

# A'-AGREEMENT IS NOT ONLY MORPHOLOGICAL: THE CASE OF FOCUS AGREEMENT



## MOVE AND AGREE FORUM 2021

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## GOALS & CLAIMS

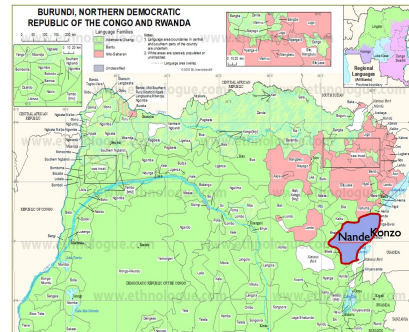
- Investigate the syntax of A'-agreement in Kinande and establish that there is a non-movement wh-/focus agreement phenomenon in the language where, contra the approach of Baier 2018, a morphological-only account of wh-/focus agreement falls short
- Show that the way A'-agreement behaves is influenced by the syntax/position of an agreeing DP as well as its feature make-up
- Establish that agreement morphology can reflect position of the nominal with the agreement features as well as its feature makeup
- Demonstrate a need in Kinande for nominal licensing of goal of agreement probe
- Supports the proposal that the syntax needs access to IS.

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## BACKGROUND

- Kinande—Bantu language, well-known for its anti-agreement. I look here beyond the original anti-agreement data at another A'-related agreement phenomena in the language. In particular, I examine agreement with a focus particle that among other things, marks wh-agreement in the language.
- Focus in copular constructions
- We will see that Focus-agreement is affected by the syntax of the DP that is participating in agreement, and not just by its A'-features.



(K)INANDE/KONZO  
NARROW BANTU –  
(JD42)  
(NEAREST MAJOR CITY:  
BUTEMBO, DRC)

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## FOCUS ON THE LEFT EDGE

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## A'-AGREEMENT: FOCUS ON THE LEFT EDGE

- The subject/verb agreement that occurs for noun class one (+singular, +human) subjects is  $\alpha$ -. Call this **canonical agreement** (1a). It is incompatible with a nominal that has +focus/+wh- features, as illustrated in (1b) and when agreement is with such a focused nominal, the anti-agreement form must occur. (2) orients us to all the agreeing/anti-agreeing elements:
- (1)a. Omukali     **a**-ka-genda     [canonical agreement **a**-]  
          I woman     I-TAM-leave  
          'The woman is leaving.'
- b. lyondi yo     **u**-ka-genda     /\***a**-ka-genda     [note: **Anti-Agreement**]  
          I who IFOC AA-TAM-leave     I-TAM-leave  
          'Who is leaving?'
- (2) lyondi **yo**     **u**-ka-genda     [ **FOC** marker + **Anti-Agreement**]  
          I who IFOC AA-TAM-leave  
          'Who is leaving?'

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## A'-AGREEMENT: FOCUS ON THE LEFT EDGE

- The subject/verb agreement that occurs for noun class one (+singular, +human) subjects is  $\alpha$ -. Call this **canonical agreement** (1a). Well established in literature on Kinande. And as such, it is incompatible with a nominal that has focus/+wh- features, as illustrated in (1b) and when agreement is with such a focused nominal, the so-called anti-agreement form must occur:
- (1)a. Omukali     **a**-ka-genda     [canonical agreement **a**-]  
          I woman     I-TAM-leave  
          'The woman is leaving.'
- b. lyondi yo     **u**-ka-genda     /\***a**-ka-genda     [note: **Anti-Agreement**]  
          I who IFOC AA-TAM-leave     I-TAM-leave  
          'Who is leaving?'
- (2) lyondi **yo**     **u**-ka-genda     [ **FOC** marker + **Anti-Agreement**]  
          I who IFOC AA-TAM-leave  
          'Who is leaving?'

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## A'-AGREEMENT: FOCUS ON THE LEFT EDGE

- QUESTION-ANSWER PAIR -- NARROW FOCUS ON SUBJECT

(3)

a. Q: iyóndi **yó** **w**-á-hándik' ebharúha (kwé)? [Q: elicits A with **narrow focus on subject**]  
 I who I FOC AA-TAM-write 9letter (Q?)  
 'Who wrote the letter?'

b. A: Kátsuba **yó** **w**-á-hándik' ebharúha [A: Subject is **narrow focus**, **AA** obligatory]  
 Katsuba I FOC AA-TAM-write 9letter  
 'Katsuba wrote the letter.'

c. A': #Kátsuba **á**-hándik' ebharúha (also not: #**w**-á-hándik' ) [A': **#narrow focus**, **canonical** agr]  
 Katsuba I-write 9letter #AA-TAM-write  
 'Katsuba wrote the letter.'

