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Exploring Agreement Displacement from the Internal to the External Argument in the Tenetehára Language (Tupí-Guaraní Family)

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe and examine the verbal agreement system in the Tenetehára language (of the Tupí-Guaraní linguistic family). We assume the hypothesis that the agreement displacement phenomena – which are sensitive to person hierarchies – come from the mechanism of Agree, that operates on articulated φ-feature structures in cyclic syntax (Rezac, 2003; Béjar, 2000ab, 2003; Béjar; Rezac, 2009). We explore such agreement displacement in order to understand its syntactic and morphological character and its parameterization in Tenetehára. The analysis of the target language shows that cyclicity and locality derive a preference for agreement control by the internal argument, rather than by the external. Furthermore, the articulation of the probe derives when the agreement control displaces – in terms of cyclic syntax – to the external argument, which is sensitive to the following person hierarchy: $1>2>3_{[+foc]}>3_{[-foc]}$ (Duarte, 2007). In sum, when the resulting syntactic configurations are submitted to Transfer, properties of the morphological component further parameterize the outcome. Thus, the agreement displacement phenomenon in Tenetehára characterizes at least three classes of derivations corresponding to direct, inverse and direct-inverse contexts.

KEYWORDS: Tenetehára (Tupí-Guaraní); agreement displacement; person hierarchy; cyclicity

RESUMO

Este artigo tem o objetivo de descrever e examinar o sistema de concordância verbal na língua Tenetehára (da família linguística Tupí-Guaraní). Assumimos a hipótese de que os fenômenos de deslocamento de concordância – que são sensíveis às hierarquias de pessoa – surgem a partir dos mecanismos da operação Agree, que operam sobre as estruturas articuladas de traço-φ na sintaxe cíclica (Rezac, 2003; Béjar, 2000ab, 2003; Béjar; Rezac, 2009). Exploramos este deslocamento de concordância para entender seu caráter sintático e morfológico e sua parametrização em Tenetehára. A análise dessa língua mostra que a ciclicidade e a localidade derivam preferencialmente por uma concordância controlada pelo argumento interno, ao invés do argumento externo. Além disso, a articulação da sonda

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deriva quando a concordância muda, em termos de sintaxe cíclica, para o argumento externo, o qual é sensível à seguinte hierarquia de pessoa: $1>2>3_{[+foc]}>3_{[-foc]}$ (Duarte, 2007). Em suma, quando as configurações sintáticas resultantes são submetidas ao mecanismo de transferência (Transfer), as propriedades do componente morfológico parametrizam o resultado final. Assim, o fenômeno de deslocamento de concordância na língua Tenetehára exibe pelo menos três classes de derivação, as quais correspondem aos contextos direto, inverso e direto-inverso.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Tenetehára (Tupí-Guaraní); deslocamento de concordância; hierarquia de pessoa; ciclicidade

Introduction

In the Tenetehára[1] language (of the Tupí-Guaraní linguistic family), a *portmanteau* agreement morpheme is one that tracks features from two nuclear arguments. As the example[2] in (1) indicates, the agreement morpheme {*uru-*} spells out the first person feature from the subject and the second person feature from the object. It is important to note that this *portmanteau* morpheme is distinct from the agreement morpheme that cross-references the first person subject, as in (2), and also from the morpheme that cross-references the second person object, as it can be seen in (3).

(1) *uru-pytywà* *ihe*
1SG.2SG-help 1SG
"I helped you"

(2) *a-pytywà* *Tentehar* *ihe*
1SG-help Tenetehára 1SG
"I helped the Tenetehára"

(3) *ne-pytywà* *Tentehar* *a'e*
2SG-help Tenetehára 3
"The Tenetehára helped you"

[1] Tenetehára belongs to the Tupí-Guaraní family, Tupí Stock (Rodrigues, 1985). It is located in the northern region of Brazil and spoken by two indigenous groups: the Tembé and the Guajajára (Duarte, 2007). For a detailed analysis of the morphosyntax of Tenetehára, see Duarte (1997, 2003, 2007, 2012), Castro (2007, 2017), and Camargos (2013, 2017).

