

## Distributed Agreement in Archi and Other Languages

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Baker (2008) proposes a theory of agreement, including the Agreement parameter, given below in (1):

- (1) a. **The Direction of Agreement Parameter (preliminary)**  
F agrees with DP/NP only if DP/NP asymmetrically c-commands F.  
b. **The Case-Dependency of Agreement Parameter**  
F agrees with DP/NP only if F values the case feature of DP/NP or vice versa.  
(Baker 2008: 15)

According to Baker, in languages with a positive setting for Parameter 1, if a certain T-head agrees with some NP X, it must necessarily assign a (nominative) case to it. Therefore, agreement on both auxiliary and main verb with the same NP X is impossible, since that would result in multiple case assignment to the same NP, which is impossible. If, however, agreement does not depend on case, distributed agreement (agreement of a single type, such as subject-verb agreement, found on two or more words within a clause) is possible, as it does not require assignment of multiple case values to the same NP. Thus, these parameters make the strong prediction that distributed agreement is found only in languages that do not value the case feature of DP/NP, as in some Bantu languages. For example, in Kinande, a Bantu language, agreement is not with the nominative nominal, but with the sentence-initial nominal, as in (2).

- (2) Omo-mulongo mw-a-hik-a mukali. (Kinande, Baker 2008:158)  
loc.18-village.3 18S-t-arrive-fv woman.1  
'At the village arrived a woman.'

On the basis of recent fieldwork on Archi, a language of the Nakh-Daghestanian (Northwest Caucasian) language family, we show that this prediction is not borne out. We show first that in Archi verbs agree in gender (class) and number with the absolutive nominal (subject of an intransitive or direct object of a transitive), regardless of word order. Thus, Archi has a negative setting for parameter 1a and a positive setting for parameter 1b, similar in these respects to Indo-European languages. This means that Baker's theory predicts that Archi could not have distributed agreement. (3) shows that, in fact, Archi does have distributed agreement.

- (3) Mohamad-li Rasul c-w-arši w-i (Fieldwork 2007)  
Mohamed-ERG Rasul.ABSL praise-I I-AUX  
'Mohamad praises Rasul.'

(Roman numerals represent the gender-classes of Archi, and –w- is the marker of gender-class I.) The fact that agreement shows up in both the lexical verb, 'praise', and the auxiliary indicates that Archi has distributed agreement. We show that Archi also demonstrates distributed agreement with modal auxiliaries, with agreeing adverbs, with 'seem', and with emphatic pronouns. We show that similar facts are found in Chechen, another language of the Nakh-Daghestanian family; in Daga, an Austronesian language of Papua New Guinea; and in a number of other languages on which we have only secondary data.

We suggest that within Baker's hypothesis agreement such as that in (3) can be treated as concord, which lies outside the parameters stated in (1). On the other hand, if this approach is taken, it raises the issue of whether (1) really makes testable predictions.

#### References

Baker, Mark. 2008. *The Syntax of Agreement and Concord*. Cambridge University Press.