Concord in the verbal domain: External agreement in Nakh-Daghestanian*

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Abstract. The article discusses agreeing ablatives in Aqusha Dargwa (Nakh-Daghestanian), arguing that morphological agreement in gender–number that these constituents display with the clausemate absolutive argument is not an instance of Agree, but should rather be analyzed as the result of Concord. The argument relies on a difference between Agree and Concord with regard to c-command. The article explores the behavior of the ablative complement to the *v*P-adjoined adverb 'secretly' and demonstrates that gender–number agreement on the complement is best predicted by Concord.

Keywords: morphological agreement, Agree, Concord, non-verbal agreement, external agreement, Dargwa

External agreement in Nakh-Daghestanian comprises various instances of morphological agreement of a non-verbal constituent with another, seemingly unrelated, constituent, most typically, the clausemate absolutive DP.[1] It is a relatively typical trait of the family that occurs across different branches and languages, as illustrated in the following example from the Balqar dialect of Lak.[2]

(1) *χːadižat* *d-axtːa* *cʷi-čʼaː-n=na* *barqara-r*
Khadijat(ABS) F.SG-on.foot self.F.SG-AD-LAT=PTCL.F.SG in.Balqar-F.SG
zana *d-iːkʼ-un-ni*
get.back F.SG-be-AOR-3

‘Khadijat (female given name) went back to her place to Balqar on foot.’

In this example, in addition to the verb, three non-verbal constituents show morphological agreement that reflects the gender–number features of the absolutive subject: the adverb *b-axtːa* ‘on foot’, the locative form *barqara-b* of the village name, and the focus particle *=b-a* obligatorily attached to the reflexive pronoun.[3] External agreement in Nakh-Daghestanian has received some theoretical attention over the past several years (Polinsky 2016, Polinsky et al. 2017, Rudnev 2020, Ackema and Neeleman 2020). Typologically uncommon and not widely discussed in the literature, this type of agreement does not immediately lend itself to any particular approach to agreement and can thus shed light on our theoretical understanding of the syntactic mechanisms that underlie morphological agreement.

Current research presents two different approaches to clausal agreement with non-verbal targets. Rudnev (2020) discusses agreeing locative phrases in Avar and provides a number of conceptual and empirical considerations to exclude an analysis in terms of Concord. Instead, he highlights the importance of the Avar facts for the theory of Agree with regard to the directionality of that operation. Rudnev demonstrates that agreeing locatives can be merged either low in the complement of V or high, adjoined to *v*P, while invariably having the same agreement controller—the clausemate absolutive argument. He argues that both high and low agreeing nominal forms can be reduced to a configuration with the φ-probe c-commanding the absolutive DP and can thus be accounted for by the downward-valuation approach to Agree.

In contrast, Polinsky et al. (2017) propose that gender–number agreement seen on some personal pronouns and a focus particle in Archi (cf. the focus particle *=b-a* in the Lak sentence in [1]) is the result of feature copying from the local *v* head. While

they do not pinpoint what exactly this operation of feature copying represents in the theoretical sense and what the limits of its application are, they tellingly do *not* refer to it as Agree, thus suggesting that a different mechanism must be at play here.

Even more explicit about the non-Agree nature of external agreement in Archi are Ackema and Neeleman (2020), who argue that it represents an outcome of Concord. Following an idea sketched out by Norris (2014: 242-243), they propose that external agreement in Archi results from a two-step process. First, the functional head *v,* which has an unvalued gender–number feature, probes down its c-command domain and Agrees with its absolutive argument. Now that the *v* head has valued its gender–number feature, the features of the head percolate to its maximal projection *v*P and are then copied onto every constituent inside that maximal projection, due to the Concord operation. Both Norris (2014: 242-243) and Ackema and Neeleman (2020) thus suggest that Concord in the verbal domain depends on a prior Agree operation, given that clausal functional heads do not carry nominal features inherently and have to acquire those features from one of the clausal arguments. The idea that Agree can further feed Concord provides an elegant way to account for how *nominal* features can spread in the *verbal* domain.

In this article, I continue this discussion by introducing novel data on agreeing ablatives in Aqusha Dargwa, another language of the Nakh-Daghestanian family (van den Berg 2001, Abdullaev 1954, Abdullaev et al. 2016). In a nutshell, I side with Polinsky et al. (2017) and Ackema and Neeleman (2020), and argue that morphological agreement in gender–number that these constituents display with the clausemate absolutive argument is not an instance of Agree, but rather is best captured as the result of Concord. The argument relies on the difference between Agree and

Concord with regard to c-command, as identified in previous research (Norris 2014). I demonstrate that external agreement in Aqusha patterns with Concord with respect to that parameter.

