoid agreement with the postverbal logical subject. The first strategy could not be applied, since it would render a different reading: a dislocated NP is interpreted as a topic. In Northern Sotho (closely related to Southern Sotho/Sesotho) the subject can be right-dislocated with an afterthought reading, as indicated by the translation in (35). The verb accordingly takes its disjoint form and the penultimate lengthening shows that the verb and the subject are in two different phonological phrases.

Northern Sotho (Zerbian 2006)

(35) DJ *Ó-a-só:ma| mo:-nna|.*
            1-PRES.DJ-work 1-man
            'He is working, the man.'

Since in a thetic sentence the subject must be *de*topicalized (see section 1), dislocation is no alternative to the principle B violation. Instead, as already mentioned,

the agreement on the verb is in a different noun class than the postverbal logical subject. This class 17 marker can be considered default agreement or a locative pronoun. The last option finds an argument in the comparison with locative inversion, which is used to express thetic sentences in the Bantu language Chichewa (Bresnan & Kanerva 1989), for example. In such a construction a locative element is preposed, the logical subject stays in a postverbal position and the verb agrees with the preverbal locative.

Chichewa (Bresnan & Kanerva 1989)

(36) *Ku-mu-dzi   ku-na-bwérá   a-lendô-wo.*
      17-3-village   17-PAST-come 2-visitors-DEM
      'To the village came those visitors.'

(37) *M-mi-têngo   mw-a-khal-a a-nyani.*
      18-4-tree   18-PERF-sit 2-baboons
      'In the trees are sitting baboons.'

Demuth (1990) shows that "locative inversion" in Sesotho, at least synchronically, is in fact an impersonal presentational construction with the optional addition of a locative adverb in preverbal position.[14] In Chichewa the verbal agreement with the locative can be analyzed as grammatical agreement, but since in Sesotho the preposed locative is not required, there is no argument-bearing NP to agree with and hence the agreement cannot possibly be grammatical agreement. Thus there is direct and indirect evidence for an analysis of the Sesotho agreement marker as a pronoun in thetic sentences and evidence against an analysis as a purely grammatical agreement marker.

4.2 Makhuwa (type 2) grammatical agreement

In thetic VS sentences the verbal agreement marker in Makhuwa is argued to be grammatical instead of pronominal. Whereas a pronominal agreement marker can have case, as in type 1 languages like Sesotho, a grammatical agreement marker cannot. The verb in languages of type 2 can thus only check nominative case on the postverbal subject, not on the pronominal subject marker. There is proof that

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14.   Note also that the agreement in Sesotho thetic sentences is in the locative class 17, which has become the default in this language. Other languages may have a different default agreement, as for example Kirundi, which takes a class 16 agreement marker in an inverse construction with focus on the subject.

Kirundi (Ndayiragije 1999)

(i) *Ha-á-nyôye   amatá   abâna.*
     16-PAST-drink.PERF milk   children
     'Children (not parents) drank milk'.

the postverbal subject in type 2 indeed has nominative case, as can be seen in (38). In Latin the verb agrees with the pre- or postverbal subject and the subject has nominative case in the thetic SV (38a) as well as the categorical VS sentence (38b).

Latin (Lambrecht 2000: 635)

(38)   a.   *Taurus   mugit.*
            bull.NOM.SG   bellow.3SG.PRES
            'The bull is bellowing.'

       b.   *Mugit   taurus.*
            bellow.3SG.PRES   bull.NOM.SG
            'There is a bull bellowing.'

Since Latin is a dead language, we cannot be completely sure of the thetic inter-pretation, but Rodríguez-Mondoñedo (2005) shows for Spanish (type 2) that the subject in VS event-central thetics can at least not be accusative. In a so-called split structure (39a; see also endnote 2) the presented entity, the object, can be replaced by an accusative clitic (39b), but this is impossible in an inverted subject construc-tion (40). Thus the postverbal subject in type 2 is not object-like, as is the case with logical subjects in languages of type 1.

