AGREE and Spec-Head: Each inadequate, both necessary?*

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Draft: 8/25/16

1. Introduction

1.1 Motivation

Which grammatical relationships can be characterized as strictly local? This paper ponders that question in the domain of predicate-argument agreement. Specifically, I consider the two configurations under which such agreement has been proposed to take place in Minimalism: AGREE and Spec-Head. The former displaced the latter for empirical reasons: instances of long-distance agreement seem to demand it.[1] But AGREE is obviously less constrained than Spec-Head, so it is worth asking whether this weakening of the theory is unavoidable. Alas, my conclusion will be that it is. But matters may yet get worse. For it may be that a theory with AGREE as the *sole* mechanism for agreement is inadequate to deal with cross-linguistic variation—Spec-Head might yet be needed as a second option.

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[1] Like most "new" ideas in syntax, AGREE had long been anticipated in the literature. For instance, Sigurðsson (1990) proposed that "long-distance" Case assignment to NOM objects in Icelandic is accomplished by "chain-government," whereby in (i) Infl governs *have* which governs *been* which governs *sold* which governs *some boats.*

(i)   Það hafa   verið seldir nokkrir bátar.   *Icelandic*
           *there have(**3PL**) been sold   some   boats(**NOM.PL**)*

1.2 Definition

(1)   AGREE (α, β), where α is a probe and β is a matching goal, '>' is a c-command relation and uninterpretable features of α seek interpretable features on β. (Chomsky 2000)
α > β
|___↑

I restrict myself to the cases that motivated Chomsky's introduction of AGREE, so I have nothing to say about the substantial innovations that Bjorkman (2011) i.a. has brought to it. (I will not be concerned with constraints that the Phase Impenetrability Condition might impose—see Richards (2012) for discussion.) I take Spec-Head to require no further elaboration.

1.3 Empirical domains: Long-distance agreement

I focus on two phenomena where AGREE has frequently been employed[2]: English existential (and unaccusative) *there*-constructions (2), which Icelandic also has (3), and Icelandic long-distance number agreement in the presence of a quirky subject (4); in both cases, the number of intervening (nonfinite) clauses between the Probe (the agreeing head) and the Goal (the agreement trigger) is in principle unbounded (Sigurðsson 2000). For perspicuity I will identify the Probe and Goal with single and double underscoring, respectively.

(2)   a.   There <u>seem(**3PL**)</u> [to have been <u>many horse**s**</u> in the stable].[3]
      b.   There <u>seem(**3PL**)</u> [to have been believed [to be <u>many horse**s**</u> in the stable]].

(3)   Það virðast   hafa   sokkið einhverjir bátar   í   höfninni.   *Icelandic*
      *there <u>seem(**3PL**)</u> to.have sunk   <u>some   boat**s(NOM.PL)**</u> in harbor.the*

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[2]   See Richards (2012) for a survey of other apparent cases of Long Distance Agreement.

[3]   In the survey reported by Koopman (2004), 15 out of 17 English speakers preferred a plural over a singular verb in such long distance environments without an experiencer.

(4)　a.　Jóni　　　virðast　[hafa　　likað þessir sokkar　　　].[4]
　　　　　　*John(DAT) seem(3PL) to.have liked these socks(**NOM.PL**)*
　　　　　　'John seems to have liked these socks.'

　　　b.　Jóni　　　virðast　[vera taldir [líka　　hestarnir　　　　]].
　　　　　　*John(DAT) seem(3PL) to.be thought to.like the.horses(**NOM.PL**)*
　　　　　　'John seems to be thought to like the horses.'

I will structure the discussion around one prominent analysis of each of these phenomena, in order to have as much concrete detail to work with as possible: Moro's analysis of existentials (§3) and Koopman's analysis of Icelandic (§4). These are preceded by an overview of approaches to long distance agreement (§2), and followed by a brief discussion of cross-linguistic variation, based on a proposal by Baker (§5), and concluding remarks (§6).

2. Approaches to long distance agreement

While I do not attempt an exhaustive survey, I would like to suggest that many of the myriad approaches to the problem under discussion can be taxonomized into three broad categories, characterized in terms of the AGREE nomenclature.[5]

A) Contrary to appearances, the probe and the goal were actually local, at some (non-surface) stage of the derivation [what I call the "clandestine meeting" approach].

B) The probe and the goal were never local, but some element agrees locally with the goal, thereby acquiring its features, then moves to become local to the probe and agrees with it, thereby offloading its/the goal's features onto the probe [what I call the "secret courier" approach].

C) One cannot establish that A or B have happened, but one is committed to locality, so one invents a technology that performs the seemingly impossible action by fiat [what I call the "teleportation" approach].

