

## Nguni bare nouns: licensing without Case\*

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Nguni bare or *augmentless* nominals ([-A]) are licit only as strict negative dependents and *wh*-words. They may not appear in any preverbal subject position unless local to a negation-licensed [-A] COMP of a subjunctive clause (Pietraszko 2021). This pattern motivates an analysis in terms of negative concord and a labeling-theoretic approach to the EPP (Chomsky 2013): [-A] nouns have *uNeg* features which thwart agreement and labeling in [XP,YP] configurations (see also Bošković 2019, 2020 on uFs and labeling problems) unless valued by interpretable negation in a syntactic Agree relation (Zeijlstra 2008, Penka 2011, Haegeman & Lohndal 2010). A cluster of further distributional restrictions on [-A] are predictable from an independently motivated Nguni clausal topography of focus (Carstens & Mletshe 2016) eliminating any role for abstract Case in explaining the facts, contra Halpert (2015) and Pietraszko (2021). The analysis is inspired by and extends to parallel restrictions in Romance languages previously attributed to the ECP and the EPP (Contreras 1986, Deprez 2000, Landau 2007, Longobardi 1994).

## 1 Augmentless nominals: analytical challenges

### 1.1 Overview

A lively debate exists on the question of whether Bantu nominals have Case-licensing requirements and accordingly whether Case can be viewed as a universal (see among others Carstens & Diercks 2013a, Carstens & Mletshe 2015, 2016, Diercks 2012, Halpert 2015, Harford 1986, Pietraszko 2021, van der Wal 2015). In the Nguni languages of southern Africa this controversy centers on the distribution of bare, so-called *augmentless* nominals (henceforth [-A], underlined in examples).<sup>1</sup> These lack the outer of two class prefixes which most nominals bear as exemplified in the contrast between (1) and (2).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Zulu, Xhosa, and Zimbabwean Ndebele are very closely related and grammatically similar languages of the Nguni subgroup (Guthrie's Zone S40). Data in this paper for which sources are not explicitly identified come from my field work with native speakers of Xhosa and Zulu in Cape Town, Durban, and New Haven.

<sup>2</sup> PVSP = preverbal subject position; [-A] = augmentless, [+A] = augmented, AUG = augment; NEG = negation; SM = subject marker; OM = object marker; SBJ = subjunctive; DISJ = disjoint, a VP-final verb form; REL = relative marker, AGR = agreement, FV = final vowel, Q = question, COP = copula, PST = past, CAUS = causative, POSS = possessive, FUT = future, DEM = demonstrative, LOC = locative, COMP = complementizer, AUX = auxiliary, NCI = negative concord item, X<sub>F</sub> means X is [+focus]. Numerals indicate noun class (number+gender). Subject agreement in person/number is 1sSM/2sSM or

- |     |   |   |   |        |
|-----|---|---|---|--------|
| (1) | a. u-mu-ntu<br>AUG-1-person<br>'a/the person' | b. i-n-dawo<br>AUG-9-place<br>'a/the place'           | c. u-bani?<br>AUG-1 who<br>'who?' (preverbal) | [Zulu] |
| (2) | a. Ø-mu-ntu<br>Ø-1-person<br>'nobody/anybody' | b. Ø-mi-fino<br>Ø-4-vegetables<br>'no/any vegetables' | c. Ø-bani?<br>Ø-1 who<br>'who?' (postverbal)  | [Zulu] |

The distribution of [-A] nominals is constrained in several ways that play a role in the Case debate. First, [-A] nominals serve only as negative dependents and post-verbal *wh*-words, as (2) and (3) illustrate. (3)a is an object question formed with the [-A] in situ *wh*-*bani* – 'who'? A negative answer may include the [-A] *muntu* – 'anybody/nobody' as in (3)b. (3)c shows that *muntu* may be used as a negative fragment answer, but the unacceptability of (3)d arises because when *muntu* appears within a sentence, it must have the c-commanding negation that is present in (3)b.

- |     |   |   |        |
|-----|---|---|--------|
| (3) | a. U-bon-e <u>bani</u> ?<br>2sSM-see-PST 1who<br>'Who did you see?' | b. A-ngi-bon-anga <u>mu-ntu</u> !<br>NEG-1SM-see-NEG 1person<br>'I didn't see anybody!'                   | [Zulu] |
|     | c. <u>Mu-ntu</u> !<br>1-person<br>'Nobody!'                         | d. *Ngi-bon-e <u>mu-ntu</u> .<br>1SM-see-PST 1-person<br>Intended: I saw somebody <i>or</i> I saw nobody. |        |

A second constraint, brought to light in Halpert (2015), is the exclusion of [-A] nominals from all vP-external positions including preverbal subject position (henceforth PVSP) as shown in (4). The restriction leads Halpert to propose that [-A] require Case-licensing which is available only vP-internally from a clause-medial downwards probing head L, as illustrated in (5).<sup>3</sup> Because [+A] are encased in KP shells headed by the

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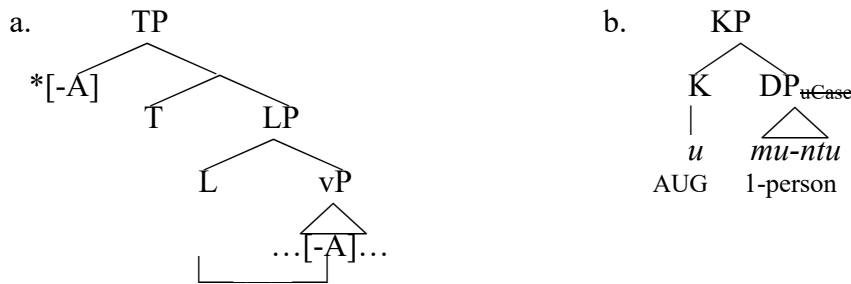
1PISM/2PISM (first or second singular or plural) as opposed to e.g. 1SM = SM in noun class 1. [Xhosa/Zulu] = examples homophonous in the two languages. I do not mark tone, which does not play a role in the phenomena of concern.

<sup>3</sup> APPL or CAUS adds a Case-licenser to ditransitives, in Halpert's account; this will not be relevant here.

augment (see (5)b), they do not require Case from a clause-level functional head and so do not exhibit the same restrictions, under Halpert's account.<sup>4</sup>

- (4) a. \*Bani u-fik-ile? [Xhosa/Zulu]  
 1who 1SM-arrive-DISJ.PST  
 Intended: Who arrived?
- b. \*Mu-ntu u-fik-ile /a-ka-fik-ile. [Zulu]  
 1person 1SM-arrive-DISJ.PST/NEG-1SM- arrive-DISJ.PST  
 Intended: Nobody arrived.

(5) Halpert (2015): A single Case-licenser L of Nguni (in)transitive clauses licenses [-A].



A third significant restriction is a clausemate requirement for negative-dependent [-A] in indicative contexts as exemplified in (6). Carstens & Mletshe (2016) propose that negative-dependent [-A] bear negative concord features which must be valued in a clause-bound Agree relation with negation ((6) = Carstens & Mletshe 2016:769:(22)a).

- (6) \*U-Simiso a-ka-shongo [ukuthi u-Nothando u-theng-e mi-fino]. [Zulu]  
 AUG-1Simiso NEG-1SM-say COMP AUG-1Nothando 1SM-eat-PST 4-vegetables  
 'Simiso didn't say that Nothando bought any vegetables.'

These disparate factors all enter into debate on the question of how best to characterize the properties of [-A] nominals and whether they reveal something about Case in Nguni.

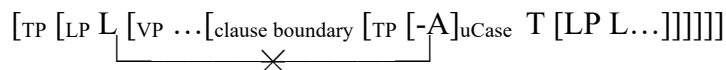
Researchers differ in their opinions of what is relevant. Halpert (2015) and Pietraszko

<sup>4</sup> Under Halpert's (2015) analysis the KP shells explain much-discussed Bantu Case anomalies in which Nguni [-A] cannot participate including hyper-raising from tensed clauses, multiple subject agreement, and overt preverbal subjects within clauses whose verbs bear the noun class morphology of infinitives. As a review lies outside this brief paper's scope I refer the interested reader to Halpert (2015) and Pietraszko (2021) for descriptions of the facts in Zulu and Ndebele; to Harford (1986), Carstens & Diercks (2013), Diercks (2012) for analyses in terms of a complete absence of Case in Bantu; and to Baker (2003) and Carstens & Mletshe (2015) for the view that only [+A] nominals require Case. See §9 for brief discussion.

(2021) argue that the *wh*-hood and negative dependence of [-A] nominals have little bearing on their syntactic distribution, while Carstens & Mletshe (2016) propose that the functions of [-A] as *wh*- and strict negative dependents indicate that they have focus features which bar them from clausal positions that have been identified as inhospitable to [+focus] material, including PVSP (on which see Sabel & Zeller 2006, Zeller 2008).

Pietraszko (2021) describes PVSP restrictions in several Ndebele dependent clause types as exemplified in (7)a-c. She argues that [-A] are excluded in these PVSPs because Case-licensing by Halpert's L is clause-bound, an analysis illustrated in (8).<sup>5</sup>

- a. \*U-fun-a                      ukuthi [bani a-buy-e]?                      [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:589]  
2sSM-want-FV COMP 1who 1SM-come-SBJ  
Intended: Who do you want to come?
- b. \*U-zwe                      i-n-goma [bani a-yi-hlabelileyo]?  
2sSM-heard AUG-9-song 1who 1SM-9OM-sing.PST.REL  
Intended: You heard the song that who sang?
- c. \*U-za-pheka                      [bani e-nga-ka-fiki]?  
2sSM-FUT-cook 1who 1SM-NEG-yet-arrive  
Intended: You will cook with who not having arrived yet?



## 1.2 Conflicting evidence

Pickiness about the properties of preverbal subjects is common, across languages.

Researchers typically relate such phenomena to the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) of Chomsky (1981); see among many others Buell (2007) and Halpert (2015) on exclusion of PPs and CPs respectively from Zulu PVSPs, and Deprez (2000) on exclusion of bare nouns from PVSPs in Romance. The EPP seems at least as plausible a source of the [-A] restrictions in (7) as is the hypothetical absence of abstract Case preverbally, particularly given Halpert's and Buell's reports of other Nguni PVSP restrictions.

Moreover, there is reason for skepticism about the Case approach in additional Ndebele data, some of which Pietraszko (2021) presents in a footnote. Pietraszko (2021:592 note 12) shows that a [-A] nominal may in fact appear in subjunctive PVSP just in case the local COMP is augmentless. Compare (9) with the well-formed (10). Here the augment drops from the COMP (*u-*)*kuthi*, a nominalization of the verb 'to say' (Pietraszko 2019), and the augment of the subject which follows it may drop as well.<sup>6</sup>

(9) A-ngi-fun-i            [u-kuthi \*(u)Sipho    a-buy-e].    [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:591]  
NEG-1SSM-want-NEG AUG-COMP AUG-1Sipho 1SM-come-SBJ  
'I don't want Sipho to come.'

(10) A-ngi-fun-i            [kuthi (u)Sipho    a-buy-e].            [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:592]  
NEG-1SSM-want-NEG COMP    AUG-1Sipho 1SM-come-SBJ  
'I don't want Sipho to come.'

Pietraszko (2021) suggests that (10) is an instance of a broad phenomenon wherein Agree with a phasal category allows the probe involved to subsequently ignore the phase boundary, accessing material within it (see (11) from Rackowski & Richards 2005:582).

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<sup>6</sup> Two points concerning these examples: (i) §4.1 shows that [-A] proper names pattern syntactically like other [-A] negative dependents in all respects. (ii) Zulu has a homophonous COMP cognate to Ndebele's COMP *ukuthi*, while Xhosa's counterpart COMP is a form of the verb 'be'. Neither can augment-drop, suggesting that they are not fully nominal like the Ndebele COMP.



- b. U-fun-a [\*<sub>(u)</sub>-kuthi \*<sub>(u)</sub>-bani a-buy-e?] [Ndebele; Pietraszko p.c.]  
 2<sub>SSM</sub>-want AUG-COMP AUG-1<sub>who</sub> 1<sub>SM</sub>-come-SBJ  
 ‘Who do you want to come?’

(14) *Alternative hypothesis: negation as a syntactic licenser “unlocking” CP in (10)*

NEG want ... [<sub>CP</sub> ø-kuthi [<sub>TP</sub> (u)-Sipho come]].

Given the indispensability of negation for augment-drop to succeed in these cases, a question arises as to whether the role of L can be eliminated to yield a simpler analysis.

For Pietraszko (2021:583), negation (or *wh*-hood) is purely a “semantic precondition” for augment-drop and not a structural licensing factor; in this Pietraszko builds on Halpert’s (2015) analysis of Zulu [-A] in negative contexts as NPIs. But her glosses indicate no semantic correlates to augment-drop from complementizers and proper names paralleling the interpretive phenomena that argue for semantic dependency of NPIs on negation (see Kadmon & Landman 1993, Chierchia 2006 on domain widening; Giannakidou et al 2019 on referential deficiency). Pietraszko’s division of labor for negation and L therefore seems arbitrary.<sup>8</sup>

A second problem with Pietraszko’s approach is that it gives rise to a false prediction. Pietraszko (2019) shows that the augment of an Ndebele COMP introducing an indicative clause may drop in the scope of negation, just like that of the COMP introducing

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<sup>8</sup> The absence of NPI-like semantic correlates to augment-drop from Ndebele COMP and proper names in Pietraszko’s examples suggests that NEG-licensing of these items is purely syntactic. Consistent with this Pietraszko (2019:72) reports that augment-drop from COMP seems to convey only emphasis, and for [-A] proper names in negation’s scope Xhosa speakers report only contrastive focus readings; see §2 on focus features of [-A]. However two Zulu speakers report ambiguity between contrastive focus and an NPI-like ‘any Sipho’ reading for [-A] proper names in negation’s scope and Galen Sibanda, the one Ndebele speaker I am able to consult, gets a focus reading for ‘Sipho’ in (10) but finds more salient the reading ‘any Sipho’. This is not surprising or problematic for a syntactic approach, since syntactic NEG-licensing is generally close companion to semantic dependence rather than an opposing option: Chierchia (2006) encodes NPIs’ dependency on NEG in a morpho-syntactic feature; negative concord is syntactic Agree between NEG and local (semantic) dependents Zeijlstra (2004, 2008).

the subjunctive in (10). As noted above, Pietraszko (2021) claims that a [-A] COMP indicates an Agree relation between L and CP, unlocking the CP for L to Case-license its contents. Given this, the preverbal subject of an indicative complement to a [-A] COMP should be able to augment-drop, but (15) shows that it cannot ((15) adapted from Pietraszko 2019:587:(12a)).

