1. Introduction

Transitive clauses in Phorh´epecha (language isolate, Michoac´an) feature agreement clitics whose form is affected by the φ-features of the subject and direct object.

(1) Akxe=ts¨ın Akshay=1 OBJ:PL see-PST-3SUBJ
   ‘Akshay saw us.’

(2) Inde=ø xe-xa-ti.
   3.DEM=3SG see-PROG-3SUBJ
   ‘He is seeing her.’

* Local-person vs. 3rd-person objects pattern differently wrt clitics & object number agreement:

(3) Ji=kin xe-xa-ka.
   1SG=2OBJ:SG see-PROG-1/2SUBJ
   ‘I am seeing you (sg.).’

(4) Three generalizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1/2 objects</th>
<th>3 objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person exponed on clitic?</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnivorous number?</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obj. Num. agreement on verb?</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All three effects are analyzed as the result of **participant object shift** which lands **above the subject** and is **ordered before verbal object number agreement**

* An example of person-specific syntax (Bianchi 2006, Merchant 2006, Deal 2016) - local-person objects move higher than 3rd-person objects

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[Background on Phorh´epecha](#)

* About 110,000 speakers (Chamoreau 2009, 2012a, 2012b)
* Data elicited in collaboration with a native speaker of the Cheran´astico variety living in Chicagoland
* Both data and analysis are novel; previous descriptions (Chamoreau 2014, Capistrán 2002) are of other varieties whose clitic systems are not the same as the one reported here

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2. Person-Specific Syntax: Participant Object Preference & Omnivorous Number

* Clitics are hosted by multiple word classes & multiple possible positions in clause

(5) jas=ri tu ara-s-ka kurinda.
   today=2SUBJ:SG youSG eat-PST-1/2SUBJ bread
   ‘Today you ate bread.’

(6) ima no=ts¨ın xe-s-ti.
   3.DEM neg=1OBJ:PL see-PST-3SUBJ
   ‘He did not see us.’

* When the object is first- or second-person, the clitic expones the object’s person feature.

(7) Inde=rin xe-xa-ti.
   3.DEM=1OBJ:SG see-PROG-3SUBJ
   ‘He is seeing me.’

(8) T’u=rin wandaapa-s-ka.
   2SG=1OBJ:SG call-PST-1/2SUBJ
   ‘You called me.’


**Georgian agreement markers**

(11) g- xedav- t
    2OBJ: saw -pl
    ‘I saw y’all, We saw y’all, He saw y’all, We saw you.’
The form of the clitic depends on the person and number of both the subject and the object.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: First-Person Object</th>
<th>Table 3: Second-Person Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SG.SUBJ</td>
<td>=rin =tsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL.SUBJ</td>
<td>=tsin =tsin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| SG.SUBJ | =kin =ksin |
| PL.SUBJ | =ksin =ksin |

Omnivorous number agreement
- When the object is first- or second-person, clitic marks whether either the subject or the object (or both) is plural.

12) 
(12) `inde=tsin xe-s-ti`
3.DEPlOBJ:PL see-PST-3SUBJ
‘They saw me/us, He saw us’

13) 
(13) `chaa=tsin wandaapa-s-ka`
2.PL=1OBJ:PL see-PST-1/2SUBJ
‘Y’all called me/us, You (sg) called us.’

Our Solution: Participant Objects Move Above the Subject
- feature stack on v: (Müller 2010)
- second feature causes v to attract a [+part] argument to outer specifier

16) `Inde=ksin xexati (3PL>2SG)`
“They are seeing you (sg).”

3. Against Cyclic Agree: No Omnivorous Number Agreement with Third-Person
- Phorhpecha: When object is third-person, only subject’s number features exponed on clitic (no omnivorous agreement)

19) Ji=ø jurendaa-s-ka inde-echa-ni.
1SG=1SUBJ:SG teach-PST-1/2SUBJ 3.DEPl-ACC
‘I taught them.’

20) Jucha=ch xaa-xa-ka.
1PL=1SUBJ:PL see-PROG-1/2SUBJ
‘We are seeing them.’

Cyclic Agree (Béjar & Rezac 2009): third-person objects should allow omnivory
- Number probe searches for plural DP in search domain (outside vP phase)
- Probe can interact with subject/object DPs
- Probe is valued if either or both are plural - omnivorous number agreement

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‘We are seeing them.’