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## BAIER: A'-AGREEMENT IS MORPHOLOGICAL RATHER THAN REFLECTIVE OF SYNTAX

- Baier (2018) proposes that Wh-agreement/Anti-agreement is essentially a morphological effect. Manifestation of such morphology is not reflective of movement, he argues, but instead is due to a rule of a  $\varphi$ -feature impoverishment in the context of an A'-feature.
  - i) *Impoverishment of  $\varphi$ -features in the context of an  $\bar{A}$ -feature* (Baier 2018:3)  
 $[\varphi] \rightarrow \emptyset / [\_ , \bar{A}]$
- I agree that wh-/FOC-agreement is not indicative of movement of the agreed with DP. However, we will see that there is more than an impoverishment rule involved and the syntactic position of A'-agreed-with expression plays a role in determining the form of the agreement.

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## AGREEMENT IN KINANDE

**canonical agreement subjects**

	sg	pl	
1 <sup>st</sup>	nyi-	-tu-	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	u-	-mu-	subject
3 <sup>rd</sup>	a-	-ba-	AGR:
		3 <sup>rd</sup> per	a-
		class 1	
		class 2	ba-
		class 3	a-
		class 4	i-
		class 5	li-
		class 6	a-
		class 7	ki-
		class 8	bi-

	subject AGR:
class 9 9a 9b	yi-
class 10	si-
class 11	lu-
class 12	ka-
class 13	tu-
class 14	bu-
class 15	ku-
class 16	ha-
class 17	ku-
class 18	mu-
class 19	hi-
class 24	i-

FOCUS MARKERS			AGR+-O
1 <sup>st</sup>	---	---	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	---	---	
1	YO	2	BO
3	WO	4	YO
5	RYO	6	WO
7	KYO	8	BYO
9	YO	10	SYO
11	LO	12	KO
13	TO	14	BO
15	KO	16	HO
17	KO	18	MO
19	HYO	24	YO

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## BINOMINAL COPULAR CLAUSES

Now, we can turn our attention to the focus marker in a different context—binominal clauses. In this context, we have [+FOC] nominals but not on the left edge—how does agreement behave? Is the focus agreement influenced by the syntax of the [+FOC] nominals or is this purely morphological?

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## PREDICATIONAL CLAUSES: INVARIANT COPULA

- Kinande is quite rich in agreement, but non-verbal predication relies on an invariant particle in the case of present tense predication sentences.
- (4) a. Kambale **ni** mugalímu/múli  
           Kambale NI 1teacher/1tall  
           ‘Kambale is a teacher/tall.’  
       b. Abana **ni** .... / Ekitabu **ni** .... / Oluhi **ni** ....  
           2child NI           7book NI           11war NI  
           ‘The children are...’ ‘The book is ...’ ‘The war is ...’

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## PREDICATIONAL CLAUSES

- Invariant particles are restricted to predication clauses with 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjects. 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> person subjects have an agreeing pattern in predication copular clauses. They borrow the –li copula/auxiliary used in locative predication.
- (5) a. **nyi-li** mugalímu/múli  
           1s-LI 1teacher/1tall  
           ‘I am a/the teacher/I am tall.’  
       b. **u-li** mugalímu/múli  
           2s-li(COP) 1teacher/1tall  
           ‘you are a/the teacher/tall.’
- [+PART] = + PARTICIPANTS: speaker & hearer

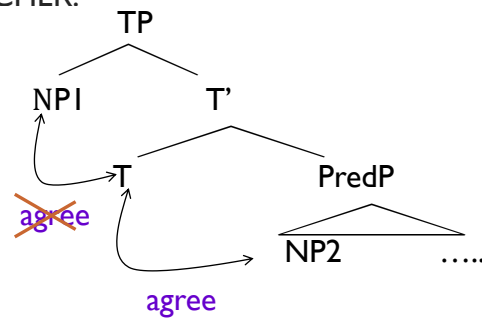
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## AGREEMENT IN BINOMINAL COPULAR CLAUSES

- (6) émbugá **I'** **ólúhi** / **y'** **ómugálimu** wage  
 9problem I I FOC I I WAR/ I FOC I TEACHER my  
 'The problem is the WAR' / '... is my TEACHER.'