[2] The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: 1: first person; 2: second person; 3: third person; DEO: deontic modality; EA: external argument; EM: epistemic modality; EXCL: exclusive; FOC: focus; FUT: future; IA: internal argument; INCL: inclusive; INV: inverse marker; OBL: oblique case; PL: plural; SG: singular; UDPAST: unattested distant past.

The goal of this paper is to answer how and where *portmanteau* agreement is formed in Tenetehára grammar. Furthermore, we intend to answer why and how the verb agrees with the external argument, as in (2), while on the other hand, it agrees with the internal argument, as can be seen in (3).

The paper is organized as follows: section 2 describes the relevant data used to investigate the agreement displacement in Tenetehára. In Section 3, we introduce the basics of the theoretical framework adopted here, exploring in detail the hypothesis that the sensitivity of agreement displacement phenomena to person hierarchies comes from the mechanism of Agree, which operates on articulated φ-feature structures in a cyclic syntax (Rezac, 2003; Béjar, 2000ab, 2003; Béjar; Rezac, 2009). Sections 4 and 5 investigate the agreement system in Tenetehára, which, in terms of cyclic syntax, generates three natural classes of derivations for transitive clauses: direct context, inverse context and direct-inverse context. Finally, Section 6 concludes the investigation.

1. The relevant data

This section aims to provide the reader an overview of grammatical facts regarding the agreement displacement phenomena that are sensitive to person hierarchies. First of all, in Tenetehára, subject and object nominal phrases do not exhibit morphological case marking. Moreover, there are three sets of person markers used to encode the syntactic functions carried out by the verbal arguments. The first set corresponds to the so-called direct context, where the external argument controls agreement, as can be seen below:

(4)	a.	*a-exak*	*ka'i*	*ka'a*	*r-upi*	*ihe*
		1SG-see	monkey	forest	OBL-in	1SG
		"I saw a monkey in the forest"				
	b.	*uru-exak*	*ka'i*	*ka'a*	*r-upi*	*ure*
		1EXCL-see	monkey	forest	OBL-in	1EXCL
		"We saw a monkey in the forest"				

c.	*xi-exak*	*ka'i*	*ka'a*	*r-upi*	*zane*	
	1INCL-see	monkey	forest	OBL-in	1INCL	
	"We saw a monkey in the forest"					
d.	*ere-exak*	*ka'i*	*ka'a*	*r-upi*	*ne*	
	2SG-see	monkey	forest	OBL-in	2SG	
	"You saw a monkey in the forest"					
e.	*pe-exak*	*ka'i*	*ka'a*	*r-upi*	*pe*	
	2PL-see	monkey	forest	OBL-in	2PL	
	"You saw a monkey in the forest"					
f.	*w-exak*	*ka'i*	*ka'a*	*r-upi*	*a'e*	(*wà*)
	3-see	monkey	forest	OBL-in	3	PL
	"He saw a monkey in the forest"					
	"They saw a monkey in the forest"					

As indicated in the following examples, the second set of person markers corresponds to the so-called inverse context (Payne, 1994), where the internal argument controls agreement:

(5)	a.	*he-r-exak*	*Tentehar*	*a'e*
		1SG-INV-see	Tenetehára	3
		"The Tenetehára saw me"		
	b.	*ure-r-exak*	*Tentehar*	*a'e*
		1EXCL-INV-see	Tenetehára	3
		"The Tenetehára saw us"		
	c.	*zane-r-exak*	*Tentehar*	*a'e*
		1INCL-INV-see	Tenetehára	3
		"The Tenetehára saw us"		
	d.	*ne-r-exak*	*Tentehar*	*a'e*
		2SG-INV-see	Tenetehára	3
		"The Tenetehára saw you"		
	e.	*pe-r-exak*	*Tentehar*	*a'e*
		2PL-INV-see	Tenetehára	3
		"The Tenetehára saw you"		

f. *upaw pira Tentehar h-exak a'e (wà)*
all fish Tenetehára 3-see 3 PL
"All the fish, the Tenetehára saw it"

