Parallels between object agreement and passive in Seliš

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Seliš (Montana Salish) is part of the dialect continuum Spokane-Kalispel-Montana Salish, which is a Southern Interior Salish language spoken in northwestern Montana by the Bitterroot Salish, Upper Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai tribes. All data presented today was collected by others (mostly Thomason 2018 ms.) and made available to me. I recognize that I present without permission to distribute data from the Salish Culture Committee.

Main point:

Seliš passive allomorphy shows an interesting parallel to object agreement morphology. Passive allomorph *-t* is sensitive to [+PART] features, and post-syntactic Impoverishment is necessary to capture the relationship between passive and object agreement distribution.

Salish passives

- Seliš passives: demote the subject without promoting the object
- Other Salish passives and selected syntactic evidence:
  - Across Central and Interior Salish, failure to promote the object or partial promotion of the object (`Kroeber 1999, Wiltschko 2001/2004, Gerdts 1988, H. Davis 2018`)
  - impersonal subjects with passive objects (`Wiltschko 2001;Halkomelem`)
  - relative clause extraction restrictions (`Gerdts & Hukari 1998;Halkomelem`)

- Morphological evidence: object clitic and underspecified subjects

(i)   kʷu   kʷ'eʔ-nt-és   t   smx̣é
      1SG.OBJ bite-TR-3.ERG OBL grizzly.bear

(ii) kʷu   kʷ'eʔ-nt-**em**   t   smx̣é
      1SG.OBJ bite-TR-**PASS**   OBL grizzly.bear

(iii) kʷu   kʷe'ʔ-nt-és
      1SG.OBJ   bite-TR-3.ERG
      '(s)/he bit me'

(iv) kʷu   kʷ'eʔ-nt-**em**
      1SG.OBJ bite-TR-**PASS**
      '(s)/he,you(sg/pl) bit me'

(v)   qe   čɬp-ɬúl-l-**t**
      1PL   hunt-TR-1PL.OBJ-**PASS**
      'you(sg/pl)/(s)he/they hunted us'

Parallel to object agreement

ROOT	-TRANS	-OBJ	-SUBJ	
kʷ'e?	*-nt*	*-cí*	*-t*	's/he bit you'
kʷ'e?	-nt	-	*-em*	's/he/you bit him'

OBJ SUFF:		-sí		-l	-um	
O → S↓	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
1SG	(RFLX)	Ø	Ø		Ø	Ø
2SG	-em	(RFLX)	-em	-t		-em
3SG	-em	-t	-em	-t	-t	-em
1PL		-t	-em	(RFLX)	-t	-em
2PL	-em		-em	-t	(RFLX)	-em
3PL	-em	-t	-em	-t	-t	-em

Object agreement morphemes
- Object is marked as a suffix on the verb when 1PL/2
- Object is unmarked/null when 3
- 1SG objects are marked with a preverbal clitic

Passive allomorphs *-t*/*-em*
- *-t* occurs when object is 1PL/2
- *-em* occurs when object is 1SG/3

Everett & Thomason 1993, Thomason flathead dictionary

How to capture relationship between passive and objects?

- Capture 1PL/2 with binary features or feature geometry? (Nevins 2011, Harley & Ritter 2002)
  - ✘ [+PART]
  - ✘ [+PART +PL]

- With cyclic or multiple agree? (Béjar & Rezac 2009; Coon & Bale 2014)
  - ✘ [+PART +PL] [+ADD]

5
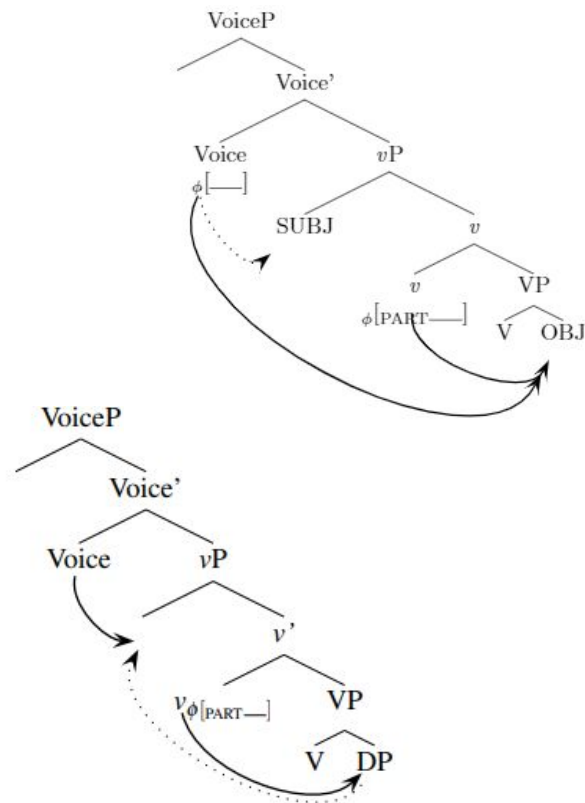
How to restrict features?

- If we can't capture the pattern in syntax, we look to post-syntactic processes.
- Post-syntactic Impoverishment (Embick&Noyer 2007)
  - In syntax, overspecify for [+PART] for both object agreement and Voice
  - Post-syntactically, restrict the feature class with Impoverishment
  - [$_{PART}$ +SPEAKER] → ∅ / __ [+SG]
  - Eliminates 1SG from the [+PART]
- Voice vocabulary items:

  -*t* ↔ [+PART]

  -*em* ↔ elsewhere

OBJ SUFF:		-sí		-l	-um	
O → S ↓	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
1SG	(RFLX)	∅	∅		∅	∅
2SG	-em	(RFLX)	-em	-t		-em
3SG	-em	-t	-em	-t	-t	-em
1PL		-t	-em	(RFLX)	-t	-em
2PL	-em		-em	-t	(RFLX)	-em
3PL	-em	-t	-em	-t	-t	-em

Implications

- Features and accountability
  - I've shown how to mechanically capture the passive and object agreement patterns in the data, but there's still the question of why this relationship exists?
  - Why is passivity sensitive to objects?
  - Syntactically, I think this just shows continued evidence for the need of post-syntactic measures

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Appendix: syntactic evidence for passives

- Syntactic versus morphologically demoted