- Focus particles mediate the predication
- Unexpected downward Agree!
- Will also tell us something about nominal licensing in Kinande, as well as A'-agreement



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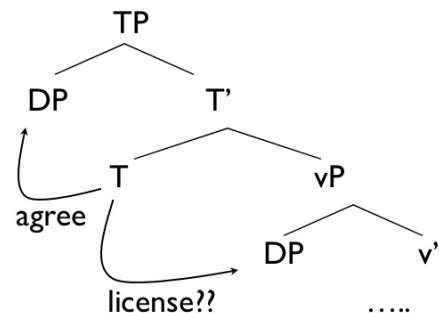
## AGREEMENT IN KINANDE

- (7) a. omo mulongo mwásátiré múlúme, twabúliré ng' akálwa hayi.  
 I8LOC 3village I8danced Iman IPL.ask if 3S.leaving I6where  
 'A man danced in the village; we wonder where he is coming from.'

b. In the park  $\checkmark$ sit/\*sits [three children] very quietly.

c. In the park \*sit/ $\checkmark$ sits [a small child].

- Agree is claimed to always be upward in Bantu languages (cf. Baker 2003, a.o.), and in Kinande in particular.



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## DOWNWARD AGREEMENT & COPULAR CLAUSE TYPE

- Specificational (NP2 provides a value for an initial description)
  - (8) Ekyo Maryá ákola **ry'** êríhuk' obuhóti  
 7thing Mary did 5FOC 5cook 14beans  
 'What Mary did is to cook beans.'
- Equative (both NP1 & NP2 are referential)
  - (9) Eririma **ky'** ekihugo; ..... (Matthew 13:38) (Kinande Bible)  
 5field 7FOC 7world;  
 'The field is the world; ...'
- Both types mediated by FOC particle

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## AGREEMENT PUZZLE

NP2 = [names, pronouns]	NP2 = [all other 3 <sup>rd</sup> pers nominals]
a. émbugá <b>ni</b> <b>Kámbale/iwe</b> 9problem ni 1Kambale/you 'The problem is Kambale/you.'	b. émbugá <b>I'</b> <b>ôlúhi</b> / <b>y'</b> <b>ómugalímu wage</b> 9problem 11foc 11war/ 1foc teacher my 'The problem is the war/my teacher.'

TABLE 1 – SPECIFICATIONAL CLAUSES

No names (class 1a expressions) nor any pronouns (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> person of any gender) can value the focus copula. The invariant **NI** results instead under those circumstances. (see Hedberg & Schneider-Zioga 2015 for discussion)

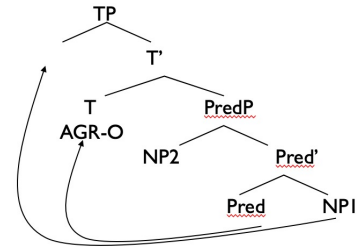
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## STRUCTURE OF DOWNWARD AGREEING CLAUSES

- (10) Specificational clauses:  

TOPIC	FOCUS
predicate	subject of pred



- Order in specificational clause suggests an inversion and that the structure associated with agreeing **FOC** is such that the pred head can move higher, expanding the domain within which the predicate is close enough to spec TP, to move across the subject (cf. den Dikken 2006; and see discussion in Hedberg & Schneider-Zioga 2015 for Kinande). Following den Dikken, equatives essentially have the same syntax—this is consistent with agreement behavior in Kinande

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## DISTRIBUTION OF **NI** & **-O** WHEN A HIGHER AUXILIARY OCCURS IS CONSISTENT WITH CONCLUSION THEY ARE NEAR PRED<sup>0</sup>

### NI

- (11) a. ómwibí    **ni**    Magúlu  
          I thief    **NI**    Magulu  
          'The thief is Magulu.'
- b. ómwibí    **abyá** \*(**i-ni**)    Magúlu  
          I thief    was    **NI**    Magulu  
          'The thief was Magulu.'
- c. ...ómwami    kw'    **á-lí**    \*(**i-ni**)    Magúlu  
          I king            that' 3s-is    **NI**    Magulu  
          '...the king to be Magulu.'

