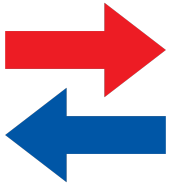
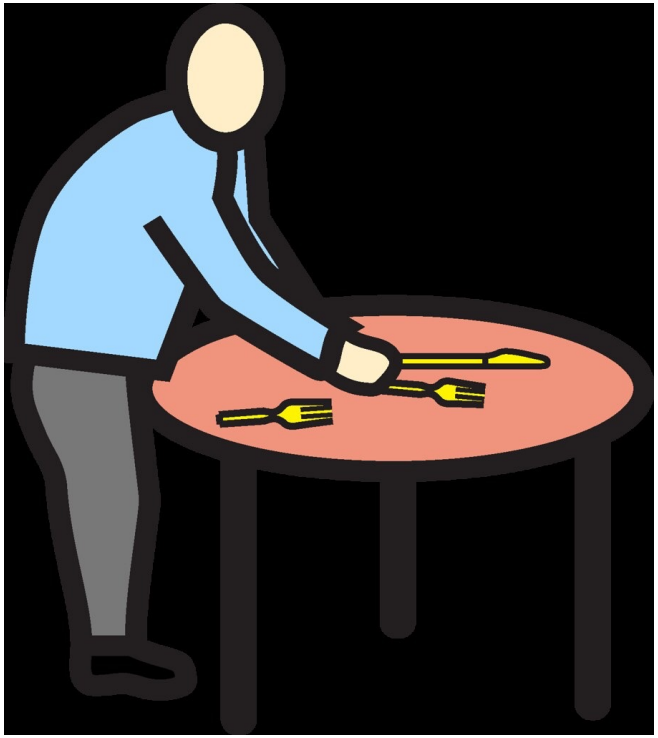


Move and Agree Forum

(31 May to 04 June 2021)

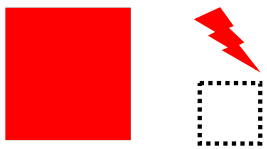
Setting the scene
(J. Crippen, H. Keupdjio, R.-M. Déchaine)

- The broad view of feature **integration**
  - the “binding problem”: feature **segregation** versus feature **combination**
- The language-centric view of feature integration
  - Move = feature integration with complete match
  - Agree = feature integration with partial match
- Perspectives on Move and Agree
  - Typology of Move & Agree
    - Move conditions (phasal) A’-agreement: Medumba
    - Functor dependencies condition (upgward): Tlingit:
    - …
  - Retrospective view: geometry of Agree
  - Prospective view: Move & Agree = feature integration

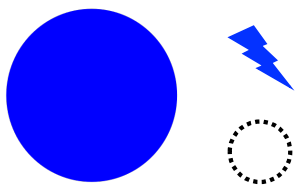


1. Broad view

the problem of
(1) the red square, and



(2) the **blue circle**



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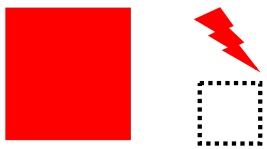

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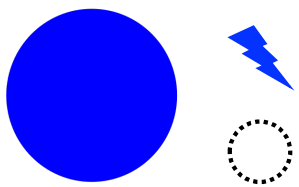

Note: these are set partitions
(1) she {SENTIENCE:animate,human, PERSON:3, GENDER:male}
(2) he {SENTIENCE:animate,human, PERSON:3, GENDER:male}

Feature integration is omnipresent in natural language, e.g. pronouns and pronominal agreement.
It likewise can be divided into two subproblems:
How is **segregation** achieved? How do we come to re-cognize features such as SENTIENCE, PERSON & GENDER?
How is **combination** achieved? How doe we come to re-cognize combinations of features such as SENTIENCE, PERSON & GENDER?

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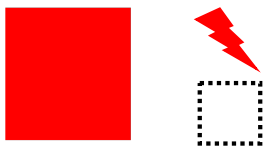

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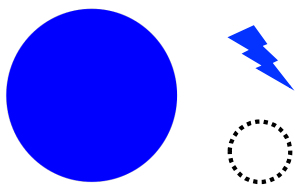

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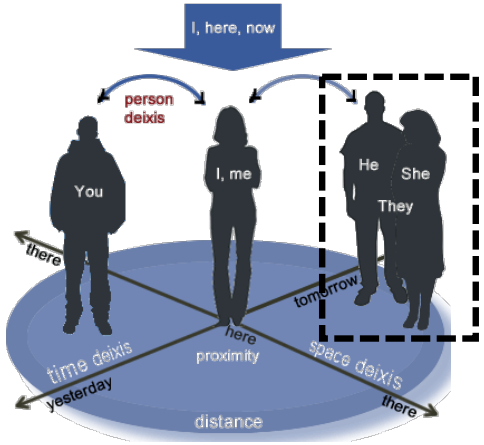

