

Extraction as a window into multiple loci of Agree: Insights from Acehnese

Introduction. As is well-known, Acehnese exhibits a passive construction that features verbal agreement with the (demoted) agent (1). Superficially similar agreement is employed in its Actor Voice (AV) clauses (2), where the verb also carries φ -agreement with the agent/subject. Both environments utilize the same set of affixes (3).

<p>(1) Gari nyan geu-bloe lé Abu. bike DEM 3SG.POL-buy by Father ‘That bike was bought by Father.’ [PASS]</p>	<p>(2) Ureueng nyan geu-bloe gari. person DEM 3SG.POL-buy bike ‘That person bought a bike.’ [AV]</p>				
1 SG	1 PL	2 SG	2 PL	3 SG	3 PL
<i>lon-</i>	<i>meu-</i> (exc.), <i>ta-</i> (inc.)	<i>ka-</i> (familiar), <i>neu-</i> (polite)	—	<i>ji-</i> (familiar), <i>geu-</i> (polite)	—

In contrast to (1)–(2), Durie (1985) and Asyik (1987) both report that agreement cannot appear in relativization, *wh*-extraction, or focus constructions targeting the subject/agent. This constraint is further confirmed through our primary fieldwork on the North and Great Aceh dialects: in either subject or object extraction, verbal agreement is obligatorily absent in fronted *wh*-questions, relativization, and pseudo clefts, as in (4)–(7):

<p>(4) Soe nyang (*ji)-bloe gari? who COMP (3SG.FAM)-buy bike ‘Who bought a bike?’ [SUBJECT WH-Q]</p>	<p>(5) Si Randi nyang (*ji)-bloe gari. ART Randi COMP (3SG.FAM)-buy bike ‘It was R. who bought a bike.’ [SUBJECT CLEFT]</p>
<p>(6) Peu nyang jih (*ji)-bloe? what COMP 3SG.FAM (3SG.FAM)-buy ‘What did s/he buy?’ [OBJECT WH-Q]</p>	<p>(7) Gari nyang si Randi (*ji)-bloe. bike COMP ART Randi (3SG.FAM)-buy ‘It was a bike that R. bought.’ [OBJECT CLEFT]</p>

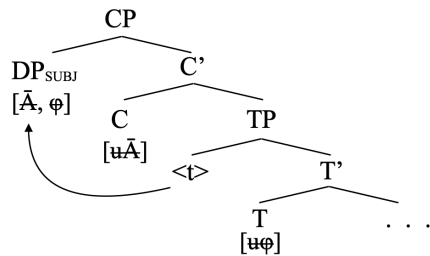
Main claims. In this paper, we present novel evidence for two points that are central to previous debates about the core syntax of Acehnese: **first**, the apparently similar agreement morphology in the passive (1) and the AV (2) is triggered by two distinct heads: Voice in the former and (finite) T in latter (contra Legate 2014, which attributes both to the Voice head); **second**, although Acehnese appears to impose no voice-marking constraints on \bar{A} -extraction (e.g. (4)–(7)), it essentially exhibits a strict, Philippine-style ‘pivot-only’ restriction, despite the absence of Philippine-type syntax in the language. Not only does this analysis align with the existing claim that Acehnese exhibits a grammatical subject position (Spec, TP) that attracts the highest DP in a given clause (Legate 2014), but it also offers new insights into how a highly constrained extraction restriction may be manifested in syntax despite without overt morphological cues.

‘Pivot-only’ shown through implicit voice distinctions. Although constructions like (4)–(7) appear to show no morphological indications of voice-marking, we will discuss how Acehnese’s strict word order patterns indicate all instances of agent extraction must follow AV’s word order pattern, and those of theme extraction must follow OV’s. This suggests that agent extraction is only possible from AV, and theme extraction is only possible from OV, demonstrating a strict ‘pivot-only’ restriction. In line with this observation, the same constraint is found with the passives: only the theme, and not the agent, may be extracted from a passive, as seen in (8)–(9).