- (15) A-ngi-cabang-i      [ (u)kuthi    [\*(u)-Sipho      u-za-pheka ]]      [Ndebele]  
       NEG-1SM-think-NEG    AUG-COMP    AUG-Sipho      1SM-FUT-cook  
       ‘I don’t think Sipho will cook.’

Summing up, Pietraszko’s (2021) account of (10) wrongly predicts that when Ndebele’s indicative clause COMP drops its augment under negation in (15), Case from L should enable the local subject to augment-drop too. The account thus falls short of its goal of explaining the distribution of [-A] nominals as preverbal subjects. Analytical questions also arise from the claim that Case from L is the crucial syntactic licensing factor in Ndebele (10), since the grammaticality contrast between (10) and (13) hangs on the presence or absence of negation. In Zulu and Xhosa, COMPs cannot augment-drop (see note 6) but proper names may do so in the scope of clause-mate negation, yielding the same questions as arise in Ndebele vis-à-vis the nature of negation’s role.

This article presents an alternative approach in which negation is the syntactic licenser of augment-drop in negative contexts, analyzed as a form of negative concord. Negative concord licenses both the [-A] COMP and the [-A] subjunctive subject in (10). [-A] are excluded from PVSP of indicatives like (15) because it is antipocus (Sabel & Zeller 2006, Zeller 2008); as strict negative dependents and *wh*-, [-A] have focus-features incompatible with this location. The remaining PVSP restrictions are EPP-effects.



The rest of the article is structured as follows. §2 shows how the Nguni topography of focus and anti-focus accounts for all distributional restrictions on [-A] nominals apart from the non-indicative PVSP facts in (7) (Carstens & Mletshe 2016). §3 establishes the properties of negative concord in Xhosa and Zulu and demonstrates that the licensing of a subjunctive clause [-A] subject perfectly parallels augment-drop negative concord spreading into DPs. §4 proposes that all [-A] nominals must be syntactically licensed by NEG or interrogative C<sub>Q</sub> and shows that of the two relations, only NEG-licensing involves feature-valuation. These factors pave the way for §5 to present an EPP-as-labeling-theoretic account of residual PVSP restrictions and of their ability to be neutralized by negative concord. §6 provides evidence that each [-A] noun has a null D which can be licensed by only one or the other of NEG or C<sub>Q</sub> (never both) and assimilates the relations to operator-variable binding. §7 extends the labeling approach to post-verbal subjects in Nguni TECs. §8 analyzes parallels in Romance languages. §9 concludes that negative concord, focus, and *wh*-hood play vital syntactic roles in Nguni contra Pietraszko (2021), eliminating any explanatory role for abstract Case. The upshot is that all aspects of the distribution of [-A] nominals reduce to morpho-syntactic features associated with their functions as negative dependents and *wh*-words.

## **2. PVSP and the Focus/Case debate**

### **2.1 Successes of a Focus-based account**

§1.2 demonstrated that the Case approach advocated in Pietraszko (2021) does not fully explain the distribution of [-A] nominals in PVSPs. This is important because the viability of the approach depends on its success in the preverbal domain, since several other restrictions identified in Halpert (2015) and attributed to Case-licensing failures for

[-A] are shared by certain [+A] expressions which, under Halpert's approach, do not require Case. Thus while Halpert shows that [-A] cannot be right-dislocated (diagnosed by cooccurrence of an agreeing object marker) or appear as Q of a VSQ(O) Transitive Expletive Construction (TEC), Carstens & Mletshe (2016) point out that [+A] *wh*-phrases are barred from the same range of locations, as is the expression 'only XP' (see (16) - (18)). The same is true of indicative PVSP, whether matrix or embedded: both [-A] and [+A] *wh*- phrases are excluded there, as is 'only XP' (see (19)a-c). For completeness (20) demonstrates the same pattern of exclusions affecting negative dependent [-A].

(16) Neither [+A] nor [-A] *wh* may clitic-dislocate [Xhosa/Zulu]

a. \*U-**m**-bon-ile]<sub>VP</sub>                      bani/**u-bani**?  
 2sSM-3sOM-see-DISJ.PST 1who/AUG-1who  
 Intended: Who did you see?

b. \*Bani /\***u-bani**      u-**m**-bon-ile?  
 1who/AUG-1who 2sSM-3sOM-see-DISJ.PST  
 Intended: Who did you see?

(17) Both [+A] and [-A] *wh* are excluded as Q of VSQO [Xhosa/Zulu]

\*Ku-fund-is-e                      u-Loyiso      bani/**u-bani**                      i-si-Xhosa  
 17SM-learn-CAUS-PST AUG-1Loyiso 1who/AUG-1who AUG-7-Xhosa  
 Intended: Who did Loyiso teach Xhosa to?

(18) [+A] 'only' XP cannot be Q of VSQ(O) or clitic-dislocate [Xhosa/Zulu]

a. \*Ku-fund-is-e                      u-Loyiso      [**U-John**      **kuphela**] (i-si-Xhosa)  
 17SM-learn-CAUS-PST AUG-1Loyiso      AUG-1John only                      AUG-7-Xhosa  
 Intended: Loyiso taught only John Xhosa.

b. \*U-**m**-bon-ile]<sub>VP</sub>                      [**U-John**      **kuphela**]  
 1SM-3sOM-see-DISJ.PST      AUG-1John      only  
 Intended: S/he saw only John.

(19) [+/-A] *wh*- and 'only' XP are all excluded from indicative PVSP

a. \*(U-)bani      u-fik-ile? [Xhosa/Zulu]  
 AUG-1who 1SM-arrive-DISJ.PST  
 Intended: Who arrived?

b. \***[U-John      kuphela]** u-fik-ile  
 AUG-1John only                      1SM-arrive-DISJ.PST  
 Intended: Only John arrived.

- c. \*U-cinga ukuba [(u-)bani w-emka]? [Xhosa]  
 2sSM-think COMP AUG-1who 1SM-leave  
 Intended: Who do you think left?

(20) [-A] negative dependents share the distributional restrictions

- a. \*A-ngi-m-bon-i mu-ntu [Zulu; \*clitic right-dislocation of [-A]]  
 NEG-1sSM-1OM-see- NEG 1-person  
 Intended: I don't see anybody.
- b. \*A-ku-phek-anga u-Sabelo n-to! [Xhosa; \*[-A] as Q of VSO]  
 NEG-17sSM-buy-NEG 1-Sindiswa 9-thing  
 Intended: Sabelo didn't buy anything!
- c. \*A-ngi-funi ukuthi mu-ntu a-phek-e [Zulu; \*[-A] as S of SVO]  
 NEG-1sSM-want COMP 1-person 1SM-cook-SBJ  
 Intended: I don't want anybody to cook.

Taking *wh*- and 'only XP' to be [+focus] expressions, there is a robust generalization:

wherever [+focus] material is ruled out, [-A] nominals are excluded also (see (21)).

(21) Predicting [-A] distribution from [+Focus] restrictions

If XP<sub>[+Focus]</sub> is barred from Position P, then [-A] nominals are barred from P

The distribution of [+A] *wh*-words and 'only XP' is the basis for [+/-focus] clausal positions proposed in Sabel & Zeller (2006), Zeller (2008), Carstens & Mletshe (2015), Carstens & Zeller (2020); antifocus positions include S of indicative SVO, Q of VSO(O), and dislocated positions. Assuming with Carstens & Mletshe (2016) that all *wh*-words and [-A] negative dependents have focus-features in Nguni, the above patterns of exclusion follow (they cite Watanabe 2004 and Shimoyama 2011 on focus-features of negative dependents in Japanese, Sells 2006 and Giannakidou & Yoon 2016 on Korean, and Giannakidou & Zeijlstra 2017 for discussion; see also Bošković 2008a on the role of focus particles in deriving negative concord items in Serbo-Croatian). Under this approach, the unacceptability of a [-A] subject in the embedded clause of (15) is due to

the antifocus property of indicative PVSP. Table 1 is from Carstens & Mletshe (2016).<sup>9</sup>

**Table 1:** Summary of correspondences between [-A] and [+focus] material in Nguni

	Restriction #1	Restriction #2	Restriction #3	Restriction #4
Nominal type	<u>S</u> of <u>SV</u> ... indicative	Clitic-dislocate	<u>Q</u> of <u>VSO</u>	<u>Q</u> <sub>1</sub> of <u>VSO</u> <sub>1</sub> <u>Q</u> <sub>2</sub>
[+A] ‘only’ DP	X	X	X	X
[-A] neg. dep.	X	X	X	X
[+/-A] <i>wh</i> -word	X	X	variable	X

The parallels summarized in Table 1 are quite analytically significant. Consider the evidence in (17) and (19) that both [+A] and [-A] *wh*-phrases are barred from indicative PVSP and Q of VSOQ. Under Halpert’s and Pietraszko’s approach, these identical patterns of restriction have entirely distinct origins: [-A] *wh*- are excluded by an absence of Case but since [+A] do not require Case, [+A] *wh*- must be excluded by a different factor -- an analytical anomaly which the focus-based account eliminates. Turning to (16) and (20)a, Halpert and Pietraszko view the ill-formedness of clitic-dislocated [-A] as an indicator that in Nguni, movement is not possible from a Case-licensed position to an A’-position. The plausibility of this proposal is undermined not only by the fact that the dislocation restriction is the same for [-A] and [+A] *wh*- as noted above; the pattern is also cross-linguistically pervasive: the contrasts in (22) demonstrate that *wh*-, negative dependents, and negative quantifiers are quite generally resistant to dislocation even in English. For relevant discussion of such restrictions see among others Zeller (2016) on Nguni anti-focus positions, Rizzi (1997) on the ability of ‘no one’ to be focus but not topic, Baker (2003) for a similar account of why Kinande [-A] nominals cannot dislocate,

<sup>9</sup> The variability of judgments on *wh*- as Q of VSO is puzzling but as Carstens & Mletshe (2016) note, a problem for focus and Case accounts equally since it holds of both [+A] and [-A] *wh*-. §4.3:(59)-(60) provide evidence of focus projection from Nguni *wh*-phrases to their containing category. This might be relevant here, assuming with Carstens & Mletshe that S of VSO raises to Spec of a low FocusP leaving the *wh*-Q as sole occupant of vP, to which it might project its focus-feature. Details exceed this paper’s scope.





layer absent in subjunctives, relatives, and participial clauses as depicted in (27). TopP is inhospitable to [+focus] material including ‘only XP’ and *wh*-phrases whether [+A] or [-A]. This explains why they are excluded from PVSP of indicatives alone:

- (27) a. Indicative: [ ForceP C [ TopP SU [ FinP.Ind [TP [vP ... V O (O) ... ]]]]]  
 b. Relative, participial, subjunctive: [ FinP.Sbj C [TP SU [vP ... V O (O) ... ]]]

Table 2 summarizes the contrasts between [-A] and [+focus] material in Nguni PVSPs that Pietraszko describes. The relationship between focus and [-A] distribution is clearly not a biconditional; (28) expands on (21) to explicitly reflect this fact.

**Table 2:** Contrasting distribution of [-A] and [+focus] material in Nguni PVSPs

Nominal type	S of SV... indicative	S of SV...non-indicative following [+A] COMP
[+A] ‘only’ DP	X	✓
[+A] <i>wh</i> -word	X	✓
[-A] negative dependent	X	X
[-A] <i>wh</i> -word	X	X

(28) [+Focus] and [-A] distribution: a one-way correlation

- a. ✓If XP<sub>[+Focus]</sub> is barred from Position P, then [-A] nominals are barred from P  
 b. XIf [-A] nominals are barred from Position P, then XP<sub>[+Focus]</sub> is barred from P

The one exception Pietraszko provides to the exclusion of [-A] from PVSPs is the ability of a [-A] negative dependent to follow a [-A] COMP exemplified in (10), repeated below.

- (10) A-ngi-fun-i [kuthi (u)Sipho a-buy-e]. [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:592]  
 NEG-1SSM-want-NEG COMP AUG-1Sipho 1SM- come.SBJ  
 ‘I don’t want Sipho to come.’

## 2.3 Discussion

The facts of (24)-(26) are convincing evidence that focus-features alone cannot explain all of the facts of [-A] distribution, since [-A] and [+focus] expressions do not pattern alike in non-indicative PVSPs. But we saw in §2.1 that the Case account suffers from redundancy with the independently motivated topography of focus in other environments.

Moreover, the Case account cannot explain why a [-A] preverbal subject is licit in (10) but not in the embedded indicative (15) despite augment-drop from its COMP. And the unacceptability of a [-A] in the affirmative (13)a shows that Pietraszko's account of (10) implicitly relies on two licensers, because the proposed Case-licensing is possible only when negation sanctions the presence of a [-A] COMP (examples reproduced below).

(15) A-ngi-cabang-i [ (u)kuthi [\*(u)-Sipho u-za-pheka ]] [Ndebele]  
 NEG-1SM-think-NEG AUG-COMP AUG-Sipho 1SM-FUT-cook  
 'I don't think Sipho will cook.'

(13) a. Ngi-fun-a [\*(u)-kuthi [\*(u)-Sipho a-buy-e ]] [Ndebele; Sibanda p.c.]  
 1SSM-want AUG-COMP AUG-1Sipho 1SM-come-SBJ  
 'I want Sipho to come.'