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DISTRIBUTION OF **NI** & **-O** WHEN A HIGHER AUXILIARY OCCURS IS CONSISTENT WITH CONCLUSION THEY ARE NEAR PRED<sup>0</sup>

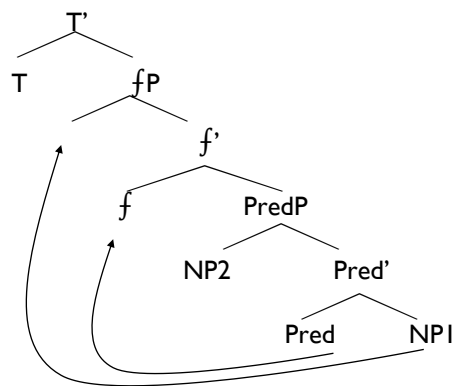
**AGR+O**

- (12) ebyálya ebyo nábyá nanzire kutsíbú bya-**byá** í-**lw'** ólukondi  
 8food 8that 1s-was 1s.like best 8.was i-11COP 11bean  
 'What I liked best was beans.'

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(13)



Specificational clauses:

TOPIC FOCUS

predicate subject

analysis of structure in specificational clause, including auxiliary forms, suggests that the structure associated with agreeing **Pred** is big enough that the pred head can move higher, expanding the domain within which the predicate is close enough to spec TP, by raising the pred head so that the predicate can move across the subject of predication (cf. den Dikken 2006). See also Hedberg & Schneider-Zioga 2015.

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**Specificational clauses:** the form of agreement is sensitive to augments (or lack thereof). Generalizations:

- (14)
- copula is invariant **ni** if NP2 is unaugmentable
  - copula is agreeing **-o** if NP2 is [+augment]

NP2 = unaugmentable	NP2 = [+augment]
a. ómwibí <b>ni</b> Kámbale 1thief NI 1Kambale 'The thief is Kambale.'	d. ómwibí <b>y'</b> ómugalímu wage 1thief 1FOC 1teacher 1my 'The thief is my teacher.'
b. émbugá <b>ni</b> iwe 9problem NI you 'The problem is you.'	e. émbugá <b>l'</b> ôlúhi 9problem 11FOC 11war 'The problem is the war.'
c. ómwibí abyá *(i- <b>ni</b> ) Magúlu 1thief was NI 1Magulu 'The thief was Magulu.'	f. [ebyalya ebyo nyanzire kutsibu] <b>w'</b> amatimo 8food 8that I.like strongly 6FOC 6bananas 'The food that I like best is bananas.'

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## IDENTIFICATIONAL CLAUSES

- Following Mikkelsen 2005, Moltmann 2010, and Bejár & Kahnemuyipour 2017, identificational is a subtype of specificational sentence
- Context: A grandfather is looking at photos with his young grandchildren. He points out:

(15)

NP2 = unaugmentable	NP2 = [+augment]
a. Oyú <b>n'</b> iwê (ni iwe) 1this NI you 'This is you.'	d. N' oyu <b>y'</b> ômúhúki (na oyu ...) and 1this 1FOC 1cook 'And this is the cook.'
b. N' oyú <b>n'</b> ingyê (Na oyu ni ingye) and 1this NI I and this is me	
c. Oyú <b>ni</b> Kátsuba 1this NI Katsuba 'This is Katsuba.'	

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## EQUATIVE CLAUSES

(16)

NP2 = unaugmentable	NP2 = [+augment]
a. Iwe <b>n'</b> iwê (ni iwe) you NI you 'You are you.'	d. Eririma <b>ky'</b> ekihugo; ... (Matthew 13:38) 5field 7COP 7world; 'The field is the world; ...'
b. (context: assumed identity game) Iye <b>n'</b> ingye S/he NI I 'He is me.'	n' embuto yowene <b>b'</b> abana b' Obwami <i>na embuto.... bo ..... ba</i> and 9seed 9good 2COP 2child 2of 14chieftancy '...and the good seed is the children of the kingdom'
c. Jorge Bergoglió <b>ni</b> Pápe Franswâ 'Jorge Bergoglio is Pope Francis.'	

