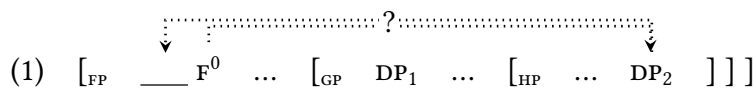


A-Locality at the Edge

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 Syntax Reading Group
 March 27, 2026

THE GOAL OF THIS TALK is to contribute to the wider push to make sense of the A- $\bar{A}$ divide, against a new empirical backdrop and in a new theoretical context.

THE NARROW TARGET: the theory of relative locality in A-movement.



TRADITIONALLY:

(Postal 1971; Chomsky 1981)

A-MOVEMENTS	$\bar{A}$ -MOVEMENTS
Raising	WH-movement
Passive	Relativization
Object Shift	Topicalization

INTERFACE EFFECTS		FEEDING RELATIONS		INTERNAL PROPERTIES	
	A	$\bar{A}$		A	$\bar{A}$
CROSSOVER	✗	✓	CASE	✓	✗
CONDITION C	✓	✗	AGREEMENT	✓	✗
VARIABLE BINDING	✓	✗	A-MOVEMENT	✓	✗
				STRICT LOCALITY	✓
				NOMINALS ONLY	✗

A-SYNTAX	$\bar{A}$ -SYNTAX
Lower Positions	Higher Edges
Case & Agreement	Operators; Criteria
Heads always present	Heads present as-needed

TWO TRENDS:

1. DISSOCIATION

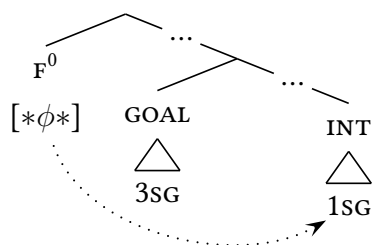
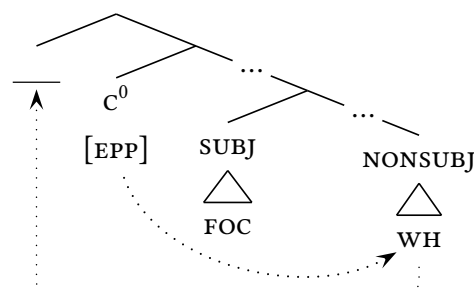
Individual steps of movement seem able to draw properties “from both sides.”
 (Aldridge 2004; Fong 2019; Gong 2022; Erlewine & Branen 2024; Bhatt & Keine 2025)

2. INTERACTION

Apparent steps of $\bar{A}$ -movement can derail expected patterns of A-movement
 (Campos 1997; McCloskey 2000; Fitzpatrick 2006; van Urk 2015; Newman 2024)

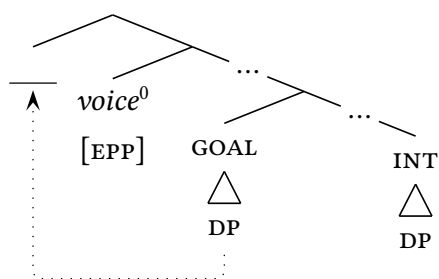
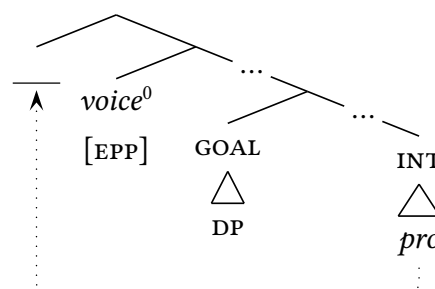
THE NARROW PUZZLE:

Systems of ϕ -agreement and $\bar{A}$ -attraction often show **SELECTIVITY** (PRIORITY EFFECTS): before heads trigger MOVE/AGREE, they compare a range of goals in their search domains.

(2) a. *Selective Agreement*b. *Selective Attraction*

THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH: these patterns don't emerge in the domain of A-attraction, since (modulo ACTIVITY) the probes that drive A-movement always target the closest DP.

BUT TODAY:

(3) a. *Ditransitives in Mandar*b. *Selective A-Attraction***THE WIDER PERSPECTIVE:**

EMPIRICALLY: these effects fall into a wider class of deviations around **RELATIVE LOCALITY**.

THEORETICALLY: they feed a wider push to connect relative locality to **HEIGHT**: in the A-syntax, selective attraction emerges at the edge of the clause-internal phase.

SOCIOLOGICALLY: they further the program that leverages these deviations to reinterpret and extract individual components of the A- $\bar{A}$ divide while keeping the distinction intact.

THE MAP:

1. A PUZZLE OF A-LOCALITY
2. THE PRIORITY EFFECT
3. TOWARD A THEORY

(On an Austronesian voice system)
(Selective A-attraction)
(Locality at the Edge)

1 Language Background

The focus of this talk will fall on Mandar, an Austronesian language of Central Indonesia.

- Part of the South Sulawesi subfamily, a primary branch of Malayo-Polynesian (Esser 1936; Grimes & Grimes 1987; Smith 2017); related to Selayarese (Finer 1997; 1999)
- Roughly half a million speakers; moderately endangered; shift toward Indonesian
- DATA: long-term elicitation (2018–) with a single speaker, Jupri Talib, regular trips to the field; prior work (Pelenkahu 1983; Sikki et al. 1987; Muthalib & Sangi 1991)

Quick facts:

- VERB-INITIAL ORDER: basic word order = vso; derived by head-movement of the v
- HEAD-MARKING: ergative-absolutive agreement; no morphological case; *pro-drop*
- SUBJECTHOOD: systematic and covert A-movement of the absolutive DP

WORD ORDER: verb > arguments > adjuncts to the VP.

(Brodkin 2025)

- (4)
- | | | | | |
|------------|--------|--------|---------|----------|
| V | EXT | INT | GOAL | ADJUNCTS |
| Nalli-angi | iKaco' | bunga | iCicci' | dio. |
| buy-APPL | NAME | flower | NAME | there |
- 'Kacho' bought Chichi' flowers there.'

ERGATIVE AGREEMENT: prefixes on transitive and ditransitive verbs.

- (5)
- a. U-alli i **yau** bunga dio.
 1ERG-buy 3ABS 1SG flower there
 'I bought the flowers there.'
- b. Na-alli-ang i **iKaco** bunga iCicci' dio.
 3ERG-buy-APPL 3ABS NAME flower NAME there
 'Kacho' bought Chichi' flowers there.'

ABSOLUTIVE AGREEMENT: second-position clitics agree with the EXT when the verb is antipassive (6a), the INT when it's transitive (6b), and the GOAL when it's ditransitive (6c).

