

## Clausal agreement on adverbial expressions in Andi

One of the most important and substantial tasks faced by linguistic theory is to account for the *limitations* on what is possible in the languages of the world, with a view to understanding what this tells us about the nature of the human linguistic system. If a particular abstract phenomenon is not found in a given language, this absence does not necessarily require a principled explanation; but if it is apparently unattested in language as a whole, we look to linguistic theory to suggest an underlying reason why. This means that it is of crucial importance to determine which thinkable phenomena really are absent from human language, and which merely suffer from a lack of documentation – so that our theories do not impose constraints which are falsified by empirical reality.

Agreement, which sits at the interface between syntax and morphology and has no obvious correlate outside language itself, has long been the subject of theoretical enquiry. But there is a growing body of evidence which casts doubt on widely-held assumptions about what agreement can and cannot do. Here I show that Andi, an under-documented Nakh-Daghestanian language of Russia, supports the position that while agreement at the clause level is generally thought of as affecting the verb (and associated forms such as auxiliaries), it can also target numerous parts of speech which are usually not considered to be potential agreement targets. I focus on the possibility of finding clausal agreement on adverbial expressions:

- (1) Ali-di            keč'i                            **šu-b**            q'ori  
Ali(I)-ERG        song(IV)[SG.ABS]        good-IV        call.AOR  
'Ali sang the song well.'
- (2) Ajšati                            diwan-u-č'u                            **j-eχudi<j>a**        j-eq'aši  
Aisha(II)[SG.ABS]        sofa(IV)-SG.OBL-CONT        II-behind<II>        II-hide.AOR  
'Aisha hid behind the sofa.'

In (1), the adverb *šub* 'well' agrees in gender with the object of the sentence, *keč'i* 'song' (gender IV), as is signalled by the final *-b*; in (2), the postposition heading the phrase *diwanuč'u jexudija* 'behind the sofa' is marked (twice) for agreement with the single argument of the clause, *Ajšati* (gender II).

The fact that the postposition *jexudija* in (2) is able to agree, and with a nominal other than its own complement *diwan* 'sofa', is noteworthy in itself. However, one could envisage an account of examples (1-2) which treated the presence of agreement as semantically driven, signalling that the property communicated by the agreeing expression ('being good', 'being behind the sofa') is predicated of the relevant noun. That is, for example, it might be argued that the syntactic structure of sentence (1) is better captured by a translation 'Ali sang the song [so that it was] good.'

In this paper I show that an account of this kind is insufficient to deal with the full range of agreement we see in Andi. Consider example (3), where plural agreement on *č'ilol* 'wrongly' is with the *friends*, and not with the *girl* whose action is treated as wrong – giving a mismatch between the formal and semantic relationships shown by the adverb.

- (3) još-u-di                            **č'il-ol**        elto-č'igu                            homoloϝ-adul        iši<j>a-l  
girl(II)-SG.OBL-ERG        wrong-PL        allow-PF.NEG        friend(II)-PL.ABS        homeward<II>-PL  
'The girl wrongly refused to let her friends in.'

Evidence of this kind demonstrates that a structural explanation is required, whereby adverbial expressions in Andi inflect for agreement with the absolutive argument regardless of their semantic orientation. I present an account of this phenomenon in which, in Minimalist terms, agreement comes as the result of upward valuation and probing in Andi is sensitive to absolutive nominals only.