As I mentioned above, a different interpretation of the PVSP restrictions merits consideration: the EPP. EPP-effects vary across languages from the simple requirement that there be some expression in PVSP (Holmberg 2000) to fine-grained restrictions regarding the category and size of the occupant as detailed in Buell (2007) on exclusion of PPs from Zulu PVSPs, Halpert (2015) on exclusion of Zulu CPs (though Pietraszko reports them to be accepted in PVSPs of Ndebele), and Deprez (2000) on exclusion of Romance bare nominal subjects, among others. The illicitness of [-A] nominals in PVSPs seems very much akin to this family of constraints. Table 3 adds my proposal to results of existing explorations of the EPP in Nguni languages.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 3:** What satisfies the EPP in Nguni?

Category	Status	Comments
[+A] nominals	✓	though * <u>[+focus]</u> 'only XP' and <i>wh</i> - in indicative Spec, TopP
CPs	variable	✗Zulu (Halpert 2015, 2018), ✓Ndebele (Pietraszko 2019)
PPs	✗	See Buell (2007) on Zulu; Carstens (2022) on Xhosa
[-A] nominals	✗	Ruled out in all 3 languages

<sup>11</sup> I have found CPs to be fully acceptable in PVSP of Zulu and Xhosa non-indicative clauses. See Carstens (2022) for details and a labeling-theoretic account of the CP and PP facts in Table 3.



I henceforth adopt Carstens & Mletshe’s (2016) focus-based account of the restrictions in (16)-(20) and advocate an EPP-analysis of the PVSP facts in (24)-(26) approached in terms of the labeling theory of Chomsky (2013) and reflecting a generalization not yet considered, namely that [-A] cannot be agreed with. This and negative concord are key factors in labeling, I will argue. After mapping out the workings of negative concord and *wh*-licensing in §3 and §4, I argue in §5 that negative concord impacts labeling in a way that neatly explains the distribution of both negative-dependent and *wh*- [-A] in PSVPs.

### 3 Negative concord and licensing through COMP

My account builds on a parallel between the facts of augment-drop on a subjunctive subject and a hitherto unnoticed generalization about Nguni augment-drop within complex nominal expressions, many facts of which are described for Zulu in Halpert (2015). Halpert shows that augments may be dropped from modifiers within a complex [-A] nominal and describes this as augment-drop concord. Further investigation reveals concordial augment-drop to be consistently licit within complex negative dependents as in (29)a,b, but not within complex *wh*-phrases like the Xhosa (30)a-c or Zulu (31) (from Halpert 2015:224), despite the *wh*-word itself being [-A]. (30)c shows that augment-drop also fails under an alternative noun-initial word order within the *wh*-phrase.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Zulu ‘what time’ in (i)a has two [-A] members but seems to be a phrasal compound since neither *si-ni* – ‘what’ nor *si-kathi* – ‘time’ may bear an augment as shown in (i)b, regardless of syntactic context; there are inner prefixes but no augments on the second members of compounds (Halpert 2015:224). Similarly *-ni* in Xhosa ‘what gender/kind’ is always [-A] and must be preceded by a [-A] noun (Taraldsen 2019), but nominal modifiers nonetheless cannot augment-drop; a compounding analysis seems plausible. That both involve *-ni*, otherwise a morphologically dependent element (Zulu’s verbal enclitic ‘what’), lends support.

(i) a. U-zo-fika      nga-si-kathi si-ni?      b. ..(\*Yi/i)-si-kathi      (\*e-/i-)si-ni...?      [Zulu]  
      2SSM-FUT- come NGA-7-time    7-what      COP/AUG-7-time    REL/AUG-7-what  
      ‘What time will you come?’      ‘..what time...?’

(29) Augment-drop concord is possible within a complex [-A] in negation's scope

- a. A-ndi-bon-i      ø-zi-hlangu      ø-zi-bomvu.      [Xhosa]  
 NEG-1SSM-see-NEG      8-shoes      8-red  
 'I don't see any red shoes.'
- b. U-Mary      a-ka-thand-i      ø-zi-nja      ø-zi-nkulu      zi-ka-John.  
 AUG-1Mary NEG-1SM-like-NEG      10-dogs      10-big      10-poss-1John  
 'Mary doesn't like (any of) John's big dogs.'

(30) Augment-drop concord is impossible within a complex *wh*-expression

- a. U-Mary      u-thanda      ø-zi-phi      \*(i-)zi-hlangu      \*(e-)zi-bomvu?      [Xhosa]  
 AUG-1Mary 1SM-like      8-which      AUG-8-shoes      AUG.REL-8-red  
 'Which red shoes does Mary like?'
- b. U-thanda      ø-zi-njani      \*(i-)zi-nja      \*(e-)zi-ncincini?      [Xhosa]  
 2SSM-like      10-what.kind      AUG-10-dogs      AUG-10-small  
 'What kind of small dogs do you like?'
- c. U-thanda      \*(i-)zi-nja      \*(e-)zi-njani      \*(e-)zi-ncincini?      [Xhosa]  
 2SSM-like      AUG-10-dogs      AUG-10-what.kind      AUG-10-small  
 'What kind of small dogs do you like?'
- (31) W-a-bona      mu-phi      \*(u-)mu-ntu?      [Zulu]  
 2SSM-see-PST      1-which      AUG-1-person  
 'Which person did you see?'

Halpert (2015) analyzes augment-drop concord as Case concord, but the contrasts in

(29)-(31) argue against this since all the [-A] nominals in these examples occupy vP-

internal positions that Halpert analyzes as Case-licensed. Halpert points out that [-A] *-phi*

– 'which' (see her (31) and Xhosa (30)a) is possible only vP-internally, as her account

predicts; a [+A] form of *-phi* is required in vP-external locations like the PVSP in (32)

(Zulu; adapted from Halpert (2015:225 (368)). Halpert argues that the augmentless *-phi*

exemplified in (31) relies on vP-internal Case-licensing. She does not suggest an account

for why augment-drop concord is ruled out on the noun that *-phi* introduces.

- (32) A-ng-azi      ukuthi      \*(u-)mu-phi      u-m-sakazi      o-zo-hlukanisa  
 NEG-1SSM-know COMP      AUG-1-which      AUG-1-broadcaster 1REL-FUT-divide  
 u-nyaka.  
 AUG-3.year  
 'I don't know which DJ will be closing out the year.'

I propose instead that clause-level licensing of productive augment-drop concord is provided not by L but by NEG. It is *negative* concord, reflecting syntactic Agree between interpretable negation and unvalued, uninterpretable negation features, henceforth *uNeg* (see Zeijlstra 2004, 2008, Penka 2011 among others).<sup>13</sup> I follow Haegeman & Lohndal (2010) in analyzing this as a very local relation, the reach of which may be extended through a chain of concord-bearers as illustrated in the West Flemish (33), adapted from Haegeman & Lohndal (2010:194).<sup>14</sup> A West Flemish DP must have a negative head *niet* if NCIs are to be licit within it, much like what we have seen for augment-drop within an Nguni DP. In (34) I represent an augmentless nominal as a DP with a null D head, and an augmentless modifier  $\alpha$  within it as having a null head as well; empirical support for null D is provided in §6.

(33) Negative concord spreading from D into DP in West Flemish

- a. dan ze [van **\*(niet)** vele **geen** boeken] ketent zyn  
 that they of not many no book contented are  
 ‘that they are not pleased with many books’
- b. [<sub>NegP</sub> OP [*iNeg*] ... [<sub>DP</sub> niet [<sub>#Neg</sub>] vele [<sub>#Neg</sub>] geen [<sub>uNeg</sub>]]

(34) Nguni augment-drop concord:

*Agree* (Neg ... [<sub>DP</sub> ØD<sub>uNeg</sub> ... Ø $\alpha$ <sub>uNeg</sub> ]

Returning to the PVSP restriction, (35) and (36) bring out a striking parallelism between augment-drop concord within nominals and CPs. In (35)a NEG licenses nominal augment-drop and, as we saw already in (29), an adjective within the nominal phrase can

<sup>13</sup> A prenominal demonstrative can license augment-drop on material that follows it within DP (see Mbana 2021). I leave unification to future research. See §6 on augments in negative *wh*-questions.

<sup>14</sup>See Haegeman & Lohndal (2010) for complex adjacency and anti-adjacency effects which they capture via the binary Agree dependencies among concord bearers depicted in (33)b.



(37) Negative concord spreading from C to SU yields a licit [-A] preverbal subject



The Ndebele facts bring to mind an aspect of Basque negative concord discussed in Laka (1990). Laka shows that there is a Basque COMP *duenik* with negative features which is licensed by matrix negation. For negative dependents to be acceptable in an embedded clause, that clause must be a subjunctive introduced by *duenik* as shown in the contrast between (38)a,b (Laka 1990:217:(53); labeled bracketing added). Under my analysis of the [-A] *ø-kuthi*, both cases illustrate strategies to overcome clausal opacity for negative concord by spreading it downwards via a bridging COMP (see also Progovac 1992 for arguments that some embedded NPI-licensing in English works similarly).

- (38) a. \*Inigok ez du sinisten [CP [TP ezerk eztanda egingo] duela]] [Basque]  
           Inigo no has believe anything explode do will that  
           Intended: Inigo does not believe that anything will explode
- b. Inigok ez du sinisten [CP [TP ezerk eztanda egingo] duenik]]  
           Inigo no has believe anything explode do will that.NEG  
           ‘Inigo does not believe that anything will explode’

In the following section I map out in detail the syntactic relations sanctioning [-A] nominals as dependents of negation and as *wh*-words. This paves the way for my labeling-theoretic analysis of the PVSP constraints in §5.

## 4 The licensing relations

### 4.1 Neg-licensing: heterogeneity with uniform locality

Let us return to the first property of [-A] nominals introduced in §1.1, namely that they may surface only as *wh*-phrases and in the scope of negation. It is commonly assumed that *in situ wh*- lack intrinsic quantificational force and therefore must be unselectively

bound by the interrogative clause-typing  $C_Q$  (see among many others Baker 1970, Pesetsky 1987 and Cheng 1997). The syntactic reliance of negative dependents on local negation is also well-established (Haegeman 1995, Zanuttini 1997, Laka 1990/2019, Progovic 1988, 1993a, among many others). I propose the baseline requirement (39) (assuming a chain of negative concord provides an indirect strategy for NEG-licensing).<sup>16</sup>

(39) [-A] must be syntactically licensed by c-commanding  $i_{NEG}$  or  $C_Q$ .

The facts of [-A] in negative contexts are heterogenous and intricate. Because they will play an important role in the analysis I provide full details.

Carstens & Mletshe (2016) show that in addition to combining with a clausal negator to yield single negation readings, three Zulu [-A] are acceptable negative fragment answers as exemplified in (40)a-c. This duality of function is a hallmark of true negative concord items (Valdúvı 1994, Giannakidou 2006). Other [-A] are ill-formed as fragment answers (see (40)d,c), like English NPIs: *\*(I didn't see) any woman!*<sup>17</sup>

- (40) Fragment answers:
- |   |   |  |        |
|---|---|--|--------|
| a. $\checkmark$ <u>Mu-ntu!</u><br>1-person<br>'Nobody!' | b. $\checkmark$ <u>Lutho!</u><br>1 thing<br>'Nothing!'    | c. $\checkmark$ <u>N-dawo!</u><br>9-place<br>'No place!' | [Zulu] |
| d. * <u>M-fazi!</u><br>1-woman<br>Intended: No woman!   | e. * <u>Zi-hlangu!</u><br>8-shoes<br>Intended: No shoes!' |  |        |

All nominals including proper names seem able to drop their augments in the scope of negation; see the Ndebele (41) from Pietraszko (2021) and the Xhosa/Zulu (42).

<sup>16</sup> For brevity's sake I ignore raising approaches to NCIs and Qs (Collins & Postal 2015, Cable 2010). Carstens & Mletshe (2016) report that 1/3 of the Xhosa speakers in their study accepted [-A] in polar questions. For speakers who do not, the licenser is better identified as  $C_{WH}$  but I leave this aside.

<sup>17</sup> Carstens & Mletshe (2016) also show that Zulu *muntu* - 'nobody' and *lutho* - 'nothing' may be modified by *cishe* - 'almost', another common NC diagnostic. A third, the ability to appear in PVSP with apparent negative force, is unhelpful in Nguni due to independent factors ruling [-A] out in this location; see §1.2.

(41) A-ba-bon-i (u)-Zodwa. [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:583]  
 NEG-2SM-see-NEG AUG-Zodwa  
 ‘They don’t see Zodwa.’

(42) U-Sabelo a-ka-thand-i Zodwa/m-fazi/zi-nja. [Xhosa/Zulu]  
 AUG-1Sabelo NEG-1SM-like-NEG Zodwa/1-woman/10-dogs  
 ‘Sabelo doesn’t like Zodwa<sub>F</sub> /any woman/any dogs.’

Despite their heterogeneity, all [-A] in negative contexts share several syntactic constraints previewed in §1. These include the PVSP exclusion, the restrictions that (17)–(18) showed to be shared with [+focus] material, and the requirement of clausemate negation in indicatives exemplified in (43).<sup>18</sup>

- (43) a. \*U-Mary a-ka-tshongo [ukuthi u-John u-thanda m-fazi/Zodwa]. [Zulu]  
 AUG-1Mary NEG-1SM-say COMP AUG-1-John 1SM-like 1-woman/Zodwa  
 Intended: Mary didn’t say that John likes any woman/likes Zodwa<sub>F</sub>.
- b. \*U-Simiso a-ka-zi [ukuthi u-Sabelo u-dl-e nyama]. [Zulu]  
 1-1Simiso NEG-1SM-know COMP AUG-1Sabelo 1SM-eat-PST 9meat  
 ‘Simiso doesn’t know that Sabelo ate any meat.’
- c. \*A-ndi-cabang-i [ukuba u-bon-e m-ntu/Zodwa]. [Xhosa]  
 NEG-1SM-think-NEG COMP 1SM-see-PST 1-person/Zodwa  
 Intended: I don’t think that (s)he saw anyone/saw (any) Zodwa<sub>F</sub>.’
- d. \*A-ndi-qond-i [ukuba a-ba-ntwana ba-bona m-fazi]. [Xhosa]  
 NEG-1sSM-believe-NEG COMP AUG-2-children 2SM-see 1-woman  
 ‘I don’t believe that the children see any woman.’

