ABSTRACT. C agrees in the φ-features of an operator in its Spec but not one in situ in many Bantu languages. Despite this I argue that a closest c-command based account (Chomsky 2000) is superior to a Spec–head agreement analysis, for two reasons. First, feature-valuation under closest c-command permits a unified treatment of Bantu operator agreement and West Germanic complementizer agreement with subjects. Second, it explains a common requirement that subjects be in situ in Bantu A’-movement constructions: a subject raised to Spec, TP would intervene between C’s φ-features and the operator in outer Spec, vP that must value them. Like wh-movement, subject raising always coincides with agreement in Bantu; I propose that Bantu uninterpretable φ-features have EPP features. These are distinct from the classical EPP of T which, I argue, underlies a verbal agreement requirement giving every Bantu inflectional category a specifier. I show that nominative Case-checking is independent of both agreement and EPP in Bantu.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Phenomena

In Kilega, a wh-phrase may either surface in situ or raise to a position at the left periphery of the clause. Just in the latter case, the verb, located in second position, agrees in noun class with the wh-phrase:¹

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¹ All Kilega data are taken from Kinyalolo (1991) unless otherwise noted. Arabic numerals in glosses of Bantu examples designate noun class. Roman numerals I and II in Bantu glosses indicate 1st and 2nd person. Throughout, abbreviations are: SA = subject agreement; CA = complementizer agreement (whether with wh- in Bantu, or with a West Germanic subject); AGR = agreement; ASP = aspect; T = tense; PST = past tense; HAB = habitual; IMP = imperfective; PROG = progressive; MOD = modal; APPL = applicative morpheme; PERF = perfect aspect; PL = plural; FV = final vowel of Bantu verbs. A = the Kilega vowel a, which Kinyalolo (1991, 2003) analyzes as a default vowel; it seems to lexicalize phonetically null heads in the T/A system. ETE is an aspectual auxiliary.
Such agreement is found in many languages of the Bantu family. Bokamba (1976) and Kinyalolo (1991) discuss comparable facts in the topicalization and relativization constructions of Dzamba, Likila, and Lingala; and in a large-scale study of Bantu relativization, Nsuka (1982) describes 70 languages with the same patterns of word order and agreement, as well as 34 others in which a raised operator controls agreement on a right-adjacent element other than the verb. Throughout this paper, I will accordingly treat the Kilega facts as representative of Bantu generally. I discuss a couple of subpatterns featuring significant deviations from the Kilega facts in sections 2.3.2 and 8.

1.2. Theoretical Issues

Kinyalolo (1991) provides an illuminating treatment of (1) and many other phenomena of Kilega in terms of the hypothesis that heads inherit features of their specifiers, as shown in (2) (Chomsky 1986; Koopman 1992; and others).

\[(2) \text{Spec–head agreement hypothesis (SHAH):} \]
\[
[\text{XP} \ YP_\Phi [\ X]] \rightarrow [\text{XP} \ YP_\Phi [\ X_\Phi]]
\]

Kinyalolo (1991) argues that the Kilega verb raises and adjoins to C in (1b) (see (3)). It therefore exhibits the \(\Phi\)-features that C acquires under SHAH from an operator raised to Spec, CP (see also Carstens and Kinyalolo 1989; Rizzi 1990).

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\(^2\) Wh-questions in the languages of Bokamba’s study are quite opaquely formed, with no operator agreement and the wh-phrase appearing rightmost in the string (Bokamba 1976, pp. 154–160). These might involve large-scale remnant movement across the wh-phrase (heavy pied-piping in the sense of Nkemnji 1995). I leave the constructions aside here, for future research.