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[4]　Sigurðsson (1996) reports considerable interspeaker variation as to whether agreement here is preferred, optional, or dispreferred, versus default (3SG) inflection. Obviously what is relevant here is that agreement is possible. He notes that cross-clausal agreement is "weaker" than clause-internal agreement with NOM objects, as in (35) below, which is obligatory for most speakers with most verbs. (For the most part, 1st and 2nd person NOM DPs cannot trigger any agreement on a verb of which they are not the subject.)

[5]　An excellent historical tour of approaches to expletive constructions through its time of writing can be found in Hartmann 2008, which I became aware of too late to incorporate into the main body of this paper.

Some examples should illustrate what I have in mind with this classification.

• A transformational rule—a "clandestine meeting" solution: (6) is derived from (5) by rightward movement of the bracketed associate, followed by either insertion of *there* (Burt 1971, Milsark 1974) or pronunciation of the trace of the associate as *there* (Kuno 1971, Dresher & Hornstein 1979); cf. also Harris (1957), Stowell (1978).

(5)   [Many horses] seem to have been in the stable.

⇓

(6)   There seem to have been [many horses] in the stable.

• Linking/coindexing/CHAIN[6]—a "teleportation" solution: *there* must be in a particular (representational) relationship with the associate, but the properties of this relationship are not identical to other instances of that relationship (e.g., in (7) *there* does not *refer* to the same entity as the associate, despite being coindexed with it).

(7)   There$_i$ seem to have been [many horses]$_i$ in the stable.

• Expletive Replacement—a "clandestine meeting" solution: this used movement to capture the locality of the expletive–associate relationship but was quickly rejected because it wrongly predicted high scope for the associate.

• Expletive Adjunction/Affixation—a "teleportation" solution: the unique LF configuration (8) is assumed to result in phi-feature sharing/matching; is "LF affix" (Chomsky 1991) even a coherent notion?

(8)   [[Many horses]$_i$ [there]] seem to have been t_i in the stable.

• Affix Hopping—another "teleportation" solution: Bošković (1997) also proposes that expletive *there* is an LF affix, but rather than the associate adjoining to it, *it* adjoins to the *associate* via LF lowering "affix hopping."[7] *There* agrees in a spec-head configuration with Infl, but affixation requires the affix's number value to match that of its host (for reasons unclear).

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[6]   As in Chomsky 1986.

[7]   Since this version of affix hopping, unlike its traditional namesake, can cross an unbounded amount of intervening material, "affix long-jumping" seems a more appropriate moniker.

• Bobaljik's (2002) single output approach—a "clandestine meeting" solution: the associate moves to subject position, where it triggers agreement locally, but for both phonology and semantics it is the "lower copy" that is interpreted; however, as the only such case, this verges on "teleportation" (see also Preminger 2009).

• *There*-raising: one version of this, predicate inversion, will occupy us in section 3; others have been proposed by, i.a., Richards & Biberauer (2005), Deal (2009), Alexiadou & Schäfer (2010) (though latter do not deal with existentials). They involve *there* starting out low in the structure, but they employ AGREE, which is "teleportation" par excellence.

3. Predicate inversion

Moro (1997, 2006) proposes a "secret courier" solution: *there* is a predicate head of a small clause that originates in a local relationship with the goal, the subject of predication, which it agrees with (conceivably by Spec-Head),[8] then *there* undergoes predicate inversion to get to subject position, where it triggers agreement with the probe (Spec-Head), as in (9):

(9)   [IP [IP There are$_V$ [VP t_V [SC [many copies of the book] t_{there}]]] [in the studio.]]

The purported appeal of this approach is that the D-structure position of *there* and its raising to subject position are supposed to be independently motivated on the basis of inverse copular sentences, as in (10):

(10)   [IP [The cause of the riot]$_{pred}$ was$_V$ [VP t_V [SC [a picture of the wall] t_{pred}.]]]

But does that parallel empirically pan out? The following four subsections pursue that question.

3.1 Extraction: Contrasts not as expected

First I mention five sets of extraction contrasts that raise problems for the predicate inversion approach.

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[8]   Moro himself notes that getting *there* to agree (in number) with its "subject" is not trivial, since a predicate need not match its subject in number (i). Perhaps this issue could be circumvented by positing that a predicate must match its subject *when its own number is unspecified*, as *there*'s might be.

(i)   The children(PL) are the problem(SG)/*problems(PL).