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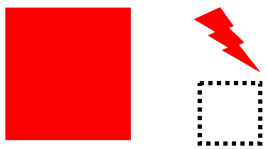

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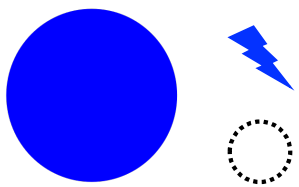
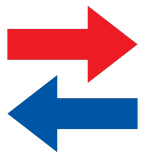


2. Language-centric view: Move and Agree as feature integration

- **Move**: features of two distinct syntactic positions **match**
  limiting case is "copy movement", where feature integration is (complete) feature matching



(3) rightward non-local dependency
Lucy gave <~~all of her books~~> to her friends all of her books.

(4) leftward non-local dependency
What did Lucy give <~~what~~> to her friends?

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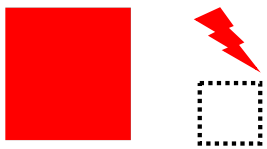

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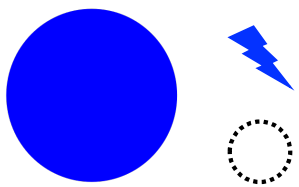

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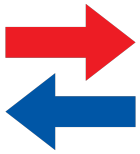

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(4) leftward non-local dependency
What did Lucy give <~~what~~> to her friends?

- **Agree:** features of two distinct syntactic positions **overlap**; i.e. partial match

(5) feature co-occurrence
a. ***Luke*** *tap-**s** maple syrup.*
{HUM, MS, SG} {SG}
b. ***He*** *taps-**s** maple syrup.*
{HUM, MS, SG} {SG}
c. [CONTEXT: add for itinerant maple-tapper]
pro *taps-**s** maple syrup, **pro** will travel.*
{SG}

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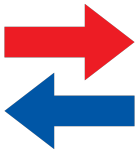
2. Language-centric view

- **Move**
  feature integration = complete match



rightward non-local dependency

leftward non-local dependency

- **Agree**
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  (5) ***He*** *tap-**s** maple syrup.*
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In human language, feature integration also divides into two subproblems:
How is **segmentation** achieved?
How is **composition** achieved?

3. Perspectives on Move & Agree

3.1 Typology of Move & Agree

form (i.e. morphosyntax) is source of evidence for how feature integration proceeds

Finding 1: leftward **Move-WH conditions** (phasal) **Agree** (Keupdjio 2020)

- Medumba A'-agreement is phasal

(6) A'-agr = HL tonal allomorphy on verb, e.g. Medumba (Grassfields Bantu)
(counterpart to concordial agreement found in other Bantu languages)

a. *Nùmí jʉ́n b-ún tʃ-ə́*
Numi see PL-child PL.C6-3POSS
H
Numi saw his children

b. *ə́ wʉ́ Nùmí jʉ́ʉ̀n* ~~<ə́ wʉ́>~~ *ə́*
FOC WH Numi see Q
HL
Who did Numi see?

Finding 2: **various dependencies condition** (upward) **Agree** (Crippen 2019)

- Tlingit (Na-Dene) plural-agreement = suppletive verbal allomorphy {D,

(8) a. *Neil-dé* pro *woo-**goot**.*
[PP home-to] PFV-go·SG
'S/he went home.'

b. *Neil-dé has woo-**.aat**.*
[PP home-to] 3PL·HUM =PFV.go·PL
'They went home'

Open question:
What is the (theoretical/conceptual/empirical) motivation for modelling (non)-local dependencies with upward/downward Agree?