- (6)
- a. Ma'-ala **a'** **yau**.
 ANTIP-take 1ABS 1SG
 'I took (some).'
- b. Na-ala **a'** *pro* **yau**.
 3ERG-take 1ABS 3SG 1SG
 'They took me.'
- c. Na-ala-ngang **a'** *pro* *pro* **yau**.
 3ERG-take-APPL 1ABS 3SG 3SG 1SG
 'They took it for me.'

1.1 High Absolutive Agreement

Our starting point is a fact of agreement: the absolutive enclitics sit high in the clause.

LINEAR EVIDENCE: the language has a series of preverbal AUXILIARIES that mark polarity and aspect, and when these are present, absolutive agreement docks on the highest.

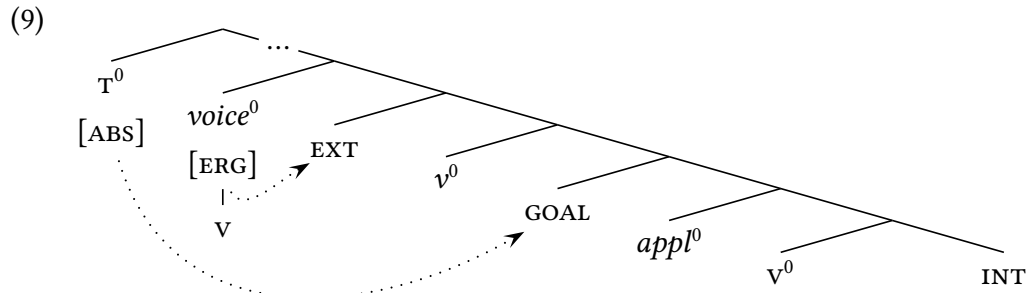
- (7) a. **Rua** i u-ita *pro* iKaco' dio.
 once 3ABS 1ERG-see 1SG NAME there
 'I once saw Kacho' there.'
- b. **Ndang** i rua u-ita *pro* iKaco' dio.
 not 3ABS once 1ERG-see 1SG NAME there
 'I've never seen Kacho' there.'

MORE SERIOUS ARGUMENTS:

1. MORPHOLOGY: absolutive agreement shows allomorphy triggered by C^0 and ASP^0 ,
2. SYNTAX: and it's absent from the complements of control and restructuring verbs.

- (8) a. U-ulle i [_{POLP} ndang u-pake $_/*i$ lo'diang].
 1ERG-strong enough 3ABS not 1ERG-use 3ABS ring
 'I'm strong enough to not use the ring.'
- b. Batabata a' yau [_{ASPP} pura na-kalulu $_/*a'$ iKaco' PRO].
 reluctant 1ABS 1SG done 3ERG-help 1ABS NAME
 'I'm reluctant for Kacho' to be done helping ____.'

RESULT: absolutive arguments seem to trigger a non-local pattern of agreement with T^0 .



SCAFFOLDING:

- ϕ -AGREEMENT = CASE-ASSIGNMENT: all types of absolutive DP receive Case from T^0 .
- RELATIVE LOCALITY: this is A-syntax $\rightarrow$ the probe should target the closest DP.
- INTERIM QUESTION: how does T^0 get past the ergative DP?

1.2 High Abslutive Syntax

This effect is matched by patterns that are familiar from systems where $ABS \approx NOM$ (in AN: Kroeger 1993; Richards 2000; also Guilfoyle, Hung, & Travis 1992; Aldridge 2004; more broadly: Bittner & Hale 1996a,b; Coon et al. 2014; Royer 2022; Ershova 2023).

Starting with Condition C:

(10) *Between A-Positions: (Reinhart 1883)*



Between NON-ABSOLUTIVE ARGUMENTS:

- Pronominal external arguments CANNOT corefer with R-expressions in the INT
- Pronominal internal arguments CAN corefer with R-expressions in the EXT.

(11) *Ditransitive EXT > INT*

- a. Na-yolo-ang a' *pro* [_{INT} kindo'-na [_{EXT} iKaco' na iCicci']] *pro*.
 3ERG-show-APPL 1ABS 3SG mom-of NAME and NAME 1SG
 'She_i showed me Kacho' and Chichi's_{i,j} mom.'
- b. Na-yolo-ang a' [_{EXT} kindo'-na [_{EXT} iKaco' na iCicci']] *pro pro*.
 3ERG-show-APPL 1ABS mom-of NAME and NAME 3SG 1SG
 'Kacho' and Chichi's_i mom showed her_i to me.'

Between ABSOLUTE and NON-ABSOLUTIVE ARGUMENTS:

- Pronominal external arguments CAN corefer with R-expressions in the GOAL
- Pronominal GOALS CANNOT corefer with R-expressions in the EXT.

(12) *Ditransitive GOAL > EXT*

- a. Na-yolo-ang i *pro* seni [_{GOAL} kindo'-na [_{EXT} iKaco' na iCicci']].
 3ERG-show-APPL 3ABS 3SG art mom-of NAME and NAME
 'She_i showed Kacho' and Chichi' _i's mom some art.'
- b. Na-yolo-ang i [_{EXT} kindo'-na [_{EXT} iKaco' na iCicci']] seni *pro*.
 3ERG-show-APPL 3ABS mom-of NAME and NAME art 3SG
 'Kacho' and Chichi' _i's mom showed her_i some art.'

Turning to Variable Binding:

(13) *Between A-Positions: (Reinhart 1983)*



BACKGROUND:

- LINEAR DISTRACTION: in finite clauses, many quantifiers subextract to second-position.
- VARIABLE BINDING: completely insensitive to movement of *nasang* “every.”

Between NON-ABSOLUTIVES:

(14) *Ditransitive EXT > INT*

- a. Na-yolo-an nasang a' [EXT pallukis ____EVERY] [INT lukisang-na pro].
 3ERG-show-APPL every 1ABS painter painting-3GEN her
 ‘Every_{ij} painter showed me her_i paintings.’
- b. Na-yolo-an nasang a' [EXT pallukis-na pro] [INT lukisang ____EVERY].
 3ERG-show-APPL every 1ABS painter-3GEN its painting every
 ‘Its_{ij} painter showed me every_i painting.’

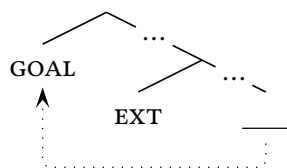
Between ABSOLUTIVES and NON-ABSOLUTIVES:

(15) *Ditransitive GOALS/Transitive INTs > EXT*

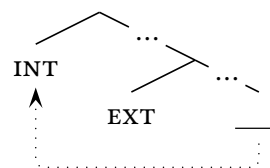
- a. Na-yolo-an nasang i [EXT sola-na pro] seni [G pallukis ____EVERY].
 3ERG-show-APPL every 3ABS friend-3GEN her art painter
 ‘Her_{ij} friend showed every_i painter some art.’
- b. Na-pelambi' nasang i [EXT kindo'-na pro] [INT sanaeke ____EVERY].
 3ERG-visit every 3ABS mom-3GEN her kid
 ‘Her_{ij} mom visited every_i kid.’