(i) Extraction of the notional subject is possible in canonical copular sentences, in contrast with inverse copular sentences,[9] suggesting predicate inversion is responsible for the badness of (11)b:

(11) a. What provision do you believe *t* was the objection to the bill?
      b. *What provision do you believe the objection to the bill was *t*?

Moro claims that existentials pattern with inverse copular sentences, giving the following ungrammatical examples:

(12) a. *Which wall do you think there was *t*?
      b. *Which girls do you think that there are *t* in the room?

From these, Moro (2006) concludes that "there can be no *wh*-movement of the [associate] if the [associate] is headed by *which*." However, the examples in (12) are pragmatically quite odd: if we use D-linked sets that are easier to accommodate, *which*-NP extractions are fine:

(13) a. Which magazines did you say there were *t* in the waiting room?
      b   What options do you think there will be *t* on next year's Prius?
      c. What kind of cake do you expect there will be *t* at the wedding reception?

In (13), *which* seems to be ranging over kinds or types rather than individuals or tokens. This might explain why they sound better than (12). But the same kind/type readings should be available in the inverse copular examples in (14), yet they are still completely out.

(14) a. *Which magazines did you say the target of the lawsuit was *t*?
      b. *What options do you think the cause of the Toyota recall was *t*?
      c. *What kind of cake do you expect the biggest challenge for the chef will be *t*?

Thus, the real contrast is between inverse copulars on the one hand and existentials and canonical copulars on the other.

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[9] As Moro notes, this restriction holds only for D-linked *wh*-phrases. (i) is fine, as is its existential counterpart (ii):

(i)   What do you believe the objection to the bill was *t*?
(ii) What did you see that there was *t* in the bathroom?

See Heycock (1995) for a possible explanation.

(ii) The associate of an existential can be extracted as a *how many* DP (15) (e.g., Hoekstra & Mulder 1990), as can the subject of a canonical copular (16)a; these contrast with the inverse copular (16)b:

(15)   How many men do you think there were *t* in the room?

(16)   a.   How many nude pictures do you think *t* were the cause of the scandal?
       b.   *How many nude pictures do you think the cause of the scandal was/were *t*?

(iii) Safir (1985) observes that relativization of "total amounts" is possible in existentials (17); subjects of canonical copulars also allow this (18); these contrast with inverse copulars (19):

(17)   a.   The very few books that there are *t* in the house are all mysteries.
       b.   All the children that there were *t* in the orphanage have finally been adopted.

(18)   a.   The very few books that are in the house are all mysteries.
       b.   All the children that were in the orphanage have finally been adopted.

(19)   a.   *The very few books that the only source of entertainment is *t* are all mysteries.
       b.   *All the children that the focus of our concern was *t* have finally been adopted.

(iv) den Dikken (2006) observes other flavors of *wh*-movement that fail on the notional subject of inverse copulas (20). Again, these contrast with associates of existential *there* (21), though the latter may not be perfect; canonical copulars are fine (22)a & c, unless the unmoved counterpart is itself ungrammatical, as (23) is for (22b).

(20)   a.   *Whose oversized comforter do you suspect the problem for the washing machine was *t*?
       b.   *They fixed whatever problem the cause of the first shuttle disaster was believed to be *t*.
       c.   *How big of a poster would you say that gift to your brother was *t*?

(21)   a.   ?Whose clothes do you suspect there were *t* on your roommate's bed?
       b.   ?They fixed whatever problems there were believed to be *t* with the shuttle design.
       c.   How big of a poster would you say there was *t* on your brother's wall?

(22)   a.   Whose clothes do you suspect *t* were on your roommate's bed?
       b.   *They fixed whatever problems *t* were believed to be with the shuttle design.
       c.   How big of a poster would you say *t* was on your brother's wall?

(23)   *Several problems were believed to be with the shuttle design.

(v) Extraction from a post-copular DP is possible in canonical copular sentences, but not in inverse copular sentences:

(24) a. Which riot do you think a picture of the wall was [the cause of *t*]?
     b. *Which wall do you think the cause of the riot was [a picture of *t*]?

As Moro himself notes, inverse copulars contrast with existentials.

(25) a. Which book do you think there were [many copies of *t*] in the library?
     b. Which models do you think there are [pictures of *t*] in the album?

    To summarize this subsection: with respect to extraction, existentials pattern with canonical copulars, but not with inverse copulars.

3.2 QRing out of the post-copular DP: Contrast unexpected

    QR out of the postcopular DP is possible in canonical copulars, but impossible in inverse copulars (judgments from Moro 1997):

(26) a. A picture of the wall wasn't [the cause of many riots].   ✓many > not
        = Many riots are such that a picture of the wall wasn't the cause of them.
     b. The cause of the riots wasn't [a picture of many walls].   *many > not
        ≠ Many walls are such that the cause of the riots wasn't a picture of them.