In Table 1, we summarize the first and second sets of verbal agreement. Notice that the second column shows the personal pronouns, which occupy the syntactic positions of subject and object. The third column displays the markers that refer to the external arguments. Lastly, the fourth column presents the agreement prefixes that indicate the internal argument.

	Pronouns	**First set (EA)**	**Second set (IA)**
1st person, singular	ihe	a-	he-
1st person, exclusive	ure	uru- ~ oro-	ure-
1st person, inclusive	zane	xi-	zane-
2nd person, singular	ne	re-	ne-
2nd person, plural	pe	pe-	pe-
3rd person	a'e (wà)	u- ~ o- ~ w-	i- ~ h-

Table 1. First and second sets of agreement

The third set of person markers corresponds to the *portmanteau* agreement, where the external and the internal arguments control agreement, as can be seen below:

(6) a. *uru-exak ka'a r-upi ihe*
1SG.2SG-see forest OBL-in 1SG
"I saw you$_{(sg)}$ in the forest"

b. *uru-exak ka'a r-upi ure*
1EXCL.2SG-see forest OBL-in 1EXCL
"We saw you$_{(sg)}$ in the forest"

c. *apu-exak ka'a r-upi ihe*
1SG.2PL-see forest OBL-in 1SG
"I saw you$_{(pl)}$ in the forest"

d. *urupu-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ure*
1EXCL.2PL-see forest OBL-in 1EXCL
"We saw you$_{(pl)}$ in the forest"

Table 2 summarizes the third set of verb agreement.

EA → IA	**Third set (*portmanteau*)**
I → you$_{SG}$	uru-
we$_{EXCL}$ → you$_{SG}$	uru-
I → you$_{PL}$	apu-
we$_{EXCL}$ → you$_{PL}$	urupu-

Table 2. Third set of agreement

2. Cyclic agreement

From a descriptive perspective, Duarte (2007) analyzes agreement in the Tenetehára language using person hierarchies, as in (7).

(7) 1st person > 2nd person > 3rd person [+FOC] > 3rd person [-FOC]
(> means "more prominent than")

As schemed in (7), the choice of which argument will be Agreed with is an independent component of φ-agreement. In such approach, φ-agreement is treated as a uniform phenomenon that depends on the choice of the target.

Based on Harley & Ritter (2002), Béjar (2003) and Béjar & Rezac (2009), we propose that Tenetehára uses cyclic verbal agreement. That is, agreement takes place in a cyclic way through a list of arguments. Béjar & Rezac (2009, p. 39) claim that "we interpret the core pattern, where IA agreement bleeds EA agreement, to mean that the relevant φ-probe is on the *v* head and so has only the IA in its search space at first", as can be seen in the morphosyntactic representation in (8).

(8) $[_{vP}\ F_{EA}\ [\ \boldsymbol{v}+_{\mathbf{AGR}}\ [_{VP}\ V\ F_{IA}\ ]]]$

Following Béjar & Rezac (2009), we assume that the sensitivity of agreement displacement phenomena to person hierarchies is possible because the mechanism of Agree operates on articulated φ-feature structures in a cyclic way. According to the authors, the cyclicity and the locality derive a preference for agreement control by the internal argument. Consequently, articulation of the probe determines when the agreement controller cyclically displaces to the external argument. We will see that this system characterizes three classes of derivations corresponding empirically to direct, inverse and direct-inverse contexts.