The speakers I consulted also found relative and participial clauses opaque to negation-licensing, providing further evidence of its local character.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Carstens & Mletshe (2016) report that 10/10 Xhosa and 7/7 Zulu speakers in their study strongly rejected cross-clausal licensing except into subjunctives, as did all 3 Zulu and all 5 Xhosa speakers in the present study. In contrast, Halpert (2015) reports that over half the Zulu speakers in her study accepted cross-clausal licensing into indicatives. Carstens & Mletshe (2016) suggest that NEG-raising and the permeability of Bantu clauses exhibited in hyper-raising may underlie this discrepancy; Halpert (2015:240) notes a correlation between acceptance of hyper-raising and cross-clausal NEG-licensing. Pietraszko (2021) exemplifies cross-clausal licensing into the indicative complement of ‘think’, a classic NEG-raising verb.

<sup>19</sup> Halpert (2015:213) provides Zulu example (i) in which the head of a relative and its modifiers are [-A]. This resembles negative concord reaching into other opaque constituents as represented in (33),(34) (37).

(i) A-ngi-bon-i ba-ntu ba-gqoka zi-gqoko zi-bomvu  
 NEG-1sSM-see-NEG 2-people 2-wear 8-hat 8-red  
 ‘I don’t see any people wearing red hats.’

(44) Participial adjunct clauses are opaque to cross-clausal negation-licensing

- a. U-suk-e [ku-hlabela bani]? [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021]  
 2SSM-left 17SM-sing 1who  
 Lit: You left while who singing?’
- b. A-ngi-soze ngi-suke [\*(u-)Sabelo e-hlabela]  
 NEG-1SSM-AUX.FUT 1SSM-leave AUG-Sipho 1SM-sing  
 ‘I will not leave while Sipho is singing.’
- c. A-ngi-soze ngi-suke [ku-hlabela \*(u-)Sipho]  
 NEG-1SSM-AUX.FUT 1SSM-leave 17SM-sing AUG-Sipho  
 ‘I will not leave while Sipho is singing.’

(45) Relative clauses are opaque to negation-licensing

A-ndi-zange ndi-yi-bon-e [RC i-ndoda i-theng-e \*(i)-ncwadi.] [Xhosa]  
 NEG-1SSM-NEG 1SM-9OM-see-PST AUG-9man 9REL-buy-PST AUG-9book  
 ‘I didn’t see the man who bought a/the/any book.’

On the other hand, [-A] are licit as internal arguments in subjunctives under superordinate negation as shown in the Xhosa (46). This is a difference between the Nguni facts and those of Basque introduced in (38) which will be discussed in detail in §4.2.

- (46) A-ka-cel-i [ukuba \*(u-)Sabelo a-bon-e m-ntu/Zodwa]  
 NEG-1SM-ask-NEG COMP AUG-1-person 1SM-cook-SUBJ 1-person/Zodwa  
 ‘S/he isn’t asking that Sabelo see anybody/see Zodwa<sub>F</sub>.’

Table 4 summarizes these aspects of [-A] nominal distribution.

**Table 4:** Distributional properties of [-A] nominals (IA = internal argument)

Type of [-A] nominal	Negative fragment answer	PVSP in indicatives	PVSP in subjunctives, relatives, participials	Clausemate NEG needed for IA in indicatives	Clausemate NEG needed for IA in subjunctives
Zulu <i>lutho</i> , <i>muntu</i> , <i>ndawo</i>	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Other negative dependent	No	No	Only in Ndebele under [-A] COMP	Yes	No
Proper name	No	No	As above	Yes	No
<i>Wh</i> -phrase	N/A	No	No (but see §5.1)	No	No

The facts in (40)-(45) are best reflected by designating all negation-licensed [-A] nominals in Nguni as *strict negative dependents* including [-A] proper names, [-A] NPIs like (40)d *mfazi* – ‘any woman’, and the true NCIs *muntu* – ‘nobody’, *ndawo* – ‘no place’



and *lutho* – ‘nothing’ in (40)a-c. This raises a potential complication concerning the negative concord analysis of augment-drop: if only *mntu*, *ndawo*, and *lutho* are full-fledged NCIs (see (40)), a question arises as to why modifiers within the other negative-dependent [-A] can participate in augment-drop concord. To account for this I adopt a proposal of Carstens & Mletshe (2016) that [-A] nominals which fail the fragment-answer diagnostic have negative concord features nonetheless, but they are too weak to be compatible with the silent or elided negation often posited as the licenser of negative fragment answers in negative concord languages (see (47)). Carstens & Mletshe draw a comparison to the idea that *u*phi features of T vary in whether they are compatible with *pro*-drop -- those of Italian T are strong enough, while those of English are too weak.

(47) [ OP<sub>iNeg</sub> [A nadie<sub>uNeg</sub>]...] – ‘Nobody’ [Spanish; Zeijlstra 2004:271]

## 4.2 The subjunctive puzzle

As we have seen, the clausemate restriction has a systematic exception: matrix negation licenses [-A] internal arguments within subjunctive complements (see the Zulu (48)).

(48) A-ka-cel-i [ukuthi u-Sabelo a-bon-e mu-ntu/Zodwa]  
 NEG-1SM-ask-NEG COMP AUG-1-person 1SM-cook-SUBJ 1-person/Zodwa  
 ‘S/he isn’t asking that Sabelo see anybody/see Zodwa<sub>F</sub>.’

On the other hand, we saw in (9) that subjunctives disallow [-A] preverbal subjects, leading Pietraszko (2021) to treat them as opaque to Agree/Case-licensing from matrix L.

(9) A-ngi-fun-i [u-kuthi \*(u-)Sipho a-buy-e]. [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:591]  
 NEG-1sSM-want-NEG AUG-COMP AUG-1Sipho 1SM-come-SBJ  
 ‘I don’t want Sipho to come.’

A [-A] nominal is licit in subjunctive PVSP only when it follows a negative-licensed [-A] COMP as in (10) (repeated below), strongly suggesting that there is clausal opacity preventing the relation Agree (Neg, [-A]) from reaching directly into subjunctives.

- (10) A-*ngi-fun-i* [kuthi (u)*Sipho* a-buy-e]. [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:592]  
 NEG-1SSM-want-NEG COMP AUG-1*Sipho* 1SM- come-SBJ  
 ‘I don’t want *Sipho* to come.’

Cross-linguistically, the exceptionality of subjunctives with respect to otherwise strict clausemate requirements is widespread and has received extensive attention (see Giannakidou & Quer 1997, Haegeman & Zanuttini 1991, Giannakidou 1998, 2009, Progovac 1993b, Picallo 1984, Penka 2011 among others). For example, Progovac (1993)b shows that NCIs are licit in the clausal complements to verbs like ‘want’ in Serbo-Croatian but not in clausal complements to verbs like ‘claim’, a contrast that she analyzes in terms of a subjunctive vs indicative distinction (see (49)-(50)). The pattern is typical for languages with NCIs; Spanish examples in (51) are from Arnaiz (1996).<sup>20</sup>

- (49) \**Ne tvrđim [da vidim nikoga]*. [Serbo-Croatian; Progovac 1993b:117]  
 not claim that see no one  
 Intended: I don’t claim that I can see anyone.
- (50) *Ne zelim [da vidim nikoga]*. [Serbo-Croatian; Progovac 1993b:117]  
 not want that see no one  
 ‘I don’t wish to see anyone.’
- (51) a. \**No dijo que Juan besó a nadie*. [Spanish; Arnaiz 1996:54]  
 NEG said.3s that Juan kissed.3s P n-body  
 ‘She didn’t say that Juan kissed anybody.’
- b. *No espero que Juan bese a nadie*  
 NEG expect.1s that Juan kiss.SBJ P n-body  
 ‘I do not expect Juan to kiss anybody.’

Following Giannakidou & Quer (1997) among many others, I assume that while direct cross-clausal NEG-licensing of strict negative dependents is impossible, quantifier raising

<sup>20</sup> In Xhosa, infinitives are also transparent to negation-licensing as reported for other languages (Giannakidou 2000) (see (i)). Clauses with class 17 expletive subject agreement seem more transparent than those with full agreement; (ii) is judged somewhat more acceptable than the examples in (43)).

(i) A-*ndi-fun-i* [ku-bona Ø-m-ntu]. (ii) ??U-*Sabelo* a-ka-tshongo ukuba [ku-phek-e mntu]  
 NEG-1SSM-want 15-see Ø-1person AUG-*Sabelo* NEG-1SM-say that 17SM-cook-PST 1person  
 ‘I don’t want to see anybody.’ ‘*Sabelo* didn’t say that anybody cooked.’

(QR) can move such a negative-dependent out of a subjunctive into locality with superordinate clause negation. In contrast, it is well-established that QR is *not* possible from one indicative clause to another (on these questions see also Beghelli 1995, Cecchetto 2003, 2004; Farkas 1981; Farkas & Giannakidou 1996; Fox 2000; Johnson 2000; Szabolcsi 1997). As for the special problem of [-A] subjects in PVSP, §5 proposes that *uNeg* features give rise to labeling failures if unvalued at a point where their bearer needs to Agree; thus only valuation via COMP allows [-A] to surface in PVSP.<sup>21</sup>

Summing up, apart from an anomaly associated with internal arguments in subjunctives, clausemate effects add to the evidence of augment-drop concord that negative-dependent [-A] nominals have negative concord features, *uNeg*, which require valuation in clause-bound Agree. Something special facilitates licensing of material in embedded subjunctives: in Basque, a negative COMP (see (38)b); in Xhosa, QR of an internal argument or NEG-licensing of PVSP via the local COMP. In contrast, we will see in §4.3 that unselective binding of *wh*- by C<sub>Q</sub> differs in being non-local.

### 4.3 The non-locality of unselective binding by C<sub>Q</sub>

Assuming *wh*-questions involve a clause-typing C<sub>Q</sub> (Cheng 1997) I have suggested that there is a relation [C<sub>Q</sub>...[-A]] comparable to [NEG...[-A]] in making [-A] nominals licit.

A small, closed class of lexical items serve as *wh*-words: in Zulu, *-phi* ‘which’,

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<sup>21</sup> Vergara (2017) shows that Spanish object but not subject n-words are licit in subjunctive complements to ‘doubt’ and ‘deny’ and on this basis argues that apparent cross-clausal licensing in reality relies on NEG-raising from the subjunctive to a position c-commanding the subject, which is blocked from ‘doubt’ and ‘deny’ complements. A problem for a NEG-raising approach to subjunctive transparency exists in verbs like ‘ask’ (see (48)) since *I didn’t ask that John see anybody* ≠ *I asked that John not see anybody*. In an earlier draft of this article I proposed an approach in which, as an aspect of its inflectional dependency, a subjunctive can include a silent copy of matrix negation in the clause-medial location of overt subjunctive negation, which c-commands only internal arguments. Thanks to Chris Collins (personal communication) for suggesting the simpler alternative of a QR approach to subjunctive permeability.

(*ku-*)*phi* – ‘where’, (*u-*)*bani* ‘who’, (*i-*)*ni* ‘what,’ *-ngaki* ‘how many’, *-njani* ‘what kind/how’, *nini* – ‘when’ and *ngani* ‘why’. I assume that *wh*-features of these items make them compatible with and requiring of licensing by C<sub>Q</sub>. While all postverbal *wh*- are [-A] in Xhosa (see (52)), Zulu allows [+A] *wh*- in situ as shown in (53).<sup>22</sup> These too by assumption have *wh*-features requiring unselective binding by C<sub>Q</sub>.

The examples in (52) and (53) show that a [+/-A] *wh*- may take matrix scope from within an embedded clause. This is a first indicator that licensing by C<sub>Q</sub> is non-local.

- (52) U-cinga ukuba u-Mary u-thanda (\*u-)bani? [Xhosa: \*postverbal [+A] *wh*]  
 2sSM-think COMP AUG-1Mary 1SM-like AUG-1who  
 ‘Who do you think Mary likes?’
- (53) U-cabanga ukuthi u-Mary u-thanda (u-)bani? [Zulu]  
 2sSM-think COMP AUG-1Mary 1SM-like AUG-1who  
 ‘Who (exactly) do you think Mary likes?’

Both [+A] and [-A] *wh*- are licit within adjuncts and relative clauses (see the Zulu (54)-(55)). They may also ignore the island of an embedded clause construed as a reported *wh*-question or ‘whether’ complement as illustrated in the Xhosa (56) and (57) (this test from Lasnik & Saito 1992, Watanabe 1992).

- (54) U-Mary w-a-hamba ngaphambi kokuthi u-John a-fik-e kuphi?  
 AUG-1Mary 1SM-PST-leave before COMP AUG-1John 1SM-arrive-SBJ where  
 ‘Where did Mary leave before [John arrived <where>]?’
- (55) U-Sabelo w-a-hlangana nowesifazane o-funa-ni/i-ni?  
 AUG-1Sabelo 1SM-PST-meet with.AUG1.woman 1REL-want-9what/ AUG-9what  
 ‘What did Sabelo meet the woman who wants?’
- (56) U-John u-funa u-kw-azi ukuba u-Mariya u-thenge i-n-cwadi.  
 AUG-1John 1SM-want AUG-15-know COMP AUG-1Mary 1SM-buy AUG-9-book  
 ‘John wants to know whether Mary bought a book.’

<sup>22</sup> While there is a preference in Nguni for *wh*- to appear immediately after the verb, my investigation uncovered no correlates between word order and scope-taking so I leave this aside.

- (57) U-John      u-funa      u-kw-azi      ukuba u-Mariya      u-thenge ntoni.  
 AUG-1John 1SM-want AUG-15-know COMP AUG-1Mary 1SM-buy 9what  
 ‘John wants to know what Mary bought.’ OR  
 ‘What does John want to know whether Mary bought?’

A question in which a *wh*- appears within an island may be answered with a single word, as in the (58) Q and A pair. This is at odds with a potential analysis in terms of covert pied-piping of the *wh*-, for which a diagnostic is a requirement that the answer must repeat the whole island (see Nishigauchi 1984, Choe 1987, Pesetsky 1987 on Japanese).