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## A CLOSER LOOK AT NOMINALS WHICH CANNOT VALUE AGREEMENT

### canonical agreement subjects

	sg	pl
1 <sup>st</sup>	nyi-	-tu-
2 <sup>nd</sup>	u-	-mu-
3 <sup>rd</sup>	a-	-ba-

subject/object

ingye (1<sup>st</sup>s)itwe (1<sup>st</sup>p)iwe (2<sup>nd</sup>s)inywe (2<sup>nd</sup>p)iye (3<sup>rd</sup>s)

ibo NC2 (they)

iyo NC4 (they)

iryo NC5 (it)

ikyo NC7 (it)

ibyo NC8 (they)

tonic pronouns (of all classes)

i+AGR??+e

i+AGR+e

i+AGR+e

i+AGR??+e

i+????+e (cf: yo)

i+AGR+O

i+AGR+O

i+AGR+O

i+AGR+O

i+AGR+O (etc.)

TABLE 3 – PRONOUNS: DO NOT TAKE AUGMENTS

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## A CLOSER LOOK AT NOMINALS WHICH CANNOT VALUE AGREEMENT

1A (proper names)	2A (proper names— Name+associates)
[Ka-mbale] -AUG+12+name	aboKambale +AUG+2a+name
cannot value upward. form of copula= <b>ni</b>	can value upward. form of copula= <b>bo</b>

(18) a. ómwibí    **ni**    Magúlu  
          I thief    **NI**    Magulu  
          'The thief is Magulu.'

b. abibi            **b'**            **a-bo**-Magulu  
      2thief          2FOC        aug-2a-Magulu  
      'The thieves are Magulu and his associates.'

TABLE 4 – NAMES: DO NOT TAKE AUGMENTS

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## KINANDE UNAUGMENTED NOMINALS

- Certain nouns in Kinande can never be augmented:

--Pronouns  
 --Names  
 --Locatives

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## Kinande nominal morphology (NC = gender+number)

(Augment) - noun class marker - noun

noun class marker - noun

**o-mu-kali**  
AUG-NC1-woman 'a/the woman'

**mu-kali**  
NC1-woman 'any woman/WOMAN'

**a-ba-kali**  
AUG-NC2-woman '(the) women'

**ba-kali**  
NC2-woman 'any women/WOMEN'

**e-ki-tabu**  
AUG-NC7-book 'a/the book'

**ki-tabu**  
NC7-book 'any book/BOOK'

**e-bi-tabu**  
AUG-NC8-book '(the) books'

**bi-tabu**  
NC8-book 'any books. BOOKS'

TABLE 2 – NOMINAL MORPHOLOGY IN KINANDE

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## What do augments do?

A: encode belief of existence (Gambarage 2019, examining Nata)

A: Related to nominal licensing

- lack of augments seem to require licensing by a c-commanding & close enough licenser
  - *lack of augment in Kinande = NPI, can only occur in licensed positions—c-commanded by negation (Progovac 1993)*
  - *lack of augment in Zulu = nominal requiring licensing (Halpert 2015)*
    - licensing only available within the vP domain—outside vP augments obligatorily occur to self-license nominals
- (UPWARD AGREE—cf. Wurmbrand 2012, Zeijlstra 2012, Bjorkman & Zeijlstra 2019)

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## AUGMENTS & LICENSING

- From the work of Halpert (2015), we know that unaugmented noun phrases need special licensing in many Bantu languages. In work with Monica Irimia (2021a), (2021b), we have shown that this is true for certain types of locative phrases in Kinande, as well. The licensing explored in Halpert's work examined nominals that can optionally have an augment or leave it off and it is observed that when such nominals occur without an augment, they have a restricted distribution—essentially restricted to verb phrase internal positions.
- In this current work, I observe that nominals that are unaugmentable also have a restricted distribution—but with respect to the possibility of agreeing:
  - if they occur in a phrase below T, they cannot agree with the copula
  - external to that domain below T, however, they have no problem participating in agreement
    - A name can be the subject of the sentence and hence agree with the verb
    - A name can be focused on the left edge and hence agree with a focus marker.