In addition, we will adopt the Béjar & Rezac (2009, p. 47) approach, according to which the φ-features permit us "to distinguish individual φ-values by representing them as subsets of a single feature structure". This means that the person hierarchy sensitivity to agreement displacement can be modeled by the following facts:

(9) a. Matching of a proper subset of the features of a probe by a goal leaves an active residue able to match another goal

b. Different cross-linguistic person hierarchy sensitivities follow from different articulations of the probe

(Béjar; Rezac, 2009, p. 47)

According to Béjar & Rezac (2009), the pattern of agreement displacement presents a preference for the internal argument as the controller, which is superseded by an external argument if the internal argument does not suffice to check all segments of a language's characteristic probe (Rezac, 2003; Béjar, 2000ab, 2003).

The internal argument will fail to Agree for a particular feature [uF] or [uP] of such an articulated φ-probe when it lacks a matching [F] or [P]; thereby [F] or [P] on the external argument can then be the goal of Agree. Therefore, the full agreement can be controlled by the internal argument, as in (10a), and bypassed by the internal argument in favor of control by the external argument, as can be seen in (10b). In the last situation, (10c), the agreement on H is controlled by [F] on the internal argument and by [P] on the external argument.

(10) *Cyclic Expansion* (adapted from Béjar; Rezac, 2009, p. 42)

a. → DP$_1$ Agrees

DP$_2$	H	DP$_1$
[F:val]	[uF]	[F:val]
[P:val]	[uP]	[P:val]

b. ← DP$_2$ Agrees

→ DP$_1$ Bypassed

DP$_2$	H	DP$_1$
[F:val]	[uF]	
[P:val]	[uP]	

c. ← DP$_2$ Agrees (P)

→ DP$_1$ Agrees (F)

DP$_2$	H	DP$_1$
[F:val]	[uF]	[F:val]
[P:val]	[uP]	

According to Béjar & Rezac (2009, p. 42), "one such system is developed by Harley & Ritter (2002) for morphological φ-features, which is extended to the φ-features visible to Agree, following Béjar (2000ab, 2003)". Accordingly, the φ-feature bundle is structured into subgroups that include semantic entailment relations and natural classes. Therefore, all persons include some shared features. In addition, first and second persons are specified as discourse participants and so grouped into a natural class. Finally, first and second persons are differentiated from one another by a feature on the first person, distinguishing it as the speaker (Béjar; Rezac, 2009, p. 42).

3. Agreement paradigm shift

Taking into account that "morphological derivations must directly reflect syntactic derivations (and vice versa)"[3] (Baker, 1985, p. 375), we assume that the agreement pattern in Tenetehára is characterized by a single-head agreement, which can be controlled by one or two nuclear arguments. Furthermore, spell-out is sensitive to the person feature value on both agreeing arguments, leading to the characterization of such systems as sensitive to person hierarchies. According to Béjar & Rezac (2009, p. 36), the fundamental principles that enter into account are:

(11) a. Intervener-based locality (Rizzi, 1990), relativized to features (Chomsky, 1995): Agree for a feature [F] is sensitive only to other elements with [F]

b. A fine-grained approach to cyclicity, where every syntactic operation defines a cycle and thus a potential feeding-bleeding relationship (Rezac, 2003)

c. A fine-grained approach to φ-features (specifically person or φ-features), and especially φ-probes, associating with each person value (φ-value) a different feature structure and thus a different locality class (Béjar, 2003)

In the Tenetehára language, these mechanisms will generate three natural classes of derivations for transitive clauses: direct context, inverse context and direct-inverse context, as we can see below:

Inverse context

(12) a. *he=r-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *a'e* (3 → 1 = 1)
1SG-INV-see forest OBL-in 3
"He/she saw me in the forest"

b. *he=r-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ne* (2 → 1 = 1)
1SG-INV-see forest OBL-in 2SG
"You saw me in the forest"

[3] According to Baker (1985, 1988), the order of affixes reflects the order in which the associated syntactic operations apply.

c. *ne=r-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *a'e* (3 → 2 = 2)
2SG-INV-see forest OBL-in 3
"He/she saw you in the forest"