UPSHOT: A-movement

(16) a. *Ditransitives*



b. *TRANSITIVES*



1.3 The Path of the Absolutive DP

There's a universe of work on the systems that raise the absolutive DP, in Austronesian (Guilfoyle, Hung, & Travis 1992, Rackowski 2002; Aldridge 2004, Erlewine 2018; Nie 2020) and beyond (Coon et al. 2014; Brown 2016; Royer 2022; Yuan 2018, 2022, Ershova 2023).

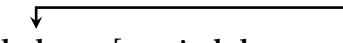
Two puzzles:

- The facts of word order are often totally unclear (e.g., in Tagalog: Sabbagh 2014)
- The relevant steps of A-movement are often COVERT (Polinsky & Potsdam 2002)

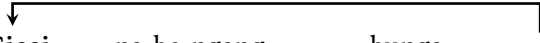
BUT HERE:

- We really understand the word order, controlling for distractions (Brodkin 2025)
- With the right prosodic manipulations: A-movement = overt (me again)

STEP ONE: Definite objects $\rightarrow$ SPEC, VP:

- (17) a. Na-be-ngang a' [VP iKaco' [VP **mindulu** buku]] AE!
 3ERG-give-APPL 1ABS NAME back book PRT
 'Kacho' gave a book back to me!' 
- b. Na-be-ngang a' [VP iKaco' **buku** [VP **mindulu** ____]] AE!
 3ERG-give-APPL 1ABS NAME book back PRT
 'Kacho' gave the book back to me!'

STEP TWO: Absolutive DPS $\rightarrow$ SPEC, voiceP:

- (18) a. Rua i [voiceP **iCicci** na-tumae iKaco' ____].
 once 3ABS NAME 3ERG-propose NAME
 'Kacho' once proposed to Chichi.' 
- b. Rua i [voiceP **iCicci** na-be-ngang bunga ____].
 once 3ABS NAME 3ERG-give-APPL flower
 'He once gave flowers to Chichi.' 

STEP THREE: Absolutive DPS $\rightarrow$ SPEC, TP:

- (19) a. [TP **iCicci** rua [voiceP ____ na-tumae i ____] AE!
 NAME once 3ERG-propose 3ABS PRT
 'He once proposed to Chichi.' 
- b. [TP **iCicci** rua [voiceP ____ na-bengang i ____] AE!
 NAME once 3ERG-give 3ABS PRT
 'He once gave it to Chichi.' 

The facts of linear order, then, suggest that we also have the non-local step of movement in (20): the absolutive DP is drawn above the EXT by movement to the edge of the *voiceP*. (see also: Aldridge 2004, Coon et al. 2014, Erlewine 2018; Nie 2020, Hsieh 2020)

The diagram illustrates the semantic structure of the sentence "The cat sat on the mat and drank from the bowl". The tree is rooted at T^0 . The root branches into an ellipsis (...) and another T^0 . This second T^0 branches into $[ABS]$ and an INT node. The INT node branches into $voice^0$ and an EXT node. The $voice^0$ node branches into V . The EXT node branches into an INT node and a v^0 node. The v^0 node branches into V^0 and an INT node. Dotted arrows indicate the semantic interpretation: $[ABS]$ points to the first INT node, and the first INT node points to the second INT node, which in turn points to the final INT node.

(Guilfoyle, Hung, & Travis 1992, Bittner & Hale 1996a,b, Legate 2008, Ershova 2019...)

- (21) [voiceP voice⁰ [vp EXT ... [vp ... INT]]] [ERG] [uCASE]

1. **LOW ERGATIVE CASE:** the (di)transitive EXT should always get Case from *voice*⁰
2. **CASE FOR OTHER NON-ABSOLUTIVES:** ditransitive INTs should receive Case low, too
3. **NO STRUCTURAL ACCUSATIVE:** transitive INTs/ditransitive GOALS $\nrightarrow$ Case from *v*⁰

The diagram illustrates the semantic structure of a sentence, showing the hierarchy of nodes and their relationships. The root node is T^0 . It branches into $[ABS]$ and a node labeled $GOAL$. $[ABS]$ has a dotted arrow pointing to the $GOAL$ node. The $GOAL$ node branches into $voice^0$ and a node labeled EXT . $voice^0$ has a dotted arrow pointing to a node labeled $[uCASE]$. EXT branches into $[ERG]$ and a node labeled v^0 . v^0 branches into a node labeled $GOAL$ and a node labeled $appl^0$. The second $GOAL$ node branches into V^0 and a node labeled INT . V^0 branches into $[OBL]$.

2 Priority Parcels

THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN reasons to disfavor Activity (Nevins 2004; Chomsky 2020 fn.5): hyperraising (Ura 1994), profligate subject movement (Cable 2012), A-movement of quirky subjects (Zaenen et al. 1985) and ergative DPS (Legate 2006); everything about Bantu...

But there's also empirical reason to believe that this account is not correct.

UP TO THIS POINT: we've looked at ditransitive clauses where the INT $\approx$ the GOAL. When both arguments are pronouns or DPS: the absolutive argument = the GOAL.

- (23) a. U-yolo-ang **o** [INT *pro*] [GOAL **i'o**].
 1ERG-show-APPL 2ABS 3SG 2SG
 'I showed her to you.'
- b. U-yolo-ang **i** [INT **i'o**] [GOAL *pro*].
 1ERG-show-APPL 3ABS 2SG 3SG
 'I showed you to her.'

HOWEVER:

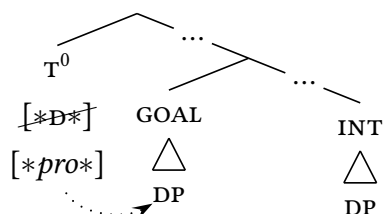
- (24) $INT = Pronoun + GOAL = DP$
- U-yolo-ang **o** [INT **i'o**] [GOAL sola-u].
 1ERG-show-APPL 2ABS 2SG friend-my
 'I showed you to my friends.'

