

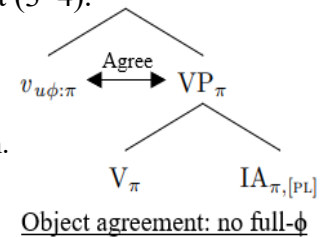
## Agreement with nominal antecedents in Welsh

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The literature on agreement in Welsh has well documented that full  $\phi$ -agreement only occurs with pronominal antecedents; canonically, nominal antecedents trigger only default agreement morphology, or none at all (Borsley et al. 2007). This “complementarity” is often likened to parallel phenomena in Irish and Breton (McCloskey and Hale 1984, Jouitteau and Rezac 2005), which only allow full agreement with a null (*pro*) antecedent. However, the Welsh pattern has several exceptions, all involving full  $\phi$ -agreement with a displaced nominal antecedent: these constructions include object *wh*-dependencies and the periphrastic passive. What conditions unify these exceptions? Can a generative approach maintain a unified account of agreement in both the general case and these exceptions? I propose that a) default agreement with nominal antecedents in Welsh is full agreement with a defective intervener, b) full agreement with nominals occurs via cyclic Agree (Béjar and Rezac 2009) when the antecedent escapes the intervener while still in the domain of the  $\phi$ -probe, and c) full agreement with pronouns reflects incorporation.

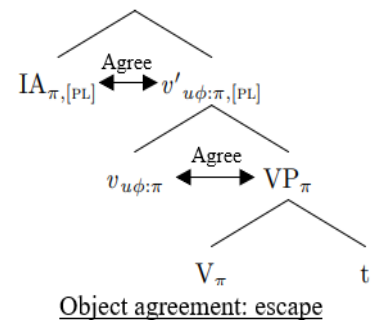
Welsh exhibits full agreement with pronominal antecedents (null or overt), but not canonically with nominal antecedents. This pattern holds across all agreement paradigms: most notably, inflectional subject agreement (1–2), and object clitic agreement (3–4).

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| <p>(1) Cerdd-<b>on</b>/*-<b>odd</b>   nhw.<br/>             walk-PST.3P/*3S   they<br/>             ‘They walked’</p> <p>(2) Cerdd-<b>odd</b>/*-<b>on</b> y   dynion.<br/>             walk-PST.3S/*3P the men<br/>             ‘The men walked.’</p> | <p>(3) Dw       i ’n   <b>eu</b>/*<b>ei</b> gweld (nhw).<br/>             be.PRS.1S I prog 3P/*3S see.VN (them)<br/>             ‘I see them.’</p> <p>(4) Dw       i ’n   *<b>eu</b>/*<b>ei</b> gweld y   dynion.<br/>             be.PRS.1S I prog *3P/*3S see.VN the men<br/>             ‘I see the men.’</p> |
|---|--|



Note how nominal antecedents trigger default 3s subject agreement, but do not trigger any object agreement clitic. However, in certain constructions with a displaced object, an object agreement clitic appears: contrast (4) with (5) (the passive) and (6) (object *wh*-dependency). I assume that subject agreement spells out a  $\phi$ -probe on T, and object agreement clitics spell out a  $\phi$ -probe on *v*.

- (5) Cafodd y dynion **eu** gweld *t*. (6) Pwy dw i ’n **eu** gweld *t*?  
 get.PST.3S the men 3P see.VN *t* who be.PRS.1S I prog 3P see.VN *t*  
 ‘The men were seen.’ ‘Who did I see?’ (pl. object)



I propose, following Jouitteau and Rezac (2005), that the Welsh verb has an inherent person feature which percolates to its highest projection. Assuming cyclic Agree, the object agreement probe on *v* matches only its person feature on its first attempt to agree; I stipulate that a person feature is not enough for *v* to spell out an object agreement clitic (although it is for the subject agreement probe, resulting in apparent default agreement). However, the probe on *v* gets another chance to match more features when an antecedent base-generated in object position moves out of the *v*P phase through the phase edge, as in passives or object *wh*-dependencies (assuming that the active probe on *v* can also project above its head, as far as the phase edge). Pronominal objects can also always incorporate into *v*, allowing the probe to match more features.

This work draws attention to under-researched exceptions to the generalization that Welsh does not exhibit full agreement with non-pronominal antecedents. Invoking the mechanics of cyclic Agree and articulated  $\phi$ -features allows us to incorporate this previously problematic data into a mainstream generative approach to agreement in Welsh and other Celtic languages.

## References

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