- (58) Q: U-bon-e      u-mu-ntu      o-thanda (u-)bani?      A: John      [Zulu]  
 2sSM-see-SBJ AUG-1-person 1REL-like AUG-1who      1John  
 ‘Who did you see the person that likes?’      ‘John.’

The sole island in which *wh*- are consistently ruled out is indicative PVSP, though they are fine in subjunctive PVSP as shown in the contrast of (59) with (60).

- (59) \*[I-si-thombe si-ka-bani]      si-lenga odong-eni.      [Zulu]  
 AUG-7-picture 7-POSS-1who 7SM-hang LOC.3wall-LOC  
 Intended: Who does a picture of hang on the wall?
- (60) ✓U-funa      ukuthi [[i-si-thombe si-ka-bani]      si-leng-e      odong-eni]?  
 2sSM-want COMP AUG-7-picture 7-POSS-1who 7SM-hang-SBJ LOC.3wall-LOC  
 ‘Who do you want a picture of to hang on the wall?’

Focus-features account for this contrast. Recall Pietraszko’s (2021) demonstration that subjunctives differ from indicatives in permitting [+focus] material in PVSP (see (61) vs (19)a,b, repeated below).

- (61) a. Ngi-funa      [ukuthi ✓[u-John      kuphela] a-pheke] [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:589]  
 1SM-want COMP AUG-1John only 1-cook.SBJ  
 ‘I want only John to cook.’
- b. U-funa      [ukuthi ✓u-bani      a-pheke]?  
 2sSM-want COMP AUG-1who 1-cook.SBJ  
 ‘Who do you want to cook?’

- (19) a. *\*(U-)bani u-fik-ile?* [Xhosa/Zulu]  
 AUG-1 who 1SM-arrive-DISJ.PST  
 Intended: Who arrived?
- b. *\*[U-John kuphela] u-fik-ile* [Xhosa/Zulu]  
 AUG-1 John only 1SM-arrive-DISJ.PST  
 Intended: Only John arrived.

I have adopted Carstens & Mletshe's (2016) proposal that [-A] nominals are [+focus] expressions. Assuming there is *focus-projection* from a *wh*-phrase to its containing DP, the antifocus status of indicative PVSP explains the ill-formedness of (59) just as it does (19)a,b (see Cinque 1993, Selkirk 1984, Adger 2006, Bresnan 1971, Arregi 2016 among others on focus projection just as it does.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, it is unclear how these facts could be approached in terms of Case. Since *bani* in (60) is well-formed, Halpert and Pietraszko's accounts would need to assume that it is Case-licensed, perhaps from the possessive marker *ka* (paralleling English 'of'). But *ka* is also present in (59), yielding a conundrum as to the source of ill-formedness. That the focus-approach can easily explain the contrast between (59) and (60) is an argument in its favor.

Returning to the issue of locality, the general absence of island effects suggests that there is neither feature-valuation via Agree between C<sub>Q</sub> and *wh* nor covert raising of a *wh*-phrase to its scope position in Nguni.

## 5 EPP effects, obligatory subject agreement, and labeling

### 5.1 The ubiquity of *uNeg*

With the properties of negative- and *wh*-licensing established I return now to the PVSP restriction on [-A] nominals exemplified in (7)a and (9), repeated below.

<sup>23</sup> There is no [+A] counterpart to *ka-bani* 'whose/of whom' to explore with respect to the focus projection analysis of (57)a,b. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for help clarifying this.

- (7) a. \*U-fun-a            u-kuthi    [bani a-buy-e]?            [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:589]  
           2SSM-want-FV AUG-COMP 1who 1SM-come-SBJ  
           Intended: Who do you want to come?
- (9) A-ngi-fun-i            [u-kuthi    \*(u-)Sipho    a-buy-e]. [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:591]  
       NEG-1SSM-want-NEG AUG-COMP 1AUG-Sipho 1SM-come-SBJ  
       ‘I don’t want Sipho to come.’

I propose that a featural deficiency excludes [-A] nominals from PVSPs -- in particular, all of them, including *wh*-phrases, have *uNeg* features that block agreement and hence labeling (Chomsky 2013) for reasons to be detailed in §5.2. I have already motivated *uNeg* features for strict negative dependent [-A] nominals such as *lutho* – ‘nothing’, *mifino* – ‘any vegetables’ and the like, in preceding sections. And recall from §2.1 that *any* common noun, or proper name, or even the COMP *u-kuthi*, can become a strict negative dependent by dropping its augment. If *uNeg* is a consistent ingredient in the feature content of *all* Nguni [-A] nominals, the full productivity of this process is explained and a unified account of their exclusion from PVSP follows.

Evidence supporting this approach to [-A] *wh*-phrases is provided by Galen Sibanda (personal communication), a native speaker of Zimbabwean Ndebele. In his judgment, the *wh*-subject of a subjunctive clause introduced by a [-A] COMP in the scope of negation may be [-A] (see (62)), the same as a common noun or proper name (see (10), repeated below). This makes perfect sense under my proposal that all [-A] nominals have *uNeg* features, including [-A] *wh*-. I view (62) as valuable confirmation for this approach.<sup>24</sup>

- (62) A-wu-fun-i            [Ø-kuthi [ (u-)bani    a-buy-e]]?            [Galen Sibanda p.c.]  
       NEG-2SSM-want-NEG        COMP    AUG-1who 1SM- come-SBJ  
       ‘Who don’t you want to come?’

<sup>24</sup> Sibanda rates augment-drop in (10) a 5 out of 5 and in (62) as 4 out of 5, where 5 is perfect. §6 presents evidence that NEG cannot directly license a [-A] *wh*-phrase because its null D is bound by C<sub>Q</sub>. For this reason §5.3 sketches an approach to (62) that avoids the direct NEG-licensing available in (10). The slight difference in these examples’ status likely reflects this recourse to an alternative strategy.

- (10) A-ngi-fun-i [kuthi (u)Sipho a-buy-e]. [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:592]  
 NEG-1SSM-want-NEG COMP AUG-Sipho 1SM-come-SBJ  
 ‘I don’t want Sipho to come.’

What remains to be captured is why [-A] *wh*- should require negation-licensing when they occupy PVSP but apparently in no other clausal location, given the licitness of their appearance as internal arguments in affirmative clauses like (53), repeated below.

- (53) U-cabanga ukuthi u-Mary u-thanda (u-)bani? [Zulu]  
 2SSM-think COMP AUG-1Mary 1SM-like AUG-1who  
 ‘Who (exactly) do you think Mary likes?’

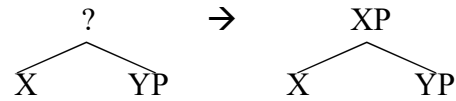
As we have seen, [-A] nominals serving as strict negative dependents rely on Agree with NEG to meet the [-A] licensing requirement in (39). But *wh*- instead meet the licensing requirement through their relationship with c-commanding C<sub>Q</sub>. Therefore wherever feature-sharing is not needed for labeling, the *u*Neg of [-A] *wh*- need not be valued, following Preminger’s (2014) proposals that agreement may licitly fail.

## 5.2 The labeling algorithm and unvalued features

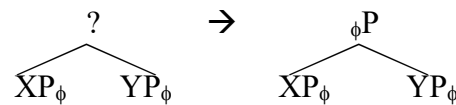
This approach has three ingredients. Following Chomsky (2013), labeling is accomplished by an algorithm that applies at the phase level. A configuration [X, YP] is labeled XP based on its unique head X as in (63)a. In contrast an [XP, YP] configuration lacks a unique head and must be labeled by shared features as shown in (63)b.

(63) Chomsky (2013) labeling by algorithm:

- a. *A unique head labels* [X, YP]



- b. *Shared features must label* [XP, YP]



Merge of an agentive subject creates an illicit [XP, YP] configuration: \*[DP vP]. The



subject therefore raises obligatorily out of vP to a landing site where shared features can provide a label – canonically, a PVSP position associated with subject-verb agreement, in a classic EPP-effect. I maintain the standard assumption that phi-agreement with subjects is accomplished via downwards-probing Agree, as in Chomsky’s account, but its success becomes crucial for convergence once a subject has raised and labeling is attempted.

Chomsky’s labeling approach straightforwardly accounts for why agreement is obligatory with preverbal subjects in Bantu. It eliminates the need for a proposed linkage between T’s  $u\text{Phi}$  and an EPP-feature proposed in Baker (2003), Baker & Collins (2002), Carstens (2005) to capture the fact that whatever precedes T must agree with it.

The second ingredient of my account is a proposal that Nguni [-A] nominals are unable to participate in the feature-sharing needed to label if they have unvalued  $u\text{Neg}$  features, as sketched in (64).

(64) Absent valuation,  $u\text{Neg}$  of a [-A] negative dependent excludes it from PVSP

\*...[<sub>CP</sub> **u-kuthi** [<sub>?  $u\text{Neg}$</sub>  **Sipho** T <sub>$u\text{Phi}$</sub> -buy-e]].  
                   AUG-COMP                   1Sipho                   come-SBJ

As above discussion has noted, phi-agreement is a standard mechanism of feature-sharing for preverbal subjects. It is therefore highly relevant that [-A] are never agreed with.<sup>25</sup>

We have seen this in the fact that they cannot occupy *any* PVSP, even those tolerant of other [+focus] material like ‘only XP’ and [+A] *wh* (see (24)-(26); this is the core of

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<sup>25</sup> Halpert (2015:77) argues that a [-A] values subject agreement just in case it undergoes raising-to-object from a subjunctive clause (see (i)). I assume instead that agreeing T labels TP in a case like (i) (the lower copy of *muntu* is invisible to the labeling algorithm, following Chomsky 2013).

(i) A-ngi-fun-i                    muntu    [ukuthi [<sub>TP</sub> <muntu> a-phek-e                    i-qanda]].  
       NEG-1SSM-want-NEG    1person    COMP                    1SM-cook-SBJ    AUG-5egg  
       ‘I don’t want anyone to cook a(ny) egg.’

Pietraszko’s argument for advocating that the Case account of the PVSP restriction is superior to the focus-based account. We have also seen that [-A] cannot be doubled by object-marking under dislocation; see (16)-(19) and (65). (66) shows that they cannot surface as agreeing post-verbal subjects.

- (65) U-**m**-bon-ile]<sub>VP</sub>                      \*(u-)Sipho?                      [Xhosa/Zulu]  
       2sSM-3sOM-see-DISJ.PST        AUG-1Sipho  
       ‘Did you see Sipho?’
- (66) U-fik-ile                      \*(u-)Sipho.  
       1SM-arrive-DISJ.PST        AUG-1who  
       ‘Sipho arrived.’

I accordingly propose that a *u*Neg feature of a [-A] expression renders it unable to serve as goal in an Agree relation under (67), unless successfully valued as it is in (37).<sup>26</sup>

- (67) The Agreement Mixing Prohibition: An expression with an unvalued agreement feature may not value agreement.

This approach converges in a significant way with a proposal in Bošković (2019, 2020, 2021) that uFs in general thwart labeling (see (68)). I explore this connection in §5.4.

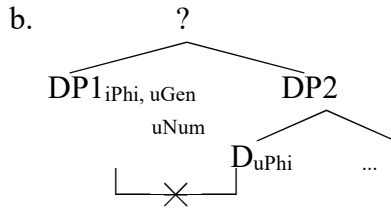
- (68) The presence of an uninterpretable feature blocks labeling via feature-sharing in XP-YP configurations (from Bošković 2020, 2021:10 (24)).

(67) is an update of a proposal made in Carstens (1991) to address a gap in DP-internal agreement. I pointed out there that while many languages have possessor agreement and many have nominal concord within DPs, bidirectional agreement along the lines of (69) seems to be rare or non-existent.

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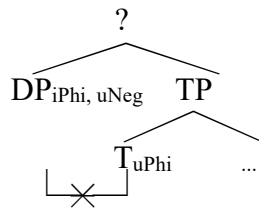
<sup>26</sup> As previously noted, indicative PVSPs and dislocated positions exclude [+focus] material so [-A] nominals are doubly ruled out in such positions. I leave labeling of [+A] dislocated material to future research; see Zeller (2015)a,b for relevant discussion.

(69) a. \**my-masc.pl sons-1s*



Like the problem at hand, this is compatible with the view that the goal in an Agree relation cannot itself have unvalued agreement features.<sup>27</sup> Let us take that insight as the basis for hypothesizing that labeling fails when any [-A] nominal appears in PVSP. In (70) *uNeg* cannot obtain a value in the Agree relation valuing *uPhi*. This circumstance seems to be incompatible with successful feature-sharing in PVSP.<sup>28</sup>

(70) Feature-sharing is thwarted when the goal bears unvalued agreement features



The formulation in (67) leaves the door open for successful feature-sharing without phi-agreement. This is important in relation to postverbal subjects in transitive expletive constructions (TECs) to be discussed in §7, where I argue that labeling by focus-features is possible because phi-agreement plays no role in it.

<sup>27</sup> Norris (2014) argues that Case-concord and possessor agreement cooccur in Finnish and Skolt Saami, pointing out that such cooccurrences are expected if agreement and concord are non-overlapping in their domains of application, as he proposes (morphological vs. syntactic components). This overlap need not in principle be incompatible with my proposals here, which can be formulated so as to differentiate among varieties of features. But Carstens (2020) argues that the evidence supports the opposite conclusion. It's accordingly possible that Case-concord falls under (67)/(69), though I leave this to future research.

<sup>28</sup> An anonymous reviewer argues that if uFs probe individually problems should not arise. I take (69) as evidence that that problems *do* arise, as is the fact that a [-A] in PVSP is well-formed only if negation-licensed. See also Bošković (2009)a on failures of gender agreement with singular first conjuncts. Bošković notes that if each unvalued feature probed separately, *uNum* could be valued by [+plural] &P and *uGender* by singular DP1, but this fails in many cases (see Taraldsen et al 2018, Carstens 2019 on Xhosa).

Clearly there is more to be said about [-A] *wh*-phrases since they are licit without negation-licensing outside of PVSP as demonstrated in (3)a, repeated below. If [-A] *wh*- have *uNeg* features as shown in (71), why are they not ruled out in such contexts?