This type of effect is familiar from AGREE: ϕ -probes often seem to inspect multiple goals (Hiraiwa 2001; Nevins 2011; Oxford 2014; Deal 2015; Coon & Keine 2021; Grishin 2023)

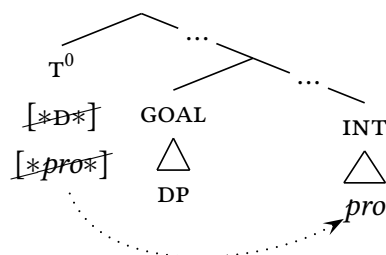
One way to understand these effects: (Pesetsky & Torrego 2001)

- FEATURE HIERARCHY: regular DPS have the feature [D]; pronouns have [*pro*] + [D]
- COMPLEX PROBE: T^0 has two features that guide agreement: [$*D^*$] and [$*pro^*$]
- ECONOMY CONSTRAINT: T^0 favors the goals that check the most features.

(25) a. *Regular Derivations*



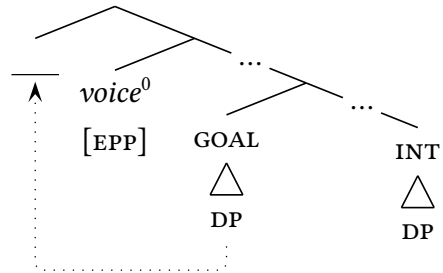
b. *Priority Derivations*



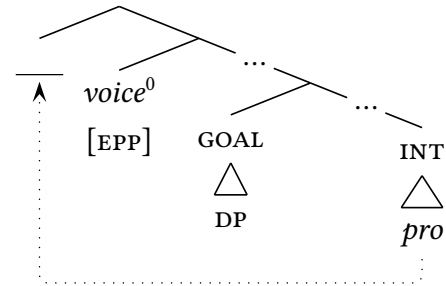
2.1 Selective A-Attraction

PROPOSAL: when the INT agrees with τ^0 , voice^0 triggers SELECTIVE A-ATTRACTION.

(26) a. *Regular A-Movement*



b. *Selective Attraction*



ARGUMENT ONE: in these environments, the GOAL cannot surface overtly in SPEC, voice_P :

- (27) a. Rua i [voice_P **iCicci** u-carita-ngang *pro* ____] AE!
 once 3ABS NAME 3ERG-tell-APPL it PRT
 ‘I once told Chichi’ about it.’
- b. Rua i [voice_P u-carita-ngang *pro* **iCicci**] AE!
 once 3ABS 3ERG-tell-APPL her NAME PRT
 ‘I once told Chichi’ about her.’

ARGUMENT TWO: the GOAL loses the ability to bind variables in the EXT:

- (28) a. Na-yolo-an nasang i [EXT sola-na *pro*] seni [G pallukis _EVERY].
 3ERG-show-APPL every 3ABS friend-3GEN her art painter
 ‘Her_{ij} friend showed every_i painter some art.’
- b. Na-carita-ngang nasang i [EXT kindo’-na *pro*] *pro* [sanaeke ____].
 3ERG-tell-APPL every 3ABS mom-of 3SG her kid
 ‘His_{i*j} mom told every kid_i about her.’

...and it loses the ability to contain R-expressions coindexed with the EXT, too.

- (29) a. Na-yolo-ang i *pro* seni [GOAL kindo’-na [_{CP} iKaco’ na iCicci’]].
 3ERG-show-APPL 3ABS 3SG art mom-of NAME and NAME
 ‘She_i showed Kacho’ and Chichi’_i’s mom some art.’
- b. Na-carita-ngang o [EXT *pro*] *pro* [kindo’-na iKaco’ na iCicci’].
 3ERG-tell-APPL 2ABS 3SG 2SG mom-of NAME and NAME
 ‘She_i told Kacho’ and Chichi’_{s*}_{ij} mom about you.’

ARGUMENT THREE: the INT gains the ability to bind variables in the EXT:

(30) *Shifted Agreement: INTs gain Privilege*

- a. Na-yolo-an nasang a' [EXT pallukis-na pro] [INT lukisang ____EVERY].
 3ERG-show-APPL every 1ABS painter-3GEN its painting every
 'Its_{*ij} painter showed me every_i painting.'
- b. Na-carita-ngang nasang i [EXT kindo'-na pro] [pro ____] iCicci'.
 3ERG-tell-APPL every 3ABS mom-of 3SG them NAME
 'Her_{ij} mom told Chichi' about every one of them_i.'

...and it gains the ability to contain R-expressions coindexed with the EXT, too:

(31) *Shifted Agreement: INTs gain Privilege*

- a. Na-yolo-ang a' [EXT kindo'-na [_{DP} iKaco' na iCicci']] pro pro.
 3ERG-show-APPL 1ABS mom-of NAME and NAME 3SG 1SG
 'Kacho' and Chichi's_i mom showed her_i to me.'
- b. Na-carita-ngang i [EXT kindo'-na iKaco' na iCicci'] pro dottor.
 3ERG-tell-APPL 3ABS mom-of NAME and NAME her doctor
 'Kacho' and Chichi's_{*ij} mom told the doctor about her_i.'

ARGUMENT FOUR: the INT starts to move overtly to SPEC, *voiceP*.

- LINEAR DISTRACTIONS: weak third-person pronouns are always null in Mandar, and all types of weak pronouns—without the right controls—cluster in second-position.
- EMPIRICAL EXTENSION: the pronouns are not the only xps that force this effect. We see the same types of patterns (albeit with important variation among them) with WH-phrases, relative operators, PRO, and many types of quantified xps.

When we quantify the GOAL and the INT, all tests reveal that the GOAL = the absolutive:

- (32) a. Rua [GOAL **tallu lessang**] u-be-ngang [INT 50 loka] ____.
 once three monkey 1ERG-give-APPL 50 banana
 'I once gave three monkeys fifty bananas.'
- b. Rua [GOAL **tallu lessang**] u-yolo-ang [INT ian. loka] ____.
 once three monkey 1ERG-show-APPL each banana
 'I once showed three monkeys each banana.'

And when we quantify the INT and keep the GOAL a DP:

- (33) Rua [INT **tallu loka**] u-be-ngang ____ [GOAL iting lessang].
 once three banana 1ERG-give-APPL that monkey
 'Once I gave that monkey three bananas.'

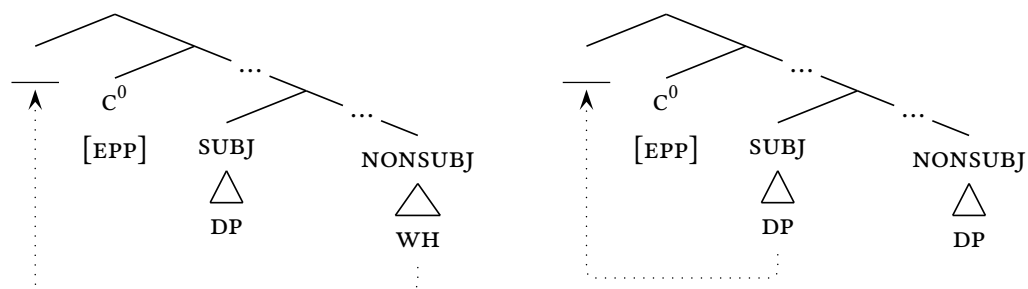
2.2 The Case for A-Movement

In the domain of *ATTRACTION*, the result is a pattern that's familiar from the $\bar{A}$ -domain: “attract the thing you want the most, but all else being equal, just take the highest *xP*.”