Spanish (Rodríguez-Mondoñedo 2005)

(39)   a.   *Había unos niños en el   parque.*
            have   some kids   in the park
            'there were some kids in the park'

       b.   *Los   había.*
            MASC.PL.ACC have

(40)   a.   *Llovieron insultos sobre el   árbitro.*
            rained.PL insults over   the referee
            'The referee was pelted with insults.'

       b.   **Los   llovieron.*
            CL.ACC rained.PL

A second implication mentioned for type 1 languages was the impossibility of coreference between the pronominal agreement marker and the postverbal logical subject, consistent with principle B. As I propose to analyze the agreement marker in type 2 as purely grammatical agreement, this principle would not be violated, making coreference between the agreement marker and the postverbal subject possible. If the agreement marker and the subject are thus allowed to occur within the same phrase in type 2, the conjoint verb form may be expected to occur in the Bantu thetic sentences. However, in thetic sentences in Makhuwa the disjoint form is used. There are general and language-specific reasons why the CJ verb form is not used in Makhuwa thetic sentences.

The first (general) reason is that the use of the CJ form requires a certain relation between the verb and the following element. Apparently it is not sufficient for the verb to simply have an element in a postverbal position, but this element needs to be in a specific domain or have specific characteristics to allow the verb to appear in its CJ verb form. There are two possible hypotheses as to why the relation between the verb and the postverbal subject in a type 2 language does not satisfy the requirements for the use of a CJ form.

Firstly, there is some evidence that the use of the CJ form requires the presence of an element in a certain domain (Buell 2006) or in the immediate postverbal position (Van der Wal 2006a). In a VS construction the postverbal subject indeed follows the verb, but (according to this hypothesis) it would be in a position other than immediately postverbal, not in the right *domain*. Secondly, the element following a CJ verb form gets an exclusive interpretation in Makhuwa. Since the postverbal thetic subject is to be interpreted only as non-topical, and not as exclusive, there is a clash in interpretation if the CJ form would be used.

Another reason why the conjoint verb form cannot be used in thetics in Makhuwa specifically is that it would render a different syntactic construction. If the conjoint form were used in a VS construction, it would be interpreted as a pseudocleft. The "conjoint" verb form is translated as a headless relative and the postverbal logical subject as a nominal predicate. I will first explain the form of the relative verb and then give more information on nominal predication in Makhuwa in order to see how the interpretation as a pseudocleft comes about. In Makhuwa relative clauses the CJ/DJ distinction is inapplicable, but the relative verb is formally equal to the CJ verb form (compare (41b) and (41c)) (see Katupha 1983, van der Wal in preparation). No special relative morphology is used. As illustrated in the subject relative in (42b,c), a headless relative is formed by omitting the head noun.

Makhuwa
(41) a. DJ *Nlópwáná   oo-thípa.*
               1.man   1.PERF.DJ-dig
               'The man dug.'

      b. CJ *Nlópwáná   o-thip-alé   nlittí.*
               1.man   1-dig-PERF   5.hole
               'The man dug a hole.'

      c. REL *Nlópwáná   o-thip-alé.*
               1.man   1-dig-PERF
               'The man who dug.'

(42) a. DJ *Mwanámwáné o-hoó-khwa.*
          1.child   1-PERF.DJ-die
          'A/the child died.'

     b. REL *Mwanámwáné o-khwa-alé o-rí owáani.*
          1.child   1-die-PERF 1-be 17.home
          'The child who died is at home.'

     c. REL *O-khwa-alé o-rí owáani.*
          1-die-PERF 1-be 17.home
          'The one who died is at home.'

The tonal process called Predicative Lowering, as also explained in section 2.4, is applied to the object after a conjoint form. However, it is also used to change a noun into a nominal predicate, hence the name (43; van der Wal 2006b).

(43) *mwanámwáne* 'child'   (LHHL)
     mwanamwáne 'it is a child' (LLHL)

Considering these properties of relativization and predication in Makhuwa, the combination of a verb which resembles a conjoint form and a following (tonally lowered) subject is interpreted as a pseudocleft, and not as a thetic sentence. This is confirmed by the context given for the phrases in (44). Whereas (44a) is used as an announcement, out of the blue, (44b) is used as an answer to the question "who is it that died?"(i.e., we already know that someone died).

(44) a. DJ *O-hoó-khwá   mwanámwáne.*
          1-PERF.DJ-die 1.child
          'There died a child.'

     b. "CJ" *O-khw-aalé mwanamwáne.*
          1-die-PERF 1.child
          'The one who died is a/the child.'

The Makhuwa disjoint VS structure could alternatively be analyzed as pronominal agreement with a right-dislocated subject, and a comparison with the Northern Sotho example in (35) is easily made. However, the environments in which the Makhuwa (disjoint) VS sentences are used (first lines of stories, out of the blue) argue against this. Example (45) is the first line of a story, clearly thetic, and a VS construction is used.