- (3) a. U-bon-e      bani?  
          2sSM-see-PST 1who  
          ‘Who did you see?’

- (71) [TP U-bone    bani<sub>uNeg</sub>]?  
          you-saw    1who

This brings us to the third ingredient of the account: as mentioned in §5.1, I follow Preminger (2014) in assuming that all else being equal, unvalued agreement features are licit in syntax; they do not cause derivational crashes. Recall that [-A] nominals *must* be licensed (see (39), repeated below). For negative-dependent [-A] nouns like *lutho* – ‘anything/nothing’, *mfazi* – ‘any woman’ and [-A] proper names like *Ø-Sipho* – ‘Sipho’, the only possibility is negation-licensing so we find they are licit only where their features can be valued in a clause-bound Agree relation (*iNeg*, *uNeg*). But for [-A] *wh*-phrases, on the other hand, C<sub>Q</sub> suffices to fulfill the licensing requirement in (39).

- (39) [-A] must be syntactically licensed by c-commanding *iNEG* or C<sub>Q</sub>.

Absent valuation of their *uNeg* we might expect [-A] *wh*- to surface with some kind of default morphology, but this would likely take the form of the augment. Since C<sub>Q</sub> is an alternative licenser of augment-drop, default augments do not surface on C<sub>Q</sub>-licensed *wh*.

Summing up, I have argued that *uNeg* features are not intrinsically in need of valuation – a freedom that they share with *uPhi*, assuming Preminger (2014). As a result, *wh*-phrases may surface in augmentless form with their *uNeg* unvalued, and augment-drop licensed by C<sub>Q</sub>. They may not, however, surface augmentless in PVSP, unless their

*uNeg* is valued via negation-licensed [-A] COMP as in (62), repeated below.

- (62) A-wu-fun-i                      [Ø-kuthi [ (u-)bani      a-buy-e]]?                      [Galen Sibanda p.c.]  
       NEG-2SSM-want-NEG            COMP    AUG-1who 1SSM- come-SBJ  
       ‘Who don’t you want to come?’

### 5.3 Mechanics

The mechanics of my account build on a proposal of Arregi & Nevins (2012) that agreement involves two components. The first of these, their *Agree Link*, establishes a probe-goal relationship. I build on Arregi & Nevins’ assumptions in taking Agree-Link to be common to all probe-goal relations (not just phi-valuation) and in proposing that it constitutes a very simple form of feature-sharing by confirming a match. Phi-agreement involves *Agree Copy* -- an additional step of copying the features of the goal; for person those values might be 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person; for noun class, any of roughly 5 gender values + singular or plural. I propose that Agree-Copy cannot accommodate unvalued agreement features on the goal and faced with them, it aborts. Unlike Arregi & Nevins I take Agree-Copy to be available in syntax, since (in the way that I employ it here) it feeds labeling.

(72) Two-step agreement of Probe P with Goal G (Arregi & Nevins, adapted)

- a. Agree-Link: P has unvalued features triggering Agree (P,G). The result is a link between P and G establishing that a match is present.
- b. Agree-Copy: The values of the  $\phi$ -features of G are copied onto P.

I summarize the labeling problems that arise for a [-A] preverbal *wh*-phrase in an affirmative context in (73) and for a negative dependent following a [+A] COMP in (74).

(73) Though unselective binding of *wh*- is possible long-distance, labeling fails when a [-A] *wh* is preverbal because its unvalued *uNeg* aborts Agree-Copy.

- a. \*U-fun-a            [(u-)kuthi      [bani a-buy-e]]?  
       2SSM-want    (AUG-)COMP    1who 1SM-come-SBJ  
       Intended: Who do you want to come?

- b.  $C_Q$  \*U-funa [(u-)kuthi [? bani<sub>WH, uNeg, iPhi</sub> T<sub>uPhi</sub> ]]
- ✓ Binding *wh-* by  $C_Q$  succeeds  
✗ Agree Copy (SU, T) fails

(74) Following a [+A] COMP,  $uNeg$  of a [-A] negative dependent is in an opaque domain (the CP phase), cannot be valued in situ, and aborts Agree-Copy

- a. \*A-ngi-fun-i [u-kuthi Sipho a-buy-e].  
NEG-1SSM-want-NEG AUG-COMP Sipho 1SM- come.SBJ  
Intended: 'I don't want Sipho to come.'

- b. Neg ... [u-kuthi [? Sipho<sub>uNeg, iPhi</sub> T<sub>uPhi</sub> ]]
- ✗ Locality blocks Neg. concord  
✗ Agree Copy (SU, T) fails

I turn to the grammatical cases of [-A] nominals in PVSP. I follow Arregi and Nevins (2012) in assuming that while Agree Link is established once  $uPhi$  finds a DP in its c-command domain, Agree Copy can take place after movement. This permits Agree Copy to be facilitated by the local concord relationship between  $\emptyset$ -*kuthi* and a preverbal [-A] subject in (75)a,b. While there is no evidence that T ever merges bearing  $uNeg$  features of its own, I assume also that negative concord in the form of valued  $uNeg$  is passed down from a NEG-licensed [-A] COMP to T via Feature Inheritance (Chomsky 2007, 2008), so that T and the [-A] subject match in this feature.

(75) Labeling succeeds when COMP has a negative concord value that it can share with the embedded preverbal subject and T

- a. A-ngi-fun-i [Ø-kuthi Ø-Sipho a-buy-e].  
NEG-1SSM-want-NEG COMP 1Sipho 1SM- come-SBJ  
'I don't want Sipho to come.'

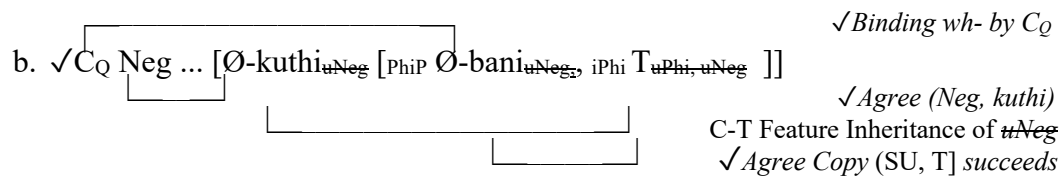
- b. ✓Neg ... [Ø-kuthi<sub>uNeg</sub> [PhiP Ø-Sipho<sub>uNeg, iPhi</sub> T<sub>uPhi, uNeg</sub> ]]
- C-T Feature Inheritance of  $uNeg$   
✓ Agree (Neg, kuthi) & (kuthi, Sipho)  
✓ Agree Copy (SU, T) succeeds

C-T Feature Inheritance plays an important role in the licensing of a preverbal [-A] *wh*-subject. We will see evidence in §6 that [-A] licensing by NEG and  $C_Q$  are mutually

exclusive, yet a [-A] *wh*-phrase is licit in PVSP following the [-A] COMP in (76)b. Given Feature Inheritance of valued *uNeg* I propose that Agree (T, SU) can value the subject's *uNeg* and permit labeling, as (76)b illustrates (though a slight cost perhaps accompanies the lack of more direct licensing; see note 24).

- (76) Valuing *uNeg* features of the preverbal subject need not rely on a direct relation with NEG given C-T Feature-Inheritance and Agree (T, SU)

- a. A-wu-fun-i                    [Ø-kuthi    Ø-bani    a-buy-e]?  
      NEG-2SSM-want-NEG        COMP        1who    1SM- come.SBJ  
      ‘Who don’t you want to come?’



C-T Feature Inheritance is potentially relevant to the contrast in (77)a,b, presented by Halpert (2015:114) as support for her Case-account of PVSP restrictions on [-A] nominals. These examples illustrate that in the scope of a local left edge negative adverb *ngeke* – ‘never’, a Zulu [-A] negative dependent is licit post-verbally but not preverbally.

- (77) a. Ngeke ku-fundis-e        **mu-ntu**.  
      never    17SM-teach-SBJ 1-person  
      ‘Nobody will ever teach.’  
      b. \*Ngeke **mu-ntu**    a-fundis-e.  
      never    1-person    1SM-teach-SBJ  
      Intended: Nobody will ever teach.

In terms of the approach that I have proposed, this contrast could be taken to indicate that Feature Inheritance is consistently crucial to agreement between a [-A] subject and T, continuing to assume that T does not merge bearing *uNeg* of its own. It would follow that unlike a NEG-licensed COMP, the presence of the adverb *ngeke* does not suffice to license

a [-A] negative dependent in PVSP because T needs a matching valued *u*Neg feature that it cannot acquire from the adverb.

However, the contrasts between (78)a,b and show that Zulu speakers also reject [+A] *wh*-phrases and ‘only XP’ in this PVSP, suggesting that the position is antifocus. If correct, clashing focus-values is all that is needed to explain the facts of (77).

- (78) a. Ngeke ku-fundis-e u-John kuphela.  
           never 17SM-teach-SBJ AUG-1John only  
           ‘John will not/never be the only one to teach.’
- b. \*Ngeke u-John kuphela a-fundis-e.  
           never AUG-1John only 1SM-teach-SBJ  
           Intended: John will never be the only one to teach/Only John will never teach
- (79) a. Ngeke ku-fundis-e (u)-bani?  
           never 17SM-teach-SBJ AUG-1who  
           ‘Who will never teach?’
- b. \*Ngeke u-bani a-fundis-e?  
           never AUG-1John 1SM-teach-SBJ  
           Intended: Who will never teach?

As mentioned in note 11, Halpert (2015) points out one further restriction on [-A] that I have so far not considered: they may not be clefted ((80) from Halpert 2015:69, adapting Sabel & Zeller 2006:273).

- (80) Ng-\*(u)-bani o-fik-ile?  
       COP-AUG-1who 1REL-arrive-DISJ.PST  
       ‘Who came?’

Sabel & Zeller (2006:279) show that the shape of the cleft copula obligatorily reflects the noun class of what is clefted (see (81), adapted from their (24)).

- |                     |                |                 |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| (81) a. ng-u-m-fana | b. y-i-mali    | c. l-/y-u-donga |
| COP-AUG-1-boy       | COP-AUG-9money | COP-AUG-11-wall |
| ‘it’s a boy’        | ‘it’s money’   | ‘it’s a wall’   |

My analysis predicts that an augment is necessary in (80) because the cleft copula has



uPhi to be valued, and agreement is impossible with [-A].

The syntax of Nguni clefts has received divergent analyses in Cheng & Downing (2013), Sabel & Zeller (2006), though these authors agree on a predicate inversion approach to the position of the cleft copula. For concreteness I adopt the account of Sabel & Zeller (2006) under which the copula raises to T and the clefted expression occupies a low Spec, Foc as depicted in (82)a. While Sabel & Zeller posit a null expletive in Spec, TP, plausibly the preverbal position is simply empty; also, the clefted expression might originate low and raise to its surface position, so that there is downward Agree (COP, uSipho) before movements take place as sketched in my (82)b.

- (82) a.  $[_{TP} \textit{pro} \textit{ng-FOC-T} [_{FocP} \textit{uSipho} <\textit{Foc}> [_{VP} <\textit{COP}> ]]]$
- 
- b.  $[_{TP} \textit{ng-FOC-T}_T [_{FocP} \textit{uSipho} <\textit{Foc}> [_{VP} <\textit{COP}_{u\phi}> <\textit{uSipho}_{\phi}> ]]]$
- 

For reasons of length I will not pursue details of the construction further. It suffices to note that agreement is involved between the cleft and clefted expression, and the requirement that the latter be [+A] follows.

## 5.4 Discussion: feature-checking, agreement, and other uFs

§5.1 noted a proposal of Bošković (2020, 2021) that there is broad incompatibility between unvalued uFs and feature-sharing, as stated in (68) repeated below.

(68) The presence of an uninterpretable feature blocks labeling via feature-sharing in XP-YP configurations (Bošković 2021:10 (24))

(68) builds on existing proposals that feature-checking is impossible in intermediate positions (Bošković 2008b, 2019b, Boeckx 2003). Some Bantu evidence for this comes from Schneider-Zioga's (2009) demonstration that in Kinande, where there is obligatory

*wh*-agreement on intermediate COMPs, reconstruction effects are present in short but not long dependencies, arguing that the former but not the latter are movement-derived. For this reason a bound reading is available for the fronted pronoun in (83)a but not (83)b (from Schneider-Zioga 2009:5, and see Bošković 2008b for discussion).’

- (83) a. Ekitabu kiwe <sub>k/j</sub> kyo [obuli mukolo]<sub>j</sub> akasoma \_\_ kangikangi.  
           7book 7his 7wh.agr every student reads \_\_ regularly  
           ‘(It is) His <sub>k/j</sub> book that [every student]<sub>j</sub> reads regularly.’
- b. Ekitabu kiwe <sub>k/\*j</sub> kyo ngalengakanaya [<sub>CP</sub> nga kyo [obuli mukolo]<sub>j</sub>  
           7book 7his 7wh.agr I.think that 7wh.agr every student  
           akasoma \_\_ kangikangi.  
           reads \_\_ regularly  
           ‘(It is) His <sub>k/\*j</sub> book that I think [every student]<sub>j</sub> reads regularly.’

While this is evidence against movement from one A’-feature-checking relation to another, Bošković (2008)b argues that feature-checking relations are broadly limited to one. Following McCloskey (2000), licit stranding of *all* in (84)a strongly suggests that *who* does not raise via PVSP; otherwise the result should be unacceptable, as in (84)b.

- (84) a. Who<sub>i</sub> was arrested all t<sub>i</sub> in Duke Street?  
       b. \*They<sub>i</sub> were arrested all t<sub>i</sub> last night.

Another kind of evidence is the impoverishment or suppression of subject-verb agreement with extracted subjects in the phenomenon referred to as antiagreement (Ouhalla 1993), found in many Bantu languages and exemplified in (85) (see among others Kinyalolo 1991, Schneider-Zioga 2007, Diercks 2009, Henderson 2013).

- (85) a. mutu ú-mozi á-ku-kít-ag-a bubo [Kilega; Kinyalolo 1991: 26: (24)]  
           1person 1-one 1SM-PROG-do-HAB-FV 14that  
           ‘Someone usually does that’
- b. nází ú-(\*á)-ku-kít-ag-a búbo?  
           1who 1whAgr-(\*1SM)-PROG-do-HAB-FV 14that  
           ‘Who (usually) does that?’