This is what happens in the *v2* systems where one position attracts *WH*-phrases/foci/topics and otherwise the closest *xP*, like German (Fanselow 2002, Fanselow & Lenertová 2011; on the existence of a single *v2* landing site in German, see Schwartz & Vikner 1989, 1996).

(34) a. *Non-Subject Attraction*

b. *Subject Attraction*



It's also familiar from the systems where focus positions preferentially attract *WH*-phrases over foci, like San Martin Peras Mixtec (Hedding 2022) and Hungarian (É Kiss 1998):

- (35) a. $[_{CP} [_S \text{ MARIA } \text{ÑÁ}] \text{ } C^0 [_{TP} \text{ kàsá'a } \text{ }] [_O \text{ ntsiajyí vá'a }]]$.
 NAME made mole
 ‘MARIA made mole.’ ?, ex11b
- b. $[_{CP} [_O \text{ Nă }] \text{ } C^0 [_{TP} \text{ kìxaxì } [_S \text{ PEDRO RÀ }] \text{ }]]?$
 what bring NAME
 ‘What did PEDRO bring?’ ?, ex13b

BUT HERE:.

1. *BINDING*: this step influences Condition C/ Variable Binding,
2. *AGREEMENT*: it positions its targets for ϕ -agreement with τ^0 , and
3. *FEEDING EFFECTS*: it also feeds A-movement to the highest subject position, *SPEC,TP*:

(36) *Quantified Absolutives: Priority Movement to SPEC, VoiceP*

- $[_{INT} \text{ Ing. poto iAli }] \text{ rua } i \text{ } \text{ na-jolo-ang } \text{ } [_{GOAL} \text{ sola-na }]$.
 all photo NAME once 3ABS 3ERG-show-APPL friend-his
 ‘He_{ij} once showed his friends all the photos of Ali_i.’

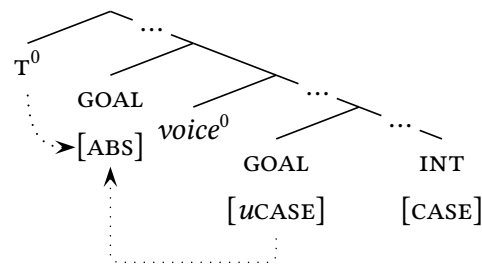
2.3 Interim Scaffolding

To make sense of all this:

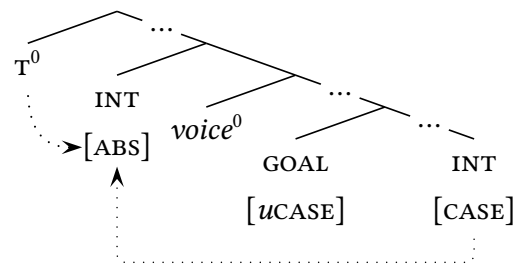
- WHAT ARE THE MECHANISMS THAT DETERMINE THE LOCALITY PROFILE OF A-MOVEMENT, which typically force strict relative locality but allow for selective attraction here?
- WHAT ARE THE MECHANISMS THAT “PICK UP THE SLACK” IN THE SYSTEM OF CASE, when selective attraction seems to cut arguments off from their sources of licensing?

SCHEMATICALLY:

(37) a. *Regular Ditransitives:*



b. *Priority Environments:*



MORPHOLOGICAL FOOTWORK:

- DITRANSITIVE BASELINE: when the GOAL and INT are pronouns: $T^0 \rightarrow \text{GOAL}$.
- SECOND-POSITION EFFECT: the absolutive enclitics in $T^0 \rightarrow$ the highest auxiliary.
- OBSERVATION: when we give these elements their own independent landing site, there's a second type of agreement with the INT that appears on the v.

- (38) a. U-yolo-ang **i** [INT **i'o**] [GOAL *pro*].
 1ERG-show-APPL 3ABS 2SG 3SG
 'I showed you to her.'
- b. Rua i u-yolo-ang **o** [INT *i'o*] [GOAL *pro*].
 once 3ABS 1ERG-show-APPL 2ACC 2SG 3SG
 'I once showed you to her.'

INTERIM ACCOUNT:

- There's a head in the *voiceP* that agrees with the ditransitive INT and assigns it Case
- In the syntax this always occurs, but in the morphology, it's only exponed when:
 1. its target is a pronoun, and
 2. it's not linearly adjacent to T^0 .

When the GOAL is a regular DP in contexts of PRIORITY, we never see this agreement: T^0 agrees with the INT and nothing seems to target the GOAL.

- (39) a. [_{INT} **Ing.** lukisang] rua **i** u-yolo-ang [_{GOAL} sola-u].
 all painting once 3ABS 1ERG-show-APPL friend-my
 ‘Once I showed all the paintings to my friends.’
 b. Rua **o** u-yolo-ang [_{INT} *i’o*] [_{GOAL} sola-u].
 once 2ABS 1ERG-show-APPL 2SG friend-my
 ‘Once I showed you to my friends.’

BUT: there are elements in this system that are better than pronouns, like quantified xps. When we place these in the position of the INT, they always interact with T^0 :

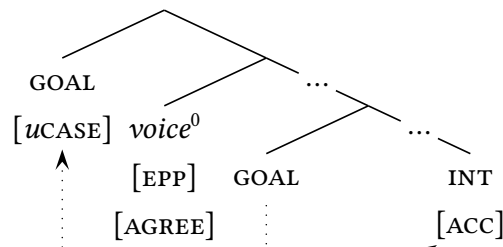
- (40) a. [_{INT} **Ing.** lukisang] u-yolo-ang **i** [_{GOAL} **i’o**].
 all painting 1ERG-show-APPL 3ABS 2SG
 ‘I showed you all the paintings.’
 b. [_{INT} I’o mie’ **ing.**] na-yolo-ang **o** [_{GOAL} **yau**].
 you guys all 3ERG-show-APPL 2ABS 1SG
 ‘They showed me all of you.’

In this environment: we can see that pronominal GOALS are rescued by low agreement.