2. Language-centric view

- **Move**
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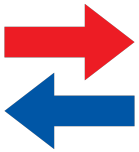

rightward non-local dependency

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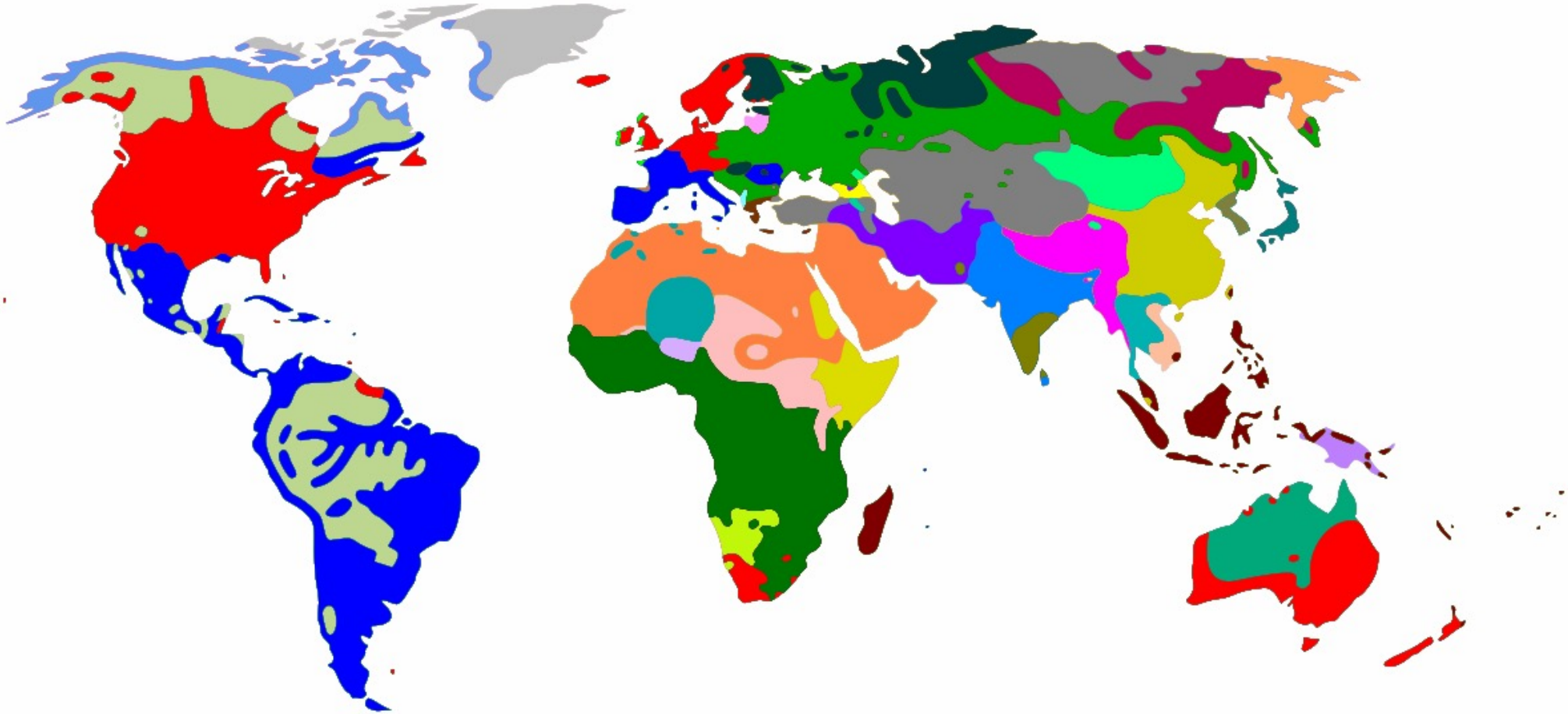
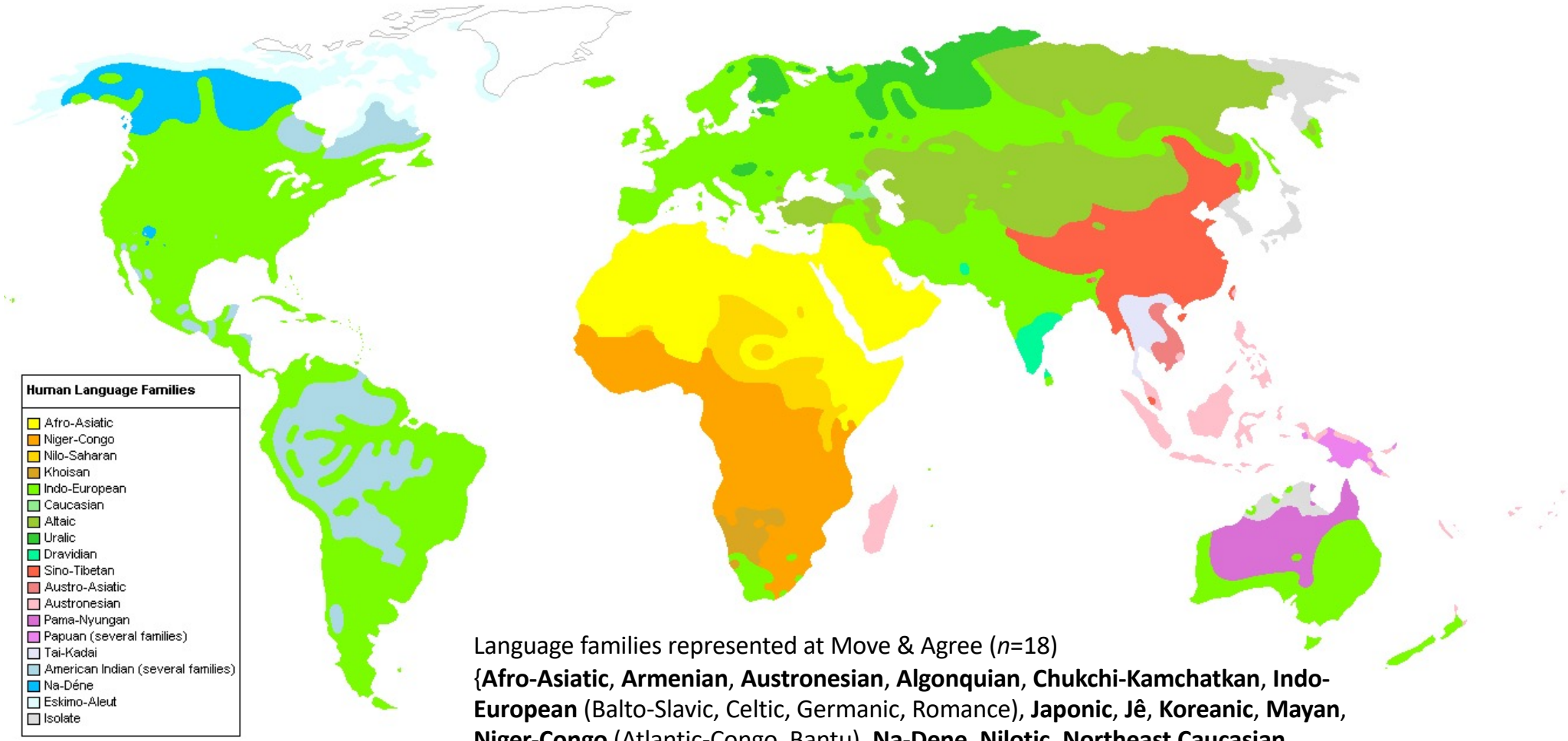
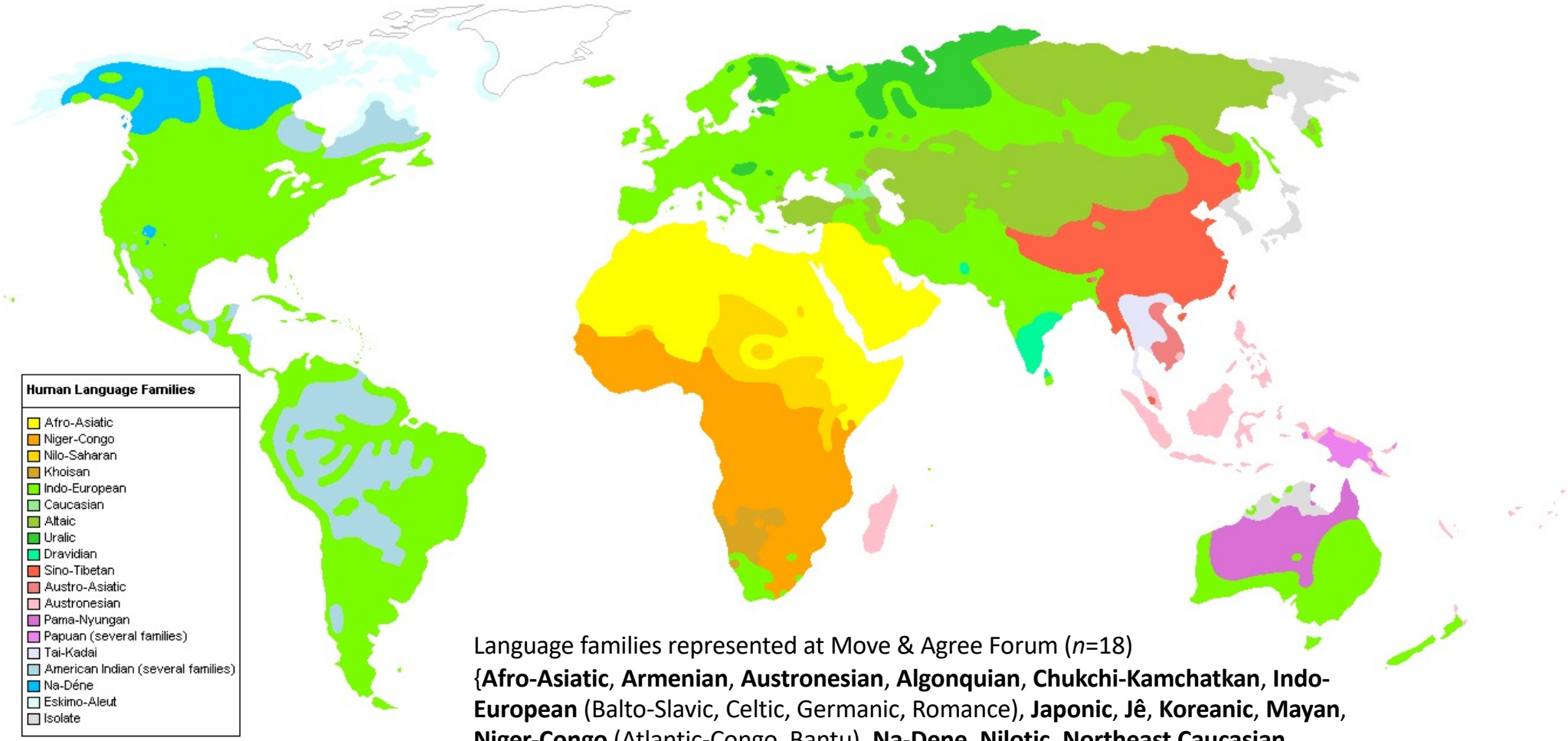