Moro asserts (contra his theory's prediction) that existentials work differently from inverse copulars—QRing out is possible:

(27) a. There isn't [a picture of many walls] in the album.   ✓many > not
        = Many walls are such that there isn't a picture of them in the album.
     b. There weren't [copies of many books] in the library.   ✓many > not
        = Many books are such that there weren't copies of them in the library.

    Assuming the facts are as described, existentials do not track inverse copulars with respect to scope.

3.3 Small clause environments: Contrasts not fully expected

    Inside small clauses, canonical copulars are possible, but inverse copulars are impossible, in contrast to full (infinitival) clauses.

(28) a.   Mary considers a picture of Stalin (to be) the cause of the riot.
     b.   Mary considers the cause of the riot *(to be) a picture of Stalin.[10]

Here Moro is correct that *there* existentials pattern with inverse copulars:

(29)   The inspector considers there *(to be) too many people in the elevator.

Moro proposes that what is wrong with the short versions of (28)b and (29) is that a small clause has no "extra space" that would allow the predicate to get above the subject, an explanation based on the idea that the predicate (which is *there* in (29) on his analysis) must originate low.

     However, Heycock (1995) observes that predicate inversion across raising verbs is not possible either, as in (30)b and (31)b,[11] and here the issue cannot be the lack of a landing spot because the upstairs nonthematic subject position is available for that purpose.

(30) a. %John seems the best man for the job.
     b.   *The best man for the job seems John.

(31) a.   John is considered the best man for the job.
     b.   *The best man for the job is considered John.

Nonetheless, existentials are good (for many, especially British, speakers) in this environment.[12]

(32) a. %There was considered insufficient evidence to prosecute the officer.
     b. ?*The reason for the officer's acquittal was considered the lack of witnesses.

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[10] Contra the standard judgment in the literature, many people seem to accept the small clause version of this sentence, particularly with focal accent on the final DP. Similar accenting does not seem to help (29), however, which only creates another circumstance where existentials and inverse copulars are not parallel.

[11] Heycock (1995) points out the following exceptions:

(i)   The best solution became/remained instant retreat.

den Dikken (2006) intriuingly suggests these are good because *become* means 'come to be' and *remain* means 'continue to be', so that *be* is actually present in these sentences, contra appearances. By contrast, *seem* and (*be*) *considered* in (30) and (31) obviously cannot be semantically decomposed into aspectual material plus *be*.

[12] Strictly speaking, the empirical issue is not how good e.g. (33)a sounds relative to (33)ab. Rather, it is how degraded each of them sounds relative to its respective counterpart in (i). I hope to provide survey data on this.

(i) a.   People consider there to be inadequate justification for building a hotel on campus.
    b.   People consider the demands of the parents to be the best justification for building a hotel on campus.

(33) a. %There is considered inadequate justification for building a hotel on campus.
      b. ?*The best justification for building a hotel on campus is considered the demands of the
            parents.

The conclusion is that, with respect to the full range of small clause environments, existentials do not track inverse copulars.

3.4 Optionality: Contrast unexpected

As a final simple but perhaps not trivial point, predicate inversion is optional, but "*there*-inversion" is obligatory:

(34) a.   There was a book missing *t* from the shelf.
      b. *A book was *t* there missing from the shelf.
      c. ?*A book was missing *t* there from the shelf.[13]

3.5 Summary

There is no independent evidence that *there* originates in a local "predication" relation with the associate or that *there* undergoes predicate inversion. Indeed, the evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that *there* does not have this derivational history, since it does not pattern with inverted predicates. Therefore, a "secret courier" solution that would explain long-distance agreement in existentials in terms of predicate inversion is no better than any other stipulated solution to the long-distance agreement problem.

4. Long-distance object agreement, or How do you solve a problem like Icelandic?[14]

4.1 The data

Icelandic has achieved notoriety for its quirky subjects, such as the datives (DAT) in (35) and (36), which—except for not triggering agreement—behave entirely like subjects; in quirky-subject clauses, a nominative (NOM), if there is one, behaves like an object.[15]

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[13] I think this string ameliorates only if a comma follows *there*.

[14] To the tune of "How do you solve a problem like Maria?" from *The Sound of Music* (Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II, 1959).

[15] Evidence abounds in the literature, including (for subjecthood of DAT) binding of subject-oriented reflexives, being and controlling PRO, deleting and licensing deletion under conjunction reduction, licensing object NPIs, restrictions on extraction, etc.; (for objecthood of NOM) failing subjecthood tests, undergoing Object Shift, etc. See Jónsson (1996) for review.