Bošković (2008)b, (2020), (2021) argues that there is a freezing effect of feature checking. He takes (68) to underly imperfection-driven movement, propelling expressions that bear uFs to positions where the offending feature can be valued and labeling via feature-sharing can therefore succeed.

My approach to the distribution of [-A] is along similar lines. The commonalities are striking, but there are important caveats.

First, I mentioned the need to permit feature-sharing without phi-agreement in TECs with [-A] subjects, to be described in more detail in §7. If *any* uF blocks *any* form of labeling via feature-sharing, this ought not to be possible.

Second, while Bošković (2020) proposes that uFs thwart labeling in [XP, YP] configurations, Bošković (2021) goes further in proposing that uFs block labeling even in head-complement configurations, as a unified approach to movement. The idea that *uNeg* features remain licitly unvalued outside of [XP,YP] configurations is inconsistent with this latter view. While many approaches to negative dependents assume they move to a NegP or PolP (see Vergara 2017 for a recent example), I have argued that Nguni *wh- in situ* also have *uNeg* features. Though it is possible that they undergo string-vacuous short movement of some kind, there is no reason to think that in affirmative clauses, they raise to a position where *uNeg* can be valued.

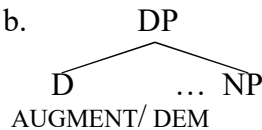
While I cannot do full justice to this topic, these factors suggest that agreement features on the goal are different from other uFs. While they impact feature-sharing in [XP, YP] configurations as described above, agreement features are otherwise “under the

radar” and ignored by the grammar as in Preminger (2014). In contrast, those *u*Fs that drive movement of *wh*-phrases, topics, and the like have consequences for the C-I interface. Perhaps for or this reason they will crash a derivation if transferred unvalued, and thwart feature-sharing relations that fail to value them.<sup>29</sup>

## 6. Null D and the licensing requirements

I turn to some empirical evidence from negative concord that [-A] nominals are headed by null Ds. These function like variables in that NEG and C<sub>Q</sub> compete to bind them.

Noting that Zulu augments and pronominal demonstratives are in complementary distribution (see (86)a), De Dreu (2008) proposes that they are both Ds (see (86)b).

- (86) a. lo (\*u-)m-fazi  
 IDEM AUG-1-woman  
 ‘this woman’
- b. 

Negative *wh*-questions provide compelling evidence for the null D approach to [-A] nominals. We have already seen in example (30) of §2.1 (repeated below) that augment-drop concord is not generally possible within complex *wh*-phrases in affirmative questions. Comparing the negative statements in the Xhosa (87) with their *wh*-counterparts in (88) we see that augment-drop concord on modifiers within a [-A] *wh*- is ruled out even with local c-commanding negation. On the other hand, Xhosa (89) shows that within a complex expression in a negative Yes/No question, augment-drop concord is licit. This makes it clear that interrogation and concordial augment-drop are compatible in the same clause, as long as there is no augment-drop concord within a *wh*-phrase.

<sup>29</sup> I forego discussing Case given questions outside the scope as to whether it always triggers raising (Bošković 2011) or not (Bobaljik & Wurmbrand 2005), to what extent it merits the classic role attributed to it in raising (Marantz 2000), and variation in its linkage to C-I-relevant features such as specificity.

(30) Augment-drop concord is impossible within a complex *wh*-expression

- a. U-Mary      u-thanda    ø-zi-phi    \*(i-)zi-hlangu    \*(e-)zi-bomvu?      [Xhosa]  
 AUG-1Mary 1SM-like    8-which    AUG-8-shoes    AUG.REL-8-red  
 ‘Which red shoes does Mary like?’
- b. U-thanda    ø-zi-njani      \*(i-)zi-nja      \*(e-)zi-ncincini?      [Xhosa]  
 2sSM-like    10-what.kind    AUG-10-dogs    AUG-10-small  
 ‘What kind of small dogs do you like?’

(87) ✓ Augment drop concord within a complex [-A] in negation’s scope

- a. U-Simiso      a-ka-theng-anga    zi-hlangu    zi-bomvu.  
 AUG-1Simiso    NEG-1SM-buy-NEG    8-shoes    8-red  
 ‘Nandi didn’t buy (any) red shoes.’
- b. U-Nomsa      a-ka-thand-i      zi-nja      zi-nkulu      zi-ka-Sabelo.  
 AUG-1Nomsa    NEG-1SM-like-NEG    10-dogs    10-big      10-POSS-1Sabelo  
 ‘Sindiswa doesn’t like (any of) Sabelo’s big dogs.’

(88) ✗ Augment-drop concord within complex *wh*-, despite c-commanding Neg

- a. U-Simiso      a-ka-theng-anga      zi-phi    \*(i-)zi-hlangu    \*(e-)zi-bomvu?  
 AUG-1Simiso    NEG-1SM-like-NEG.PST    8-which    AUG-8-shoes    AUG.REL-8-red  
 ‘Which red shoes did Simiso not buy (any of)?’
- b. A-wu-thand-i      \*(i-)zi-nja      \*(e)zi-njani      \*(e-)zi-nkulu?  
 NEG-1SM-like-NEG    AUG-10-dogs    AUG.REL-10-what.kind    AUG.REL-10-big  
 ‘What kind of big dogs don’t you like (any of)?’

(89) ✓ Augment drop concord within a complex [-A] in negation’s scope of a Y/N Q

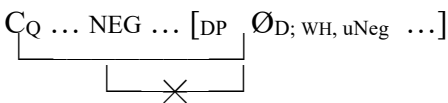
- a. (Ngaba) U-Simiso      a-ka-theng-anga      zi-hlangu    zi-bomvu?  
 Q      AUG-1Simiso    NEG-1SM-buy-NEG.PST    8-shoes    8-red  
 ‘Didn’t Simiso buy (any) red shoes?’
- b. (Ngaba) U-Nomsa      a-ka-thand-i      zi-nja      zi-nkulu    zi-ka-Sabelo?  
 Q      AUG-1Nomsa    NEG-1SM-like-NEG    10-dogs    10-big    10-POSS-1Sabelo  
 ‘Doesn’t Sindiswa like (any of) Sabelo’s big dogs?’

I consider the pattern in (87)-(89) important evidence that when C<sub>Q</sub> and NEG are both local to a [-A] nominal they compete as potential licensers. The facts follow easily from assuming that licensing is a kind of binding of a null D counterpart to the overt augment, as D is unique and structurally accessible to clause-level operators (see also Gambarage’s 2019 analysis of Nata [-A] as having operator-bound null Ds). I reflect this in a

revision of the base-level licensing requirement for [-A] nominals:<sup>30</sup>

(90) **[-A] licensing requirement:** null D must be unselectively bound by NEG or C<sub>Q</sub>.

We can think of null D as functioning rather like a variable, since it can have one and only one binder. C<sub>Q</sub> clearly trumps NEG when both are candidates to bind null D as depicted in (91). This is easily explained: if C<sub>Q</sub> does not bind a *wh*- the resulting interpretation is perhaps a polar question, in which case the presence of the *wh*-phrase is anomalous (see Chomsky 1995:291 for relevant discussion), or perhaps the result is nothing intelligible at all. In contrast, NEG's primary function is to negate the clause. While it may unselectively bind and value *uNeg* of any null D in its scope, there is no need for it to do so if the binding requirement is met by C<sub>Q</sub>.<sup>31</sup>

(91) 

The variable-binding approach provides a simple explanation for the failure of augment-drop concord within [-A] *wh*-phrases in negative contexts. While feature-valuing Agree relations are not typically analyzed as binding, the valuer of negative concord is a sentential operator whereas the valuer of phi-agreement is typically an argument. For these reasons I think it makes sense to view the commonality underlying licensing by NEG and C<sub>Q</sub> as a kind of A'-binding, albeit with differing characteristics in the two cases.

Summing up, to capture the similarities and differences between [-A] *wh*- and [-A]

<sup>30</sup> While Gamarage (2019) proposes a null D operator-binding approach to [-A] nominals in Nata, the properties differ considerably: Nata [-A] nominals are licit in PVSPs, do not require surface c-command or a clause-mate licenser, their class of licensers is much broader, they may serve as predicates and, Gamarage argues, Nata augments convey speaker's belief in the referent's existence. Given so many contrasts our analyses differ considerably. Further consideration lies outside this paper's scope.

<sup>31</sup> Thanks to Martha McGinnis (personal communication) for suggesting that null D is bound at the phase level when both Neg and C<sub>Q</sub> are present.

negative dependents I have proposed that both are operator-bound.  $C_Q$  legitimizes a [-A] serving as a *wh*-word by unselectively binding its null D, assuming Pesetsky's (1987) approach to island-impervious *wh*- in situ. Negative dependence is accounted for here in a similar way, building on the status of negation as a clausal operator and on the fact that, like *wh*-in situ, negative dependents lack independent quantificational force (see Giannakidou & Quer 1997 for helpful discussion). I summarize in (92) below.

(92) a. Negation binds [-A]'s null D through clause-bound Agree (Neg...*uNeg*)

$$\text{Agree Neg...}(\underbrace{*[CP] \dots \emptyset_{D, uNeg}}_{\text{...}} \dots$$

b.  $C_Q$  binds a *wh*- [-A] without sensitivity to locality

$$\checkmark C_Q \dots ([CP] \dots \underbrace{\emptyset_{D, wh, uNeg}}_{\text{...}} \dots$$

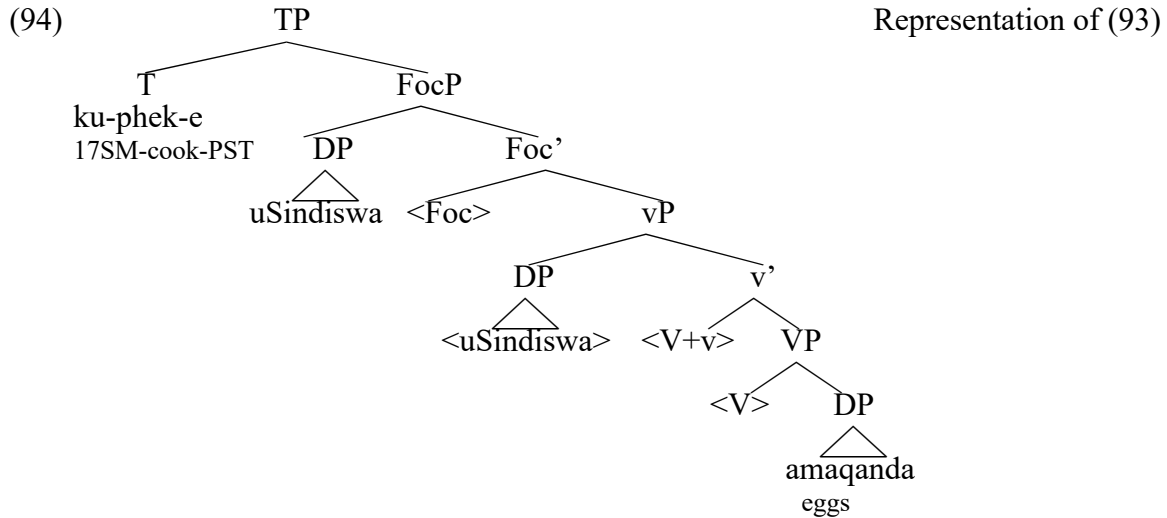
## 7. Focus and labeling of postverbal subjects

The account I have presented attributes the PVSP restriction on [-A] nominals not to Case but to labeling-theoretic issues: feature-sharing is needed to label [XP, YP] configurations but *uFs* block it, and these include *uNeg* features of [-A] nominals.

[XP, YP] configurations arise also in VSO constructions like (93). An obligatory focus-reading for the post-verbal subject signals how labeling works in this domain.

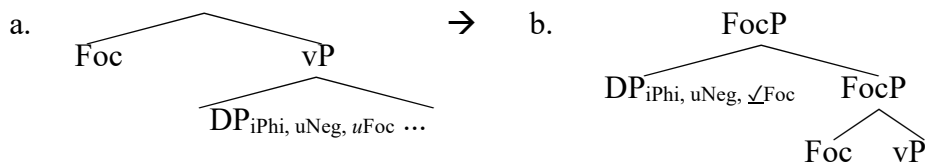
(93) Ku-phek-e      u-Sindiswa      a-ma-qanda.      (answers 'Who cooked eggs?')  
       17SM-cook-PST AUG-1Sindiswa AUG-6-eggs      (cannot answer 'What happened?')  
       'Sindiswa<sub>F</sub> cooked eggs.'      (cannot answer 'What did Sindiswa cook?')

Carstens & Mletshe (2015) propose that there is a low FocusP in Xhosa immediately dominating vP as shown in (94). In keeping with a general ban on both subject and object staying in situ (Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 2001) the subject of a VSO TEC must raise to Spec, Foc. Following Chomsky (2013) I assume this is necessary because a labeling failure arises in the [XP, YP] configuration [SU, vP].



According to my proposals in §5, Agree-Copy aborts when it encounters an unvalued agreement feature on a goal. I propose that since there is no phi-feature copying associated with labeling between the Focus head and a post-verbal argument bearing *uNeg*, the problem does not arise. Agree Link is established between the Focus head and a focused expression, confirming a match (represented by  $\checkmark$  in (95)b). The subject raises to Spec, Foc where the shared focus-features can label.<sup>32</sup>

(95) Labeling FocusP



The facts highlight a need for more detailed work on the comparative properties of different kinds of feature-sharing. (95) is only an initial step in this direction, but I must leave further exploration to future research.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> I tentatively adopt in (95) the suggestion of an anonymous reviewer that [+focus] material is formally *uFocus*. This entails that 'only XP' and [+A] *wh*- can surface in PVSP of non-indicative clauses because *iFocus* is available there, and similarly for focus-tolerant  $\underline{Q}_2$  of VSO<sub>1</sub> $\underline{Q}_2$ ; see Carstens & Mletshe (2016). Alternative approaches are easily imaginable (including *uFocus* or an edge feature on Foc itself); I leave pursuit of the many related issues to future research.