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## AUGMENTS & LICENSING

- external to the domain of T, however, where unaugmentable nominals occur in specifier positions, they have no problem participating in agreement
  - A name (or +3 tonic pronouns) can be the subject of the sentence and hence agree with the verb:
 

(19) Kambale a-ka-genda  
       Kambale 3s-TAM-go  
       ‘Kambale is leaving.’
  - A name (or +3 tonic pronoun) can be focused on the left edge and hence agree with a focus marker:
 

<p>(20) a. Kambale y’        u-ka-genda                    Kambale IFOC AA-TAM-go                    ‘KAMBALE is leaving.’</p>	<p>b. Kambale yo        (u-abya)        mwibi                    Kambale IFOC AA-past-BE    I thief                    ‘KAMBALE is the/a thief.’</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
- But as we saw, when a name or pronoun is lower than T, its features cannot be copied by the probe associated with the focus copula, and we observed that that contrasts with augmented expressions.

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## AUGMENTS & LICENSING

- The distribution of possibilities of agreeing for unaugmentable expressions exactly parallels the possibilities of [+PART] agreement in many languages as expressed the PCC: the Person Case Constraint where, in its strong version, a [+PART] cannot be a direct object in the presence of an indirect object.
- However, if the [+PART] argument is structurally higher, there is no problem for it to occur. Roughly:
  - (21) \* IO > **Ip/2p** (where '>' stands for c-command)
  - ok: **Ip/2p** > DO

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## AUGMENTS & LICENSING

- One way the PCC can be understood is as an agreement problem. A probe cannot copy the features of a deeply embedded [+PART] nominal due to the presence of an additional nominal. One promising account is based on the idea of "feature gluttony" (Coon & Keine 2019) when a probe agrees with too many nominals due to their feature make-up:

(22) [ Probe<sup>0</sup> [ ... DP<sub>1</sub> ... [ ... DP<sub>2</sub> ... ] ] ] → *feature gluttony* (Coon & Keine 2019)

(23) \* probe IO > **Ip/2p** (if the wrong kind of features are involved)

- ok: probe **Ip/2p** > DO
- 

- However, as an account of the focus agreement facts, this might not be the best approach as there are no obvious hierarchy effects in the copular clauses we have been examining yet a feature gluttony approach is precisely designed to handle such effects.

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## AUGMENTS & LICENSING

- Another way the PCC can be understood is as a failure of licensing a deeply embedded [+PART] nominal due to a nominal intervening between the licensor and the [+PART] nominal which needs licensing. ([+PART] must be licensed via agreement, cf. e.g. Bejar and Rezac 2003)

(24)

- \* *licensor* IO > **Ip/2p** (in same domain)

- ok: *licensor* **Ip/2p** > DO

- I propose a similar licensing requirement on unaugmentable nominals.

(25)

- \* *licensor* NP > **unaugmentable** (in same domain)

- ok: *licensor* **unaugmentable** > NP

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## AUGMENTS & LICENSING

(26)

- \* *licensor* NP > **unaugmentable** (in same domain)

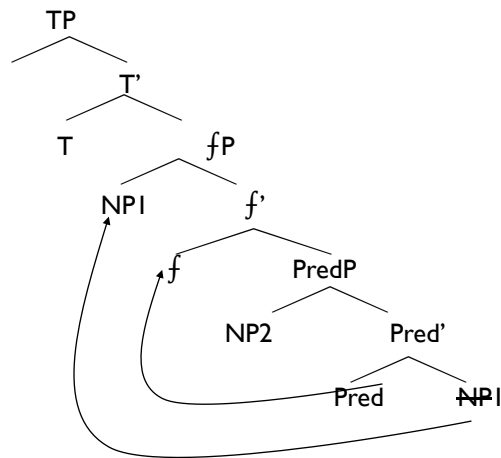
- ok: *licensor* **unaugmentable** > NP

- A licensing approach would posit that the features of an unlicensed nominal cannot be copied by the relevant probe. We have already seen that expressions lacking augments need licensing in Kinande and many Bantu languages—this natural extends this same observation to unaugmentable nominals.