(35) Henni   líkuðu   hestarnir.
     her(DAT) liked(3PL) the.horses(NOM.PL)
     'She liked the horses.'

(36) a. Jóni$_i$ virðast   [t_i hafa   likað þessir sokkar   ].
         John(DAT) seem(3PL)   to.have liked these socks(NOM.PL)
         'He seems to have liked these socks.'

     b. Jóni$_i$ virðast   [t_i vera taldir [t_i líka   hestarnir   ]].
         John(DAT) seem(3PL)   to.be thought   to.like the.horses(NOM.PL)
         'John seems to be thought to like the horses.'

In (36) the same VP is embedded under one and then two raising predicates, and the DAT raises to become their subject. The finite verb (the probe) at the top of the raising structure cannot agree with the DAT, instead it agrees (in number) with the NOM object (the goal) in the lowest clause, as expected under AGREE. How can we get this pattern with only local agreement?

4.2 A Spec-Head analysis

Koopman (2003, 2006) explicitly argues that Spec-Head agreement is up to the task. Since she provides a very detailed proposal, it is worth considering at some length. She advocates for the Strong Agreement Hypothesis: "the Spec-Head agreement configuration… is the only configuration leading to the spellout of agreement" … "under the strong agreement hypothesis all cases of long distance agreement then are to be reanalyzed as arising at some early point in the derivation under a local Spec-head relationship."This is a clandestine meeting solution.

More technically (Koopman 2006), "If XP agrees with Y, XP is merged with YP, or XP is merged with ZP which is merged with YP (or XP is merged with WP which is merged with ZP which is merged with YP, etc.)." That is, a head agrees with its specifier, or the specifier of its specifier, or the specifier of the specifier of its specifier, etc. (this allows "long distance" agreement to the extent that the distant Goal can pied pipe structure above it into the specifier of the Probe). This is illustrated in the following diagrams from Chandra (2007).

(i)

(ii)

(iii)
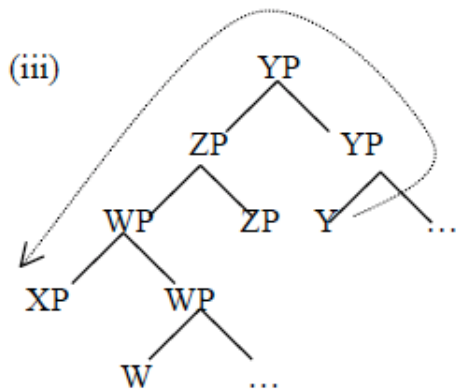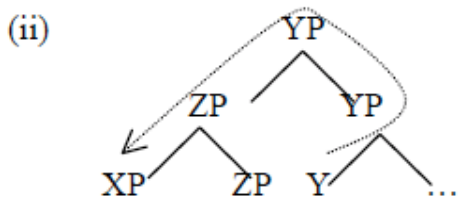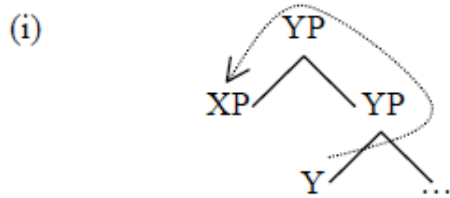
Koopman's structure for a monoclausal Icelandic sentence like (35) above is as given in (37) below (which abstracts away from intermediate steps of V-raising), where…

• Subj$_1$P hosts the EPP feature that derives the surface position of the subject (independent of its case marking);

• Nom$_1$P checks subject Nominative case (cf. Cardinaletti 2004 for split subject positions);

• T$_1$P hosts canonical tense features;

• DatP checks Dative case;

• vP introduces the experiencer argument and projects DatP to provide it with inherent Dative case;

- VoiceP, when it contains the morpheme -*st*, selects a complement containing a NomP[16];

- Subj$_2$P hosts the EPP feature that derives the surface position of the object (independent of its case marking);

- Nom$_2$P checks object Nominative case;

- T$_2$P has no tense semantics (cf. Collins & Thráinsson 1996);

- VP introduces the theme (internal argument).