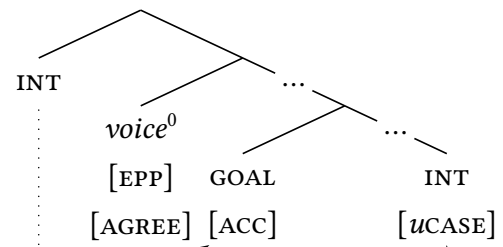
- (41) a. [_{INT} **Ing.** lukisang] rua **i** u-yolo-ang **o** [_{GOAL} **i’o**].
 all painting once 3ABS 1ERG-show-APPL 2ACC 2SG
 ‘I once showed you all the paintings.’
 b. [_{INT} I’o mie’ **ing.**] rua **o** na-yolo-ang **a’** [_{GOAL} **yau**].
 you guys all once 2ABS 3ERG-show-APPL 1ACC 1SG
 ‘They once showed me all of you.’

SCHEMATICALLY:

- (42) a. *Regular Ditransitives:*



- b. *Priority Environments:*



QUESTION: how does the A-syntax reroute ϕ -agreement?

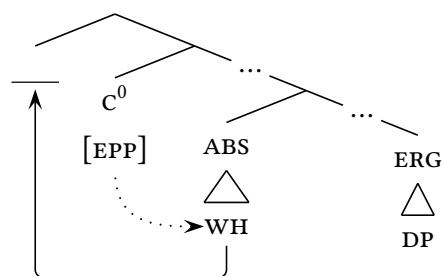
3 Towards a Theory

STARTING PROPOSAL: **STRICT RELATIVE LOCALITY IS NOT ABOUT THE A- $\bar{A}$ DIVIDE.**

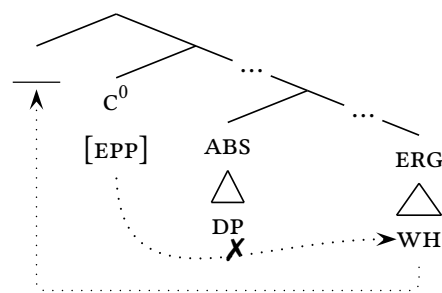
This step fits well with the push to recognize patterns of $\bar{A}$ -PROBING FOR THE CLOSEST DP (Aldridge 2004; Erlewine & Branan 2024; Branan 2025; see also Keenan & Comrie 1976):

- A mechanism that seems necessary to account for certain restrictions on $\bar{A}$ -extraction in many ergative systems, including the **ABSOLUTIVES-ONLY EXTRACTION CONSTRAINT** across Austronesian (Guilfoyle et al. 1992, and see also Coon et al. 2014, 2021),
- Plus many steps of “subjects-only $\bar{A}$ -extraction” in nominative-accusative systems: in pseudorelatives (Cinque 1992), reduced relatives (Cagri 2005), subject-initial v2 clauses (Travis 1984; Zwart 1993), and many subject WH-questions (Bošković 2024)

(43) a. *Absolute Extraction*

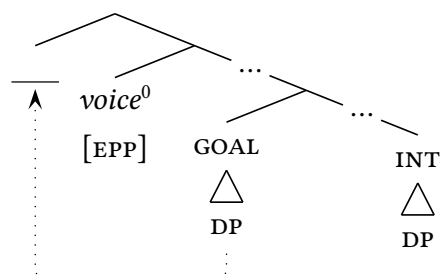


b. *Ergative Extraction*

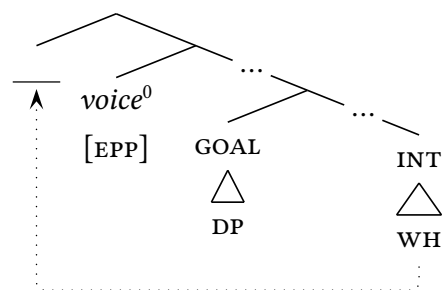


It also traces the growing recognition that A-movements are often derailed in the presence of $\bar{A}$ -elements that target landing sites nearby (van Urk 2015; Newman 2024).

(44) a. *Regular Ditransitives*



b. *Wh-Internal Arguments*



In Mandarin, for instance: A-movement of the ditransitive GOAL to SPEC, *voiceP* is derailed when the INT is a WH-phrase that passes through the edge of the phase:

- (45) $[_{INT}$ **Apa** $]$ byasa $[_{voiceP}$ ____ pira na-be-ngang **o** $[_{GOAL}$ **i'o** $]]?$
 what usually all 3ERG-give-APPL 2ACC 2SG
 ‘What all do they usually give you?’

3.1 The Link to the Edge

ELSEWHERE, I HAVE ARGUED that “ $\bar{A}$ -probing for the closest DP” is bound up with height: the $\bar{A}$ -positions that strictly attract the closest DP are always relatively LOW.

HERE, I’d like to focus on the opposite effect.

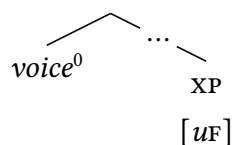
- In this system, selective A-attraction emerges at the edge of the extended VP: the key steps are triggered by a head that falls just beneath the auxiliaries.
- This juncture corresponds to the edge of a PHASE, in the system of Chomsky 2000, 2001, and it has been argued to provide landing sites for movements of two types:
 1. $\bar{A}$ -extractions (Abels 2012; Van Urk 2015; 2018; cf. Keine & Zeijlstra 2025),
 2. Non-local A-movement of absolutive DPs (Aldridge 2004; Coon et al. 2014)

THE STANDARD ACCOUNT IN THE $\bar{A}$ -DOMAIN:

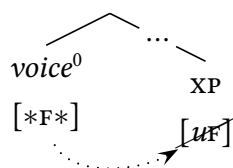
Chomsky 2000,2001

- Syntactic derivations proceed in chunks, delimited by phase heads like *voice*⁰, and at the end of each phase, the complement of the phase head is transferred to PF.
- These complements have to meet conditions of interface legibility, and it falls to the phase heads to ensure that these requirements are met—by resolving the problems or drawing all the problematic elements out of the phase.