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(27)

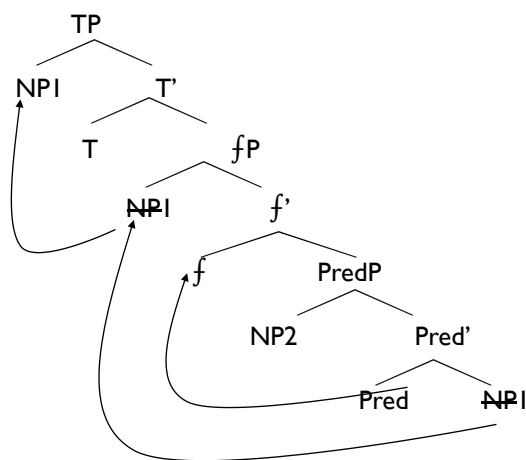


In specificational and equative clauses, the post-copular nominal (NP2) is structurally lower than NP1, at at least two points in the derivation:

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(27')



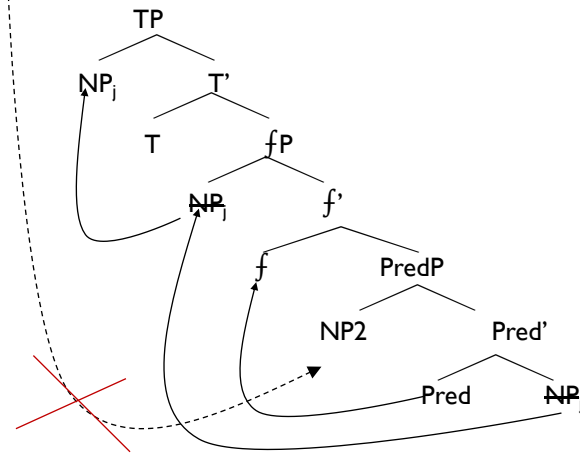
In specificational and equative clauses, the post-copular nominal (NP2) is structurally lower than NP1, at at least two points in the derivation.

However, never at the point where the agreeing focus particle, the presumed location of the probe, would c-command both NP2 and NP1

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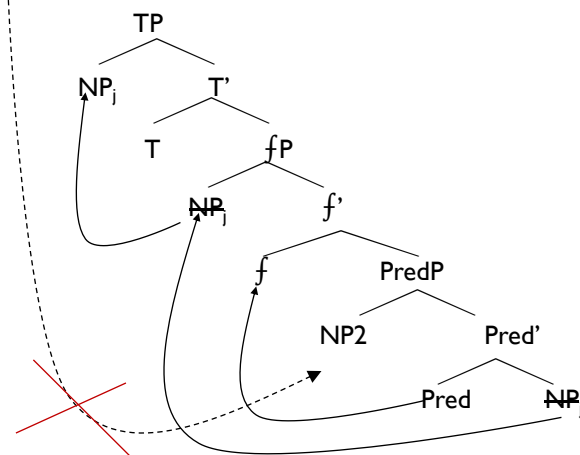
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- proposal: there is a high licenser which is discourse/IS driven. Unaugmentable expressions involve entities necessarily known to the participants in the discourse. Possibly related to the [+PART] licensing condition we have seen in Kinande
- Licensing necessary for unaugmentable /unaugmented expressions only.
- higher  $NP_i$  (found in these inverted constructions) blocks licensing.
- unlicensed expressions cannot value the probe in question, and therefore the invariable copula occurs as indication of failed agreement.

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- This discourse driven licensing is in the spirit of Irimia's work (2021) on licensing beyond uninterpretable Case in situations of Differential Object Marking (DOM).
- Licensing necessary for unaugmentable/augmentless expressions only

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### FAILED AGREEMENT FOR UNAugMENTABLE NOMINALS

- Licensing of unaugmentable expressions, disrupted by intervention of higher DP.
- Feature copying is prevented if the nominal is not licensed. Failed agreement results in invariant **NI**.
- Recall that the relevant probe has no trouble copying the features of an unaugmentable nominals outside the domain of T: (repeat of 20a):
- (30) Kambale y'            u-ka-genda  
          Kambale IFOC AA-TAM-go  
          'KAMBALE is leaving.'

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### CONCLUSION & EXTENSIONS

- Unaugmentable nominals, like augmentless nominals, need licensing
- The distribution of copulas and their agreement possibilities in Kinande largely follow from interactions of conditions on person licensing and licensing of augmentless expressions in the syntax
- Licensing of nominals plays a role in the syntax of Kinande and interacts with agreement
- Licensing problems for nominals can be one source of agreement failure
- Agreement does correlate with licensing, even in Kinande with its nearly rigid upward agreement requirement –if you agree, then you are licensed
- Wh-/Focus agreement has a syntactic element as well as a morphological one

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THANK YOU!

Comments are very appreciated! [pzioga@fullerton.edu](mailto:pzioga@fullerton.edu)

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