Language families represented at Move & Agree (*n*=18)
{**Afro-Asiatic**, **Armenian**, **Austronesian**, **Algonquian**, **Chukchi-Kamchatkan**, **Indo-European** (Balto-Slavic, Celtic, Germanic, Romance), **Japonic**, **Jê**, **Koreanic**, **Mayan**, **Niger-Congo** (Atlantic-Congo, Bantu), **Na-Dene**, **Nilotic**, **Northeast Caucasian**, **Sahaptian**, **Salish**, **Sinitic**, **Uralic**}



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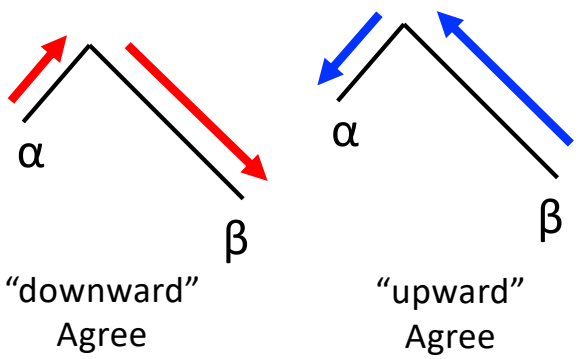
3. Perspectives on Move & Agree
3.1 Retrospective view: geometry of Agree

• **data sources**
(i) agreement conditioned by **binding** dependencies
(ii) agreement conditioned by **movement** dependencies
(ii) **morphologically conditioned** pro-drop
agreement of verb with subject,
e.g. Romance, Germanic,…
agreement of verb with subject and object
e.g. Iroquoian, Algonquian,…
(iii) discourse conditioned pro-drop
e.g. Sinitic, Japonic

• **tree geometry**



Open question:
Are both "downward" and "upward" Agree necessary?

3.1 Prospective view: feature-integration

• **findings: agreement is Janus-like in that it has two faces**
(i) agreement can be interpretable
(ii) agreement can be purely structural, a.k.a. "uninterpretable"

• **attending to feature integration** allows us to better understand the two faces of agreement

Speculation 1: syntax-semantics mapping
interpretable agreement reduces to compositional feature-integration; mechanisms are predicted to be uniform in all human languages

Speculation 2: syntax-morphology mapping
- **one-to-one**: concordial
  only one exponent per feature
  e.g. Bantu N-classes
- **one-to-many**: suppletive
  one exponent maps onto several features
  e.g. Indo-European
- **many-to-one:** prolific
  person, number, and gender are compositional;
  map onto one argument via restriction
  Iroquioan, Algonquian

Speculation 3: (uninterpretable) structural agreement is the syntactic version of "the emergence of the unmarked"; should show last resort conditioning