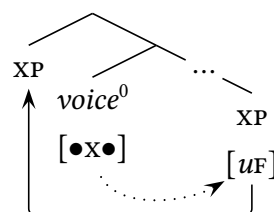
(46) a. *Starting Point*



b. *Solution One*

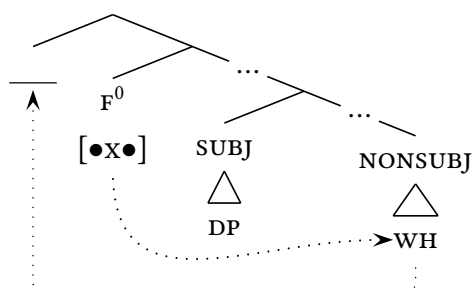


c. *Solution Two*

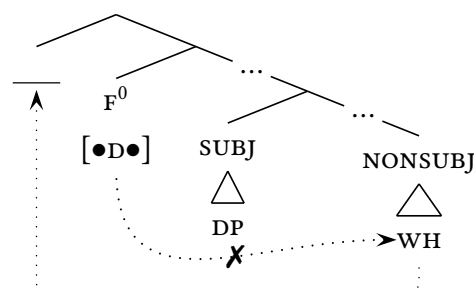


- To ensure that phase heads can always clean up in this way: they must be endowed with movement-driving “EDGE FEATURES” that allow for selective relative locality.
- These features contrast with the triggers for regular A-movement—by hypothesis, features that strictly attract the closest DP. Denoting the two as [•D•] and [•X•]:

(47) a. *Edge Features*

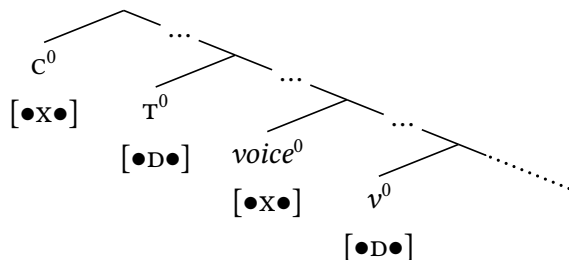


b. *Regular Features*



FIRST RESULT: $\bar{A}$ -features, which license selective locality, must be TETHERED TO THE EDGE.

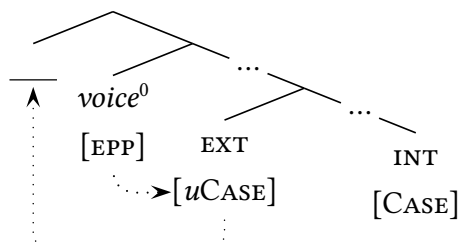
(48) *Movement-Driving Features: Distribution*



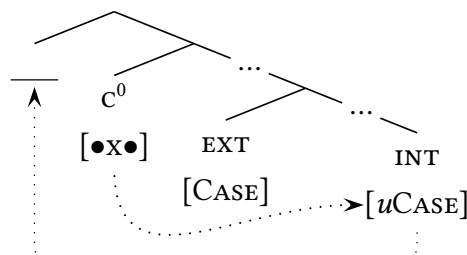
TURNING TO THE A-DOMAIN:

- The extended VP often contains DPs that rely on external heads for structural Case.
- In nominative-accusative systems where these arguments are highest in the *voiceP*, it should usually be possible to draw them to the edge without selective attraction.
- But in the ergative-absolutive systems where the ABS DP gets Case from T^0 : we need some type of attraction that can skip the EXT (and go beyond ACTIVITY).

(49) a. *Nom/Acc Systems*



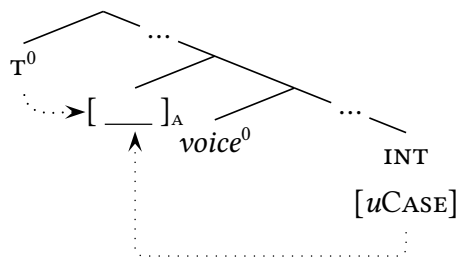
b. *High-Abs Syntax*



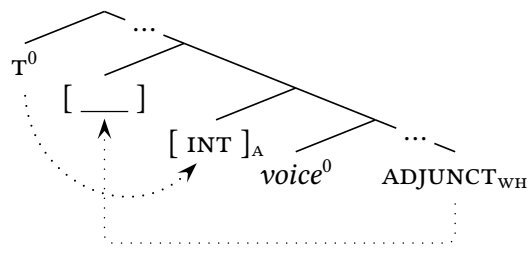
To ensure the core properties of A-movement—that these steps reshape patterns of binding and feed ϕ -agreement, licensing, and A-movement—I'll assume they target A-positions.

- IN THE SYNTAX: their landing sites are marked by privative features that render them visible to the operations of the A-syntax, unlike landing sites of $\bar{A}$ -movement.
- FORMALLY: these positions are designated by A/ $\bar{A}$ features (cf. Van Urk 2015).

(50) a. *A-Positions*



b. *$\bar{A}$ -Positions*



SECOND RESULT: relative locality can be severed from the A- $\bar{A}$ divide.

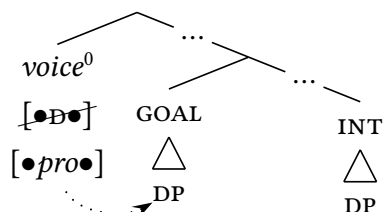
- The features that license non-local attraction must be available to both the A-syntax and the $\bar{A}$ -syntax: in our terms, they must come in the forms $[\bullet x \bullet]_A$ and $[\bullet x \bullet]$.
- The ensuing patterns of attraction emerge from the interaction of four systems:
 - INDEPENDENT FEATURES: preferentially target QPs; pronouns; caseless DPS...
 - FEATURAL ECONOMY: check as many features as possible on the fewest goals.
 - BEST-MATCH EFFECTS: if you can't check them all, favor certain features.
 - RELATIVE LOCALITY: all else being equal, attract the closest licit goal.

PRIORITY EFFECTS $\rightarrow$ MULTITASKING

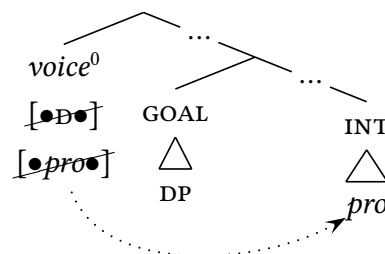
(Pesetsky & Torrego 2001)

- FEATURE HIERARCHY: regular DPS have the feature $[D]$; pronouns have $[pro] + [D]$
- COMPLEX PROBE: $voice^0$ has two subfeatures that guide $[\bullet x \bullet]$: $[\bullet D \bullet]$ and $[\bullet pro \bullet]$
- ECONOMY CONSTRAINT: $voice^0$ favors the goals that check the most features.

(51) a. *Regular Derivations*



b. *Priority Derivations*

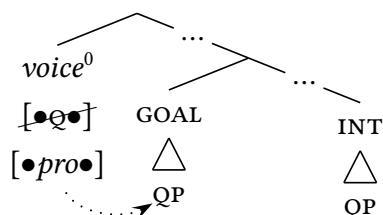


FINER PREFERENCES $\rightarrow$ BEST-MATCH CONSTRAINTS

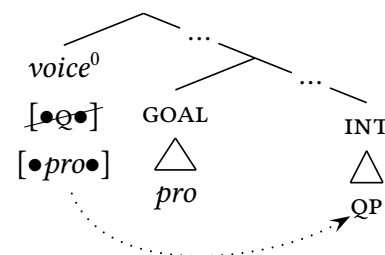
(Coon & Bale 2014)

- DISJUNCTIVE FEATURES: pronouns have $[pro] + [D]$; quantifiers have $[D] + [Q]$
- MORE COMPLEX PROBE: $voice^0$ has another subfeature to guide $[\bullet x \bullet]$: $[\bullet Q \bullet]$
- BEST-MATCH HIERARCHY: $voice^0$ favors the goals that $[\bullet Q \bullet]$ over $[\bullet pro \bullet]$.