The structure of the article is as follows. In Section 1, I introduce agreeing ablative forms in Aqusha Dargwa. Section 2 discusses syntactic differences between Agree and Concord and spells out two respective competing analyses of Aqusha agreeing ablatives. In Section 3, I highlight and propose an analysis for one specific configuration that I think can serve as a reliable diagnostic for the nature of morphological agreement on ablatives in Aqusha. Section 4 demonstrates that the proposed analysis is on the right track. In Section 5, I discuss the derivation of gender-number agreement in that configuration and argue that Concord is an optimal solution, whereas Agree requires some additional assumptions, which are not corroborated by empirical facts. In Section 6, I discuss Rudnev's arguments against Concord in Avar agreeing locatives and show that none of them are valid. I conclude that the Concord approach developed in this article can be extrapolated to Avar locatives and, possibly, other instances of external agreement in Nakh-Daghestanian.

1 Agreeing Ablatives in Aqusha Dargwa

Like Avar, Aqusha Dargwa has agreeing spatial case forms. The morphological makeup of a spatial form in Aqusha follows the template in (2).

(2) Structure of spatial case forms in Aqusha

ROOT – oblique stem suffix -*li* – localization (–gender-number agreement – ablative)

Spatial cases are formed by means of special localization suffixes attached to the nominal oblique stem, which is built by suffixation of the marker -*li* to the nominal root. Localization suffixes express the topological region where an object is located,

functionally identical to English prepositions like *in*, *on*, *under*, and so forth. Spatial forms with localization suffixes but no further suffixation express allative semantics; that is, they indicate that the participant expressed by the absolutive argument moves towards the region denoted by the localization suffix. Locative cases are derived from allatives by suffixing a gender–number agreement marker that reflects the φ-features of the absolutive (or, in some cases, optionally ergative)[4] argument. Ablative forms are further derived by attaching the ablative suffix *-ad*. An example paradigm is given in Table 1; gender–number agreement markers are in a box, to serve as a reminder that depending on the gender and number of the clausemate absolutive DP this morphological position can be filled with a different agreement exponent (the position can host the following suffixes: M.SG *-w*, F.SG *-r*, M/F.PL *-b*, N.SG *-b*, N.PL *-r*).

INSERT TABLE 1 AROUND HERE

Examples (3) and (4) show agreeing ablative forms in the context (the gender–number agreement suffix within the ablative is shown in a box; the controller of gender–number agreement on the ablative is in bold).

(3) a. ***Sa̱ʔid*** *uta-li-či-*[*w*]*-ad* *χarč* *iz-ur.*

Said(ABS) chair-OBL-SUPER-M.SG-ABL jump (M.SG)stand.up:PF-AOR.3

'Said (male given name) jumped up from his chair.'

b. ***Salimat*** *uta-li-či-*[*r*]*-ad* *χarč* *r-iz-ur.*

Salimat(ABS) chair-OBL-SUPER-F.SG-ABL jump F.SG-stand.up:PF-AOR.3

'Salimat (female given name) jumped up from her chair.'

(4) a. *Iljas-li* *Sa̱ʔid-li-zi-*[*b*]*-ad* ***džuz*** *sas-ib.*

Ilyas-ERG Said-OBL-IN-N.SG-ABL book(ABS) take:PF-AOR.3

'Ilyas (male given name) took a/the book from Said.'

b. *Iljas-li* *Sa̱ʔid-li-zi-r-ad* ***džuz-i*** *sas-ib.*

Ilyas-ERG Said-OBL-IN-N.PL-ABL book-PL(ABS) take:PF-AOR.3

'Ilyas took (the) books from Said.'

The sentences in (3) show two parallel examples with the super-ablative form of *uta* 'chair' in an intransitive clause, demonstrating that the exponent of the case changes according to the gender–number feature of the intransitive subject in absolutive case: the masculine singular subject *Sa̱ʔid* triggers M.SG agreement on the ablative, whereas the feminine singular subject *Salimat* determines F.SG agreement (cf. gender–number marking on the verb). The sentences in (4) illustrate the use of the in-ablative case in a transitive clause, showing that the exponent of the case co-varies with the gender–number feature of the transitive direct object in absolutive case: the neuter singular DP *džuz* 'book' is responsible for N.SG agreement on the ablative in (4a), whereas the neuter plural DP *džuzi* 'books' determines N.PL agreement on the nominal form in (4b). Note that the two other NPs in (4a) and (4b) are masculine singular and cannot be the source of gender–number agreement on the ablative. The examples in (4) also demonstrate that ablative cases in Aqusha can be used in non-spatial functions to mark oblique complements with some verbs.