<p>(8) Peu nyang geu-peugléh lé Abu? what COMP 3SG.POL-clean by Father ‘What did Father clean?’ [THEME EXT.]</p>	<p>(9) *Lé soe mèja nyan geu-peugléh (*lé soe)? by who table DEM 3SG.POL-clean (by who) (Intended: ‘Who cleaned that table?’) [AGT EXT.]</p>
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Absence of agreement as a window into the locus of Agree. Let us now reconsider the examples in (4)–(5). Recall that φ -agreement is obligatory in two-place AV clauses, as in (2). The fact that instances of agent extraction must exhibit the word order of AV construction yet lack φ -agreement (4)–(5) thus suggests that φ -agreement is absent under agent extraction. Why would \bar{A} -extraction eliminate φ -agreement in AV clauses? We argue that this is the effect of anti-agreement (Ouhalla 1993; Schneider-Zioga 2007)—that φ -agreement in the Actor Voice is triggered by Agree with T; thus, where the grammatical subject (the highest DP per clause) Agrees with an \bar{A} -probe (e.g. [uREL], [uFOC]) and moves to an \bar{A} -position, the anti-agreement effect is manifested, since the subject has been locally extracted from Spec, TP, as in (10). This effect, however, is not observable in the Object Voice (OV), as the OV originally employs no overt φ -agreement with the agent/external argument. In other words, the empirical picture suggests that the OV imposes a ‘pivot-only’ constraint evident by word order, yet shows no morphological clues either for the presence of extraction or anti-agreement effects.

(10) Proposed anti-agreement effect in Acehnese’s AV constructions



Our current analysis readily predicts that \bar{A} -extraction from the Acehnese passive should not drive the absence of verbal agreement, since the agreement-like affix found in the passive, as we propose, is neither triggered by Agree with T nor manifests φ -feature agreement (but rather is the spell-out of restrictive θ -features associated with the passive Voice head), as argued in Legate (2012, 2014). This prediction is borne out: new data from primary fieldwork show that theme extraction does not impact the presence of verbal agreement in the passive, as seen above in (8). As for agent extraction, Legate (2014) reports it being possible from a passive as an instance of adjunct extraction (11). Although such sentences were rejected by all three of our consultants who speak North and Great Aceh dialects, the crucial observation here is that either theme or agent extraction from the passive (where acceptable) carries overt φ -feature agreement—as are passives that involve no \bar{A} -extraction. This suggests that φ -agreement is not impacted by extraction in the passive, indicating that it is triggered by a head distinct from that in the AV (4)–(5).

- (11) Lé soe (*nyang) boh drien nyan **ji**-pajôh?
 by whom COMP cl durian dem **3FAM**-eat
 ‘By whom was the durian eaten?’ (Legate 2014: 74)

Further support for our claim that the absence of φ -agreement in the AV (4)–(5) results from anti-agreement comes from instances of *wh*-in-situ in the language. These instances are reported to be acceptable although disfavored by our speakers. In contrast to constructions (4)–(5), *wh*-in-situ sentences consistently correlate with the use of obligatory φ -agreement with the agent (12)–(13). This reinforces the view that \bar{A} -extraction, rather than the use of interrogative or *wh*-words, is indeed the cause of the absence of φ -agreement in (4)–(5).

- (12) ?Si Randi ***(ji-)**bloe peu? (13) ?Mak ***(geu-)**undang soe bak walimah?
 ART Randi (**3SG.FAM**)-buy what Mother (**3SG.POL**)-invite who P wedding.ceremony
 ‘What did Randi buy?’ ‘Who did Mother invite to the wedding ceremony?’

Further supporting evidence. For our current proposal (10) to go through, it is crucial to show that (i) Acehnese does employ a grammatical subject position above VoiceP that is obligatorily filled by the closest DP and (ii) the locus of agent agreement in the passive is indeed on Voice. We will present new evidence from raising and unaccusative constructions as well as binding patterns for (i) and data from restructuring and serial verb constructions for (ii). A discussion will also be given to the postverbal φ -agreement-like suffix found in Acehnese’s unaccusatives and the fact that the same agreement morphology may optionally appear in the passive and the OV—a pattern discovered in our fieldwork that has received scant attention in the literature.

Conclusion. The present analysis that separates the locus of φ -agreement in Acehnese’s AV and passive offers an optimal account for the presence of the same set of agent agreement affix in both transitives and passives—which is theoretically perplexing if both were triggered by the Voice head—which, in principle, should be distinct between transitives and passives. It also provides a simple account for the absence of φ -agreement under agent extraction in Acehnese—a phenomenon that has been reported in the literature yet received scant attention. These observations yield two major implications: (i) φ -agreement may be triggered by two distinct heads in a given language and realized morphologically indistinguishable and (ii) an extraction constraint may become superficially opaque yet remain syntactically present in a given language. Acehnese thus demonstrates an instructive case where \bar{A} -extraction sheds light on the design of agreement.

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