Direct context

d. *a-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ihe* (1 → 3 = 1)
1SG-see forest OBL-in 1SG
"I saw him/her in the forest"

e. *ere-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ne* (2 → 3 = 2)
2SG-see forest OBL-in 2SG
"You saw him/her in the forest"

Direct-inverse context

f. *uru-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ihe* (1 → 2 = 2)
1SG.2SG-see forest OBL-in 1SG
"I saw you in the forest"

g. *uru-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ure* (1 → 2 = 2)
1EXCL.2SG-see forest OBL-in 1EXCL
"We saw you in the forest"

In order to implement the theoretical proposal developed above, we will now show how the cyclic Agree mechanism derives the basic pattern of agreement displacement in Tenetehára in terms of the following person hierarchy: [1>2>3]. To simplify the explanation, only the person feature will be considered. The number feature will be ignored. The relevant data is given in (12). Note that the verbal prefix cross-references the person of the external argument when it is more highly specified than the internal argument.

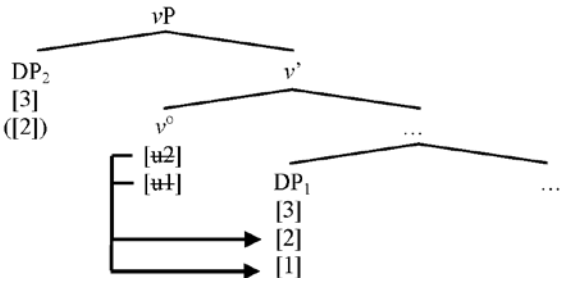
Let us start with inverse context, in which the internal argument checks all the probe's features that it can match. In this situation, the core π-probe of *v* does not Agree with the external argument. See the examples repeated below.

(13) a. ***he***=*r-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *a'e* (3 → 1 = 1)
1SG-INV-see forest OBL-in 3
"He/she saw me in the forest"

b. ***he***=*r-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ne* (2 → 1 = 1)
1SG-INV-see forest OBL-in 2SG
"You saw me in the forest"

As the derivation in (14) indicates, the internal argument checks all the segments of the probe in the first cycle. Therefore, the second cycle is totally unnecessary, as the probe cannot Agree with the external argument anymore.

(14) *First Cycle*



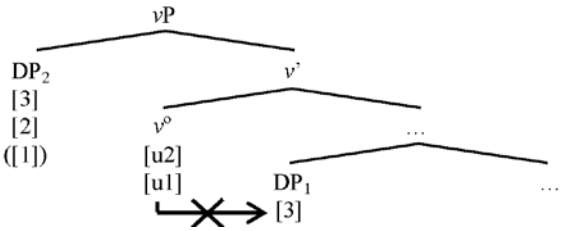
In direct context, the external argument is more highly specified than the internal argument. Hence, after trying, but failing, to Agree with the internal argument, the probe Agrees for its unchecked segments with the external argument. In this situation, the core π-probe of *v* Agrees only with the external argument, since the segments of the internal argument could not control the agreement. See the examples repeated below.

(15) a. ***a***-*exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ihe* (1 → 3 = 1)
1SG-see forest OBL-in 1SG
"I saw him/her in the forest"

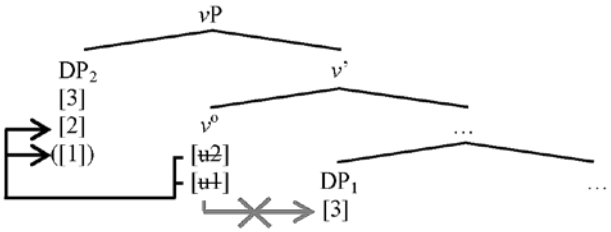
b. ***ere***-*exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ne* (2 → 3 = 2)
2SG-see forest OBL-in 2SG
"You saw him/her in the forest"

As the derivation in (16) exhibits, the internal argument cannot check the segments of the π-probe in the first cycle. For this reason, the π-probe has to be assigned a value on the second cycle (EA > IA), so that it Agrees for its unchecked segments with the external argument. Note that articulation of the probe derives when the agreement control displaces, in terms of cyclic syntax, to the external argument.