## 8. Extension to parallels in Romance

The analysis of [-A] nominals that I have presented was inspired by work on an exclusion of bare nouns from PVSP in Romance languages. Contreras (1986:25-27) provides the data in (96) illustrating that a Spanish preverbal subject differs from an internal argument in requiring a determiner.

- (96) a. Quiero café.  
          'I want coffee.'  
      b. \*Café me gusta. [Spanish; Contreras 1986]  
          coffee me pleases  
          'I like coffee.'  
      c. El café me gusta.  
          the coffee me pleases  
          'I like coffee.'

Longobardi (1994) points out that the same asymmetry characterizes bare nominals in Italian (see (97)). Only PVSP is subject to a determiner requirement.

- (97) a. \*Acqua viene giù dalle colline. [Italian; Longobardi 1994: 616]  
          water comes down from-the hills  
      b. Viene giù acqua dalle colline.  
          comes down water from-the hills  
      c. Ho presto acqua dalla sorgente.  
          I took water from-the spring

Deprez (2000) shows that an identical restriction affects bare nouns in Portuguese and Sardinian as well: though permitted as objects of verbs and prepositions, they may not be preverbal subjects ((98) from Deprez 2000:256; glosses added).

- (98) a. ??Crianças estão a gritar ao telefone. [Portuguese]  
          children are screaming on phone  
          Intended: Children are screaming on the phone.  
      b. \*Sórrikas an mandicatu su casu. [Sardinian]  
          mice AUX ate the cheese  
          Intended: Mice ate the cheese.

---

<sup>33</sup> The licit [-A] Q in Spec, Appl or Cause of a SVQO construction creates an [XP, YP] configuration. Arguably Q surfaces in Nguni's postverbal [+focus] position, so falls under (95).

In a highly significant parallel to the Nguni facts, this restriction is consistent across clause types – determiners are required for nominals in PVSP of subjunctives and relative clauses of Spanish (99) Italian (100), Portuguese (101) and Sardinian (102).<sup>34</sup>

- (99) a. No quiero que \*(el) agua entre en la casa. [Spanish]  
 NEG want.1s that the water enter.SBJ in the house  
 ‘I don’t want water to come into the house.’  
 b. Este es un maestro que \*(los) niños odian.  
 this is a teacher that the children hate  
 ‘This is a teacher that children hate.’
- (100) a. Voglio che \*(i) bambini giochino sempre in questo parco. [Italian]  
 want.1s that the children play.SBJ always in this park  
 ‘I want children always to play in this park.’  
 b. Questo è un insegnante che \*(i) bambini amano.  
 this is a teacher that the children love  
 ‘This is a teacher that children love.’
- (101) a. Eu conheci um político que \*(os) cidadãos respeitam. [Portuguese]  
 I met a politician that the citizens respect  
 ‘I met a politician that citizens respect.’  
 b. Eu não quero que \*(a) água entre na casa.  
 I NEG want that the water enter.SBJ the house  
 ‘I don’t want water to come into the house.’
- (102) a. Custu est unu professore chi (\*sos) pitzinnos aman. [Sardinian]  
 this is a teacher that the children love.PRES.IND.3PL  
 ‘This is a teacher that children love.’  
 b. Cherzo chi \*(sos) pitzinnos gioghen sempre in custu parcu.  
 want.PRES.IND.1SG that the children play.SBJ.3PL always in this park  
 ‘I want children always to play in this park.’

Table 5 summarizes the results for the Romance languages and Nguni.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> For assistance in assembling the data in this section my thanks to Guido Menshing for Sardinian, Andrea Calabrese for Italian, Pilar Barbosa for European Portuguese, and the late Paula Kempchinsky for Spanish and for helpful discussion.

<sup>35</sup> VS order seems predominant in Romance participials regardless of the subjects’ properties.

**Table 5:** Exclusion of bare nominals from preverbal subject positions

Bare nominals	Nguni [-A]	Italian	Spanish	Portuguese	Sardinian
SV (indicative)	X	X	X	X	X
SV (subjunctive)	X	X	X	X	X
SV (rel. clause)	X	X	X	X	X
SV (participial)	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

A unified account of these point-by-point correspondences between Nguni and Romance PVSP restrictions is a theoretically attractive goal. Absent evidence that Romance bare nominals have special Case needs, the approach to Nguni [-A] in Halpert (2015) and Pietraszko (2021) cannot be extended to them. But negative concord plays a major syntactic role in Romance, just as in Nguni – a state of affairs that I take to be non-coincidental, like the correspondences in Table 5.

In fact, the ability of negative concord to neutralize the Ndebele PVSP restriction has a striking parallel in Romance languages discussed in Deprez (2000): negative concord items (NCIs) are a systematic exception to the exclusion of bare nominals from PVSP in (96)-(102) (see (103) adapted from Deprez 2000:254 (4); glosses added).

(103) Nessuno ha telefonato. [Italian]  
 no one has telephoned  
 ‘No one called.’

I adopt a proposal of Zeijlstra (2008) that *nessuno* has *uNeg* features which in (103) obtain valuation from a silent negation operator that c-commands PVSP (see (104)).

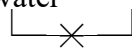
(104)  $iNeg \dots \boxed{\emptyset_{uNeg}}$  - Nessuno ha telefonato. [Adapting Zeijlstra 2008:27]

(103) is thus grammatical because of successful Neg-licensing from the left edge as in the Nguni (37), repeated below.

(37) Negative concord spreading from C to SU yields a licit [-A] preverbal subject

A-ngi-fun-i [CP  $\emptyset_{uNeg}$ -**kuthi** [TP  $\emptyset_{uNeg}$ -**Sipho** a-buy-e]].  
 NEG-I-want COMP 1Sipho 1SM-come-SBJ

Turning to Romance bare mass nouns and plurals, I suggest that they have null Ds with  $uNeg$  features, just like bare nouns in Nguni. These thwart agreement and hence labeling as in Nguni, yielding the familiar pattern of facts in (96)-(102) (see (105)).

(105) \*[TP  $\text{Acqua}_{uNeg}$   $T_{uPhi}$  viene giù dalle colline. = (97)a  
 water comes down-from-the hills  
  $uNeg$  of *acqua* blocks Agree

I also extend to these expressions a proposal of Carstens & Mletshe (2016) that I advocated in §3.1 for strict negative dependents like *mifino* – ‘any/no vegetables’: their  $uNeg$  features are too weak to be compatible with a silent negator, just as  $uPhi$  of T in English is too weak for compatibility with *pro*-drop. For this reason bare plurals and mass nouns of Romance cannot be licensed in PVSP as *nessuno* is in (104). Nor can they serve as negative fragment answers as (106) shows, for the same reason: following Zeijlstra (2004, 2008) among others, negative fragment answers rely on a silent negator.

(106) Q. Quanta acqua hai bevuto? Ans. \*Acqua!  
 how.much water have.2s drunk? water  
 ‘How much water have you drunk? Intended: no water!’

Outside of PVSP, it may be that the  $uNeg$  features of Romance bare nouns enable them to function as negative dependents, when NEG-licensing is available:

(107) a. Non voglio acqua. b. NEG ....[DP  $\emptyset_{uNeg}$ -acqua] [Italian]  
 NEG want.1s water  
 ‘I don’t want (any) water.’

Absent local negation they simply express mass or plural meanings which do not require a relation with NEG (see (108)). In this they parallel Nguni [-A] *wh*: their possession of

*uNeg* features is irrelevant to their core semantic content and primary functions.

- (108) Ho presto Ø<sub>uNeg</sub>-acqua dalla sorgente.  
 I took water from-the spring  
 ‘I took water from the spring.’

In contrast, negative dependent expressions like the Italian *nessuno* – ‘anybody/nobody’ and Xhosa *ø-mifino* ‘any/no vegetables’ have no meanings when not bound by negation; in this they are like *wh*-phrases without binding by CQ.

A question arises regarding why the licensing strategy in (104) fails for the three NCIs *lutho* – ‘anyplace/no place’, *muntu* – ‘anybody/nobody’ and *ndawo* – ‘anyplace/no place’ in the PVSPs of (109). I noted in §3.1:(40), repeated below, that these three may serve as fragment answers, and on that basis I’ve hypothesized that a silent negator exists in Zulu. In indicative clauses, PVSP is inhospitable to [+focus] material as we have seen, so the exact counterpart to (104) would be doomed. But something must be said about why the silent negator doesn’t license preverbal [-A] nominal subjects in subjunctives like (109)a,b:

- (40) Fragment answers: a. √Mu-ntu!      b. √Lutho!      c. √Ndawo!      [Zulu]  
                                  1-person                      11thing                      9place  
                                  ‘Nobody!’                      ‘Nothing!’                      ‘No place!’  
                                  d. \*M-fazi!    e. \*Zi-hlangu!  
                                  1-woman    8-shoes  
                                  Intended: No woman!    ‘No shoes!’
- (109) a. \*Ngi-funa [(ukuthi) lutho li-phuk-e]      [Zulu]  
                          1SSM-want (COMP) 11thing 11SM-break-SBJ  
                          Intended: I want nothing to break.’  
                          b. \*Ngi-funa [(ukuthi) mu-ntu a-phek-e]  
                          1SSM-want (COMP) 1-person 1SM-cook-SBJ  
                          Intended: I want no one to cook.

I take the ill-formedness of (109)a,b to indicate that a silent left-edge negator is absent in

Nguni subjunctives as is consistent with the clause-medial location of overt negators within subjunctives, illustrated in (110)c (compare to (110)a and (110)b). Pietraszko proposes that the higher negation available in indicative clauses like (110)a is absent in subjunctives, where the left periphery is truncated.

- (110) a. Ngi-cabanga ukuthi a-bafana **a-ba-phek-i**. [Ndebele; Pietraszko 2021:595]  
           1<sub>SSM</sub>-think COMP AUG-2-boys NEG1-2SM- cook-NEG  
           ‘I think that the boys do not cook.’
- b. \*Ngi-funa ukuthi a-bafana **a-ba-phek-i**.  
           1<sub>SSM</sub>-want COMP AUG-2-boys NEG1-2SM- cook-NEG  
           Intended: ‘I want the boys not to cook.’
- c. Ngi-funa ukuthi a-ba-fana **ba-nga-phek-i**.  
           1<sub>SSM</sub>-want COMP AUG-2-boys 2SM-NEG2-cook-NEG  
           ‘I want the boys not to cook.’

Another question that arises is why exactly bare nouns are systematically endowed with *uNeg* features in Nguni and Romance, under this proposal. I conjecture that this might be a simple general strategy for equipping languages with the foundation for a negative concord system. NCIs are non-referential; if overt articles facilitate denotation and reference (Longobardi 1994), and non-referentiality correlates even partially with their absence, then bare nouns have a baseline profile more compatible with serving as NCIs than do nouns with determiners. *uNeg* features and null Ds are thus a natural-enough marriage. It is arguably efficient to supply *uNeg* features to bare nouns, in negative concord languages, especially given that the grammar can ignore them in any circumstances where they are not relevant, apart from labeling contexts.

A loose end remains in the availability of bare singular preverbal subjects in certain Romance languages, most often with generic readings ((111) is from Rinaldi 2018, p. 85:(2), citing Muller & Oliveira 2004).

(111) Elefante é inteligente.  
Elephant is intelligent  
'Elephants are intelligent.'

[Brazilian Portuguese]

I can only suggest that the feature-content of their determiners, if they have them, excludes *u*Neg. I must leave a deeper treatment to future research. I also leave to future research the absence of tell-tale default morphology on Romance bare nominals which lack negation-licensing.

## 9. Concluding remarks

The central claim of this article is a rather simple one: that the distribution of Nguni bare nouns follows from their nature as negative dependents and *wh*-question words. One surprising distributional fact to be captured is their exclusion from PVSPs, but Pietraszko (2021) shows that in Ndebele, negation-licensing via COMP overrides this prohibition. I have accordingly proposed that valuation of *u*Neg features is the crucial factor in this pattern. More broadly, an XP bearing unvalued agreement cannot value agreement on a probe Y and thereby thwarts feature-sharing relations on which labeling relies in [XP, YP] configurations (Chomsky 2013, Bošković 2020, 2021). The PVSP restrictions are thus a variety of EPP-effect arising from the valuation dependency that [-A] have on *i*Neg and more generally, negative concord.

§1.1 noted controversy over whether negative-dependence and *wh*-hood are relevant to the syntax of Nguni [-A] nominals. In promoting Halpert's (2015) approach Pietraszko (2021:583-84) writes:

Halpert proposes that negative polarity and *wh*-hood...are semantic preconditions on their appearance. The distribution of augmentless DPs is *additionally* regulated by purely syntactic factors, and [Halpert's] theory is a theory of the structural (not the semantic) licensing conditions.

My article has presented an array of evidence that the heavy lifters in syntactic licensing of [-A] are negation, focus, and C<sub>Q</sub>. Alongside of their semantic properties I have shown that these categories play important morpho-syntactic roles in Nguni.

Abstract structural Case plays no part in this account, unlike in the analyses of Halpert (2015) and Pietraszko (2021). The case for Case in most Bantu languages hangs on the question of how to interpret a very narrow range of phenomena. A 'no' setting for Nguni seems within reach for Diercks's (2012) Bantu-inspired Case parameter in (112) under my analysis of [-A] nominal distribution.

(112) Case parameter: uninterpretable Case features are/are not present in a language  
A welcome simplification of our conception of Nguni grammar would result from this, consonant with the major, striking roles that other kinds of morphosyntactic features play in regulating the positions of Nguni nominals (Zeller 2008, Sabel & Zeller 2006, Carstens & Mletshe 2015, 2016, Carstens & Zeller 2020).

Romance languages similarly exclude bare nouns from PVSPs quite similar to that which I explored in Nguni; some prior accounts have attributed this to unvalued D-features of T or phi-feature visibility problems (Deprez 2000, Landau 2000). I have suggested instead extending the labeling account of Nguni to bare nouns in Romance, though this is speculative and leaves some open questions.

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