(45) *Nihúkú ni-motsa ohíyú   w-aanú-mwááryá mweéri.*
     5.day   5-one   14.night 3-REM.PERS-shine 3.moon
     'One night the moon was shining.'

We hardly find any right dislocation in the environments where dislocation of the subject would seem most appropriate. Instead, demonstratives are used.

For example, at the end of an anecdote about a child: the child is playing, then he is run over by a car, he is lying there, he is taken to hospital and *he died, that child*. The Makhuwa story would end as in (46).

(46) *Ni   ólé   mwanámwán' oolé   o-hoó-khwa.*
     and 1.DEM 1.child   1.DEM 1-PERF.DJ-die
     'And (then) that child died.'

The few attestations of subject right dislocation found in thirteen Makhuwa stories also use demonstratives, either as a free pronoun (47) or to modify the right-dislocated noun (48).

(47) *Ophéélá o-´m-pwésh-ak-átsá óle,   namárókolo.*
     15.want   15-1-hit-DUR-PL   1.DEM, 1a.hare
     'Wanting to hit him, Hare.'

(48) *Álé   aa-pácérá   w-ií-hímya-ká-tsá   akúnyá ale.*
     2.DEM 2.PERF.DJ-begin 15-REFL-say-DUR-PL 2.white 2.DEM
     'They began to identify themselves, those Portuguese.'

An even more convincing argument against an analysis of right-dislocation is the use of a VS construction with an indefinite subject. From the Romance examples in (49) it is clear that indefinites cannot be right-dislocated.[15] Since indefinites do occur in Makhuwa VS constructions, it follows that these postverbal subjects cannot be dislocated (51).

Italian (Linda Badan, p.c.)
(49) **Non è venuto,   un   ragazzo.*
     NEG is come.PP   a   boy
     int: 'He didn't come, a boy.'

French (Larsson 1979)
(50) **Je crois   qu' il vient   d' entrer par   la porte, un monsieur.*
     1SGbelieve.1SG that he come.3SGof enter through the door, a   gentleman
     int: 'I believe that he has (just) entered through the door, a man.'

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15.   Larsson (1979: 22): "Une des conséquences de ces conditions contextuelles est l'impossibilité d'avoir une phrase nominale indéfinie à référence spécifique dans la position disloquée" (one of the consequences of these contextual conditions is the impossibility of having an indefinite specific phrase in a dislocated position). Delais-Roussarie, Doetjes & Sleeman (2004: 522) mention that indefinites can in fact be right-dislocated, but only when they have a generic interpretation, or when they are textually/situationally evoked or inferred. This makes their status in information structure more topic-like (Erteschik-Shir 2007), which is an interpretation avoided in thetic sentences.

Makhuwa

(51) a. *Ohoó-wá   ńtthu.*
          1.PERF.DJ-come 1.person
          'There came someone.'

      b. *Kha-wa-álé   ńtthu.*
          NEG.1-come-PERF 1.person
          'No-one came.'

Thus there is clear evidence that the Makhuwa VS construction expresses theticity, and that the construction cannot be analyzed as right dislocation. Yet another alternative would be to use the same structure as Sotho, with a conjoint verb form and dummy/locative agreement. It seems, however, that locative nouns in Makhuwa generally have the status of adverb instead of argument. It may be for this reason that locatives cannot function as pronouns in VS constructions. The locative cannot trigger agreement in locative inversion either (52). That the locative is not a true object is shown in (53), where subjectivization of the locative is impossible.[16]

(52) a. *Aléttó   a-náá-phíyá   wakisírwa.*
          2.guests 2-PRES.DJ-arrive 16.island
          'The guests arrive on the island.'

      b. *Wakisírwá a-náá-phíyá   alétto.*
          16.island 2-PRES.DJ-arrive 2.guests
          'On the island arrive guests.'

      c. **Wakisírwá   wa-náá-phíyá   alétto.*
          16.island   16-PRES.DJ-arrive 2.guests
          int: 'On the island arrive guests.'

(53) a. *Ki-núú-hélá   ephepélé mpoótíli-ni.*
          1SG-PERF.PERS-put 9.fly   18.jar-LOC
          'I put the fly in the jar.'

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16. Locatives can in fact be arguments in Makhuwa, as subjects in an impersonal passive.