(16) a. *First Cycle*



b. *Second Cycle*



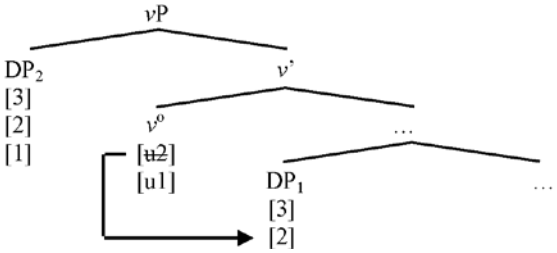
Finally, in direct-inverse context, the external argument is more highly specified than the internal argument. Hence, after the characteristic probe has Agreed as fully as possible with the internal argument, it Agrees for its unchecked segments with the external argument. In this situation, the core π-probe of *v* Agrees with both the internal argument and the external argument, for different segments, as we can see in the following repeated examples.

(17) a. ***uru****-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ihe* (1 → 2 = 2)
1SG.2SG-see forest OBL-in 1SG
"I saw you in the forest"

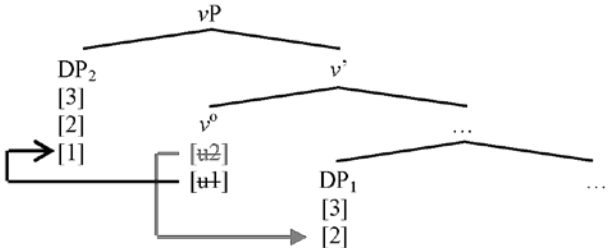
b. ***uru****-exak* *ka'a* *r-upi* *ure* (1 → 2 = 2)
1EXCL.2SG-see forest OBL-in 1EXCL
"We saw you in the forest"

As the derivation in (18) reveals, the internal argument partially checks the segments of the π-probe in the first cycle. After that, it Agrees for its unchecked segments with the external argument. As a consequence, the outcome is a *portmanteau* morphology, which arises when features of more than one syntactic terminal (in this case, internal argument and external argument) are spelled-out by a single vocabulary item.

(18) a. *First Cycle*



b. *Second Cycle*



In sum, this analysis of the Tenetehára language demonstrates that cyclicity and locality derive a preference for agreement control by the internal argument. Additionally, articulation of the probe derives when the agreement control displaces, in terms of cyclic syntax, to the external argument, which is sensitive to the following person hierarchy: $1>2>3_{[+foc]}>3_{[-foc]}$ (Duarte, 2007).

4. Agreement in the C/TP-domain

It could be proposed that *v* is responsible for agreement with the internal argument, whereas a higher head, probably T or C, Agrees with the external argument. However, this is not supported by Tenetehára data. The examples given above show that there is an agreement displacement paradigm, suggesting that we are dealing with just one φ-probe that oscillates between two controllers. This means that there is just one slot for

agreement. Furthermore, the preference for agreement with the internal argument is evidence that this φ-probe has to be low in the structure (i.e. within the *v*P shell).