(23) ... [vP v [vP ... DP.OBJ3PL]]
- CA probe is relativized for [part]
- probe agrees with an participant object (24)
- if the object is not a participant, the probe agrees with the subject (25)
Cyclic Agree for Omnivorous Number $X$

(25) \( [vP \, [vP \ldots \, \text{DP,OBJ}^{3\text{PL}}] \)

(26) \( [vP \, \text{DP,SUBJ} \, [vP \, [vP \ldots \, \text{DP,OBJ}^{3\text{PL}}] \)

- but #-probe on v should agree with plural object, regardless of person (26-27)
- incorrectly predicts number of a plural third-person object will be exponed

Our Solution: Third-Person Objects Do not Undergo Object Shift

**Step 1: Third-Person Object not Targeted by v**

(27)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{vP} \\
\text{DP}^{\text{subj}} \\
\text{[PL]} \\
\text{v'} \end{array}
\]

- the \([\bullet \text{PART} \bullet]\) feature on v isn’t satisfied; no object shift
- the \([\bullet \text{D} \bullet]\) feature on v triggers merger of the subject

**Step 2: Third-Person Object Trapped in vP Phase**

(28)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Cl} \\
\text{[DP}^{\text{subj}} [\text{[PL]}] \\
\text{vP} \\
\text{v'} \end{array}
\]

- Cl is merged with vP
- Cl probes for closest goal in its c-command domain: the subject
- object is trapped by a phase boundary & therefore cannot be a possible goal for #-probe

4. Prediction: Object Shift Bleeds Object Agreement

- If local-person objects move to Spec,vP, we predict that this movement can bleed some other operation which occurs very low
- This is borne out - Phorhépecha features object number agreement on the verb, but only for 3rd-person objects
- Agreement morpheme is very low in the clausal spine - directly adjacent to verb stem

**Third-Person Objects:**

citic agreement & verbal agreement are in complementary distribution

3 OBJ & 1SG SUBJ

(29) Ji=ø xe-xa-ka
1SG=1SUBJ:SG see-PROG-1/2SUBJ
‘I am seeing her.’

(30) Ji=ø x-aa-xa-ka.
1SG=1SUBJ:SG see-3PL.OBJ-PROG-1/2SUBJ
‘I am seeing them.’

3 OBJ & 2SG SUBJ

(31) \text{T’u}=\text{ri} xe-xa-ka.
2SG=2SUBJ:SG see-PROG-1/2SUBJ
‘You are seeing her.’

(32) \text{T’u}=\text{ri} x-aa-xa-ka.
2SG=2SUBJ:SG see-3PL.OBJ-PROG-1/2SUBJ
‘You are seeing them.’

3 OBJ & 3SG SUBJ

(33) Inde=ø xe-xa-ti.
3.DEM=3SG see-PROG-3SUBJ
‘She is seeing her.’

(34) Inde=ø x-aa-xa-ti.
3.DEM=3SG see-3PL.OBJ-PROG-3SUBJ
‘She is seeing them.’

- A problem: movement out of vP must occur before agreement into vP to avoid a counter-cyclic derivation
Our solution: Ordering Merge before Agree

- 3rd-person objects not goals for the [PART] probe on v: do not undergo shift

(35) \[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{DP}_{\text{subj}} \rightarrow v' \\
\text{V} \\
\text{VP} \\
\end{array} \]

(36) \[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{DP}_{\text{subj}} \rightarrow v' \\
\text{V} \\
\text{VP} \\
\end{array} \]

no object shift because the third-person object cannot check the PART feature on v

(37) \[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{DP}_{\text{subj}} \rightarrow v' \\
\text{v} \\
\text{VP} \\
\end{array} \]

- a third stacked feature on v is a #-probe relativized for plural
- this #-probe searches for a goal in its c-command domain
- only nominal in the search space is a third-person object: participant objects have already shifted to a specifier of v due to the second stacked feature [PART] on v
- movement is ordered before Agree

the opposite order makes false predictions

(38) \[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{DP}_{\text{subj}} \rightarrow v' \\
\text{v} \\
\text{VP} \\
\end{array} \]

- Object is still in base position when agreement feature is triggered
- falsely predicts that local-person objects should also be agreed with

No verbal object agreement for 1/2 objects:

(39) \[ \text{inde}=\text{tsín} \hspace{1em} \text{xe}-(\text{aa})-\hspace{1em} \text{si} \]

3. DEM=IOBJ:PL see=(*\text{PL.OBJ})-PST-3SUBJ

‘They saw me, He saw us, They saw us’

(40) \[ \text{inde}=\text{ksí}n \hspace{1em} \text{xe}-(\text{aa})-\hspace{1em} \text{si} \]

3. DEM=2OBJ:PL see=(*\text{PL.OBJ})-PST-3SUBJ

‘They saw you, He saw y’all, They saw y’all’

Merge and Agree cannot be triggered by different heads

(41) \[ ... [vP DP,SUBJ [\text{vP} v [1/2P] \text{1/2} 1/2[vP ... DP,OBJ,3PL]]] \]

- A non-starter: Merge is before Agree, but landing site of Merge is still below probe
- The only way to get the facts right is to have object shift and object agreement be mediated by ordered operations triggered by features on the same head (Georgi 2017)

5. Conclusion

- Phörhëpecha features complementary person splits in omnivory and object agreement
- Local-person objects move higher than 3rd-person objects - person-specific syntax
- Omnivorous number is relatively little-studied cross-linguistically - it may be that such a movement-based analysis is viable for many such patterns

6. References


Poleto, C. 2000. The higher functional field: Evidence from Northern Italian dialects. OUP.


Georgi, D. 2017. Patterns of movement as the result of the order of Merge and Agree. Linguistic Inquiry 48.4, pp. 585-626.