(37)

Subj$_1$P
Henni   Nom$_1$P
her(DAT)
         Øexpl
              Nom$_1$ T$_1$P
                    T$_1$ DatP
                    líkuðu
                    liked(3PL)   t
                              Dat   *v*P$_{exp}$
                                   t
                                        VoiceP
                                        Voice   Subj$_2$P
                                        "-st"
                                             hestarnir   Nom$_2$P
                                             the.horses(NOM)
                                                       t
                                                         Nom$_2$ T$_2$P
                                                              T$_2$ VP
                                                                   t   V
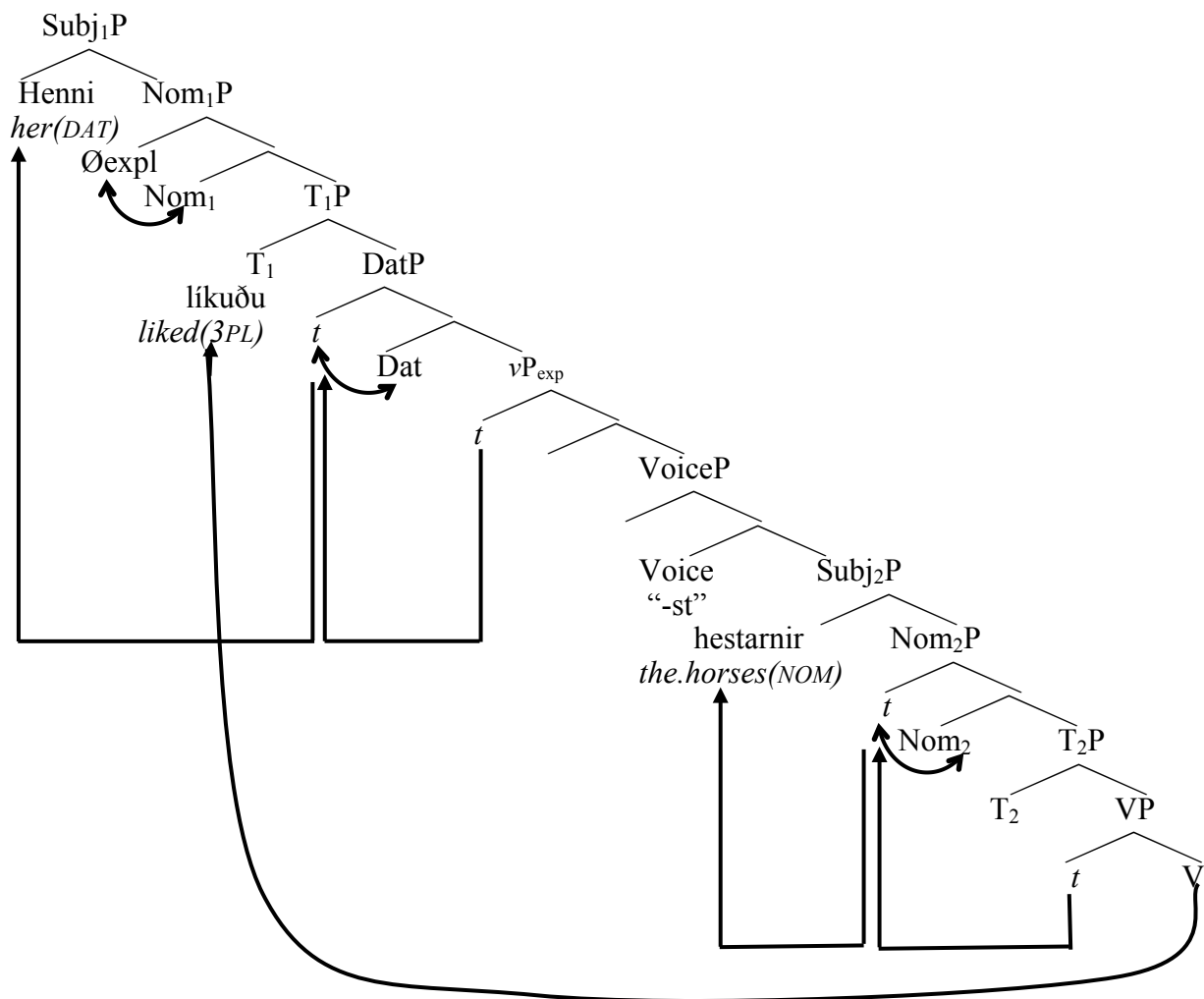
The following properties of this account merit attention:

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[16] For DAT-NOM verbs that do not have the -*st* suffix, like the one in (35), Koopman assumes a silent counterpart.