It is also important to observe that the Tenetehára language displays a second agreement slot, which is not a verbal affix (possibly because the verb does not move to TP, according to Duarte, 2012). In terms of φ-features, this head can only be controlled by the external argument. We propose that this agreement is in the C/TP-domain because it is next to, for example, the expression of modality and evidentiality, as can be seen below:

(19)	*ne-r-exak*	*rakwez*	***kwarer***	*ka'a*	*r-upi*	***a'e***	*ri'i*
	2SG-INV-see	UDPAST	boy	forest	OBL-in	3	EM
	"The boy certainly saw you in the forest"						
(20)	****ne**-r-exak*	*rakwez*	*kwarer*	*ka'a*	*r-upi*	***ne***	*ri'i*
	2SG-INV-see	UDPAST	boy	forest	OBL-in	2SG	EM
	"The boy certainly saw you in the forest"						

In the C/TP-domain, there is also an agreement in terms of number feature. As the examples demonstrate (21)-(22), the number of the subject is marked at the end of the sentence (the singular is not marked, though). What is surprising is that the head in the C/TP-domain can also Agree, in terms of number feature, with the internal argument, as can be seen in (23), (24) and (25).

(21)	*w-exak*	*kwarer*	*tata*	*a'e*	***wà***
	3-see	boy	fire	3	PL
	"The boys saw fire"				
(22)	*ne-pytywà*	*kwarer*	*a'e*	***wà***	
	2SG-help	boy	3	PL	
	"The boys helped you"				
(23)	*w-exak*	*Tukàn*	*kwarer*	*a'e*	***wà***
	3-see	Tukàn	boy	3	PL
	"Tukàn saw the boys"				
(24)	*a-exak*	*ka'i*	*ka'a*	*r-upi*	*ihe*	***wà***
	1SG-see	monkey	forest	OBL-in	1SG	PL

"I saw monkeys in the forest"

(25)	*ere-zuka-putar*	*ka'i*	*ne*	***wà***	*nehe*
	2SG-kill-FUT	monkey	2SG	PL	DEO

"You will kill the monkeys"

One such system is identified by Harley & Ritter (2002) and Béjar & Rezac (2009) for φ-features, which we extend to the number feature in terms of cyclic agreement. Furthermore, we propose that the number agreement happens in a cyclic way through a list of arguments whose morphosyntactic representation is:

(26) $[_{CP} \ldots \#P+_{AGR} [_{vP} F_{EA} [_{VP} V F_{IA}]]]$

In line with Béjar & Rezac (2009), this paper shows that the sensitivity of agreement displacement phenomena to number arises from the mechanism of Agree operating on articulated number feature structures in a cyclic syntax. Additionally, the locality derives a preference for agreement control by the external argument. Accordingly, articulation of the probe determines when the agreement controller cyclically displaces to the internal argument.

The external argument will fail to Agree for a particular feature [uF] of such an articulated number probe when the external argument lacks a matching [F]; thereby [F] on the internal argument can then be the goal of Agree. Therefore, the agreement can be controlled by the external argument (see (27a)) and bypassed by the external argument in favor of control by the internal argument, as in (27b).

(27) *Cyclic Expansion* (adapted from Béjar; Rezac, 2009, p. 42)

a. ⟶ DP_1 Agrees

H	DP_1	DP_2
[uF]	[F:val]	[F:val]

b. ⟶ DP_2 Agrees

⟶ DP_1 Bypassed

H	DP_1	DP_2
[uF]	[F:val]	

5. Final remarks

In the Tenetehára language, a *portmanteau* agreement morpheme is one that codifies features from two nuclear verbal arguments. This *portmanteau* morpheme is distinct from the agreement morpheme that cross-references the subject and from the morpheme that cross-references the object. From a descriptive perspective, Duarte (2009) analyzes agreement in this language using person hierarchies: $1>2>3_{[+foc]}>3_{[-foc]}$. In addition, the choice of which argument will be agreed with is an independent component of φ-agreement.

Following Béjar & Rezac (2009), we assumed that the sensitivity of agreement displacement phenomena to person hierarchies is possible because the mechanism of Agree operates cyclically on articulated φ-feature structures. According to the authors, the fact that the derivation unfolds in cyclic and local fashion derives a preference for agreement control by the internal argument. Accordingly, articulation of the probe determines when the agreement controller cyclically displaces to the external argument. We've seen that this system characterizes three classes of derivations that correspond empirically to direct, inverse and direct-inverse contexts.

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