(52) a. *Regular Derivations*



b. *Priority Derivations*



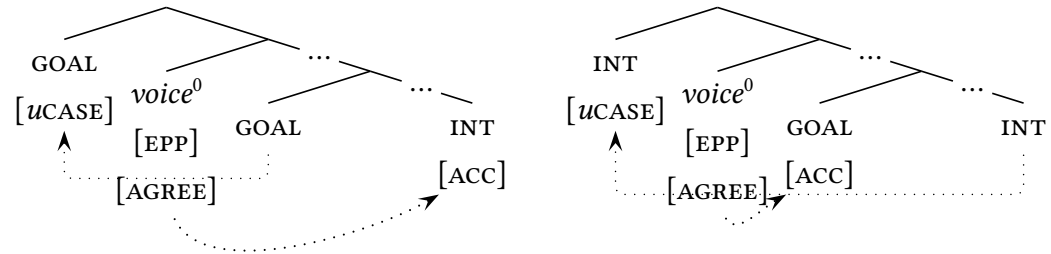
Heads must be allowed to vary in the features they bear that guide $[\bullet x \bullet]$, the Case features that enable selective A-attraction, and the hierarchies that drive Best-Match—but the simplest view might hope that phase heads would always bear edge features of both types, with restrictions on movement emerging from independent constraints.

3.2 Rerouting Agreement

OUR FINAL TASK: to derive our interaction between attraction and ϕ -agreement/Licensing.

(53) a. *Regular Ditransitives:*

b. *Priority Environments:*



SCAFFOLDING: Heads often don't agree with the xps they attract: Anagnostopoulou 2003; Bruening 2005; Anand & Nevins 2006; Béjar & Rezac 2003; Halpert 2012; Richards 2013; and on Icelandic/Faroese: Holmberg 2003, Sigurdsson 2008, Chomsky 2008, Asarina 2011

TWO PERSPECTIVES:

1. FEATURE ORDERING (Georgi 2014, 2017): features are organized into ordered stacks and these effects emerge when MOVE and AGREE are ordered in the “wrong” way.
2. ANTI-MULTITASKING: if the syntax can access blocks of features and check them in parallel (Chomsky 2000), then these types of effects may emerge from constraints against checking specific combinations of features against a single goal.

EMPIRICAL PICTURE: there's a similar effect that plays out when the EXT is a QP, WH-phrase, or PRO: *voice*⁰ attracts it with priority and ERGATIVE AGREEMENT is lost.

(54) *The Agent Focus*

a. Byasa a' **na**-pelambi'i [_{EXT} *pro*].

Usually 1ABS 3ERG-visit 3SG

'Usually he visits me.'

b. [_{EXT} **Ing.** sola-u] byasa i **map**-pelambi'i a'.

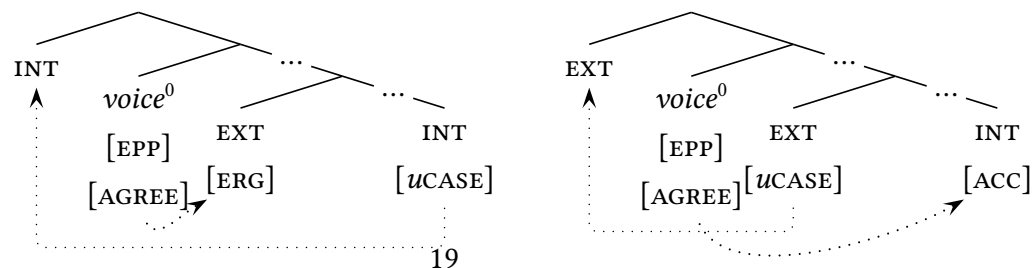
all friend-my usually 3ABS AGENT.FOCUS-visit 1ACC

'All my friends usually visit me.'

SCHEMATICALLY:

(55) a. *Transitive Syntax:*

b. *Agent Focus:*



4 Wrapping Up

THE EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTION.

1. There are steps of selective attraction that seem well-integrated with the A-syntax: reshaping patterns of Condition C and Variable Binding, feeding ϕ -agreement and A-movement, and determining how the movement-driving head assigns Case.
2. These effects emerge at the edge of the clause-internal phase in Mandar, triggered by the same head that drives non-local A-movement of the absolutive DP.

THE THEORETICAL CLAIM:

3. These steps implicate selective A-attraction, rather than mixed A/ $\bar{A}$ -movement
4. Strict relative locality is not a defining property of A-movement or A-attraction, and
5. The possibility for selective attraction is systematically tied to the edge of the phase.

THE THEORY OF LOCALITY:

6. When selective attraction emerges around the A-syntax, it need not be “mixed A/ $\bar{A}$.”
7. These steps of movement, and patterns of non-local A-movement more generally, should always be anchored to the edge of the phase—in a way that seems to resonate with much work on similar systems in other languages (and work on ergativity, too).
8. Strictly local $\bar{A}$ -attraction becomes a different thing: $\bar{A}$ -movement to low positions (putting us on the hook for a theory of how triggers for $\bar{A}$ -movement can be low).

THE THEORY OF THE DIVIDE:

9. A-movement looks more like ϕ -agreement and $\bar{A}$ -attraction than we knew: probes may always see multiple goals and choose in response to ranked constraints.
10. This type of A-movement may lie behind all putative cases of A- $\bar{A}$ mixing, and it may be possible to get back to the world where A- $\bar{A}$ mixing does not exist.

SOME EXPLICIT PREDICTIONS:

11. Selective A-movement of this type—and priority effects—should emerge at the edge in the systems that have the resources to Case-license deprioritized xps.
12. Selective attraction of this type should not be restricted to elements with “ $\bar{A}$ -features,” since they should be tethered to the featural profiles of movement-driving heads.

SOME MYSTERIES THAT REMAIN:

11. We haven’t explained the identity of the triggers for selective attraction in any way: why are the priority parcels pronouns, operators WH-phrases, PRO, and some QPs?
12. ...and we seem very far away from a typology of these effects, since so little is known about selective A-attraction and A- $\bar{A}$ mixing overall.

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