- all cases are assigned/checked in a Spec-Head relationship with a case head (curved double-headed arrows in (37)): Quirky cases (here DAT) are licensed by vPs; NOM cases are licensed by TPs;

- independent of those case positions, both subject and object (of any case) have their surface position determined by an EPP feature of a (rather unhelpfully named) Subj head;

- the NOM associated with subjects of canonical NOM-ACC clauses (Nom$_1$) is *not* the same NOM responsible for Nominative objects (Nom$_2$)—it cannot be, under the Strong Agreement Hypothesis,[17] because a NOM object never gets as high as T_1; consequently, since the subject NOM is assumed to be part of every clause, it must undergo checking with a null expletive (in Spec-Nom$_1$P) when the subject is quirky;

- it is stipulated that only a Dative-experiencer-assigning v can take a VoiceP complement that contains a NomP—this is necessary because otherwise, predicates with two NOM arguments would counterfactually be predicted to be possible in Icelandic; this loses the intuition that NOM becomes assignable to the object *just when* it is not assigned to the subject (as in Schütze 1997, i.a.);

- to get long-distance agreement as in (38), the account requires that "a second source for agreement must be assumed, … 'agreement climbing' i.e. agreement with a plural predicate triggered under complex verb formation."

(38) a. Jóni$_i$ virðast   [t_i hafa   likað þessir sokkar   ].
           John(DAT) seem(3PL)   to.have liked these socks(NOM.PL)
           'John seems to have liked these socks.'

    b. Jóni$_i$ virðast   [t_i vera taldir [t_i líka   hestarnir   ]].
           John(DAT) seem(3PL)   to.be thought   to.like the.horses(NOM.PL)
           'John seems to be thought to like the horses.'

Koopman elaborates on this last point: "A nominative object DP will trigger agreement on all the verbs in a *Restructuring* domain, because of two different processes: regular nominative agreement triggered low in the structure, and copying of agreement features as a by-product of complex verb formation" [emphasis added]. "Complex verb formation always requires a local

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[17] But see Schütze (1997 §4.1.1) for argumentation that it should be.

Spec-head relation between the *restructuring* predicate and the predicate of its complement" [emphasis added].

Thus, in (38)b the complex predicate 'seem to be thought to like' must be formed by moving each predicate into the spec of the next higher one; subsequent movements (not specified) must somehow restore the underlying word order of the predicates *and adverbial material*, which (39) shows can intervene in such configurations:[18]

(39) a. Jóni   virðast   **einfaldlega** vera taldir   líka   hestarnir.
          *John(DAT) seem(3PL) **simply**   to.be thought to.like the.horses(NOM.PL)*
          'John simply seems to be thought to like the horses.'

      b. Mér   mundu   **þá**   virðast þeir   vera hérna.
          *me(DAT) would(3PL) **then** seem   they(NOM.PL) to.be here*
          'It would then seem to me that they are here.'

4.3 Is there independent evidence for the necessary Restructuring?

Hróarsdóttir (2000) shows that Old(er) Icelandic had three surface patterns typical of (Germanic) Restructuring:

1) Short leftward object movement within VP;

2) Object scrambling out of VP to the left of nonfinite auxiliaries and sentential adverbs;

3) V-raising of non-finite main verbs to the left of non-finite auxiliaries.

These all departed the language at the same time: they were stable from the 14th through the 17th centuries, but declined rapidly in the 18th century and all but disappeared by the 19th. Furthermore, those verbs that were attested with OV order in Older Icelandic fit very well into the semantic classes of verbs that license Restructuring in modern West Germanic (cf. Wurmbrand 1998), with only a half-dozen exceptions, for which Hróarsdóttir has plausible explanations. So, we know what Icelandic-cum-Restructuring would look like, it was attested, but Modern Icelandic does not have it.

4.4 Summary

Under the Strong Agreement Hypothesis, the following elements are needed but lack independent motivation:

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[18] Most sincere gratitude to Ásgrímur Angantýsson, Haldór Ármann Sigurðsson, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson, Þórhallur Eyþórsson and Höskuldur Þráinsson for Icelandic judgments and discussion; standard disclaimers apply.

- a source for NOM other than canonical Tense/C;

- a stipulation to prevent that second NOM source from overgenerating (to block two NOM arguments in one clause);

- Restructuring;

- operations to undo the word order consequences of the complex verb formation that allows agreement to climb long distance;

- null expletives;[19]

- a second configuration for agreement (apparently violating the Strong Agreement Hypothesis).

5. Variation

One further seemingly blatant problem for an AGREE-only approach is that of variation, both within and across languages. Based on a very broad survey, Baker is led to propose that agreement can actually work in one of three different ways:**[20]**

(40) *The Direction of Agreement Parameter* (Baker 2008: 215)
    i.   F agrees with DP only if DP asymmetrically c-commands F, *or*
    ii.   F agrees with DP only if F c-commands DP, *or*
    iii. F agrees with DP only if F c-commands DP or vice versa.