In the next section, I look deeper into the properties of Agree and Concord and discuss one important difference between them, which I will later use to diagnose specific agreement configurations in Aqusha as instantiating Agree or Concord.

2 Agree vs Concord: Alternative Hypotheses for Agreeing Ablatives

Norris (2014) proposes that morphological agreement can be an outcome of two different operations in the syntax: Agree or Concord. According to the first one, morphological agreement between the verb and its arguments is assumed to be a

reflection of the probe–goal relation established between two structural loci in phrase structure—the probe residing on a clausal functional head that needs to value certain φ-features and the goal DP having the necessary φ-features—by means of the operation *Agree* (Chomsky 2000, 2001). The probe scans its c-command domain in search of a suitable goal and, when it is found, establishes an Agree relation, whereby the probe receives valued φ-features it needs from the goal (on another view, their sets of φ-features are unified, Frampton and Gutmann 2000, 2006; Pesetsky and Torrego 2007). It is these valued φ-features on the probe that appear as morphological agreement between the verb and its argument.

In addition to Agree, Norris identifies another operation called *Concord*, which is responsible, for example, for morphological agreement between the head noun and nominal modifiers. Concord operates in several steps, first activating feature percolation from the head noun to its maximal projection and then triggering feature spreading from the maximal projection to all elements dominated by it.

According to Norris, the conceptual difference between Concord and Agree lies in the relationship between the target and the controller of agreement. On the most general level, Agree is a relationship between two different extended projections, whereas Concord is a relationship between an extended projection and its members (Norris 2014: 101). For example, in subject–verb agreement, which results from Agree, the features expressed in the extended verbal projection originate from a nominal projection merged as one of the clausal arguments. In NP-internal agreement, which arises due to Concord, an agreeing modifier expresses features of that same extended projection that contains it. Moreover, although both operations have some underlying rationale in the narrow syntax, they differ in where the need for overt

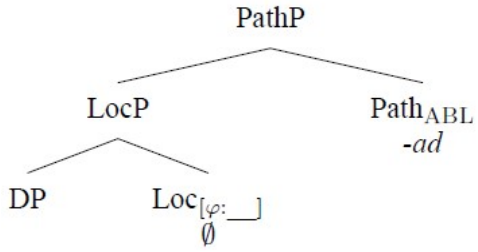
agreement comes from. In Agree, morphological agreement is the result of the need of a probe on a functional head to value its unvalued φ-features in the narrow syntax. In Concord, morphological agreement is a language-specific PF requirement that some constituents express the φ-features of the extended projection they are in (Norris 2014: 131).

Down to the practical level, Norris highlights a number of differences between Agree and Concord, of which one will play an important role in the following discussion: the structural relationship between the target and the controller of agreement. Agree requires one to c-command the other, whatever the direction of valuation is (see below). By contrast, Concord does not depend on c-command between the target and the controller; the two can stand in a non-c-commanding configuration. Rather, Concord is a relationship of membership in an extended projection: an agreeing element expresses the features of the constituent containing it (Norris 2014: 98, 104, 158). Let us now see how this theoretical distinction results in different analyses for agreeing locatives and ablatives in Aqusha.

As explained in the previous section, locatives and ablatives in Aqusha always have a gender–number agreement marker. In an Agree-based approach, that agreement suffix can be analyzed as the exponent of a φ-probe on the locative head. Moreover, the agreement is the only overt signal of locative semantics; nothing else in the nominal form expresses it. Therefore, Aqusha locative forms can be reasonably assumed to have a null locative head with a gender–number probe present on that head. Following existing analyses of locative PPs (see Cinque 2010 and other contributions to Cinque & Rizzi 2010), ablative cases are built by further adding the

Path head, expressed as the ablative suffix *-ad* in overt morphology, on top of the locative projection; see (5).

(5) The structure of locative and ablative phrases in Aqusha



In an Agree-based approach, the gender–number probe on the locative head searches for an absolutive DP and copies its features after finding it. How exactly the Agree probing could be implemented is not entirely clear, given that the absolutive controller is located outside the c-command domain of the locative head. For instance, the probe may have to be able to search upwards, or the absolutive DP and the locative/ablative phrase may form a small clause, where the two are in a sister relationship with each other, as proposed by Rudnev (2020).

Let us now consider how a Concord-based approach could derive gender–number agreement on locatives and ablatives. As mentioned above, Ackema and Neeleman's (2020) analysis derives gender–number agreement on locatives and ablatives in two steps. As a first step, the functional head *v* probes down its c-command domain and Agrees with the absolutive argument.[5] The features of the *v* head then percolate to its maximal projection *v*P and spread to every constituent inside *v*P. Most of the constituents do not have a PF/morphological requirement to spell out a gender–number feature and thus show no morphological agreement. However, the morphology requires a gender–number agreement suffix to appear on locatives and ablatives, which thus surfaces with the features spread from the maximal projection.