Makhuwa

(i)   *Oparásá   woo-cáw-él-íya.*
      17.fortress 17.PERF.DJ-run-APPL-PASS

(ii) *Mparásá   moo-cáw-él-íya.*
      18.fortress 18.PERF.DJ-run-APPL-PASS
      'The fortress was run to.'

b. *Ephepélé   e-núú-hél-íyá   mpoótíli-ni.*
    9.fly   9-PERF.PERS-put-PASS   18.jar-LOC
    'The fly was put in the jar.'

c. **Mpoótílí-ní   n-núú-hél-íyá   ephepéle.*
    18.jar-LOC   18-PERF.PERS-put-PASS   9.fly
    int: 'In the jar was put a fly.'

Another indication for the non-argument status of the locative in Makhuwa is the use of Predicative Lowering (see also sections 2.4 and 4.2). Objects following a CJ verb form undergo this tonal change (54a), whereas temporal (54b), manner (54c) and locative (54d,e) adverbs do not.

(54) a. *Ki-m-wéhá   muupattétthe.*   (non-PL: **muúpáttétthe*)
          1SG-PRES-see   3.beehive
          'I see a/the beehive.'

      b. *Ki-n-thítá   nańnáanová.*   (PL: #*nannaanová*)
          1SG-PRES-pound right.now
          'I am pounding right now.'

      c. *O-phwany-alé woowáákhuvéya.*   (PL: **woowaakhuvéya*)
          1-find-PERF   quickly
          'She found (it) quickly.'

      d. *Ki-n-rúpá   wa-khaámá-ni.*   (PL: **wakhaamaní*)
          1SG-PRES-sleep 16-bed-LOC
          'I sleep in a bed.'

      e. *Ki-n-rówá   o-pharéya.*   (PL: **ophareyá*)
          1SG-PRES-go   17-beach
          'I go to the beach.'

In summary, the evidence regarding Case and coreference under principle B in thetic VS sentences suggests an analysis of the verbal subject agreement marker as grammatical agreement in languages of type 2. Furthermore, the interpretation as a pseudocleft and the limited use of right-dislocation suggest that an analysis of the subject marker in type 2 as pronominal is incorrect. Finally, a locative agreement marker as in Sesotho (type 1) is not an alternative either in Makhuwa (type 2).

4.3   Remarks on an analysis of agreement in Italian dialects

Manzini & Savoia (2002) observe the same two types of languages (agreeing and non-agreeing) in the Southern and Northern Italian dialects. In their account of the different agreement in VS constructions, they propose that there is a set of

nominal inflections in addition to T (a head D, with the features Number, Person and predicative N). They propose furthermore that these features (always) attract an aspectual feature. This aspectual feature is already associated with the logical subject and its features, when it is attracted by T and then by D. The difference between the two language types is a lexicalisation choice in the agreement between T, D and this aspectual feature: in the typical Northern dialects (my type 1) only the predicative N-feature is shared; in the typical Southern dialects and Standard Italian (my type 2) all features are shared (Number, Person, Gender).

This technical account does not seem completely incompatible with the proposal put forward in this paper, but it does not take into consideration the status of the postverbal logical subject. It remains unclear whether there are differences in the subject in the two types of languages/dialects, in terms of case or (phonological or syntactic) phrasing. However, a further examination of these dialects in the light of the language types 1 and 2 looks interesting.

5.   Conclusion

I have shown above that thetic sentences can be expressed by a construction using a Verb-Subject order in both Romance and Bantu languages. The Bantu and Romance language families thus show a similarity in expressing theticity. Moreover, both language families show two different types of agreement on the verb, which can be either default (type 1) or agreement with the postverbal subject (type 2). Accounts by Collins (2004), Carstens (2005) and Baker (2008) have attributed this difference to the mechanism of agreement. Their parameters on agreement, however, do not provide a motivation for all the differences in agreement observed in thetic VS sentences. Instead, this paper argues that there is a fundamental difference in the system, which is a difference in the status of the agreement marker. In languages of type 1 this agreement marker is pronominal, while it is purely grammatical in type 2 languages. Arguments for this analysis are found in Case, Binding Theory and information structure.

More research needs to be conducted on the status of the agreement in Romance and Bantu languages to better understand the motivation for these different agreement patterns. In general the debate on clitics and affixes and their status as pronouns or agreement markers deserves more attention, while the typology of agreement would benefit from more new data as well as comparison with other languages and language families. It is important in this research to always take into account the information structure in the sentence, by looking at the context and the prosody, for example, in addition to the syntactic facts and word order.

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