Option (i) is upward-only agreement, as found in Bantu, exemplified in (41),[21] and some Romance languages/dialects (42); other Romance languages/dialects display bidirectional agreement, option (iii), exemplified in (43)[22]; and Burushaski (isolate, N. Pakistan) is

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[19] Opinions obviously vary widely on whether null expletives have any place in Minimalist syntax. I am inclined to agree with Jane Grimshaw, who said "Null expletives are an abomination" (uttered during the presentation of Grimshaw & Samek-Lodovici 1995). In my view, null expletives are simply a mechanical device used to force a derivation to proceed differently from how it otherwise would, typically by blocking otherwise-obligatory A-movement. A more compelling theory ought to *explain* why these operations are blocked in just the situations where they are.

[20] As Baker acknowledges, his parameter would not fit under Borer's (1984) conjectured restriction of parameters to properties of individual lexical items. I find nothing troubling in that. Potentially more conceptually problematic is the apparent fact that the level of representation at which "upward" and "downward" are assessed is that formerly known as S-structure, whose current status is murky.

[21] (41b) is an example of locative inversion: according to Bresnan & Kanerva's analysis, the locative and the notional subject each have the option of becoming the structural subject.

[22] In (43)b we see that downward agreement is optional, while (43)a shows that upward agreement is obligatory.

(suspiciously) the only language Baker identifies as employing setting (ii), downward-only agreement, corresponding to pure AGREE.

(41) a. Chi-tsîme chi-le ku-mu-dzi.   *Chichewa*
          7-well   7-be   17-3-village
          'The well is in the village.'

      b. Ku-mu-dzi   ku-li chi-tsîme.
          17-3-village 17-be 7-well
          'In the village is a well.'   (Bresnan & Kanerva 1989: 2)

(42) a. Questo, lo fa   sempre i   bambini.   *Anconetano (Northern Italian)*
          *this   it do.**3SG** always **the children***

      b. Questo, i   bambini lo fanno sempre.
          *this   **the children** it do.**3PL** always*
          'This, the children always do.'   (Cardinaletti 1997)

(43) a. Dois meninos chegaram/*chegou.   *varieties of spoken Brazilian Portuguese*
          two boys   came.**PL/*SG***

      b. Chegaram/Chegou dois meninos.
          *came-**PL/SG**   **two boys***   (p.c. from Carlos Mioto,
          'Two boys came.'   reported in Guasti & Rizzi 2002)

    I think that Baker is on the right track; here are some more facts that appear to call for parameterization. There are English dialects all over the world that have invariant singular agreement with *there* across the board (Rupp 2005), in contrast to the pattern in (2):

(44) There **was** pit**s** everywhere.   *West Midlands English*

Burzio (1986: 174) observes that the same is true in "substandard" Italian:

(45) Ci   sarebbe   stato/*stati troppi clienti nel   negozio.   *Substandard Italian*
      *there would.be(**SG**) been(**SG/*PL**) too.many **clients** in.the store*
      'There would have been too many clients in the store.'

And in Faroese, which shares a great many properties with Icelandic, the predicates that take NOM objects in Icelandic generally take ACC objects, and these never trigger agreement (Thráinsson et al. 2004):

(46) Honum nýtist   fleiri bókahillar   heima hjá sær.   *Faroese*
      him(DAT) needs(3SG) more bookshelves(ACC.PL) at.home with self
      'He needs more bookshelves in his home.'   (Barnes 1986)

One could posit that the languages represented in (44)–(46) have upward-only agreement, while Icelandic has bidirectional agreement (cf. Schütze 1999).

6. Concluding remarks

The best attempts to reduce the scenarios that motivated AGREE to more local relations require considerable stipulations, at best—we seem to be stuck with AGREE. But one thing that we seem to have lost when Chomsky fully divorced agreement from movement was the tendency for DPs that are in higher (A-)positions to trigger more agreement than those that are lower, as noted by Guasti & Rizzi (2002) and exemplified in (42) and (43). Although Baker makes the seemingly radical move of proposing three crosslinguistic options for agreement configurations, essentially re-introducing Spec-Head among them, he still does not capture this generalization, which amounts to a markedness relationship among his parameter values, though it is not clear how to cash that out within a single language as (42) requires. And it could be that Baker has not gone far enough: others have suggested that the properties of π and $\#$ probes must be independent (e.g. Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008). One more issue, raised by the data in (43)b and the apparent free variation for many English speakers between agreement and nonagreement in *there*-existentials, is how agreement can ever be optional. For recent suggestions see Denis 2015 and work cited there.

We seem to be rather far from having a handle on how agreement really works, despite it having been the focus of so much Minimalist hand-wringing since 1992.

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