The problem with distinguishing between these two analyses in the verbal domain is that the source of φ-features on the locative/ablative constituent in both is ultimately the same clausemate absolutive argument. In the Agree analysis, a direct link is established between the absolutive and the locative/ablative; in the Concord analysis, the connection between them is mediated by *v* and *v*P. In the next section, I make an attempt to distinguish between the two analytical options and present an empirical argument that Concord is a superior option to Agree.

3 Non-c-commanding Configurations

Before laying out my empirical arguments, a look from a more general conceptual standpoint apparently indicates that agreeing locatives/ablatives are derived by Concord rather than Agree. As mentioned above, Norris (2014) characterizes Agree as a relation based on c-command, whereas Concord stems from shared membership in an extended projection. Given the diversity of non-verbal agreement targets across Nakh-Daghestanian, as exemplified in (1) above, it seems unlikely that all of them can be reduced to a uniform c-command configuration between the probe and the goal, *pace* Rudnev (2020). The relation between various non-verbal agreement targets, on the one hand, and the absolutive argument, on the other, does not look like the one of c-command, whichever direction of valuation of Agree we prefer. By contrast, characterizing the relation as that of membership in an extended projection seems intuitively right. As has been long recognized in Nakh-Daghestanian studies, the same gender–number value simply reappears on every clausal constituent that shows morphological agreement in gender–number, without any observable constraints on the relative structural position of the probe and the absolutive DP.

However, this intuition does not exclude an Agree-based approach to external agreement in a definitive way. Given this predicament, the best way to solve the dilemma is to find a syntactic configuration where the probe and the goal cannot be reasonably analyzed as being in a c-command relationship and to observe the behavior of external agreement in that configuration. The two approaches give different predictions for non-c-commanding configurations. For an Agree-based analysis, the absence of c-command implies that the goal can be never found by the probe, which must then surface with default agreement features (neuter singular in Aqusha). For a Concord-based analysis, the absence of c-command plays no role: a non-verbal constituent must be able to show morphological agreement with the head of the maximal projection. Below, I introduce a syntactic structure where the ablative constituent is not in a c-command relationship with the clausemate absolutive DP. I argue that the agreement pattern observed there is compatible with the Concord approach but not with the Agree approach.

Agreeing ablatives in Aqusha appear in a fairly wide range of environments. Apart from their locative functions and their use as complements to lexical verbs, illustrated back in (3) and (4), the ablative appears as a complement to the adverb *diʔganali* 'secretly' derived from the adjective *diʔgna* 'secret'. Example (6) shows the use of this adverb without a complement; example (7) illustrates the adverbial complement function of the in-ablative.

(6) *nuša* *diʔgna-li* *arq'-eħe.*

we(ABS) secret-ADV go:IPF-FUT.1PL

'We will go without telling anyone (lit. We will go secretly).'

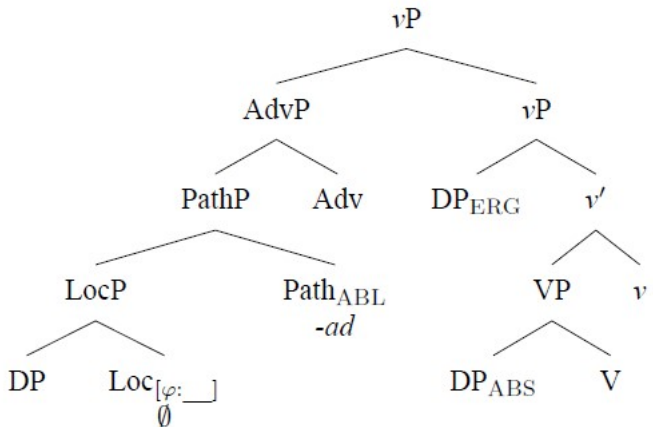
(7) *ʔaɣli-ni dudeš-li-zi-{r/[???]b}-ad diʔaɣna-li džuz-i d-ic-ib.*

Ali-ERG father-OBL-IN-{N.PL/N.SG}-ABL secret-ADV book-PL(ABS) N.PL-sell:PF-AOR.3

'Ali sold the books without telling his father (lit. secretly from his father).'

