

## Inuit $\phi$ -markers as the exponence of AGREE: evidence from granularity, default forms

Richard Compton, Université du Québec à Montréal

**Background:** Inuit (Eskimo-Aleut) predicates exhibit  $\varphi$ -marking that co-indexes both ERGATIVE and ABSOLUTIVE arguments. Following proposals by Woolford (2010), Nevins (2011), and Kramer (2010) arguing that many cases of apparent object agreement cross-linguistically are in fact object pronominal clitics, Yuan (2016, 2017) and Johns & Kučerová (2017) propose that Inuit  $\phi$ -marking consists (in all or in part) of such clitics.

**Claim:** I offer two arguments in favour of analyzing these markers as the exponence of the AGREE relation and address two potential counterarguments. I argue that Inuit  $\phi$ -markers exhibit both the featural granularity and default forms expected of agreement (Preminger 2009, 2014). Next, I argue that instances of omnivorous number are not problematic (as proposed by Nevins 2011) and that apparent cases of PCC in some dialects (Johns & Kučerová 2017) in fact have another source.

**Evidence from feature granularity:** As part of Preminger’s (2014) treatment of agreement in Kichean (Mayan), he proposes that clitics, but not genuine agreement, exhibit the property of featural coarseness, since as D heads they should copy feature bundles of arguments entirely (p.51):

- (1) *The coarseness property of clitic doubling:* If  $CL^0$  is the result of clitic doubling of some noun phrase  $\alpha$ , then  $CL^0$  will reflect the full set of  $\varphi$ -features on  $\alpha$ .

Conversely, genuine agreement is expected to be granular, insofar as probes are valued separately (Bejar & Rezac 2009). Transitive paradigms in Inuit exhibit this granularity in several ways, as illustrated in (2); (i) placing the language’s productive dual ( $-k$ ) and plural ( $-t$ ) # morphemes outside person markers, (ii) through multiple exponence of features, such as DUAL ( $-a\dots-k$ ), and (iii) through a pattern of syncretism/impoverishment whereby ABS non-sg # bleeds ERG #.

	3SG.ABS	3DU.ABS	3PL.ABS
(2)	3SG.ERG -ŋa	-aŋik	-ŋit
	3DU.ERG -ŋak	-aŋik	-ŋit
	3PL.ERG -ŋat	-aŋik	-ŋit

**Evidence from default forms:** Preminger (2009, 2014) argues that failure to enter into an AGREE relation may result in a default agreement form, while clitics that are unable to enter into an appropriate relation will simply not surface. Yuan (2018) shows that formally transitive ECM verbs embedding weather predicates exhibit 3SG.ABS (object) marking. I take this to be an instance of default AGREE. While the English pronoun *it* in the translation arises to satisfy the EPP, Inuit has no such subject requirement—instead this is default (object) agreement (Yuan 2018, p.5):

- (3) maqu-qu-jara  
rain-want-1S.S/3S.O  
'I want it to rain.'

**Potential counterarguments:** A potential problem for analyzing these markers as agreement is Nevins’s (2011) claim that omnivorous number (which occurs sporadically in Inuit, not shown) is a property of clitics, not agreement. I argue that Inuit also exhibits omnivorous *person*, which is problematic for his account. Further, following Preminger’s (2014) treatment of Kichean, I argue that omnivorous number and person are compatible with genuine agreement. Next, I argue that apparent cases of PCC effects in some dialects outlined in Johns & Kučerová (2017), which would similarly be indicative of clitics, are instead caused by the collapse of two moods (clause-types) and defective probes—as evidenced by unexpected intransitive forms in the affected dialects.

**Discussion:** While cases of apparent object agreement have been reanalyzed as in fact being object clitics in other languages, evidence from Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun dialect groups will contribute to

the empirical base of languages with genuine object agreement, and thus the theoretical availability of object agreement in grammar, building on Oxford (2014) and Preminger (2014).

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