In example (7), all five consultants accept neuter plural agreement (the N.PL suffix *-r*) on the ablative in the complement of *diʔaɣnali* 'secretly'. This option unambiguously reflects agreement with the absolutive direct object *džuzi* 'books'. In addition, one consultant also allows neuter singular agreement as an acceptable option here (judged completely ungrammatical by the other consultants). That option is not an instance of agreement with an argument, since the sentence features no neuter singular DPs. Instead, the N.SG marking on the ablative must be a case of default agreement surfacing when no absolutive controller can be found.[6] Turning to theoretical analysis, I propose the structure in (8) for examples like (7).

(8) Adverbial adjunction to *v*P



Two pieces of analysis are crucial in this structure for the argument to follow. First, the adverbial phrase headed by *diʔaɣnali* 'secretly' must be an adjunct adjoined no higher than *v*P. Were it adjoined above *v*P, it would not be subject to φ-feature spreading within *v*P; the ablative complement of Adv^0 could not then have the features

of the absolutive DP. Second, the absolutive DP must remain *in situ* within *v*P, without moving to Spec,*v*P or a higher position. If it moved upward, it would end up in a position c-commanding the adverbial, leaving space for an Agree analysis. Both points can be argued for based on the causative construction. With that, a very brief introduction into the structure of the causative, and how it helps us substantiate the analysis in (8), is in order here.

4 The Causative in Aqusha

The causative in Aqusha is morphological, formed by the suffix *-aq* attached directly to the verb stem. The causer shows up as the ergative subject of the construction; the causee of an intransitive verb appears in the absolutive, whereas the causee of a transitive verb is in the in-allative case (see Table 1). The sentences in (9) and (10) illustrate the causative in Aqusha.

(9) a. *rursi r-ak'-ib*

girl(ABS) F.SG-come:PF-AOR.3

'The girl came.'

b. *neš-li rursi r-ak'-aq-ib*

mother-ERG girl(ABS) F.SG-come:PF-CAUS-AOR.3

'The mother made her daughter come.'

(10) a. *rursi-li ʔaq̲m-k'uc'ul d-irc-ib*

girl-ERG dish-spoon(ABS) N.PL-wash:PF-AOR.3

'The girl washed the dishes.'

b. *neš-li rursi-li-zi ʔaq̲m-k'uc'ul d-irc-aq-ib*

mother-ERG girl-OBL-IN dish-spoon(ABS) N.PL-wash:PF-CAUS-AOR.3

‘The mother made her daughter wash the dishes.’

While the details of the analysis of the causative in Aqusha are still to be discovered, two points are relevant with regard to the properties of the complement of the causative head (“lexical layer”): its ability to host adverbials of various types and the presence of the subject position inside it. With regard to adverbials, the lexical layer cannot host its own temporal modifier that conflicts with the temporal properties of the causative layer, thus suggesting that the lexical verb in the causative does not project above *v*P, as shown in (11).

(11) **neš-li rursi-li-zi [žaʔaq̲l ʔaq̲m-k’uc’ul d-irc]-aq-ib*

mother-ERG girl-OBL-IN tomorrow dish-spoon(ABS) N.SG-wash:PF-CAUS-AOR.3

Intended: ‘The mother made her daughter [wash the dishes tomorrow].’

That it is exactly *v*P rather than a smaller constituent can be seen from the fact the lexical layer can host its own subject.

(12) *neš-li rursi-li-zi [sune-ni=cun ʔam-k’uc’ul d-irc]-aq-ib*

mother-ERG girl-OBL-IN self-ERG=only dish-spoon(ABS) N.PL-wash:PF-CAUS-AOR.3

‘The mother made her daughter$_i$ wash the dishes herself$_i$.’

The reflexive pronoun in this example refers back to the locative causee and bears ergative case. Under this interpretation, the ergative cannot be assigned in the causer subject position, obviously. The only other possible locus for ergative case assignment can be the subject position in the extended projection of the transitive lexical verb *b-irci* ‘wash’. Based on this evidence, I conclude that the lexical layer in the causative construction instantiates *v*P.

The entire structure thus resembles an object control construction, with a *v*P complement. The embedded subject is controlled by the causee and usually remains null, as in (10b), but can also appear overtly, as in (12) (see Ganenkov 2023 on overt controlled subjects in Dargwa). Note that it is the ergative argument of the complement that acts as a controlled argument here, thus suggesting it occupies the highest position Spec,*v*P within the lexical layer and effectively excluding the absolutive DP from that position.

Unlike temporal adverbials, manner adverbials, including *diʔɣnali* 'secretly' discussed in this article, are allowed in the lexical layer, which confirms that they are adjoined no higher than *v*P.

(13) *neš-li* *rursi-li-zi* *džuz-i* *diʔɣna-li* *d-ic-aq-ib*

mother-ERG girl-OBL-IN book-PL(ABS) secret-ADV N.PL-sell:PF-CAUS-AOR.3

'The mother made her daughter secretly sell the books.'[7]

If the reasoning above is on the right track, the causative head in Aqusha takes a *v*P complement that features an ergative DP in its specifier and an absolutive DP below it, and can also adjoin a manner adverbial phrase headed by the adverb *diʔɣnali* 'secretly'. This seems to be enough to ascertain that the structure in (8) is a correct analysis of (7): the ablative inside AdvP and the absolutive DP do not c-command one another. Let us now look at how the gender–number agreement options in (7) can be derived.

5 Deriving Gender-number Agreement on the Ablative

The N.PL agreement in (7) is directly predicted by the Concord analysis: the φ-probe on the locative head reflects the properties of the absolutive DP despite the absence of a c-

command relationship between the two. By contrast, additional manipulations are necessary in order to place the φ-probe in a c-commanding position with respect to the absolutive direct object and thus derive the N.PL agreement on the ablative in (7) via Agree. In fact, the only way to achieve that is via the percolation of the φ-probe from the locative head to AdvP. However, such percolation is theoretically not very credible, since apparently, no examples of probe percolation from a complement to the maximal projection have been reported in the literature. Note also that the percolation must be optional in order for the Agree approach to derive the variation between two variants of agreement in (7), thus adding the question as to what regulates that optional percolation.

The N.SG agreement could be explained by assuming that the ablative spells out the φ-features of the minimal maximal projection it is located in, that is, AdvP. Neither the Adv head nor its maximal projection is specified for φ-features, thus leading to the default N.SG agreement on the ablative. The variation between two agreement options in (7) thus reflects the choice between what counts as the Concord domain for the ablative in the complement of *diʔɢnali* 'secretly': the entire clause or the adverbial constituent.

An anonymous reviewer asks about how the local domain is defined for Concord, suggesting that it could be captured in terms of phases. Although this question deserves a separate study (see Norris' original discussion of feature spreading in Norris 2014: 131-151), preliminary observations suggest that phases may in fact be involved here. Recall that the adverb *diʔɢnali* 'secretly' is derived from the adjectival predicate *diʔɢna* '(be) secret'. Adjectival predication has been argued to represent a reduced (stative) clausal structure in the closely related Tanti Dargwa (Sumbatova and

Lander 2014). This analysis can be safely extended to other Dargwa languages, including Aqusha, given their identical profile in this regard. As Sumbatova and Lander propose, deadjectival adverbs can be analyzed under that approach as converbal stative clauses, supported by the fact that the adverbial suffix is identical to the suffix on the imperfective converb (both are *-li* in Aqusha).

If so, the Concord domain for an agreeing ablative under *diʔɣnali* 'secretly' can be uniformly assumed to be the phase that contains that ablative. The variation in gender–number agreement on the ablative in that environment reflects a dual structural status for what is labeled as AdvP in (8). On the one hand, it can be a stative *v*P, following Sumbatova and Lander's (2014) proposal. In this case, the adverbial constituent (that is, the adjectival stative clause) is a separate phase and thus constitutes the Concord domain for the ablative. The stative clause features no absolutive DP, meaning that the adjectival/stative *v* cannot value its unvalued gender–number feature, resulting in the default N.SG feature on the stative *v* and elsewhere in that clause, including the agreeing ablative. On the other hand, the adverbial constituent can be reanalyzed as a non-clausal (and non-phasal) constituent, that is, regular AdvP. In that case, the agreeing ablative under *diʔɣnali* 'secretly' acquires its φ-features from the closest *v* head, that is, from the one projected by the lexical verb *b-ici* 'sell'. Since that *v* head Agrees with the neuter plural DP *džuzi*, the N.PL value spreads over the entire clause, including the agreeing ablative inside the adverbial phrase due to the fact that the latter is part of the same phase.

An anonymous reviewer also suggests an alternative scenario. In that scenario, the adverb *diʔɣnali* 'secretly' is assumed to also carry an Agree φ-probe that percolates to AdvP and searches down the c-command domain of AdvP, finding the

absolutive DP as a result. The φ-features of AdvP then spread to all constituents inside it due to Concord and end up being pronounced on the ablative complement of Adv. Three considerations come to mind in this regard. First, Agree probes are standardly assumed to be present on functional heads, not lexical heads (Chomsky 2000, 2001). The analysis proposed by the reviewer assumes that the φ-probe resides on the lexical head; we would need a richer functional infrastructure in the extended projection of the adverbial head before accepting an Agree analysis for adverbs. Second, according to this proposal, the Adv head hosts a φ-probe that never receives morphological exponence, which makes it difficult to falsify: Depending on whether or not the agreeing ablative inside the adverbial phrase shows morphological agreement with the absolutive argument, we can assume the presence or absence of an invisible φ-probe on AdvP.[8] Finally, the suggested scenario also employs a combination of Agree and Concord, using Adv instead of *v* as a mediator, thus turning it into an alternative implementation of the same idea that non-verbal agreement with the absolutive in Aqusha involves Concord.

Summarizing, the Concord model straightforwardly predicts the best agreement option in (7) accepted by all of my consultants, whereas an Agree-model cannot account for agreement on the ablative in non-c-command configurations. With regard to the second, more marginal, agreement option in (7) accepted by one of my consultants, an Agree approach does predict that option under the assumption that the φ-probe does *not* percolate from the locative head to AdvP, thus adding the question as to what regulates this probe percolation (not very credible in the first place; see above).[9] The Concord approach has to make an assumption about the dual status of the adverbial constituent, stative *v*P or AdvP, which is theoretically reasonable and in line

with what has been previously observed in Dargwa languages, thus making it, in my view, the optimal choice.

6 Conclusion

The article develops an argument that agreeing ablatives in Aqusha are derived by feature copying under Concord, similar to Polinsky et al.'s (2017) and Ackema and Neeleman' (2020) proposals, and *contra* Rudnev's (2020) Agree-based proposal. The empirical basis of this theoretical discussion is one less trivial configuration that features an ablative complement to some *v*P-adjoined adverbs. I demonstrate that this configuration shows a syntactic behavior associated with Concord in that the agreeing constituent need not c-command the controller of agreement in order to show morphological agreement with it.

I thus conclude that the behavior of the agreeing ablative under the adverb *diʔganali* 'secretly' is best explained by the Concord approach. Note that, despite Rudnev's rejection of the Concord analysis for Avar, Concord is also compatible with his data. Recall that in Avar, locatives show morphological agreement with the clausemate absolutive argument. Rudnev points out that in prototypical instances of Concord the features of a head are realized on constituents inside the extended projection of that head. He observes that agreeing locatives in Avar are located outside the extended projection of the absolutive DP, taking that as evidence that they do not represent Concord. Just like in Aqusha, however, the *v* head in Avar also bears the φ-features of the absolutive argument, which opens up the possibility for an analysis along the lines of what has been discussed in this article. Gender–number agreement on locatives can be derived by having the *v* head Agree with the absolutive DP and

further transmit its φ-features to other agreeing constituents, including locatives, by Concord.

Rudnev also brings up the case-discriminating behavior of Avar locatives, which can only agree with a DP in absolutive case. He indicates that no dependence between case and agreement has been reported for Concord, while case discrimination is a well-documented feature of Agree. Again, this argument becomes irrelevant as soon as we assume that agreement on locatives is a reflection of the *v*'s φ-features. No direct connection between case and external agreement has to be established in that case. Locative forms show whatever φ-features the *v* head carries, but they are always the φ-features of the clausemate absolutive DP, since *v* can Agree only with absolutives.[10] If the reasoning above is correct, the mechanism proposed in this article works just as well in the derivation of gender–number agreement on Avar locatives and can possibly be extrapolated to other instances of external agreement across Nakh-Daghestanian.

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Table 1. Partial paradigm of the noun *ɢarɢa* ‘rock’.

	ALL	LOC	ABL
IN	ɢarɢa-li-zi rock-OBL-IN ‘(hit) into a rock’	ɢarɢa-li-zi-b rock-OBL-IN-N.SG ‘(be) in a rock’	ɢarɢa-li-zi-b-ad rock-OBL-IN-N.SG-ABL ‘(move) from inside a rock’
SUPER	ɢarɢa-li-či rock-OBL-SUPER ‘(jump) on a rock’	ɢarɢa-li-či-b rock-OBL-SUPER-N.SG ‘(be) on a rock’	ɢarɢa-li-či-b-ad rock-OBL-SUPER-N.SG-ABL ‘(jump) from a rock’
SUB	ɢarɢa-li-u rock-OBL-SUB ‘(move) under a rock’	ɢarɢa-li-u-b rock-OBL-SUB-N.SG ‘(be) under a rock’	ɢarɢa-li-u-b-ad rock-OBL-SUB-N.SG-ABL ‘(move) from under a rock’

* I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their careful reading of the manuscript and for their comments, and suggestions. I am thankful to Ruslan Daudov for helping me organize field work with in Levashi, Daghestan to gather grammaticality judgments on Aqusha Dargwa reported here. This work received financial support from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), grant #424782389 (“Exploring the edges of Obligatory Control”). Any remaining errors are my own. The abbreviations here follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules (https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php), with the following additions: AD – location ‘near’, AOR – aorist, IN – location ‘inside’, IPF – imperfective

stem, LAT – lative (movement toward), OBL – oblique stem, PF – perfective stem, PTCL – particle, SUPER – location ‘on surface’.

[1] The term *external agreement* has been first used in this sense by Bond et al. (accepted); Creissels (2012) uses it to refer to a different kind of unusual agreement.

[2] Example (1) comes from my own fieldwork on Balqar Lak. Examples from Aqusha Dargwa cited in this article originate from work with five native speakers living in the village of Levashi. The examples were elicited using translation of sentential stimuli in Russian and acceptability judgments on modified translations and constructed examples.

[3] Following the convention established in Nakh-Daghestanian studies, the position of the gender–number agreement marker is filled with the default (neuter singular) marker /b/ when citing forms specified as agreeing in gender–number.

[4] Ergative controllers of gender-number agreement are only possible in clauses with periphrastic verb forms in Aqusha (van den Berg 1999, Lander and Sumbatova 2014, Ganenkov 2018). To the best of my understanding, the issue of choice of agreement controller is orthogonal to the question discussed here.

[5] That gender–number agreement on the verb spells out the φ-features of the *v* head has been argued for in the literature for a number of different Nakh-Daghestanian languages (Gagliardi et al. 2014 for Tsez and Lak, Polinsky 2016 for Archi, Bogomolova 2022 for Tabasaran), including the closely related Chirag Dargwa (Ganenkov 2022), so I assume that verbal gender–number agreement in Aqusha reflects *v*’s features as well. The same body of work also agrees that all case assignment occurs *v*P-internally in these languages, which will be important later in this discussion (see Section 4).

[6] It is not clear to me whether this option is an anomaly in the data or it represents a legitimate agreement pattern allowed by a smaller subset of native speakers; more elicitation is required to determine its status. The Concord analysis discussed below in Section 7 leaves room for the derivation of this marginal pattern on the assumption that adverbial phrases instantiate converbal stative clauses, as independently proposed in Lander and Sumbatova 2014.

[7] The adverbial 'secretly' modifies the caused event in this sentence rather than the causative.

[8] Aqusha does have agreeing adverbs, which also reflect the features of the clausemate absolutive argument. However, it is clear that gender-number marking on adverbs like *b-uʔqar-li* 'N.SG-cold-ADV' is not associated with the Adv head (lexicalized by the suffix *-li*), but rather comes from the adjectival complement of Adv, given that the adjective *b-uʔqar* 'N.SG-cold' must carry an agreement prefix regardless of whether or not Adv is present.

[9] An anonymous reviewer suggests that the agreement alternation in (7) can be accounted by assuming early or late Merge of the manner adjunct. Three assumptions are required here to make this suggestion work: (i) *v* is a phase head (Chomsky 2001), (ii) late Merge occurs at the phase level (Nissenbaum 2000), and (iii) phase heads block Agree into their complement once the phase they head has been sent to Spell-out (Chomsky 2001). The optionality of agreement for agreeing ablatives would then follow from the optionality of late Merge. If the adjunct is Merged prior to Spell-out of *v*P, the absolutive will still be accessible for Agree, thus resulting in N.PL agreement in (7), but if the adjunct is Merged after Spell-out, the absolutive will be inaccessible, leaving us with default agreement. It is not clear, however, whether the third

assumption can be maintained in Aqusha, given that functional heads outside *v*P still have access to the absolutive argument, as demonstrated by (a) gender-number agreement with the absolutive on the progressive auxiliary, and (b) person agreement with the absolutive on T; see examples (i) and (ii).

(i) *dudeš-li* *džuz* *b-uč'-ul* *sa-b*

father-ERG book(ABS) N.SG-read:IPF-CONV AUX-N.SG

'Father reads a book.' (van den Berg 1999: 161, transcription and glosses adapted)

(ii) *rasul-li* *nu* *r-uc-i-ra*

Rasul-ERG I(ABS) F.SG-catch:PF-AOR-1

'Rasul caught me (female).'

Given this evidence that the absolutive argument's φ-features can be accessed from outside *v*P, late Merge would not lead to default agreement, contrary to the reviewer's suggestion.

[10] Rudnev also presents a language-specific argument that Agree and Concord use different morphology in Avar, since suffixal exponence of plural agreement is different on adjectives and locatives. I suggest that it could be just that: different morphological exponence associated with different word classes, which says nothing about the syntactic mechanisms that underlie that agreement.